

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

- BELIEVE – ACTS 16:31
- REPENT – ACTS 17:30; LUKE 13:3
- CONFESS – ROMANS 10:10; I TIMOTHY 6:12
- BE BAPTIZED – ACTS 2:38; MARK 16:16
- BE FAITHFUL – REVELATION 2:10

PRAYER LIST:

North Ridgeville church of Christ
36364 Chestnut Ridge Road
North Ridgeville, OH 44039

Website: nrcoc.net

Times for Meeting

Lord's Day

9:30 AM Bible Study (all ages)
10:30 AM Worship

Wednesday

7:00 PM Bible Study (all ages)

Elders

Bruce Dean
Mark Ullman

Evangelist

Steven Wallace

THE NORTH RIDGEVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only,
deceiving your own selves.” James 1:22

October 02, 2022

“Thief on the Cross Salvation Today?”

Steven J. Wallace

“Then he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise’” (Lk. 23:42, 43).¹

Jesus said, “He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48). We find many who *pledge allegiance* with Jesus, calling Him “Lord,” but in the next breath deny His word. One clear example of this circulates around the thief on the cross in Luke 23:39-43. We do not deny the thief’s salvation but deny the error that has been circulated regarding him.

Against Baptism?

Some reason as such: Jesus was baptizing people before his death (John 3:22-26); he saved the thief on the cross without baptizing him; therefore, baptism is not essential for salvation.

If this reasoning *holds water*, why not also reason: Jesus went about saving people before He died and shed His blood (Luke 5:20, 21); He saved the thief before He died; therefore, His death and shed

blood are not essential to salvation? Any honest person can see the point clearly.

We must recognize that the thief died under the Old Testament law and that His *New Testament* would only come into effect after He died. "For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead..." (Heb. 9:16, 17, emp. mine, SJW).

The thief died under the *Old Testament* but we live under the New Testament today. As a safeguard against error, we must consider everything the Bible says on a given subject. "The entirety of Your word *is* truth..." (Psa. 119:160).

Without consulting the whole counsel of God, one could cherry-pick any passage of the Bible and force it into a conclusion that the Bible, as a whole, would not agree with.

Against Belief?

Consider Luke 23:33-37:

"And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.' The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, 'If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.'"

Shall we argue the following from the above passage?

"Before He died, Jesus prayed to the Father to forgive those who were crucifying Him. If belief is essential to be saved, why did Jesus pray to have unbelieving sinners forgiven?"

One could mistakenly argue against the necessity of belief in these Scriptures as much as one could argue against the necessity of baptism in the other. In other words, if the thief on the cross excludes baptism from the plan of salvation, does the Lord's prayer for the *people*, the *rulers*, and the *mocking soldiers* also exclude belief in Luke 33-36? *If not, why not?*

If one should counter that "Paul told the Jailer, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household' in Acts 16:31," we must continue to read the *whole counsel*. "And he took them the same hour of the night and washed *their* stripes. And immediately he and all his *family* were baptized. ...and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household" (Acts 16:33, 34). He *believed* only after he *heard* the word (Acts 16:32; cf. Rom. 10:17). He was *baptized* that same hour for an urgent reason (Acts 16:33). Only after he was baptized does the Scripture identify him as *having believed*.

Jesus requires belief and baptism to be saved. After His death He required both to be taught (Mk. 16:16). While Jesus prayed for the Father to forgive these sinners, it would be based on meeting the conditions He laid forth in the gospel plan which His blood brought into effect (Heb. 9:16, 17). Although Jesus prayed for their forgiveness on the cross, they were still guilty of the lawless behavior that put Him on the cross in Acts 2:23. Like these, you can find pardon when you obey the blessed command, "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 2:38).

Rather than wanting to be saved like the thief, be saved like the chief of sinners and repent and be baptized to have your sins washed away (1 Tim. 1:15, 16; Acts 22:16; Rom. 6:3, 4).