

Mount Zion A.M.E. Church of New Brunswick, NJ
03/31/2024

By Paul T. Bennett Church School Superintendent

SUNDAY SCHOOL Quarter Preview

Examining Our Faith

Faith-FULL verses Faith-LESS

■ 3/3 – JUDE 17 - 25

Jude exhorted the church to build their faith to withstand those who try to divide them, by building each other up in study, the Word, prayer and fellowship (i.e. relationships)

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■ **3/10 – 2 Corinthians 13:5 – 11**

Paul's authority as an apostle was heavily scrutinized by those causing division in the church in Corinth. Paul then challenges them to test their own faith and if it's genuine, they will know that what he speaks is the truth

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■ **3/17 – 1 Peter 3:8 – 17**

Peter encourages the church not to repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but to seek peace and emotional stability that comes when one abides in the faith and in the Spirit that God gives

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■ 3/24 – Acts 6:7 – 15

Stephen used his spiritual gifts for the benefit of the Church, but his enemies challenged him and when they could not offer a proper defense, they used nefarious means to trap him, yet his faith never waivered.

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The Resurrection: Key to Faith

Mark 16:1 – 8

Background

- Mark is the earliest Gospel and one of the earliest books of the New Testament (A.D. 55-59)
- The Gospels of Luke and Matthew mirror Mark in many accounts identical to it. This is why Mark, Luke and Matthew are called '**The Synoptic Gospels**'

Background

- Mark was an associate of Peter and is considered a spiritual son of him
(**1 Peter 5:13**)
- Mark joined Paul and Barnabas on their 1st missionary trip, but not the 2nd due to a disagreement (**Acts 15:37-38**)

Background

- While Matthew is written to fellow Jews, emphasizing Jesus' lineage and teachings, Mark's Gospel targets Roman and Gentiles, focusing on Jesus' actions

Background

- Near the end of Paul's life, he asked for Mark to be with him (**2 Timothy 4:11**)
- After Jesus' death, Joseph of Arimathea asked for His body. He took it to a tomb and rolled a large stone in front of it (**Luke 23:50-54**), using 75lbs of spices (**John 19:39-40**)

Background

- Fearful of Jesus' prophecy that He would rise from the dead in three days, the Pharisees went to Pontius Pilate and requested tomb of Jesus be sealed and guarded, believing that Jesus' disciples would steal the body (Matthew 27:62-66)

Background

- Mary Magdalene and Mary (the mother of James and Joseph) watched these happenings closely (**Matthew 27:55, 61**)
- The women planned to complete the burial process bringing spices they prepared (**Luke 24:1**)

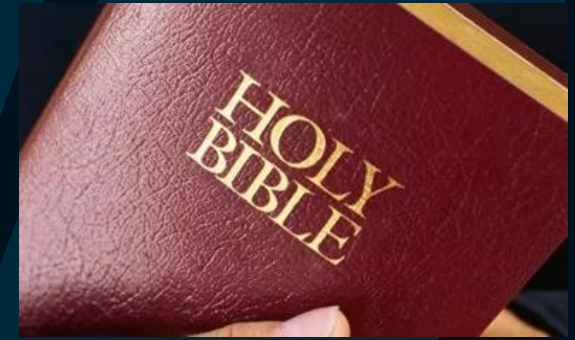
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* Reference Text

Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV)

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that **He is**, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently **seek** Him.



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Lesson Text

MARK 16:1 (NKJV)

¹ Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him.



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Lesson Text

MARK 16:2 – 3 (NKJV)

² Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

³ And they said among themselves, “Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?”

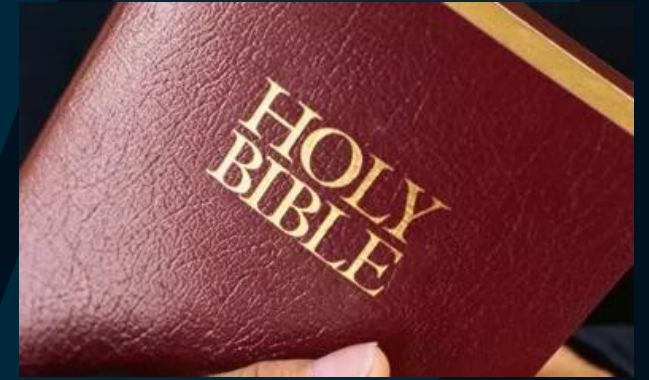


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Lesson Text

MARK 16:4 – 5 (NKJV)

⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. ⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.

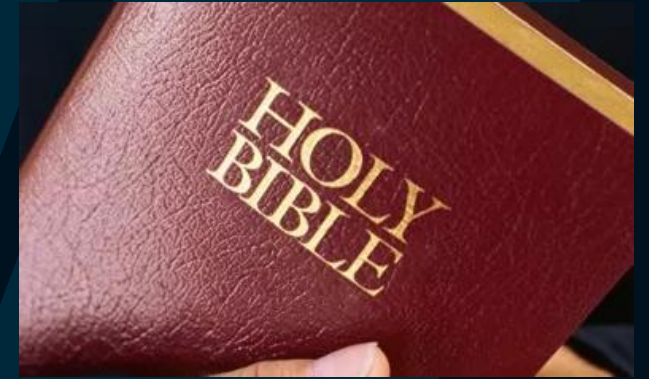


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Lesson Text

MARK 16:6 (NKJV)

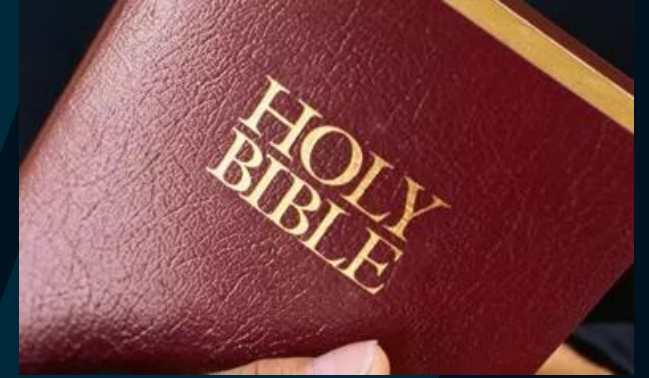
⁶ But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.



Lesson Text

MARK 16:7 (NKJV)

7 But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going ^[a]before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.”



Lesson Text

MARK 16:8 (NKJV)

⁸ So they went out [^b]quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.



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Commentary: First Witnesses

- Despite the patriarchy of the day, women are named as the first witnesses of the resurrection, adding credibility to the text and validating that all are equal in Christ (**Galatians 3:28**)
- We now see that women were an integral part of the Gospel narrative: —

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Commentary: First Witnesses

- Mary Magdalene was the Mary whom Jesus freed from the possession of 7 demons (**Luke 8:2**)
- The other Mary was the mother of one of the two Disciples named James and Joses (**Matthew 27:56**)
- Salome was the mother of James and John (**Matthew 20:20-22; 27:56**)

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Commentary: First Witnesses

- They were the first to witness that the tomb was empty (the guards were unconscious)
- They were the first to hear of Jesus' resurrection They were the first to testify to the Disciples His resurrection
- They were the first to see Jesus after His resurrection (**Mark 16:9**)

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Commentary: Why Peter?

- Of all the Disciples that could have been told, Peter is specifically mentioned despite the fact he denied Jesus 3 times (**Luke 22:54-61**) after swearing he would never deny Him (**Matthew 26:35**)
- This realization affected Peter greatly (**Luke 22:62**)

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Commentary: Why Peter?

- Yet Jesus made a promise Peter, that upon Peter's (then Simon's) recognition of who Jesus was, that on that rock, Jesus would build His church (**Matthew 16:15 – 18**)
- Peter's restoration is an essential part of the Resurrection narrative – hope and restoration for those of the faith

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Scripture References

John 21:15 – 19

Peter's Restoration

1 Corinthians 15

*The Importance of the Resurrection
to our faith and the true meaning of
Easter*



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Church School Creed

Our Church School must grow & grow
And we must help to make it so
Every member a Christian
Every Christian a worker
Every worker trained
A worker that will not be ashamed
This we ask in Jesus' name

-AMEN

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Church School Benediction

We have come

We have studied

We have learned

So until our next coming together

To study God's word

May His rich blessings reside with you

And may His Grace be eternally yours

-AMEN