

Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension

Mark 16:9-15

“No ‘stone’ set or sealed by the authority of men could keep the Christ entombed, and early in the morning on the first day of the week came Jesus’ glorious resurrection. . . , The Resurrection, confirmed by Jesus’ subsequent appearances, revived the fainting faith of the apostles and filled them with renewed spiritual strength and confidence. His physical presence convinced them of his resurrection and he became to them the Risen Christ. This rising gave incontrovertible evidence of the truth of his teachings and authenticated every precept he had uttered” (Shotwell 328).

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 Jesus was seen by his disciples during the forty days following his resurrection is a fact carefully authenticated and verified by the Gospel writers. By tarrying on earth the Master gave proof of his resurrection. Ten appearances are specifically recorded as having occurred during this period, five of these taking place on the day of Resurrection.

“In each of these five appearances he sounded out the understanding of those to whom he appeared. He found them slow to believe. The acceptance for centuries of the inevitability of death was so predominant that the realization of his living presence was almost beyond their grasp” (Shotwell 329).

“To a woman was this honour given to be the first that saw the risen Redeemer; and that woman was not his virgin-mother” (Jamieson 3.214).

“That Jesus chose to make a woman the first witness to his resurrection was the most dramatic confirmation of his belief in her spirituality. He entrusted her with the most significant message of his mission on earth—that he had overcome death—and in so doing paid the highest tribute to her faith and to her love. Above all he held her up as the person most worthy of his trust” (Sergio 106).

“The plan was that the women should return first thing on the Sunday morning to complete the task of burying Jesus properly. Waking before dawn, meeting somewhere in the city, quietly going through the Garden Gate in the city’s wall, they made their way out to the disused quarry—a place now associated in their minds with barbaric torture, political injustice and human tragedy. It was likely to have been a damp, chilly April morning. They were a small group—probably four of them (Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and another Mary). They hoped that they would not draw attention to

themselves, and that their combined efforts would be sufficient to roll the stone away. Although a tiny expedition, it was destined to become perhaps the most famous of all time. For when they came within sight of the tomb, they could see that the stone had already been rolled away” (Walker 180).

10 And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

“Mary found the disciples in a state of mourning. While the people of Jerusalem were celebrating the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples were weeping, but not for long. Her witness to them was that Jesus was alive, and she knew it to be so because she had seen him. The reluctance of the disciples to believe her is certainly understandable. A resurrection is no ordinary event” (EBC 8. 789).

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

“*Believed not.* This is proof that they did not expect his resurrection; proof that they were not easily deceived; and that nothing but the clearest evidence could undeceive them” (Barnes 178).

“The most significant affirmation of woman in the New Testament may well be found in the tradition made prominent in all four Gospels that women were the ones to find the tomb of Jesus empty; that according to Mark and Luke the announcement of Jesus’ resurrection was first made to women; that according to Matthew and John, Jesus actually appeared first to women (in John to Mary Magdalene alone); and that according to all four Gospels women were commissioned to inform Peter and the other apostles as to the most fundamental tenet of the Christian faith, that Jesus is not dead but risen!” (Stagg 144)

One of the religious tenets of Christian Science states:

“5. We acknowledge that the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection served to uplift faith to understand eternal Life, even the allness of Soul, Spirit, and the nothingness of matter” (S&H 497).

12 After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

“These verses are obviously a shortened account of the story of the two men on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35)” (EBC 8. 789).

“In the afternoon of this same momentous day Cleopas, a disciple, with another whose name is not known, walked along the road to Emmaus, a town about seven miles distant

from Jerusalem” (Shotwell 330).

13 And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

Residue in Greek is *loipoy* and means “the remaining ones; the other; remnant; the rest of any number or class” (Thayer 3062).

“Their unbelief brought quick reproof: ‘O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?’ Then ‘beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.’ Quoting passage after passage, he traced the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah and his kingdom, making plain that the whole spirit and content of the Scriptures foretold a suffering Messiah, whose kingdom was a spiritual kingdom to be manifested by precisely the way of loving self-sacrifice the Nazarene had taken. How illumined were the Messianic passages of Scripture as they walked with him, not alone from Jerusalem to Emmaus, but from Moses and the prophets to Christ and his glory” (Shotwell 330).

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.

“The same evening, as the apostles (except Thomas), met together behind closed doors because of their fear of the authorities, Jesus suddenly stood among them” (Shotwell 331).

“The rebuke Jesus gave his disciples is particularly severe - more severe, in fact, than any other rebuke he gives them elsewhere in the Gospels” (*EBC* 8. 789).

“*And upbraided them.* Rebuked them, or reproached them. This was done because, after all the evidence they had had of the resurrection, still they did not believe. . . This is a most important circumstance in the history of our Lord’s resurrection. It shows, conclusively, that they had not conspired to impose on the world; that they had given up all for lost when he died; that they did not expect his resurrection; and all this is the strongest proof that he truly rose” (Barnes 178).