

Mark 16:16

By Ron Boatwright

Our Lord said in Mark 16:16, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." This is easy to understand. One needs help to misunderstand it. Jesus says that in order to be saved one must both believe and be baptized. Both belief and baptism must precede salvation if one wants to be saved. Neither belief nor baptism can come after salvation. It doesn't say he that believes is saved and can be baptized later. Nor does it say he that is baptized is saved and can believe later as is in the case of infant baptism. Both are contrary to what the Lord says one must do to be saved.

But there are those who want to justify themselves and ignore what Jesus said in the first part of the verse and only look at the latter part. They do this in an attempt to try to manufacture a loophole in what the Lord has said. In the later half of the verse Jesus says "but he who does not believe will be condemned." They say in the second part Jesus does not say people are condemned because they are not baptized, but only because they didn't believe. But why would anyone who does not believe want to be baptized? They wouldn't. It is impossible for any disbeliever to be scripturally baptized for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38) so they can be saved (Mark 16:16).

But a lack of faith is sufficient cause for one to be lost. One who does not believe is certainly not going to be baptized. One who does not believe could go through the motions and get dunked under the water, but he would not be scripturally baptized. He would only get wet. He would still have every sin he has ever committed and would still be lost. Since one who does not believe could not be scripturally baptized, it would have been useless for the Lord to have mentioned baptism in the latter half of the verse. A person who does not believe does not have to be told he will be condemned without baptism because he is already condemned because of a lack of faith. Many people will do anything to justify their disobedience; but they are doing this to their own eternal destruction. It will be a horrible and rude awakening when they find out on Judgment Day how wrong they are. It will be too late when they begin crying for just one drop of water to cool their tongue (Luke 16:24).

People are not willing to accept that Jesus says we must believe and be baptized to be saved. Even Satan knows one is saved at the point of baptism, and not before. The lie of Satan says baptism is not necessary for the

forgiveness of sins nor is it necessary to be saved. After the Lord has suffered and died for us, people are still rejecting what the Lord has commanded. Jesus could not make it any clearer what one has to do to be saved. In Mark 16:16 we only have two choices: either we obey and are saved; or we do not obey and be condemned.

When we refuse to believe and obey the first part of what Jesus says in Mark 16:16 then the second part of the verse applies to us, "he who does not believe will be condemned." A lack of belief is enough to condemn a person and damn his soul. A person who is not baptized in order to be saved does not believe the Lord who said, "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned". He will be condemned because of a lack of faith.

If we expect to be saved we must do what God says, in the way He says, and for the reason He says. If one's baptism is not for the remission of sins so he can be saved, then he still has all of his sins and is still lost. People may argue against the Lord's requirement of being baptized in order to be saved, but they will not be able to argue with the Lord when they stand before Him on the Day of Judgment. It will be too late then.