

Trembling And Astonished

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Mark 16:1-8

This is the last scene we saw in Mark:

Mark 15:42–47: *When evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus were looking on to see where He was laid.*

The women intended to return after the Sabbath to make sure that Jesus' body was treated with all the dignity of which He was worthy. It was sundown on Friday when we left off our studies in Mark. Saturday morning unfolded more drama:

Matthew 27:62–66: *Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, and said, "Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I am to rise again.' Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go, make it as secure as you know how." And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone.*

From Matthew we learn what happened some time during the darkness of Saturday night or the wee hours of Sunday morning. All who arrived observed the same scene in the early light of dawn.

Matthew 28:2–4: *And behold, a **severe earthquake** had occurred, for **an angel** of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The **guards** shook for fear of him and **became like dead men**.*

The soldiers wound up giving unwitting testimony to the resurrection.

Matthew 28:11–15: *Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and said, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.’ And if this should come to the governor’s ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.” And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day.*

As He promised, Jesus rose from the dead. Mark ends his book with powerful evidence of the resurrection.

I. **The Tomb Is Empty (1-4)**

Mark 16:1: *When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him.*

Mark 16:2-3: *Very early on the first day of the week, they *came to the tomb when the sun had risen. They were saying to one another, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?”*

Mark 16:4: *Looking up, they *saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.*

Do you realize that no one ever refuted the fact of the empty tomb? Forever the testimony stands, ***The Tomb Is Empty***. Not so with any other religious figure in history.

II. **An Angel Announced It (5-7)**

Mark 16:5: *Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed.*

Mark 16:6: *And he *said to them, “Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, here is the place where they laid Him.*

The message from the angel was simple:

Mark 16:7: *“But go, tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.’”*

III. The Women Were Astonished (8)

Mark 16:8: *They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.*

Here's a combination of a very literal translation and the picture it paints: *Having exited, they were fleeing from the tomb, because they were quaking and in ecstasy, and they weren't talking because they were fearing God.*

1 Corinthians 15:4–8: . . . *He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and . . . He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep; then He appeared to James, then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to one untimely born, He appeared to me also.*

Mark ends with people quaking and in ecstasy and completely wrapped in the reverent fear of God. That's exactly the right place for this book to end. It started with the first sentence, which stands like a title over the book and it tells us the purpose of this book.

Mark 1:1: *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.*

The word ***gospel*** (good news, *euangelion*) was understood in the Roman world. It was the good word, or good announcement, of the arrival or presence of a king or a conqueror.

The record of the life of Jesus Christ is the ***beginning*** of the good news about Him, which far exceeds any human conqueror. The picture is complete, and we understand that He is ***the Son of God***, when the ultimate act of His first coming is complete. That act is the resurrection!

The Easter question stands. **Do you believe?** We must conclude with Paul's words:

1 Corinthians 15:1–4: *Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, . . .*

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the turning point of all of history for all of mankind. The reason the Church of Jesus Christ has always met on Sunday is the same reason that on one of the 52 Sundays per year we devote ourselves to the resurrection. **Nothing is more important:**

1 Corinthians 15:14: *. . . and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain.*

You can't **just believe**. You have to believe **something**. You have to believe **someone**. The record is clear, what you need to believe. You need to call out to God and declare your trust in what He did for you through Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:23: *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 10:9–10: *. . . if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.*