

Understanding "The Great Commission": Mark 16:14-20

Something to think about before we begin:

In this study, we are examining the "Great Commission" according to the order in which the gospels appear in our New Testament. However, if we were to follow their chronological order [John 16:7-11 (and John 20:21-22); Mark 16:14-20; Matthew 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-48], we would find that Jesus spoke of this part of His plan on at least four different occasions near the end of His time with the apostles. Why might He have placed such a heavy emphasis on this?

Mark 16:14-16 (see also John 20:19-23, 26-29)

As Jesus met in private with "the eleven themselves", what was the reason He rebuked them? [cp Mark 16:1-13; see also Mark 8:31-33; 9:9-10, 30-32; 10:32-34; 14:27-28; etc]

- Why might Jesus be moved to rebuke them so strongly, especially in this particular context?

Analyze Jesus' words to the apostles *in the light of Personal Evangelism* done by all disciples: "Go into all the world..." [Mark 16:15; cp Matthew 28:19]

- Where did Jesus intend for His apostles to do the work He was giving them? In practical terms, where is the "field" into which Jesus has sent workers for the harvest? [cp Luke 10:12; etc]

- Though this is not the **primary** purpose of Jesus' use of the word "go", do you believe He intended for His disciples to "stay" in one place and hope people would come to them in order to hear the gospel message?

"...and proclaim the gospel..." [Mark 16:15; cp Matthew 28:19-20]

- What, specifically, did Jesus say His apostles were to be teaching as they "went"? (Carefully consider the way that Mark *began* his very own gospel, Mark 1:1) In practical terms, then, what **must** be our focus as we evangelize, and what should **not** be our focus?

- In the simplest of terms, as we compare the Lord's instructions in Mark 16:15 and also in Matthew 28:19-20, what should we include as we proclaim the gospel to the world?

"...to the whole creation" [Mark 16:15; it may be helpful to consider several translations here]

- Why might Jesus describe the gospel's reach as to "every creature" or "the whole creation"? How might this help us to understand the gospel's *purpose*? [cp Gen 3:15-19; Rom 8:18-25]

"Whoever believes... but whoever does not believe..." [Mark 16:16]

- Jesus here speaks of the *only two possible reactions* to the preaching of the gospel. How might our understanding that these are *the only two possibilities* help urge us to "go" and to "proclaim" the gospel? Do you believe that there is *another possibility* besides these two?

"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved..." [Mark 16:16; cp Matthew 28:19-20]

- In order to be saved, it is clear that the one who hears the gospel proclaimed must *believe* it; but what else did Jesus tell the apostles was *necessary* for the salvation of the believer?

- Based on the texts of Mark 16:16 and Matthew 28:19-20, do you believe that baptism **must** have been a part of what the apostles taught as they proclaimed the gospel? [cp Acts 8:36; 9:17-19 (22:16); 10:44-48; etc]

"...whoever does not believe will be condemned" [Mark 16:16]

- Did Jesus extend a false hope to His apostles that everyone would be persuaded by the power of the gospel's message? How should this part of Jesus' message further urge us to "go" and to "proclaim" the gospel? [cp Rom 10:5, 9-14; etc]

Mark 16:17-20

We will not examine at length the "debate" as to *exactly who* was to receive the signs mentioned in these verses (17-18); we can all agree that signs were a part of God's plan at the time the gospel was being revealed and spread in the first century, before the Scriptures were complete. What were signs *always* meant to convey about the nature and origin of the message? Has the nature and origin of the message changed in our day? [cp Ex 4:1-9; 1 Pe 4:11; 1 Th 2:13; etc]

Following the Lord's ascension back to the right hand of the Father (v19), what did the apostles do? [cp v15; see also Acts 26:15-23]

What does Mark say the Lord was doing, and how did He do it? [v20; cp Acts 14:1-3; Hb 2:1-4]

Even though the "age of miracles" (as in, miraculous signs performed at the hands of men) has passed, do you believe the Lord is "working with" those who proclaim His message today? Why or why not? [consider John 16:7-11 and Acts 24:25 as you think about this]

May the Lord help us to GO and PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL to THE WHOLE CREATION!!