

"FIVE VIEWS OF MARK 16:16"

How Some People Just Will Not Accept The Obvious

INTRODUCTION

1. There is a statement of Jesus that is so plain, and yet so controversial...
 - 1.a. That you rarely hear it referred to by denominational preachers, whether it be in their churches or on TV or the radio
 - 1.b. That when they do, they feel it necessary to give an explanation that goes against the clear statement of Jesus
2. 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."

3. 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 should be considered.]

In essence, they would say...]

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

I.A. TWO SEPARATE GROUPS HOLD THIS VIEW...

- A.1. ATHEISTS - who do not believe in God, heaven or hell, or salvation of any kind
- A.2. JEWS, MUSLIMS, HINDUS, etc.
 - 2.a. Who believe in God (or gods)
 - 2.b. But who do not believe that salvation is to be found in Jesus
 - 2.c. And that to believe and/or be baptized is contrary to the will of God

I.B. BUT THOSE WHO ACCEPT JESUS AND THE AUTHORITY OF HIS APOSTLES REJECT SUCH A VIEW...

- B.1. There IS a God who offers salvation (contrary to the views of atheists) - **1Titus 2:3-4**
- B.2. Salvation DOES come only through Jesus (contrary to the Jews, Muslims, Hindus, etc.) - **1Timothy 2:5-6; Jn 14:6**

[Though I doubt any present actually hold to this view, there are some who do, and it only begins to illustrate how some are willing to deny the plain statement of Jesus.

Consider a second view...]

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

II.A. THIS VIEW IS HELD BY "UNIVERSALISTS"...

- A.1. Who believe that God will save everyone eventually
- A.2. To support their view, they will isolate some verses like **1 Timothy 2:6**

II.B. BUT THOSE WHO KNOW THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST AND PAUL LIKEWISE REJECT SUCH A VIEW...

- B.1. Jesus Himself told that there would be few who would be saved - **Matthew 7:13-14**
- B.2. Paul warned of those who would not be saved, but would face the wrath of God - **Ephesians 5:5-6**

[Most "Bible-believing, professing Christians" would never treat **Mark 16:16** the way the first two views do. But as we consider two more views, we may start hitting closer to "home".

But please understand...that we do so, desiring to "speak the truth in love"; and we pray that your love for the truth is such that you are willing to seriously consider what follows (cf. **Acts 17:11**).

The third "view" then...]

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

III.A. THIS VIEW IS HELD BY MOST WHO PRACTICE "INFANT BAPTISM"...

- A.1. By "**baptizing**" (actually sprinkling, not immersing) infants incapable of faith...
 - 1.a. They (esp. Catholics) indicate that faith is not essential to salvation
 - 1.b. Some (esp. Lutherans) try to get around this by saying that God imparts saving faith to the infant so baptism can still save

- A.2. By sprinkling or pouring instead of immersion, they also indicate Jesus did not mean what He said (the reason **"BAPTIZED"** above is in quotes)

III.B. **BUT SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE, WE MUST POINT OUT...**

- B.1. That faith is a necessary prerequisite...
 - 1.a. For baptism - **Acts 8:35-37**
 - 1.b. For salvation - **Romans 10:9-10**
- B.2. That sprinkling or pouring is NOT Bible baptism...
 - 2.a. The Greek word used in the Bible is **"baptizo"**, and it means "to immerse"
 - 2.b. This is why baptism is described in the Bible as a "burial" - cf. **Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12**
 - 2.c. Sprinkling or pouring was substituted in the place of baptism (immersion) hundreds of years after Christ and His apostles
 - 2.d. By keeping the "tradition of men" by sprinkling or pouring, we fail to keep the "command of God" concerning baptism - cf. Jesus' condemnation of displacing God's commands by traditions of men, **Matthew 15:3-9**
- B.3. That baptizing infants is without scriptural precedent
 - 3.a. There are no commands or examples of infant baptism
 - 3.b. Since the prerequisites of faith (**Mark 16:16; Acts 8:37**) and repentance (**Acts 2:38; 17:30**) are beyond the infant's capability, they are not suitable candidates for baptism

[I am confident that those who hold to the view of sprinkling infants are honest and sincere. But despite their honest sincerity, they are just as guilty of twisting the words of Jesus as are the atheists, unbelieving Jews (and Muslims, Hindus, etc.) and the universalists.

But there is another view sincerely held by many, and that is...]

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

IV.A. **THIS VIEW IS HELD BY THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN SALVATION BY FAITH "ONLY"...**

- A.1. That one is saved BEFORE baptism
- A.2. That baptism is not essential to salvation
 - This view is held for all practical purposes by most members of various denominations

IV.B. BUT JESUS AND HIS APOSTLES CLEARLY TAUGHT DIFFERENTLY...

- B.1. That faith "alone" cannot save
 - 1.a. As declared by Jesus - **Matthew 7:21; Lk 6:46**
 - 1.b. As taught by His apostles - **Romans 6:17-18; Hebrews 5:9; James 2:14,17,20,24,26; 1Peter 1:22; 1Jn 2:3-5**
- B.2. That baptism IS essential to salvation
 - 2.a. According to Jesus - **John 3:5; Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:18-20**
 - 2.b. According to His apostles - **Acts 2:38; 22:16; Galatians 3:26-27; Colossians 2:12-13; Titus 3:5; 1Pe 3:21**

[Again, I believe that those who hold this view (including personal relatives) are sincere, and are not knowingly twisting the words of Jesus. Yet, I cannot help but think of such people as Paul thought of his brethren in the flesh (**Romans 10:1-3**).

This leads us to the fifth and final view, one that I believe we are compelled to accept...]

V. HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED

V.A. THIS VIEW TAKES THE WORDS OF JESUS AT FACE VALUE...

- A.1. No explanations are necessary
- A.2. Jesus says what He means, and means what He says

V.B. WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN PREVIOUSLY THAT THE BIBLE TEACHES...

- B.1. That one must "believe" - **Acts 8:36-37**
- B.2. That one must be "baptized" to enjoy the forgiveness of sins - cf. **Acts 2:38; 22:16**

CONCLUSION

1. Which of the five views of **Mark 16:16** do you hold to?
 - 1.a. He who believes and is baptized "will not" be saved?
 - 1.b. He who "does not believe" and "is not baptized" will be saved?
 - 1.c. He who "does not believe" and "is baptized" will be saved?
 - 1.d. He who believes and "is not baptized" will be saved?
 - 1.e. He who believes and is baptized will be saved?

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

2. But perhaps more importantly, with which of these views is your life consistent?
 - 2.a. One may hold intellectually to the FIFTH view...
 - a.1. But act as though they believed the SECOND view
 - a.2. How? By never confessing faith in Christ and being baptized!
 - 2.b. One may hold intellectually to the FIFTH view...
 - b.1. But act as though they believed the THIRD view
 - b.2. How? For though they may have been "baptized", they are not living the life of faith required of one in Jesus!
 - 2.c. One may hold intellectually to the FIFTH view...
 - c.1. But act as though they believed the FOURTH view
 - c.2. 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...

"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.'"

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." - Acts 2:38; 22:16