

Mark 16:17 If a person cannot perform the signs does that mean that they are not a believer in Christ Jesus?

One does not go to heaven or hell based on his giftedness (e.g. speaking in tongues, consuming poison and living, etc.). He goes to heaven or hell based on a right relationship with Jesus Christ.

Regarding Mark 16:17-18¹ J. Vernon McGee wrote:

If you want to accept any of these sign gifts, then you must take them all, brother. I'll be glad to prepare a formaldehyde cocktail if you think you can drink it. What am I trying to say? These signs have followed the preaching of the gospel. But they are not signs to continue the preaching of the gospel....[I]f someone maintains that they are injunctions for today, then one must accept them all, even the drinking of a deadly poison. Even before the end of the first century, the sign gifts were no longer the credentials of the apostles. The test was correct doctrine (see 2 John 10). It is the Word of God that is the great sign in this hour.²

Debate continues as to whether the sign gifts are for today. One thing that theologians seem to agree upon; however, is that gifts will reappear in the last days.

The prophet Joel wrote:

“And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
“And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
And also on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days. (Joe 2:28–29).³

¹ And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they 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 [Mark 16:17–18].

² McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: The Gospels (Mark)* (electronic ed., Vol. 36, pp. 201–202). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

³ Tongues were a sign of the Spirit's coming at Pentecost (Acts 2:3, 4).

Simple faith saves an individual. The apostle Paul wrote, “If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved (Ro 10:9).”

After salvation the Holy Spirit gifts individuals for service in the church. He assigns gifts sovereignly (1 Co. 12:11, 28). Every believer is given a gift (v. 12:7). No believer is given all of the gifts (vv. 12:29–30). Gifts are given for the edification of the church (v. Ro 1:11).⁴

The diversity of the gifts (vv. 12:8-10, 28) include: wisdom (v. 12:8a), knowledge (v. 12:8b), faith (v. 12:9a), healing (vv. 12:9b, 28e), miracles (vv. 12:10a, 28d), prophecy (vv. 12:10b, 28b), discernment (v. 12:10c), tongues (vv. 12:10d, 28h), interpretation of tongues (v. 12:10e), apostleship (v. 12:28a), teaching (v. 12:28c), helping (v. 12:28f) and administration (v. 12:28g).⁵

All gifts are important. Similar to a human body, the body of Christ must have healthy and functioning parts. Paul taught for example that the “eye” and the “head” should not devalue one another (1 Co 12:21). Every member of Christ’s body should rejoice and suffer together (vv. 12:19–20, 22–27).

⁴ The identification of these gifts (12:6–8): Seven spiritual gifts are listed.

- a. Prophesying (12:6)
- b. Serving (12:7a)
- c. Teaching (12:7b)
- d. Encouraging (12:8a)
- e. Giving (12:8b)
- f. Leading (12:8c)
- g. Showing kindness (12:8d)

Willmington, H. L. (1999). *The Outline Bible* (Ro 12:4–8). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁵ Willmington, H. L. (1999). *The Outline Bible* (1 Co 12:8–30). Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.