HE HAS RISEN!

Mark 16:1-20

Key Verse: 6

“‘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.”

We think and praise God for Jesus’ death on the cross. He was flogged, mocked, crucified and then died on the cross crying out in a loud voice, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” There are always two kinds of responses toward the crucifixion of Jesus: one kind is mocking, cynical and doubting, or indifferent and habitual; another is God-fearing and trusting and believing and cherishing the cross. Regardless of how the world responds, apart from the cross of Jesus, only the dreadful wrath of God is awaiting. The cry of Jesus is the cry of salvation for those who believe. Those who do not recognize this cry of Jesus should cry endlessly in the lake of fire, being forsaken by God. But with Jesus’ crucifixion and death of Jesus on the cross, life is quickened and alive now and forever with the reality of God’s presence and his eternal kingdom.

Happy Easter! He has risen! No one has been raised from the dead, but Jesus. Let’s study Jesus’ resurrection according to Mark’s gospel today so that we may be deeply convinced by the fact of the resurrection of Christ Jesus and put our full trust and hope in him.

Verse 1 says, “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.” These women were faithful women. Though Jesus died and was gone from their sight, still their love for Jesus did not die. Their love for Him was not like, “Out of sight, out of mind.” Their love was not practical but pure and sacrificial. In their faithful love for Jesus, their last hope was to anoint Jesus’ body with spices so that the stench of the dead body might be changed into a pleasant fragrance, even if only temporarily.

Then verse 2 says, “Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb.” In verses 1 and 2, we see the contrast between the Sabbath and the first day of the week. For the Jews, they had no names for the days of the week. They didn’t have Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday words in Hebrew. They only used numbers, and all numbers were related to the Sabbath as the first day after Sabbath, the second day after, the third day after, the fourth, and so forth. The Sabbath day was the focal point of their lives. We know that the fourth commandment in the Decalogue is “Keep the Sabbath holy.” According to this command of God, the Israelites kept the Sabbath holy as the day of worship throughout their history. The expression, “the Sabbath was over” was simply the Sabbath day of that week was over. However, we find the phrase “the first day of the week” here related to the day of Jesus’ resurrection in the Bible. So in light of the resurrection of Jesus, “the Sabbath was over” could imply that the Sabbath was over forever as the legitimate Sabbath, the Sabbath God recognizes. Since Jesus was raised on the first day of the week, Christians began to gather on this day of Jesus’ resurrection, Sunday. It is becuase there would be no more legitimate Passover, since Jesus died as the Lamb of God and so there would no more the blood sacrifices. The Passover was changed into the Communion, commemorating Christ’ death. We know that Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is the foundation and pillar of Christianity. Without the resurrection, Christianity crumbles. Christianity firmly stands on the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In fact, the resurrection of Jesus is the only resurrection in this world as the victory over death forever, which makes the world upside down. How important the resurrection of Jesus is! So Christians began to worship God on Sunday. On one occasion, Jesus said in Mark 2:27, “the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” when the Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath law by healing the sick on the Sabbath. When you read the New Testament, there is no record of believers gathering on the Sabbath. But they gathered on the first day of the week. Acts 20:7 says, “On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people.” On that day Paul raised a dead young man. 1 Corinthias 16:2 says, “On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income.” In fact, it was so established and so standardized that in Revelation 1:10, by the end of the first century, when John is writing, it says, “On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit…” It wasn’t the first day anymore. It was the Lord’s Day. And it is still today as the day of worship. What a great effect of Jesus’ resurrection!

Then let’s see further how Mark described the resurrection of Jesus Christ, simple yet powerful in 8 more verses. The women were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?” What a pitiful and heavy question! They were weak women, and their question was who could do such an impossible work, the work of rolling the stone away. They would not even be able to anoint Jesus’ body, which was their last hope. They seemed to be most sorrowful and pitiful women because of their love for Jesus.

Verse 4 says, “But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.” What power! It would be the prelude of Jesus’ resurrection. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.” Luke says in Luke 24:4-5, “…suddenly two men in clothes that gleaned like lightning stood beside them. In their fright, the women bowed down with their faces to the ground.” Here we again see the beauty of the gospel narratives. Each gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John has its own beauty and correctness in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, making the story of Jesus complete. They do not contradict one another, though writing in each one’s own free will in the illumination of the Holy Spirit. According to the four gospels, there were two angels in the form of man. And according to Mark, since the angels were in their clothes that gleamed like lighting, the women could see only one angel. That’s quite understandable. And he described the person as a young man. At the shining appearance of the young man, the women were alarmed and frightened. The word “alarmed” is in Greek ἐξεθαμβήθησαν ([*exethambēthēsan*](https://biblehub.com/greek/exethambe_the_san_1568.htm)) and also translated as “amazed” (in NASB). It has the meaning of being terrified, not in the sense of we fear for life, but that there is something around that cannot be rationally comprehended. “Frightened” is in Greek ἐμφόβων ([*emphobōn*](https://biblehub.com/greek/emphobo_n_1719.htm)), from which we get the word “phobia.” This word is a fear of something that’s not really grasped or explained.

Now let’s read verse 6 together, “Don’t be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.” What an amazing and truly alarming message! This is the heavenly message through the angel. The angel showed that the tomb was empty, saying, “Here is not here. See the place where they laid him.” All the four gospel writers testify that Jesus’ tomb was empty. In Matthew’s gospel the angel also said, “See the place where he lay” (28:6). Matthew and Mark very simply testified concerning the empty tomb through the words of the angel. But Luke wrote what Peter watched at the tomb, “…he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves…” (Lk 24:12). John also wrote what Peter observed, yet in more detail, “He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus’ head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separated from the linen” (Jn 20:6-7). The empty tomb is clear evidence of Jesus’ resurrection. To human reasoning every tomb contains the body of a dead person unless the corpse is stolen. Of course, the Bible eliminates any possibility of the disciples’ taking away the body of Jesus, although the chief priests fabricated the story that the disciples came during the night and stole the body and let the story be spread through the Romans soldiers who guarded the tomb (Mt 28:13-15). The disciples did not know the place of Jesus’ burial. Only some women who watched the crucifixion and death of Jesus saw where he was laid. Matthew 27:61 says, “Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.” Mark 15:47 says, “Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.” Luke 23:55 says, “The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it.” The disciple did not see the place of Jesus’ burial at all. More than that, the disciples were hiding for fear of the Jews, which was their situation when the risen Jesus visited them as written in John 20:19, “On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews…” Yes, the Scripture testifies that Jesus’ body was not stolen, yet the tomb was empty, completely different from all other tombs of human beings who had died and buried. The empty tomb of Jesus is a nonverbal powerful message of Jesus’ resurrection.

And there is a verbal message of the angel, “He has risen! He is not hear.” At the time of Jesus’ birth there was a heavenly message through an angel of the Lord, “Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord” (Lk 2:11). No human could deliver the message of the birth of Jesus the Son of God. In the same way no human could deliver the message of Jesus’ resurrection, for no human eyes could see it. Only heaven witnessed it and the message of his resurrection came from heaven through the angel; he has risen. God raised him from death. In the previous passage, when Jesus was crucified and died on the cross. The centurion exclaimed, “Surely this man was the Son of God.” The resurrection of Jesus confirms this confession of the centurion that the death of Jesus was the death of the Son of God, completely innocent and righteous. So his death was not a natural death, but an atoning death that he died for our sins. Also when the darkness of God’s wrath came upon him who was hanging on the cross, Jesus cried out, “My God, my God why have you forsaken me?” The resurrection shows that God accepted such cry of Jesus and was very pleased with him. This is a proof that Jesus indeed took upon himself the wrath of God, which was otherwise poured out upon all sinners resulting in suffering forever in the fiery lake of burning sulfur, eternally forsaken and abandoned by God in complete separation from God. Sin and God’s punishment were truly taken away, gone forever from those sinners who repent and believe and put their trust and hope in him. What a grace! Amen. Happy Easter! He has risen!

In the message “he has risen” there are three words in the English expression. But in Greek it is one word, ἠγέρθη ([*ēgerthē*](https://biblehub.com/greek/e_gerthe__1453.htm)). How precious this one word is! Without this one word, the world would be dark and totally hopeless under the power of sin and death. But in fact, the word exists through the resurrection of Christ Jesus and human life is full of hope. Death is not the final destination of man. There is a worldwide deception that the life in this world is everything, so you enjoy your life in material abundance and physical pleasures. But Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:33, “Do not be misled: ‘Bad company corrupts good characters”, and in 15:19, “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men.” True believers in Christ Jesus have living hope in this world of sin and death, as Peter said in 1 Peter 1:3-4, “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.” God refines our faith through the hardships in life so that we may not engrossed in earthbound hope but really have heavenly hope. Those who have the living hope know that they have a citizenship in heaven and await Jesus’ coming again. At his return, everything will be in his control, and he will transform our lowly bodies that our bodies will be like his glorious body” (Phil. 3:2-21).

He has risen. He is alive. All his words are alive. They are not deadened words but living words, different from all human words. He speaks to us, and we listen to him. Jesus said in John 6:63, “The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.” He speaks, “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation” (Lk 22:46), “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” (Jn 11:40), and “Have faith in God” (Mk 11:22). When we are sure that we do what is right and carry God’s will, we should not give it up. Proverbs 24:16 says, “though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again…”

The angel said continually in verse 7, “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.’” Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.

Whenever we worship God on Sunday, on the first day of the week, we celebrate Jesus’ resurrection. Here three words, “trembling”, “bewildered”, and “afraid” are in Greek, Τρόμος ([*tromos*](https://biblehub.com/greek/tromos_5156.htm)), ἔκστασις· ([*ekstasis*](https://biblehub.com/greek/ekstasis_1611.htm)), and ἐφοβοῦντο ([*ephobounto*](https://biblehub.com/greek/ephobounto_5399.htm)*; phobeó* (fob-eh'-o)). That much the resurrection of Christ Jesus was a shock to them, and actually is to be so to all mankind as completely new and unique in all human history. The women were to be witnesses of Jesus’ resurrection. Praise God! Praise Jesus, he has risen! This is the wonderful end of Mark’s gospel.

Now we can think of probably the post script. The point of this part is that the Eleven disciples did not believe the testimonies of those who had seen him, Mary Magdalene and two disciples. In verses 9-11, it says, “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. She went and told those who had been with him and were mourning and weeping. When they heard that Jesus was alive and she had seen him, they did not believe.” Afterward, Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the countryside. These returned and reported it to the rest; but they did not believe them either. Them what did Jesus do? Verse 14 says, “Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and for their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.” Here, stubborn refusal is in most other translations “hardness of heart”. Unbelieving is the matter of heart. When we remain in unbelief, Jesus is most sorry and rebukes us. Although our generation is unbelieving, God wants each one of us to believe and keep believing regardless of any human circumstances.

Then despite their low spiritual condition Jesus said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.” Here we see Jesus’ heart for all creation and his urgency for the gospel preaching to save every creature. Paul also said in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures.” The Scriptures are most reliable and trustworthy with 100 accuracies, particularly Christ’s death for our sins and resurrection, which are the gospel. At the beginning of his earthly messianic ministry Jesus said, “The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.” (Mk 1:15) Now after his resurrection he said, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved and whoever does not believe will be condemned.” The only difference of human beings is whether to repent and believe or not to believe.

The risen Jesus continues, “And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 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.” May we believe this.

Then in verses 19 and 20, “After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.” The Lord Jesus works with those who preach the gospel of his death and resurrection.

Let’s say together, “He has risen” “ἠγέρθη” Amen!