

# Mark 16

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon explores the resurrection story in Mark, highlighting Mary Magdalene's consecration and the risen Christ's message to the disciples.*

**Scripture:** Mark 16:1

**Topics:** "Resurrection", "Faith and Mission"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the simplicity and significance of the resurrection account in Mark, noting the different visits of women to the sepulchre and the angel's message of Christ's resurrection. He highlights Mary Magdalene's unique role as the first to witness the risen Lord and her commission to share this news with the disciples, marking a new relationship as 'brethren' of Christ. The sermon illustrates the importance of faith in understanding the resurrection and the divine power that enabled Jesus to rise, as well as the subsequent mission of the apostles to spread the Gospel. Darby concludes with the assurance that belief and confession in Christ lead to salvation, supported by signs and wonders. The message of hope and resurrection is central to the Christian faith.

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## Transcript

The history of the resurrection in Mark is very short and simple. There is no doubt that more than one troop of those women who followed the Lord visited the sepulchre, one after the other. It is clear that Mary Magdalene arrived before the others, and that the other Mary and Salome were together; then came the others. Each Gospel gives us what is necessary for our faith, and that according to the special teaching which God desires to be presented in that Gospel. For instance, in John's Gospel we have the story of Mary Magdalene, and that beautiful story is fitted to the doctrine of that Gospel. Verse 9 of this chapter speaks of it also; she came whilst it was yet dark; here in Mark we see her at sunrise. Other women had bought spices to embalm the Lord; perhaps they had already bought some before the sabbath began, in order to rest during the sabbath day; and certainly after the sabbath was over, that is, at six o'clock, they waited till the morning to embalm Him.

332 But when Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre, the stone, which was very large, had been already rolled away from its mouth by an angel come down from heaven; and the Lord was no longer there. He was risen, in divine power, in perfect calmness; all the grave-clothes which were left in good order in the sepulchre. That which God did to awaken men's attention is related in Matthew 28:2-4; but Jesus was not there. The great stone did not present any obstacle to the Lord's egress; the divine power which raised

Him from the dead and the spiritual body which He then possessed, made His disappearance from the sepulchre easy.

Mark only speaks of Mary Magdalene's first visit to the sepulchre in verse 9; in verse 2, the other Mary and Salome are spoken of. Mary Magdalene had already gone away from the sepulchre to announce to Peter and John the fact of the sepulchre's being empty. These enter into the sepulchre, finding the stone rolled away from its mouth; they find an angel seated on the right hand of the place where Jesus lay, who encourages these timid but faithful women, "Fear not, ye seek Jesus . . . he is not here . . ." and then he shews them the place where He had been. It is blessed to see the goodness of God: there was still some unbelief in the women, for they ought to have understood that Jesus was risen; the angel had told them so. But this was too much for their faith; they believed in His person, and that He was the Son of God, but His resurrection was as yet too glorious a truth for their faith. Their heart was sincere, but they sought the living amongst the dead: and here the grace of God, full of compassion, reassures them.

These women did not find Jesus dead, but the blessed testimony that the beloved Saviour was alive. They are made the messengers to the disciples of the word of the Lord from the mouth of the angel. It is the consecration of the heart to the Lord that brings light and intelligence to the soul, if we are seeking the truth and Jesus Himself. Mary Magdalene shews more consecration of the heart to Christ than the others; and this is why she is seen at the sepulchre before sunrise, and is the first of all of them to see the Lord. Moreover, a more excellent message is confided to her; she was to go to the apostles themselves to announce to them our more excellent position, our higher privilege. The Lord says to her, "Go to my brethren and tell them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." The disciples are here called the brethren of Christ for the first time, brethren of the risen Christ. His God is our God; His Father is our Father.

333 These women, although honoured of the Lord, have not yet so great a privilege; another message is confided to them. The risen Christ assumes two characters: His relationship with the remnant of Israel, and His new position as a glorified Man before the Father. In the first He appears to His disciples in Galilee, where He used to be with them habitually; in the second relationship He ascends to heaven from Bethany. The mission of the disciples too is different. Matthew presents to us the first; and, in consequence, we do not find there the history of the ascension; Luke gives us the second, where the Lord ascends and is received into heaven. The message to the disciples is given to Mary and Salome; they are commanded not to depart from Galilee. That which happened there is not told here: the women go away afraid.

Then this Gospel gives a summing up of the other part of the story of Jesus risen, of that which is found in John's and Luke's Gospels; of Mary Magdalene's case, and of the two disciples who went to Emmaus; after that, the general mission of the apostles, who were to go and preach to the whole world. Whoever should believe and make public confession of Christ should be saved. Miracles should be performed, not only by the apostles, but also by those who should believe by their means; they should manifest, by the wonders they should perform, the power of Him in whom they believed.

Finally the Lord is received up into heaven, and sits at God's right hand. The apostles go out to preach in the world, and the Lord works with them, confirming the word with the signs which accompanied it. Salvation depended upon faith and the confession of Christ, and the Lord, when the word had been planted, bore witness to His truth by powerful signs; this facilitated faith, and left unbelievers without excuse.

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