

How is the evidence of God's presence and power displayed over demons, snakes, poison, illness?

Many of these signs of the Kingdom are seen throughout scripture. Jesus cast out demons and so did His disciples, Paul was bitten by a deadly snake in Malta and survived, Jesus healed many and so did His disciples. What we can conclude from this is that God's sovereignty trumps the plans of the enemy. It is not inviting us to "test God" by deliberately putting ourselves in harm's way.

19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. 20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. - Mark 16:19-20 NIV

The conclusion of this chapter tells us Jesus is now in Heaven seated at the right hand of God, a place of power. But on earth, His disciples spread the good news. But ultimately it was the Lord working with them that ushers in His Kingdom.

WRAP-UP

This passage invites us to respond to the message of Mark's ending by focusing on how it shapes our lives, rather than getting stuck in debates about the text itself. Like the disciples, we may struggle with doubt, fear, or discouragement even when we know the truth about Jesus, so we are called to choose faith and trust in God's goodness, especially in difficult moments. We are reminded that our purpose is to share the good news with others, relying on the Holy Spirit to guide and empower us in both our words and actions. As we live this out, we can look for evidence of God's power at work—bringing healing, freedom, and hope—while trusting that Jesus reigns and continues His mission through us each day.

MEMORY VERSE

15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. - Mark 16:15 NIV

Challenge –

Continue to pray for those in your life who aren't believers. As God for an opportunity to share the hope of Jesus with them this Easter season.

The End of Mark's Gospel Gospel of Mark Ch. 16 - Week 1

INTRODUCTION

We have journeyed through the Gospel of Mark since November 2024, and we are nearing its conclusion. But where exactly it concludes is not entirely clear. If we pause briefly to consider the way our Protestant English Bible came into being, we recognize that not everyone agrees on everything, especially in Mark. Our Bible is a collection of written manuscripts that include the material that made up the Jewish Bible (TaNaK) that we call the Old Testament, as well as documents developed by early church leaders which we call the New Testament. The Gospel of Mark is in the New Testament, all of which was written after Jesus was born. Mark wrote his gospel around 60 – 70 AD. The earliest copies we have of Mark's Gospel were made 300 to 400 years later. And so, we find there is a gap in time between when Mark wrote his account and the oldest copies we have to reference. The two earliest copies of Mark's Gospel we possess conclude with verse 8 of chapter 16. But starting about 500 AD most copies of the Gospel of Mark include verses 9- 20 of chapter 16. Some Bible scholars believe these verses were written by another author and added later, and other scholars believe it is a part of Mark's original text. So, what do we do with this controversy? We will consider what these verses contain, weigh them against the rest of scripture and pray for God to give us discernment in how we should apply them in our lives.

Key Passages

9 When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. 10 She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. 11 When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it. 12 Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. 13 These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either. 14 Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. 15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." 19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. 20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it. - Mark 16:9-20 NIV

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Jesus' disciples had trouble believing Him

9 When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. 10 She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. 11 When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it. 12 Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. 13 These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either. 14 Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen. Mark 16:9-14 (NIV)

31 because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." - Mark 9:31 NIV

In verses 9 – 14 we read that Jesus rose and appeared to Mary Magdalene who shared the news with the disciples mourning Jesus' death. Then the men who met Jesus on the Emmaus Road also told the disciples Jesus was alive, and they still didn't believe.

Verse 14 says Jesus later appeared to the disciples Himself. What did Jesus rebuke them for? What had Jesus said in Mark 9:31 (Mark 8:31, and Mark 10:34) that should have prepared them and strengthened their faith? Why do you think they found it so difficult to accept what Jesus had plainly told them and was confirmed by eye-witness accounts?

The disciples had listened, followed and confessed but couldn't overcome the pain of His death. Sometimes we must choose faith over whatever opposes it (e.g. fear, sorrow, self-reliance, doubt). At those times when find ourselves doubting and discouraged we need to hold fast to what we know to be true of God- He is good, He is kind and He is loving. We can trust Jesus even when all seems lost. Yes, Jesus died on the cross... but in God, there is always hope!

2. Our Calling

15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. Mark 16:15-16 (NIV)

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, " 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.." - Matthew 28:19-20 NIV

Mark 16:15 states our calling to share the good news of Jesus with everyone. It is the same calling found in Matthew's gospel which we refer to as the Great Commission. The reason we share the good news is given in verse 16- salvation comes through faith in Jesus.

Mark 16:16 ends by saying whoever doesn't believe is condemned. Is there someone you care about that doesn't yet believe? How do you feel knowing that they are condemned by their unbelief? Have you had conversations about Jesus with that person? Pause to pray for those God has put in your life who you can share the good news with, through words, prayers and actions.

49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." - Luke 24:49 NIV

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." - Acts 1:8 NIV

19 by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. - Romans 15:19 NIV

Making disciples is our life's purpose, but we are not doing it alone. We are so-laborers with God in His mission to restore humanity to a relationship with Him.

When Jesus instructed the disciples to wait in Jerusalem (Luke 24:49), how did He describe what would happen? What would follow after the disciples received the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8)? To what did Paul attribute his ability to proclaim the gospel of Christ (Rom 15:19)?

One thing we can do to be effective witnesses is to listen closely to the Holy Spirit and make ourselves available to be used when God opens a door for us to make Jesus known.

3. Signs of The Kingdom

17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well." - Mark 16:17-18 NIV

God's Kingdom is invading our world because Jesus conquered Satan when He conquered sin and death. The Kingdom of God is anywhere He rules and reigns. But until Jesus returns, we still see the struggle between God and the enemy forces. Verses 17 and 18 list some of the signs that God's power is evident and holds authority over the attacks of the enemy.