

MARK

Chapter 16

The Resurrection

When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 And they were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?” 4 And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back—it was very large. 5 And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. 6 And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” 8 And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

16:1 *Sabbath was over.* About 6:00 P.M. Saturday evening. No purchases were possible on the Sabbath. (CSB)

After sundown on Saturday. (TLSB)

Mary Magdalene – Mary of Magdala (Magdalene). She was a leader among these women because she had received more than all the rest, and therefore her measure of devotion and love was greater. Fourteen times Mary is mentioned by name. In eight of these her name leads the list.

Somehow the name of this woman has come to be associated with fallen womanhood the world over largely because some scholars chose to identify her with the unnamed sinful woman of Luke 7:36-50. There is no evidence in the Bible to support this thought.

The women fully intend to go back to the tomb to anoint the dead body of Jesus, for they “saw where he was laid” (15:47). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

Mary the mother of James – This was James the younger. (CSB)

Salome – Salome, the wife of Zebedee and mother of James and John – Sister of Mary mother of Jesus.

spices. Embalming was not practiced by the Jews. These spices were brought as an act of devotion and love. (CSB)

Sweet-smelling ointments were usually wrapped around corpses in strips of cloth before entombment. (TLSB)

The women who witnessed the crucifixion and burial purchased aromatic oils with which to anoint the body of Jesus. Spices were not used for mummification, which was not a Jewish custom, but to offset the odors from decomposition. It is not uncommon to find in Palestinian tombs dating to the first century such funerary objects as perfume bottles, ointment jars, and other vessels of clay and glass designed to contain the aromatic oils. The desire of the women to anoint the body indicates that the oils were to be

poured over the head. The preparations for returning to the tomb in performance of an act of piety show that the women had no expectation of an immediate resurrection of Jesus. Since the climate of Jerusalem deterioration would occur rapidly, the visit of the women with the intention of ministering to the corpse after two nights and a day must be viewed as an expression of intense devotion. (Lane)

to anoint him – The women had no expectation of Jesus’ resurrection. (CSB)

16:2 *very early* – Generally points to the time around 6 a.m., probably in the faint light of dawn. It is not difficult to conclude that Mark used the two terms *lian prōi* simply to connect the women’s trek to the tomb with the moment of sunrise. Note John’s testimony: “while it was still dark” (Jn 20:1). The precise moment of the beginning of their Easter marathon is less important than the resurrection finish line. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

first day. Sunday. (TLSB)

16:3 *they were saying to one another* – Mark is the only one of the synoptic gospels to record the words of the women’s conversation. In Mark, the problem is how to get to the body, considering the huge stone that would be blocking their way. On the other hand, Mark is the only one who does not give us an explanation of how it was moved from the entrance of the tomb. He simply states the fact. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

Who will roll the stone away ... ? Setting the large stone in place was a relatively easy task, but once it had slipped into the groove cut in bedrock in front of the entrance it was very difficult to remove. (CSB)

Although the women had witnessed the burial of Jesus and the closing of the entrance to the sepulcher (Ch. 15:47), they had no knowledge of the official sealing of the tomb by the Sanhedrin nor of the posting of a guard (cf. Mt 27:62-66). This is evident from the fragment of conversation preserved by Mark alone concerning the rolling back of the stone from the entrance to the tomb. While the setting in place of a large stone was a relatively easy task, once it had slipped into the groove cut in bedrock just before the entrance it could be removed only with great difficulty. Mark’s account is characterized by great restraint. The evangelist makes no attempt to explain how the stone was rolled back, but records simply that the women looked up and saw that it had been removed. (Lane)

16:5 *entering the tomb*. Inside the large opening of the facade of the tomb was a forechamber, at the back of which a low rectangular opening led to the burial chamber. (CSB)

young man...dressed in a white robe. Identified by Matthew (28:2) as an angel. (CSB)

An angel. Angels typically appear in the form of young, adult males. (TLSB)

Inside the large opening in the façade of the tomb was an antechamber, at the back of which was a rectangular doorway about two feet high led inside. Small low doorways between the antechamber and the burial chamber were standard features of Jewish tombs in this period. The inner chamber where the body had been laid was perhaps six or seven feet square, and about the same height. When the women entered the burial chamber they were startled to see “a young man clothed in a white robe, sitting on the right side.” Mark’s language could designate a valiant young man or an angel. (Lane)

In the LXX, the Jewish Apocrypha, and Josephus, *neaniskon* (“young man”) “designates young men who are exceptionally strong and valiant, or faithful and wise” (William Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark*

[Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974], p 527). It is therefore also an appropriate word to describe the mighty angels of God, who do his bidding. Lane remarks that “there is some detail in the context which makes this plain. In ch. 16:5 this detail seems to be the element of revelation” (p 527, fn 106). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

As frequently in the OT and the Jewish literature from the later period, the angel appears as the divine messenger. This conclusion is supported by the detail of the white garment. In the color symbolism of the NT, white is primarily the heavenly color and is mentioned almost exclusively in eschatological or apocalyptic contexts. In this instance the white clothes are not properly a description, but an indication of the dazzling character of their glory. The presence of the angel underscores the eschatological character of the resurrection of Jesus and anticipates the parousia when the Son of Man will come in the glory of the Father with the holy angels. (Lane)

were alarmed – The response of the women to the angelic presence is described by a strong word which Mark alone among the NT writers uses (cf. 9:15). It introduces the note of dread which is woven into the theme until it becomes the dominant motif in verse 8. Confronted with the messenger of God, the women were terrified. (Lane)

16:6 *do not be alarmed* – People were often filled with awe and fear in the presence of angels. (TLSB)

Jesus of Nazareth – This reference allows no equivocation concerning the subject of the emphatic statement. (Lane)

crucified. A Roman means of execution in which the victim was nailed to a cross. Heavy, wrought-iron nails were driven through the wrists and the heel bones. If the life of the victim lingered too long, death was hastened by breaking his legs. Archaeologists have discovered the bones of a crucified man, near Jerusalem, dating between A.D. 7 and 66, which shed light on the position of the victim when nailed to the cross. Only slaves, the basest of criminal, and offenders who were not Roma citizens were executed in this manner. First-century authors vividly describe the agony and disgrace of being crucified.

He has risen! The climax of Mark’s Gospel is the resurrection, without which Jesus’ death, though noble, would be indescribably tragic. But in the resurrection he is declared to be the Son of God with power (Ro 1:4). (CSB)

Luther says, “The blessed resurrection... is pure joy, because we hear that our greatest Treasure, over which we rejoice, is already in heaven above, and that only the most insignificant part remains behind; and that He will awaken this, too, and draw it after Him as easily as a person awakens from sleep. There will no longer be any grief or suffering, and neither world nor devil will plague and sadden us anymore.” (TLSB)

That Jesus of Nazareth was crucified, died, and was buried (“he is not here”) is historical fact. That the body was missing was obvious. That “he has risen” is known only by revelation and received only by faith. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

The action of God is not always self-evident. For this reason it is invariably accompanied by the word of revelation, interpreting the significance of an event (e.g. Ex 15:1-18 interprets the flight from Egypt as the action of God). The emptiness of the tomb possessed no factual value in itself. It simply raised the question, what happened to the body? God, therefore, sent his messenger to disclose the fact of the resurrection. The announcement of the angel is the crystallization point for faith. (Lane)

The fact that women were the first to receive the announcement of the resurrection is significant in view of the contemporary attitudes. Jewish law pronounced women ineligible as witnesses. Early Christian tradition confirms that the reports of the women concerning embarrassing (cf. Lk 24:11, 22-24; Mk 16:11)). That the news had first been delivered by women was inconvenient and troublesome to the Church, for their testimony lacked the value as evidence. The primitive Community would not have invented this detail, which can be explained only on the ground that it was factual. (Lane)

16:7 *and Peter.* Jesus showed special concern for Peter, in view of his confident boasting and subsequent denials (14:29–31, 66–72). (CSB)

The expression “his disciples and Peter” corresponds to Ch 1:36, “Simon and those with him.” Peter is singled out because of his repeated and emphatic denial of Jesus (Ch 14:66-72). He has not been mentioned by Mark since that shameful occasion, and his disloyalty might well be regarded as an extreme example of sin and blasphemy which disqualified him from participating in Jesus’ triumph. Yet he had been forgiven (Ch 3:28). The summons to Galilee provided the assurance that Peter had not been rejected by the risen Lord. (Lane)

Galilee. Original home of Jesus and His disciples. This fulfills Jesus’ promise in 14:28. (TLSB)

you will see Him. “Examples of mercy help ... such as when we see Peter forgiven his denial” (Ap XXI 36). (TLSB)

just as he told you. Jesus foretold in 14:28 that he would meet his disciples in Galilee after his resurrection. Now the angel commissions the women to bring this promise (“just as he told you”) to the remembrance of “his disciples and Peter.” Peter is singled out because he was to be convinced of complete forgiveness for his sinful denial of Jesus (14:66–72). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

16:8 *trembling and astonishment...afraid* – This verse is supremely important. The vivid description of the women—“trembling and bewildered,” fleeing from the tomb in silence and fear—completes the primary motif of Mark’s gospel. When Jesus stilled the storm (4:41), his disciples “were terrified.” When he commanded the demons in the man in to enter the pigs, which then committed suicide by drowning, the people “were afraid” (5:15); so also the woman “trembling with fear” (5:33), the synagogue ruler (5:36), the disciples when they saw Jesus walking on the water (6:50), the comment about Peter’s ignorant babbling at the transfiguration (9:6), and the disciples’ reluctance (“fear”) to even begin to ask Jesus what he meant about being betrayed and killed (9:31–32). Mark’s repeated observation of this emotional reaction of fear serves as an indication of the presence and action of God. So here at the tomb, the women were aware of the nearness and power of God, who had raised Jesus from death. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 7, Part 2)

The statement finds its closest parallel in the transfiguration narrative, where Peter’s brash proposal to build three tabernacles calls forth the remark, “for he did not know what to say, for they were exceedingly afraid (Ch 9:6). Those who are confronted with God’s direct intervention in the historical process do not know how to react. (Lane)

they said nothing – The women were temporarily overcome by fear and could not speak (as were Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration, 9:6). Luther says, “A Christian must accustom himself to think about Christ’s victory – the victory in which everything has already been accomplished and in which we have everything we should have. Henceforth we live only to spread among other people the news of what Christ has achieved.” (TLSB)

16:1–8 Three women undertake the job of properly preparing Jesus’ body for burial, which the press of time prevented earlier. When they arrive at the tomb, they find it empty and hear the wonderful (and temporarily paralyzing) message that Jesus has risen from the dead and the tomb is empty. In spite of Jesus’ clear predictions on at least three occasions (8:31–32; 9:31; 10:33–34), His disciples do not believe. Jesus rises from the dead, proclaiming His victory to all creation and providing for all believers a resurrection to eternal life on the Last Day. • “Christ Jesus lay in death’s strong bands For our offenses given; But now at God’s right hand He stands And brings us life from heaven. Therefore let us joyful be And sing to God right thankfully Loud songs of alleluia! Alleluia!” Amen. (*LSB* 458:1) (TLSB)

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

9 [Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. **10** She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. **11** But when they heard that he was alive and had been seen by her, they would not believe it.

16:9–20† Serious doubt exists as to whether these verses belong to the original Gospel of Mark. They are absent from important early manuscripts and display certain peculiarities of vocabulary, style and theological content that are unlike the rest of Mark. His Gospel probably ended at 16:8, or its original ending has been lost. (CSB)

As the ESV text note for 16:9–20 shows, these verses do not appear in a number of early Greek manuscripts. This likely means they were not part of Mark’s original composition, which may have used a “suspended” ending that left readers wanting to learn more about Jesus and His disciples. The longer ending was perhaps added later to satisfy people’s interests. (TLSB)

16:11 Luther: “Faith is a divine work which God demands of us; but at the same time He Himself must implant it in us, for we cannot believe by ourselves” (AE 23:23). (TLSB)

16:9–11 Mary Magdalene sees the resurrected Jesus and tells the disciples about Him, but they do not believe it. Sinful human nature cannot believe. Doubt assails our hearts at every opportunity. Yet faith, like life, comes as a pure gift from God. He keeps us in the true faith unto life everlasting. • “Lord, by the stripes which wounded Thee, From death’s dread sting Thy servants free That we may live and sing to Thee. Alleluia!” Amen. (*LSB* 464:5) (TLSB)

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples

12 After these things he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. **13** And they went back and told the rest, but they did not believe them.

16:12–13 A shortened account of the two men going to Emmaus (see Lk 24:13–35). (CSB)

16:12 *another form*. The unnamed disciples were kept from recognizing Jesus. (TLSB)

walking into the country. On the road to Emmaus. Cf Lk 24:13–34. (TLSB)

16:13 *they did not believe them*. Even after a second eyewitness report, the disciples did not believe that Jesus was risen from the dead (cf Jn 20:24–25). Ter: “It was well, however, that the unbelief of the disciples was so persistent, in order that to the last we might consistently maintain that Jesus revealed Himself to the disciples as none other than the Christ of the prophets” (*ANF* 3:422). (TLSB)

16:12–13 The pattern of unbelief continues in spite of additional eyewitness accounts. Like us, the disciples are slow of heart and deaf to the good news of their reconciliation with God through Christ’s resurrection. Yet, He still rose for them and commissioned them to proclaim the Gospel everywhere. That

is still the gracious commission to the Church from Christ. • “Christ is arisen From the grave’s dark prison. So let our joy rise full and free; Christ our comfort true will be. Alleluia!” Amen. (LSB 459:1) (TLSB)

The Great Commission

14 Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. **15** And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. **16** Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. **17** And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; **18** they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.” **19** So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. **20** And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.]]

16:14 *the Eleven.* Judas Iscariot had committed suicide (see Mt 27:5). (CSB)

16:15 Hus: “Christ preached to the people on the sea, in the desert, in the fields and houses, in synagogues, in villages and on the streets, and taught his disciples.... And these, going forth, preached everywhere, that is, in every place where the people were willing to listen, God working with them” (*The Church*, pp 205–6). (TLSB)

16:16 *baptized.*† Faith is a gift from God, which He bestows through the Word and through Holy Baptism. “Concerning Baptism, our churches teach that Baptism is necessary for salvation [Mark 16:16] and that God’s grace is offered through Baptism” (AC IX 1). “Baptism is not a work that we offer to God. It is a work in which God baptizes us. In other words, a minister baptizes us on God’s behalf” (Ap XXIV 18). (TLSB)

16:17 *signs.* Miracles pointing to Christ. (TLSB)

in My name. By Jesus’ authority and in accordance with His will. (TLSB)

16:18 *drink deadly poison.* No occurrence of drinking deadly poison without harm is found in the NT. (CSB)

God promises to protect us, but we should not tempt or test Him. Cf Ac 28:3.(TLSB)

lay their hands on the sick. A way of communicating blessing and the Holy Spirit (cf Ac 19:6). Ambrose: “There is no power of man exercised in these things, in which the grace of the divine gift operates” (NPNF 2 10:335). (TLSB)

16:19 *right hand of God.* A position of authority second only to God’s (see 14:62; Ps 110:1). (CSB)

An expression stating that Christ rules the universe as Lord and God in the same way that a ruling son has a throne beside his father. (TLSB)

16:20 *preached everywhere.* Beginning with Jerusalem and then extending throughout the Roman province of Judea-Samaria and finally Rome itself. (TLSB)

worked with them. Jesus does not leave us alone but is always with us in this outreach (cf Mt 28:20). (TLSB)

confirmed the message. Miracles revealed the saving power of the Gospel. (TLSB)

16:14–20 Jesus commissions His followers to proclaim the message of salvation throughout the world. Only through faith in Jesus Christ can anyone be saved. The Gospel invitation is open to all. God wants all people to be saved through Jesus (1Tm 2:3–4). • “Now let the heav’ns be joyful, Let earth its song begin, Let all the world keep triumph And all that is therein. Let all things, seen and unseen, Their notes of gladness blend; For Christ the Lord has risen, Our joy that has no end!” Amen. (LSB 478:3) (TLSB)