

What Does Mark 16:16 Really Mean?

Mark 16:15-16

Introduction

- One of the simplest sentences in the New Testament is also one of the most controversial and misunderstood.
- Lesson: We want to look at 5 basic interpretations that have been made about this one basic statement.
 - One of those passages that people have felt compelled to explain... in a manner contrary to its evident meaning. "That's what it says, but..."
 - Many allow something else to influence their understanding.

I. View #1 → He who believes and is baptized will not be saved.

- Clearly not what the text says in any translation.
- This is the view that is held by...
 - Atheists
 - By a large segment of the population that would practice some kind of religion:
 - Orthodox Jews → Claim to believe in God of the Old Testament, but not in Jesus Christ.
 - Muslim Religion → ¼ of the world's population. Claim to believe in the God of the Bible. Deny that Jesus is the Son of God.
 - Buddhist, Hindu → those who believe in multiple gods; not the God of the Bible.
- Truth:
 - There is a God who has made provisions for our salvation. (Gen. 1:1; Ps. 14:1; I Tim. 2:3)
 - Jesus, the Son of God, is the only way to him. (Jn. 8:24; 14:6)
 - Salvation, by grace, is also conditional.
 - Obviously not what the text plainly teaches.

II. View #2 → He who does not believe and is not baptized will be saved.

- Universalism.
- Unitarian Universalist → If there is a God, he is too good and loving to send anyone to hell.
 - Liberal religion that embraces all beliefs and "paths".
 - In the end, it does not matter what you do, practice, and believe, etc. all will be saved.
 - Alleged proof texts: (I Tim. 2:6; Jn. 3:16)
 - Human reasoning: How can you believe in a God who would send anyone to hell?
- Truth: The Bible clearly teaches that most will be lost: Eph. 5:5-6; Rom. 11:22; Matt. 7:13-14
- Those who take this view from a practical standpoint.

III. View #3 → He who does not believe and is baptized shall be saved.

- Those who teach and practice "infant baptism"
 - Not really baptism. (Rom. 6:3-4; Col. 2:12; Acts 8)
 - Infant baptism 100's of years after Jesus spoke the words of Mk. 16:16.
- Errors of infant baptism:
 - An infant has no sins of which to repent. (Matt. 18:3)
 - Denies faith is always a pre-requisite to baptism. (Acts 8:37-38; Rom. 10:10; 10:17)

IV. View #4 → He who believes and is not baptized will be saved.

- Sadly and ironically this is probably the most common view of this verse.
- The belief of those who teach salvation by faith only.
 - Appeal to passages such as Rom. 3:28; 4:2-5; and try to explain Mk. 16:16, etc. contrary to its wording.

—It doesn't say and is not baptized. Why would Jesus have to say that? Would someone who did not believe be baptized? Someone who didn't believe would refuse.

•Truth: Many passages teach the necessity of obedience to be saved: (Matt. 7:21; Lk. 6:46; Rom. 6:16-17; Heb. 5:9; Js. 2:26)

V. View #5 → *He that believes and is baptized shall be saved...*

•It means just what it says.

•In the absence of baptism for the remission of sins, you are not saved.

—From your past sins.

—No hope of salvation in eternity.

—To be in a saved relationship with God you must come to Him as a penitent believer, willing to confess your faith in Jesus as His Son, and be baptized in water for the remission of your sins.