

5 VIEWS OF MARK 16:16

There is a statement of Jesus that is so plain, and yet so controversial that you rarely hear it referred to by denominational preachers, whether it be in their churches or on TV or the radio

- a. And when they do refer to it, they feel it necessary to give an explanation that goes against what it clearly teaches.

I have reference to the words of Jesus as found in **Mark 16:16** -- “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

To illustrate what I said earlier, let's take a look at four different views of this verse as taught by men, and then contrast those views with the one plainly stated by Jesus and supported by His apostles in their teaching and preaching.

The first view is one held by those who do not profess to be Christians, but for the purpose of our lesson it should be considered.

- a. In essence, they would say . . .

1. HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED WILL NOT BE SAVED.

There are several groups that hold this view.

- a. Atheists -- who do not believe in God, heaven or hell, or salvation of any kind.
- b. Hindus, Buddhists, etc.
 - ▶ They believe in a god (or gods), but they do not believe in the God of the Bible, and they certainly do not believe in Jesus Christ and the salvation He promises through the gospel.
- c. Muslims, and non-christian Jews.
 - ▶ They reject the gospel of Jesus Christ and the baptism that is commanded in His name.

But those who accept Jesus for who He claims to be, and accept the authority of His apostles, believe that . . .

- a. There is a God who offers salvation; salvation comes only through Jesus Christ.
 - ▶ 1Tim 2:3-4 -- “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”
 - ▶ 1Tim 2:5-6 - “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, . . .”
 - ▶ Jn 14:6 -- “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

2. HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE AND IS NOT BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED.

This view is held by “Universalists” who believe that God will eventually save everyone.

But those who believe the teachings of Christ and the teachings of the apostle Paul know that . . .

a. Many will be lost eternally, and few will be saved.

- ▶ **Matt 7:13-14** -- “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”
- ▶ **Jn 8:21-24** -- “Then Jesus said to them again, ‘I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.’ 22 So the Jews said, ‘Will He kill Himself, because He says, ‘Where I go you cannot come?’ 23 And He said to them, ‘You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.’”

b. Those who are not saved will suffer the wrath of God.

- ▶ **Eph 5:5-6** -- “For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.”

3. HE WHO “DOES NOT BELIEVE” AND “IS BAPTIZED” WILL BE SAVED.

Those who hold to this position are actually saying that it is not necessary to believe in order to be baptized -- the one being baptized does not have to have faith.

a. This view is held by some of those who practice “infant baptism.”

- ▶ They “baptize” (actually they “sprinkle”) infants who are obviously incapable of believing.
 - They (esp. Catholics) indicate that faith is not essential to salvation.
 - Some (esp. Lutherans) try to get around this by saying that God imparts saving faith to the infant so baptism can still save.
- ▶ By sprinkling or pouring instead of immersing, they also indicate Jesus did not mean what He said (the reason “BAPTIZED” above is in quotes)

But those who know and believe what the Bible teaches understand that . . .

a. Faith is a necessary prerequisite . . .

▶ for baptism

- **Ac 8:35-37** -- “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?’ 37 Then 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.'

- ▶ for salvation
 - Rom 10:9-10 -- "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
- b. Sprinkling is not baptism
 - ▶ The Greek word used in the Bible is "baptizo", and it means "to immerse"
 - This is why baptism is referred to in the Bible as a "burial" – Rom 6:3-4; Col 2:12.
 - ▶ Sprinkling began to be used as a substitute for immersion hundreds of years after the New Testament scriptures were completely revealed.
 - ▶ By going along with the "traditions of men" and sprinkling or pouring instead of truly baptizing, they fail to keep the "command of God" concerning baptism.
 - Cf. Jesus' condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees for replacing God's commands with the traditions of men -- Matt 15:3-9
- c. Baptizing infants is without scriptural precedent and without scriptural authority.
 - ▶ There is no command in the New Testament to baptize infants, and there are no examples in the New Testament of infants being baptized.
- d. Faith (Mk 16:16; Ac 8:37) and repentance (Ac 2:38; 17:30) are necessary prerequisites for baptism.
 - ▶ And since infants have no ability to believe and no need to repent, infants are not proper candidates for baptism.

4. HE WHO BELIEVES AND "IS NOT BAPTIZED" WILL BE SAVED.

This is the position that is taken by those who believe in salvation by faith only.

- a. They believe that one is saved the moment he believes, and they believe that the believer is saved before and without baptism.
- b. They believe that baptism has nothing whatever to do with being saved.
 - ▶ This is the position taken by most protestant denominations.
- c. Some people, and some churches, who want to give baptism some importance . . . but not the importance the Lord gives it . . . would prefer to say something like this: HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS SAVED SHOULD BE BAPTIZED.

But Jesus and His apostles clearly taught differently.

- a. Jesus and His apostles taught that faith "alone" cannot save.
 - ▶ Jesus.

- Matt 7:21 -- “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”
- Lk 6:46 -- “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?”
- ▶ His apostles.
 - Rom 6:17-18 -- “But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”
 - Heb 5:9 -- “though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,”
 - Jas 2:14, 17, 20, 24, 26 -- “What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? . . . 17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. . . . 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? . . . 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. . . . 26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”
 - 1Pet 1:22 -- “Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, . . .”
 - 1Jn 2:3-5 -- “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”

b. And Jesus and His apostles taught that baptism is essential to salvation.

- ▶ Jesus
 - Jn 3:5 -- “Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’”
 - Mk 16:16 -- “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”
 - Matt 28:18-20 -- “And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”
- ▶ His apostles
 - Ac 2:38 -- “Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
 - Ac 22:16 -- “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

- Gal 3:26-27 -- “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”
 - Col 2:11-13 -- “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, . . .”
 - 1 Pet 3:21 -- “There is also an antitype which now saves us – baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,”
- c. And Jesus and His apostles taught that salvation comes at the point of baptism, and NOT before.
- ▶ Ac 22:16 -- “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”
 - ▶ Rom 6:3-4 -- “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”
 - Rom 6:17-18 -- “But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”
 - ▶ Col 2:11-12 -- “In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

5. HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED

This view takes the words of Jesus at face value.

- a. No explanations are necessary.
- b. Jesus says what He means, and means what He says.

We have already seen previously that the bible teaches that . . .

- a. one must “believe” -- cf Ac 8:36-37
- b. one must be “baptized” in order to have the forgiveness of sins
 - ▶ Ac 2:38 -- “Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
 - ▶ Ac 22:16 -- “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

CONCLUSION

Which of the five views of **Mark 16:16** do you hold to?

He who believes and is baptized “will not” be saved?

- a. He who “does not believe” and “is not baptized” will be saved?
- b. He who “does not believe” and “is baptized” will be saved?
- c. He who believes and “is not baptized” will be saved?
- d. He who believes and is baptized will be saved?

It should be clear that there is only one view which is in harmony with Jesus’ words, as there is only one which does not involve “tampering” with the clear statement of Jesus!

But perhaps more importantly, with which of these views is your life consistent?

- a. One may hold intellectually to the FIFTH view . . .
 - ▶ But act as though they believed the SECOND view
 - ▶ How? By never confessing faith in Christ and being baptized!
- b. One may hold intellectually to the FIFTH view . . .
 - ▶ But act as though they believed the THIRD view
 - ▶ How? For though they may have been “baptized”, they are not living the life of faith required of one in Jesus!
- c. One may hold intellectually to the FIFTH view . . .
 - ▶ But act as though they believed the FOURTH view
 - ▶ How? For while believing in Jesus, they have never submitted to being baptized!

Only those who have come to Jesus in faith and ACTED in harmony with His teachings can have the assurance of salvation. The words of the Bible are clear. . .

- a. “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit’” -- Ac 2:38
- b. “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” -- Ac 22:16

Bill Walton
1629 Rock Bluff Road
Hixson, TN 37343
(423) 842-0460
bw1944@bellsouth.net