

“What must I do to be saved?”

This is the single most important question anyone can ever ask. Our souls will exist for eternity but on the Day of Judgment when Jesus Christ judges all who have ever lived, He will divide the saved from the unsaved. The saved will go to eternal life while the unsaved will go to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46). This is why it is imperative we be on the right side of the dividing line before that day arrives.

The Bible teaches, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). So *everyone* is in need of salvation. Salvation comes through Jesus Christ. And “salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12).

To be saved we must:

- 1.) **Hear the “good news” of Jesus Christ** (Romans 10:14)
- 2.) **Believe** (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 8:37; Mark 16:16; John 8:24)
- 3.) **Repent of our sins** (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30; Mark 10:15)
- 4.) **Confess faith in Jesus Christ** (Acts 8:36-37; Romans 10:9)
- 5.) **Be baptized (in water) for the forgiveness of sins** (Acts 2:37-41; 1Peter 3:21; John 3:3-5; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-8; Colossians 2:12; Galatians 3:26-27; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:34-39; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 4:5)
- 6.) **Remain faithful for the rest of our lives and carry our cross daily** (Revelation 2:10; Matthew 24:13; Luke 9:23)

We become saved (conversion occurs) and we come into contact with the blood of Christ (or enter into Christ), at baptism, after steps 1-4 have been fulfilled.

Answers to some common arguments critics use in an attempt to nullify the need for baptism:

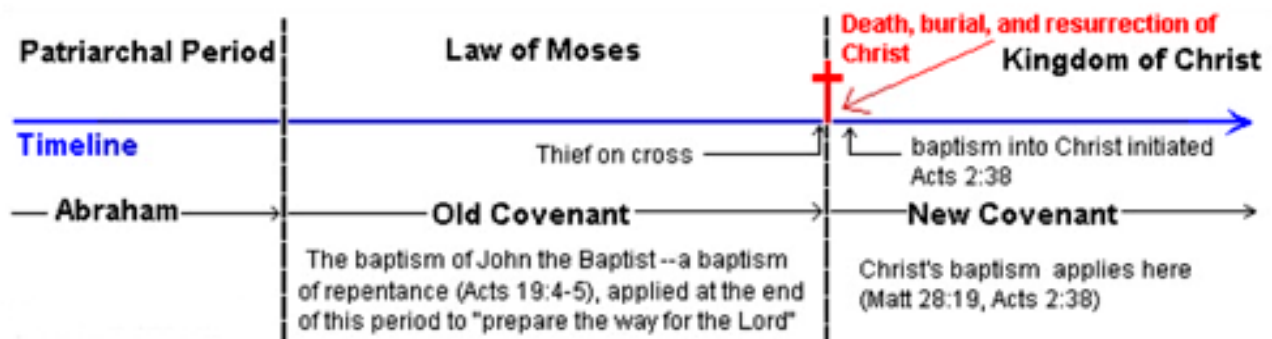
Part 1

The thief on the cross

Some will ask, “Well, what about the thief on the cross? *He* wasn’t baptized and Jesus very clearly told him he would be in paradise. Doesn’t that prove baptism is not essential for salvation?”

This is a perfectly valid question and makes sense at first glance. However, the problem arises from not having a clear understanding of what baptism represents and what the scriptures tell us about it. According to Romans 6:3-6, **baptism represents being unified with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection.** The problem with the thief on the cross when Jesus told him he would be with Him in paradise, is that **Jesus was still alive.** Christ had not yet died or been buried, so He had certainly not risen yet either. Baptism into Christ was not put into practice until Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 **after** Christ had risen from the dead and ascended to heaven.

The thief on the cross was still under the Old Covenant and therefore not subject to this baptism. He was saved just like anyone else under the Old Covenant.



But besides that, when Christ was on this earth, He had the authority to forgive people of their sins. Look at Mark 2:9-12:

Which is easier, to tell the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven;' or to say, 'Arise, and take up your bed, and walk? **'But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'** -- he said to the paralytic -- "I tell you, arise, take up your mat, and go to your house." He arose, and immediately took up the mat, and went out in front of them all; so that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

When Christ was on the cross, He was still on this earth. And He had the authority to forgive sins.