

Angelic Instructions for Able Witnesses  
Mark 16:1-8

**I. True Story**

**A. Intro**

1. The story you have just heard is true
  - a. The names have not been changed to protect the innocent, because there is only one innocent in the story and He doesn't need protecting
  - b. The events are described as they happened.
    - (1) At the heart of this story is this truth: **God raised Jesus of Nazareth from the dead proving He was the Son of God, the Savior.**
    - (2) God came to us in human form
      - (a) He lived, died on the cross, and was buried
      - (b) On the third day He was raised from the dead by the power of God
      - (c) **Romans 4:25 (ESV) *who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.***
        - i) He died for our sins
        - ii) His resurrection provides
          - a) Proof of God's acceptance
          - b) Basis for forgiveness
          - c) Opportunity to be acquitted
    - c. The details have not been disguised or altered in order to allow for certain validation

**B. Validating Evidence**

1. Women are the central characters of the narrative
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> century women - 2<sup>nd</sup> class
  - b. The testimony of women was inadmissible in a court of law
  - c. No one in the 1<sup>st</sup> century who wanted to fabricate a believable story about a resurrection would make women the witnesses
2. The women's concern for the stone and not the stench supports authenticity
3. The women clearly did not anticipate a resurrection
4. No one in 1<sup>st</sup> century Israel would dare to put a lie on the lips of God
  - a. The angel is the messenger of God who delivers God's word
  - b. If the angel says Christ is risen, God says Christ is risen.

**II. The Able Witnesses**

**A. Who were these women**

1. **Mark 15:40-41 (ESV) <sup>40</sup> *There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. <sup>41</sup> *When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.****

- a. Present at the crucifixion
  - b. Watching - powerless to do more than observe from afar
  - c. Named - real people with real lives who could be sought out for the real story
  - d. They had history with Jesus
    - (1) They followed Him
    - (2) They ministered to Him
    - (3) They fulfilled the qualifications of disciples
  - e. They were not alone
2. **Mark 16:1-2 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> *When the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him.* <sup>2</sup> *And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.*
- a. They were committed to do what love could do
    - (1) They bought spices
    - (2) Intended to minister to Him, even in death
      - (a) Three days in a tomb in the tropics
      - (b) “He stinketh” (Lazarus)
  - b. They were prepared to accept the consequences of association
3. **Mark 16:5-7 (ESV)** <sup>5</sup> *And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed.* <sup>6</sup> *And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him.* <sup>7</sup> *But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”*
- a. They encountered the unexpected
    - (1) The stone was rolled away
    - (2) There was someone alive in the tomb, and it wasn’t Jesus
  - b. They were instructed
    - (1) The angel addresses their fear
    - (2) The angel acknowledges their experience
    - (3) The angel announces the truth
    - (4) The angel asserts the evidence
    - (5) The angel advances their mission
4. **Mark 16:8 (ESV)** <sup>8</sup> *And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.*
- a. Eventually, they told the whole story, since we have the details today
  - b. But, as they were running from the empty tomb, they were afraid and said nothing to anyone
  - c. Why might they have been afraid?
    - (1) Perhaps they didn’t trust the reality to be real - afraid the entire incident was a figment of their traumatized condition
    - (2) Perhaps they didn’t trust the reality to be recountable -

maybe they just couldn't grasp the details and were unable to tell the story coherently

- (3) Perhaps they didn't trust the reality to be reasonable - perhaps they knew no one would believe them
- (4) Perhaps the reality of hope and joy simply overwhelmed their sensibilities and they were so lost in the awe and wonder and glory of the moment, words failed them.
  - (a) Their response to the news of the resurrection of Jesus is consistent with the response of men and women to Jesus as He shows His power and majesty as the Son of God.
    - i) When Jesus stilled the storm, the disciples were afraid
    - ii) When Jesus delivered the demoniac, the Gadarenes were afraid
    - iii) When Jesus set His face for Jerusalem and the cross, the disciples were afraid
  - (b) **The truest and best response to Jesus is awe and wonder that God came among men and lived and died for our salvation.**

### III. The Relatable Witnesses

#### A. They are Us

- 1. These women represent all of us, and our place in the story
  - a. Their expectations are earthbound until redefined by Jesus
    - (1) They expect death but find life
    - (2) They expect to serve Jesus but find He has already out-served them
    - (3) They expect sadness, failure, defeat, and hopelessness but they find exactly the opposite
  - b. They encounter the living Christ and He changes their world
- 2. **A living Savior and an empty tomb ought to elicit a deep and profound sense of awe and wonder**
  - a. You come to the tomb seeking, but leave telling
  - b. You come prepared for a mission of your own making, but leave sent on a mission of His making
  - c. You come willing to take on the world, but leave willing to love the world
  - d. You come thinking everything will be the same, but you leave knowing nothing will ever be the same again.

#### B. The Witness

- 1. Jesus' resurrection from the dead proves that He is the Son of God
- 2. Jesus' resurrection from the dead proves that Jesus is the Christ, the God-certified Savior
- 3. Jesus' resurrection from the dead proves that God accepts His death on our behalf

4. Jesus' resurrection from the dead proves that God will grant eternal life to those who put their faith in Christ
  - a. **John 14:19 (ESV)** *Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.*

### C. The Requirement

1. Paul in Athens
  - a. **Acts 17:32 (ESV)** *Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, "We will hear you again about this."*
  - b. **Acts 17:34 (ESV)** *But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.*
2. Three Responses
  - a. Mockers
    - (1) God will not be mocked
    - (2) Given unto every man once to die and then comes judgment
    - (3) We will all answer for our lives
      - (a) Either we will approach God with faith and find forgiveness
      - (b) Or we will approach God with guilt and find judgment
  - b. Procrastinators
    - (1) Procrastination prolonged becomes permanent
    - (2) Now is the appointed time, today is the day of salvation
  - c. Believers
    - (1) **Romans 10:9-13 (ESV)** *<sup>9</sup> because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*
    - (2) When we put our faith in Jesus, God applies all the benefits of Christ's life and death, forgiving our sin, removing our guilt, restoring our relationship with Him, bestowing eternal life

### D. Come to the Empty Tomb and the Risen Christ

1. Come to the empty tomb and let the risen Christ change all your expectations.
  - a. Trust the One who defeated death to have the power and will to release you from slavery to the fear of death into new life

- b. As this world becomes more and more a hopeless place, let Christ give you an unwavering hope.
  - c. As this world seems more and more a joyless residence, let Christ bestow on you an indescribable, unrelenting joy
  - d. As offense and unforgiveness multiply in this world to critical, toxic levels, let Christ embrace you with God's mercy that cancels guilt and removes our transgressions from us.
2. Come to the empty tomb, just as those women came long ago, come seeking Jesus. Come find more than you imagine.