

Mark 16:16 (Misinterpreted Scriptures)

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Misinterpretation: The UPC and some other groups often use this Scripture to say that a person must be baptized to be saved.

Facts: The purpose of this discussion is not to talk about whether or not baptism is necessary, but to point out that Mark 16:16 is almost certainly an apocryphal Scripture (meaning that it was probably not part of the original Book of Mark). As a matter of fact, all of verses 9-20 are apocryphal in the 16th chapter of Mark. Most modern English translations put Mark 16:9-20 in brackets to show the reader that those verses were probably not in the original text.

I will not go into all of the reasons that scholars think these 11 verses are apocryphal. Instead, I will point the reader to two very good overviews of the subject. This first is a collection of comments from various study Bibles and commentaries, found at the [Bible Research](#) Web site. This site also offers an article by a scholar who does feel that Mark 16:9-20 was part of the original text, so you can read both sides of the debate. The second is the [Wikipedia article on Mark 16](#). Both of these sites are excellent starting points for you to do your own study into the subject.

Finally, I want to remind you once again that I am not debating baptism here, I am only pointing out that Mark 16:16 should not be used to try to prove the necessity of baptism. Please do not write me with all the reasons you think baptism is necessary! I believe that it is necessary as well (although I do think there are circumstances where a person can be saved

without being baptized [cf. Luke 23:39-43]), so you will be wasting your time by e-mailing me!

Mark 16:17-18 (Misinterpreted Scriptures)

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.

Misinterpretation: This Scripture is often used to support the UPC doctrine that says a person must speak in tongues to be saved.

Facts: First, this is an apocryphal Scripture (see [my comments on Mark 16:16](#)). Second, if this Scripture means that all believers will speak in tongues then it also means that all believers will cast out devils, take up serpents, and heal the sick by laying hands on them. Finally, even if this Scripture is not apocryphal, there is nothing in it that says that all believers will do these things. It only lists some signs that will follow believers as a whole, not as individuals.

No one doubts that the early Church spoke in tongues, and quite a few Christians do not doubt that tongues and interpretation is still a spiritual gift that God gives out today. The problem is when people start to teach that *all* believers will speak in tongues, and they try to use Mark 16:17-18 to prove it.