

I WANT TO BE SAVED LIKE HIM (Luke 23:39-43)

I. You can't prove the thief wasn't baptized under John's baptism.

- A. This is a very simplistic point but one that needs to be made.
- B. John did a tremendous work in getting out the message of the One soon to come and about the coming kingdom.
 - 1. It was his job to prepare the way (Malachi 3:1).
 - 2. He did his job very well (Matthew 3:5-6; Mark 1:4-5).
- C. Notice that a great number of people were baptized by John.
 - 1. Both Matthew and Mark use the word all.
 - 2. We know not every single person obeyed and was baptized because the Jewish leaders were part of "all" and they were not.
 - 3. It does indicate a great deal of people were baptized though, one of whom could have been this thief.
- D. Now, admittedly, it would be impossible for us to either prove or disprove he was baptized by John.
- E. But, by some of the things he mentioned that day, there is more evidence that he was baptized than there is that he wasn't.

II. Jesus had power to forgive sins on earth.

- A. Jesus got in trouble with the Pharisees for many things, one of which was telling someone their sins were forgiven.
 - 1. For instance, when friends brought a man suffering from palsy to be healed, Jesus told him first his sins were forgiven (Mark 2:5).
 - 2. The Pharisees thought in their minds that Jesus was blaspheming by saying such so Jesus let them know He had power to forgive and heal (vs. 10-11).
- B. While Jesus was on earth He possessed the power to forgive sins.
 - 1. He could forgive anyone's sins at any time.
 - 2. He had the authority to do that and did at times (Luke 7:48).
- C. When Jesus told the thief he was saved, Jesus had the power to save Him because He was present with the thief.
- D. Today, forgiveness is based upon our relationship with Jesus through His covenant.
- E. If Jesus were here personally, He could forgive sins, but He is not so there has to be some other way and that way is through belief in and obedience to the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16).

III. The thief showed faith in Jesus when most around were reviling Him.

- A. Notice that this man, after having been involved in railing on Jesus, showed faith.
- B. Not only that, but this man was surrounded by people denying Jesus and chose to show faith in Jesus.
- C. Also, notice what he said about Jesus.
 - 1. He acknowledged Jesus as Lord.
 - 2. This shows some knowledge of Jesus and who Jesus was.
 - 3. At some point, it seems this man had been taught something about

Jesus.

- D. Whatever he had learned about Jesus, combined with what He was then seeing and hearing from and about Jesus moved him to have faith in Jesus as Lord.

IV. The thief understood the true nature of the kingdom.

- A. Jesus was about to die as was he.
- B. He put his faith in Jesus despite the fact that Jesus was going to die.
- C. He asked Jesus to remember him when Jesus came into His kingdom.
 - 1. This tells us that the thief understood the kingdom of Jesus was spiritual in nature.
 - 2. This was exactly what Jesus had told Pilate (John 18:36).
 - 3. This man knew normal dead people don't enter into kingdoms.
- D. This also tells us that at some time, this man had been taught about the kingdom of heaven.
 - 1. He must have been taught that the kingdom belonged to Jesus.
 - 2. In other words, the thief had heard and believed the teaching of the gospel.
 - 3. John and Jesus both had preached about the coming kingdom.

V. The New Covenant had not come into effect yet.

- A. Jesus was still alive so there was no new will in force (Hebrews 9:16).
- B. Everyone alive today is under the authority of the New Testament, not the Old.
 - 1. Jesus fulfilled the Old Law, which was His purpose (Matthew 5:17).
 - 2. Jesus took the Old Law out of the way (Colossians 2:14).
 - 3. Ephesians 2:15.
- C. Since such is the case, the thief could not have been forgiven under the New Testament, only the Old.
 - 1. He lived and died under the Moses Law.
 - 2. The Law of Christ, or the New Testament was not in force until His death and resurrection.
- D. We can't be saved like the thief because we don't live under the same covenant as him.
- E. As one writer said, "I would have just as much authority to build an ark in order to be saved as I would to appeal to the thief on the cross."

VI. The terms of the New Covenant had not yet been given.

- A. Jesus had told Peter that He would give him the keys to the kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19).
- B. When Jesus died, He had still not given the keys to Peter.
 - 1. In fact, even at His resurrection, Jesus did not immediately give the keys to Peter.
 - 2. Jesus still had to talk to Peter about being faithful.
- C. Those keys were not given until 50 days after the death of Jesus.
 - 1. In Acts 2, Peter and the other apostles told people what to do to be saved from their sins.
 - 2. They were told to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38).
- D. Until those terms were given, one could not know what to do to obtain

forgiveness under the New Testament.

E. There was no way for the thief to know those terms but we can today.

This is not an original outline but don't know the source.