

## **5 Views of Baptism: What View Do You Hold?**

Jesus stated nearly 2000 years ago, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk. 16:16). To the simple, unbiased and unprejudiced mind, Jesus' statement is very clear and easy to understand. It is as easy to understand a doctor's statement, "He who eats his food and digests it will live; but he who does not eat will die." All of us would easily understand that unless we eat and digest, we will die! However, for those who have allied themselves with human creeds and have been depraved with worldly wisdom, Jesus' simple statement becomes confusing and contradicting. Although the Bible ALWAYS places water baptism (in Jesus' name) before salvation, men have sought ways to undermine His authority and confuse the simplicity of our Lord's teaching.

### **ATHEIST'S VIEW**

For example, the Atheist would say, "He who believes and is baptized will NOT be saved." He has rejected the existence of God and the authority of the Bible. Unbelievers believe there is no God, yet one would have to be "God" himself to prove such a position. For one to know that there is no God, he would have had to have been everywhere, seen everything at once and know all things! Yet Jesus had him in mind when he said, "...he who believes not shall be condemned," and again, "...he who does not believe is condemned already" (Jn. 3:18). Truly "the fool has said in his heart 'There is no God'" (Psa. 14:1).

### **UNIVERSALIST'S VIEW**

The Universalist approaches the scripture with the bias that God is a God of only love and therefore He can never condemn anyone. They say, "He who believes NOT and is NOT baptized shall be saved." While such a faith accepts the actuality of God, it rejects His word and leaves, nonetheless, a corrupt and misguided picture of Deity. Warning! "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" (Jn. 12:48).

### **CATHOLIC'S VIEW**

The Catholic comes along and teaches, "He who believes NOT and is baptized shall be saved." I say this as a former Catholic who was sprinkled as a baby. Catholics baptize babies because of the erroneous view of inherited sin (Ezek. 18:20); however, Bible baptism was NEVER administered to babies. Jesus taught that babies are safe (Lk. 18:15-17). Notwithstanding, subjects of Bible baptism must have first believed (see again Mark 16:16), yet faith comes by hearing the word of the Lord (Rom. 10:17). How can a baby believe when they cannot understand the word of the Lord? Can they also confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37)? False doctrine makes us believe unbelievable things!

### **PROTESTANT'S VIEW**

Then the Baptist comes and says, "He who believes and is NOT baptized shall be saved." Yet is this what Jesus said? Is it Deity's view? No amount of human manipulation will change the eternal truth of Mark 16:16. Beware all of these "NOTS" are formulated by men in the devil's "tale" to cheat your soul!

### **JESUS' VIEW**

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned" (Mk. 16:16).

*- by Steven J. Wallace*

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## ***"Just As I Am"***

The song Just As I Am is perhaps the most commonly used invitation song. The idea in the song is that we cannot make ourselves right with God on our own; apart from Jesus' blood we have no hope. That is precisely the New Testament picture (Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5; etc.).

I fear, however, that some folks have an erroneous idea about Jesus saving us "just as we are." They seem to think that He saves us without any change in our conduct. That is opposite to the New Testament picture.

Jesus' charge to the apostles was "that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations" (Lk. 24:47). Forgiveness is extended to those willing to abandon sinful conduct, not to those who insist on continuing in it.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians, "Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you..." (1 Cor. 6:9-10). He did not say such are some of you, but such were. They changed their conduct in connection with being washed, sanctified, and justified (v. 11).

"Just as I am," if referring to our own helplessness, is a comforting sentiment. But to suggest it means salvation without repentance is to hold out false hope.

- by Frank Himmel

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## **"So Great Salvation"**

*"How shall we escape, **if** we neglect so **great salvation**; which at the first began to be **spoken** by the Lord, and was **confirmed** unto us by them that heard him."* (Hebrews 2:3)

Christians should think long and meditate often about the wonderful salvation that God has made available to us through His Son. Look at this text, and realize that we are the recipients of a:

**"Great Salvation"**: It is great because our past sins have been forgiven; we enjoy a present relationship with God as our loving Father; and we have the hope of a beautiful future in eternity.

**"Spoken Salvation"**: Too many people in the religious world are trusting their subjective feelings concerning their eternal souls. They wouldn't do that if it involved their material possessions or their financial security, but they do it with their souls. It simply doesn't make sense. God doesn't ask us to trust our salvation to such uncertainty. Instead, he has given us His spoken word, whereby we can learn and understand the things essential to salvation (Rom. 1:16; 10:17; Eph. 3:3-5).

**"Confirmed Salvation"**: We can be sure that the salvation offered through Jesus Christ is legitimate. The message of salvation was confirmed by the men who knew Jesus, who saw Him, heard Him, worked with Him. They were eye-witnesses to His life, and their words and accounts assure us that these things are true. In fact, their willingness to die for His cause is one of the surest proofs of all. Furthermore, God also confirmed their testimony by way of the miracles they were empowered to do (see the next verse, Heb.2:4).

**"Conditional Salvation"**: A key word in this great text is the word **IF**. It clearly teaches that our salvation is conditional upon meeting the requirements set forth in God's word. God offers us this wonderful gift. We show our willingness to accept it by doing His will. Salvation is for *"all them that obey him"* (Heb. 5:8,9).

- by Greg Gwin