

LIVE with Greg Locke: Why Do So Many Ignore This Key Part of the Great Commission?

We all need to understand that the Bible is still just as practical and prophetic today as it was when the ink of inspiration flowed out in Revelation 22. We also must realize that we have no say in which parts of the Bible to obey. We either believe the Bible or we don't, and the only parts of the Bible we truly believe are the parts we truly behave.

I'm going to explain what has become one of the most controversial passages in the Bible, Mark 16:15-18, where Jesus delivers the Great Commission as recorded by Mark. This passage has often divided the church, and much of it has egregiously ignored by many denominations. It won't take long for me to explain why this has happened, and all I'll need are the words of Jesus to do so. The Bible will always explain itself.

"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," (Mark 16:15-18).

Here in our key passage of this study, Jesus is at the end of His ministry preparing to ascend to the right hand of the Father. No one has a problem with how it starts, but there are certain commands that follow this instruction that most Christians have been ignoring for a very long time because we

were told to look past them. Much of this ignorance is rooted in the cessationist theology.



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It is a tragedy that many large denominations continue teaching that the gifts Jesus addresses in this passage no longer apply to us today, so I want to give it a solid study right before moving on. For some of you, it may be your first unadulterated look. In these last of the last days, it's time to take off the denominational lens and learn to read the Bible exactly as it was written.

At the top of our key passage in verse 15, we see that it starts our pretty easy to understand. It's the Great Commission crystalized in black and white. Simply put, we are to herald the truth of the gospel. Romans 1:16 says, "I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." And 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 tells us what the gospel is: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There's no social gospel, there's no medical gospel, and there's no civic gospel. There's only a saving gospel.

While every denomination loves verse 15, many take a quantum leap over the rest of this passage, as if it isn't even there. Why? Because the message makes folks uncomfortable.

The controversy starts with the front half of verse 16, which says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved". Some people have problems with this for fear that it teaches baptismal regeneration, but it absolutely does not. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that washes away our sin, but baptism is

an important public declaration nonetheless.

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In Mark 1:15 Jesus said, "Repent and believe the gospel" with no mention of baptism. But if you are truly saved by the grace of God, you will have no problem submitting yourself in obedience to water baptism. Your salvation is freely given to you by Jesus, and you will want to freely testify to that fact as Jesus instructs. So, baptism is a proof of your salvation, not a cause of your salvation. He clarifies that in the next phrase (v. 16) with "but he that believeth not shall be damned." He doesn't say, "He that believeth not or is not baptized." The damnation comes if you don't believe, and baptism comes because you do believe.

When we get to verse 17 of our key passage, we are still in the introduction of what Jesus wanted the disciples to do, as He said on the front end, "These signs shall follow them that believe..." Who are these people that believe? The same folks referenced in the previous verse, the ones who believe and get baptized because of their belief and are thereby willing to preach the gospel. He basically said to them, "Look, these things are going to happen to all who believe and it's not going to stop."

As we continue in verse 17, we see that the first of the signs that will follow all believers is, "In my name shall they cast out devils." Jesus said that the very first of multiple signs that will follow believers is that they shall cast out demons in His name. Jesus Himself did exactly that more than any other miraculous act during His ministry.

It empowers me to know there's still power in the name of Jesus, and there's still power in the authority of the local church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim.

3:15). The church is still God's organization, God's institution and God's organism. It's the only entity that is infused by the power of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). If hell does not prevail, then all this nonsense in our culture will not prevail against the church of Jesus Christ, so be encouraged. {eoa}



To read more from Greg Locke's newest book, Cast It Out, visit

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