

**Exegetical Notes, Mark 16:1-8**  
**“Trembling and Bewildered”**

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**Mark 16:1-8**

**Verse 1:**

*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.*

- Jesus' body had been placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea near the end of Friday, the day he was crucified. As the Sabbath began on Friday at sunset, there had not been time to prepare his body properly for burial according to the Jewish customs of the times. These women, followers of Jesus, purchased the necessary spices to properly wash and anoint Jesus' body. Their intention was to take care of this necessity as soon after the Sabbath as possible..
- The women involved in this plan were: Mary Magdalene, see Mark 16:9 and Luke 8:2; Jesus had freed her from slavery to seven demons. Mary the mother of James, see Mark 15:47; her son was James called “the Lesser” by the Church and sometimes called James in the Bible. Salome, see Matthew 27:56; she is believed to be the wife of Zebedee, the mother of the disciples James, known as “the greater” by the Church, and John . They were among the women who traveled with Jesus' disciples.

**Verse 2-3:**

*Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?”*

- As the women approached the tomb, they remembered the great obstacle. Joseph had sealed Jesus' tomb with a huge stone. The stone would be too heavy for the women to move alone.
- They had probably not gone to the tomb on the Sabbath. So they would not have known about the guards that the Jewish leaders had placed there nor about the seal on the stone.

- Given these obstacles, there was no possible way for the women to enter Jesus' tomb. Not even for the purpose of preparing his body for burial.

#### **Verse 4**

***But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away.***

- To their surprise, the women discovered that the obstacle had been removed. The grave was already open when they arrived.

#### **Verse 5**

***As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.***

- The three women approached the tomb and discovered that they were not alone. What they took to be a "young man," identified by Matthew as an angel, was waiting for them, most likely just inside the door of the tomb and to the right side. For a fuller description of the creature see Matthew 28:2 and Luke 24:4.
- The presence of this unexpected person frightened the three women.

#### **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."***

- The angel's greeting begins with the words, "Do not be afraid." Fear is always the reaction to angelic visitors, and their first words always reassure those to whom they are sent that they need not be afraid.
- The angel recognizes that the women are seeking Jesus who was crucified. He tells them that Jesus has risen from the dead and invites them to explore the empty tomb. The fact that Jesus' body is not in the tomb confirms the resurrection, for the tomb was sealed shut and guarded. There was no other acceptable explanation.
- The simply stated fact that Christ has risen is the foundational fact upon which Christianity stands.

#### **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.'"***

- The women are given an assignment by the angel. They are to go and tell. In this case they are to go to the other disciples and tell them that Jesus has risen from the dead and that he would meet with them in Galilee. Their commission to go and tell is the same commission as is given to all Christians. We are to go and tell the news of the resurrection.
- When discussing his death and resurrection with the disciples, Jesus had told them that he would see them in Galilee following his resurrection. See Mark 14:27-28.
- The angel was specifically concerned that this message be conveyed to Peter. This is apparently because of Peter's boastful confidence on the night of Jesus' betrayal.

### **Verse 8**

***Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.***

- The word translated "trembling" is the Greek word *tromos*. It is the word from which the English word tremor comes. It means to quake, the cause of the quaking being fear.
- The word translated "bewildered" is the Greek word *ekstasis*. The word implies a displacement of the mind. It means that they could not comprehend or understand what they had been told.
- Together, these words tell us that the women were scared to death and not able to get their minds around what they had been told. As a result, they ran away from the tomb. But they did not do as they had been instructed immediately. Their fear incapacitated them so they told no one what the angel had told them.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Trembling and Bewildered*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)