

WHAT'S THE WORD?

Truth In An Uncertain World

Some of our Previous Topics

Artificial Intelligence

Gender and Marriage

The value of life

Israel and Antisemitism

Politics and Government

Angels and Demons

Next Week's Topic

**Christian Persecution
around the world**

WHAT'S THE WORD?

about Baptism?

What is Baptism?

“Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.”

-The Baptist Faith and Message, 2000

WHAT'S THE
WORD?

Why do we as a church emphasize Baptism?

Jesus said, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20

- As obedient followers of Jesus, our calling is to help others meet the Savior... by having respectful conversations and explaining the truth of God’s Word

When should Baptism occur?

In the Bible, baptism always follow one's personal commitment of salvation.

Baptism occurs at the finish line of the old life (without Jesus) and the starting line of the new life (with Jesus).

Why do we not practice Infant Baptism?

- Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe in the gospel.**” Mark 1:14-15
- Peter said to them, “**Repent**, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” Acts 2:38
- Baptism is a step of faith and obedience taken by people who are mature enough and aware enough to understand their sin and the need for spiritual forgiveness.

Are you ready to say YES to Jesus today?

Are you ready to follow Him in baptism?

Baptism of Jesus

Matthew 3

Mark 1

Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matthew 3:1

The call to repentance is important and must not be neglected. It is entirely accurate to say that it is the *first word of the gospel*.

- **Repent** was the *first word* of John the Baptist's gospel (Matthew 3:1-2).
- **Repent** was the *first word* of Jesus' gospel (Matthew 4:17 and Mark 1:14-15).
- **Repent** was the *first word* in the preaching ministry of the twelve disciples (Mark 6:12).
- **Repent** was the *first word* in the preaching instructions Jesus gave to His disciples after His resurrection (Luke 24:46-47).
- **Repent** was the *first word* of exhortation in the first Christian sermon (Acts 2:38).
- **Repent** was the *first word* in the mouth of the Apostle Paul through his ministry (Acts 26:19-20).

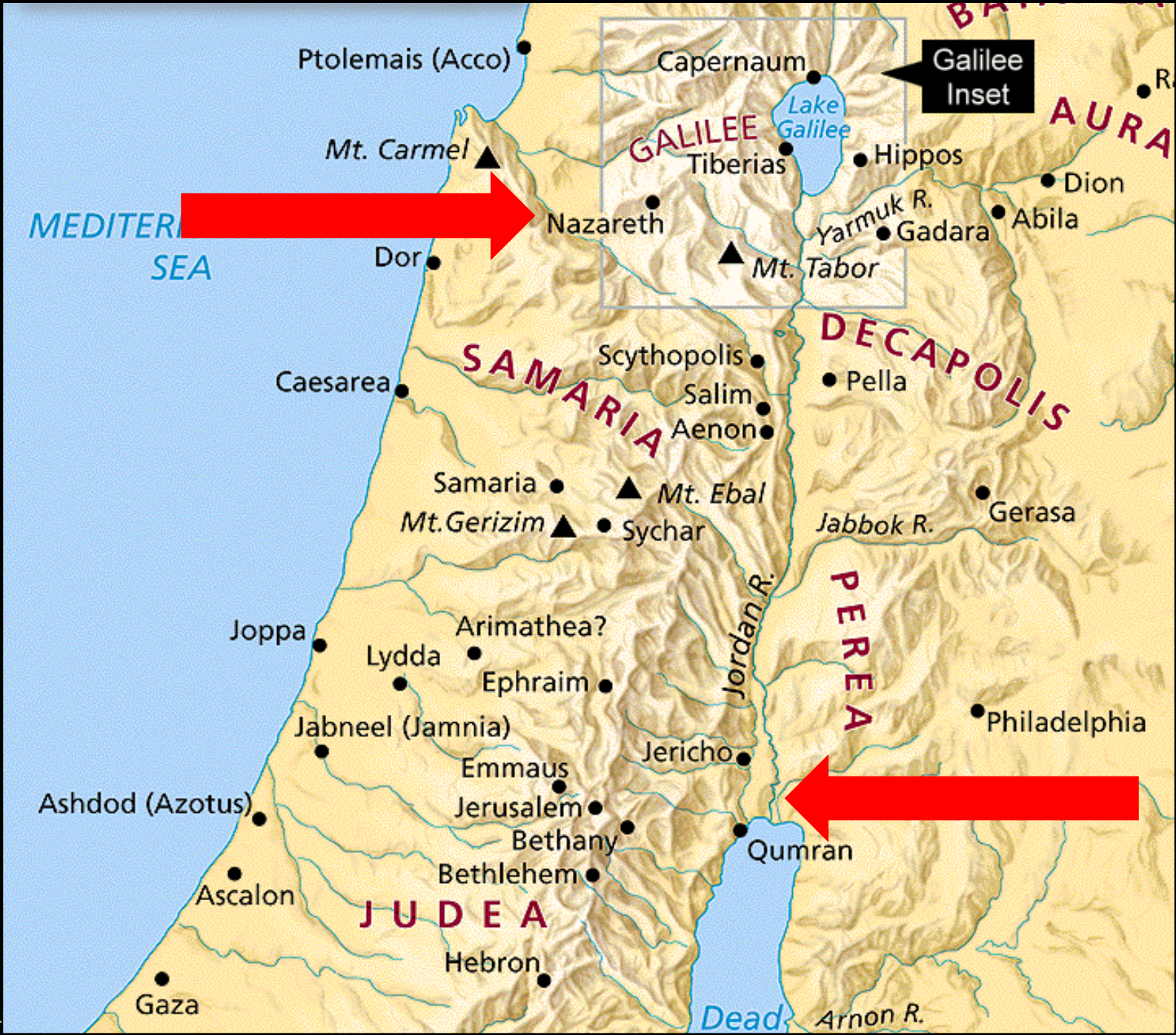
For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight!’ ” [see Isaiah 40:3] Now John himself had a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; and **they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.** Matthew 3:2-6

But when he [John the Baptizer] saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

Matthew 3:7-10

“As for me, I baptize [Greek verb βαπτίζω *baptizo*... to dip, to immerse] you with water for repentance, but **He who is coming after me** is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.** His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Matthew 3:11-12

Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan [River] coming to John, to be baptized by him. But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us **to fulfill all righteousness.**” Then he permitted Him. Matthew 3:13-15



In those days
Jesus came from
Nazareth in
Galilee and was
baptized by John
in the Jordan.
Mark 1:9

After being baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he [John] saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him [Jesus], and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.”

Matthew 3:16-17



Immediately coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opening, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him; and a voice came out of the heavens: "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

Mark 1:10-11

WHAT'S THE
WORD?

- **The heavens were opened:** It was important for God the Father to publicly demonstrate that Jesus' baptism was not just like anyone else's, in the sense of being a display of repentance. It was *not* a display of repentance, but instead it was a righteous identification with sinners, motivated by love, and was *well pleasing* to the Father.
- **This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased:** When this voice of God the Father spoke from heaven, everyone knew that Jesus was not just another man being baptized. They knew Jesus was the perfect (**in whom I am well pleased**) Son of God, identifying with sinful man. By this, everyone knew that Jesus was different. Jesus was baptized so to be identified *with* sinful man, but He was also baptized to be identified *to* sinful man.

Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled

Behold, My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one in whom My soul delights. **I have put My Spirit upon Him**; He will bring forth justice to the nations.

Isaiah 42:1

But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain. I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord: He said to Me, **“You are My Son, today I have begotten You.”** Psalm 2:6-7

Why would Jesus seek to be baptized by John?

- **A baptism of humility.** Jesus humbles Himself to do what God asks. Jesus does this because God requires it. He lived a life of complete obedience to God; He was sinless.
 - who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 2:6-8
- **A baptism of commitment.** This launched Jesus' ministry that would eventually lead to the cross. This inauguration began that process. It was a commitment to God's plan and you and me.
- **A baptism of identification.** He affirmed John's ministry and identity with the people He'd come to save. Jesus took this step of obedience to show us the way - to identify with those of us who do need to repent and turn back. - Joseph Vest

Baptism of the Ethiopian Man

Acts 8:25-38

So, when they [Peter, John, Philip] had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

Acts 8:25

*Philip, during the persecution of the church in Jerusalem, had gone to the city of Samaria, and was engaged in revival meetings that were accompanied with signs and wonders.

- Jim Cole-Rous

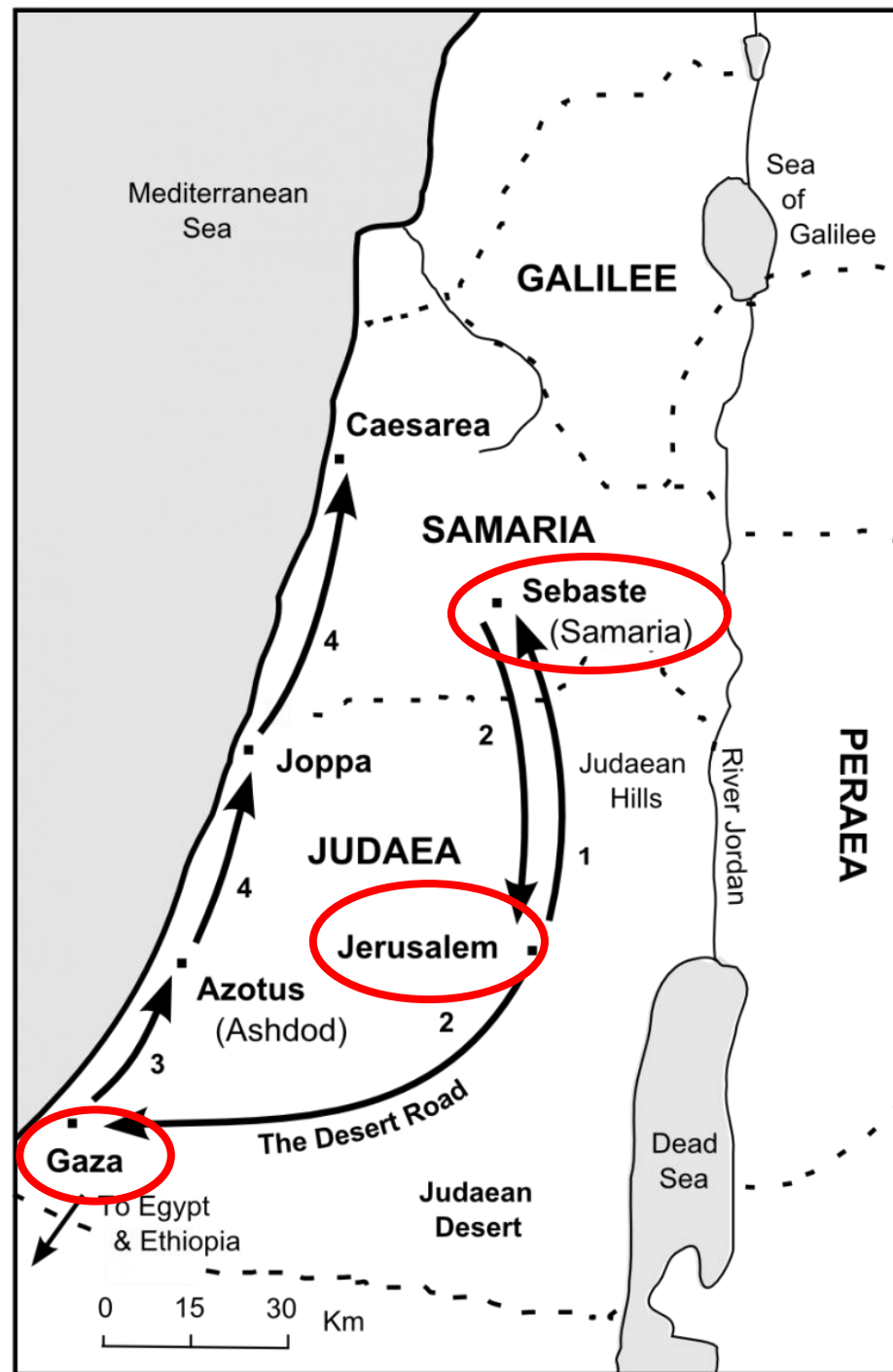
But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip saying,
“Get up and go south to the road that descends
from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a desert road.)

Acts 8:26

*What if you were serving God faithfully and telling the story of Jesus in a powerful way in a certain place and God then told you it was time to move on?

*Would we be obedient enough and courageous enough to make the change?

Map of Israel in the time of Jesus



Journey #1 – Jerusalem to Samaria

Journey #2 – Back to Jerusalem, then to Gaza

So he [Philip] got up and went; and there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians [whose kingdom, larger than modern Ethiopia, stretched north along the River Nile into modern Sudan], who was in charge of all her treasure; and he had come to Jerusalem to worship, Acts 8:27

***Candace** – not a personal name, but the dynastic title of the queens of the Kingdom of Kush in what is now the Sudan, similar to “Caesar”

* **Eunuch** - the Hebrew word *saris* refers to a man in some sort of service to a ruler, castration isn't always the case. He was probably a Gentile proselyte to Judaism.

***Amantitere** ruled as Queen of Kush approx. 25-41 AD.



The ancient Kingdom of Kush covers much of modern-day Sudan.

Distance of approx. 1500 miles

Photo credit:
The British Museum
MUSEUM
WORD?

We are told in Acts 8:27 that the Ethiopian man had made the long journey for the purpose of coming to worship the God of Israel. This involved coming to the Temple in Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice. This journey would have taken several weeks each way. For a man in his position as Minister of the Treasury of Ethiopia (Kush), this meant the expense of a long journey for not only himself but for his entire entourage. He was a Cabinet Minister to the Queen, and would never travel alone. Travel would likely be by boat and then overland using chariots. - Jim Cole-Rous

and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. Acts 8:28



Chariot pulled by an ox or horse

Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go up and join this chariot.” Acts 8:29

- One man was spiritually curious and seeking
 - The Ethiopian governmental official
- One man knew Messiah Jesus and was called to share –
Philip, one of the original 7 deacons
- Are we ready to start spiritual conversations?

Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet [aloud, in Hebrew], and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” Acts 8:30

- The rules and regulations of the Temple Worship had perplexed him, but he procured a copy of the holy writings upon which so much of the religion was based. It was a copy of the book of the Prophet Isaiah, a book that would have taken a scribe a year to write. There were many detailed rules that were required of a scribe, to ensure that the book was perfectly copied from a master copy. It must have cost the eunuch an enormous sum of money. Having invested a small fortune in this book, he commenced to read it as he traveled homewards. - Jim Cole-Rous



WHAT'S THE
WORD?

And he said, “Well, how could I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Acts 8:31

- Philip, of a lower societal rank, needed permission.
- The Ethiopian man had spent time in Jerusalem among the leading scholars and yet did not have answers to his spiritual questions.
- People seeking spiritual truth need someone to explain how to find salvation by faith in Jesus.
- Many people are open to authentic conversations.

Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this: “He was led as a sheep to slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He does not open His mouth. In humiliation His judgment was taken away; who will relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth.” [Isaiah 53:7-8] The eunuch answered Philip and said, “Please tell me, of whom does the prophet say this? Of himself or of someone else?” Acts 8:32-34

Did You Know?

Jesus often spoke of Himself in connection with Isaiah 53

- This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: “He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.” Matthew 8:17 (referencing Isaiah 53:4)
- This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” John 12:38 (referencing Isaiah 53:1)
- Jesus said, “For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, ‘And He was numbered with transgressors’; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment.” Luke 22:37 (referencing Isaiah 53:12)

Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning
from this Scripture [Isaiah 53]
he preached Jesus to him. Acts 8:35

- Did you know that the promised Messiah, Jesus/Yeshua, appears in the writings of the Old Testament (Tanakh) prophets?
- Are we prepared to explain the true meaning of salvation to those who are curious?
- Are we preaching Jesus or something else?

The Ethiopian man had **previously** read this section of Isaiah 53...

Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, **He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.** All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. Isaiah 53:1-6

As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, “Look! Water! What prevents me from being **baptized**?” And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “**I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.**”

Acts 8:36-37

*The Ethiopian man wanted to know if Messiah Jesus would accept him, a non-Jew, into His faith family.

*What do we believe about Jesus and salvation?

And he [the Ethiopian man] ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he **baptized** him.

Acts 8:38

*Sometimes the time is NOW

Some people come to faith in large group settings

So, when they had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, and were preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans. Acts 8:25

Some people come to faith in one-on-one conversations

And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may."
And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Acts 8:37

How Are People Diverse?

- Age
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Language
- Education
- Careers
- Generation
- Nationality

Philip, a Jew from Israel, was called to share the story of Messiah Jesus with a successful, distinguished non-Jew from Africa. They had different nationalities, different first languages, different skin colors and different careers... and both needed a Savior.

Is Baptism required for salvation?

One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, “Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!” But the other answered, and rebuking him said, “Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he was saying, “Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!” And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.” Luke 23:39-43

What is required for salvation?

“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

Romans 10:9-10

Confession of Baptism

“Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4

**“I believe that Jesus
Christ is the Son of God.”**

Are you ready to say YES to Jesus today?

Are you ready to follow Him in baptism?