

Sunday, September 9, 2012—Mark Dispensationally Considered—Mark 16:15-16: Is the Great Commission our Commission, Part 1

### Introduction

- As we begin looking at verses 15-18, it is important to keep in mind that these are some most controversial and fought over verses in the entire Bible. First, as we saw three weeks ago, virtually all Evangelical scholarship believes that these verses should not be in the Bible. Second, those who do maintain the passage cannot agree about what parts of the passage are for today.
- As we suggested two weeks ago the answer to the confusion is not found by casting these verses out of the Bible and pretending like they should not be there. The answer to the denominational difficulties in interpretation and application is found in rightly divide the word of truth.
- This morning, because there is so much to talk about in these verses, we will limit ourselves to just verses 15 and 16. Virtually all of professing Christendom believes that our commission or marching orders for today are found in these verses even though they don't even teach verse 16 correctly.

### Mark 16:15-16

- **15) And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.**  
**16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.**
- Before we begin looking at verse 15, it is important to understand to whom Christ is speaking. According to verse 14, Jesus appeared and spoke to “the eleven,” i.e., the 12 Apostles minus Judas. Therefore, in verse 15 when it says, “And he said unto them,” Jesus is directly addressing the same select group of people, the Apostles.
- It is important to realize/remember that Jesus had already called and commissioned these men before his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Please note the following aspects of their original commissioning in Matthew 10:1-10:
  - Every Apostle is a disciple but not every disciple in an Apostle. Jesus selected twelve Apostles but had many more disciples. (Matt. 10:1-4)
  - Under this commission the 12 Apostles sent forth and **explicitly commanded not** to go to the gentiles. (Matt. 10:5)
  - Under this commission the 12 **sent to Israel only**. (Matt. 10:6, Matt. 15:24, Rom. 15:8)
  - Under this commission the 12 are **sent to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom**, i.e., “repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matt. 10:7, Mark 1:14-15)
  - Under this commission the 12 are given power to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out devils. (Matt. 10:8)

- Mark 16:15—after his resurrection as he “sat at meat” with them in verse 14, Jesus tells them in verse 15, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Virtually all of professing Christendom views this statement as our commission for today. If the word of God is not rightly divided it is easy to see why the church today would find its commission in verses 15 and following. It sounds good. It sounds like what we should be doing, preaching the gospel in all the world to every creature. But not so fast, we need to compare Scripture with Scripture to see if these instructions are as straight forward as people want to make them.
- Luke 24:33-46—is the same context as Mark 16. Jesus appears to “the eleven” as they sat at meat. As we saw last week in verses 44-46 Jesus opens their understanding by teaching them from the law, prophets, and psalms concerning himself and causes them to understand the scriptures that he (Jesus) needed to suffer and rise from the dead the third day. Remember that until this time they did not understand these things.
- Luke 24:47—once again in the same context as Mark 16, Jesus tells them in verse 47, “that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.” Does that sound very similar to Mark 16:15, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature?” Notice carefully what further instruction is given in Luke 24:47 that is not found in Mark 16:15. They were to begin this process of worldwide evangelism at Jerusalem. Who is still first in the plan and program of God? Israel.
  - Acts 1:8—lays out the progression Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, uttermost part of the earth.
  - Acts 5:29-31—according to the preaching of Peter and the other apostles why had God the father raised up Jesus? To give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.
  - Ephesians 2:11-12—Israel is still first in the plan and program of God. No dispensational change has occurred yet as of Mark 16.
- Mark 16:15—what exactly is the gospel that should be being preached in all the world to every creature? The majority of professing Christendom which believes that there is only one gospel in the Bible would no doubt answer the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. We need to let verse 16 answer this question for us.
- Mark 16:16—whatever gospel they are to be preaching includes belief and water baptism as a requirement for salvation. Folks this verse is not teaching baptism as an outward sign of an inward commitment. This verse is teaching water baptism as vital to ones salvation in order to avoid damnation.
  - Mark 1:4—John’s water baptism in the wilderness is called “the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” If you just read the verse does it sound like baptism was optional or recommend for those listening to John preach?

- Luke 3:3—“the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”
- Luke 7:29-31— these verse are not teaching baptism as an outward sign of an inward commitment rather they are clearly teaching baptism with water as a requirement for salvation. Notice in verse 31 that Jesus tells his hearers that they are living within a generation in Israel that has a major problem.
- Matthew 3:1-7—what was John preaching? Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. What is the title of this message according to Mark 1:14-15? The gospel of the kingdom. What message were the 12 originally commissioned to preach to the lost sheep of the house of Israel? The gospel of the kingdom. Imbedded within the gospel of the kingdom was the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. John’s Baptism was drawing a line in the sand within Israel in order to separate the believers from the untoward generation or apostle nation that was living in rebellion against God.
- Matthew 3:7-11— notice that John calls these men a generation of vipers who were trusting in the fact that they were the physical descendents of Abraham for their salvation.
- Acts 2:40—Peter is doing the same thing that John the Baptist was, i.e., calling the individual within Israel to save themselves from the untoward generation. How could they do this? Acts 2:38 “Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins.”
- Matthew 3:13-17—in order to help us understand why water baptism was essential for the remission of sins in Israel’s program we need to consider some things about the baptism of Christ. According to Matthew 3:15, Jesus Christ is baptized so that he can fulfill all righteousness. After Jesus Christ is washed with water the Spirit of God descends upon him.
- Exodus 29:1-4—in order to function in the office of a priest the law required that the priest be washed with water and anointed with oil. Oil is a type of the Holy Spirit. We know from the book of Hebrews that Jesus Christ is a high priest. Jesus Christ was baptized with water to fulfill the righteous requirements of the law for those who would function in the office of a priest. All of this helps to explain why water baptism is required in the preaching of John the Baptist and the 12 Apostles.
  - Exodus 19:6—the entire nation of Israel was to be a kingdom of priest and holy nation.
  - Isaiah 61:5-6
  - I Peter 2:9—Peter and the 12 are commissioned to preach a gospel that included water baptism because they were involved in separating the chosen generation, i.e., true believing Israel from apostate Israel.

- Luke 12:32—this believing remnant that was to function as the priest of the Lord is called the Little Flock.
- Matthew 28:19—the 12 are sent forth to teach and baptize all nations.
  - I Corinthians 1:15-17—if Paul was not sent to baptize but to preach the gospel is there any way he could have been functioning under the same commission as Peter? Paul was functioning under a different commission that did not include water baptism. Paul's commission and message do include a baptism; however, it has nothing to do with water.
  - I Corinthians 12:12-13—our baptism today is spiritual baptism into the Church the Body of Christ.
  - Colossians 2:11-12—our baptism today is not made with hands rather it is spiritual process performed by God the Holy Sprit the moment we trust Christ and believe the gospel we are identified with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.
  - Ephesians 4:4-6—how many baptisms do you have?
- Matthew 28:20—most people totally overlook the fact that law keeping is also a requirement of the so-called great commission. What is that the gentile nations are supposed to be taught? All things that Christ commanded the Apostles.
  - Matthew 23:1-3—Christ taught his followers to keep the law. There is no indication in Matthew 28 that Jesus told the Apostles that his death and resurrection freed them from observance of the Mosaic Law.
  - Acts 3:1—they took part in the temple worship and where careful not to start a new sect separate from Judaism. Law keeping was part of this commission.
  - Romans 6:14—Paul teaches that we are not under the law but under grace.