

MSB 210

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis Q, Sellers, Founder - David R Hetteema, Director

SELF EVIDENT TRUTH

By David R. Hetteema

There may come a time in the life of an individual believer, when becoming more familiar with God's Word, he or she comes face to face with what can be a very perplexing spiritual problem. There is a 3-verse portion of scripture that for hundreds of years has been misunderstood, misinterpreted, even explained away. The result of this confusion is that there exist today various religious groups and even denominations founded upon the misunderstanding and erroneous interpretation of the words of Christ Jesus found in the last chapter of Mark's gospel.

Mark 16:15-18 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

On every side we see these who attempt to make this passage their commission and those who proclaim that this is the constitution of the Christian church. The so-called Divine Healers, the charismatics who claim they have the gift of speaking in tongues, and even those who handle serpents as a demonstration of their faith. The promised results are not there; no hospitals have been emptied by the healers, the cemeteries continue to grow. What these zealous but self-deceived workers produce today is a contradiction to what our Lord promised in the closing verse of Mark's

gospel. ***And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following (Mark 16:20).***

The believing individuals who carefully read these verses may question their own faith when they come to the words, ***these signs shall follow them that believe.*** "If I am a believer, should these signs be following me?" "Are these gifts part of the Christian's life today?" "Am I all that God wants me to be?"

These questions are very clearly answered in the Word of God. God through His Spirit inspiring men to write saw fit to include certain events and words that reveal what the present day believer should know concerning the gifts of the Spirit. When the obvious facts of scripture are recognized it can be said "these are self evident truths."

When this commission was given by our Lord, it was at the close of His earthly ministry. He had victoriously passed through the crucifixion, was resurrected the third day, and now had spent forty days with His disciples; ***To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion (sufferings) by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:3).***

His last words to them were concerning the power they would receive, enabling them to carry out the commission He had given them. This gift was given to the 120 assembled at the feast of Pentecost, just ten days after His ascension. He had said; ***Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8).***

The entire record of the 33 year period of the book of Acts is filled with the signs and miracles of those commissioned; ***and they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the words with signs following.***

Following along with the events taking place in the book of Acts, we find the record of the Apostle Paul. This "chosen vessel" as the Lord referred to him was to suffer many things as he proclaimed the Kingdom of God before Kings, the nations, and the children of Israel. His late entry upon the scene did not lessen the power and effectiveness of his gifts of the Spirit. Paul was a God commissioned Apostle and as such was fully equipped by the Holy

Spirit to do the work, as he relates in **2 Corinthians 11: 5; *For I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.***

Paul's ability to speak in tongues was extensive, "*a linguist extraordinary*" and here we would borrow from Otis Q. Sellers' Seed & Bread number **SB006 , Biblical Gift of Tongues.** "*we know for sure that he spoke Hebrew (Acts 22:2) and Greek (21:37). Having lived long in Palestine the Aramaic would have been familiar to him, also the Romanic language which we call Latin. Beside these he had knowledge of many God-given languages to meet the needs of his far flung ministry. "*

From this we can understand what Paul was referring to when he said ***I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all (1 Cor. 14:18).***

The testimony of scripture concerning the God given abilities of the Apostle Paul is capped by the statement made in the book of Acts, ***and God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them (Acts 19:11-12).***

It is interesting to note that even in the closing chapters of the book the record is one of God faithfully working with His Apostle. Witness in these two final chapters the mighty miracles performed by Paul, a clear indication that the power of God and the charge of this commission were still in effect.

In chapter 27 of the book of Acts we read the fascinating story of the apostle Paul, a prisoner under Roman guard being transported to Rome to stand before the judgment seat of Caesar, a journey by sea of at least several months under the best of conditions. On the last leg of the journey their ship is caught in a violent storm (Acts 27: 14-44) and for two weeks the sailors struggle to keep the ship afloat, but the storm continues without letup until, finally despairing for their lives, they now fear all on board will die. But God sends his angel to Paul with a message; that because of Paul there would be no loss of life among the 276 persons on board the ship, but they would be shipwrecked and cast ashore on a certain island. Amazingly it happened just that way.

In chapter 28 after everyone from the ship had safely made their way to shore the natives of the island kindled a fire to warm the chilled and wet survivors. It is at this point that an incident occurs that demonstrates that the Lord's words were still true. ***And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and***

fastened on his hand And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god (Acts 28:3-6).

The demonstration of God's power did not end there. As the narrative continues, so does the miraculous. Paul healed the father of Publius and all those in the island with diseases who came to him. *And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed (Acts 28:8-9).*

Several months later after finally arriving in Rome, Paul calls the chief Jews of the city together. He expounds to them the God-given message that they were to hear, concerning the Kingdom of God and Jesus Christ.

Paul is then led by God to make a declaration that will bring great changes in many things, especially now that God's Salvation bringing message is made available to the people of all nations, with the promise that it will get through to them. *Let it then be known unto you, that the salvation-bringing message of God has been authorized to the nations and they will hear it (Acts 28:28).* (Otis Q. Sellers' Resultant Version).

While Paul's activities were centered in Rome for at least the next two years, they did not end there. He traveled again, and later in the closing words of a letter to Timothy he makes what seems at first like a very strange thing for a powerful healer to say: *"Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick" (2 Tim 4: 20)*. Why couldn't Paul heal his friend? Again in (Philippians 2: 25-27) Paul tells of Epaphroditus, *"sick nigh unto death,"* and he could not heal his fellow worker. It becomes obvious that something had changed.

What had changed was God's method of dealing, marked by the declaration of Acts 28:28. This new administration brought a halt to all the manifest gifts. The Acts period enjoyed many mediators such as Paul, through whom the gifts of the Spirit were dispensed, but now one great fact stands out;

there is only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5). Timothy, a young believer whom Paul spoke of as "his son." became ill and when Paul knew about it (1 Tim 5:23), he replies. But Paul did not send a handkerchief or an apron. He suggested that Timothy "*not drink the water, but use a little wine for his stomach's sake and his oft infirmities.*" Paul was now in the same position that the present day believer finds himself.

In another epistle written shortly after the declaration at Acts 28:28 Paul by inspiration explains what has occurred. Philippians 1:6 tells the wondering believer just where we stand today in relation to the gifts of the Spirit. They have been totally discontinued until the Kingdom of God, the Day of Christ, is manifest in the earth.

The following is Otis Q. Sellers' Resultant Version of Philippians 1:6: *Having come to this settled and firm persuasion concerning this very thing, namely that the One having begun a good work in you will be suspending it until the day of Christ Jesus (Phil. 1:6).*

The present day believer is *sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest (down payment) of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory (Eh.1: 13-14).*

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*For more information on this subject see Otis O. Sellers' Seed & Bread
Number SB006, BIBLICAL GIFT OF TONGUES and
Number SB007, THE ACTS DISPENSATION.*

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