Introduction: Many in the denominational world appeal to the thief on the cross to show that baptism is not a requirement for salvation.

I. THE SITUATION
   A. Jesus was being crucified between two thieves.
      1. His crucifixion lasted for 6 hours.
      2. At the beginning of this ordeal, both robbers blasphemed Him.
         a. Mat. 27:44 “The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.”
         b. Mark 15:32 “Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.”
   B. One of the thieves changed.
      1. Luke 23:38-43 “And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. 39And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”
      2. He petitions Jesus to remember him when He comes in His kingdom.

II. THE THIEF’S KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST
   A. From what he stated, he had a good deal of information about Jesus.
      1. He could have learned it during the crucifixion.
      2. He could have learned it previously.
   B. Some of the things he believed.
      1. The existence of God.
      2. A standard of right and wrong.
      3. The innocence of Jesus.
      4. That Jesus was a king.
      5. That Jesus’ life would not end with the crucifixion.
      6. That Jesus would come in His kingdom.
      7. That Jesus could bless him in His kingdom.
   C. His knowledge of these things?
      1. It seems improbable that he would have learned these things while on the cross.
      2. He could have learned them from John, Jesus, or His disciples.
         a. Mark 1:4-5 “John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 4And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.”
         b. John 4:1-2 “When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, 2(Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)”
         c. Jesus sent His disciples out on the limited commission; Mat. 10.
      3. Could he have been a disciple?
         a. It is something we cannot prove.
         b. However, one cannot insist that the thief had never been baptized.
III. Jesus’ Promise to the Thief

A. He would be in paradise.

B. Paradise.
   1. It is in that realm of the unseen world—hades.
   2. It is that area when individuals are blessed by God.
      a. Luke 16:25 “But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good
         things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”
      b. It is being with Christ; Phi. 1:21, 23 “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain....23For
         I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:”
   3. Those in paradise will enter heaven at the second coming of Christ.

C. The thief was saved.

IV. The Last Will and Testament of Jesus.

A. There are at least 8 requirements for a will to be valid.
   1. Must have reached his majority.
   2. Must be alive when it is drawn up.
   3. Must be of sound mind.
   4. Clarity of Thought, Purpose, Intent, and Desire. It must be able to be Understood
   5. Must be possessions to give.
   6. Must be a witnessing of the will.
   7. The testator must die.
   8. Settlement made according to the terms set forth in the will.

B. Consider 2 of these.
   1. Possessions to give.
      a. He has remission of sins and eternal life to give.
      b. Remission of sins.
         (1) Luke 24:46-47 “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to
             suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47And that repentance and remission of sins
             should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
         (2) Acts 10:43 “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever
             believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”
         (3) Eph. 1:7 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins,
             according to the riches of his grace;”
         (4) Col. 1:14 “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”
      c. Eternal life.
         (1) John 3:16-17 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that
             whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17For God sent not
             his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be
             saved.”
         (2) John 11:25 “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me,
             though he were dead, yet shall he live:”
         (3) John 20:30-31 “And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples,
             which are not written in this book: 31But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus
             is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
2. The death of the testator.
   a. Heb. 5:8-9 “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 8And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;”
   b. Heb. 9:15-17 “And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. 16For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.”

C. While Jesus was alive, he could dispense of his possessions any way He wishes.
   1. The man sick of the palsy let down from the ceiling; Jesus forgives his sins; Mat. 9:2-8; Mark 2:3-12.

D. When Jesus died His will goes into effect and to receive the possessions He gives today, we must meet the conditions of the will.

Conclusion: The clear teaching of the Scriptures is that for man today to be saved, he must: believe, repent, confess, and be baptized. Do not try to follow the example of the thief, instead do what our Lord taught us to do.