

***The Negative***

***Inference***

***Fallacy***

By Timothy Sparks

TimothySparks.com

# ***The Negative Inference Fallacy***

- Concerning Mk. 16:16 and Lk. 17:3
  - Should we assume/infer the opposite of what Jesus says, even if he does not explicitly say it?
  - 1 Pet. 4:11
- If a proposition is true, it does not necessarily follow that the opposite is also true
  - It may or may not be true, but if it is true, it is not necessarily so by inference from the original proposition

# ***The Negative Inference Fallacy***

- In conditional format, "If A, then B," does not imply the negation, "If not A, then not B"
  - For example, "If a man is a resident of Texas, then he is a resident of the United States," does not imply "If a man is not a resident of Texas, then he is not a resident of the United States"
- Some have accused advocates of the essentiality of immersion of the Negative Inference Fallacy concerning Mk. 16:16

# ***The Negative Inference Fallacy***

- We do well to speak as the very words of God: “He who believes and is immersed will be saved” (Mk. 16:16)
  - There is no need for us to state, “He who believes and is not immersed will not be saved”
  - Dr. Linda Johnson writes, “The passage states a fact that baptized believers will be saved. It says nothing, however, about believers who have not been baptized” (continued on next slide)

# ***The Negative Inference Fallacy***

“**Condition vs. Requirement** In looking for answers to whether baptism is required for salvation, we must be careful not to confuse a **condition** of salvation with a **requirement** for salvation. The Bible clearly teaches, and we can say with absolute assurance, that belief is both a condition **and** a requirement. However, we cannot say the same about the act of baptism.” (continued on next slide)

# ***The Negative Inference Fallacy***

“Nowhere in Scripture does it say if a person is not baptized, then s/he is not saved. While we can attach any number of conditions to the requirement of faith, the person is still saved whether they meet any one or more conditions that **relate** to salvation. As such, no one can state with absolute assurance and authority that baptism is necessary for salvation.”

(<http://www.aocibibletraininginstitute.org/salvation-baptism.html#negativeinference>)

# ***The Negative Inference Fallacy***

- Again, we do well to speak as the very words of God: “He who believes and is immersed will be saved” (Mk. 16:16)
  - There is no need for us to state, “He who believes and is not immersed will not be saved”
  - Dr. Linda Johnson explicitly states, “The passage states a fact that baptized believers will be saved. It says nothing, however, about believers who have not been baptized”

# ***The Negative Inference Fallacy***

- She actually commits the negative inference fallacy by assuming that he who believes and is not baptized will be saved!
- Questions to ask concerning Mk. 16:16
  - What does the text actually state (1 Pet. 4:11)?
  - Do you want to be saved?
  - What should you do?



# ***The Negative Inference Fallacy***

- Similarly, we do well to speak as the very words of God concerning Lk. 17:3-4
  - Jesus uses:
    - Imperatives: “(do) rebuke” and “(do) forgive” (v. 3)
    - Future indicative (statement of fact): “you will forgive him” (v. 4)
      - The negative inference fallacy would be to assume: “If he does not repent do not forgive him!”
  - What does the text actually state (1 Pet. 4:11)?

# ***The Negative Inference Fallacy***

- It does not appear that the apostles thought Jesus implied the opposite of what he actually said concerning forgiveness, as they then express their need for more faith!
  - They use an imperative: “Do add to us faith” (“Do increase our faith”) (Lk. 17:5)
  - Who would say none of us is lacking concerning Jesus' teaching on forgiveness?!
  - We will do well to remember Mt. 18:35