

## Why Did Jesus Not Command the Thief To Be Baptized?

(Luke 23:39-43)

### Introduction:

1. This evening we are concentrating on a question that relates to the Lord's plan of salvation.
2. The question is based on the conversation that Jesus had with one of the thieves crucified with Him.
3. Jesus clearly stated in Luke 23:43 that this man would be with Him in paradise that very day.
4. This implies something -- the man's sins were forgiven.
5. Sometimes the question is asked, "Why did Jesus not command the thief to be baptized?"
6. This is an interesting question, and we need to be thankful that the Bible answers it.
7. As we search the Scriptures to answer this question, let us first examine . . .

### Discussion:

#### I. PASSAGES FROM THE GOSPELS THAT RELATE TO THIS MAN

##### A. Matthew 27

1. (vs.38) Two thieves were crucified with Jesus -- one on either side of Him.
2. (vs.44) It appears that both thieves ridiculed Jesus for a time.

##### B. Mark 15

1. (vs.27) The same basic information is given.
2. However, we learn from vs.28 that a prophecy was fulfilled (Isaiah 53:12).

##### C. John 19

1. (vs.17-18) The same basic information is given.
2. (vs.31-32) The legs of the thieves were broken so they would die that day.
3. (vs.33-37) Jesus had already died that day (about 6 hours after being nailed to the cross).

##### D. Luke 23

1. (vs.32-33) The same basic information is given.
2. (vs.39-43) Additional information is given.
  - a. (vs.39) One thief continued to rail against Jesus.
  - b. (vs.40-41) The other thief rebuked him.
  - c. (vs.42) This thief made a request of Jesus.
    - 1) He knew about the Lord's kingdom.
    - 2) How do you suppose he learned about the Lord's kingdom?
    - 3) See Matthew 3:1-6
    - 4) This man may have been baptized by John.
  - d. (vs.43) Jesus said that this man would be with Him that very day in Paradise.

#### II. LET US IDENTIFY THIS PLACE THAT JESUS CALLED "PARADISE"

##### A. (James 2:26) Death occurs when the spirit departs from the body.

##### B. When death occurs, the spirit goes to "Hades" [the place of departed spirits] to await the resurrection.

1. This is where the Lord's soul went when He died (Acts 2:25-27; Psalm 16:8-11).
2. However, the Lord's soul did not remain in Hades.
3. (Luke 16:19-31) In Hades, there is:

- a. a place of torments for the unrighteous
- b. a place of comfort for the righteous [Abraham's bosom].

##### C. Before Jesus died, He said that the thief would be with Him that very day in Paradise [the place of comfort, Abraham's bosom].

##### D. Let us turn our attention to some . . .

#### III. MATTERS PERTAINING TO SALVATION

##### A. Sometimes people appeal to the Lord's statement to the thief to try to prove that baptism is not essential for salvation.

##### B. By looking at a few Scriptures we can clear up any confusion that may exist.

- C. For one thing, Jesus had power on earth during His ministry to forgive sins.
  - 1. Jesus forgave the sins of a man when He healed him (Matthew 9:2, 6).
  - 2. Jesus also forgave the sins of a woman who anointed His feet (Luke 7:48).
  - 3. Jesus had the power to forgive the sins of the thief crucified with Him.
- D. For another thing, when did Jesus issue His command for people to be baptized to be saved? (Was it before or after the thief died?)
  - 1. Jesus did not give His Great Commission until after He was resurrected (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16).
  - 2. To be more specific, it wasn't until about 40 days after Jesus was resurrected (Acts 1:1-8).
  - 3. The conversation between Jesus and the thief took place before Jesus gave the command for people to be baptized.
  - 4. How could the thief have done something before Jesus commanded it?
- E. The question we need to be concerned about is: What did people do to be saved after Jesus gave the Great Commission?
  - 1. Acts 2:38, 41
  - 2. Acts 8:12
  - 3. Acts 8:38
  - 4. Acts 9:18; 22:16
  - 5. Acts 10:48
  - 6. Acts 16:14-15
  - 7. Acts 18:8
  - 8. Acts 19:5

Conclusion:

- 1. Why did Jesus not command the thief to be baptized?
- 2. The thief died before Jesus gave His command in the Great Commission for people to be baptized.
- 3. If we want to be saved from our sins today we must comply with the terms that Jesus gave in the Great Commission (Mark 16:16).