

## Signs: Snakes & Poison

**Mark 16:17-18** And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; <sup>18</sup> they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Again – these are not proofs of salvation. We do not handle snakes or drink poison to prove anything any more than Daniel would have thrown himself into the lion's den.

- **Acts 28:3-6** But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. <sup>4</sup> So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live." <sup>5</sup> But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. <sup>6</sup> However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.
- **This was an accident that God used to confirm the Gospel.** Paul did not intentionally grab the snake to prove a point.
- **Matthew 4:6-7** and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'HE SHALL GIVE HIS ANGELS CHARGE OVER YOU,' and, IN THEIR HANDS THEY SHALL BEAR YOU UP, LEST YOU DASH YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.' " <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'YOU SHALL NOT TEMPT THE LORD YOUR GOD.' "
- One of the miraculous stories involving Matthias was when he was forced to drink a potion that contained poison. When he did so, he was not harmed, and he even healed some other prisoners who suffered from blindness after drinking the potion. He was also able to leave the prison without anyone noticing him.

2 weeks ago I asked how many have experienced a miracle. Now I want to ask how many of you have experienced a miracle that is **NOT** included in this list.

This is not an exhaustive list of every supernatural event that could happen in the life of a believer.

**This is also not an exhaustive list of things that may cause fear for a believer advancing the Kingdom. It is representative of fear.**

Snakes and Poison = Boldness. Or not being afraid of what can happen to us for advancing the Kingdom of God.

## **Boldness**

**Acts 4:29-31** Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word,<sup>30</sup> by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus."<sup>31</sup> And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

- The disciples have only been preaching a few days. Some have been put in jail. They are beginning to persecute the Christians.
- Peter and John have just returned from being jailed, then let go but with severe threats.
- They did not pray for comfort, for the persecution to stop. They asked for something that will increase the confrontations.
- They pray for boldness and signs and wonders. Why?
  - Because that is what Jesus told them would follow them in Mark 16.
- The result of their prayer – They were filled with the Holy Spirit. Again.
  - They prayed for boldness, but got the Holy Spirit
  - Boldness is a gift of the Holy Spirit and is supernatural.
  - Boldness cannot be mustered up or found within

## **Mark 16 has the great commission, but it is also written in Acts**

- **Acts 1:8** 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 end of the earth."

- The Holy Spirit is the power behind not just healing and casting out demons, but also of boldness, and being His witnesses.
- We will not be successful witnesses without the Holy Spirit. If we do it in our own strength it will either be unfruitful or lead to fear.
- If we find ourselves with fear, particularly in regards to the Gospel, we need a revelation about receiving from the Holy Spirit.

### **Boldness is a sign that proves the Gospel is real**

- We have already established that there are 2 driving forces behind the evidences in Mark 16. To confirm the Gospel and love for others.
- **Acts 4:13** Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.
- **Acts 14:2-3** But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brethren. <sup>3</sup> Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.
- **Acts 13:45-49** But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. <sup>46</sup> Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. <sup>47</sup> For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I HAVE SET YOU AS A LIGHT TO THE GENTILES, THAT YOU SHOULD BE FOR SALVATION TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.' " <sup>48</sup> Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed. <sup>49</sup> And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region.

### **Boldness is required to love people**

- First, in order to love others, we must have boldness in knowing the love God has for us.

- **Romans 8:31-39** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. <sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written: "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE KILLED ALL DAY LONG; WE ARE ACCOUNTED AS SHEEP FOR THE SLAUGHTER." <sup>37</sup> Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Then we can love others with boldness
  - **Ephesians 4:11-15** And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; <sup>14</sup> that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, <sup>15</sup> but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ
  - **1 Thessalonians 2:2-4** But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. <sup>3</sup> For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. <sup>4</sup> But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts.

**And we must continually ask for boldness, just as with all the gifts.**

- **Ephesians 6:18-20** praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints-- <sup>19</sup> and for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, <sup>20</sup> for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.