

Believe, Billy, and Baptism

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In a Friday, March 16th, 2018 (yes, ironically the date happens to be 3:16) news story written by Steve Jordahl (OneNewsNow.com), he reported a recent statement made by Pastor Michael Walrond, who has grown the “First Corinthian Baptist Church in Harlem from 350 members to over 10,000 in the last 14 years.” The article, entitled “‘Insanity’ to believe Jesus is the only way, says pastor” (See: <https://www.onenewsnow.com/church/2018/03/16/insanity-to-believe-jesus-is-the-only-way-says-pastor?>) chronicles Walrond’s comments, wherein he stated:

‘There was a time where you could see people in the pulpit say, “If you don’t believe in Jesus, you [are] going to hell.” That’s insanity in many ways because that is not what Jesus even believed.’ Pastor Walrond indicated he doesn’t want to exclude anyone: ‘The key is, do you believe in God? And whatever your path is to God, I celebrate that – personally. I celebrate that.’ [See video of [comments](#)]

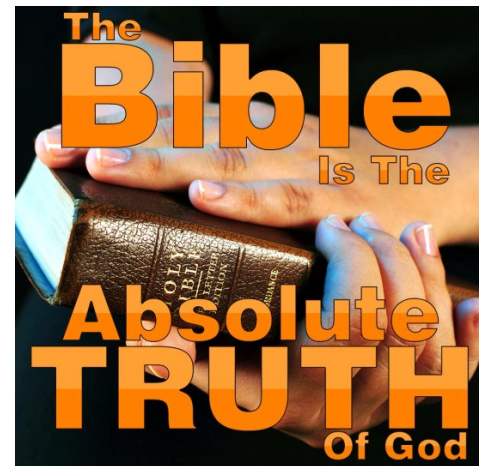
Now understandably, in light of passages such as John 8:24, 14:6, and many, many other biblical texts, Walrond’s comments have caused him – and very rightfully so I might add – to come under much and heavy fire from even his own man-made and never seen in Scripture denomination. Charges such as “misleading his congregation,” “[he] is a misleader,” “He’s a false teacher,” “He is a wolf in sheep’s clothing,” and others can be seen in the above cited article. The following, even more stern warning can also be seen contained therein:

Christian apologist Dr. Alex McFarland has a more personal warning for Walrond. “Before Pastor Walrond says that the gospel – quote – ‘is insanity,’ let me remind him of the words of the only man who ever walked on water and rose from the dead, Jesus Christ: Jesus said in John 8:24 – listen to this – If you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” Walrond’s comments, captured in a short video clip and [posted](#) on Facebook, were greeted with scattered applause in the congregation.

But besides the obvious, here’s the far, far more colossal and immensely larger problem, with his denomination’s supposed problem with him and his comments. We all know that we are to believe in and become one in Christ Jesus through the divinely-inspired truths His handpicked apostles and messengers gave us (John 16:12-15, 17:6-22; 2 Timothy 3:12-4:4; 2 Peter 1:16-2:3). Included within those eternally-

settled and forever firmly fixed in heaven truths (Psalm 119:89), is the fact that, according to God, there is only “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:5). In other words, the same that is true of Jesus – that is, that He is the one and only Lord and way to heaven – is also true of the one faith and one baptism as well. That is to say, that **according to God**, in the same way that Jesus Christ is the one and only Lord, Savior, and way to heaven, that there is also: only one faith – the one that was “once for all delivered to the saints” before the end of the first century (Jude 3) – and only one and only baptism – the one baptism which every lost sinner **MUST** undergo or else they cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (John 3:3-5); the one baptism which is specifically **FOR** the forgiveness of one’s sins and not something done after they have supposedly already been forgiven by some other man-made and never seen in Scripture means (Acts 2:38); the one baptism which the almighty God of heaven defines in His divinely-inspired word as the exact, precise, and specific point wherein a lost soul calls on the Name of the Lord and has their sins washed away (Acts 22:16); the one baptism which puts us “into Christ” (Romans 6:3-4) and makes us sons and daughters of God and members of His one, New Testament, pre-denominational church or body, through our faith in God and His power (Galatians 3:26-29; Colossians 2:8-13; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 1:22 + 23; Romans 16:16); and hence, the one baptism which God says **SAVES US** (1 Peter 3:21).

So, going back to Ephesians 4:5: Why is it that when one of their own claims that there is more than “one Lord” or way to God, that they get all upset and call Him a false teacher and etc., but when one of their own, in the very same and exact way, repeatedly rejects and denies the rest of that very same text and sentence, by claiming, proclaiming, writing, preaching and teaching for more than half a century that there is more than one, or a different faith than the one seen in the word of God; and that there is more than one, or a different baptism acceptable to God than the one for the aforementioned biblical reasons, that ***that*** false teacher is lauded and applauded with such inhuman accolades as being “the greatest preacher of the gospel since the apostles,” how he “walked with Moses, Abraham, and the Apostles,” and how he could now “give St. Peter a rest and hold open the gates of heaven... he was that revered,” as well as many other sickeningly similar sentiments (See: <https://www.onenewsnow.com/church/2018/02/21/power-in-humility-billy-grahams-legacy>)? A bit of history if I might...



Believe in Billy? Believe in Pastor? Or believe in the Bible?

June 1st, 2000, was the opening evening of the third and final Billy Graham Crusade in Nashville, Tennessee. That evening, preaching students from the ***Memphis School of Preaching***, as well as brother Garland Elkins who coordinated the effort, along with a few other folks, helped to distribute thousands of teaching brochures on the sidewalks leading to the stadium. The tract that they distributed that evening was one written by brothers Garland Elkins and James McGill, entitled, “***Baptism: The Bible and Billy Graham***.” The contents of that tract are reprinted with permission below:

As Billy Graham closes his sermons, he often tells his hearers that there are three things they must do:

(1) Repent

Graham then gives a good definition of repentance. This requirement is biblical. On the day the church began almost two thousand years ago, when the apostles preached the first gospel sermon, thousands in their hearing “*were pricked in their heart.*” They asked Peter and the other apostles what they should do.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38).

(2) Believe

Graham stresses that this faith means total trust in Jesus – not just a mere intellectual act of mental assent. Again, Billy Graham is Biblical in saying belief is necessary. Jesus said, in giving what is often called the Great Commission:

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...” (Mark 16:16)

(3) Live For Jesus

There are many New Testament Scriptures that command this. See, for example, Second Peter 1:5-11.

Billy Graham has consistently named these three things that every accountable person must do to be saved. He has preached this message to countless millions in crusades, over radio, on television, in newspaper articles, and in books, for more than half a century. Among his numerous best-selling books, Billy Graham wrote one entitled ***How To Be Born Again.***

Graham is exactly right in saying all three of the commands must be obeyed. **(1) Repent, (2) Believe, and (3) Live for Jesus.** (We may wonder why he places repentance before faith. In the recorded instances of conversion from the time the church began, in the New Testament Book of Acts, it was faith that came first and that motivated and led to the additional acts of obedience.)

But There Are More Than Just Three Steps In God’s Plan Of Salvation.

To **leave out even one step** changes the gospel. It changes the plan of salvation just as surely as *adding* an unauthorized act would change God’s plan. Compare Galatians 1:6-10.

Suppose we are giving someone directions to a certain destination. And suppose there are *four* turns he must make. We must tell him correctly about all four turns. If we neglect to mention any turn – just one turn – then that person would not get to his destination.

For half a century Billy Graham has consistently failed to include **baptism** when he tells those seeking salvation what they must do to be saved! Billy Graham has been reading from the Scriptures and using passages from the Bible in his preaching for more than fifty years. Now, the most puzzling question ever:

How Could Billy Graham Have Failed To See In The Bible The Command To Be Baptized For The Remission Of Sins?

Billy Graham readily sees the command to believe in Mark 16:16: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...”* He clearly sees the commandment to repent in Acts 2:38: *“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins...”*

Yet somehow, incredible as it seems, he has never seen Jesus’ command to be baptized to *“be saved”* (Mark 16:16) or the command to *“be baptized... for the remission of sins”* (Acts 2:38).

Seemingly, all through the years, Billy Graham has looked at these Bible verses as though they read... *“He that believeth — shall be saved”* (Mark 16:16) and *“Repent — every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins”* (Acts 2:38).

How could Billy Graham have failed to see Jesus’ words *“and is baptized”* in Mark 16:16? How could Billy Graham have overlooked Peter’s words *“and be baptized”* in Acts 2:38?

An Old Question

This is not a new question. About fifty years ago, during the Billy Graham month-long Crusade in Nashville at the Vanderbilt University football stadium, someone asked a member of the *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association* team this question directly:

“Why does Billy Graham not include the command to be baptized in his preaching?”

The short and very unsatisfactory answer was: ***“Because it is a controversial subject.”***

A **further insight** into this strange phenomenon came to light a few years later with the publication of Leslie L. Spear’s book *The True Religion and Religion of Others*. When that book was published, one chapter attracted immediate attention, and created intense interest: **Chapter 2** – an exchange of letters between the author and the *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in Minneapolis*.

The first letter, dated January 12, 1963, was written by Leslie L. Spear from Oak Ridge, Tennessee, in response to a Billy Graham *My Answer* column that had just appeared in the *Knoxville Journal*. An inquirer had asked Billy Graham: **“Please give me a simple answer to ‘What must I do to be saved?’”** Billy Graham completely failed to mention **baptism** in his reply!

In Leslie Spear’s letter to Billy Graham, he quoted the words of Jesus: *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...”* (Mark 16:16). Spear says that Graham might have included *that* Scripture as part of an appropriate answer to the question.

Spear then quotes the words of Paul the apostle in Galatians 3:27: *“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”* At this point in his letter, Leslie Spear puts his first direct question to Billy Graham:

“Mr. Graham, why didn’t you give Paul’s answer to the question? You could have told where it was found, so the person could have read it for himself.”

On April 17, 1963, Leslie Spear received a reply from the *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association*. It was signed by John D. Lundenburg, Spiritual Counselor. At last, there was to be an answer to this puzzling question! But the part of the answer that responds directly to the question is brief:

“Salvation is not dependent upon a person having been baptized...”

There it is! When people have been steeped in centuries of religious prejudice, they can somehow read right through all the Scriptures that teach clearly that obedience in baptism **is** necessary for salvation.

The doctrine that salvation can occur before and without baptism for the remission of sins has been preached millions of times since it first began to be taught in Europe five centuries ago.

That doctrine has been repeated so many times that even otherwise able men like Billy Graham have been saturated with it. **They** were taught the doctrine just as if it were true – even Biblical! Yet, to say that obedience in baptism is not necessary for salvation is just as false as it was when men like John Calvin invented and propagated the doctrine in the 1500’s.

The Result

Think of the multiplied millions who have heard and accepted Billy Graham’s teaching. Every one of these souls will one day stand before God in the Great Day of Judgment. They will not be able to account for why they were not baptized for the forgiveness of their sins – except to say, honestly, *“Billy Graham didn’t tell me I had to do that!”*

And Billy Graham will face God in judgment, too, as all people – great and small – must do. What will he answer if God asks, ***“Billy, why did you never tell all these millions that they must be baptized to be saved?”***

“...be baptized, and wash away thy sins...”

~Acts 22:16

“...baptism doth also now save us...”

~First Peter 3:21

As one final footnote to this false, fatal, and fallacious doctrine of salvation occurring before and without baptism, and the fact that it is still taught and defended by Graham’s followers and association, a post at www.billygraham.org seeking to address the question, “Is baptism essential for salvation?” is answered thus:

“To one who has received Christ, baptism is a necessary and meaningful experience... You may know that we urge immediate and extensive Bible study for each convert. As the Scripture is reviewed, the place of baptism will surely be discovered. If baptism were a requirement for salvation, we would certainly say that. But you couldn’t support that, knowing, for example, that the thief on the cross had no opportunity for baptism or church membership.”

And as we know, this response shows a total and undeniable lack of biblical knowledge, understanding, or acknowledgment of the fact, that of course the thief on the cross didn’t have to be baptized to be saved, ***because He lived and died under the Old Covenant!*** This Grahamatic answer utterly and completely fails to take into account and apply such vital passages as Galatians 4:1-7 and Hebrews 9:15-17 to the overall New Testament salvation ‘portrait’ that God ‘paints’ for us in the sacred text! So of course it’s going to be an erroneous answer; because those furnishing it fail to take into account ***all*** of the relevant verses on the subject, or their context and connection to said topic! They sincerely believe that they’re giving folks the full picture, but without their having put all the ‘pieces of the puzzle’ properly in place to begin with! Hence the ‘holes’ in their answer! Such ‘scripture-plucking’ failure to rightly divide the word of God always leads to such error, confusion, and eventually, if not corrected, spiritual death and destruction. Of course the thief on the cross did not need to be baptized in order to be saved, and had no opportunity for church membership – BECAUSE THE NEW COVENANT/TESTAMENT HADN’T COME INTO EFFECT YET, AND THE LORD’S ONE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH HADN’T BEEN ESTABLISHED YET! That crowning achievement of God’s plan (Ephesians 3:8-12) would come about and into existence some fifty days later, and only after the thief’s death – on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2:1-47 (which see).

The bottom line for our denominational friends and their leadership in relation to Ephesians 4:4-6 is simply this: Is there ***more than*** one Lord, and one faith, and one baptism acceptable to God? Or; is there only ONE Lord and way to heaven – the one and only Lord Jesus Christ which we read about in the New Testament; ONE faith and way to God – the one and only faith which we read about in the New Testament; ONE baptism which God honors as outlined in the aforementioned scriptures – the one and only baptism which we read about after the Lord’s church was established in Acts 2 of the New Testament; and of course, ONE church (or body – Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:3) that belongs to Jesus Christ – the one and only church which we see established and in existence as we read through the New Testament, congregations of which the apostles worked and worshipped in and as were called by His name and His alone (Romans 16:16; Acts 4:12)? Because whichever way it is, applies to each and every one of the seven terms contained in the text of Ephesians 4:4-6. So... which way is it?

For further explanation on audio see: <https://soundcloud.com/user-640047687/737-3-4-18-pm-strangers-aliens-forever-part-two>

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