



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



The Holy Gospel According to St. Mark

Chapter 16

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Introduction

Chapter Outline

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- Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 16:9-11
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- The Great Commission 16:14-18
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He Is Risen 16:1-8

- Friday night, Saturday, and Saturday night passed away, three days according to the Jewish calculation
- He, Who had truly died, lay also truly buried
- Meanwhile the holy women, whom a love stronger than death had drawn to observe the place on the evening of His burial, had returned in order that they might complete the preserving of the Body, which had necessarily been done in haste, as the Sabbath drew on, Luke 23:54



He Is Risen 16:1-8

- The women set forth to the tomb not thinking about the guards nor the seal; their only anxiety was *Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb*
- They had seen the arrangements, and had observed the size of the stone on Friday evening, Mark 15:47
- But as they drew nearer in the middle of the glimmering light, the earth quaked beneath their feet, Matthew 28:2, and looking up they saw that all cause of anxiety was removed, for the stone was already rolled away



He Is Risen 16:1-8

- St. Matthew says the angel was sitting on the stone, whilst St. Mark says that they saw him sitting on the right side of the Sepulcher
- St. Luke has two men in shining apparel
- The evangelists tell us of more than one visit by the women to the tomb
- Each of them presented a scene to complete together the events of the resurrection
- Here, St. Mark the Evangelist tells us of the entrance of the women into the tomb



He Is Risen 16:1-8

- They saw an angel, in the form of a young man, sitting on the right side and clothed in a long white robe
- St. Augustine says that this does not signify their actual entrance into the tomb, but rather their very close approach, to the extent of being able to behold everything inside the tomb
- They saw an angel inside, although they saw him later outside
- As St. Augustine also says, there were angels all around area, inside as well as outside the tomb
- The tomb turned into a heaven, where the angels desire to dwell



He Is Risen 16:1-8

- The women did not speak and probably were too frightened to ask questions; but their amazed look, their blank surprise, were themselves questioning, and the angel replied to their inward emotion *Do not be alarmed*
- The soldiers have a reason to fear; they are the enemies of the Lord; but the women are His friends, and need feel no alarm
- He proclaimed the message of the resurrection to the women seeking the Crucified
- Although the Lord Christ had risen, the angel called Him, "*Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified*" as a way to confirm to them he is talking about Jesus whom they are seeking



He Is Risen 16:1-8

- The Jews had given this name to Christ by way of reproach, Matthew 2:23; but as it was under this name that He was crucified, John 19:19, the angel here, and the apostles after, have given Him the same name, Acts 4:10
- *See the place where they laid Him*, This seems to imply that the women actually entered the inner chamber, and saw the very place where the Lord lay
- Who does not see here how certain and indisputable is the evidence of His resurrection?



He Is Risen 16:1-8

- The angel invites the Apostles to return to the Galilee where Jesus' mission to declare the Kingdom started
- St. Gregory says, "If the angel had not named Peter, he would not have dared to come amongst the disciples. Therefore he is specially named, lest he should despair on account of his denial."
- It was evidently intended as a special message of comfort to Peter
- As the Fathers say, he was mentioned by name for his consolation



He Is Risen 16:1-8

- In Mark 14:28 our Lord is recorded to have said, "*After I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.*"
- He would go before them as their Shepherd
- The Apostles will not leave immediately, but they will later meet Jesus along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, John 21
- The women *went out quickly and fled* from the scene of such surprises
- The angel's words had failed to calm them; the event altogether too much for them



He Is Risen 16:1-8

- The vision of angels had terrified them
- They were probably afraid to say anything to any one, on account of the Jews, lest it should be said that they had stolen the body of Jesus

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 16:9-11



- This appearance of our Savior is more fully related by St. John
- Up until now no human eye had seen the risen Conqueror of Death
- The holy women had seen the stone rolled away, and the empty tomb, and had heard the words of the Angels, and announced all that had occurred to the Eleven, but their words appeared to them as “*idle tales*” Luke 24:11
- The Apostles Peter and John also, when they visited the Sepulcher, beheld proofs that it was indeed empty, but did not see Him

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 16:9-11



- The first person to whom the Savior showed Himself after His resurrection was Mary of Mandela
- St. Luke 8:2 mentions that "seven devils had gone out of her;" and St. Mark repeats it here, to show the power of love and repentance, that she was the first to be permitted to see the risen Savior
- The vision of the angel had scared her, and she said nothing; but the actual sight of her risen Lord gave her confidence, and she went immediately, in obedience to His command, and told the disciples, 20:11-18

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 16:9-11



- She had remained by His tomb; her strong affection captivated her to the spot
- In the fullness of believing faith, she hurried back to Jerusalem and recounted her tale of joy to the Eleven and the rest
- The apostles were sad at the loss of their beloved Master, and unable to realize the wonderful accounts of His resurrection
- They were heartbroken for the death of their Lord, and the loss of His presence; and also for their carriage towards Him, that one among them should betray Him, another deny Him, and all forsake Him

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord 16:9-11



- Thus they were mourning for their absent Lord, and for their own iniquities; and in this condition they were in, when Mary brought them the joyful news of Christ's resurrection from the dead
- So incredible to them did the whole story appear
- So they refused to believe on the bare statement of Mary Magdalene
- They did not believe her until the risen Lord stood before them

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples

16:12-13



- This resurrection appearance is told in detail in Luke 24:13-35
- The reference here, of course, is to His manifestation to the two disciples going to Emmaus
- He appeared in a form unlike His ordinary appearance so much so that they did not at first know Him
- They had refused to believe the evidence of Mary Magdalene, Mark 16:11, and even now hesitation possessed them, and they could not give credibility to the word of the two disciples

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples

16:12-13



- This want of faith happened by the permission and providence of God
- "This their unbelief," says St. Gregory, "was not so much their infirmity as our future constancy on the faith."

The Great Commission 16:14-18



- Jesus' resurrection appearance to the Apostles is recorded in detail in Luke 24:36-49 where Jesus opens their minds to understanding the Scriptures and in John 20:19-23 where Jesus breaths the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and gives them the power to “bind and loose”
- If we examine and compare the four gospels, this was not the last time that Christ appeared to His disciples after His resurrection
- *He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart*, This is a strong word of rebuke
- They ought to have received the testimony of competent witnesses

The Great Commission 16:14-18



- Their hearts were much affected, and they were filled with sorrow and trouble for the loss of Christ; but in this point their unbelief increased by their fears, and so much prevailed, that all that were said by one, and another, made no impression on them
- That was the reason of Christ's reproach
- But their doubts were only removed by the evidence of their senses; just as afterwards in the case of Thomas
- St. Mark is always careful to record the rebukes administered by our Lord to His apostles



The Great Commission 16:14-18

- Here is a considerable interval of time, not mentioned in any way by the evangelist
- *He said to them*, Not on the day of his resurrection
- It would seem that this charge was delivered to them in Galilee, and that it is the same as that recorded in St. Matthew 28:19
- *Go into all the world*, Not into Judaea only, but everywhere
- This command has expanded with the discovery in later times of new portions of the inhabited earth
- “A bishop or a priest,” in the eyes of St. John Chrysostom, “has been assigned to the world as a whole to become a father to all People.”

The Great Commission 16:14-18



- Baptism is necessary for salvation!
- These words are very important
- The Church has been given no other way to bring mankind to salvation other than the Sacrament of Baptism
- The first clause opposes the notion that faith alone is sufficient for salvation, without those works which are the fruit of faith
- He who willfully rejects the Gospel message, when offered to him, shall have no share in its saving mercies, but shall be left to the condemnation due to him for his sins

The Great Commission 16:14-18



- *these signs will follow those who believe*, Marvelous significant appearances for the divine confirmation of their faith
- This is said, for the encouragement both of those that preach the Gospel, and of them that hear, believe and obey
- *these signs*, Not all of them, but some; and not always, only for a time; and which were necessary for the confirmation of the Gospel, and the establishment of Christianity in the world
- Such evidences were necessary in the beginning to attract attention to the doctrine

The Great Commission 16:14-18



- However, our Lord's words do not mean that they were to be in time without end, as a continually recurring evidence of the truth of Christianity
- *speaking with new tongues*, This was the first hint of the great miracle to be inaugurated on the day of Pentecost
- The gift was continued but for a very limited time
- *take up serpents*, As the example of the Apostle Paul when he had a viper, which fastened and hung on his hand, which he shook off, without receiving any harm from it, Acts 28:3

The Great Commission 16:14-18



- *drink anything deadly it will by no means hurt them*, Not that they were hereby warranted to drink poison, to show what power they had; but should they be forced to it by their enemies in order to destroy them, they should find no hurt by it
- St. Gregory says, "These signs were necessary in the beginning of Christianity. In order that faith might take root and increase, it must be nourished by miracle; for so even we, when we plant shrubs, only water them until we see that they are taking root, and when we see that they have rooted themselves, we cease to water them. And this is what St. Paul means where he says "Tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to the unbelieving" (1 Corinthians 14:22)



Christ Ascension 16:19-21

- It has been observed that the Ascension is gradually revealed in the Gospels
- St. Matthew does not mention it at all
- St. Mark refers to it in this brief and very simple manner
- But St. Luke describes it with great fullness, both in the Gospel according to St. Luke and in the Acts of the Apostles, throughout which book he leads his readers to contemplate Christ as ascended into heaven, and as sitting at God's right hand, and as ruling the Church and the world from the throne of His glory



Christ Ascension 16:19-21

- St. John implies it in his report of our Lord's words, John 6:62; John 20:17
- The Setting at the right Hand of God, recorded only by St Mark, forms a striking and appropriate conclusion to this Gospel, and conveys to the mind a comprehensive idea of Christ's Majesty and Rule
- By these words it is not to be understood that Jesus is to be confined to that particular posture of body, or that the Father has any hands



Christ Ascension 16:19-21

- The image of God comes not within the reach of our mortal senses
- When the Scripture, therefore, speaks of God, it uses such imagery of language as is adapted to our senses, that it may thereby convey to us some imperfect knowledge of those beautiful mysteries, which are incomprehensible to our understanding
- Thus we are informed that Jesus Christ, in the heaven of heavens, He now occupies the place of greatest honor, of most exalted majesty, and of most perfect pleasure, and that God has bestowed upon Him all authority of dignity, power, and favor



Christ Ascension 16:19-21

- He moreover holds the same sovereign dominion with the Father over all creatures; because, as God, He is equal to the Father in power, in wisdom, and in all perfection
- *went out and preached everywhere*, Not immediately
- They were commanded not to “*depart from Jerusalem*,” but to “*tarry*” there until at Pentecost they should be endued with power from on high, Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4
- But when the day of Pentecost had come, and the Comforter had been bestowed, they went forth on their holy work



Christ Ascension 16:19-21

- Even though Jesus has ascended to the Father, He has not abandoned His disciples
- Through the ministry of the Holy Spirit: *the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs*
- The miracles they worked in His name confirmed for them His divine presence throughout their mission to carry the Gospel forward to the ends of the earth
- "Grant, O Jesus! that the discourse we deliver, concerning virtue, may be confirmed by works and actions; that thus, by thy co-operation, we may become perfect in word and work; for to Thee is due the glory of our discourses and actions." Theophylactus



Discussion

- When did the women come? Study the various gospel accounts of the resurrection of Jesus. List verses that tell us on what day He rose.
- Some passages say that Jesus arose on the third day after His death. Some people have questions about how the days were counted. Study Luke 24:1,13-21 and explain how this record helps us understand how first-century people counted days
- To whom did Jesus first appear?



Discussion

- What are two reasons Peter is singled out in verse 7?
- According to some studies, the disciples' reaction of unbelief helps validate the historical nature of Jesus' Resurrection. How? What can you cite from your own experience that would explain how unbelief might confirm the truth of a claim?
- What responsibility did Jesus give to the apostles in 16:15? To whom did Jesus want the gospel preached? What can we learn from this?



Discussion

- List passages about the importance of baptism. Many people deny baptism is necessary as a condition to receive forgiveness. How would you respond?
- Some people claim that the signs of verses 17,18 should follow all believers even today. Read 1 Corinthians 12:28-30; Acts 8:14-19. Did all believers do miracles in the first century? Verses 14-16 mention two groups of people who needed to believe: the apostles (v14) and those who hear the gospel (v16). According to verse 20, which group actually did the signs? What conclusions do you reach?