

FOLLOW ME

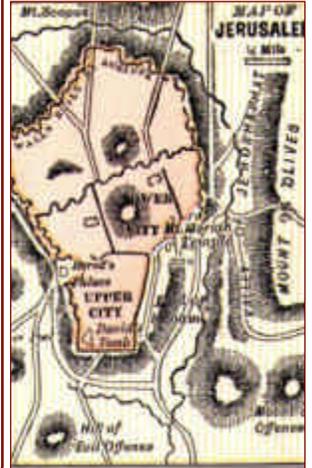
LESSON TWENTY: THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK 16



FAST FACTS

- After the Sabbath, Ss. Mary Magdalene, St. Mary, and St. Salome went to anoint Jesus' body with spices.
- They were greeted by a young man, who told them that Jesus was risen, and to go tell the Disciples (and especially St. Peter).
- Jesus appeared to St. Mary Magdalene, but the others did not believe her.
- Jesus appeared to two men on the road to Emmaus, but the others did not believe them.
- Jesus appeared to the Disciples in Galilee, and rebuked them for not believing the reports of His Resurrection.
- He told them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creatures.
- Jesus told them that God would empower them to work miracles as signs of the truth of their message.
- Jesus ascended into heaven.

MAP



MARK 16:1-8

The women who witnessed Jesus' Crucifixion went after the Sabbath to anoint His body with spices. This anointing was an act of love: while Jews did not embalm corpses, they did put spices on the bodies of their deceased loved ones to reduce the smell of bodily decay. St. Mark is the only writer to record their conversation about moving the stone from the front of the tomb: they probably did not know that the tomb had been sealed and guarded (Matthew 27:62-66).



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Fr. Paul Tarazi believes the "young man" who met the women at the tomb was probably St. Mark; the Church traditionally teaches that the young man was one of the angels mentioned in Matthew 28:5 and Luke 24:4 (this is reinforced by his white clothes, which in the New Testament are mentioned as worn by angels and glorified saints (Mark 9:3; Revelation 6:11; 7:9, 13)).

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OUR FAITH TEACHES

The Troparion for the Sunday of the Myrrhbearing Women:

The angel came to the myrrhbearing women at the tomb and said:

Myrrh is meet for the dead;

But Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption!

So proclaim: the Lord is risen,

Granting the world great mercy!

OUR FAITH TEACHES

St. Theophan the Recluse teaches us about Pascha: 'Pascha, the Pascha of the Lord!' *By His Resurrection, the Lord has brought us from death to life, and that Resurrection the 'Angels in Heaven cry,' [for they have] seen the light of deified human nature in fore-ordained glory in the person of our Lord and Redeemer, in Whose Image and through the power of Whose Resurrection, all true believers in Him, all who have united with Him with all their souls, are transformed. Glory, O Lord, to Thy Most-glorious Resurrection! The Angels sing, rejoicing together with us and foreseeing the swelling of their ranks. O Lord, make us worthy, to hymn Thee, the Resurrected One, with pure hearts, seeing in Thy Resurrection the cessation of our corruption, the seeds of a new resplendent life and the dawn of coming eternal glory whose forerunner Thou becamest, being resurrected for our sake. The tongues of neither men nor angels are capable of expressing Thy ineffable mercy toward us, O most-gloriously Resurrected Lord!*

denial of Him.

MARK 16:9-14

St. Mark very briefly summarizes Jesus' post-resurrection appearances to St. Mary Magdalene (recorded in greater detail in Luke 24:1-11 and John 20:11-18), and two men on the road to Emmaus (recorded in greater detail in Luke 24:13-35).

We are of course struck by the miracle of the risen Christ appearing and speaking to people, but pay attention to a special point St. Mark makes in vv. 11 and 13: those people who had not yet seen Jesus did not believe He was risen. The unbelief that plagued the Disciples throughout Jesus' ministry flared up intensely after His capture and death. Blessed Augustine explains:

When [Jesus] was with them before His passion, He had foretold all — that He would suffer, that He would die, that He would rise again on the third day — He had predicted it all; but His death was as a loss of memory for them. They were so disturbed when they saw Him hanging on the Cross that they forgot His teaching, did not look for His Resurrection, and failed to keep His promises in mind.

It is for this reason that Jesus chastised the Disciples for their unbelief in v. 14.

MARK 16:15-20

St. Mark also condenses the accounts of the Great Commission recorded in Matthew 28:16-20 and Luke 24:44-49. While the term "Great Commission" generally refers to the passage in Matthew, its meaning is clearly seen here: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (v. 15). Fr. Constantine Nasr explains the Great Commission:

The Great Commission was not given only to the disciples then: it was given and will continue to be given to the shepherds of His Church, to the Patriarchs and Bishops, to the Priests, to go and preach to all the nations. I firmly believe that every person who confesses Christ and follows Christ and works for Christ is a missionary worker who complements and enhances the work of the shepherd. In fact, the shepherd, whether he is a Patriarch, Bishop or Priest, needs co-workers, men

TIME TRAVEL

Mark 16:9-20 is a particularly difficult passage for biblical scholars because it is widely debated whether it was part of the original Gospel record, or whether someone added it long after the Gospel was written. This debate occurs because the earliest manuscripts of Mark, such as the version in the two primary New Testament collections, the *Codex Sinaiticus* and *Codex Vaticanus*, do not have these last twelve verses. Other collections give a shorter ending than is found in the twelve verses in the New King James Version, but most other manuscripts include the verses.

A 10th century Armenian manuscript attributes the verses to Aristion, one of the Holy Apostle John's disciples. Some of the saints who quote passages from these last twelve verses include St. Irenaeus of Lyon (2nd century), St. Ambrose of Milan (4th century), and Blessed Augustine (4th – 5th centuries).

These verses are frequently quoted in Orthodox Christian explanations of Holy Baptism and exorcism.

LOOK AT YOURSELF

The Orthodox Church in America gives several suggestions for engaging in evangelism:

- *Among family and friends* — Talk to them about your experience in church, invite them to go to church with you, pray for them, etc.
- *In your local community* — Help your parish, get involved in charitable activity, be unafraid to live out and witness to your faith in school, in sports, with friends, etc.
- *In your country or across the globe* — Support the Church's mission communities, go on a mission or service project trip, etc.

and women of God in the Church.

St. Mark concludes his Gospel account by quoting Jesus' teaching regarding the need for baptism, as well as the fact that God will empower Christians to accomplish His purpose in the world. Finally, Jesus' Ascension is depicted, with the final note that the Disciples then "went out and preached everywhere."

WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT FOLLOWING JESUS?

- Do I celebrate the fact that Jesus is risen? What does Pascha mean in my life?
- Do I believe what I have learned about Jesus? Do I trust

His promises to His people, including me?

- Do I reach out to others, and try to share the Good News of Jesus with them? What can I do to share with others the great gift that God has given to me?

