

Dr. Mark Jennings, Mark, Lecture 24, Mark 15:32-16:8, Crucifixion, Empty Tomb, and Ending

© 2024 Mark Jennings and Ted Hildebrandt

This is Dr. Mark Jennings in his teaching on the Gospel of Mark. This is session 24, Mark 15:32-16:8, Crucifixion, Empty Tomb, and Ending.

Welcome back.

We're going to continue to work through the rest of Mark chapter 15 here, and then we will get into Mark chapter 16. And that will wrap up our conversation of the text of Mark proper, and after that we'll have a little more to say just about the theology of Mark in general, and consider the book as a whole. But so just to remind ourselves of where we are at, Jesus has now been through the hearing with Pilate.

Pilate has declared Jesus to be crucified. The soldiers have mocked him. They have beaten him.

They have put the laurel of thorns upon him, spit upon him. They brought him through to where he would be crucified. We've had Simon Serene help carry the cross beam.

We've had the lots being divided. And then we get to here, with where we've picked up here at the end of 16 through 32, that it was the third hour, verse 25 when they crucified him. And the inscription of the charge against him read, the King of the Jews.

Now, when we look at Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, there's a little bit of difference in the exact thing that was written above it, but they all sort of agree on the King of the Jews aspect. And so, the standard is whatever reason someone was crucified, or the main reason, Rome would put that charge above the head as a message. Remember, crucifixion was a message.

And here he says the message is the King of the Jews, which is, as we know from the broader gospel account, the religious leaders wanted it to be something that he said he was the King of the Jews, instead of the King of the Jews. But Pilate reinforces that this is the charge. There's a political statement being made there as well, that this man who's now completely beaten and has been whipped and has been mocked and has been spit upon and is being crucified, this is the King of the Jews.

And Pilate is making a statement, I think, in that as well. Verse 27, and with them, they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. The robbers here are most likely; the term robbery here probably isn't in the sense of thief, but more in brigand, more sort of an organized, maybe even a revolutionary; I mean, that would have been the idea.

The language is fascinating. We've talked about this. Remember, this is what John and James were wanting.

They wanted to be on Jesus's right and left when he came into his kingdom. I think Mark reminds us a little bit of that in his depiction of the robbers. They were crucified, one on Jesus's right and one on his left.

There's a subtle reminder that this is what Jesus came to do, and this is the coming of his kingdom here. So, we have this picture. Notice how completely alone he is.

And then those who pass by, we're going to get this sequence of mockery from different groups coming by. And those who pass by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, aha, you who have destroyed the temple and rebuilt it in three days, save yourself and come down from the cross. You look at these statements.

It's known that Jesus had made this statement about destroying the temple and rebuilding it in three days. It's likely that this statement was one that, as we know from already in Mark, was part of his trial, part of his accusation that he had the power to destroy the temple and rebuild it. And so, the people are using that as part of the mockery.

But even more, let's keep in mind that Mark wants us to know that people are using that phrase. It's probably not the only thing that they mocked him on, but Mark wants us to remember that. And I think we need to keep in mind here what Jesus, Mark, has been telling us about what Jesus has been doing up to this point.

We had the cursing of the temple, the cursing of the fig tree that was combined with the cursing of the temple activity, putting it to an end. We have the three-day references, which John picks up on as well, but we are talking about the resurrection. I think Mark wants us to realize that these people are mocking Jesus for saying he will end the temple and rebuild a new one in three days, but that is actually exactly what is occurring at this moment.

There is an ending of the temple, the practice of the temple, the purpose of the temple, what it did, and what it served. And a new one is being rebuilt. That there is this Jesus as the temple that is now being rebuilt.

And what used to be able to be said about the temple is now being said about Jesus. And even the irony of he saved others, but he cannot save himself, for those who are reading and understand what Jesus has been saying realize that he actually is saving others at that moment and he is choosing not to save himself. And so, Mark is, I think, purposefully choosing these phrases to recall because of the power that they convey and this grand irony we've seen throughout Mark of how people say more than what they realize.

So, also, the chief priest and the scribes mocked him. So, you have the crowds mocking him and the chief priest mocking him. Then, the final statement is, let Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe, which is sad in so many ways.

One is the failure, for all those involved in this moment, to realize that they are seeing the Christ, the King of Israel, and what is the centerpiece of faith. But also, it is because they've seen so many things that Jesus had done and refused to believe. The idea that somehow, if he comes off the cross, they would now believe would be sufficient for their faith just really speaks to the reality that that's simply not true.

They have seen so much that they should have pointed them to Christ and had not believed and have even failed to see that this is exactly why and for what reason the Messiah had come. And then we end verse 32, those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

Mark does not give us an account of the conversation between Jesus and one of the thieves on the cross. For Mark, the picture is one of complete loneliness and rejection that those who were crucified with him were also making fun of Jesus.

And so the scene of even those who are dying by crucifixion somehow taking a position of shaming Jesus just speaks to the lonely and lowliness of the moment. We come then to verses 33 to 47. And when the sixth hour came, we talked about noontime.

When the sixth hour had come there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. So, remember this is the middle of the day when darkness has come. I've talked about before that when we were discussing how Jesus was praying that the cup would not come, that he could let that cup pass from me, that he would not need to drink of it.

The cup motif was full of judgment and language associated with God's pouring out his judgment throughout the Old Testament. And I think here, with this darkening of the midday, we have a similar reality now being shown that we have the physical ramifications of creation as it applied to the day of the Lord now coming into view in

a very particular way. The day of the Lord in Isaiah 13 and in Joel 2, Joel 3, Amos 5, and Amos 8 speak of it being one of darkness.

Amos 8 and 9, for example, read, and Mark is also telling us it's noon, and there is now darkness. It's also, given the Passover setting of this all, reminds you of the plague of darkness and darkness covered for three days. So that judgment aspect, both the day of the Lord and the plague from Exodus of Darkness, are judgment realities.

And I think that's what we are to see here, that we are now reaching that moment, that there is something happening now, particularly at this moment when it is the pouring out of God's wrath. That these three hours, if you will, from six hour until the ninth hour, is the moment of the day of the Lord. There is a three-hour window here during the day of the Lord being poured out upon Jesus.

And then at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, which means, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? It's interesting that we've talked a lot about how the Gospel of Mark was written in Greek, yet Jesus spoke Aramaic. And we get very little actual Aramaic in the Gospel of Mark. We get a few places where we get the Aramaic, but mostly we get the English translation of the Greek translation of what would have been the Aramaic words.

But we get the Aramaic here. There has been speculation about why we get the Aramaic of Eloi Eloi, L'ma Sabachthani. I think Mark tells us why.

I think he gives us the reason why. If we didn't have the Aramaic there, we might be confused as readers, Roman readers, Greek readers, and, of course, us as well, about why the crowds think Jesus might be calling out to Elijah. We wouldn't catch the phonetic similarity.

If you have Jesus crying out in his Aramaic words, it is much easier to suppose that Eloi Eloi, in a garbled, beaten, dehydrated mouth, could phonetically draw some similarity, which seems like a cry to Elijah. Thus, why do those around him say he's crying out to Elijah? And I think, you know, I think maybe Mark gives us the Aramaic, not simply because of the gravity of the moment, though I certainly think that's part of it, but to help the reader.

This is to help the reader understand why the crowd thinks Jesus might be calling out to Elijah. And, of course, that he would be calling out to Elijah would also fit that setting because there was this understanding eschatologically that Elijah might come; we've seen an Elijah figure already here. I don't think we're to understand this moment as an anticipatory moment in terms of the crowds around him going, well, wait a minute, maybe we've gotten this all wrong, let's give Jesus a little more time and see if something happens.

I think the sense is probably still mockery. I think they're still; they're taking joy in what seems to be a cry of help and desperation. Of course, one of the things we know is that this is not a random call from Jesus, but it actually comes from Psalm 22 verse 1 and is the first verse of Psalm 22 verse 1. It's been interesting, I'm going to look at a few places here, how similar Psalm 22 is to what Mark has been telling us about the crucifixion of Christ.

So similar that some have questioned whether Jesus ever made this cry, that this has been put on the lips of Jesus by the later church because they saw what happened to Jesus and they looked at Psalm 22 and they said, hey this is such a perfect match, let's have Jesus actually cry this out. Others have taken the reverse stance and said, well, Jesus probably did cry this out, and then Mark saw, knew he'd cry this out, and so crafted all these events around Psalm 22. I think there's a path or a different way through this in a second, but I think we do need to recognize how similar Psalm 22 is and keep in mind it's not uncommon during this time period to cite a verse from a passage and have the broader passage be considered, even if it's not directly stated.

Now, in all of this, because we're going to see some things in Psalm 22, I don't want us to lose sight of the fact that Jesus is in agony, Jesus is crying out, Jesus did pray at Gethsemane that this would not happen if there was anyway. So, even though I think there are some other things happening in Psalm 22, I do not want to domesticate or dampen the cry that Jesus is experiencing. But Psalm 22, I want to look through Psalm 22 here, and there are some different things that I think you'll find interesting.

First, of course, is the first verse, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me from the words of my groaning? Oh my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer and by night, but I find no rest. Yet you are holy and thrown on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers trusted, they trusted and you delivered them.

To you, they cried and were rescued. In you, they trusted and were not put to shame. But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

All who see me mock me. They make mouths at me, they wag their heads. Again, we've seen this all in Mark.

He trusts in the Lord, let him deliver him. Let him rescue him for he delights in him. This is part of this mockery.

Yet you are he who took me from the womb. You made me trust you at my mother's breast. On you was I cast from my birth and from my mother's womb you have made me my God.

Be not far from me, for trouble is near. There is none to help." Again, Mark is making this also known. Many bulls encompass me, and strong bulls of Bashan surround me.

They open their mouths at me like ravening and roaring lions. I am poured out like water. All of my bones are out of joint.

My heart is like wax; it melts within my breast. My strength is dried up like a potsherd. My tongue sticks to my jaws, you lay me in the dust of death.

For dogs encompass me, a company of evildoers encircles me. They have pierced my hands and feet. I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me.

They divided my garments among them. For my clothing, they cast lots. But you, O Lord, do not be far off.

O you, my help, come quickly to my aid. Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog. Save me from the mouth of the lion.

You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen. Then, in verse 22, I will tell of your name to my brothers in the midst of the congregation; I will praise you. Yet you who fear the Lord, praise him.

All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him and stand in awe of him. All you offspring of Israel. For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted.

And he has not hidden his face from him but has heard when he cried to him. From you comes my praise in the great congregation. My vows I will perform before those who fear him.

The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied. Those who seek him shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever.

All of the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord. And all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For kingship belongs to the Lord.

And he rules over the nation. All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship. Before him shall bow all who go down to the dust.

Even the one who cannot keep himself alive. Posterity shall serve him. It shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation.

They shall come to proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn that he has done it. There's so much there that is clearly of what happens at the cross—the lots.

The mocking. The surroundingness. The loneliness.

The agony. The rejection. But notice, too, in that psalm; there's an arc that moves like most psalms of laments do, from a cry for the agony to a declaration about the goodness and rightness of God and then the glorification of God at the end.

And in Psalm 22, the glorification of God at the end is one that then speaks of how we'll go to a people who have yet unborn; to generations, we'll proclaim that God has heard the cries and has given comfort to the afflicted. In fact, a lot of the language of Psalm 22 is very akin to the suffering servant language of Isaiah. There's a lot of overlap there.

And there's this move at the end of Psalm 22 that speaks about what the Lord has done and how we'll go out. And it's from standing on this side of the cross. You see in Psalm 22, I think, the spread of the gospel mission.

That the Lord has done it. That the Lord has accomplished his great design. And so when I look at this, I think, you know, there's this question: Did the early church put these words onto Jesus because they matched so perfectly? Well, isn't there an option that has it both matching so perfectly? Has Mark understood what is happening and matched so perfectly yet still allows it to be historical? And I think there is if we think Jesus knew he was going to be crucified.

The question goes into the passion predictions. Do we think they're historical? If we think they're historical that Jesus knew he was going to die, if we think in the process even of these events, even as late as his arrest, if not beforehand, that Jesus knew he was going to be crucified, then doesn't it stand to reason that Jesus thought about what he would say? He gave some consideration to what his words would be if he had come on this mission to be the suffering servant. That when he was on the cross, he didn't simply utter spontaneous cries, but had a willful choice.

And we know there's some willful choice there. He was able to refuse what was offered to him. So if we think there's a pre-planned, predetermined, willful decision by Jesus, then when he has felt the full pouring out of God's wrath for the three hours that the world has been dark, and he knows that he has reached this utter moment of forsakenness, then choosing Psalm 22, one that has a full cry of suffering, but ends with the great proclamation of the gospel, seems very much in keeping with Jesus and his authority and his decisiveness.

So, he makes this cry. Some think they're calling out for Elijah. And then it says in 37, And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.

And then two things were told. So, there's this moment after the loud cry, and then it's over. And two things happened.

In one verse 38, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Verse 39, And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. I think we're to understand all three of those events together.

The breathing of his last, the tearing of the curtain, and the confession of the centurion. Now, with the tearing of the temple curtain, there is a question of which curtain. Was it the curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple complex, the most sacred place from the rest? Or was it the temple that separated the inner courtyard from the outer courtyard? Both of them would have had symbolic overtones.

If it's the former, if it's the Holy of Holies, then that might speak to the sacrificial system now being canceled out, or the access to God now, or the place of God no longer, the unique place of God no longer being limited within a Holy of Holies, but now going out. But if it's the outer one, then that might speak to the function of the temple itself, sort of the wall indicating the end of the temple, which would fit, of course, with the cursing. And maybe it's wrong to make such a distinction, nonetheless.

I think the tearing of the temple, though, of the temple curtain, is indicative of the statement that the temple would be destroyed and in three days, there would be a new one. The tearing of the curtain is a symbolic way of saying the temple and what its function was, both in the atonement and sacrifice, but also in the sort of unique location of God, which has ended and is now over. And then we have the centurion confession.

Of course, up to this time, when we've been working and looking through the confession, there's always been that building tension and mark of when it is okay for a person to say who Jesus is. Every time, it seemed like they were told to be quiet, or told, or rebuked, or silenced in some way, and it's building this tension. And now you get to this centurion. And the centurion, who stood facing him and saw the way he died, said, truly this man was the Son of God.

And here in the story of Mark, there's no correcting, there's no silencing, there's no rebuking. From a literary view, it's as if now it's okay. Now you understand what it means to say Jesus is the Son of God.

Now, to the question of what did the centurion himself know and believe, that's a little bit more problematic. There's no indication of a right understanding from the centurion's point of view. We as a reader of Mark know he has now said correctly.

When an apotheosis would happen for Roman emperors, it would usually occur when someone was declared to be the Son of the Divine, it happened at their death. And so, there's an interesting similarity. Mark is, I think, clear to say that it's the circumstances of Jesus' death were of such a wonder, especially if you couple it with the darkness that's happened all midday, that the centurion, who had been witnessing this whole thing and then saw how he died, that it must have been such a moment, it wasn't just a natural expiration, that it was of such a significance that the centurion seemed the only right response is to declare relation to divinity.

It is interesting that the centurion, for Mark, that it's been the first undiluted confession happens from a Roman soldier. And even to think through how similar this is to the baptism, where you have a veil that is torn, and we talked about this, that Mark uses at Jesus' baptism. He doesn't say the heavens opened.

He uses the term that says the heavens were torn, which is the same as the veil. You have a voice that confesses it is God who says, this is my Son at the baptism and quotes a psalm. You have a psalm reference given by Jesus, and then you have a confession of Jesus' divinity, but now from a person, from a Roman centurion.

And there's a lot of ways where you have, I think, that which the baptism symbolized, which was the beginning of Jesus' ministry, of which both have that Exodus motif surrounding it, and has Jesus standing where, in John's baptism, where only sinners belong, and has all of that playing into. Now you have at the crucifixion, again at the Passover, and the Exodus motif coming in from the Last Supper, the freedom from bondage and slavery, and the finishing of the ministry. You had the beginning of the ministry and now the finishing of the ministry.

And Mark tells it in such a way to understand they're mutually interpretive, that this was God's intent with what Jesus was to do from the beginning. And that had in mind the Gentile mission. That had in mind also this great proclamation of the Messiah would now come on the lips of a Roman soldier.

In verse 40, there are also women looking on from a distance. This is the first time we're told about these women. Women looking at a distance were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger, Joseph, and Anselm.

When he was in Galilee, these women followed him and ministered to him. There were many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem. When the evening had come, since it was the day of preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, and of course, as we know from the Old Testament, from Deuteronomy 21, for example, the bodies of executed victims needed to be buried before nightfall, but especially before the eve of the Sabbath when no work could be done.

So, there's some concern here about how this gets done. Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, that would have been the Sanhedrin council. It's not clear that Joseph of Arimathea was at the hearing there.

There was a quorum of the Sanhedrin was there. It doesn't necessarily mean everyone was there. Who also was himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

I think we have a beautiful display here, too, of Jesus; though he was alone at the crucifixion, he wasn't absent of people who still cared for him. Notice it's not the disciples. The disciples have scattered as Jesus said they would.

So, Joseph goes to Pilate and asks for the body. Pilate, verse 44, was surprised to hear that he should have already died and basically asked for a death certificate. He asked for the centurion to confirm it.

And once he learned from the centurion he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph. This is an interesting act, I think, because, remember, usually, the Romans would leave the people on the cross, even after they had died, as a message. And so perhaps here we do have a hint that Pilate understands that there's something incorrect about this crucifixion of Jesus.

And so he allows the corpse to go to Joseph. Joseph brought a linen shroud and, taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of rock. He rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joseph, saw where he was laid. Now, some important information has been given. One is he's clearly dead.

Against any arguments that sort of ham about during the dawn of the enlightenment that maybe Jesus wasn't dead, that he was somehow unconscious, Pilate makes sure that Jesus is dead and has the centurion confirm it. Two, we know that he is buried. That becomes one of the centerpieces of the Christian faith, that Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried.

We get the details for it. And that the two women saw where Jesus was laid. One of the things that was a popular explanation for the resurrection a few centuries ago was that the two women went to the wrong tomb when they went to check out and it was empty and so they declared there must have been the resurrection.

But Mark makes us understand that they did know. They did witness where he was buried. When the Sabbath was passed, so they had waited, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Solon brought spices so they might go and anoint him.

They couldn't do that. They couldn't prepare his body for burial during the Sabbath. And so they have to wait until the Sabbath has passed.

And very early on the first day of their week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. And they were saying to one another, as we get into chapter 16, they were saying to one another, who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb? And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back. It was very large.

And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side dressed in a white robe. They were alarmed. 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. But go, tell the disciples and Peter that he is going before you in Galilee. There you will see him just as he told you.

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. And then we come to a problem.

What happens next? Does anything happen next? Most Bibles now, when you get to verse 9 and following, will have some sort of series of brackets all the way down through the end in 1620. The reason for those brackets is that the textual evidence for those verses as being part of Mark is highly suspect. We don't have it in strong manuscripts.

The very manuscripts that help us decide with certainty, chapter 1, verse 1 through 16, verse 8, those very same manuscripts, that very same method of which we can say, yes, in those 15 plus 8, 15 chapters plus 8 verses, we have a high degree of certainty that this is in line with the original autograph. That same method would require us to then question and deny verses 9 through 20. Indeed, there are many passages in 9 through 20 that do not have manuscript support; in other words, these are passages that come very late in terms of the history of the transmission of the text.

It doesn't seem to be comprised of any of the early portions of the early manuscripts or the earlier manuscripts of Mark. But also the style is different. It doesn't fit Mark's writing style or how the Greek is done.

There's some theology in here that comes out of nowhere in terms of the Gospel of Mark, some things that seem a bit strange. You even have this sort of odd change when you get from verse 8 to verse 9 where in the Greek, especially when you look

at it, there's an odd change of who the subject of the sentence is and not. There's a grammatical problem there.

The general consensus has been that verses 9 through verse 20 probably weren't originally Mark and weren't in Mark's Gospel. Now, one of the reasons for the certainty for these passages that are still held today, I think, has to do just sort of deal with the reality of manuscript discovery. That for a long time, especially if you think of some of the earliest English Bibles, the manuscripts that they were using, the method that they were using to look at the different copies and try to figure out what might have been the original autograph, all of the manuscripts that they were using centuries ago had this passage in it.

So, there was no reason to question it substantially. But over the last few centuries, we've discovered more and more manuscripts. We've discovered more and more evidences of texts that are much older and much more controlled and tighter.

And so now, we do the same process, and we have to really deny that Mark wrote 8 through 20 or 9 through 20, excuse me. But that doesn't alleviate us from the problem. I mean, if 9 through 20 or portions thereof, and there's actually, it's not just 9 through 20, there's a shorter and a longer and an even longer ending.

If these were added to the Markian manuscript, the question, of course, is why. Well, the answer seems to be because Mark doesn't have something that he must have, which is a resurrection appearance. And so if there is no account, an actual resurrection appearance, we have a declaration that there's been a resurrection, but there's no actual resurrection appearance, that would create a problem, of which then later scribes would want to put in a resurrection appearance into Mark's Gospel.

Because we can't get by the fact that the resurrection appearance is one of the key aspects of the Church's confession, Jesus lived, that he was crucified, that he died, that he was buried, and that he was seen again. I mean, Paul actually runs that sequence himself.

I mean, it's one of the key elements. The other Gospels have resurrection appearances. When the Acts talks about resurrection appearances, Paul in his letters talks about resurrection appearances.

The empty tomb itself was not the end of the early confession. It was that Jesus was seen afterward. And so, we have, I think, a problem here because we don't have Jesus being seen afterward, which is itself a problem in Mark because Jesus himself in Mark has been saying, you will see me again in Galilee.

He has been talking about his own resurrection appearances. He's been declaring it would happen. And so, you have Jesus in Mark saying, you will see me again, but yet we have Mark not actually telling us that has occurred.

We get only a hint so far of them, of "Go tell the disciples to meet me there." And we also have the problem, but it seems that the women are disobedient. You have this figure dressed in white, in a white robe, telling them that Jesus, who they seek, has risen, and he's not here, and go and tell, go and tell the disciples and Peter.

And then, if Mark were to end at verse 8, you have, they went out, fled from the tomb for trembling and astonishment, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. You have the person say, go tell Peter, and then Mark ends with the women saying nothing, for they were afraid. Well, that's, I mean, shouldn't it be reversed? Like before the crucifixion, the idea, the command was to say nothing, and people disobeyed by going and telling people.

And now, it's as if nothing really has changed. You have go, tell people, but they're saying nothing. So, I've come then to the conviction that Mark had a resurrection appearance.

There is a longer ending to Mark, but somehow it has been lost. Now, people have speculated that maybe it never got written, and this got written and sent out, and there were events that happened, or maybe it got lost very early. Maybe it got lost very early, and somehow the ending of Mark, the ending that Mark wrote didn't get sustained and contained.

I find it difficult to think that Mark would have written a story that was designed to tell the truth about who Jesus is and left out one of the major tenets, which is the resurrection appearances, which he speaks to himself. Perhaps, perhaps it's to cause a literary tension. Of course, we have no certainty of any of the answers on that, other than that 9 through 18, 9 through 20 is probably not written by Mark.

But I'd like us to consider one thing before we end here, and then when we come together next time, we'll talk about the theology of Mark as a whole. I'd like us to consider just the possibility, the theoretical possibility, that we do have the ending to Mark, the ending that Mark wrote, but we find it in Matthew. Keep in mind that it's held by many, including myself, that Matthew used the Gospel of Mark, that Matthew followed the Gospel of Mark in many places, sometimes elaborating, sometimes adding on.

And a scholar by the name of Rithmington suggested this once, and I found it to be at least captivating. I want to look at Matthew 28. I want to look at Matthew 28 and see here, if we don't note some similarities between Matthew 28 and what we have in what we just read in Mark.

This is verse 1. Now, after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb very much like Mark. And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it.

This would be a Matthean edition. His appearance was like lightning, his clothing white as snow, and fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. Again, this is a Matthean edition.

But the angel said to the women, Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. This is what we saw in Mark. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said.

Come see the place where he lay. This is like Mark. Then go and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you in Galilee.

There you will see him. See, I have told you. This is like Mark 16.

So, they departed quickly from the tomb with fear. This is like Mark 16. And ran to tell his disciples.

And then, if we look down at verse 16, so then we have this conversation, right? We have this where Jesus meets them on the way and these other aspects, which is all with Matthew. But in verse 16, we have, again, after we get sort of a much more flowery conversation, if you will, or more detail, we get back to very curt, very deliberate events, which is very Markian. Verse 16, now the 11 disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had directed them.

When they saw him, they worshipped him, but some doubted. I wonder, and within the turn I suggested, if verses 16 and 17 aren't actually Markian. You would have the women being told to go and that they were afraid.

And then we lose the bit where it actually says they go and tell the disciples. And the 11 disciples then go to Galilee, to which Jesus had directed them. And it said that they worshipped him, but then some doubted.

Which would actually be very Markian. To have the disciples, even in this moment, some of them having reservations on just the significance of the whole thing would be in keeping with what would even have been seen with the disciples. I don't know.

It's speculation. But it is possible that whether it's these verses that I've read for you out of Matthew or not, I think it's possible that, or maybe I should say it's more likely that if there's any textual remembrance of the resurrection appearance of Mark, we

will find it in Matthew. We've come to the end of the study of the gospel of Mark proper, the first eight chapters of the one who had authority, and the final seven chapters and into 16 of the one who had that authority yet laid it down as a suffering servant.

We'll be discussing the overarching theology of the gospel of Mark the next time we gather and what he says about the church, Christ, and God's plan. See you then.

This is Dr. Mark Jennings in his teaching on the Gospel of Mark. This is session 24, Mark 15:32-16:8, Crucifixion, Empty Tomb, and Ending.