

The Simple Truth Series #24

These signs shall follow them that



believe!

The Mark 16 Church is the only Church ordained by the Lord Jesus, and it is the only Church He personally recognises as His own.

Brother Kevin
www.therescueshop.org

'And expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.' Acts 18:26.

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1.

The New Testament Church's Commission

"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 they shall 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.

So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

(Mark 16:15-20).

This is the Commission which the Lord Jesus gave to His Church on the day He was, *'received up into heaven.'* In it, he commanded them to fulfil His work on earth, and ten days later, on the Day of Pentecost, He personally empowered them with His Holy Spirit, to fulfil this Commission, as He had promised. *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."* (Acts 1:8).

On this day, Peter, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, exhorted the people to, *"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many As the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:39).

The Church's Commission is to, *"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."* "All the world," and *"every creature,"* includes every person born between that day and the Lord's return. And the promise of the Holy Ghost is to, *"all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."* We are all included in the Commission and we all need to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to empower us to fulfil it.

2.

2.

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Imagine there is a young man who decides he is going to become a Lawyer. He enrolls at law School, and from the first year of his studies whenever he is asked by strangers what he does, he replies smartly, "I'm a Lawyer!" Of course he isn't a lawyer yet, he is in training to *become* a Lawyer, and he cannot represent a client in court until he finishes his studies and passes the Bar exam. So, he isn't a lawyer, he's a liar.

Unfortunately, that is what most 'church' members are like. As we read above, the Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to, ***"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature."*** Then He promised, ***"he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned."***

Many 'church' members go to 'church' because it's a tradition in their family, or because their friends go, etc, but we aren't talking about them here, because they have no hope anyway. We are talking about those who have had some sort of an experience, where the Lord revealed Himself to them: as in, ***"he that believeth,"*** or else they had a sincere desire to seek for Him; so, they begin to attend a 'church.' Once they are there, they start doing what everyone else is doing there, they attend Fellowship, pay their tithe to the 'church,' and attend prayer meetings etc. Then they begin testifying to one and all that they are now 'Christians.' But they are no more 'Christians' then, than our Law School friend is a Lawyer.

The Lord's promise was, ***"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."*** They have *believed*, that is true, but then we have the Lord saying, ***"and."*** And is a conjunction, it means *this* and *this* together. He promised ***"He that believeth and is baptized."*** ***"He that believeth,"*** is still in Law School. ***"He that believeth and is baptized,"*** has passed the Bar exam.

As we are told in James 2:19, ***"The devils also believe and tremble."*** So, these people are no better off than the devil, Satan himself, who also believes, but also does not have the Holy Spirit, just like them, so is not saved either.

"And is baptized," does not mean water baptism, because as St Peter revealed to us in 1 Peter 3:21, baptism is, ***"The answer of a good conscience toward God."***

But, in speaking about the Holy Spirit in Romans 8:5-9, St Paul reveals this truth to us, ***"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."***

3.

For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

He says, *'The carnal mind is enmity* (at war) *against God,'* so it cannot be subject to Him. But if the Spirit of Christ dwells in you, then you have the Mind of Christ, and you will see the world from God's point of view, not the carnal world's point of view.

We are warned in the last line there, *'But if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.'* Surely that is plain enough for anyone to understand? If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ (the Holy Spirit) dwelling in them, they are not the Lord's yet, and cannot call themselves a Christian, except by lying about it as our Law School friend did?

"Believeth and is baptized," is the only thing that makes an unbeliever a Christian, and saves them. Outside of that they are still just as lost as they were, on the day when they came into this world, even though they may spend their whole life faithfully attending a Church.

So, how does the Holy Spirit dwell in someone? In Acts 5:32, Peter says, *"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."* God gives the Holy Spirit to them that obey Him. So, how do we obey Him? The most straight forward way is that given by St Peter on the day of Pentecost, the day the New Testament Church began. Peter spoke to the Jews and told them they had crucified their Messiah, *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto peter and to the rest of the apostles, men and brethren what shall we do?"* Peter's reply to this was, *"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."* (Acts 2:37-39).

The promise is to, *"as many as the Lord our God shall call."* If He has called you, then He gave this promise to you. Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ promises you will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit).

Is this the only way to receive the Holy Spirit? No. As true as it is, it is not a magic formula which is all things to all men. It began with, *"Repent."* True repentance comes before baptism, and without true repentance, a person being baptized a thousand

times will still not receive the Holy Spirit. The Lord is Sovereign, and He can fill a person with the Holy Spirit the moment they believe, if He so chooses to. We see this at the house of Cornelius in Acts 10:44, *'While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.'*

In what is referred to as the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19, the Lord Jesus said, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."* That was a simple enough instruction, because Father is not a name, neither is Son, neither is Holy Ghost, they are Titles to that one Name. He said *'name,'* singular, not *'names,'* plural. And 10 days later, on the day of Pentecost, St Peter revealed to Israel what the *'name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'* was, when he said, *"Repent and be baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ."* There is only one God and His name is the Lord Jesus Christ. As the father He was over us, as the Son He was with us, as the Holy Spirit He is in us.

We only have to look through the Scriptures to find witness to that.

'In the beginning was the Word (Jesus Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1).

'For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.' (1 John 5:7).

"I and my Father are one." (John 10:30).

"He that hath seen me hath seen the father." (John 14:9).

'For by him (Jesus Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.' (Colossians 1:16).

'For in him (Jesus Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' (Colossians 2:9).

'For unto us a child is born (Jesus Christ), unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.' (Isaiah 9:6).

Also, if we look at the record of baptisms in the Book of Acts, we find the believers were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

'Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John. Who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost (For as yet he was fallen on none of them: only they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus).' (Acts 8:14-16).

‘Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord.’ (Acts 10:47-48).

‘When they heard this, they were baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus.’ (Acts 19:5).

So just what is the Holy Spirit given to the believer for? It is the Presence of God in us for service, as we are told in Philippians 2:13, *‘For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.’* His Presence in us works to desire and to do His Will. All we are asked to do is to surrender to Him and let Him play us like a fiddle, and work through us.

It is also the Seal, which the Lord has marked us with, to proclaim to the world that we are His. *‘And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.’* (Ephesians 4:30).

3.

“He that believeth not shall be damned.”

There are only two options for anyone on earth, either believe and be saved, or don’t believe and be damned. It’s hard to believe that any sane person would choose the second option, but the majority of people do. Why is that? Because they are not one of the Lord’s lost sheep, so there is nothing inside of them to give them a desire to believe and obey Him. We won’t dwell on this because it is not for believers, but here are three of the many Scriptures concerning it.

“No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.” (John 6:65).

‘And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.’ (Acts 2:47).

‘As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.’ (Acts 13:48).

4.

“These signs shall follow them that believe.”

So, how do we know a person has believed and is baptized? Because the Lord Jesus promised, *“These signs shall follow them that believe.”* He never said they *may* follow

them, but they, ***“shall.”*** It isn’t a hope, it’s a promise. These signs don’t follow a believer because the Believer wants them to happen. They follow the believer because the Lord wants them to happen. He is a supernatural Being, He lives in a supernatural realm, and He acts supernaturally. He desires His followers to believe and be filled with His Holy Spirit, so that he can act supernaturally *through* them. He cannot act supernaturally through someone who knows nothing but the ways of the natural world.

In 1 Corinthians 2:11 we read,

‘For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.’

And in 2:14 we read,

‘But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.’

Without the Spirit of God, the natural man can neither believe God, nor trust Him. What happened when the disciples received the Spirit of God? We are told in verse 20, ***‘And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following.’*** When the believers preached the word of God, the Lord proved they were His, by confirming what they preached with supernatural signs. That has not changed, and it never will change. If a person is a believer, these signs will follow them.

Often, ‘Church’ members say, “If that were true you would see it in our ‘Church.’” Yes, you would, if you, ***“Believed and were baptized.”*** Without that, they will only doubt and scoff at the works and ways of God.

5.

“In my name they shall cast out devils.”

Will every believer manifest every one of these signs? No, but they *could*.

“In my name they shall cast out devils.” That word ***“devils,”*** means demons, fallen angels, or as the Lord Jesus referred to them, ***“unclean spirits,”*** which is what they are. Just like the devil (Satan), they do nothing but evil.

“And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with

chains:

Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.

And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.” (Mark 5:2-9).

This is typical of demons, tormenting someone. I hope you noticed that the demons could speak? Many sicknesses are caused by demons, and as these demons were living within the man, but separate from him, so the sicknesses are merely parasites within the sick person, and the demon is the life of the sickness. When the demon is cast out of the sick person, the life of the sickness is gone, and the person will recover.

Cancer is a good example of this. A cancer is a spirit living within a person, as is epilepsy, asthma, and the other sicknesses which are caused by spirits.

‘And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.’ (Matthew 10:1). This is the same authority as was given to His Church, “In my name they shall cast out devils...They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

6.

“They shall speak with new tongues.”

‘And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all

these which speak Galilaeans?

And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and Proselytes,

Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?’

(Acts 2:4-12).

“What meaneth this?” It was the fulfilment of what Jesus had promised, *“They shall speak with new tongues.”* At the Tower of Babel, when the ungodly were building a tower up to heaven, and an earthly kingdom to rival the Kingdom of God, the Lord confused their language, so that every person spoke a different language than everyone else, and so they gave up building, and separated from each other, spreading out across the earth.

On this day, when the disciples were all praising and exalting the Lord, speaking in Galilean, the Lord reversed what he did at Babel and, *“every man heard them speak in his own language.”* This phenomenon brought everyone together to find out what was going on, and Peter stood before them, to preach the first sermon of the New Testament Church, and to introduce the Mark 16 Church to the world.

Often in the Book of Acts, when believers received the Holy Spirit, they spoke in tongues as above.

‘And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.’ Acts 10:45-46).

‘And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.’ (Acts 19:6).

In 1 Corinthians 12:10, when St Paul was elaborating on Spiritual Gifts within the Church, he said there was given, *‘to another divers kinds of tongues; to another interpretation of tongues.’* These gifts are used when the Lord gives a message to the Church by ‘tongues and interpretation.’ Also, in 1 Corinthians 13:1, St Paul mentions,

‘tongues of men and of angels,’ meaning earthly languages and heavenly languages.

In 1 Corinthians 12:30 he asks, *‘do all speak with tongues?’* No, they don’t, though there has been a lot of confusion created by wrong teaching on tongues. In the early 1900’s when the gifts were being restored to the Church, Pentecostal Missionaries believed they could go overseas speaking in English, and their hearers would hear them in their own languages, as on the day of Pentecost. But that never happened. It was also made a tenet of many Pentecostal Denominations that speaking in tongues was the ‘initial evidence,’ of receiving the Holy Spirit. But as Will Cheeseman, a Godly Pastor whom I knew used to say, “I’ve known so many people who speak in tongues but don’t have the Holy Spirit, and so many people who don’t speak in tongues who do have the Holy Spirit, that I can’t believe it is the ‘initial evidence’ of receiving the Holy Spirit.” I agree with him.

7.

“They shall take up serpents.”

There are ‘Churches’ where the congregation’s handle deadly snakes as a part of their Church Service, and people are bitten and die at times during the Services. That is tempting the Lord, and it is not what the Lord promised us here. He will protect us from snakes, or any other animal which can harm us. Why? Because he is protecting the vessel in which His Spirit dwells. But, as it is with Psalm 91, there are provisos.

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” (Psalm 91:1). He who dwells (*lives*) in the Presence of God, not he who visits it for two hours on Sunday morning. Psalm 37:4, is another example.

‘Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.’ When He is your delight and all you desire, He will give you the desires of your heart. 2 Chronicles 7:14, is another good example.

‘If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.’ Again, this promise has several provisos, *‘shall humble themselves.’* This is important, because as James tells us, *‘God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.’* (James 4:6).

Another proviso is to *‘seek my face.’* If you went seeking John, but he wasn’t at home,

you would go to his workplace, and if he wasn't there, you would go to the golf course he frequents, and if he wasn't there, you would go to his friend's homes looking for him. You would seek for him until you found him. That is what the Lord is saying here, seek for Him until you find Him, and you're in His Presence with Him.

There is another proviso here as well, *'turn from their wicked ways.'* Too many people think they can casually walk into the Presence of God without sincerity, but God's promises just aren't that cheap, we must be whole hearted.

8.

"If they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them."

As in the last chapter, there are 'Churches' where they drink poison, as a part of their Services, believing this promise protects them, but again it is fanaticism.

In the early 1900's there was an infidel going around Churches in the United States with a bottle of deadly strychnine. He would wait until the Service was well underway, then go and put the bottle on the pulpit, and challenge the people. "You say you believe the Bible? Jesus said, *'If they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them.'* I want one of you to come up here and prove you believe the Bible!" He went from Church to Church without having any takers.

Finally, he went into a Church where a young Minister named Roy Davis was in the congregation. When Roy heard the challenge, he turned to an old Minister sitting beside him and said, "I'm not going to let this infidel make fun of the Lord and the Bible like that!" The Minister said, "Just sit still and don't say anything, and he will go away."

The infidel had left a string of Churches behind him, with their tails between their legs in shame, and Roy wasn't about to be a coward because of him. He went to the front, and boldly stated, "I'm not going to let this infidel make fun of the Lord or the Bible like this, even if it kills me." With that he took the bottle, and drank the contents, and as the Promise predicted, *"it did not hurt him."* The Lord honoured his faith, and his heroic stand by protecting him.

If I drink poison on purpose, I am tempting the Lord, and though He may protect me, He may not, because he doesn't have to. But there are ample stories around of Missionaries in particular, who have been poisoned in the Lord's Service, and the poison has not harmed them.

9.

“They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”

This promise is also echoed in James 5:14-15. *‘Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:*

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.’

These are much misunderstood verses. I have too often been told about someone who was prayed for, according to one of these promises, then I was told, “But they weren’t healed.” These promises are just as true today, as they were at the time they were given. The Lord is always faithful to His promises, but he doesn’t have to be faithful to our misinterpretations of them. In Mark 16 we were promised, ***“They shall recover.”*** In James 5 we are promised, ***‘The Lord shall raise him up.’***

If someone trusts a Doctor to help them, and they are given a bottle of tablets with the instructions to take two, three times a day until they’re finished; they don’t take the first two and yell, “I’m healed!” No, they take them as prescribed, and they slowly recover.

That is what we are promised in both of these verses as well. When we have hands laid on us for healing, we begin to recover, as the Lord promised, and after several days of recovering, we are healed. But too often, people expect to be healed immediately, which is a miracle, not a healing, and not what we are promised in either of these cases, and when they aren’t healed on the spot, ‘they weren’t healed.’ This is a misinterpretation of the Scripture, and insulting to the Lord, because when someone testifies they weren’t healed, they are calling the Lord a liar.

10.

“Call an Ambulance!”

‘And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow: and continued his speech until midnight.

12.

And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

And Paul went down, and yelled, Call an Ambulance!’

Of course, he never yelled, “Call an Ambulance!” He lay on the young man, as Elijah did with the dead boy, and prayed, and he came back to life. But what would happen in most ‘Churches’ today? The first response would be, “Call an Ambulance,” because the people do not believe the Word of God.

Is it any wonder that Watchman Nee asked incredulously, “Why is it that the Church we see in the New Testament is so much different than the ‘Church’ we see today?” Why indeed? Because one began on the day of Pentecost when the Lord Himself empowered it with His own Spirit, but the others seem to believe they can function without the Holy Spirit.

A man was going to push a wheelbarrow across a tightrope over the chasm of Niagara Falls, and a large crowd had assembled to watch the spectacle. “Do you believe I can do it?” he asked them. “Yes! Yes!” they chorused enthusiastically. Then he invited one of them to come and sit in the wheelbarrow, but no one accepted his offer. They believed him, but they didn’t trust him.

Unfortunately, that is exactly what the worldly ‘Church’ is like. They claim to believe the Lord, but they don’t trust Him. When they are sick, they do not trust the promise of God which states, ***“They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”*** Instead, they trust Doctors and Hospitals more than they trust the Lord, so they go to seek them for healing.

When they need financial help, they do not trust the promise of God which states, ***‘My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.’*** (Philippians 4:19). Instead, they trust Bankers and Banks more than the Lord, so they go and beg the money from them.

The Mark 16 Church, like Abraham of old, is ***‘Fully persuaded that, what he (God) had promised, he was able also to perform.’*** (Romans 4:21). The Mark 16 Church not only believes God, but they also trust Him. That is God’s Church. Faith means trust, and the Lord loves, provides for, and jealously protects them, because ***‘Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.’*** (Hebrews 11:6).

Do you, *'diligently seek Him?'*

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Ed.D.