

Sunday, September 30, 2012—Mark Dispensationally Considered—Mark 16:17-18: These Signs Shall Follow Them That Believe

Introduction/Review

- Last week we continued studying the commission that the Lord gave the Apostle after his resurrection by beginning to look at Mark 16:17-18. The following general points were observed.
 - “And”—verses 17 and 18 continue and expound upon that thought stated in verses 15 and 16. Therefore they are part of the commission.
 - “These signs shall follow them that believe”—the use of the word “shall” in the third person it implies a promise, command or determination. It carries the force of a *promise* in the person speaking; it expresses determination in the speaker, and implies an authority to enforce the act. Those who believe and our baptized in verse 16 will have the signs follow in verses 17 and 18.
 - “Sign”—the Jews required a sign (Luke 8:1, John 4:48, Acts 2:22, I Cor. 1:22, Ex. 4:1-9). From the very beginning of God’s dealings with Israel he used signs to authenticate his man/message. The very fact the Jesus is guarantying that “these signs shall follow them that believe” is further proof of the Jewish nature and character of this commission. If they were begin their testimony in Jerusalem it must be accompanied by signs and wonders since the Jews require a sign.
 - All five of these signs go together and cannot be separated from each other. One cannot arbitrarily claim verses 15 and 16 as applying to today and at the same time reject verses 17 and 18 and remain consistent. Likewise, one cannot pick and chose which of the five signs they like or don’t like and remain consistent. Consequently, one must either accept or reject the entire passage as being applicable to today.
- Regarding the signs themselves, since all five of the signs mentioned in verse 17 and 18 stand or fall together are going to spend the bulk of our time talking about the sign of tongues and use what we learn about that issue to address the other four signs. Last week we learned the following about tongues.
 - Acts 2:4-13—in the Bible tongues were real discernible languages not an indiscernible private prayer language as the modern Pentecostal/Charismatic movement has tried to claim. In the Bible to speak with a new tongues means to speak in a language that one has not studied. The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and along with its accompanying signs (tongues) was the fulfillment of a prophecy made to the nation of Israel in Joel 2:28-32 (Acts 2:15-21).
 - I Corinthians 14:22—tongues were for a sign for unbelievers not a private pray language for believers. Who requires a sign? “The Jews require a sign.” (I Cor. 1:22)

The Cessation of Tongues During the Dispensation of Grace

- Galatians 3:27-28—today in the body of Christ, there is no longer a difference between Jews and Gentiles, as a result Israel’s sign program is no longer functioning.
- Here is where the Pentecostals will stand up and point out that even Paul spoke in tongues as said the following.
 - I Corinthians 14:18
 - I Corinthians 14:39—why don’t you followers of Paul listen to Paul and forbid not to speak in tongues?
- It is clear that during the early stages of the dispensation of Grace that the gift of tongues was still being given and functioning.
 - Acts 9:15—the Apostle Paul would naturally need to speak in tongues as he preached to the Jews that required a sign.
 - I Corinthians 12:4-11—notice that the Spirit divided the gifts severally to every man as “he will.”
 - I Corinthians 12:29-30—it is also equally clear that even during this time when the gift of tongues was functioning not everyone was given the gift of tongues. This runs contrary to the modern Pentecostal teaching that every believer must experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues. Some will even question the salvation of one who has never spoken in tongues.
- I Corinthians 13:8-13—tongues, prophecy, and knowledge would cease, fail, and pass away when that which is perfect is come. Paul makes it clear that for the body of Christ tongues was only a temporary situation.
 - “That which is perfect” is not the Kingdom, Jesus Christ, or when all the saints believe the same thing. Rather it refers to the completion of that which is only in part, namely knowledge , i.e., the word of God.
 - Use illustration of Cliff Huxtable on the Cosby Show
- All three of these gifts (tongues, prophecy, and knowledge) are revelatory gifts that were part of the mouth piece of God. They were the vehicle through which God imparted his word to the saints until the written word was complete.
 - Acts 26:16—Paul was going to be a witness of what he had seen and things that Christ would reveal unto him.
 - II Corinthians 12:7—Paul received his thorn in the flesh because of the revelation He was continually receiving.

- Colossians 1:25—it is Paul's writings that completed the word of God. When the revelation of the mystery had been fully made known and Paul put down his pen the Scripture says that the word of God was complete. At which time the gift of tongues, along with all the gifts for that matter were longer needed.

Dispensational Differences and Problems

- Tongues functioned differently in the life of the early church than they did during Israel's program. We need to rightly divide the word of truth on this issue.
 - Acts 2:4-6—no interpreter was necessary
 - I Corinthians 12:10, 14:27-28—Paul instructs the Corinthians that if no interpreter is present they should refrain from speaking in tongues. How many times do you see this happen in a Pentecostal meeting?
- Modern Pentecostals do not even follow the Biblical rules for speaking in tongues established in the Scriptures.
 - I Corinthians 12:29-30—why are they trying to make everyone speak in tongues when Paul clearly teaches that not everyone has that gift and therefore is not going to speak in tongues.
 - I Corinthians 14:27-28—when was the last time these instructions were followed in a Pentecostal meeting?
- Anyone who believes that the gift of tongues is still functioning today must also believe that the word of God is not complete. If tongues are still being given then someone needs to be writing down all of these special revelations and new words from God. If tongues are still being given then God's word is not complete and cannot be trusted.
- All of this ends up becoming a fair show in the flesh by which people attempt to demonstrate what God is doing for them. Those who don't succumb to peer pressure are routinely told that the reason they cannot speak in tongues is because they either 1) don't have enough faith or, 2) have unconfessed sin in their life.
- If God the Holy Spirit is not functioning in this way today then what is going on?
 - Galatians 6:12—emotionalism. People are placing more faith in their experiences than in God's written word. Learned patterns of speech.
 - II Thessalonians 2:9—lying wonders of the enemy. Satan is only able to copy and counterfeit what God has already done.

Conclusion

- Acts 2:22—Israel the sign people of God did not acknowledge or appreciate the one to whom the signs pointed. They rejected Jesus Christ, had him crucified by the Romans, and rejected the renewed opportunity to repent offered by the Apostles during the early Acts period. Now today during the dispensation of Grace, Satan has the body of Christ running like fools after Israel's signs.
- Numbers 14:1-9, 40-45
- Mark 16:17-18—if you have enough faith to move Jesus Christ the eternal son of God and second member of the Godhead into your inner man the very moment you believe that he died for your sins and rose again you have enough faith to operate these verses if that is what God is doing today. Instead of getting mad at God for not doing something for you that you feel he should be wouldn't it be better to just rightly divide the word of truth and understand that Mark 16:15-18 is not your commission.
- Next week we will comment on the remaining 4 signs and conclude our studies in the book of Mark.