

Beyond Doubt

Mark 16:9-14

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A. True or False (vs. 9-11):

1. After he had risen – When Christ got up from the grave He did so with an agenda. His appearance was first to someone whose faith kept her looking for Him. Those whose faith failed were nowhere to be found even though He told them numerous times He would rise again. He repeated this message some many times even His enemies knew what He said.
2. Appeared to Mary Magdalene – Christ once and for all made Himself visible to Mary so that she mistook Him for the gardener (John 20:11-18).
 - a) Mary could not recognize Jesus until He opened her eyes (1 Cor. 2:10-15; Mk. 4:10-20; Mt. 16:13-19).
 - b) Mary saw Christ while all the disciples had to be convinced by several visits He is alive.
 - c) In all four Gospels, Mary Magdalene's name is found among the first witnesses of the resurrection. Although 16:9–11 come from a later time, they indicate that in the memory of the church Mary was counted not only as the first witness to the resurrection of Jesus but also as the first herald of the resurrection to the church. The first person to proclaim the resurrection testimony upon which saving faith derives (1 Cor 15:14) is a woman. The reference to her being exorcised of seven demons in v. 9 comes from Luke 8:2; her report to the mournful disciples in v. 10 reflects John 20:14, 18 (so, too, the *Gospel of Peter* 26); and the disciples' disbelief reflects Luke 24:11. V. 10 records that the grief of Peter (14:72) has now overtaken the entire apostolic company, although, as the following verse indicates, it is not a grief that leads to faith. The disciples, whose later proclamations of the gospel were met with disbelief, cannot have forgotten their own disbelief of the same message from Mary, and hopefully were more understanding and effective heralds because of it.¹
 - d) Mark states that she was the person out of whom he had driven seven demons. This indicates the supernatural healing of Christ in Mary's life. It also explains her devotion to him to the very end. John tells us that Mary Magdalene stayed around the tomb after the appearance of the angels to the women (John 20:11–18). She was the first believer to see the risen Christ.²
3. She went – Mary believed Christ right away and no matter the distance she, with no plans of stopping, went to where the disciples were.
 - a) Apparently a short time later Jesus appeared to the other two women, confirming the angel's announcement and urging them to tell His disciples (cf. Matt. 28:1, 9–10).³
4. Report – Mary spoke to the disciples with a full conviction that the person she saw was Jesus. To report means to share one's faith with others.

¹ Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (p. 504). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

² Cooper, R. L. (2000). *Mark* (Vol. 2, p. 276). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

³ Grassmick, J. D. (1985). Mark. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 195). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

5. Had been with Him – This means that the disciples had a relationship with Christ that was something they never had before.
6. Mourning – The disciples were continually experiencing depressing grief because of the way they behaved during Christ arrest and crucifixion (“is not to grieving or mourning for the dead but rather sadness and grief because of wickedness and oppression.”).
 - a) They had given up everything to follow Christ (Mt. 19:27-30). Peter would say later ‘silver and gold have I none.’ (Acts 3:6) They were hoping to be on the left and right when Christ became king (Mk. 10:35-40).
7. Weeping – The disciples were also continuously mourning Christ death. They were loudly continuously wailing and lamenting. It is obvious that they had given up hope.
8. Weeping — Believing what we choose to believe can put in hopeless state when what we believe does not come through.
9. Heard He was alive - Christ was now continuously spiritually and naturally alive. He was continuously in a state of being able to provide life to everyone.
10. Had been seen; beheld – The disciples clearly understood that Mary vividly saw Christ. Mary explained with careful deliberation and with specific details what she saw when she encountered Christ.
11. They refused to believe – Culturally they did not accept evidence from a woman. They committed to their culture rather than their theology.
12. They refused to believe – The disciples clearly understood what Mary was saying but deliberately chose to reject what she was saying. They were faithless.

B. Truth Affirmed (vs. 12-13):

1. Appeared; manifested – Jesus revealed Himself clearly, by an act of divine revelation (Lk. 24:13-35), to disciples on the road to Emmaus. Again He has to open eyes.
 - a) For a more complete record of this event, see Lk 24:13-35 (Road to Emmaus).
 - b) Jesus wanted them to know that the witnesses of his resurrection could be trusted. The phrase the Eleven means the apostles because there were only ten of them together at the time, since Thomas was absent (John 20:19–25). Verse 14 parallels the account in Luke (24:36–44).⁴
2. Different form – Jesus appeared with special features that was different than He appeared to anyone else.
 - a) The second appearance to the two travelers presupposes and summarizes the story of the resurrected Jesus appearing to two travelers on their way to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35). The note about appearing “in a different form” explains why Jesus was not recognized in the original story (Luke 24:16) and is thus the earliest extant commentary on the latter passage. The disciples, however, were no more receptive of the report of these messengers than they were of the report of the women in v. 11.⁵
3. Their way; go – They were continuously focused on reaching their destination which was a considerable distance.

⁴ Cooper, R. L. (2000). *Mark* (Vol. 2, p. 276). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

⁵ Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (pp. 504–505). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

4. They went away – They interrupted their journey by immediately deciding to go and share with the rest of the disciples what they had seen.
5. They went away – Two witnesses confirm facts (Deut. 17:6).
6. Reported – The two witnesses that were on the road to Emmaus were completely convinced that Christ rose from the dead. Their faith was steadfast when they decided to share with others.
7. They did not believe – The disciples refused to develop a deep conviction that Christ rose from the dead. They lack absolute confidence that He was alive.

C. Accept the Evidence (v. 14):

1. After He appeared; manifested – Jesus revealed Himself clearly, by an act of divine revelation, to disciples who were no longer weeping because they were now eating.
 - a) It seems like Christ would appear to the eleven first but He appeared to them after these witnesses as if He wanted to expose their unbelieving hearts.
 - b) This appearance to the eleven followed immediately upon the report of the Emmaus travelers (Lk 24:36-49; Jn 20:19-25).⁶
 - c) The phrase “the Eleven” in Mark 16:14 simply means “the Apostles,” because there were only ten of them together at that time, since Thomas was absent (John 20:19–25).⁷
 - d) After Judas’s demise (Matt. 27:3–5; Acts 1:16–18), the disciples were known for a while as the eleven. Jesus upbraided these disciples for not believing the account of eye witnesses, but He pronounces a blessing on “those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29). Jesus’ words would apply equally to Mark’s original readers and present-day believers as well.⁸
2. Appeared; manifested – Jesus vividly revealed Himself to disciples who seem hopeless.
3. Reclining – Jesus came after they were determined not to listen. Their will was totally exposed.
4. Reclining – The disciples were continuously sitting at the table as if they were waiting to partake of a meal. Jesus seems to come after they were determined not to listen.
5. Reproached – Jesus once and for all scolded (reprimanded, rebuked, despised) the disciples. Remember that Peter went to the tomb and did not see Christ laying there (John 20:6-10).
 - a) In 16:14 Jesus himself appears to the disciples. The longer ending presents three testimonies to the disbelieving disciples in an order of increasing authority: one female witness (vv. 9–11), two male witnesses (vv. 12–13; the Greek pronouns are masculine), and the resurrected Jesus himself (v. 14). Jesus upbraids the disciples for their disbelief of the earlier witnesses, whose testimony he confirms. V. 14 assures readers that the testimony of the church to the resurrection of Jesus is, in fact, the testimony of the risen Lord himself.⁹
 - b) They had seen Jesus raise a dead girl, man, Lazarus to life.
 - c) They had seen Jesus on the Mt. of Transfiguration.
6. Unbelief, not lack of faith – They disciples had every opportunity to gather the facts presented (two witnesses; Deut. 17:6) to them and believe that Christ words were true when He told them He would

⁶ Pfeiffer, C. F., & Harrison, E. F. (Eds.). (1962). *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Mk 16:9–14). Chicago: Moody Press.

⁷ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 167). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁸ Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1999). *Nelson’s new illustrated Bible commentary* (pp. 1242–1243). Nashville: T. Nelson Publishers.

⁹ Edwards, J. R. (2002). *The Gospel according to Mark* (p. 505). Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos.

rise from the dead. They however demonstrated a total lack of confidence in what the eyewitnesses said or what Peter saw when he went to the tomb.

7. Hardness – Instead of the disciples becoming excited of the news that Christ raised from the dead they became were determined to hold to their conviction that Christ was dead (Their eyes are shut while seeing – false doctrine). No matter what anyone said to them they were obstinate (inflexible, pig-headed, adamant, headstrong), unmoved by any testimony presented to them.
8. Had not believe/again not the word faith - facts – The disciples refused to develop a deep conviction that Christ rose from the dead. They lack absolute confidence that He was alive. They refused to accept anything, about Christ words concerning the resurrection or eyewitness accounts, that was taught to them. They were very deliberate about not developing a deep commitment to the facts from eye witnesses that was presented to them.
9. Seen; beheld – Everyone gave the disciples a critical presentation of what they saw with a desire to cause them to believe that Christ raised. They wanted the disciples to share their excitement and conviction.
10. Seen – The evidence demanded complete trust, no doubting (1 Corinthians 15:3-11).
11. After He had raised – All the accounts of Christ appearance was after Christ gotten up from the grave and was fully spiritual and physical.
 - a) The miracle of His bodily resurrection is important to the message of the Gospel and the motivation of God's people for witness and service (Acts 1:21–22; 2:32; 4:10, 33).¹⁰
12. After He had raised – Salvation is a total conviction of the heart for a surrendered life (Romans 10:9).
13. Faith required - Faith is activated when we accept the evidence (Heb. 11:3; 12:1-2 – Crowd of witnesses). This is when our lives are transformed from hard hearts to a spiritually maturing process that works out our sanctification which empowers us to grow from the flesh to Spirit enjoying all the Spirit's fruit (Gal. 5:22-25).

¹⁰ Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (pp. 142–145). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.