

- *The women prepare to anoint Jesus' body*

Late on Saturday night after the Sabbath has finished at about 6 pm, three women go to buy spices to anoint the body of Jesus. One of the women is Mary Magdalene. Another is Mary the mother of James. And there is Salome. They agree to anoint Jesus' body early on the following morning<sup>☞1</sup>, which will be a **Sunday**.

☞1 16:1

**Resurrection**

- *The stone rolled away*

Early the next day the three women go to the tomb of Jesus but they are wondering how to get the stone rolled away from the tomb entrance<sup>☞1</sup>. When they get there the stone is already rolled away<sup>☞2</sup>. A young man is there, dressed in a way that suggests he is an angel<sup>☞3</sup> (Matthew says there were two angels; Mark writes only about the one they spoke to). The angel tells them of the resurrection<sup>☞4</sup>. They are invited to see the place where Jesus had been<sup>☞5</sup>, but then they must go to Galilee where Jesus will appear to them<sup>☞6</sup>. Shocked and fearful the women hurry away, saying nothing to anyone because they are fearful<sup>☞7</sup>.

☞1 16:2-3

☞2 16:4

☞3 16:5

☞4 16:6

☞5 16:6

☞6 16:7

☞7 16:8

- *The angel*

- *The ending of Mark's gospel*

At this point Mark's Gospel ends. Verses 9-20 which appear in many Bibles, were added later but are not really part of Mark's Gospel. They are not found in the earliest manuscripts of our gospel. It is one of only two passages where a lengthy section has been added to the gospel. It is not something that need trouble us. Early manuscripts of the gospel had to be copied by hand. There are slight differences among the manuscripts. Most of the variations are tiny. In only two places<sup>☞1</sup> we have longer passages that are not original but were added later.

☞1 Mark 16:9-20 and John 8:1-12

Mark has implied that Jesus appeared to the disciples in Galilee. Perhaps a lost ending of Mark told how Jesus appeared to the disciples in Jerusalem and in Galilee, gave then parting instructions and then ascended into heaven. However we have only Mark 16:1-8 of the authentic Mark's Gospel.

- *A historical event*

The resurrection was a historical event. It actually happened. The body of Jesus was raised. An angel appeared to explain what had happened. It was not any kind of hallucination. The women were not expecting to find Jesus raised from the dead. On the contrary they had specially bought anointing oil to use on His dead body. The resurrection took them by surprise and made them hurry away with fear, saying nothing to anyone.

**1. A supernatural faith**

**1. The story prevents us from getting rid of the supernatural from the Christian faith.** Of course there have been people who have tried to do precisely that. There have been people who would like to re-tell the story of the Christian faith so that there is nothing miraculous about it. But as long as the Bible is taken with any seriousness it is quite impossible to get rid of the supernatural. Jesus was raised from the dead. It happened. Angels announced it. The Scriptures clearly present a gospel in which Jesus is raised from the dead. A 'Christianity' without the risen Jesus is a monstrosity.

**Jesus raised -The foundation**

**2. The events here are the foundation of everything else that follows in the story of the Christian faith.** It is the proof of Jesus' claims. It is the indication and sample of the fact that death has been conquered. It is the defeat of Satan, the one who holds people in the fear death. It is a sample of future resurrection. It is the reversal of Genesis 3:19.

Similarly the resurrection is the foundation of Christian experience. The Christian is joined on to the power of Jesus' resurrection. He is '*raised with Christ*'.

The original Gospel of Mark ended sharply and abruptly at Mark 16:8. It was Mark's purpose to tell the basic facts of what happened in and around Galilee<sup>☞1</sup>, on the way to Judea<sup>☞2</sup> and in Judea itself<sup>☞3</sup>. To this he added a very brief introduction<sup>☞4</sup> and a very brief ending<sup>☞5</sup>. Apart from the bare fact of Jesus' resurrection he says nothing more because that was not his purpose. No doubt he knew all the rest: the resurrection appearances, the day of Pentecost, the story of the first days of the church. Mark knew about

☞1 1:14-9:1

☞2 9:2-10:52

☞3 11:1-15:47

☞4 1:1-13

☞5 16:1-8

those things but his task was simply to tell of the basic facts of what happened in Galilee and in Judea. He has finished that task, so he stops.

### 3. The Fact of Jesus' resurrection

3. **Mark wants to confront us with the sheer fact of Jesus' resurrection.** Other gospel writers tell us interesting stories but Mark simply wants us to face the sheer fact that Jesus is raised from the dead! This is as far as Mark's purpose takes him. No doubt he knew the rest of the story but Mark wanted to end here – or if there was a lost ending God wanted the gospel to end here!

- *Hard to believe – but what if it actually happened?*

Of all the things that are difficult to believe, a resurrection from the dead is the greatest. The story challenges our view of reality. It challenges our ideas about what life is all about. Men and women think they know what can happen and what cannot. They think they know that dead men don't rise! That is the general view that people have of life. But what if that is wrong? What if Jesus Christ did rise from the dead?

- *The resurrection "turns everything around"*

If the resurrection is true, then God is real. The spiritual world is real. The miraculous is real. Prayer is real. The Holy Spirit is real. All of our secular ideas are wrong. The resurrection turns everything around and lets us know that we do not know what life is all about as much as we thought we did.

- *The physical body*

And it is a resurrection of the **body** that is involved. The Bible is not speaking simply of some vague 'life after death'; it is speaking of a resurrected body, something solid, something physical.

### 4. An offer of forgiveness

4. **The resurrection story came with an offer of forgiveness.** 'Go tell his disciples and Peter...'. The disciples had abandoned Jesus. They had all sworn they would never deny Him. Peter had said he would die with Jesus, if need be. But in the event they all ran away, and Peter denied ever having any connection with Jesus.



But there is forgiveness! 'Go tell his disciples and Peter...'. Jesus is not going to hold against them their unbelief. He had told them about what would happen to Him and they had not believed Him – but it is alright. There is forgiveness.

### 5. The Church has a future

5. **Mark's story lets us know that the church has a future.** The story ends very suddenly. And yet Mark tells us enough for us to know that the story will continue. 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee...'. The main work of Jesus had been in Galilee. Now He is going ahead of them. They will meet Him there, and receive further instructions. The work of Jesus is to continue!

- *The story continues with those who have trusted in Jesus*

Jesus did not go back to the chief priests and the theologians. He did not go back to Pontius Pilate! Jesus is not interested in visibly proving Himself to unbelieving people. The story of the church will continue with those who have trusted Him. To them He will give many proofs that He is alive. And the church of Jesus will continue. It will be kept alive by its faith in a risen Lord Jesus Christ.

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