



## The Gospel of Mark - Chapter Sixteen

### III. Mark 8:27-16:8 - Testing Jesus' Authority in Suffering (continues/concludes)

#### III.c. Mark 14:1-16:8 - Death and resurrection in Jerusalem (continues/concludes)

##### III.c.iii Mark 15:21-16:8 - Crucifixion and resurrection (continues/concludes)

#### Summary of Chapter Sixteen

The women go to the tomb on the Sunday morning to find the tomb empty, except for an angel, who told them that Jesus is now the Risen Lord and that they were to return to inform the disciples of this.

The longer ending, vv.9-20, provides essentially a summary statement of other known Scriptures that tell of Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene, to two disciples on the Emmaus Road, and then the eleven apostles. Following some final teaching and rebuking, indications of Spiritual gifts to come, and instructions to go out into the world to spread the Gospel, known as the great commission, Jesus ascended into heaven.

#### III.c.iii.4 Mark 16:1-8 - Jesus Has Risen

The women, who had witnessed the crucifixion and burial of their Lord, took some oils to anoint the body of Jesus in his tomb. When they arrived they found the stone that had sealed the tomb had been rolled away, and that the body of Jesus was gone.

An angel in the tomb informed them that Jesus had risen from death. He instructed the women to return to the other disciples, especially Peter, to inform them what they had found and instruct them that they were to return to Galilee to meet with Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint

Jesus' body. <sup>2</sup> Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb <sup>3</sup> and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

#### Mark 16:1-3

Once the Sabbath was over, which officially occurred at sundown on the Saturday evening, the women were able to buy oils for a further embalming of the corpse after sunrise on Sunday morning, which was the first day of the week.

**Sunday Nisan 17 was considered to be the third day:** <<From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life>> (Matthew 16:21), <<They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life." And the disciples were filled with grief>> (Matthew 17:23), and: <<"We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!">> (Matthew 20:18-19).

<sup>4</sup> But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. <sup>5</sup> As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

#### Mark 16:4-5

They saw a young man, who was an angel. Other accounts: <<While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them>> (Luke 24:4), and: <<Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot>> (John 20:11-12), give additional information, specifying two angels, but here and: <<There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified">> (Matthew 28:2-5), mention only one. Studying the texts, the angels were undertaking different tasks and there may well have been more than two, but it is clear there were at least two. That Mark and Matthew mention only one does not detract from their accounts nor does it cause any conflict or inconsistency in the account being told.

<sup>6</sup> "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

### Mark 16:6

Don't be alarmed. Both God and his angels tried to put people at their ease when they suddenly appeared to them: <<*After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward"*>> (Genesis 15:1), <<*But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John"*>> (Luke 1:13), and: <<*But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God"*>> (Luke 1:30).

Jesus the Nazarene is a term that indicated Jesus had grown up in Nazareth, although it is a Greek term that comes from a Hebrew word that means branch, a term used to indicate the coming Messiah: <<*In that day the Branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel*>> (Isaiah 4:2), <<*"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land"*>> (Jeremiah 23:5), <<*In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line; he will do what is just and right in the land*>> (Jeremiah 33:15), and: <<*Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord'*>> (Zechariah 6:12). When these prophecies were written the town of Nazareth did not exist under that name!

He has risen! He is not here. The heavenly messenger confirmed that Jesus had fulfilled his predictions that he would rise from the dead: <<*He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again*>> (Mark 8:31), and: <<*"Truly I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God"*>> (Mark 14:25).

<sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'

### Mark 16:7

Go, tell his disciples. The women were witnesses of the crucifixion: <<*Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph, and Salome*>> (Mark 15:40), the burial: <<*Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid*>> (Mark 15:47), and the empty tomb (v.5), as well as the message of the resurrection (v.6). Mark's report that women were the first witnesses to the Christ's resurrection was courageous, since the testimony of women as witnesses was not always given credence in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century context, especially in a court of law. After the initial encounters with the Risen Jesus in Jerusalem, Galilee again served as a place of preparation, just as Jesus had predicted: <<*But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee*>> (Mark 14:28). Jesus thus avoided the possibility that the disciples might hold false expectations of a political, messianic kingdom in Jerusalem, something they continued to speak about right up until his ascension: <<*Then they gathered*

around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?”>> (Acts 1:6).

And Peter. Despite the lack of any apparent hierarchy in the apostolic grouping, it is noted here that even the angel made special mention of Peter. Perhaps this was because Peter was still distraught at having denied even knowing Jesus three times, as recorded in Mark 14:66-72. This is the first indication of the reconciliation between Jesus and Peter that was soon to come.

**<sup>8</sup> Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.**

### Mark 16:8

Trembling and astonishment follow on from the women’s awe at being eyewitnesses to an act of God that changed all of history.

They said nothing to anyone. Their silence would be only temporary: <<*So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples*>> (Matthew 28:8).

This Gospel account, known to have been compiled by Mark on behalf of Peter, ends with the women leaving the tomb to seek the disciples in Jerusalem.

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### III.c.iv Mark 16:9-20 - Longer ending of Mark

The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20, which appears to have been added by someone other than Mark but essentially contains no new material that is not included in the other Gospel accounts or in the Book of Acts.

Few analytical comments will be made on this section.

**<sup>9</sup> When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons.**

**<sup>10</sup> She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. <sup>11</sup> When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.**

**<sup>12</sup> Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. <sup>13</sup> These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either.**

**<sup>14</sup> Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.**

**<sup>15</sup> He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. <sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but**

whoever does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup> And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; <sup>18</sup> they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”

<sup>19</sup> After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. <sup>20</sup> Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

### Mark 16:9-20

Some ancient manuscripts of Mark’s Gospel contain these verses and others do not, which presents a puzzle for scholars who specialise in the history of such manuscripts.

This longer ending is missing from various old and reliable Greek manuscripts, especially Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, as well as numerous early Latin, Syriac, Armenian and Georgian manuscripts. Early church fathers, e.g. Origen and Clement of Alexandria, did not appear to know of these verses. Eusebius and Jerome state that this section is missing in most manuscripts available at their time. And some manuscripts that contain vv.9-20 indicate that older manuscripts lack the section.

On the other hand, some early and many later manuscripts, such as the manuscripts known as A, C, and D, do contain vv.9-20, and many church fathers, such as Irenæus, evidently knew of these verses.

As for the verses themselves, they contain various Greek words and expressions uncommon to Mark, and there are stylistic differences as well. Many think this shows vv.9-20 to be a later addition.

In summary, vv.9-20 should be read with caution. Many modern translations have placed the section within brackets, showing their doubts as to whether it was originally part of what Mark wrote, but also recognising its long history of acceptance by many in the church.

The content of vv.9-20 is best explained by reference to other passages in the Gospels and the rest of the NT. Most of its content is found elsewhere, and no point of doctrine is affected by the absence or presence of vv.9-20.

With particular reference to v.18, there is no command to pick up serpents or to drink deadly poison; there is merely a promise of protection as found in other parts of the NT: <<*Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, “This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live”*>> (Acts 28:3-4), and: <<*Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. Is*

*anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective>> (James 5:13-16).*

Although it is prophesied that a time is coming when: <<*The infant will play near the cobra's den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest*>> (Isaiah 11:8), the best advice is: <<*Do not put the Lord your God to the test*>> (Deuteronomy 16:6a).