

## 16. The Resurrection and the Great Commission

Mark 15 closed with the secure burial of Jesus in a tomb of solid rock, sealed with a large stone and guarded by soldiers:

46 So Joseph bought some linen cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the linen, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.

There was no way escape, except by divine intervention, which, indeed, happened when he was raised from the dead.

### ***The Secure Tomb Is Empty***

Mark 16:1-3

*16:1 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. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb 3 and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"*

The group of women who had been following him closely the previous day was on the way to the tomb. They knew the tomb was secured, for they wondered how they were going to move the stone at the entrance of the tomb. This statement seems contrary to Mark 16:9-10:

9 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. 10 She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping.

In fact, Mark 16:9-20 does not appear in some early manuscripts; however, the other gospels confirm the content of that passage in its essential elements.

Mark 16:4-8

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

*6 "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. 7 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.'"*

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

Matt 28:2-4 describes this "young man" as the angel of the Lord:

2 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. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

The primary message of the angel was to instruct them to tell the disciples that the

Lord would meet them in Galilee. The women were frightened and said nothing.

### ***Jesus Appears to Some of the Disciples***

[The most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20.]

Mark 16:9-11

*9 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. 10 She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. 11 When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.*

This passage appears to disagree with other statements in the early part of the chapter. This also is the only place that we read of Mary Magdalene as being demon possessed.

Mark 16:12-14

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

*14 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.*

Luke 24:13-16 records the meeting with the two men:

13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognizing him.

Paul offered the best summary of the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection in 1 Cor 15:5-8:

5 and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. 6 After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7 Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8 and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

### ***The Great Commission***

Mark 16:15-16

*15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*

This account of the great commission requires one to be baptized in order to be saved. This essential nature of baptism was repeated by Peter in Acts 2:37-39:

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call."

Paul preached the necessity of baptism in Acts 16:29-34:

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.  
30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized.

Paul himself obeyed this very same command in Acts 22:14-16:

14 "Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. 15 You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

### ***How the Word Was Confirmed***

Mark 16:17-20

*17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 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."*

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

The Hebrew writer taught that the word was confirmed in this very same way in Heb 2:2-4:

For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, 3 how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. 4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Although the signs and miracles followed the first generation of Christians, when the apostles died there was no way to pass them forward, since it was by the laying on of the apostles' hands that they passed to the early Christians. Acts 8:15-19 teaches:

When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money 19 and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

At the end of the apostolic age, the gifts ceased just as it was prophesied that they should in 1 Cor 13:8-11:

But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.