

## Mark 16:1-20 ~ Scripture Verses

### *The Resurrection*

<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?"

<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.

<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.

<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.'"

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

[The earliest manuscripts do not have Mark 16:9–20.]

<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 good news to all creation. <sup>16</sup> Whoever believes and is baptized 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 16:1-20 ~ Discussion Questions

1. When and why did the women go to Jesus' tomb? Why at that time?
2. Why were they concerned about rolling the stone away?
3. Who was the "young man" the women saw at the tomb? What did he say to them?
4. Why did the women flee from the tomb and not tell anyone what they saw?
5. Biblical scholars agree that the last verse written in this book by Mark was verse 16:8. Where did verses 16:9-20 come from? Are they reliable?
6. How did Jesus' disciples respond every time someone told them that Jesus had risen from the dead? (16:11, 13, John 20:24-19) How had they responded earlier when he told them he was going to die? (Mark 8:31-33, Matthew 16:21-23) If this happened today, how would you respond? Are there things in the Bible today that you have trouble believing?
7. How did Jesus rebuke the apostles when he first saw them? (16:14) When you get to heaven and first meet Jesus, what's the first thing he's going to say to you?
8. What instructions did Jesus give his apostles? (16:15-18) Were these commands just for his apostles, or are they for others? Are they for you?
9. What can we learn from this passage (16:16) about the importance of baptism?
10. Has your view of Jesus Christ changed at all from studying this part of the Mark's gospel? How? Be specific.
11. Do you believe verses 16:17-18 literally? Enough that you would do what it describes (drink poison, pick up a deadly snake)? (Acts 28:1-6)
12. What did the disciples do after Jesus had left earth to be in heaven? (16:20) Do you have a role or responsibility to do the same? What are the three steps in fulfilling this command? (Mark 16:20, Matthew 28:19-20, John 21:15-17)
13. How does the Lord "confirm his word" through Christians today? (16:20)

## Mark 16:1-20 ~ Leader's Guide

1. When and why did the women go to Jesus' tomb? Why at that time?

The Sabbath ended about 6:00 p.m. on Saturday evening. No purchases were possible on the Sabbath so it would have been that evening or the next morning before they could have bought spices. Embalming was not practiced by the Jews, so it was their intent to *anoint* Jesus' body as an act of devotion and love. In those days, an ossuary was generally used for Jewish burials. They are frequently used where burial space is scarce. A body is first buried in a temporary grave, then after some years the skeletal remains are removed and placed in an ossuary. The greatly reduced space taken up by an ossuary means that it is possible to store the remains of many more people in a single tomb than if the original bodies were left as is.

2. Why were they concerned about rolling the stone away?

Setting the large stone in place was a relatively easy task, but once it had slipped into the groove cut into the bedrock in front of the entrance, it was very difficult to remove. Obviously, they had no expectation of Jesus' resurrection.

3. Who was the "young man" the women saw at the tomb? What did he say to them?

Inside the large opening of the facade of the tomb was a forechamber, at the back of which a low rectangular opening led to a burial chamber. Matthew 28:2-3 says an angel of the Lord rolled back the stone and sat on it. Luke 24:2-4 says the women found the tomb empty and while they were wondering about this, two men appeared and suddenly stood beside them. In John 20:1, only Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and the man (or angel) does not appear at all. So this story is a little hazy in its details. It seems that at least one angel, possibly two, appeared to the women (woman?) And said something along the lines of the words in Mark 16:6-7, which is the most complete of all four accounts (unusual for Mark, who is usually the most terse). The angel speaks of a meeting between Jesus and his apostles when they will be forgiven and restored; and their relationship with Jesus, broken by their failure to stick with him, will be renewed. Once again, they will become disciples, with Jesus "going ahead" of them, just as he did before (10:32).

4. Why did the women flee from the tomb and not tell anyone what they saw?

They were afraid; wouldn't you be? And who would believe them anyway?

5. Biblical scholars agree that the last verse written in this book by Mark was verse 16:8. Where did verses 16:9-20 come from? Are they reliable?

It is clear that on stylistic and theological grounds, verses 16:9-20 were written and added by someone other than Mark. Did Mark intend to end his book at 16:8? Many feel that this is an abrupt, clumsy and unsatisfactory place to end—and it left the gospel uncompleted. There are several explanations for this: the ending was accidentally or deliberately lost or Mark was prevented from finishing by illness or being arrested. On the other hand, because it was the first gospel written (based on sermons of Peter) before the Christian church had become a church of any real power and glory, perhaps Mark did intend it to end there, with its last focus on Jesus' suffering and crucifixion.

Nevertheless, a later unknown scribe(s) added the last 12 verses, which are totally consistent with the scripture of Matthew, Luke, and John, so they have come to be accepted by most people as canonical.

6. How did Jesus' disciples respond every time someone told them that Jesus had risen from the dead? (16:11, 13, John 20:24-19) How had they responded earlier when he told them he was going to die? (Mark 8:31-33, Matthew 16:21-23) If this happened today, how would you respond? Are there things in the Bible today that you have trouble believing?

They didn't believe him. Thomas, of course, gets the nickname "doubting Thomas" from his disbelief, but all the disciples expressed disbelief. Would you have been any different?

7. How did Jesus rebuke the apostles when he first saw them? (16:14) When you get to heaven and first meet Jesus, what's the first thing he's going to say to you?

8. What instructions did Jesus give his apostles? (16:15-18) Were these commands just for his apostles, or are they for others? Are they for you?

9. What can we learn from this passage (16:16) about the importance of baptism?

Going back to Mark 1:4, we see that John the Baptist was practicing a new form of baptism: repentance-baptism, or baptism that was preceded or accompanied by repentance. Baptism was not new; Jews knew of it for Gentile converts, but had not heard that descendants of Abraham (Jews) needed to repent and be baptized. Repentance is deliberately turning from sin to righteousness.

The importance of baptism is, of course, that Jesus said, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned." Interestingly, he did not say that not being baptized will cause one to be condemned, but merely emphasized the positive result of baptism *and* faith.

10. Has your view of Jesus Christ changed at all from studying this part of the Mark's gospel? How? Be specific.

11. Do you believe verses 16:17-18 literally? Enough that you would do what it describes (drink poison, pick up a deadly snake)? (Acts 28:1-6)

First of all, we must go back to the fact that Mark did not write verses 9 to 20. Who did? Are these verses suspect? This is the only gospel where this statement about poison and snakes appears. The real problem with these verses, is the idea that the taking up of serpents and drinking deadly things is a command of some sort, or a test of faith. When Satan suggested that Jesus leap from the pinnacle of the temple to prove His identity as the Messiah, Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” So what this verse seems to be is a promise of protection for a Christian when obeying or serving the Lord.

As for the poison, Paul took up a serpent, on Miletus, which bit him, and the natives, expecting him to swell up and die, were amazed that he just shook off the snake and was not harmed. This was Paul’s identifying proof of his apostleship, if you will. There is no need to believe that it will happen to everyone—it was fulfilled in Paul. But, for all we know, it has happened many times since then, as has the poison, for the Lord is able to protect to the uttermost.

The leaders of Potter’s House in Guatemala feel that they must accept dirty food (poisoned, in a sense) from the people that they minister to in the Guatemala City Garbage Dump. They’d prefer not to, but in 20 years, no one has become deathly ill from eating it. So, really, the problem only arises when we believe these things are commands, rather than promises—it’s foolish to tempt God by “proving” your faith and playing with deadly things.

12. What did the disciples do after Jesus had left earth to be in heaven? (16:20) Do you have a role or responsibility to do the same? What are the three steps in fulfilling this command? (Mark 16:20, Matthew 28:19-20, John 21:15-17)

The disciples went out and preached everywhere. Specifically, Matthew 28:19-20 records Jesus as commanding them to: (1) go, (2) baptize them, and (3) teach them to obey everything I [Christ] have commanded. In John 21:15-17, Jesus elaborated on #3 above and tells Peter to (1) feed my lambs (teach children and those young in faith), (2) take care of my sheep (nurture those who are growing in the faith), and (3) feed my sheep (continue to support and walk with more mature Christians).

It goes without saying that this was a command not only to Jesus’ apostles but to all Christians through the ages.

13. How does the Lord “confirm his word” through Christians today? (16:20)

I read literally dozens of accounts on the Internet; some had examples of God confirming the word with a miracle, healing, answered prayer, or conversion to the faith, but other answers were blue sky theology, quotes of scripture, fulfillment of prophecy, and a general sidestepping of the issue. No good answer to this one.