

The Faith of a Thief

Luke 23:32-43

What About The Thief On The Cross?

- Luke 23:32-43
- The faith of the thief
 - Confessed he was a sinner
 - Confessed faith in God
 - Confessed Jesus as innocent
 - Confessed Jesus as Lord and King
 - Confessed Jesus' kingdom was not of this world
- His faith was greater than that of the apostles
 - Acts 1:6 - "Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

What About The Thief On The Cross?

- Jesus' response to the thief's request was a little different than what he asked
 - “Today you will be with me in Paradise”
 - The thief would not see the kingdom established
- Jesus was telling the thief:
 - That they would both die today
 - That they would both live on after death
 - And that at death his destiny was sealed

What About The Thief On The Cross?

- Just what did Jesus grant the thief?
 - Forgiveness of sin
 - Entrance into Paradise
- He never received the blessings in Christ given to those who serve the Lord in this present world

“But The Thief Was Not Baptized!”

- Some religiously minded persons want to be saved by means not permitted them in the word of God
 - Would you like to be saved like Zaccheus?
 - Luke 19:1-10 - “9 Today salvation has come to this house”
 - Jesus did not tell him to be baptized. Jesus didn’t tell him to do anything except “I am coming to your house.”
 - Zaccheus volunteered to give half his possessions to the poor

“But The Thief Was Not Baptized!”

- Some religiously minded persons want to be saved by means not permitted them in the word of God
 - “What must I do to be saved?”
 - Go climb a tree and give half of your stuff to street people
- You don’t hear many folks today saying, “I don’t want to be baptized; I want to be saved like Zaccheus.”

“But The Thief Was Not Baptized!”

- The thief could not have been baptized for the remission of sins. If he was baptized at all, it would have been with the baptism of repentance. Unlikely for a thief
 - Mark 1:4-5 - “John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5 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.”
 - John 4:1-2 - “Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John 2 though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples”

“But The Thief Was Not Baptized!”

- He did not need to be baptized in order for the Lord to forgive him. It is enough to know that only the Lord had the power to forgive sins.
 - Luke 5:20-24 - “When He saw their faith, He said to him, Man, your sins are forgiven you. 21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone? 22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? 24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" --He said to the man who was paralyzed, "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house. 25 Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.”

But What Has That To Do With Us?

- The thief lived and died under the Law of Moses. The Gospel was not valid until three things had taken place:
 - The propitiatory blood of Jesus was shed
 - Matt. 26:28 - “For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”
 - The validating resurrection had occurred
 - 1Cor. 15:17 - “And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!”

But What Has That To Do With Us?

- The thief lived and died under the Law of Moses. The Gospel was not valid until three things had taken place:
 - The authorized moment had arrived
 - Luke 24:45-49 - “And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

But What Has That To Do With Us?

- You want to be saved like the thief on the cross?
Then just duplicate the conditions:
 - Go back in time and live under the Law of Moses
 - Col. 2:14 - “having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”
 - Be executed on a cross
 - Confess your faith to Jesus while He is dying next to you
 - Heb. 9:28 - “So Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.”

But What Has That To Do With Us?

- We are under a new covenant
 - Heb. 8:13 - “In that He says, A new covenant, He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.”
- Now the power of salvation is only in the gospel
 - Rom. 1:16 - “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.”

But What Has That To Do With Us?

- The thief was forgiven by the word of Christ. We are saved by the word of Christ. The very same authority that saved the thief, saves us. But we have been given some commandments and conditions in the gospel of the Christian dispensation which were not given in the Old Law. And if we are to be saved, we will obey them.

Do You Have The Faith Of A Thief?

- He knew he was a sinner and that only Jesus could save him
- He knew that Jesus was the innocent Lord and King
- He knew he would live on after death and that Jesus had the power of Judgment
- What do you believe, and what are you willing to confess and do?