

HOUSE to HOUSE
HEART to HEART

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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 7



5 VIEWS OF MARK 16:16

Allen Webster

Jesus pointed a nail-pierced hand at a world for which He had just died and commanded, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:15–16).

Those thirty words are among the most famous He ever spoke. The last eighteen may be the most controversial statement Jesus made. Among those claiming allegiance to Him, it likely has been discussed more than any other.

Let’s look at five views people take of Mark 16:16. Keep in mind that Jesus intended only one interpretation. God is not the author of confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). He wants all to speak the same thing (1 Corinthians 1:10). So, ponder carefully, search thoughtfully, and decide deliberately which view you believe (cf. Acts 17:11).

HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED WILL NOT BE SAVED.

Two groups hold this view:

- Atheists—who do not believe in a God to save you, sin to save you from,

heaven to save you to, or hell to save you from.

- Non-Christian religions—who believe in God (or gods) but do not believe that salvation is in Jesus.

Those who accept Jesus’ deity (John 3:16) and the Bible’s authority (Matthew 28:18; 2 Timothy 3:16) do not take this view.

There is a God who offers salvation: Jehovah “desires all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). One is without excuse for rejecting God, for He has given ample evidence of His existence and character (Romans 1:20; Psalm 14:1; 19:1–3; Hebrews 11:6). One day all will meet Him at the judgment, where every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess (Romans 14:11; Philippians 2:11).

Salvation comes only through Jesus: “There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5–6; cf. John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE AND IS NOT BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED.

Universalists believe God saves everyone. They reason that a loving God



would not send anyone to hell and that since Jesus paid the ransom for all, all will be saved. Jesus paid for all to be saved, yet Jesus Himself taught that only a few will accept His offer of salvation (Matthew 7:13–14; 11:28). God loves all and sent His Son to rescue all from hell, but He warns that those who do not obey the gospel

will be lost despite His love (Ephesians 5:5–6; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–9).

HE WHO DOES NOT BELIEVE AND IS BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED.

Those who “baptize” (usually sprinkle) unbelieving infants express this view. Ascribing to the doctrine of total hereditary depravity, they believe babies bear the sin of forefathers and thus need baptism. Consider:

Faith and repentance are required before baptism (Acts 2:38; 8:35–37; 17:30) and salvation (Romans 10:9–10). Since these are beyond infants’ capability, they are not candidates for baptism.

Baptism in the Bible is only by immersion. It is a burial (Romans 6:3–4; Colossians 2:12). Practically no language expert and Bible scholar of any religion disputes the meaning of *baptizo*. It means to submerge.

Baptizo was not originally a religious word. It was commonly used in the cloth trade for garments being dipped into a vat of dye. It was used in recipes where cucumbers were “baptized” overnight in a solution. Greek historian Polybius (c. 203–123 BC) applied it to a sinking ship (1.51.6), and others to describe people drowning.

Baptizing infants is without scriptural precedent. There is no command for infant baptism in the Bible. Not one of the 7,957 verses of the New Testament mentions it. As infants have no sins (Matthew 18:3; 19:14; cf. Ezekiel 18:20) and are incapable of gladly receiving the word (Acts 2:41; Deuteronomy 1:39; Joshua 24:15), they cannot be proper subjects for baptism.

By practicing men’s tradition of sprinkling, we fail to keep God’s command

of immersion (Matthew 15:3–9). It is sad to think of many who believe they were baptized but were not.

HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS NOT BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED.

This view is held by those who follow John Calvin’s theology of salvation by faith only. They hold that one is saved by faith without baptism. One can be baptized if he chooses or may even be required to be baptized to join a denomination, but immersion is said to be only an “outward sign of an inward grace.” Grace (salvation) was received earlier.

The Scriptures teach that faith saves but not faith alone. Salvation is given to those who believe in and obey the Father (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46). Faith and baptism go together. Apart from faith, baptism has no efficacy; apart from baptism, faith does not save (Hebrews 5:9; James 2:14–26). Both are essential (Matthew 28:18–20; Galatians 3:26–27).

The thief on the cross, someone might say, was saved without baptism (Luke 23:43). True, perhaps (he could have been baptized by John before his crime, John 3:23), but he died before Jesus ever said Mark 16:16. He lived under the Old Covenant, which differed from the gospel and was nailed to Jesus’ cross (Colossians 2:14). The church was not established during his lifetime.

If Jesus had said, “He who believes and is baptized shall receive a new iPad,” no one would think that only one condition was necessary to receive the gift.

Purpose of Baptism in the Scriptures

- Saves (Mark 16:16).
- Puts one into the kingdom (John 3:3–5).
- Grants remission of sins

(Acts 2:38). Anytime baptism and salvation are mentioned in the same verse, baptism is always listed before salvation.

- Brings gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
- Results in rejoicing (Acts 8:38–39; 16:33–34). In Acts, baptism was never delayed for a future baptism service.
- Fulfills a command (Acts 10:48).
- Washes away sins (Acts 22:16).
- Puts one into Christ's death, thus into contact with His blood (Romans 6:3–4; Revelation 1:5). If we could travel the 8,000 miles in distance and 2,000 years in time back to the cross, we still could not apply Jesus' blood to our sins. It is contacted only through baptism.
- Raises one with Christ into a new life (Colossians 2:12).
- Puts one into Christ/puts Christ on (Galatians 3:27).
- Saves. First Peter 3:21 states, "Baptism doth also now save us." Imagine a marker board with these two sentences:

Baptism doth also now save us.
Baptism doth also not save us.

If you were asked to erase the one that you do not believe, which would you erase? If you removed the first, then you have erased God's Word, and that action brings a curse (Revelation 22:18–19). Both cannot be true, so that leaves erasing statement 2.

HE WHO BELIEVES AND IS BAPTIZED WILL BE SAVED.

This view takes Jesus' words at face value.

Jesus said what He meant and meant what He said.

Which view will you take? More important, which will you practice? One may intellectually hold the fifth view but act as if he believes

- The second. How? By not confessing Christ and being baptized but thinking he will be saved anyway.
- The third. How? Though baptized, he is not living the life of faith Jesus requires (Titus 2:11–14).
- The fourth. How? While believing in Jesus and baptism, he has not been baptized but intends to "sometime."

Much is written and said on this subject, but only the Scriptures matter in the end (John 12:48). Reread these verses. If it helps, think of being isolated on an island with only a Bible, with no prior religious knowledge or interaction with religious teachers. Then "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12).

If you have never been baptized in compliance with Mark 16:16, ask yourself, "What hinders me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36). Do not let any circumstance, person, or emotion stand between you and pleasing God.

Finding salvation is life's most important quest (Matthew 13:44–46), so make sure to get this one right.

Adapted from
Copeland, Mark A. www.executableoutlines.com.
Jackson, Wayne www.christiancourier.com.
Winkler, Wendell. Unpublished sermon.



The New Teacher

A boy in Sunday school had been taught by the same teacher for a number of years. She had a way of telling stories and she always ended by saying, "and the moral of the story is . . ."

Eventually he moved up in Sunday school and had a new teacher.

After a few weeks, the minister asked the boy how he liked his new Sunday school teacher. He replied, "She is great; she does not have any morals."

—Author Unknown

"A merry heart does good"

PROVERBS 17:22

God's Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9

Holy Spirit's Word: Romans 1:16

Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16

Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37

Christian's Work: James 2:24

Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10

The Easy Part

A friend was in the hospital to give birth to her first baby. As the labor pains became more frequent and severe, she gasped to the nurse, "Is the hard part about over?" The nurse replied, "Honey, this is the easy part. The hard part will last for the next 18 years." —W. R. Sumrall

Wise Son

Father: "Son, when Lincoln was your age, he was earning his own living."

Son: "Yes, father, and when he was your age he was President of the United States." —Unknown

Get Noticed

The quickest way for a parent to get a child's attention is to sit down and look comfortable.

—Lane Olinghouse, *The Wall Street Journal*

Let Them Overhear

If you want children to improve, let them hear the nice things you say about them to others.

"Through wisdom a house is built"

PROVERBS 24:3



For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.



The Case of the *Missing Lap*

I watched as the young father cuddled and fed his new baby.

His older child was about two, not much more than a baby himself. He was trying to climb into his father's lap beside his newborn little brother—but there was no room.

The look on the older child's face was desperate—he had to get into Daddy's lap. Such anguish! Children are capable of so much suffering that adults brush aside, laugh at, or simply ignore.

I was sitting on an opposite couch, and I offered him the services of my lap. At first the suffering child would not hear of it—his father's lap was the only one he wanted. But finally, he must have thought, "Any port in a storm," for he came to me. I put my arms around him, and he smiled just slightly. I pulled him into my lap and held him there for a little while. He became very still and rested his head against my chest.

Finally peace and serenity settled over his features. He beamed a warm grateful smile my way that I will never forget. I don't think that little boy and I will ever forget each other.

All over the world there are missing laps. There just is not enough love to go around, especially for those who do not know God. A major work of the church is to show forth the love of God to a very deprived world.

My fellow Christians, it is up to you and me to pour the oil and wine of perception, understanding, and compassion on the wounds of the world. We cannot pass by on the other side and still make our claim to be the children of God.

—Bert Mercer

"When I was my father's son, tender and the only one in the sight of my mother"

PROVERBS 4:3

Helpful Hints for Parents

1. Make your home the brightest and most attractive place on earth.
2. Let your child invite friends to your home and table so that he/she had rather be there than any other place.
3. Make your child responsible for the performance of daily duties. Never do for your child what she/he is capable of doing.
4. Never punish your child in anger.
5. Talk about God and the Bible. Let the Lord be a natural part of who you are.
6. Do not criticize your child as a person, but rather encourage his/her abilities and help his/her weaknesses.
7. Live uprightly before your child at all times. Do not hesitate to confess weaknesses and ask forgiveness when you fail.
8. Let your child hear you say, "I love you." Say it to your spouse and to your child.
9. Impress on your child that making character is more important than making money.
10. Be much in prayer that the Lord will help you. A contrite and humble heart before God accomplishes much.



The Restoration of the New Testament Church

Church history is divided into four periods: 1) The Age of the New Testament Church, 2) The Age of Apostasy and Departure, 3) The Age of the Protestant Reformation, 4) The Age of Restoration. Let's look at this last period.

Restoration assumes apostasy, departure, and change from the original. The New Testament predicted that such would occur, and it did. In time, a plea began to be made to return to the original—to go back to the church as it is described in the New Testament.

Three things about restoration are worthy of note: 1) the restoration principle, 2) the restoration plea, and 3) the restoration movement. The restoration principle is easy to comprehend. It simply says that to whatever extent apostasy and corruption have occurred, restoration needs to take place. People frequently restore an old car, house, or piece of furniture. Religiously, the restoration principle refers

to the concept of restoring Christianity today as it was in the beginning.

The restoration plea articulates the restoration principle. Peter, in effect, made the restoration plea when he urged, "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11).

A restoration movement comes from making the restoration plea. As people realize wherein departures have occurred and are motivated to return to God's way, a movement back to Him takes place. People can see the logic of going back to the original order.

The Bible gives validity to such a movement. Long ago, God's Old Testament people had departed from Him. The call went forth: "Thus says the Lord: 'Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, "We will not walk in it"' (Jeremiah 6:16). That same reaction to-

ward original New Testament Christianity is often witnessed today.

To restore New Testament Christianity in its purity is what churches of Christ are about today. "The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). It will produce in the twenty-first century what it produced in the first century—people who are members of the original church. We are committed to speaking where the Bible speaks and remaining silent where it is silent, to calling Bible things by Bible names and doing Bible things the Bible way.

We have no hierarchy, no earthly headquarters, and no creed book or church manual written by men. Christ is our only creed and the Bible is our only guide. We invite all to come with us as we strive to go back to the Bible, back to the God of the Bible, back to the Christ of the Bible, and back to the church of the Bible. —Hugh Fulford (adapted)

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.



Bible Quiz

VOLUME 23:7

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Chapter to Chapter - Luke" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
Address: _____
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Answers to Last Issue

V. 23:5 *Who's Who in the Bible:* 1. Adam, Eve (Genesis 2:19; 3:20); 2. God/Moses (Exodus 14:21); 3. Cain (Genesis 4:8); 4. Esau (Genesis 25:34); 5. Jacob (Genesis 32:28); 6. Joseph (Genesis 39:1; 47:1); 7. Joshua (Deuteronomy 31:7; 34:9); 8. Samson (Judges 16:6–20); 9. Daniel (Daniel 6:23); 10. Esther (Esther 2:16); 11. David (1 Samuel 17); 12. Job (Job 1:22); 13. Mary (Matthew 1:18); 14. Lazarus (John 11:43–44); 15. John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13); 16. Herod (Matthew 2:16); 17. Joseph (Luke 1:27); 18. Peter (Matthew 26:75); 19. Judas (Luke 22:48); 20. Saul/Paul (Acts 9:15–18); 21. Thomas (John 20:28); 22. Jesus (Matthew 27–28); 23. Elizabeth (Luke 1:13).

V. 23:6 *Wisdom Speaks:* 1. Christ (1 Corinthians 1:24); 2. wisdom (1 Corinthians 2:1); 3. this world (1 Corinthians 1:20); 4. Greeks (1 Corinthians 1:22); 5. God (1 Corinthians 1:30); 6. pray (James 1:5); 7. this world (1 Corinthians 2:6); 8. thoughts, thoughts (Isaiah 55:9); 9. consent (Proverbs 1:10); 10. remove (Proverbs 5:8); 11. wise, father's (Proverbs 13:1); 12. mischief (Proverbs 10:23); 13. cheek (Matthew 5:39); 14. foolishness (Proverbs 12:23); 15. true; honest; just; pure; lovely; good report (virtue; praise) (Philippians 4:8).

Concerning New Testament Christianity

Directions: Find answers in Matthew 1:18; 2:11; 3:13–16; 16:18; 22:36–40; 24:5–12; Luke 2:16, 20; 22:19–20; John 14:13–15; 16:13; Acts 2:38; 4:12; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Colossians 1:18; 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:2; 1 Timothy 2:4; 4:1; Revelation 22:18–19.

1. How was Jesus conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary? _____
2. Did the shepherds and the wise men all show up the night Jesus was born? _____
3. Who baptized Christ? _____
4. According to Christ, what are the two greatest commandments? _____
5. Does love for Christ demand that we obey Him? _____
6. What did Christ promise to build? _____
7. Was there another way God could have saved man without Christ dying? _____
8. What did Christ promise the apostles to assure them that they would be able to carry out His mission? _____
9. When the church was established, what were inquiring sinners told to do in order to have the remission of sins? _____
10. Who is the true and only head of the church? _____
11. Does Christ want followers divided into different denominations? _____
12. Did Christ and the apostles issue warnings about people departing from the truth? _____
13. In whose name are Christians to pray? _____
14. Christians are to do all "in the name of _____," meaning by His authority.
15. What is the purpose of the Lord's supper? _____
16. What does the bread represent? _____
17. What does the juice represent? _____
18. Should Christians be governed solely by the teaching of the New Testament, or is it permissible to add to it? _____
19. Does God desire that all people be saved in heaven? _____
20. When Jesus returns it will be as a _____ in the night. —Hugh Fulford (adapted)

CHRISTIANITY

AS SEEN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Christianity as it came from the mind of God is clearly set forth in the New Testament.

The four gospel records—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—give us the account of the earthly life of Christ and His ministry, including His death for the sins of all mankind and His burial, resurrection, ascension, and promised second coming to receive all of His faithful followers.

The fifth book of the New Testament—Acts of the Apostles—tells of the coming of the Holy Spirit on the apostles

of Christ to guide them into all truth (in fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to them before He left earth—see John 14–16), the establishment of the church on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, and the expansion of the church, particularly through the labors of the apostle Paul.

The books of Romans through Jude set forth the basis of man’s justification from sin and give divine instructions to Christians as to how they are to live in the light of their redemption, how the church is to be organized, and how it is to function in worship and work. These

books also set forth many warnings about false teachers, false doctrines, and a general falling away from the simplicity of the original faith of the gospel.

The last book of the New Testament—Revelation—describes the opposition Christians faced in the early centuries of the church (and, in principle, the challenges they face in all ages) and the ultimate victory of the faithful people of God. —Hugh Fulford

“Follow me”

JOHN 1:43

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Recommended Resource



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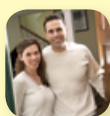
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- Some Things You Might Not Know about God
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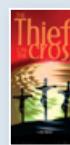
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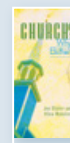
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UP WITH CHRIST

Christ Was Lifted Up (John 12:32–33). Jesus signified His death on the cross, saying that He would be “lifted up.” That Jesus could foretell the manner in which He would be killed by others proves His willingness to die (John 10:17–18).

Moses lifted up the bronze serpent in the wilderness so that the Israelites could look upon it to receive relief from their sin. Likewise, Christ has been lifted up that we might look upon Him to receive relief from our sins (John 3:14–16; Numbers 21:4–9; Hebrews 12:1–2).

Christ Was Raised Up (Acts 2:22–24). Jesus was raised up from death by God because death could not overpower Him (1 Corinthians 15:17). Without Christ having been raised up, our faith would be void. There would be no purpose to gospel preaching (1 Corinthians 15:14). The gospel that saves us

consists of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1–4).

Christ’s resurrection from the dead declares Him to be the powerful Son of God (Romans 1:1–4).

Because Christ claimed life again after His death, He has power over it and over all those held captive by it (Revelation 1:17–18; John 5:28–29).

It was God’s glory that raised Christ from the dead. To be saved, we must share in the likeness of His resurrection through baptism (Romans 6:4).

Christ Was Taken Up (Acts 1:9). After His resurrection, Jesus was “taken up” into heaven. By passing through the clouds, Jesus was enthroned to rule His kingdom (Daniel 7:13–14).

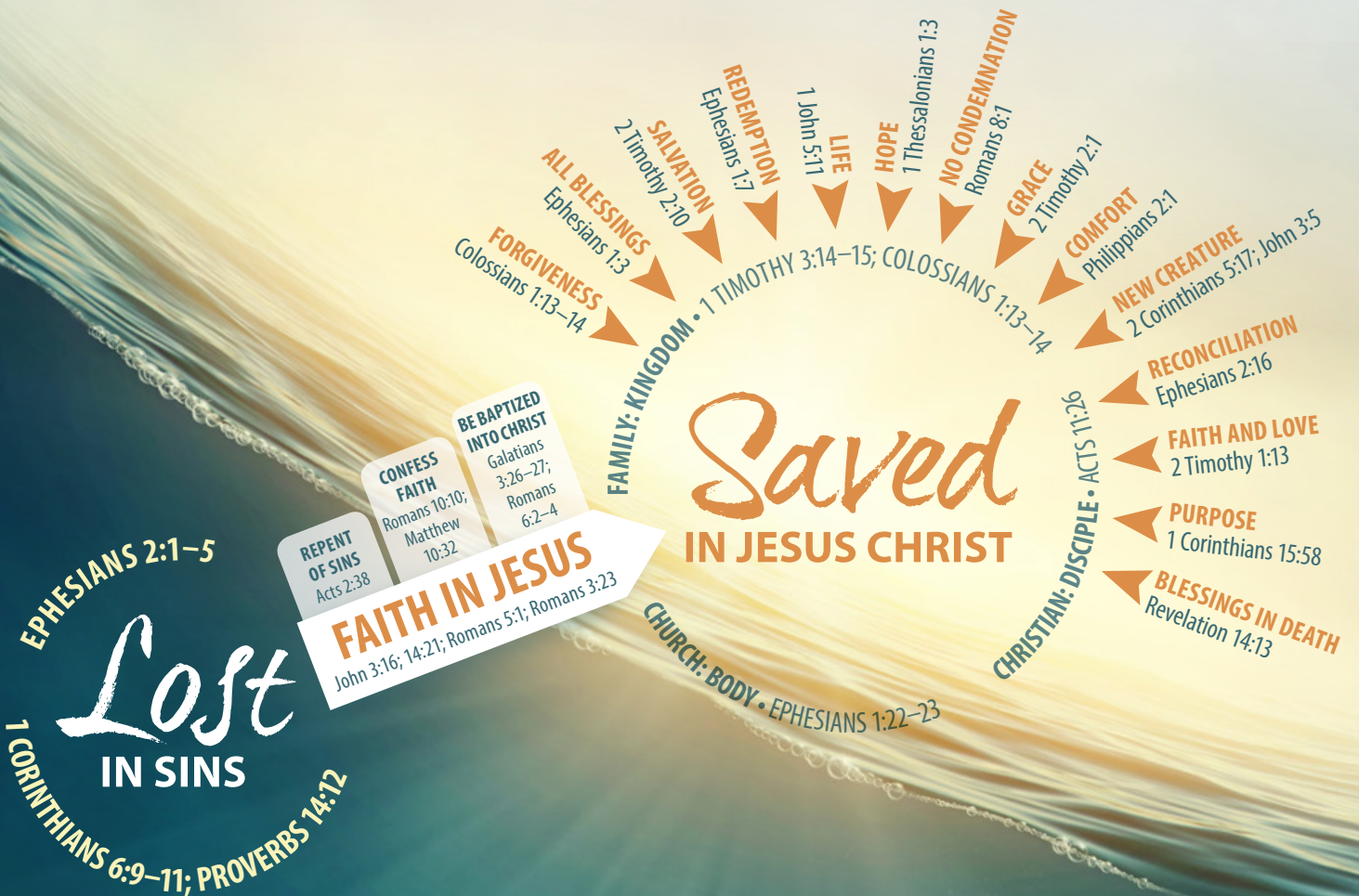
Only by departing earth was Jesus able to send the Holy Spirit to inspire His word (John 16:7, 13).

Because He went to heaven, Jesus now rules as head over the church, wherein we have our salvation (Ephesians 1:20–23).

—Author Unknown

“Above all”

EPHESIANS 1:21





Paul spoke of the width, length, depth, and height of God's love (Ephesians 3:18). Jesus spoke of the same dimensions, in the same order, in the most famous verse of the Bible: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

For God so loved the world
—Width of God's Love.

That He gave His only begotten Son
— Length of God's Love.

Whoever believes in Him should not perish
—Depth of God's Love.

But have everlasting life
—Height of God's Love.

God's love is comprehensive and overwhelming!
—Mark Posey, Decatur, Alabama



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