

# THE RESURRECTION AND MARK 16:9

by Avram Yehoshua

[The Seed of Abraham](#)

The problem with Mark 16:9-20 is that almost every Bible and every commentary speak of the passage as a later addition. In other words, Mark didn't write it. Someone might say that because it's in the Bible that's enough for them to believe that Jesus rose on Sunday, but there's no theologian who would agree with them. Not one. We'll see why in a moment. The verse in question reads:

“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.” (Mark 16:9 NKJV)

Also, there's no mention in all the New Testament of a change from Sabbath holiness and assembly to Sunday because of the Resurrection. In other words, Scripture is silent about any alleged change from Sabbath to Sunday. Nowhere does Scripture declare that God changed the day of assembly and holiness.<sup>1</sup> It's not written, even in Mark, and if God hasn't changed the day, Man has no authority from Him to do it. *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* states that Mark 16:9-20 is missing from many ancient manuscripts:

“Textual note,” Mark “16:9-20. In the two...manuscripts of the Greek NT...Vaticanus and Siniaticus, the Gospel ends with 16:8, as it does also in several early versions.”<sup>2</sup>

“Both Eusebius<sup>3</sup> and Jerome<sup>4</sup> state that the ending was missing from most of the manuscripts of their day. In addition, several texts and versions offer a shorter substitute in the

---

<sup>1</sup> See Gen. 2:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; 31:14-16, for the holiness of the 7th day Sabbath.

<sup>2</sup> The Textus Receptus, which is the basis for the KJV, and for the most part, the NKJV, has the same Greek words as the NU text (which is what the Vaticanus and Siniaticus are based on). The only exception is the English phrase for ‘out of whom,’ as in, ‘*out of whom* He had cast seven demons.’ The TR has  $\alpha\phi$  (*ahf*), while the NU has  $\pi\alpha\rho$  (*par-from*), which basically convey the same meaning (Wesley J. Perschbacher, editor, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publications, 1990), pp. 61, 41, 304). These two words don't have any affect upon the meaning of the sentence in relation to when Yeshua rose from the dead. In other words, both manuscript traditions have the exact same words, except for this inconsequential word.

<sup>3</sup> E. A. Livingstone, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 200-201. Eusebius lived from 260 to 340 AD. He was Bishop of Caesarea by 315. He was an Arian who half heartedly repented after being condemned by the Council of Antioch (324-325), and was reinstated at the Council of Nicaea in 325. He continued to oppose Athanasius. ‘Eusebius’s *Ecclesiastical History* is the main source for the history of Christianity from the Apostolic Age to his own day. It contains a huge range of material on the Eastern Church.’

Page 36: Arianism is a heresy that denies the full and equal deity of Yeshua with the Father. It states that Yeshua was not eternal, but created by the Father. The Councils of Alexandria (320) and Nicaea (325) condemned Arianism.

Page 42: Athanasius was born about 296 and died in 373 AD. He was secretary to Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, at the time of the Council of Nicaea and was later Bishop of Alexandria (328). He incurred the hatred of the Arians of Alexandria and was exiled a number of times between 336 and 366. ‘In his *De Incarnatione* he expounds how God the Word (Logos), by His union with mankind, restored to fallen man the image of God, and by His death and resurrection overcame death. Many scholars date this work before 318; others place it some 15-20 years later. As bishop, Athanasius was the greatest and most consistent theological opponent of Arianism...He also argued for the Divinity of the Holy Spirit.’

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302. Jerome lived from 345 to 420 AD. He was a biblical scholar who knew Hebrew and was secretary to the Pope (382-385). He preached an extreme form of asceticism. In 386 he settled in Bethlehem. ‘Jerome’s scholarship was unsurpassed in the early Church...His greatest achievement was his translation of most of the Bible into Latin.’

place of 16:9-20. By far the greater number of manuscripts have the longer conclusion, but many of them are of a late date and an inferior quality...By the recognized standards of textual evaluation, both the longer and shorter endings must be rejected, and this is the judgement of almost all textual scholars. Lenski is one of the few commentators who argue for the longer ending (*Interpret. of Mark*, pp. 750-755).”

“In addition, an examination of verses 9-20 cannot fail to impress the careful student with the fact that these verses *differ markedly in style* from the rest of the Gospel. Perhaps the most acceptable explanation is that the end of the original Gospel may have been torn off and lost before additional copies could be made. Perhaps others attempted to supply a substitute ending, the most successful of which was that which now appears in 16:9-20.”<sup>5</sup>

The ending of Mark is not authentic—it wasn’t written by Mark, but this is the only place in the New Testament that anyone can point to that seems to speak of a Sunday resurrection. Mark not writing it is one major problem that it has, but this isn’t the primary problem. It’s the verse itself (v. 9).

## Yeshua—First Seen On Sunday

There’s no disagreement with Yeshua first being seen on that Sunday morning. That’s Scripture. The disagreement comes from Christians using that to establish another day of assembly, in total disregard for God’s day.

To understand why Yeshua was first seen on that Sunday we need to know about the Feasts of Israel. All the Apostles kept the Feasts of Israel, both before and after the Resurrection.<sup>6</sup> After the Resurrection they understood the deeper spiritual meanings of the Feasts revolving around Yeshua. In First Sheaf (also called Firstfruits/First Fruits), which comes on Sunday in Passover week, which was the day Yeshua was first seen alive from the dead, the High Priest offered up barley grain as the first grain from the spring harvest. He dedicated it to Yahveh, sanctifying the spring harvest and all the other harvests that followed it (Lev. 23:9-14). This is why Yeshua told Miryam (Hebrew for Mary) not to cling to Him, in John 20:17:

“Yeshua said to her, ‘Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father, but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father and to My God and your God.’”

What did Jesus mean? *He was already resurrected.* The ascension He speaks of is the fulfilling of First Sheaf. Yeshua was the first to be raised from the dead, never to die again. All who believe will follow Him in their turn, as Paul states in 1st Cor. 15:20 and 23:

‘But now Messiah has been raised from the dead, the First Fruits (Sheaf) of those who are asleep...But each in his own order: Messiah the first fruits, after that those who are Messiah’s, at His coming.’

It’s important to understand Christianity’s ancient Hebraic heritage. Gentile believers have been grafted

---

<sup>5</sup> Charles F. Pfeiffer, Old Testament, Everett F. Harrison, New Testament, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1977), p. 1025.

<sup>6</sup> Acts 21:20 states that all the Jewish believers in Jerusalem kept the Law (Mosaic Law). The Feasts of Israel (as well as the 7th day Sabbath), all fall within the Law. Therefore, they all kept Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, etc. This is also historically proven by Eusebius and others, as well as places within the New Testament, such as 1st Cor. 5:8, etc. See also [The Feasts of Israel and the Church](#) and [The Feasts of Israel as Time Markers After the Resurrection](#) to see all the Feasts that the Apostles and Paul kept. See [A Snapshot of Church History and Mosaic Law](#) to understand that Mosaic Law was kept by all Christians for many years (and centuries) after the Apostles were dead.

into Israel to learn of her divine ways (Dt. 4:5-8). With this comes a deeper understanding of salvation, Yeshua, and how to walk out our faith in the Messiah.<sup>7</sup>

R. Alan Cole speaks of the longer ending of Mark 16:9-20 not being endorsed by Eusebius nor Jerome and that it would be foolish to use it as authoritative. In other words, for our specific concern, about a Sunday resurrection, one doesn't have Scripture to support it:

“omitted in some MSS, and rejected as spurious by most early authorities, such as Eusebius and Jerome. Certainly the style is quite unlike that of the rest of Mark.”<sup>8</sup>

“verse 9 itself seems to be introduced without reference to verse 1 above, virtually as a fresh beginning, which is suspicious.”<sup>9</sup>

“It would be unwise...to build a theological position upon these verses alone; and this no responsible Christian group has ever done.”<sup>10</sup>

Building a Sunday resurrection on Mark 16:9 is ‘irresponsible’ according to Cole. There’s also another significant reason for this. The actual translation of Mark 16:9, in our English Bibles, that says that Jesus rose on Sunday, cannot be proven from a Greek grammatical point of view.

*The Expositor’s Greek Testament* shares two important things about the ending in Mark. The first is that vv. 9-20 are most likely a *compilation* of resurrection passages from the other three Gospels, and the second is that the common English translation of v., 9 proclaiming a Sunday resurrection, is very questionable and based on the theology of the translator. Alexander Bruce writes this about vv. 9-20, after his comments on v. 8:

“So ends the authentic Gospel of Mark, without any account of appearances of the risen Jesus in Galilee or anywhere else. The one thing it records is the empty grave and an undelivered message sent through three women to the disciples, promising a reunion in Galilee.”

“Strange that a story of such thrilling interest should terminate so abruptly and unsatisfactorily. Was there originally a continuation, unhappily lost, containing, e.g. an account of a meeting of the risen One in Galilee with His followers? Or was the evangelist prevented by some unknown circumstances from carrying into effect an intention to bring his story to a suitable close? We cannot tell. All we know...is that vv. 9-20 of Mark 16 in our NT are not to be taken as the fulfillment of any such intention by the author of the second Gospel.”<sup>11</sup>

“The external evidence strongly points this way. The section is wanting in” Alef and B<sup>12</sup> (Sinaiticus and Vaticanus) “and in Syr. Sin” (Syriac Sinaitic, p. 60). “Jerome states...that

---

<sup>7</sup> See [Law 102, Grace, Holiness and the Pharisaic Church](#), [Hebrews and the Change of the Law](#) and [The Lifting of the Veil—Acts 15:20-21](#) to understand the scriptural and theological reasons why all Christians should be walking out their faith in Jesus through all the rules and laws of Moses that apply to them.

<sup>8</sup> R. A. Cole, M. Th., Ph. D., The Rev. Canon Leon Morris, M. Sc., M. Th., Ph. D., General Editor, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: Mark* (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), p. 334.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 335.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Alexander Balmain Bruce, D.D.; W. Robertson Nicoll, Editor, M. A., LL. D., *The Expositor’s Greek Testament: The Synoptic Gospels*, volume one (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002), p. 454.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 53-54. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, General Editor, Everett F. Harrison, Roland K. Harrison and William Sanford LaSor, Associate Editors, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Volume Four (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979), pp 815-816. Alef is Codex Sinaiticus and B is Codex Vaticanus. These are two of the oldest manuscripts available, dated around the fourth century.

it was wanting in nearly all Greek copies (*omnibus Graecis libris pene*), and the testimony of Eusebius is to the same effect.”<sup>13</sup>

“The internal evidence of style confirms the impression made by the external: characteristic words of Mark are wanting, words not elsewhere found in the Gospel occurring...the narrative a meagre, colorless summary, a *composition* based on the narratives of the other Gospels.”<sup>14</sup>

Mark didn’t write those vv. 9-20. They are a compilation of resurrection appearances from the other three Gospels, which is actually very fascinating. Bruce continues:

“Vv. 9-20 may be divided into three parts corresponding more or less to sections in John, Luke and Matthew, and not improbably based on these:”

“vv. 9-11, answering to Luke 8:2; John 20:14-18 (Mary);”

“vv. 12-14, answering to Luke 24:13-35 (the two on the road to Emaus);”

“vv. 15-18, answering to Mt. 28:19 (the Great Commission).”

“Vv. 19-20 wind up with a brief reference to the ascension and the subsequent apostolic activity of the disciples.”<sup>15</sup>

If vv. 9-11 are based on John 20:14-18, then the author is not proclaiming a Sunday resurrection, but only that Yeshua/Jesus was first seen on Sunday because John doesn’t say anything about a Sunday resurrection. Bruce explains the Greek sentence (v. 9, ‘Early on the first day of the week’) *can be equally understood in two totally different ways*:

“Early on the first day of the week: ‘whether these words are to be connected with’ having arisen, ‘indicating the time of the resurrection, or with’ He appeared, ‘indicating the time of the first appearance, *cannot be decided*.”<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 454.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 455.

Offering a more detailed breakdown of vv. 9-20 are Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, 1977 at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark\\_16#External\\_evidence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_16#External_evidence):

1. Verse 9 ...Seven demons cast out of Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2)
2. 11.....They refused to believe it (Lk. 24:10-11)
3. 12-13a .....Two returned and told others (Lk. 24:13-35)
4. 14.....Appeared to the 11 (Lk. 24:36-43; John 20:19-29; 1st Cor. 15:5)
5. 15.....Great Commission (Mt. 28:19; Acts 1:8)
6. 16.....Salvation and judgment (Acts 2:38; 16:31-33)
7. 17a .....Cast out demons (Lk. 10:17; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:18; 19:12)
8. 17b .....Speak with new tongues (Acts 2:4)
9. 18a .....Pick up serpents (Lk. 10:19; Acts 28:5)
10. 18b .....The reference to drinking poison doesn’t have a New Testament cite, but it did appear in Christian literature from the 2nd century on.
11. 18c .....Lay hands on the sick (Mk. 5:23, Acts 6:6; 9:17, 28:8)
12. 19a .....Ascension of the Lord (Lk. 24:51; Jn. 20:17; Acts 1:2, 9-11)
13. 19b .....Sat down at the right hand of God (Acts 7:55; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1)
14. 20.....Confirmed the Word by the signs that followed (Acts 14:3)

In other words, the Greek text can be grammatically translated as it has been traditionally written with its placement of the two commas, saying that Jesus rose on Sunday, or the text can be translated with a comma after *arisen* to reveal *when* Yeshua appeared to Mary:

‘Having *arisen*, early on the first day of the week He first appeared to Mary Magdalene.’

Taking out the comma from after ‘week’ and placing it after ‘arisen,’ changes the whole tenor of the verse. Truly, Yeshua first appeared to Mary on the first day of the week (i.e. Sunday). If that content was taken from John, we know that John does not speak of Jesus *resurrecting* on Sunday, but only of first being seen on Sunday. This is the correct interpretation and understanding of v. 9.

So, why is the verse traditionally translated as proclaiming a Sunday resurrection, when it can equally be read with the comma after arisen? The *Sunday* theologian-translators want this verse to be a Sunday resurrection to justify their tradition of keeping Sunday over the Sabbath. Yes they know that grammatically it cannot be proven, but most Christians reading Mark 16:9 don’t know that. They think it’s Scripture.

Yet, even if one sees Mark 16:9 as speaking of the resurrection on Sunday, there’s not a second witness in all of Scripture to a Sunday resurrection. If two or three witnesses are needed to establish something in God’s Word,<sup>17</sup> especially something of this magnitude, which seeks to alter God’s 7th day Sabbath that had been with Israel for more than 1,400 years, one would think that God would have placed many witnessed in Scripture to validate the change. There’s not even one. A Sunday resurrection cannot be biblically established, especially upon such a grammatically flimsy verse as Mark 16:9—a verse which Mark didn’t even write.

Having said all that, there are two Scripture references, which may speak of Yeshua being resurrected on the first day of the week, but these are not definitive for Sunday. In First Corinthians Paul writes that Yeshua is the First Fruits of the resurrection from the dead. The ceremony of First Fruits by the High Priest, thanking God for the giving of life through the spring harvest of barley, occurred on Sunday morning:

“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the *firstfruits* of those who have fallen asleep.” (1st Corinthians 15:20 NKJV)

“But each one in his own order: Christ the *firstfruits*, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming.” (1st Cor. 15:23 NKJV)

Paul’s thoughts can be taken to mean that Yeshua rose from the dead on Sunday, but most likely mean that the Apostle is only referencing the time of Yeshua’s first ascension<sup>18</sup> as the First Fruits that rose from the dead, complementing the ceremony that was going on at the same time by the High Priest. In other words, Paul isn’t saying that Messiah rose from the dead on Sunday, but that He ascended on Sunday as the First Sheaf to the Father at the time of the ceremony, as I’ve spoken of before. Also, First Fruits *begins* on Saturday night, after the weekly 7th day Sabbath ends, meaning that Yeshua could have risen on Saturday night, which biblically is the beginning of the first day of the week, but it’s not Sunday.

---

<sup>16</sup> Bruce, *The Expositor’s Greek Testament: The Synoptic Gospels*, p. 455.

<sup>17</sup> 2nd Cor. 13:1; Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Mt. 18:16.

<sup>18</sup> See John 20:14-17. There are two ascensions of Yeshua in Scripture. The first is as the First Fruits, which is always on the Sunday of Passover Week, and the second is 40 days later when He ascends to Heaven in the Cloud of Glory. The first ascension is John 20:15-17. The second ascension appears in Mark 16:19; Luke 24:50-52; Acts 1:1-11.

# Conclusion

Mark 16:9 is the only place in the New Testament that seems to proclaim a Sunday resurrection, but it has two serious problems that speak against Sunday being the day of the resurrection, and consequently, ‘the new Christian Sabbath.’ One, Mark didn’t write it, and two, because it takes its information for v. 9 from John’s Gospel, it can only be saying that Jesus first appeared on Sunday. This is supported by Greek grammar. The scribe who wrote it was only relaying that Yeshua had been first seen on Sunday, not that He rose on Sunday. As that Sunday was First Fruits, which isn’t an annual Sabbath, unlike the 1st and 7th days of Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread week which are annual Sabbaths, there is nothing in Mark 16:9 to support an alleged ‘Christian Sabbath.’

Coupled with the fact that there isn’t a single mention of an actual Sunday resurrection anywhere in the New Testament to support the traditional Christian argument that ‘because of the Sunday resurrection, Sunday has replaced the Sabbath,’ the argument falls flat on its face. The New Testament is silent on the actual time and day of the resurrection. Sunday, as a replacement for the Sabbath, was given to the Church not by God, but by the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>19</sup>

If we order our lives by the Word of God we cannot use the resurrection of Jesus nor His appearances on Sunday nor Mark 16:9 nor anything else<sup>20</sup> as reason for assembling on Sunday over God’s holy 7th day Sabbath. We can assemble on any and every day of the week, but only the 7th day Sabbath is holy and God commands His people to keep it.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup> See [Sabbath Denigration](#) and [Sunday—The Catholic Sabbath](#).

<sup>20</sup> See [The Feasts of Israel as Time Markers After the Resurrection](#), p. 20f., to understand why both Acts 20:7 and 1st Cor. 16:1-3 do not give Christians authority to meet on Sunday over the 7th day Sabbath. See [Romans 14 and the Dietary Laws](#) for why vv. 5-6 do not mean that a Christian can choose ‘any day’ as his Sabbath.

<sup>21</sup> Compare Mark 2:27-28; Luke 4:16; Hebrews 4:9 (in any English Bible except the KJV and the NKJV, which pervert the Greek word in Heb. 4:9, *Sabbatismos* to mean only, ‘rest,’ when it literally means a Sabbath rest).

Revised on 25 January 2018.