

Daily Bible Study

“The Last Twelve Verses of Mark” Part - 2

Mark 16:9-20

April 21– April 27, 2013

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY –Again this week, and for the final time in our study through the Gospel of Mark we take as our text, **Mark 16:9-20**. We saw last time that there is some difference of opinion as to who actually wrote *The Last Twelve Verses of Mark* and question as to whether they are Divinely inspired. We laid out some arguments for both sides of that debate and in the final analysis and regardless of that dilemma, we undertook the study of this text as we wrap up this wonderful account of our Lord’s life and ministry. In *Part – 1*, we saw a review of the appearances of the Risen Lord by Mary Magdalene, and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. We left off with Jesus appearing to His original eleven disciples (minus Thomas initially) gathered together where He will rebuke their unbelief and exhort them with rules for evangelism. This week will finish discussing this chapter and Lord willing be challenged, taught, and encouraged to obey The Lord Jesus and honor His commands. Read our text **Mark 16:9-20**: *“Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either. Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. And He said to them, “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. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.”*

Suggestion for Prayer: God, teach me this week from Sacred Scripture. Help me obey You and honor Your commands given to me as a follower of the risen, exalted, and reigning Lord Jesus.

TUESDAY – **Mark 16:14**: *“Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen*

Him after He had risen.” Immediately we jump back in and find that after appearing to the men on the road to Emmaus, Jesus appears back in Jerusalem to His original eleven disciples. We find the details of this appearance from **Luke 24** and **John 20**. There is also the record from the Apostle Paul of Jesus’ appearances to many believers after He had risen in **1 Corinthians 15:5-8**. Concerning Jesus’ first coming to the original disciples, there are actually two appearances separated by one full week and in them Jesus offers comfort and encouragement to His men but also as our text points out, rebukes *their unbelief and hardness of heart*. Luke tells us here Jesus ate before these men and verified His resurrection was real and that He was not merely a ghost. John captures the second visit of Jesus to these men where Thomas was shown by Christ the visible marks of His crucifixion which apparently Jesus continues to carry on His resurrected body. There are many things for us to see and learn from these appearances but Jesus sums up the main point best as recorded in **John 20**. He tells Thomas specifically, *“Do not be unbelieving, but believing”*. And furthermore, He says, *“Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”* We need to take this to heart Beloved and believe and also receive comfort and peace from this wonderful thought; we are blessed to believe in and on Jesus although we have only seen Him with the eyes of faith (**1 Peter 1:8**).

Suggestion for Prayer: God, help me to believe. Strengthen my faith. Help me in all circumstances of life to rest and trust in You and seek Your wisdom and Word for guidance.

WEDNESDAY – **Mark 16:15-16**: *“And He said to them, “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.”* Jesus now spells out what we could call, “The Commission of His Church.” We see the task placed before us is first one of preaching *the gospel to every creature*. We are to be the very personal heralds of Jesus. Where so many go wrong from this command is that they preach “a gospel” of their own making. We know from the Apostolic record of Sacred Scripture that the gospel we are to preach has been defined for us. It’s not about coming to Jesus “to find God’s wonderful plan for your life”. Neither is it about “your personal testimony”. It is about the definite announcement of the person and ministry of The Lord Jesus Christ and how we can receive by faith, the benefits of His life and death. This is the gospel (good news) message we are to preach (proclaim and herald) to every creature. We then see from our text that *He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned*. This is NOT saying a person who dies without water baptism will automatically go to hell unsaved. You will notice that baptism is left off the second portion of the verse. What is being said is what the Bible teaches; and that is, no one will be saved, no one will be forgiven of sin and prepared for heaven and eternity with Jesus who does not by faith believe the message concerning Jesus. Read **John 3:16** and **John 3:18** and you will see they make these points for us concerning the contrast between condemnation and salvation depending on belief or unbelief. That all being said, we do also understand from Sacred

Scripture that a genuine believer desires to walk in obedience to Jesus and does in fact do so in some measure, although imperfectly, and Jesus does in fact command men to be baptized in the name of The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. These truths of **Mark 16:15-16** are also addressed in what is known as The Great Commission of **Matthew 28:18-20**.

Suggestion for Prayer: Dear Lord, Help me obey this command of Yours to proclaim the good news of Your life and death for sinners to every creature. Save souls that hear this message.

THURSDAY – **Mark 16:17-18:** “*And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.*” Regardless of how we actually treat these words which can mislead many into areas of speculation and fruitless discussions, we need to understand a bigger picture issue; the church of Jesus Christ does indeed have the power available to carry out the mandate that was just given to us concerning proclaiming the good news. There are five signs here listed that would *follow those who believe*. We will go through them briefly. The ability to both *In My name ...cast out demons* and *lay hands on the sick, and they will recover* is indeed found in Scripture among the Apostles primarily (**Matthew 10:1; Mark 9:38, Luke 10:17, Acts 3:1-8, 5:16, 8:7, 9:32-34, 14:8-10, 16:18, 19:12.**) Also we find that ability to *speak with new tongues* was also prevalent in the Apostolic era especially (**Acts 2:4, 11, 10:46, 19:6, 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 30, and 1 Corinthians 14**). Now we address *they will take up serpents*. **Luke 10:19** mentions *trampling on serpents and scorpions* but doesn’t seem to imply deliberately handling them but rather that God’s protection being upon those carrying out His Word. We do have a specific case of the Apostle Paul being bitten by a venomous serpent and not being affected from **Acts 28:3-5** although we must note he did not deliberately pick it up. Nowhere in this text should the erroneous teachings of snake handling cults (who teach one’s faith is proved by being able to handle poisonous snakes) be given credibility as that is not what is being said in the text. Finally, we see the issue of *drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them*. There is no biblical record of anyone drinking anything poison and surviving. It should also be noted that taking this type of risk is exactly what by implication Jesus condemned both by example (**Matthew 4:7**) and direct teaching (**Matthew 10:23, 24:16–18**). I leave you with thoughts from men of God in church History concerning some of the things mentioned here. B. B. Warfield states, “These gifts were part of the credentials of the apostles as the authoritative agents of God in founding the Church.... They necessarily passed away with it.” That with the passing away of the apostolic age these gifts ceased is also the testimony of Chrysostom and Augustine. It was also the view of Jonathan Edwards: “These extra gifts were given in order to the founding and establishing of the church in the world. But since the canon of Scripture has been completed, and the church fully founded and established, these extraordinary gifts have ceased.” Among others who expressed similar views are Matthew Henry, George Whitefield, Charles H. Spurgeon, Robert L. Dabney, Abraham Kuyper, Sr., and W. G. T. Shedd.

Suggestion for Prayer: Lord, thanks for assuring me that You will be with me and in Your power and protection I will be able to carry out the mission You desire.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – **Mark 16:19-20:** “*So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.*” These two verses not only conclude our study but point us to two of the most important events in Jesus ministry; namely, His ascension and session. The doctrine of Christ’s ascension and particularly of his session at the Father’s right hand was cherished highly by the apostolic church, and occupied a prominent place in its thought and confession (**Acts 2:36, 7:55, 56, Romans 8:34, Ephesians 1:20–23, Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 1:3-4, 2:9, 8:1, 10:12, Revelation 3:21, 5:5–14**). We also notice that the Lordship of Jesus was prominent and ascribed to Jesus especially after his resurrection. Jesus was *received up into heaven*. Here it is said He was *received* rather than ascended although this, too, would have been entirely correct (**John 3:13, 6:62, 20:17, Acts 2:34, Ephesians 4:8- 9**). *He was received up into heaven*, (**Acts 1:2, 11, 22, 1 Timothy 3:16, Revelation 12:5**). The attention is here focused on the fact that it was the Father who drew His Son to Himself, being eager, as it were; to reward Him for his accomplished obedience and work. Another piece of Scripture which prophesied this ascension and coronation of Jesus is **Daniel 7:13-14**. Well as the text ends we see the men listened to Jesus and *they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen*. In obedience to Christ’s command the disciples “*preached everywhere*,” a statement which one would naturally associate with a period of church history lasting considerably longer than Pentecost and **Acts 2**. We also can be assured of these promises of Jesus presence and power in light of that. Their preaching would have been ineffective if not for power of the Lord, who was “*constantly working with them*” and “*confirming His word*”. Ours would and is also ineffective without the Divine aid. On these two beautiful verses we end this marvelous book. Looking and pointing to “*the Lord Jesus*” the One who, from His exalted position at the right hand of God, the Majesty on High, watches over, guides, energizes, and governs His church as they carry out His command in this world. Take comfort Beloved, The Church is never left alone to do its work. Jesus always works with us and in us and through us. The Lord of the Church is still in the Church and is still the Lord of power. So we finish this Gospel According To Mark with the message that the Christian life is lived in the presence and the power of Him who was crucified, rose again, and lives forevermore (**Revelation 1:18**).

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. I thank You Holy Trinity for such a wonderful study of Jesus life in The Gospel of Mark. Help me meditate on all the things you have taught me in this study of Mark. Help me rest and believe in Your promises and power, praying for You to act in a mighty way in my life as I obey Your commands Lord Jesus.”