

Mark Chapter 16

Mark 16:1 "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the [mother] of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him."

“Sabbath was past”: The Sabbath officially ended at sundown on Saturday, after which the women were able to purchase spices.

“Mary Magdalene ... Mary the mother of James, and Salome” (see note on Matt. 25:56). Luke mentions that Joanna and other woman were also there (Luke 24:10; 15:41).

“Spices”: The women bought more spices in addition to those prepared earlier (Luke 23:56); John 19:39-40).

“Anoint”: Unlike the Egyptians, the Jewish people did not embalm their dead. Anointing was an act of love, to offset the stench of a decaying body. That the women come to anoint Jesus’ body on the third day after His burial showed that they, like the disciples, were not expecting Him to rise from the dead (8:31; 9:31; 10:34).

Sunday is the first day of the week. You can see from this that they came at the very first moment possible. It was against Jewish law to go anywhere on Sabbath (which was punishable by death).

Mark 16:2 "And very early in the morning the first [day] of the week, they came unto the sepulcher at the rising of the sun."

“At the rising of the sun” (John 20:1), says that Mary Magdalene arrived at the tomb while it was still dark. She may have gone on ahead of the other women, or the whole party may have set out together while it was still dark and arrived at the tomb after sunrise.

They were not coming because it was the thing to do, but because they loved Jesus. These women were the last at the crucifixion, and the first at the grave.

Mark 16:3 "And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?"

“Who shall roll us away the stone ... ?” Only Mark records this discussion on the way to the tomb. The women realized they had no men with them to move the heavy stone (verse 4), away from the entrance to the tomb. Since they had last visited the tomb on Friday evening, they did not know it had been sealed and a guard posted, which took place on Saturday (Matt. 27:62-66).

Rolling “the stone” into its slot would have been relatively easy (15:46). But moving it away would have required the strength of several men.

Even though they were not sure they could get in to anoint the body of Jesus, they went anyhow hoping someone would be there to let them in. They showed great loyalty to the Lord.

Mark 16:4 "And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great."

“The stone was rolled away”: This was not to let Jesus out, but to let the witnesses in. The earthquake when the angel rolled away the stone (Matt. 28:2), may have affected only the area around the tomb, since the women apparently did not feel it.

Mark 16:5 "And entering into the sepulcher, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted."

“Entering into the sepulcher”: The outer chamber, separated from the burial chamber by a small doorway.

“Young man ... clothed in a long white garment”: The angel, having rolled away the stone (Matt. 28:2), had then entered the burial chamber. Luke records that there were two angels in the tomb; Matthew and Mark focus on the one who spoke (for similar instances, see note on 10:46).

“Affrighted” denotes extreme fear or distress. Mark alone in the New Testament uses the word (see also 14:33).

In this type of tomb, there are two chambers. One is to sit and mourn, while the inside chamber is for the body. This young man undoubtedly was an angel. The white garment possibly shows that he was from heaven. Fear and excitement as well, probably came over them. His purpose in being there was to tell them.

Mark 16:6 "And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him."

“Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified” (see note on Matt. 2:23). The inspired account leaves no doubt about who had been in the tomb. The idea of some unbelievers that the women went to the wrong tomb is ludicrous.

“He is risen”: Christ’s resurrection is one of the central truths of the Christian faith (1 Cor. 15:4), and the only plausible explanation for the empty tomb. Even the Jewish leaders did not deny the reality of the empty tomb, but concocted the story that the disciples had stolen Jesus’ body (Matt. 28:11-15).

The idea that the fearful (John 20:19), doubting (verses 11, 13; Luke 24:10-11), disciples somehow overpowered the Roman guard detachment and stole Jesus’ body is absurd. That they did it while the guards were asleep is even more preposterous. Surely, in moving the heavy stone from the mouth of the tomb, the disciples would have awakened at least one of the soldiers.

And in any case, how could the guards have known what happened while they were asleep? Many other theories have been sinfully invented over the centuries to explain away the empty tomb, all of them equally futile.

The fact of the empty tomb did not explain itself. God provided a revelation of the meaning of what the women saw, or rather did not see. The Resurrection becomes the starting point and basis of the Christian faith (see Romans 4:1; 1 Cor. 15:4).

"Angels" are ministering spirits, and the Lord had left this angel here to minister to those who came seeking Him. What wonderful news, “HE IS RISEN”. In this instance, He was specifically called "Jesus of Nazareth".

There was no mistaking, He was the one. Don't you know that many of the things Jesus had told them about how He would rise again came flashing into their minds? What joy, He was alive.

Mark 16:7 "But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."

“And Peter”: Peter was not singled out as the leader of the disciples, but to be reassured that, despite his denials of Christ, he was still one of them.

“He goeth before you into Galilee ... as he said unto you” (see note on 14:28). The disciple’s lack of faith made them slow to act on these words; they did not leave for Galilee (Matt. 28:7, 16), until after Jesus repeatedly appeared to them in Jerusalem (Luke 24:13-22; John 20:19-31).

Here we see the angel telling these women to carry the good news of the risen Christ to the other disciples. Peter was specifically mentioned, because Peter probably believed that Jesus would not want to see him, because he denied Him three times.

Mark 16:8 "And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulcher; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any [man]; for they were afraid."

“Afraid”: They were overwhelmed by the frightening appearance of the angel and the awesome mystery of the Resurrection.

This would be a very frightening experience. Their amazement and joy were paled by their fear of being in the presence of this angel.

Verses 9-20: The external evidence strongly suggests these verses were not originally part of Mark’s gospel. While the majority of Greek manuscripts contain these verses, the earliest and most reliable do not. A shorter ending also existed, but it is not included in the text.

Further, some that include the passage note that it was missing from Older Greek manuscripts, while others have scribal marks indicating the passage was considered spurious. The fourth-century church fathers Eusebius and Jerome noted that almost all Greek manuscripts available to them lacked verses 9-20.

The internal evidence from this passage also weighs heavily against Mark’s authorship. The transition between verses 8 and 9 is abrupt and awkward. The Greek particle translated “now” that begins verse 9 implies continuity with the preceding narrative. What follows however, does not continue the story of the women referred to in verse 8, but describes Christ’s appearance to Mary Magdalene (John 11-18).

The masculine participle in verse 9 introduces Mary Magdalene as if for the first time. Further, if Mark wrote “verse 9”, it is strange that he would only now note that Jesus had cast 7 demons out of her. The angel spoke of Jesus’ appearing to His followers in Galilee, yet the appearances described “in verses 9-20” are all in the Jerusalem area.

Finally, the presence in these verses of a significant number of Greek words used nowhere else in Mark argues that Mark did not write them. (Verses 9-20), represent an early (they were known to the second-century fathers Irenaeus, Tatian, and possibly Justin Martyr), attempt to complete Mark’s gospel.

While for the most part summarizing truths taught elsewhere in Scripture, and no doctrines should be formulated based solely on them. Since, in spite of all these considerations of the likely unreliability of this section, it is possible to be wrong on the issue, and thus, it is good to consider the meaning of this passage and leave it in the text, just as with (John 7:53 – 8:11).

In verses 9-18, Jesus commissions His disciples (see Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:46-49)”.

Mark 16:9 "Now when [Jesus] was risen early the first [day] of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils."

“Jesus was risen early the first day of the week”: That is, early Sunday morning.

“Mary Magdalene” (see note on 15:40).

Mary loved Jesus, because He had freed her from the bondage of those seven devils. Here again, we see He first appeared to a woman (Mary Magdalene), mainly because there were no men there to appear to.

I believe this was specifically mentioned to show that women have been set free by Jesus to follow Him the same as the men. She was in fact, like the first missionary. She carried the first gospel message to the disciples.

Mark 16:10 "[And] she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept."

They had forgotten that He said He would rise on the third day. They mourned, because they felt there was no hope. Can you imagine how they felt when she told them? Some probably, did not believe her, but others began to see a glimmer of hope, but still could not bring themselves to believe that she was telling the truth. They wanted to believe, but couldn't.

Mark 16:11 "And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not."

Their recollection of His telling them that He would rise again had been totally forgotten. They had never seen anyone rise before, and they did not believe her. It reminds me so much of our day. You can tell someone of a wonderful experience that you have had with God, and they don't believe you. The only time it becomes real to them is, when it happens to them.

Verses 12-13: This incident is related (in Luke 24:13-32).

Mark 16:12 "After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country."

This whole group would not believe, until they saw Him for themselves. The 24th chapter of Luke has a detailed account of Jesus appearing to the two disciples. Read it for more information on this.

Mark 16:13 "And they went and told [it] unto the residue: neither believed they them."

It was no different when the two disciples told that Jesus was alive, than when Mary Magdalene told them. They did not believe it.

Mark 16:14 "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."

“The eleven”: The 12 minus Judas, who had committed suicide (Matt. 27:3-10).

“Unbelief and hardness of heart”: In not believing the witnesses of the resurrection (verses 12-13; Luke 24:10-11).

Here Jesus scolded the disciples for not believing what Mary and the two disciples had told them about His resurrection. He had predicted it before the cross. They just had not received this into their hearts. Of all who should have believed, it should have been the disciples or the eleven, as they were called then.

Verses 15-16: Similar to Matthew's account of the Great Commission, with the added contrast of those who have been baptized (believers), with those who refuse to believe and are condemned. Even if verse 16 is a genuine part of Mark's gospel, it does not teach that baptism saves, since the lost are condemned for unbelief, not for not being baptized (see note on Acts 2:38).

Mark 16:15 "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

This is called the "great commission". It is just as valid to each of us as it was to the followers of Jesus of old. The gospel shall be preached in all the world, and then shall the end come.

Ministers (men and women), are called to go, preach and baptize. You can't sit at home twiddling your thumbs and get any one saved. Preach the good news of Jesus Christ to everyone who will listen. By the foolishness of preaching, people are saved.

Mark 16:16 "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Only faith, not baptism, is essential for salvation, as the omission of baptism from the last clause shows.

The first step to salvation is believing that Jesus is our Savior.

In (Romans 10:9-10), we read that believing in the heart is the important thing, and then telling someone is the next. Baptizing is an outward show to the world what has happened in your heart. The new birth occurs in your heart.

If you have a brand new heart, washed in the blood of the Lamb, then you want to be baptized; (buried in a watery grave to rise again to newness of life with Him). Those who do not believe are lost, because without faith it is impossible to please God.

Verses 17-18: These signs were promised to the apostolic community (Matt. 10:1; 2 Cor. 12:12), not all believers in all ages (1 Cor. 12:29-30). All (with the exception of drinking poison), were experienced by some in the apostolic church and reported in Scripture (e.g., Acts 28:5), but not afterward (verse 20).

Mark 16:17-18 "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."

This is really tough. Do you believe? Have you cast out any devils in Jesus' name lately? Is your tongue brand new? Have you done battle with any serpent lately? The serpent, you know, is that old Satan himself. We must remember that "greater is He that is in me than he that is in the world". If you are truly a follower of Jesus, (a Christian), He will protect you from the enemy.

Notice, I didn't say we had the power; I said Jesus has the power. We just use His power. He lets us use His name, if we are His. One more question. How many sick have you laid hands on lately? These signs shall follow them that believe. Examining these Scriptures one by one shows us quickly where we fall short, doesn't it?

Verses 19-20: Christ ascends to glory. (See Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:3-9). The so-called "shorter ending" is accepted by no one as being written by Mark. The traditional ending (KJV), is in nearly all manuscripts, but is lacking in the two oldest ones we have.

Mark 16:19 "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."

“Right hand of God”: The place of honor Jesus assumed after His ascension (see note on Acts 2:33).

Forty days are gathered in this sentence. Over 500 saw the resurrected Lord during these forty days. He truly was carried to heaven on a cloud, and does even now; sits at the right hand of the Father, for His work of salvation is done. He told us that from the cross, when He said, "It is finished".

Mark 16:20 "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with [them], and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

“Confirming the word with signs” (See notes on Acts 2:22; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4).

After they finally believed, they went and preached. Can they say that about us? After we believed, we went and preached. The Lord confirmed His Word. As they ministered in His name, He healed and showed great signs.

Mark Chapter 16 Questions

1. Who came to the sepulcher as soon as Sabbath had passed?
2. What were they there to do?
3. In verse 2, what day was intended?
4. How early was their arrival at the tomb?
5. What question were they asking each other as they went?
6. When they looked, what did they see?
7. John said at this point, Mary Magdalene did what?
8. When they entered the sepulcher, what did they see?
9. When they saw this, what effect did it have on them?
10. Why do you suppose he was in the tomb?
11. What wonderful news did the angel give them?
12. What are angels?
13. Who is Jesus specifically called by the angel?
14. What did the angel tell them to do?
15. Why do you think he specifically mentioned Peter?

16. Where did the angel tell them Jesus was?
17. What did the angel tell them to do?
18. Who did Jesus appear to first?
19. How many devils had Jesus cast out of her?
20. What were the others doing, when Mary went to tell them?
21. What was their reaction, when she told them?
22. Who did Jesus appear to on the road?
23. Did the disciples believe them?
24. What did Jesus upbraid the eleven for?
25. What is known as the great commission?
26. Who told them to do it?
27. What are the signs that follow?
28. In verse 17, this commission is to whom?
29. In verse 16, who shall be saved?
30. Do you believe? Are these signs following you?
31. How many days was Jesus on earth after the resurrection?
32. How many saw Him after the resurrection?
33. Why is He sitting at the right hand of the Father?