

THE PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION

MARK 16:01–13

Introduction

There are eleven proofs (events) of the resurrection in these verses - proofs that should stir faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- I. The sad and despairing women (vv. 1-3).
- II. The rolled away stone (v. 4).
- III. The young man dressed in a white robe (vv. 5-6).
- IV. The missing body of Jesus (v. 6).
- V. The compassionate, encouraging word to Peter (v. 7).
- VI. The fulfilment of the Lord's promise (v. 7).
- VII. The fright and silence of the women (v. 8).
- VIII. The appearance to Mary Magdalene (vv. 9-10).
- IX. The immediate disbelief of the disciples (v. 11).
- X. The appearance to two disciples (v. 12).
- XI. The continued disbelief of other disciples (v. 13).

MARK 16:01–13 RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

The order of the resurrection events seems to be as follows: (1) Mary discovers the empty tomb (Jn. 20:1-2), and (2) runs to inform Peter and John; (3) they in turn run to see and verify for themselves (Jn. 20:3-10).

Then some of the resurrection appearances begin. It should be noted that just how long Jesus stayed with the apostles when He visited them is not given. Some of the visits may have been for days upon days. In fact, He may have even appeared to some of which we have no records. The exact order of the appearances mentioned by Scripture is hazy, but some order is possible (1 Cor. 15:5-11): (1) to Mary Magdalene (Mk. 16:9-11; Jn. 20:1 1-18); (2) to the women running to tell the disciples about the empty tomb (Mt. 28:8-10); (3) then apparently to Peter, probably to assure him of restoration (Lk. 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5); (4) to the two Emmaus disciples sometime in the early evening (Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:13-42); (5) to the disciples, with Thomas absent (Mk. 16:14; Lk. 24:36-43; Jn. 20:19-25). (6) The next recorded appearance seems to be one week later, on Sunday evening, when Jesus appears to the disciples who had gone fishing (Jn. 21:1-25). There were also other appearances although the order is unknown: (7) to 500 believers (1 Cor. 15:6); (8) to the apostles (Mt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:15-18); (9) to James, the Lord's cousin (1 Cor. 15:7); (10) then there was the appearance to the believers at His ascension (Mk. 16:19-20; Lk. 24:44-53; Act. 1:3-12). □

I. *Mark 16:01–03 The Women, Sad and Despairing*

The first proof of the resurrection was the sad and despairing women. Several facts point to the women as proofs of the resurrection.

1. They were actual witnesses of His death and burial. They knew He was dead, and they knew where He had been laid. They had followed along behind the procession to the tomb (Mk. 15:40-41, 47; see Mt. 27:55-56, 61; Lk. 23:55-56). There was no question in their minds whatsoever about His being dead and buried.
2. They bought spices and came to anoint His body. Apparently, they had bought the spices Saturday evening after 6.00 p.m. when the Sabbath ended. Note they arose “very early, on the first day of the week [Sunday]” to go and embalm Him. Again, they knew He was dead, but they cared, so they wanted to take care of His body just as loved ones would do.
3. They were religionists who strictly obeyed the law. They were strict in the observance of the Sabbath. Imagine, their loved One was dead, yet they would not break the Sabbath law even to take care of Him (see Lk. 23:56). The women were obedient to the commandments of God. They were moral, truthful women who would never think about or even consider lying about the death and resurrection of Jesus.
4. They were practical, sensible, thinking women, not hysterical or deceived. Note what was on their minds: how they were going to remove the stone from the entrance of the tomb. Their senses were present; they were thinking about solving the practical problems facing them. Note also that they had stayed right with Joseph of Arimathea until he had closed the tomb. They knew that a large stone had sealed the entrance. Luke even says they “saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it” (Lk. 23:55). Apparently they went in, looked over the tomb, and perhaps helped Joseph and Nicodemus (and probably their servants) all they could. They probably stayed with them until the large stone was rolled into the entrance.

The point is this: the women, despite their sadness and bereavement, were sensible. They knew Jesus was dead. They were not mistaken or deceived. Every step they took was evidence that what they experienced was true: Jesus did arise from the dead.

II. *Mark 16:04 The Rolled-Away Stone*

The second proof of the resurrection was the rolled-away stone (See *Jesus' Tomb*, Mt. 27:65-66 for description of the stone). The stone was not rolled back for the benefit of Jesus but for the witnesses to the resurrection. When Jesus arose, He was in His resurrection body, the body of the spiritual dimension of being which has no physical bounds. However, the witnesses needed to enter the tomb to see the truth. The stone was rolled back for their benefit.

Note also that soldiers were guarding the tomb (Mt. 27:65-66. See 27:62-66; 28:2-4, 11-15.) The fact that the stone was rolled back is a proof of the resurrection.

MATHEW 27:65–66 JESUS' TOMB

Cave tombs were closed by rolling a huge cartwheel-like stone in front of the entrance. They were almost impossible to remove. A deep slanting groove was hewn out of the rock at the base of the entrance for the circular stone to rest in. The stone usually weighed several tons. Such precautions were essential because there were so many tombs ransacked in those days of poverty.

The tomb was further secured by being sealed. When it was necessary to seal a tomb, the huge stone was cemented to the entrance walls or else some type of rope or binding was wrapped around the entrance stone and fastened to both sides of the tomb. Then the binding was cemented with a hardening clay or wax-like substance. In the case of some burials, usually political figures, the seal of the Emperor was also attached to the walls of the entrance. This was to strike fear of Roman retaliation against any intruder.

In the case of Jesus' tomb, further precautions were taken by placing a patrol to guard against any foul play. This guard consisted of a large number of men (Mt. 28:4, 11f). □

III. *Mark 16:05–06 Angel in White Robe*

The third proof of the resurrection was the young man dressed in a white robe. He was an angel sent by God as proof of the resurrection. God sent him for four reasons.

1. To roll the stone back for the witnesses (Mt. 28:2).
2. To take care of the soldiers guarding the tomb (Mt. 28:4).
3. To reassure the women (Mk. 16:5-6). They were already grieving over Jesus' death. If they found the tomb empty without any explanation, they would have been devastated even more. The angel was a ministering spirit of God, one who ministered by reassuring God's people (See *Angels*, Heb. 1:04-14; *Old Testament References*, Heb. 1:4-14).
4. To validate and proclaim the resurrection and to give directions (Mk. 16:6-7).

HEBREWS 01:04–14 ANGELS (ANGELOS)

The word angel simply means *messenger*. The word is used at least in five different ways in Scripture.

=> It is used of men (Lk. 7:24; Jas. 2:25; Rev. 1:20; 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14).

=> It is used of Christ (Rev. 8:3-5).

=> It is used of the "angel of the Lord" or the "angel of God," meaning the presence of deity in angelic form (Gen. 16:1-13; 21:17-19; 22:11-16; 31:11-13; Exo. 3:2-4; Judg. 2:1; 6:12-16; 13:3-22).

=> It is used of prophets (Hag. 1:13).

=> It is used of spiritual beings who serve God (Psa. 104:4; Heb. 1:14; 2:2, 5).

1. The important facts about angels seem to be as follows:

- a. Angels are created beings, superior to men (Psa. 104:4; cp. Heb. 1:14; Col. 1:16).
- b. Angels are numerous (Psa. 68:17; Mt. 26:53; Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11).
- c. Angels are extremely superior to men in intelligence and knowledge (2 Sam. 14:20; Psa. 103:20; 104:4).
- d. Angels have great power (2 Kng. 19:35; Mt. 28:3; 2 Pet. 2:11; Rev. 20:1-2).
- e. Angels observe men (Eccl. 5:6; 1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3:10).
- f. Some angels have fallen with Satan from their original state (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 20:10.)

2. Apparently, angels were created in various ranks and for specific functions to be performed *before God Himself*.

- a. There is the archangel Michael who stands above all the other angels. He is the prime administrator of God (Dan. 10:21; 12:1, 7-12; 1 Th. 4:16; Jude 9). Some believe Satan was an archangel, superior even to Michael, before his fall (Rev. 12:7).
- b. There is the angel Gabriel who is God's very special messenger of mercy (Dan. 8:15-16; 9:21; Lk. 1:19-33). He is never called an archangel.
- c. The Scripture gives the titles of other angelic orders.

=> There are the seraphim, whose function seems to be to praise God (Isa. 6:1-6, the only reference to them).

=> There are the cherubim, whose function seems to be to proclaim the glory of God (Gen. 3:24; Exo. 25:18; Psa. 80:1; 99:2).

d. Other angels are said to have various functions...

- to worship God (Neh. 9:6; Lk. 2:13-14).
- to rejoice in the repentance of a single sinner (Lk. 15:10).
- to accompany Christ at His second coming (Mt. 24:31; 25:31; Mk. 8:38; 1 Th. 4:16).
- to execute the judgments of God (Gen. 3:24; 19:1; Judg. 5:23; 2 Sam. 24:16; 1 Chr. 2:15; 2 Chr. 32:32; Acts 12:23; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:9).

3. Angels have a very important function in God's dealings with believers. Note what Scripture says: They are "all ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation" (Heb. 1:14).

- a. They protect and deliver believers either through or from trials (Psa. 34:7; Psa. 91:11; Isa. 63:9; Dan. 3:28; 6:22; Acts 12:7-11).

- b. They guide and lead believers in their ministry (1 Kng. 19:5; Mt. 2:13, 19-20; Acts 5:19; 8:26).
- c. They escort believers into heaven (Lk. 16:22).
- d. They encourage believers (Acts 27:23-25). Note: this assistance seems to begin at childhood and to continue on throughout life (Heb. 1:14; cp. Mt. 18:10; Psa. 91:11). □

HEBREWS 01:4–14 OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES

The writer proves Christ's superiority by quoting seven Old Testament passages and applying them to Christ. The Old Testament passages stand as types which symbolized the coming Messiah or Saviour of the world. The passages are: Heb. 1:5 (2 Sam. 7:14 Psa. 2:7); Heb. 1:6 (Dut. 32:43; Psa. 89:27; 97:7; cp. Lk. 2:13f); Heb. 1:7 (Psa. 104:4); Heb. 1:8-9 (Psa. 45:6-7); Heb. 1:10-12 (Psa. 102:25-27); Heb. 1:13 (Psa. 110:1). □

IV. *Mark 16:06 The Missing Body of Jesus*

The fourth proof of the resurrection was the missing body of Jesus. Note several facts, all giving evidence of the resurrection.

1. The women entered the tomb (v. 5).
2. The angel verified that Jesus "was crucified" (dead).
3. The angel proclaimed, "He has risen! He is not here! See [look, contemplate] the place where they laid Him." And the women did.
4. The women "saw" (contemplated) that Jesus was not there. They saw the place where He had been laid, and the body was missing.

V. *Mark 16:07 Jesus Christ's Appearance to Peter*

The fifth proof of the resurrection was the compassionate and wise word to Peter. The compassion and wisdom of God are clearly seen in this personal word sent to Peter. God knew that Peter was crushed, despite his repentance, and that it would be extremely difficult for him to face the other disciples. He had proclaimed his loyalty too loudly and failed too greatly, even to the point of denying his Lord (see Mk. 14:26-31, 66-72). Peter was devastated, more than most believers could ever imagine. This is evident from the fact that he needed both this personal word of encouragement from an angel and a personal visit from the resurrected Lord. Apparently the Lord had to visit him first, all alone, before He appeared to the rest of the disciples (Lk. 24:34; 1 Cor. 15:5).

This personal word to Peter points to God's being behind the whole event. It demonstrates God's compassion and perfect wisdom. It is evidence of the resurrection.

Rev 1:17-18 *When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.”*

Isa 41:10 *So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.*

Isa 43:1-2 *But now, this is what the Lord says — he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*

VI. Mark 16:07 Fulfilment of the Lord’s Promises

The sixth proof of the resurrection was the fulfilment of the Lord’s promise. Jesus had told the disciples that He would go into Galilee after He had arisen (Mk. 14:28). Fulfilling His promise was proof that Jesus had arisen. Being told to meet Him in Galilee would do two things.

1. It would stir their hearts with some degree of wonder and hope. It would give them hope that their relationship with the Lord could be restored. They would know that everything could be explained to them in Galilee.
2. It would stir them to remember His promise and give evidence that Jesus had actually arisen from the dead. The very fact that He met them in Galilee, fulfilling His promise, is evidence of His resurrection. The promise could not be fulfilled if He had not risen, and since He arose, the promise was to be fulfilled.

Rom 4:21 *Being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.*

2 Cor 1:20 *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.*

2 Tim 2:13 *If we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.*

2 Pet 1:4 *Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

VII. Mark 16:08 Fear and Silence of the Women

The seventh proof of the resurrection was the fright and silence of the women. Note the women were as anyone would be: trembling, bewildered, silent and afraid. As they ran to tell Peter and the disciples, why were they silent and afraid, saying nothing to anyone?

1. The angel had told them to tell only “His disciples and Peter.” They were to tell no one else.

2. They feared others might think them crazy, so grieved that they were imagining things.
3. They feared the Jewish and Roman authorities, that they might be accused of stealing the body.

Every emotion of the women and their very reaction (trembling, being bewildered and afraid) are proof of the resurrection. They reacted in a normal way, just as any group would react, and their normal reaction is evidence of the resurrection. (Note: despite the effect upon their emotions, their thought processes were still very active. They did exactly as the angel instructed. They reasoned and knew to keep silent and quiet about the matter.)

VIII. *Mark 16:09–10 Appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene*

The eighth proof of the resurrection was the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene. The very fact that Jesus visited Mary first, before He visited anyone else, is evidence of the resurrection. It is just like Jesus. He responds to love and deep devotion. And Mary, above all others, seems to have loved Jesus more and held Him closer to her heart with more devotion than anyone else. Her need for Him seems to have been greater and felt more than anyone else's.

- => She had been forgiven and healed from so much. (Note that even in this reference to her, mention is made that Jesus drove seven demons out of her.)
- => She was at the cross through the whole ordeal and her name is one of the names always given, even above Jesus' own mother, Mary (Mk. 15:40-41).
- => She was present when Jesus was taken down from the cross and until the very last moment of His burial (Mk. 15:47; Lk. 23:55).
- => She was foremost in making preparations for embalming the body over the weekend (Mk. 15:56).
- => She visited the tomb after the Sabbath at the earliest possible moment, arising very early in the morning when it was still dark (Mk. 16:1-2; Jn. 20:1).
- => She refused to leave the tomb after Peter and John verified that the body was missing (Jn. 20:11f).

Mary was a most unusual follower of the Lord, a woman of deep devotion and love, humility and grace; a precious saint who felt the loss of her Lord perhaps more deeply than anyone else. Therefore, Jesus responded to her, meeting her need first of all. This definitely lends proof to the fact that the Lord was risen. (Every genuine believer can attest to the same glorious truth that Mary's experience proclaims: Jesus is risen, for He is ever present with us, responding to our love and devotion and meeting our every need. How precious and strong the presence of our wonderful Lord!)

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

John 14:15-16 “If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever.”

John 16:27 “No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God.”

Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

MARK 16:09–10 SCRIPTURE

These verses are not in the two oldest manuscripts, the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. Only portions are found in other manuscripts and then in various forms. However, they are found in the Vulgate and Syriac Versions. □

IX. *Mark 16:11 The Weak Faith of the Disciples*

The ninth proof of the resurrection was the immediate unbelief of the disciples. Again, the disciples are painted in a bad light, a picture that most likely would not be shown if the resurrection had not really happened. The disciples would be seen as stalwarts of great belief and heroic examples if the resurrection were being fabricated. The very fact that they are seen failing again and again and that they are actually the ones to fail the most tragically and are to be blamed the most, is clear evidence of the resurrection.

Mark 16:14 Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen.

John 3:18 “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”

Heb 3:12 See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

Heb 4:11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

X. *Mark 16:12 Jesus’ Appearance to Two Disciples*

The tenth proof of the resurrection was the appearance of Jesus to two disciples. This probably refers to the appearance to the two on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:13-35). Just who they were is not known. They were simply two disciples of the Lord who were to go to the apostles and prepare them even more for the Lord’s appearances to them. Again, the very way in which the Lord appeared and went about preparing His disciples for confrontation with Him is evidence of His having truly risen. His perfect wisdom, tenderness, and care — which is so evident in the way everything is handled — are clear evidence.

XI. Mark 16:13 Unbelief of the Disciples

The eleventh proof of the resurrection was the continued unbelief of the disciples. Again, no fabricated story would paint its main characters in such a bad light, not time after time. In fact, the disciples were not heroes, but tragic failures throughout the whole gospel story. This is seldom remembered and mentioned by preachers and teachers, yet they are seen as tragic failures, unbelievably weak time and again. They were a far cry from the type of men we would want as heroes. Why does Scripture paint them in such a bad light? Because what they said *did* happen. It is the truth. Jesus arose and appeared to Mary and the two disciples, and when they shared their experiences with the apostles, the apostles refused to believe. (They were without excuse. For many months Jesus had drilled the fact of His death and resurrection into them. Mt. 16:21-28; 17:1-13; 17:22; 17:24-27.) The weakness of the disciples and their continued unbelief are evidence that what happened was true. It is proof of the resurrection. The truth — exactly what happened — is being told simply and clearly by honest and moral eyewitnesses.

Luke 24:25 He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!”

Mark 4:40 He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”

John 8:24 “I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins.” ■