
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **5 Dangerous passages about baptism**

Several years ago my wife and I attended an end-of-the-season celebration for a friend's basketball season. Our friend was 11 years old at the time. As the celebration was progressing, a juggler came out performing amazing tricks. He rode around on a unicycle. He was a very entertaining and funny performer. He was also a preacher of sorts. He used the opportunity to preach to the audience assembled.

This performer preached about how Jesus came down from heaven to earth and died on the cross to pay for the sins of the whole world. After giving his speech, the preacher / performer asked everyone to bow their heads and he asked people in the audience to quote: *"accept Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior."* He led a short little prayer and in the prayer, if you were praying along with him, you were basically telling God you believed that Jesus was the Son of God; that you believed He died on the cross for you and that you wanted God to forgive you of your sins and save you. The preacher then made this announcement – quote: *"If you said this prayer in your heart and were sincere when saying it, then God just forgave you of your sins and you are now a saved Christian."*

What this preacher said is typical of most preachers on television, radio and in pulpits across America. But the question I ask is this: Where in the Bible did any apostle of Jesus Christ teach this? I ask you to consider 5 dangerous passages about baptism. I call them **"dangerous passages"** because they completely contradict the doctrine that all a person has to do to be saved from their sins is to believe in Jesus and say a little prayer in their heart.

Dangerous Passage #1

Mark 16:16

¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

According to this, believing is required, but belief alone is not enough to be saved. Nor is praying a prayer part of the formula. Baptism in water is the final step that saves the sinner by the blood of Christ.

Mk 16:16 comes after the thief on the cross by the way. No matter what that thief did or did not do, Mk 16:16 is for you and me today.

Dangerous Passage #2

Acts 2:38

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.

According to this, repentance is required. After one has repented, then baptism. This passage is dangerous because it explains the very purpose for baptism. Baptism is to be "*for the remission of sins.*" This means baptism is for the purpose of removing sins. If a person is saved by prayer, there are no sins to remove when baptism is performed. The apostles clearly did not teach salvation by prayer.

Acts 2:38 comes after the thief on the cross by the way.

Dangerous Passage #3

Acts 22:16

¹⁶ And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

According to this passage, baptism is the point in time when a sinner's sins are "washed away" by the blood of Christ. The washing away does not occur during a prayer. It occurs when one is baptize for the right reason.

By the way, this passage clearly shows that "*calling on the name of the Lord*" is done, not in prayer, but by baptism. (See Rom 10:13.)

Dangerous Passage #4

Galatians 3:26-27

²⁶ 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.

This passage is dangerous because it clearly shows that salvation by faith includes baptism in water. When one believes in Christ he must then be baptized. Only then is the person “in Christ” and saved.

Gal 3:26-27 agrees with Mk 16:16 and also comes after the thief on the cross.

Dangerous Passage #5

Matthew 28:19

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,

This passage is dangerous because it clearly shows that when one is baptized for the correct reason, that person is put into a unique relationship with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. One does not reach this relationship by prayer as suggested by the preacher on the unicycle.

Mt 28:19 also comes after the thief on the cross.

As I bring this short study to a close, I merely wish to emphasize that whether the thief on the cross was baptized or not is beside the point. One person was required to sell all that he had and give it all to the poor in order to be saved (Mt 19:21). Different people throughout Bible history had to do different things. But we should be asking: What does God require of people today? We have noticed 5 very important passages about baptism which demonstrate that today, God expects sinners to:

- Believe in Jesus as the Son of God.
- Repent of sins.
- Verbally confess Jesus as the Son of God.
- Be baptized by immersion in water for the remission of sins.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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