

Intro.

1. One of the most crucial passages found in Scripture is **Mk. 16:15f** **Eph. 2:8f; Rom. 5:8f**
 1. Jesus makes it plain that both *believing & being baptized* are essential to being saved by grace. ↗
 2. Sometimes I have people tell me: *I don't believe you have to be baptized. I want to be saved..... just like the thief on the cross.*
- B. (Chart 1) When considering the stated question..., I would urge you to understand that Bible answer = **NO**.
 1. The reason this is definitely the case is because today we live under much different circumstances:
 2. The thief lived under a diff. dispensation---testament---from the covenant we are living under.
- C. It is worthy of notice, too, the earlier attitude of the thief that had become penitent (**Mt. 27:41-44**)
 1. Luke's record (**Lk. 23**) leaves no doubt that the 2nd thief was saved---w/ *me in Paradise*.
 2. We need to study...
 - a. several imp. facts about the thief & some crucial questions
 - b. some prevailing principles concerning law
 3. There are concrete conclusions that can be drawn about salvation from studying these things.

Discuss.**I. SOME FACTS ABOUT THE THIEF & SOME CRUCIAL QUESTIONS:**

- A. Some factual observation:
 1. Both thieves were sinners. (**Lk. 23:32**) → Jesus was w/out sin, **Heb. 4:15**
 2. Each participated in reproaching Jesus, (**Mt. 27:44**)
 3. Eventually, the one thief *repented* & asked Jesus to remember him in heaven (**Lk. 23:42**)
 4. Jesus assured him, *Today.....with me in paradise* (**Lk. 23:43**)
 5. The penitent thief *lived & died before* the gospel became the enforced law (**Heb. 9:16-17**)
- B. Some crucial questions:
 1. Does **Lk. 23:43** *imply* that the thief was saved? (c. **Ac. 2:29-31 Lk. 16:22-26**)
 2. If so, was he saved without being baptized in the name of Christ?
 3. If so, does that mean that people living today can be saved w/o being baptized in Jesus' name?
 - ◆ What the Bible say.
 - ◆ What does *the law of Christ* teach?

II. PRINCIPLES ABOUT GOVERNING LAWS:

- A. Principles about God's spiritual laws.
 1. **Transgression** of God's Law = SIN (**1 Jn. 3:4**)
 2. *Where there is no Law, there is no transgression*, **Rom. 4:15**
 3. **The only** persons who are under obligation to obey a LAW = those to whom it is addressed, **Rom. 3:19**
 4. A law may be in force, & then be repealed (i.e., no longer in force), **Heb. 10:9**
 5. One law may be taken away so that another Law man be established. (**Col. 2:13-14**)
- B. Note an ordinary **Last Will & Testament**.
 1. It has **NO** force *before* the death of the testator, **Heb. 9:15-17**
 2. Yet, **AFTER DEATH**, of the testator, the **WILL** controls the disposition of the estate.
 3. **Gal. 3:23-25** was written to people living after cross of Christ, but still trying to live under O.T. law.
 4. Paul taught that no one could be saved by Moses' Law unless & until Christ died, **Rom. 8:1-5**
- C. The history of God's laws have included laws w/ limited application, as well as universal application.
 1. Until Mt. Sinai (**Ex. 20**) all men were under God's "Patriarchal Law".
 2. From Sinai until Pentecost, the Jews lived under the "Mosaic Law" (Gentiles under Patriarchal Law).
 3. Every since Pentecost (**Ac. 2**), ALL have been accountable to the law (or Gospel) of Christ.

III. THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST IS GOD'S SPIRITUAL LAW NOW BINDING.

A. The Law of Moses → *has been repealed.*

1. It was nailed to the cross...*blotted out.....taken ...out of the way*, **Col. 2:14**
2. **Eph. 2:14-16** Christ *abolished...the law of commandments...*

B. It necessarily follows that NO ONE can learn what to do to be saved from their sins by ...

1. studying & applying *only* what God said *before* the Law of Moses
2. studying & obeying *only* what God commanded under the Mosaic Law

C. The offer of salvation comes today to those who will be obedient to the Gospel of Christ.

Concl.

A. Today, there is not a single responsible person who *IS NOT* under & accountable to the Gospel.

1. The Gospel teaches us about salvation.
2. The thief on the cross lived & died under a different law, thus he could not obey Plan of Salvation.

B. Today, you can be saved by God if you are willing to obey the Laws God has enacted for your salvation.