

REUNITED WITH JESUS

Mk. 16:9 Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. 10 And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. 11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. 12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. 13 And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. 14 Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. 15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. 17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

In some Bible versions, after Mk. 16:8 you find a note such as, “The two most reliable early manuscripts [*Codex Sinaiticus* and *Codex Vaticanus*] do not have Mark 16:9-20”. Such New Testament translators follow what can be described as a Westcott and Hort eclectic text tradition, which underlies the majority of modern translations. These manuscripts reject the reliability of these verses and claim they are not part of the original Gospel of Mark. In other words, Mk. 16:9-20 is not to be considered infallible, inerrant or inspired, but are merely an appendix, an addendum, a postscript written by someone unknown, and *not* by Mark. ... There is also a shorter ending, and some further variations proposed by other Greek texts.

It has to be said, some of these scholars make valid points concerning the Greek text, such as how some vocabulary and grammar is different. Personally, though, I would not wish to delete these verses, - or any Bible verses, - for I do not have the authority. ... And therefore, we shall study v.9-20 as belonging to God’s infallible Word, for I believe that if I would begin to hesitate concerning any of the Bible’s content, I would have no right to stand and preach and teach from it.

Indeed, it is a dangerous thing to cast doubt upon or attack the truth of Scripture. It is what the enemy does, - Satan did it the Garden of Eden, and again with Jesus during the temptations, ... and if the Bible can be portrayed as being inaccurate, or an inadequate translation, or wrong, then we have no assurance of what it says. And something else which I commend to you ... the Bible version I use has contained these verses, - and many other verses some would omit also, - but God has kept this particular version as the world’s leading best-seller for hundreds of years ... *and I am confident with that!*

The first section in this chapter *does* end rather abruptly, Mk. 16:8 *And they [Mary Magdalene and the women] went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were*

afraid. ... You are left wondering as to what is coming next! ... Then the second section begins, **Mk. 16:9** Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils, - that is a repetition of verses one and two ... also, it introduces her as if we haven't met her before, - ... **10** And she went and told them that had been with him [*the disciples*], as they mourned and wept. **11** And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. ... The disciples cast doubt on what she was telling them ... they did not believe her ...

Remember the circumstances ... It was just after sunrise, - Mary was laden with grief and she saw the risen Jesus standing there, in the garden ... but she did not recognise Him, **Jn. 20:14** And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus ... How did she not recognise Him? ... It was early morning, tears were flooding her eyes, the mist ... He wasn't wearing the clothes she normally saw Him wear, and neither was she expecting to see Jesus for when He asked her, **15** Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener ... she thought He was the gardener, for she had no idea Who He was!

... It is important to emphasise the body of Jesus *after* the resurrection was no different to the body of Jesus *before* the resurrection ... for He presented Himself as the same, **Lk. 24:39** Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. ... He was the same Jesus, Who did not change, **Lk. 24:42** And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. **43** And he took it, and did eat before them. ... **Acts 10:41** Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us [*Peter and the disciples*], who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead ... **Jn. 20:24** But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. **26** And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. **27** Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. **28** And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. **29** Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

And there were also *other* times when those who had known Him did not recognise Him ... Mk. 16:12,13 refer to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, as mentioned more fully in Lk. 24:13-35, **Mk. 16:12** *After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. ¹³ And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. ...* These were the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. When they returned to Jerusalem and gave their account of Jesus having met them, there was a hesitancy to believe them also (Lk. 24:33-35) ... just as there was when Mary told them.

By the way, what does that mean, **He appeared in another form (Mk. 16:12)**? We don't need to come up with any fancy explanations for the most straightforward way of understanding it is by taking the words to simply mean they saw Jesus *differently, in another way*. Think about what Jesus had gone through those previous seventy-two hours ... From an ordinary perspective, the clothes He had been wearing before He was arrested were the clothes His disciples would have been used to seeing Him wear, - Jesus did not have a large wardrobe! ... The clothes He had worn, - the clothes the disciples would have been used to seeing Him wear, - had been ripped and torn from Him. Then, when He was taken down from the cross, He was brought by Joseph of Arimathea to the tomb. In the tomb His rags were removed, and He was wrapped in clean fine linen, - brand new, and never worn by anyone before (Mk. 15:46). On the morning of the third day, Jesus rose from the dead, removed the funeral linen cloth (Jn. 20:6,7), and put on new clothes, - we are not told where they came from ... but they were not the old rags He had worn on the cross, and they weren't the linen covering. ... He was wearing a brand new set of clothes.

And also, ... **Mk. 16:12** *After that he [Jesus] appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country. ...* The reason they could not identify Jesus at first is explained by Luke, **Lk. 24:15** *And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were holden that they should not know him,* - they were prevented from recognising Him. Then they continued on down the road with Him, - still not knowing Who He was, - and they invited Him in for a meal, and when He took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them *then ³¹ their eyes were opened, and they knew him ... ³² And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? ³³ And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, ³⁴ Saying, The*

Lord is risen indeed. ... And that is also what Mark records, **Mk. 16:13** And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them. That is further described to us, **Mk. 16:14** Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided [*reproached, rebuked*] them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen ... as Luke also recorded, **Lk. 24:36** And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. **37** But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. **38** And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? **39** Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. **40** And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. **41** And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? **42** And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. **43** And he took it, and did eat before them. **44** And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. **45** Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, **46** And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day

Again, put yourself in their place! ... He was taken from them in the Garden of Gethsemane ... He had been nailed to a cross, and died ... No wonder they were confused when they first met Him again! ... Just as it says, **Mk. 16:12** he appeared in another form ... He was fit and healthy, *beaming*, and they were all taken completely unawares. ... It is what Jesus had promised, - He would die, but He would rise again from the dead! ... It was an incontrovertible fact, - *Jesus rose from the dead*, - ... and do you notice the phrase that keeps occurring? ... **Mk. 16:9** Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he *appeared* first to Mary Magdalene ... **12** After that he *appeared* in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country ... **14** Afterward he *appeared* unto the eleven as they sat at meat ... This was a personal experience of the living Lord Jesus Christ each of them enjoyed, and it changed their lives forever!

These were the people Jesus had chosen and to whom He had taught the Gospel, and then He said to them, **Mk. 16:15** Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. ... Presenting the Gospel is obedience to the Lord's command. It is our obligation, to tell others God loves them, Christ died for them, and they need to be saved. Saving them is *God's* business ... telling them is our business! ... And it is our duty to *preach the gospel to every creature*, without reserve and without prejudice, - *that* is our message and our ministry.

Matthew extends it further, **Mt. 28:19** Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **20** Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Luke records, **Lk. 24:47** And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **48** And ye are witnesses of these things.

... Those were the last recorded words our Saviour said, **Mk. 16:15** *preach the gospel to every creature* ... But they don't want to listen, - that is God's 'department', He will see to that, in accordance with His plan ... Maybe we should 'dress it up' so as to try and catch their attention ... But it is not our remit 'to dress it up' ... it is our purpose to *preach* it and *present* it! God will not bless what He has not commanded and sealed with His approval! ... We daren't say to God, - even by implication, - we have to update Your Gospel, because if we were to even *think* that, we are implying His ways are old-fashioned and irrelevant to society ... I would not like to be the one to correct God! ... I would just rather do what He says, and trust Him for the blessing!

There are some who teach what is known as 'baptismal regeneration', and they emphasise the first part of verse sixteen, **Mk. 16:16** *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* ... They take this verse out of context and believe for anyone to be saved they must repent of their sins *and* be baptized, - *both* is necessary ... repentance is not sufficient on its own, it has to be accompanied by the person being baptized.

But no, that is not the case, otherwise Jesus could not have comforted the thief on the cross with the words, **Lk. 23:43** *To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* ... Baptism does not save anyone, - the merit of baptism is obedience to the Word of God for every believer after they have accepted Jesus Christ as Saviour ... but it has no power to save anyone. Salvation comes through trusting in Christ, with no additions ... Christ only.

Now, what about the signs which shall follow them that believe? Many of these signs *did* take place during the period of the Apostles, for example **Mk. 16:17** *And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils* ... and they did, **Acts 16:16** And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: **17** The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. **18** And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I

command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

Jesus also said, **Mk. 16:17** they shall speak with new tongues ... and they did, on the Day of Pentecost, and for a time thereafter ... **18** They shall take up serpents, and Paul did, on the island of Malta, **Acts 28:1** And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. **2** And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. **3** And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. **4** And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. **5** And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm.

... We don't have the Biblical record of anyone drinking any deadly thing, and it not harming them, but we do have illustrations in the Book of Acts of the apostles laying hands on the sick, and they recovered from their illness (v.18). ... I'm sure you have heard of a small group of churches in the Appalachia mountain region of the eastern United States. They pick up poisonous snakes for they believe they are 'covered' by Mk. 16:18!

Rather than Jesus suggesting silly activities, He is telling His disciples He cares for them, even when they are in dangerous circumstances. He is *not* telling them to act foolishly, - we are not saved to live unwisely. What we believe is often foolishness in the eyes of the world, but we are not instructed to be foolish people. Instead, we are to be lights not to be hidden but to be set in a prominent place, **Mt. 5:16** *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* ... We are to be like salt, - Jesus didn't say, "Please be like salt" ... Instead, He said, **Mt. 5:13** *Ye are the salt of the earth* ... Salt stings ... Salt tastes ... Salt creates thirst ... Salt heals ... Salt preserves ... These have *all* Christian applications. ... And we are also to be living epistles, **II Cor. 3:2** *known and read of all men*

... And so, approaching the end of Christ's first ministry on earth, He has achieved everything He set out to accomplish ... and we come to the finale, **Mk. 16:19** *So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.* **20** *And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen* ... and that is where we shall come to in our next study.