

Do Signs and Miracles Exist Today?

Some religious groups teach that God promised the miraculous signs listed in Mark 16:17-18 to all believers in the Christian age.

A close look at the passages in Mark 16 shows that the plural pronouns *them* and *they* of verses 17 and 18 have as their antecedents the plural pronouns *they* and *them* of verses 14 and 15. The reference is to the eleven apostles and not to the singular *he* of verse 16. If this is not true, then why is the number of the pronoun different in verse 16. The entire conversation of the passage concerns the apostles and their unique mission for the Lord:

The *them* of verse 17 are the apostles to whom Christ appeared in verse 14 and upbraided for the lack of their faith. The expression *them that believe* continues to remind them their faith needs to grow.

The *them* of verse 17 is the *them* of verse 19 in whose sight the Lord Jesus was received up into heaven.

The *them* of verse 17 are the *they* who went forth in verse 20 "and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word by the signs that followed." Heb 2:2-4 teaches that the signs that accompanied the apostles confirmed the word.

The *them* of verse 17 are the *them* to whom the baptism of the Holy Spirit was promised in Mt. 3:11 and Acts 1:2-5. The *them* of verse 17 are the ones to whom the Lord promised the Comforter to guide them into all truth (John 14:25-26; 16:13).

The *them* of verse 17 are the ones who were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:26; 2:1-4).

The Lord's promise was that the signs of Mk 16:17 would follow the apostles, and the purpose of the signs was to confirm the word which they preached and wrote (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4). Only the apostles and the ones upon whom they laid their hands could perform these signs (Acts 8:18). Where the apostles did not go, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were not imparted (Acts 8:18; Rom. 1:11; 2 Cor. 12:12). After the death of the apostles and those upon whom they had laid their hands, miraculous gifts stopped.

Paul lists the miraculous gifts in 1 Cor 12:7-10. In 1 Cor. 13:8-13, he says these would cease with the coming of "that which is perfect (1 Cor. 13:10)." "That which is perfect" refers to the completed will of Christ, the New Testament scriptures. Miraculous gifts had served their purpose and vanished from the earth.