

Mark 16:1-20 - Jesus of Nazareth has Risen!

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Introduction - Imagine hearing this story for the first time. What a wonder is the Resurrection! Jesus was resurrected from the dead and commanded His disciples to go and proclaim the gospel. We should follow Jesus and go forth unafraid on His mission to share the gospel, this good news, with all people.

v1-8 - He has risen! - Thursday evening Jesus was arrested. He was convicted and crucified at 9am Fri. At 3pm, He gave up His spirit. Saturday at 6pm ends the Sabbath, when these women can purchase spices to anoint Jesus' body above what Nicodemus and Joseph had already done (Jo 19:38-42). They arrive while it is still dark Sunday morning (Jo 20:1), likely unaware of the Roman guard and seal (Matt 27:62-66). However, the guards are unconscious and an earthquake and angel rolled the stone away (Matt 28:2-4, 11-15). Two angels were there, one sweetly speaking, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:4-7) Two crucial truths: He was crucified, and He has risen. The linen grave clothes are arranged as if the body had just passed through them.¹ His resurrection is proof of our justification before God (Rom 4:24-25, 10:9-10; 1Co 15:13-19). His disciples, and Peter, are to find Him in Galilee, just like He said (14:28).

v9-14² - Will you believe? - The disciples thought the story sounded like an "idle tale" (Lu 24:11; 1Co 1:23). Women were not allowed to give legal testimony during this time: the fact that Jesus first appears to women substantiates the trustworthiness of Mark's gospel. The story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus is referenced (Lu 24:13-32). Jesus eventually appears to the ten (excluding Thomas) and then the eleven (Lu 24:36-43; Jo 20:19-31). "Blessed are they who believe without seeing."

v15-20 - Will you go proclaim? - The mission is not over! The death and resurrection of Jesus was just the beginning of God's church (Matt 28:19-20). Go to all the world: Like being fruitful and multiplying (Gen 1:28), now we're to go and bear fruit for the Kingdom (Mar 4:20). What is the gospel? Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, He was raised, and He appeared to many (1Co 15:1-8). We must believe, which is more than intellectual acknowledgment (Jas 2:19). Belief is putting our complete trust in Jesus and making Him king of our life. Baptism does not save, it is grace through faith alone, yet it is an outward expression of our decision to follow Jesus (Eph 2:8-10; Rom 3:21-28). God saved us to be His people on earth and to enjoy eternal life with Him forever. Jesus has all authority and He sends us with His Spirit to accomplish His mission (Matt 28:18). Many miracles accompany those who proclaim the gospel manifested by the Spirit (1 Cor 12:4-11, 30; Act 2:1-11, 8:4-8; 28:1-9). Jesus accomplished salvation for the joy set before Him and is on the right hand of the Father (Rom 8:34; Heb 12:2). He will return like He departed (Act 1:11; Mrk 14:62). As they obeyed Jesus and went on the mission, "The Lord worked with them and confirmed the message."

So, what? Now, what? Look back at Mark 1:1 - "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Mark has presented excellent testimony of the good news of Who Jesus is and what His mission is. Do we believe it? Will we choose to obey Him and order our lives to put every aspect of our person under obedience to Christ, learning His commandments, following them, and teaching others to do the same? If we do that, we'll find fulfillment in life no matter our circumstances because we are living as God intended. The Christian life is not just a promise for tomorrow but a promise we can live out starting the day we put our trust in Jesus. We have a lot to celebrate: He is risen! And He has forgiven our sins, adopted us as His children, and given our lives a purpose of glorifying Him and sharing this good news.

- What has God most put on your heart in our study of Mark? What has God most helped you with through this gospel account? Take it up in praise and thanksgiving to Him today!
- Prayer: What remains in my heart that I have not surrendered completely to King Jesus?

¹ *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Earle. Pg. 349.

² What's with the square brackets? Some of the early manuscripts don't include this ending, but instead they have extra space after verse 8, suggesting the copying scribes knew of a longer ending. Even if v9-20 were not written by Mark, they are surely Scripture and recognized by the church as such very early on. (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary: NT*. Walvoord and Zuck. Pg. 193-194.)