

God's Plan of Salvation:

1. Hear - Romans 10:17
2. Believe - Mark 16:16
3. Repent - Acts 2:38
4. Confess - Romans 10:10
5. Be baptized - Acts 22:16
6. Live faithfully - Revelation 2:10

Announcements:

Sick: Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, Mr. Douglas' mother, Mr. and Mrs. Hadley, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Mr. Mathis, Lamar Mathis, Ms. Matchett, Mr. and Mrs. Pete Newsome, Mr. Sowder, Mr. Winns.
Out of Town: Mr. and Mrs. Nick Law

If you would be interested in any of the following ways to study the Bible, feel free to let us know:

- Home Bible Study - We will come into your home or other place you feel comfortable and study the Bible with you. Bible questions are welcome in these studies and we will seek to give a Bible answer.
- Correspondence courses - We will be glad to mail you a correspondence lesson that you can fill out and mail back to us and we will send you the next lesson.
- Call us with your Bible question - #503-707-6014.
- Visit our website:
www.oakgrovechurchofchristjenningsflorida.com.
- Come and visit - We always strive to have good, practical Bible instruction at each of our assemblies.

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What About the Thief on the Cross?

By Derek Long

It seems recently when I discuss with people the necessity of being baptized in order to be saved they ask, "What about the thief on the cross?" There are clear verses in the Bible which teach us the necessity of baptism to be saved today. Mark 16:16 says, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." Acts 2:38 says, "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" Acts 22:16 says, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." 1 Peter 3:21 says, "There is also an antitype which now saves us - baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." It is evident from these commands baptism is essential to salvation but the question remains how do we account for the thief on the cross being saved.

When Jesus was crucified we are told two criminals were crucified with Him, one on each side (Luke 23:32-33). Initially both of these individuals “reviled Him” (Matthew 27:44). However, during the course of the crucifixion one changes and rebukes the other criminal saying, “Do you not even fear God, see you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong” (Luke 23:40-41). The criminal will these make a request of Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom” (Luke 23:42). Jesus replied, “Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). It is often cited how Jesus nowhere told the man he needed to be baptized to be saved. The conclusion is then drawn that we do not need to be baptized to be saved today either.

We need to recognize the thief on the cross received forgiveness of sins prior to Jesus’ death on the cross. Jesus had not yet died when Jesus forgave him of his sins. Under the Old Testament, there was no command to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins. In addition, Jesus was able to forgive people of their sins as He saw fit while upon the earth because He is God (Mark 2:1-12). Once Jesus dies, His testament or will goes into effect and the only way to obtain forgiveness of sins is by complying with the terms for pardon laid out in His will (Hebrews 9:16-17).

We need to also recognize the thief on the cross possibly could have been baptized with John’s baptism. We are told, “Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins” (Mark 1:5). We cannot prove the thief

was baptized with John’s baptism but we also cannot prove he wasn’t either.

We need to remember the thief did not do other things we are required to do today in order to be saved. Romans 10:9-10 says, “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart on believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” The thief could not possibly believe God raised Jesus from the dead because Jesus had not died yet. It is evident the thief on the cross was saved in a way different than you and I are saved today.

If one wants argue we are saved like the thief on the cross, why don’t they insist on being nailed to a cross? If one wants to argue we can be saved like the thief on the cross, why don’t they argue we must have Jesus alive on a cross next to us? If one wants to argue we can be saved like the thief on the cross, why don’t they argue we must have Jesus indicate our sins are forgiven without baptism? Jesus has spoken and commanded us to be baptized to be saved today (Mark 16:15-16). Those who would teach another gospel besides what Jesus taught are to be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9).