

The Thief on the Cross

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“Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left” (Matthew 27:38). Mark affirmed that this reality was a fulfillment of a prophecy from the Messianic Prophet, “He was numbered with the transgressors” (Mark 15:28; Isaiah 53:12). J.W. McGarvey astutely observed, “How striking an illustration of the fact that he came to this world to save sinners is this fact that he was crucified between two thieves and saved one of them” (*McGarvey's Chapel Talks*, p. 27).

The salvation of the thief on the cross has yielded an uninformed and incorrect desire on the part of many to be ushered into a saved state after the same manner he was. In our day the number is into the teeming millions of people who fight strenuously in support of the position that a person can be saved by faith alone. The 10 case studies of conversion in the Book of Acts detailing the Lord's stated will in this regard that a penitent person is instructed by the Apostles to hear the word of God, believe it with all his or her heart, repent of past sins, confess Christ, and be baptized for the remission of sins in order to be added to the church of Christ, is not what some are looking for when they say they want to be saved.¹ Many are almost incorrigibly resigned to the view of salvation by faith only. It is the very definition of desperation to make an attempt to style one's manner of approach to finding favor with God and receiving forgiveness of sins today by reverting to this thief's marvelous case study of conversion.

In view of the fact that this is such a difficult point to make with some who believe or are in sympathy with the salvation by faith only position, please consider the absolutely impregnable, unassailable proof that no one living today can be saved like the thief on the cross as furnished by the Word of God. The passage is Romans 10:9:

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that GOD HATH RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, thou shalt be saved (emphasis added).

Friends, the thief on the cross was never told nor expected to believe that Jesus had already been raised from the dead. But, neither you nor anyone else living today can be saved unless he or she believes “God hath raised Him from the dead.” Therefore, neither you nor anyone else can be saved like the thief on the cross today.

¹Acts 2:22, 36-38, 47; 8:37; 16:30-33; 22:16.