

## Handling Snakes & Drinking Poison [continued from 292703]

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by Bill Crews

...wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will." This very thing is described in Mark 16:20, and this is what the Lord was referring to in Mark 16:17-18.

"They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." There are many records of this being done: Acts 3:1-8; 5:16; 9:17-18; 9:32-35; 14:8-10; 28:8.

In some instances a dead person was brought back to life, as in Acts 9:36-42 and 20:9-12. Raising the dead is not mentioned in Mark 16:17-18, but it is mentioned when Jesus first gave the apostles the power to work miracles to confirm their message (Matt. 10:1, 8).

Any way, in Mark 16:17-18 we have the Lord's promise made to the apostles concerning various signs of confirmation that would accompany the preaching of the gospel and serve to cause the lost to believe the gospel that they might be saved. For the benefit of those who were not there in the first century to witness these signs we have records of them by eye witnesses (Jn. 20:30-31). They were written that the readers might believe, and believing might receive eternal life. Both Mark 16:20 and the entire book of Acts show that the Lord's promise was fulfilled. Yet, here in the 20th century we have some well-intentioned religious people who see in Mark 16:17-18 a promise to themselves and end up putting themselves and others at risk by handling poisonous serpents at their services of worship. Those who die die in vain. Why do not they also have services at which they drink deadly poisons if they really believe the passage applies to all believers today? I think that some of them know that snakes do not always bite and snake bites do not always kill, but drinking poison will work every time as it did in Guyana with Jim Jones and his deluded followers. Please study this very important subject while asking the question: **Does the Bible clearly show the purpose of the miracles worked by Jesus and the miracles worked by some of His disciples in the first century?** I believe that it does. And when they had served that purpose, they were to cease, just as the Bible also teaches (1 Cor. 13:8-10 — they would be done away, they would cease when that which is perfect — the completed and perfect revelation of God's word — was come).

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