

# The Great Commission

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, everybody open up your Bibles. We're going to finish up with Mark today. Now, there is going to be one more message that's really talking about the long ending, some people call, of Mark.

And whether that should be in our Bible, some people think no, others yes. And so we will talk about that and get into how we got our Bibles and the original languages and some of those things. But we're going to finish up with the actual passage today. In Mark 16, 15 through 20 is what we're going to be looking at. And many people call this the Great Commission.

Jesus is about to leave planet Earth. He's about to ascend into heaven. And he's going to leave some instructions for his followers. I'm leaving you behind.

Previously, while he was with him, he says, I'm not going to leave you alone. We'll actually look at that. I'm going to actually send the Holy Spirit to be your companions. But I'm leaving, and I've got a mission for you.

[ 1 : 06 ] So this has been called the Great Commission, even though that term isn't used here. He's giving them a mission. But one of the things that I want to point out is the Jewish kind of nature of this commission.

It's important as we study the Bible that we understand as we read the big picture context. And there are certain things, while all the Bible is for our learning, there are certain things that are explicitly to us and other things that may not be.

And so we're going to take a kind of a deep dive look into the big picture context of all of this. There are some controversial topics that come into play, which is why it's important to understand the context.

Things like water baptism, especially as a requirement for salvation. And there's a passage in here that gets referenced a lot by those who would say that you have to be dunked or sprinkled or otherwise have some kind of water ritual done in order to have salvation.

There's speaking in tongues, casting out demons, miraculous healings, and then also stuff about drinking poison and snakes.

[ 2 : 19 ] And so we'll talk about those things as well. But I want to start, well actually, before we get started with our big picture kind of overview, let's go ahead and read this passage that we're going to be studying today.

So we're going to start with verse 15, Mark chapter 16, verse 15. They will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.

So then after the Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs.

Amen. And so that ends the, at least Mark's gospel or Mark's account of the story of Jesus.

What I'd like to do is help to kind of front load the context of really this whole gospel into our memory before we start going through what Jesus actually said here.

[ 3 : 48 ] When we first started our study in Mark, we actually spent a whole message just talking about the context of how to read the gospels. And really looking at the Jewishness, the Jewish nature of Jesus's ministry that's recorded in the gospels.

Jesus was sent to who? Jesus was sent to Israel. Now, we typically today will say, well, Jesus was sent to the whole world, right?

And is that true that Jesus was sent to the whole world? Yes, that is true. But that was actually somewhat of a secret. And so Jesus actually tells, during his ministry, he makes a comment that I was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

There's actually an account in, oh, I think I have it down here in my notes somewhere, where he's talking to the Seraphim woman.

She asks him for a miracle for her daughter. And he refuses at first. We studied this a few months back. But in that intercourse, in that interaction with her, he makes the comment that I was not sent to the Gentiles.

[ 5 : 10 ] I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. That is my mission. We'll talk more about that in a second. But big picture, he was sent to Israel to turn Israel, the Jewish people, back to God.

And also to prepare them for the promise that was given to them, that their nation would be restored with a future Messiah.

They were promised a restored kingdom, like the kingdom of David that they had in the past, but even greater and better, what was called the Messianic kingdom.

And before that would come, there would be a time of great tribulation. In fact, we've looked at this when we looked at Mark chapter 13. There's a prophetic timeline of what was supposed to happen. Daniel, in the book of Daniel, actually talks about a number of years that would come to pass. And then at a certain time, there would be a certain person who would be cut off.

[ 6 : 18 ] Messiah the prince would be cut off. That's a euphemism for be killed. And then after that, there would be seven years of intense persecution and trial of the Jews.

And then at the end of all that, the kingdom would come. With the Messiah sitting on the throne of Israel in Jerusalem, reigning over not just Israel, but over the whole earth.

But Jesus started off his ministry. I'm going to read from the first chapter of Mark what Jesus' message was as he began preaching. This is Mark chapter 1, verse 14.

Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe the gospel. The time is fulfilled. Daniel had said, these are the things that must come to pass. That time is fulfilled. The Messiah is here. The kingdom of God is right around the corner.

[ 7 : 23 ] So it's time for Israel to repent and believe in this good news. With all that said, so that's kind of the big, big picture.

And we'll dive into some of the details here in just a second. But with all that said, here at the end of Jesus' earthly ministry, he's giving a commission to his disciples.

And we need to keep in mind that nothing to this point has really changed. Now we'll see a few changes in this commission. But he is, again, speaking to his own Jewish disciples and giving them a commission that relates to this kingdom.

Now we have our own commission as grace believers. And we'll talk about that in a second too.

And really about the transition and how that happened. But it's important for us as we read this to understand that there is a difference.

There are some similarities. We also ought to go out and share the gospel with people. But also some important differences. With this commission that Jesus is giving to his disciples, I want to emphasize that it is very similar to what he's already been doing, Jesus himself, and then also what he's already had his own disciples do.

[ 8 : 40 ] With just two important changes. One, the message has changed just slightly. Though it's an important change in the message.

The message now includes a resurrected Messiah. The Messiah is here and he has proven that he is the Messiah by being raised from the dead.

So that's something that's been added. That wasn't part of the message before. The second thing that has changed is there is a new target group.

As it says here in this first passage, or first verse that we read, verse 15, and he said to them, Go into all the world. And up until this point, he had specifically told them not to go into all the world.

We'll look at those things in a second. So with that, let's look specifically at the changes in the message.

[ 9 : 41 ] Here it just says that the message is to preach the gospel. Well, what is the gospel anyway? We know that the word gospel just means good news, but there's all kinds of good news, right?

So what is this gospel? As we read here in the beginning of Mark, that gospel message was to repent, which means to turn, turn from sin, or turn towards God, for the kingdom of God is at hand. That is the good news, that the kingdom is coming. In Matthew 28, and you can actually look at this in the handout that we gave.

Did everybody get one of these, by the way? If you didn't get one, could you raise your hand? All right, I think we're good. Matthew 28, that version of the gospel commission, or the great commission, says, And Jesus came, and he spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And he says this, Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.

[10:50] And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. So, along with preaching the gospel, make disciples, commanding them to do all the things that I've already been teaching you.

I've been teaching you through these three years. As you make disciples, and tell people to repent, and turn to God, because the kingdom is at hand, teach them to do the things that I've commanded you.

Then if you turn to your Bibles to the second chapter of Acts, the second chapter of Acts, and we're going to actually see, with a little bit more clarity, what his disciples were actually preaching in their message.

Acts chapter 2 is about the day of Pentecost, and this is just really 10 days after Jesus ascended. It was the day of Pentecost.

They were waiting in Jerusalem, and as many of you are familiar, tongues of fire came, there was speaking in tongues involved, and then all these people from around Jerusalem heard this speaking, and Peter had an opportunity to preach a message.

[12:02] So this is part of his message. Acts chapter 2, verse 32. This is what he says about Jesus. And this Jesus, God has raised up. So we just got finished telling them that you crucified this Jesus.

You killed him, you Jews. But God has raised him up. He's been risen from the dead, of which we are all witnesses. So that was part of the mission of the apostles, of the disciples, to be witnesses to the resurrection.

Therefore, being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he poured out this, which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he said to himself, the Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand till I make your enemies, your footstool.

He's making the point that Jesus is the son of David. And that Jesus is actually the Lord of David, even though he is also a son of David.

But verse 36 says this, says this, therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

[13:13] And just to, you know, they respond to the message well, and many people believe. But what is it that they believe? What's the message? They believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

And there was proof of this because he rose from the dead. And there are many witnesses to that. And so that's the message that they get.

Jesus is the Messiah. And he rose from the dead to prove that he is the Messiah. Let's talk about this new group of people that have been added.

Like I said, Jesus himself had said that he was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel when he was having that interaction with the Seraphim woman. But also, when Jesus sent out the twelve, and this is in Matthew 10, verse 5, Matthew 10, verse 5, he told them this, these twelve Jesus sent out and he commanded them, saying, do not go into the way of the Gentiles.

He said, do not go to anyone outside of Israel. A Gentile is anybody who's not a Jew. And do not enter the city of the Samaritans. He actually makes an explicit point.

[14:28] Don't even go to the Samaritans. Well, why were the Samaritans special? The Samaritans were a people who were a mix of Jew and Gentile. God had told the Jews, don't intermarry. But some people didn't listen.

They didn't obey. And they intermarried with people who were not Jews. And there was a specific people called Samaritans, and they had intermarried. And so we're not purely Jewish.

So don't go to the Gentiles and don't even go to the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. So he had already given them a commission similar to the one that we're reading about now. Except, in this case, he said, only go to the Jews. Do not go to any Gentiles. Do not even go to the Samaritans. In the commission from Luke, the Great Commission, so this account that we're looking at here in Mark, there's another account of it in Luke.

[15:40] And this is in Luke 24. Luke 24, verse 46. And it says this, Then he said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ, or the Messiah, to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations.

That's a difference. That word nations is actually the same word as Gentiles. But notice this. Excuse me.

That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, not just the Jewish nation, but it says this, beginning at Jerusalem.

So this message should be preached to all nations, but it has to start here in Jerusalem. And then he says, You are witnesses to these things. And then he says, The promise of the Father is coming, and you'll be endued with power from on high there in the city of Jerusalem.

Luke also authored the book of Acts, and in the very beginning of Acts, he reiterates some of this same information. Turn to Acts chapter 1.

[16:51] Acts chapter 1. We're going to start with verse 1. Acts chapter 1 and verse 1. The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day in which he was taken up after he, through the Holy Spirit, had given commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen, to whom he also presented himself alive after his suffering, many infallible proofs being seen by them during 40 days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Again, notice how all of this has to do with the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, he commanded them. So again, this is, he's basically looking back and talking about this great commission that he had given them.

He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, you have heard from me. For John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.

Therefore, when they had come together, they asked him, saying, Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom of Israel? And that's important, right? That just reiterates. What was the expectation of these disciples?

Well, we've been preaching and you've been preaching that the kingdom of God is at hand. Are we there yet? You ever have kids say that? Are we there yet?

[18:20] This is what they're saying. Are we there yet? And Jesus says, he said to them, it is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in his own authority, but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses to me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.

So here, there's a little bit more information. In Luke, they start in Jerusalem, but here, there's a little bit more information. You start in Jerusalem, but then you work out from Jerusalem to all Judea or Israel, Israel at the time anyway, and then you go to the Samaritans next and then after that, the whole world.

the rest of the world. That is the mission should you choose to accept it. But they're supposed to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit to come first.

So what's up with this? Why? Why? Why start in Jerusalem? Why not go to Antioch or Egypt or Rome or even just starting in Samaria?

Well, let's go back even further. We're going to broaden our context a little bit. God had made a promise to a man named Abraham. This was the father of all the Jews.

[19:45] Genesis 12, 3 says this. When God was making a promise, he was making a covenant with Abraham and he said this to Abraham, I will bless those who bless you and I will curse him who curses you and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

So I'm going to bless you and your family, all of your descendants. But through you, I'm going to bless the whole world. One of the prophets is Isaiah says this regarding Israel and then regarding

also the Gentiles.

Isaiah chapter 49 verse 6 says this. You don't need to turn there but you can write that down if you're taking notes. Isaiah 49 verse 6 says this. Indeed, he says, is it too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob?

Jacob is a reference to Israel. And to restore the preserved ones of Israel? I will also give you, Israel, as a light to the Gentiles that you should be my salvation to the ends of the earth.

Now there's some debate whether this is talking about Israel or about Jesus. I think both can apply. But to be a light to the Gentiles. God's intention was that Israel would be a light to the Gentiles.

[ 21 : 15 ] There's another passage. This one is in Zechariah. Zechariah, another prophet, chapter 8, verse 20. Zechariah 8, verse 20. Thus says the Lord of hosts, people shall yet come, inhabitants of many cities.

The inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, let us continue to go and pray before the Lord and seek the Lord of hosts. I myself will go also.

Yes, many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts, in those days ten men from every language of the nations shall grasp the sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.

This is an indication that God is interested in offering salvation and blessing to the entire world, but that blessing must start with the Jewish people.

That God wants to bless first the Jewish people and then through them others from the other nations can come to the Gentiles and find the light.

[ 22 : 40 ] The light of Israel which will end up being a light to the Gentiles, to the rest of the nations. And so when Jesus is on his mission, on his ministry to Israel to preach to them, to turn back to God, that is the first step to turn his people, Israel, back to God.

And once they have turned to God, then to go out and reach out to the rest of the world with the message about Jesus. In Acts chapter 3, there's another passage.

This is Peter's second sermon. So we read in Acts chapter 2 his first sermon on the day of Pentecost. Acts chapter 3 is his second sermon. Peter and John were at the, they were going to Solomon's Porch, it's called, and there was a lame man there and they ended up healing him and that caused quite a ruckus and it gave Peter an opportunity to preach again.

We're just going to look at one portion of that message but Acts chapter 3 verse 22, this is what Peter says. For Moses truly said to the fathers, the Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren.

Him you shall hear in all things whatever he says to you. So he's telling them, this is what Moses told us. He told us to look forward to somebody who would be like him that we should listen to and that's speaking of Jesus.

[ 24 : 11 ] And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people. Whoever rejects Jesus, your end is destruction.

Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel and those who follow as many as have spoken have also foretold these things. It wasn't just Moses but all the prophets from Samuel on also spoke of a future Messiah.

Verse 25, you are sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with our father saying to Abraham and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

Remember we just read that. That was the promise made to Abraham. And here's what he says. Listen to this. To you first, to you Jews, to you Israelites, first, God having raised up his servant Jesus sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from your iniquities, from your sins. This was stage one of the plan. To turn Israel, God's people, his special people, the children of Abraham, to turn them away from their sins back to God.

[ 25 : 33 ] Stage two is going to the Gentiles with the nation of Israel being the evangelists, being the missionaries. That was the prophetic plan.

That was what was planned. But something that we need to realize is that something happened and things had to change.

You see, the Jewish people, and this is how the story plays out, with Peter's sermons, some people believed, but most rejected Jesus as their Messiah.

They didn't turn back to God. They didn't turn away from their sins. And so, God raised up a new apostle. There were the twelve apostles.

God raised up a thirteenth apostle, if you, some people have called it that. But a new apostle. But he was called the apostle to who?

[ 26 : 37 ] To the Jews? He was called the apostle to the Gentiles. His name was Paul. To offer to the Gentiles a salvation through Jesus that was completely separate from the law of Moses, from the covenant given to Israel.

It was different. It was still through Jesus, but it was different. It was not through Israel. It was apart from Israel. This is a salvation, a gospel message that is not through these things given to Israel, these commandments given to Israel, but by grace through faith alone.

so that now, in this time that we live in, salvation is not of the Jews even though the root, the core of it is Jewish in nature because it's part of the promises made to the Jews, but they have been in a sense passed over.

Now, it's important to note that this is just for a time or a season. In the future that will change and we'll actually read about that in just a second.

But today, instead of Gentiles, those who are not Jews, coming to faith through the Jews being missionaries, it's swapped.

[ 28 : 07 ] Today, it's Gentile believers, grace believers, who are going to the Jews and to the rest of the world, right? Not just the Jews, but to all the world and saying, God has a gift for you, mercy and forgiveness for anyone who's willing to receive it.

Through the death of Jesus, who died for the sins, not just of the Jews, but for the sins of the whole world. Turn to Romans chapter 11, and we're going to look at this transition that happened in more detail.

Romans chapter 11, verse 11. We're going to read through a bunch of passages. I'll probably skip over just a few just to kind of shorten and not make this too long.

But Romans 11, 11 says this, I say, this is Paul speaking, he's had this whole long discourse about the Jews and how he is so burdened in his heart that the Jewish people have rejected Jesus.

That's where Romans chapter 9, verse 1, that's how he starts. He is so burdened in his heart that his Jewish people have rejected their Messiah. And he's talking about that whole theme. And here, he's kind of closing out his message on that topic.

[ 29 : 34 ] I say then, have they stumbled the Jews that they should fall? Certainly not. So this isn't, God still has a plan for the Jews. But through their fall to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles.

That was not part of the plan. That was not part of the original prophetic plan. This is different. This is why it's important to understand this transition and what happened here.

Now if their fall is riches for the world and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness. So when they come into their promises, it's going to be even greater for the rest of the world than it is even now.

For I speak to you Gentiles inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles. I magnify my ministry if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are of my flesh and save some of them.

He's saying, I magnify my ministry to the Gentiles because right now this is God's way of getting to the Gentiles is by provoking through jealousy Israel by giving this free gift of grace to all the Gentiles.

[ 30 : 51 ] Anyone who's willing to believe. Verse 15, For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? For if the first fruit is holy the lump is also holy and if the root is holy so are the branches.

Let's skip down just for time's sake. Let's go to verse 24. For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature he's talking about us as Gentiles.

There was this tree that was Jewish in nature and we were cut out of a different tree, a wild olive tree and we were grafted in and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree.

How much more will these who are natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? He's making the point that God still has a plan for the Jews and will graft them back in even though for now they have been cut out of the tree cut off from their promises.

They can still come to Christ but not through their covenant. They have to come to Jesus through this plan of salvation given to the Gentiles.

[ 32 : 06 ] Verse 25 For I do not desire brethren that you should be ignorant of this mystery lest you should be wise in your own opinion that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

So there's this blindness and it's a corporate blindness I don't want anyone to think that God is blinding individual Jews because he doesn't want them to see things but there is this blindness that has happened to corporate Israel so that as a group they cannot see what's going on right now. Individual Jews can hear the gospel and believe and many have and so all Israel will be saved as it is written.

This is something that will happen in the future in which Israel corporately will find their salvation and their salvation is found in a kingdom not the individual salvation because individual Jews today can find salvation right but this is a salvation a corporate salvation that he's talking about here with their kingdom.

As it is written the deliverer will come out of Zion and he will turn away ungodliness from Jacob that's Israel for this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins.

[ 33 : 20 ] So he says this concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers God still loves his people the Jews even though they are your enemies because they have many of them at least have rejected the gospel.

Verse 29 for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable so God has promised something to Israel he's not going to take back his promise even though it's put on hold for a while. For as you were once disobedient to God so you Gentiles were once disobedient in rebellion against God but yet now have obtained mercy through their disobedience because they fell because they disobeyed God is giving grace to the whole rest of the world.

Even so these also have now been disobedient that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. So God is drawing the Jews to himself through the mercy that he has given to the Gentiles for God has committed them all to disobedience that he might have mercy on all because you see God is interested in everyone coming to him.

Oh the depth of the riches of both the wisdom and knowledge of God how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out. And so what this shows us is that God is interested in offering salvation and blessing to both Jew and Gentile.

The original plan was first that he would start with the Jew and that's why he sent his he told his disciples I want you to eventually go to the whole world but we need to start in Jerusalem and then Judea and then Samaria and then to the ends of the earth.

[ 35 : 00 ] But something changed. something changed because Israel rejected they fell as Paul calls it from their promises but not forever there is still a future coming in which he will he will restore Israel and give the promises that he promised to them.

So today our message our gospel is not as Jewish in nature it's very similar to what Jesus is telling telling his disciples here in Mark in which they ought to go out we also ought to go out they ought to tell people about Jesus we also ought to tell people about Jesus but there are some important differences too our gospel that we preach is not the kingdom of God is at hand that's not what we're telling people our gospel is this turn to God repent turn to God and believe that Jesus died for your sins Jesus died for the sins of Jew and Gentile slave and free male female every ethnicity every people group he died for all and all you have to do to receive that free gift of salvation eternal life with God being part of God's family is to trust in him trust that he died for you and that his death for you is sufficient 2nd Corinthians chapter 5:18 you can just look at this piece of paper you don't have to turn there in your Bibles of course you can if you'd like to but this is where

I wanted to provide a distinction between this what I would call the gospel of the kingdom commission and these are the three different passages from the three gospels that give that commission and then the one here at the bottom is the gospel of grace commission and this is what Paul talks about he is the apostle to the Gentiles and so here is where he gives a commission as it were to those under grace and he says this now all things are of God who has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation that's what our ministry is called the ministry of reconciliation that is that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself not just Israel but the world to himself not imputing their trespasses to them so he's not holding their sins against them and has committed to us the word of reconciliation now then we are ambassadors for Christ we are to go out as ambassadors on behalf on Christ's behalf as though

God were pleading through us we implore you on Christ's behalf be reconciled to God for he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him and this is pointing to the atonement that Jesus made we preach the atonement that Jesus died for the sins of the world that he became sin he became an offering for sin for us so that instead of us dying for our own sins which is our just reward that instead he took that on for us so that we don't have to die for our own sins if we're willing to receive that gift that he offers so with that as the context and I know that took a long time but I think it's important let's continue on here in Mark looking at the specifics of what this commission was given to the 12 disciples and others not just the 12 but all of his disciples verse 16

Mark 16 16 he who believes and is baptized will be saved but he who does not believe will be condemned so here's here's the conditions of salvation you can have salvation if you believe in Jesus and remember specifically what about Jesus that he is your Messiah that he is the Messiah of Israel but then it also adds this and is baptized will be saved and so this has given a lot of room for Christians over the years different groups to say hey listen if you want to find salvation then you have to go through some kind water ritual some kind of baptism in water whether it's dunking or sprinkling or pouring or fire hose whatever it might be and so but there are two things right believing in Jesus and then two being baptized now faith in

[ 40 : 07 ] Christ is not optional for salvation it wasn't optional for the Jews and is that optional for us under grace not at all it wasn't optional then it's not optional now you know some people say that there are many paths to God you've heard that many many pathways to God and you know that's true that is very true because every path in this life ultimately leads to where to God now for many that path will lead to the judgment seat in which you stand before God to be judged according to your works whether you've sinned or whether you've maintained your innocence whether you've been righteous or a sinner that is one path to God and that's where all the other paths lead but the path of Jesus Christ is a path that leads to forgiveness to a declared righteousness in which we are declared not guilty not because of anything that we have done or not done but because of what Jesus did for us that is the path that God wants us to take so there are many paths to God right some paths lead to salvation and others lead to judgment and maybe maybe some people are just betting and this is what many people do they're betting that when they stand before

God they'll be found good enough and I think many of those who are trusting in that will find that their trust in themselves is misplaced we need to let the world know we want to put our trust you want to put your trust in Jesus Christ not in yourself but then there's this baptism thing and this is something that was a requirement for Israel this is something that actually had been a requirement for at least the priesthood in Israel for a long time that there were these ceremonial ritual washings now this water baptism thing was never a hard requirement we have the thief on the cross as just one example that we looked at just the other week but it was a requirement nonetheless and this was a part of their faith if you trust that Jesus is your Messiah if you believe what we're telling you then you will go through this water ritual and so many over the years who have not made this distinction between kind of the

Jewish nature of things and Jesus' ministry and the change that happened in regard to God's grace to the Gentiles there's been a lot of confusion about what's required for salvation under grace Paul says this Ephesians 2 8 and 9 his famous passage about salvation by grace for by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest anyone should boast Romans 3 20 says this therefore by the deeds of the law by doing things by doing ritual requirements of the law no flesh will be justified in his sight for by the law is the knowledge of sin the law will tell you that you're not righteous but it cannot make you righteous verse 17 mark 16 verse 17 here's the next part of the preaching of the gospel and these signs will follow those who believe in my name they will cast out demons they will speak with new tongues and he lists some other things but first thing

I want to talk about is signs you know God gave Israel signs different signs throughout their history I want to point out though that it wasn't always it wasn't continually through the history of Israel there really these punctuated moments throughout history where there were lots of signs and wonders that happened especially during the ministry of Moses through the ministry of some of the prophets though not even most of the prophets just a few remember that Jesus had already given his disciples authority to heal and to cast out demons and to even raise the dead before all this he did the same thing with a greater group with the 70 disciples that he sent out he gave them the same

power in fact they came back and they were so excited they said man we were able to talk to demons and they did what they obeyed us and did what we said and Jesus reminded them well hey don't put too much faith in that remember that your name is being written in heaven is what's most important

Jesus even told his disciples this is you can write this down John chapter 14 verse 12 he said this most assuredly I say to you that he who believes in me so not just the twelve but anybody who believes in me the works that I do he will do also and greater works than these will he do because I go to my father and whatever you ask in my name that will I do that the father may be glorified in the sun if you ask anything in my name I will do it he's telling them hey I'm leaving and I have a ministry for you it includes signs and wonders and so I'm going to give you the same authority to do all the things that I've done in fact you're going to do even more than the things that I've done we actually we actually see that's what happened in the ministry of the apostles many amazing miracles were done at their hand let's just continue let's continue and actually one more passage I'm going to read here you don't have to turn there Hebrews chapter 2 verse 2 actually this is because I want to talk about well what was the purpose of all these signs and wonders why would God give them this power or want them to wait in

[ 46 : 12 ] Jerusalem before they go out to preach the gospel well it actually says at the very end of this passage in verse 20 Mark chapter 16 verse 20 and they went out and they preached everywhere the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs that was the purpose of these to confirm the word with the signs with the miracles casting out demons is one example Jesus did this in his ministry now if we look back at the Old Testament was there any indication of like demonic activity evil spirits those kinds of things we do see that don't we one of the famous examples is King Saul being tormented but there were witches there were mediums who tried to call the dead and all these kinds of things and all those kinds of things are demonic activity that involve evil spirits but we actually don't find any examples in the entire

Old Testament of anyone casting an evil spirit out that doesn't mean that it didn't necessarily happen but we don't have any examples but we see lots of examples in the ministry of Jesus and it seemed that this was a unique ministry that Jesus had and had given to his disciples in Luke chapter 11 verse 20 Jesus is talking to the Pharisees because they accused him of casting out demons by the power of Satan and he shows them the error of their ways but he says this Luke 11 verse 20 but if I cast out demons with the finger of God surely the kingdom of God has come upon you you see this this casting out of demons was a sign was a sign that surely the kingdom of God has come upon you so this was a unique thing for preparing people for the kingdom the next thing was speaking in new tongues and we actually see that just ten days later when they're tearing they're waiting in

Jerusalem here's the passage in Acts chapter 2 verse 5 it says this and there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews devout men from every nation under heaven and when the sound occurred so I kind of skipped over the part where the Holy Spirit comes in and they all began to speak in new tongues but it says this and because everyone and when the sound occurred the multitude came together and were confused because everyone heard them speak in his own language then they were all amazed and marveled saying to one another look are not all these who speak Galileans and how is it that we hear each one in our own language in which we were born Parthians and Medes and Elamites those dwelling in Mesopotamia Judea and Cappadocia Pontus and Asia Phrygia and Pamphylia Egypt and the parts of Libya conjoining Cyrene visitors from Rome both Jew and Proselyte Cretans and Arabs we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God so they were all amazed and perplexed saying to one another whatever could this mean see this was a sign this is what

Jesus told them I'm going to give you signs this speaking in tongues was a sign to the people of Israel about this new thing that was happening in fact Paul when he's talking about speaking in tongues in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 he says my brethren this is 1 Corinthians 14 20 do not be children in understanding however in malice be babes but in understanding be mature so I want you to be mature in understanding in the law it is written with men of other tongues and other lips will I speak to this people and yet for all that they will not hear me says the Lord therefore tongues are a sign not to those who believe but to unbelievers but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe so this these new tongues were to be a sign for unbelieving Israel and even though many of them heard this as a sign and this was a miracle they heard people speaking who they

knew obviously did not speak their own language but they heard them speak in their own language the wonderful glories of God that was a sign to them unfortunately as the law had said many of them rejected it back to Mark verse 18 and they will take up serpents and if they drink anything deadly it will by no means hurt them this passage unfortunately has led to many people doing foolish things taking up serpents

I'm sure many of you you can just go to YouTube and find examples and this happens especially I think in Appalachia but there are those who practice snake handling and really this is a test it's really they're looking at it I think as testing their faith but really what they're doing is they're testing the Lord they're saying God promised that the snakes won't hurt us we'll take up these serpents nothing will happen to us and so they practice this as part of their church service and unfortunately a lot of times they get bitten and some people get really sick and others unfortunately don't make it because of this but their misunderstanding I think their misunderstanding not just the kind of dispensational difference here but even what God was saying to Israel he wasn't telling them that they need to play with snakes or play with poison to test God but just saying hey listen God is going to protect you from many different things that you're going to experience this is something that actually happened to Paul when he was on his way he was actually a prisoner but on his journey to Rome he was shipwrecked on the island of Malta and was helping make a fire and a snake a viper came out and bit him and the people were actually amazed because they expected him to die within minutes or hours and nothing happened to him when it comes to the poison we don't have any examples of people drinking poison and nothing happening to them but that was something that was promised to them anyway

[ 52 : 44 ] I want to well just to kind of wrap this up because he talks also about miraculous healings and this is something that he had already given to his disciples previously but this was kind of a permanent thing that he was giving to them as part of their ministry to Israel through the coming of the Holy Spirit let me finish first with the last two verses so verse 19 so then after the Lord had spoken to them he was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God and so this is just brief but Jesus left the earth and he went to heaven and notice here just one interesting point it doesn't say that he went to heaven it says that heaven received him so it was like almost like he was drawn up into heaven and then it says that he sat down at the right hand of God and that's the position that he holds today it's an exalted position at the right hand of the father and then last last verse verse 20 says they went out and they preached everywhere and the

Lord worked with them and confirmed the word with the accompanying signs and so really that's just a brief summary of really a huge portion of the book of Acts which talks about all the things that they did but I want to wrap up with this we don't have the exact same ministry as the Jews but it's actually very very similar right even though we don't have a signs and wonders ministry we are not preaching to people that they need to be baptized to be saved we're not telling them about the gospel of the kingdom we're not warning people that the kingdom is at hand but we are still going to all the world as ambassadors for Christ telling the world that Jesus died for your sins and it's a message that the world needs to hear Romans 10 verse 14 says this this is Paul this is actually where he's talking about his heart for the Jews but he's talking about the gospel

Romans 10 verse 14 how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed he just said before this anyone who calls on the name of the Lord can be saved anyone Jew Gentile they can be saved but how shall they call on him when they have not believed you can't call on the Lord if you haven't believed in him and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard how can you believe if you haven't heard the how can you hear the message if no one ever tells you and how shall they preach unless they are sent as it is written how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace who bring glad tidings of good things we have a we have a message a message to preach one that many of us most of us in this room have received we need to get the message out in every kind of way that we can imagine talking to people face to face written word passing out bibles all kinds of different things that we can do talking to people on the internet some people will hear the message some people will ignore you and a few will actually believe what we tell them and find eternal salvation in the

Lord and God will gain another member for his eternal family that he's looking to grow bigger and bigger even until this day let's finish up there and let me pray Father thank you for your word thank you for your mission to us helping us understand our mission in detail what it is making distinctions that are important so we don't confuse things and give people the wrong message that really isn't

for them but help us Father to understand what our mission is and what that message is that Jesus died for the sins of the world and give us the courage and the wisdom to get that message out there in all the different ways that we can that other people might hear and believe and trust you and grow your family and ours to be bigger than it is even today in Jesus name Amen Amen