

Lesson 13: *Appearing to Mary and Others* Wednesday, September 25, 2024

Ryan Day

Read Mark 16:9–20. What do these verses add to the resurrection story?

⁹ Now when *He* rose early on the first *day* of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. ¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. ¹¹ And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

¹² After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. ¹³ And they went and told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe them either.

Acts 12—Church prayer and disbelief over Peter’s release from prison

¹⁴ Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

How often is the Lord’s work halted or prevented do to disbelief?

The Great Commission

¹⁵ And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

“believe”—*pisteuo*—to have faith, to fully trust

²⁴ Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. ²⁵ The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”

²⁶ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” ²⁷ Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

²⁸ And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!”

²⁹ Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed.” —***John 20:24-29***

Almost all of Mark 16:9–20 has parallels to other passages in the New Testament—Mary Magdalene at the tomb seeing Jesus (*Matt. 28:1, 9, 10; John 20:11–18; compare with Luke 8:2*); two men see Him in the countryside (*Luke 24:13–35*); the eleven are commissioned (*Matt. 28:16–20, Luke 24:36–49, John 20:19–23*).

The first person to see Jesus alive was Mary Magdalene (*John 20:11–18*). Other women saw Him, as well (*Matt. 28:8–10*). It is significant that the first people to see the risen Lord were women. Because women in the ancient world did not have high status as witnesses, if the story were fabricated, it would have been much more likely to name men as the first witnesses. But it is not men, not the Twelve, but a woman. She goes to tell the good news to the disciples, but, not surprisingly, they do not believe her testimony, most likely because it seemed fantastic and, also, unfortunately, because Mary was a woman.

Apologists for the resurrection story of Jesus have used this fact, that of women being the first ones to have seen Jesus, as powerful evidence for the veracity of the story.

Of course, if they were making the story up, why would they have made themselves look so bad? Jesus had to rebuke them for their “hardness of heart.” The Gospel accounts, from the time of His arrest through His appearances after the resurrection, depict the followers of Jesus in a very negative light: fleeing, denying, disbelieving, and so forth. This makes no sense if the story were made up.

In contrast, their later bold and unwavering proclamation of the risen Christ, and the hope it offers everyone, presents powerful evidence for the veracity of their claims.

¹⁷ And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

ILL: SOD Student healed of Cancer

¹⁹ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.—

Mark 16:9-20