

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
IHOP BIBLE STUDY  
August 2003

Topic: Mark 15: 42 - 16:19

This is the fourteenth, and last, session in the study of the Gospel of St. Mark. On the "Gospel of St. Mark Chart" this sub-section is titled the "Early manuscripts and women." This is the last sub-section of three in the category of "The Event of Christ as New Birth," and a part of "The Second Mission Is To Prepare People/World For The Demonstration Of Their Rebirth."

It is important to remember that the purpose of the Gospel of St. Mark is found in the recurring statements that the end of the story will reveal the meaning of the experiences of the disciples and Jesus. Jesus commands at various point that the disciples and the people are not to worry about interpreting the various "miracles" until the end of the story is made clear. The end of the story is the death and resurrection of Jesus.

First, note the significance of the closing of this gospel in Mark 16: 9 - 20. Another interesting thing to observe is the reaction of the women as observed in 16: 8. Compare this to the report in Matthew 28: 8. Further, the whole ending in Mark 16: 9 - 20 is different than the other gospels.

I. Read through the entire assigned reading at one time.

II. In order to remember the significance of what we are reading that we live in two worlds. We live in a world that is human, and we live in a world that is spirit. Our concern is that we are asleep to the world that is spiritual, and we understand the world that is human only from a "head trip analysis." This is unfortunate, as the most common responses are bewilderment, illusion and idolatry.

Humans are bewildered as we sense the missing spiritual world but cannot appropriate its power.

We live in illusion about what is real and the truth because we create structures of meaning and assign power to them; i.e., church, religious symbols. However these are empty structures. Witness the magic we assign to "the bible." The bible is the most printed book, and the least read.

We live in idolatry because we make a fetish out of our religious symbols. The bible is a "holy book." Consequently, nothing can be placed on it (except dust?!). Church buildings are "special" places, although no one knows why. Etc.

Concerning using "head trip analysis" to understand our human situation is the gift of our Greek intellectual history. As we've explored many times,

this has good ramifications and it has bad ramifications. The good is that we used our head to bring us good health, a high standard of living, and given us science and engineering to take us to the moon. The draw back is that all of this tends to keep us asleep to the spiritual dimensions of ourselves.

When we use "gut trip analysis" we are using "the experience of what it means to be human" to successfully use our "human experience." The emphasis is on the experiential.

The reality is that we all stand before one reality. Using our "head trip" we analyze our reality from one perspective. Using our "gut trip" can analyze our reality from another perspective.

Both perspectives are needed. One can not be emphasized at the expense of the other.

NOW, in light of this conversation, using your "gut trip analysis," or your experiential human nature, to understand the death and resurrection of Jesus. THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION HERE IS "WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF DEATH, AND WHAT IS YOUR EXPERIENCE OF RESURRECTION."

I'll be interested in getting a report. So, please share it with me.

III. Observe the differences in vss. 16: 8 and 16: 10.

Do your own research on what occasioned this addendum to the gospel of Mark. Also, note in vss. 12 that Jesus appeared in "a different form" to those walking in the country. Is this an indirect reference to those walking on the road to Emmaus? What do you think?

IV. The great commandment to "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (16: 15) is a wonderful fulfillment of the prophet Isaiah's treatment of God's covenant with Israel. They were to be a people to take the message of God's love to all the world. When this didn't happen, Isaiah predicted that God would fulfill God's purpose by sending the Israelites into Exile all around the then known world. Because this people remained faithful in their worship of God, God's purpose was fulfilled.

This is the mirroring event for the purpose of Jesus' second mission (according to Mark).

V. Using "gut trip analysis" what is the meaning of the sentence in 16: 19 that "He was taken up into heaven?"

VI. In 16: 16b, what is the meaning that "whoever does not believe will be condemned?" A hint is to remember that "the reward is found in the deed itself."

NOTE FOR OUR NEXT STUDY - The Gospel of John will be studied next. I've got the chart done and will find a way of getting it to Keith at Trinity to put on the web site. However, study John 1:1 thru 34 as the context given by John as a prelude to his whole gospel. Understanding these verses clarifies the whole of John's gospel.