

**J31** JONES, Dan. *Y "lleidr ar y groes."* (The "thief on the cross.")  
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In this pamphlet, Dan Jones argues against the idea, which was common among the other religions, that baptism for the remission of sins was not essential for salvation. The scripture most often quoted against the necessity of baptism was the declaration of Jesus to the thief on the cross: "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Jones explains, however, that paradise and heaven are not the same place; when Jesus appeared to Mary three days after his crucifixion he instructed her not to touch him, for he had "not yet ascended to [his] Father" (John 20:17).

Jones quotes 1 Peter 3:18–21 and argues that the spirits in prison were in a place known as paradise, where they awaited their opportunity to be resurrected. Therefore, since the thief had not gone to heaven, he was not saved and still needed baptism. Jones's objective in the pamphlet was simply to show that the ordinance of baptism was required of all mortals; thus he does not elaborate on the Mormon belief that vicarious baptism may be performed on earth for those in the spirit prison, but merely quotes 1 Peter 4:6 and 1 Corinthians 15:29, two scriptures that suggest preaching to the dead and baptism for the dead.

## THE "THIEF ON THE CROSS."

ONE of the main refutations that is offered concerning baptism "for the remission of sins" is that the thief on the cross was saved without baptism; and the misunderstanding of the account about him is what prompts us to make the following observations.

We are *witnesses* that God forgives the sins of the repentant believer that is properly baptized; and we testify to that because we received our own forgiveness in that manner; we *know* that we received forgiveness because God proved it by imparting his Holy Spirit in its several gifts, in a manner that we never had before, and we know of no one else who has enjoyed them without first receiving forgiveness. This is our testimony of that, and no matter what happened to the thief on the cross, or where he went, it will not make our testimony weak; yet for those who are kept from being baptized because of this thief, we shall strive to explain that Jesus Christ did not say that the thief would be saved, nor could he have gone to heaven soon after dying. Let us read Luke xxiii, 43. "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise," said He. Now, the question is, by the word *paradise* does Jesus mean the place where God dwells? If not, since it is only there that our sectarian friends believe there is salvation, then the thief was not saved. Who says that Jesus means heaven? For the theologians generally acknowledge that the word *paradise* is used for *hell* as well as for the 'bosom of Abraham,' and every part of the world of the spirits, good and bad; again, for those who are kept by this thief from getting baptized, it is important to know where he went. Jesus says to Mary after his resurrection (John xx, 17), "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." Jesus said that the thief would be *with him* "today." Three days later he said that he had not yet ascended to his Father. If one acknowledges that Jesus spoke the truth and that his Father was in heaven, then one must also acknowledge that the thief did not go to his Father on that "today." One must acknowledge further that there is no proof that the thief was saved; therefore, there is no proof to be obtained in that account that salvation can be achieved without baptism. We have only quoted the words of

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Jesus himself, and those who assert that the thief was saved must prove that there is some place for the saved besides the place where the Father of Jesus Christ lives, or that Jesus told a lie. But since no one dares to do the one thing or the other, there is nothing left to do but believe what he said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

One asks where did the thief go then? Jesus has already answered that it was the same place that he was going—"with me," he said; but he did not say how long he would stay with him. Where did the two of them go, then,—who can say? Do not be angry, reader, if we say that Jesus went to hell, or to *hades*, or to prisons where the spirits were awaiting his visit, some for thousands of years; but the apostle Peter can say where Jesus went, and perhaps there will not be so much anger against him. Peter, where did Jesus go in the Spirit while his body lay in the grave, if you know? (1 Peter iii, 18—21.) "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. By which [Spirit] also he [Christ] went and preached unto the spirits *in prison*, which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even BAPTISM doth also now SAVE us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a *good conscience* toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Certainly one will not doubt the testimony of Peter, that Christ had gone to prison, and thus one cannot doubt that the thief also went to prison, but there is this difference between the two; namely that Jesus came out afterwards and left the thief there. Why so? Because such evildoers were not worthy to come out until they had paid the "last farthing;" that is what Jesus himself taught before that; and the thief in the company of holy Jesus in the other world was not worthy to be forgiven, and he could not be forgiven until he was baptized, without forfeiting the truthfulness of Jesus himself and his twofold oath. His belief in the Son of God no doubt entitled him to better company than did the other thief who scorned Him; and no doubt he will be released from his prison by another means to fulfill all righteousness for him in his proper time and place; see 1 Peter iv, 6; and 1 Cor. xv, 29.

It is not our present purpose to investigate how or when the thief will come out of the prison; it is more fitting to endeavor to persuade the reader to avoid the fate of the thief on the cross, by receiving his

baptism for the remission of sins, and thus become a member of the kingdom of God, so that when his spirit goes to paradise he will have rest from his labor, and that his works, namely his baptism and every obedience to Christ, will make him worthy of adoption, namely, the “purchase of the body” in the first resurrection, instead of waiting for the last resurrection with the thieves, the unbelievers, the unbaptized and the persecutors.

Indeed, the circumstance of the thief on the cross should be a warning to the reader not to neglect the first chance to be baptized instead of its being an excuse to try to prove baptism unnecessary. The effect should be completely the opposite, for those who have received the true baptism will not be driven to prisons when the spirit leaves the body, rather to the ‘church of the firstborn, to an innumerable company of angels, to mount Sion, the City of Enoch, the heavenly Jerusalem,’ where the spirits of the righteous wait to receive their pure bodies, and the glory of the sons of God; all of which is promised to no one except those who are “born of the water and of the Spirit;” for the only Savior spoke an unchangeable oath.

Let not the reader put us in the judgment seat now, and then blame us for condemning our godly old forefathers, the famous Reformers—the zealous missionaries, together with a numberless host who left good testimony after going to Jesus, and yet without being baptized—those who lived conscientiously according to what they understood to be the word of God. Certainly some will say in fright, “You say they are all lost!” But let us proceed slowly, reader, we do not *say*, much less *do* that; we judge no one; another who is far more just will judge them, and He will judge them correctly according to their works, and He will do so according to a just procedure. He will not punish any of them who were not baptized, unless he had sent a servant or servants among them to baptize them, and they refused them. If they acted according to the best light they could obtain, we dare say that they are a thousand times better in their place and their honor, than will be the reader who lives a life similar to theirs, and they will come up out of their graves much earlier, and also with more glory. For this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, now as it came in the time of Christ, concerning the way to salvation through baptism. And *those who refuse it* will be punished, but not those who were never *offered* it. Their judgment will be according to the corresponding degrees of excellence of the light

that was offered to them. To those who were given much, much will be required; and those of this age can never excuse themselves as their fathers can, for they have been offered a message from God, something which never came to our fathers; for that reason the fathers will rise up in the judgment against their children if their children refuse the more excellent religion that is offered them. And of this religion we testify, and our testimony will stand and will be either the savour of life to life or of death to death to the reader, and to all who can hear it.

If the foregoing godly and irrefutable testimonies have persuaded the reader to see the great importance of the true baptism—for and in the name of our Master who sent us to baptize, we sincerely exhort him, yea, we command him to obey with haste,—the first opportunity—“now is the proper time,” *today*, not tomorrow, not tonight, but before anything else, *now*, do not delay even for an hour! Remember the fate of the antedeluvians—the “thief on the cross,” and the prison they are in—do not go to him there with your eyes open; baptism is the only way to avoid it—believe the truth as it is in Jesus!

If after reading this little treatise you throw it from your hand as something that has no value, and you turn a deaf ear to this call, the author will come before you in the judgment, and he will testify in the presence *of all* that you were offered forgiveness of sins for free, and you refused—based on divine proofs by the Holy Ghost that God sent a message to the world in our age, as he sent in the days of Noah,—that he has authorized the Latter-day Saints to baptize and receive strangers as fellowcitizens of his kingdom—that he has given the Spirit of Adoption to those who adopt them for him; and we testify that this is the only plan of God to save men to eternal life. Dear friend, believe the truth and obey it so that you will have life, and that is the wish,

Of your well-wisher,

D. JONES.