

Scripture Notes on Ascension Sunday Year B Mk 16:15-20

Mk 16:15-20 “Jesus said to his disciples: “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. **These signs will accompany those** who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents with their hands, and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

Universal Call to Baptism and Life in Christ

Mark 16:15 “Go into the **whole** world, proclaim gospel to **every** creature.....”

Matthew 28:19 “Go, therefore, and make disciples of **all nations**,”

Luke 24:46-48 “Jesus said to them, “Thus it is written that the Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day and that repentance, for the forgiveness of sins, would be preached in his name **to all the nations**, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

Acts 1:8 “you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and **to the ends of the earth**.”

John 20:29,31 “Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed.... these signs are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.”

John 21:15 “Feed my sheep”, v 16 “Tend my sheep”, v.17 “Feed my sheep” & v 19 “Follow Me”

Signs? What kind of signs?

John 1:50-51 “Jesus answered and said to Nathaniel, “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will **see greater things than this**.” And he said to him, “Amen, amen, I say to you, you will see the sky opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.” (Gen 28:12 Jacob’s ladder dream angels up & down)

John 5:20 “For the Father loves his Son and shows him everything that he himself does, and he will **show him greater works than these**, so that you may be amazed.”

John 14:12 “Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and **will do greater ones than these**, because I am going to the Father.”

How about these signs?

FIRST, Mark 16:17 “These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages.”

New Languages

Acts 2:4-6 “And they were all filled with the holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language.”

Drive Out Demons

Acts 8:6-7 “the crowds paid attention to what was said by Philip when they heard it and saw the signs he was doing. For unclean spirits, crying out in a loud voice, came out of many possessed people, and many paralyzed and crippled people were cured.”

Acts 16:18 “Paul became annoyed, turned, and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her (slave girl).” Then it came out at that moment.”

SECONDLY, Mark 16:18 “They will pick up serpents [with their hands], and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, & they will recover.”

Pick up Serpents/drink deadly things

Mark 16:18 “They will pick up serpents [with their hands], and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Moses picks up serpent

Exodus 4:3-4 “God said: Throw it on the ground. So he threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and Moses backed away from it. Then the LORD said to Moses: Now stretch out your hand and take hold of its tail. So he stretched out his hand and took hold of it, and it became a staff in his hand.”

Exodus 7:10-12 “Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and did just as the LORD had commanded. Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it turned into a serpent. Pharaoh, in turn, summoned the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same thing by their magic arts. Each one threw down his staff, and they turned into serpents. But Aaron’s staff swallowed their staffs.”

Paul Shipwrecked at Malta-Snakebite!

Acts 28:3-6 “Paul had gathered a bundle of brushwood and was putting it on the fire when a *viper*, escaping from the heat, fastened on his hand. When the natives saw the *snake* hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “This man must certainly be a murderer; though he escaped the sea, Justice has not let him remain alive.” But he shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no harm. They were expecting him to swell up or suddenly to fall down dead but, after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.”

Virgin Mary’s foot on serpent head in Catholic Statuary/Imagery

Genesis 3:15 “I will put enmity between you (snake) and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; They will strike at your head, you at their heel....”

Revelation 12:14-16 “But the woman was given the two wings of the great eagle, so that she could fly to her place in the desert, where, *far from the serpent*, she was taken care of for a year, two years, and a half-year. *The serpent*, however, spewed a torrent of water out of his mouth after the woman to sweep her away with the current. But the earth helped the woman and opened its mouth and swallowed the flood that the dragon spewed out of its mouth.”

Drink Deadly Things?

Ordeal of Bitter Water Drink Poison & Be Spared

1. Prepare Poison-Numbers 5: 17 "In an earthen vessel he shall take holy water, as well as some dust from the floor of the tabernacle and put it in the water."
2. Set out Rules of Game-Numbers 5:19 "and you have not gone astray by defiling yourself while under the authority of your husband, then be immune to this water of bitterness that brings a curse."
3. Make Accusation & Try Case-Numbers 5:23-24 "The priest shall put these curses in writing and shall then wash them off into the water of bitterness, and he will have the woman drink the water of bitterness that brings a curse, so that the water that brings a curse may enter into her to her bitter hurt."
4. Verdict Declared- Numbers 5:28 "if she be innocent, she will not be hurt." (*Joseph and Mary are said to have gone through this ordeal in Protoevangelium of James*)

There are no New Testament Signs/Miracles recorded of Apostles Drinking Deadly Things (TYG)

Not the first time something that was prophesied doesn't later get recorded in Bible.

- For example, Luke 4:18 "He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives" Ask yourself, 'How many times did Jesus miraculously set slaves free?' (Maybe Barabbas Matt 27:21- 'The governor said to them in reply, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" They answered, "Barabbas!"

Possible Solutions

What if 'deadly' is only seemingly 'deadly'?

Luke 22:42 "(Jesus) saying, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done."

Mark 10:38-39 "Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" They said to him, "We can." Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink, you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized;"

OR,

What if idolatry was accepted & cup offered to idols became confused with 'drink deadly thing'?

1 Corinthians 10:14 "Therefore, my beloved, avoid idolatry."

1 Corinthians 10:20 -21 "No, I mean that what they sacrifice, [they sacrifice] to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to become participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and also **the cup of demons**. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and of the **table of demons**."

So, we are better off just leaving that sign alone!

Lay hands on the sick, and they will recover

Acts 9:17-18 "So Ananias went and entered the house; **laying his hands on him**, he said, "Saul, my brother, the Lord has sent me, Jesus who appeared to you on the way by which you came, that you may regain **your sight and be filled with the holy Spirit.**" **Immediately things like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight.**"

Acts 28:8 "It so happened that the father of Publius was sick with a fever and dysentery. Paul visited him and, after praying, **laid his hands on him and healed him.**"

Signs & Wonders have a place in Acts..... (see also 2Cor 12:12 & Heb 2:4)

Acts 2:22 "hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with **mighty works and wonders and signs** that God did through him in your midst..."

Acts 2:43 "And awe came upon every soul, and **many wonders and signs** were being done through the apostles."

Acts 5:12 "'Now **many signs and wonders** were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles."

Acts 14:3 "'So they remained for a long time, speaking boldly for the Lord, who bore witness to the word of his grace, **granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.**"

But, beware of pride and putting faith only in signs, and tempting God

Miracles can mislead, and be too fixated (attached) on the physical (earthly) level

John 6:26 "Jesus answered them and said, "Amen, amen, I say to you, you are looking for me not because you saw signs but because you ate the loaves and were filled."

John 6:30 "So they said to him, "What sign can you do, that we may see and believe in you? What can you do?"

Luke 23:8 "Herod was very glad to see Jesus; he had been wanting to see him for a long time, for he had heard about him and had been hoping to see him perform some sign."

Matthew 12:38-39 "Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." He said to them in reply, "An evil and unfaithful generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet."

Matthew 16:4 "An evil and unfaithful generation seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah."

Also, Jesus' temptations in the desert are lessons in not demanding signs as a prideful show

- 1) Matthew 4:3 Satisfy yourself. Make bread & eat up!
- 2) Matthew 4:6 Throw yourself down, make drama, God will save you on evening news!
- 3) Matthew 4:9 Worship me, I can give you any/everything

Yet, Jesus tells the Devil, "Jesus answered him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not put the Lord, your God, to the test.'" (quotes Deuteronomy 6:16)

1 Corinthians 10:9 "Let us not test Christ as some of them did, and suffered death by serpents." (refers to story of Numbers 21:5-9 of serpents biting Israelites-after complaints to God)

Persevere with or without signs of satisfaction or wonders

2 Timothy 1: 12 "On this account I am suffering these things; but I am not ashamed, for I know him in whom I have believed and am confident that he is able to guard what has been entrusted to me until that day."

Romans 5:3-4 "Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope....."

James 1:2-3 "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you encounter various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."