

Mark 16:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

Analysis

They, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not (ἡκουσαν ὅτι ζῇ καὶ ἐθεάθη ὑπ' αὐτῆς ἡπίστησαν, ēkousan hoti zē kai etheathe hyp' autēs ēpistēsan)—**believed not** (ἡπίστησαν, apisteo) means active disbelief or refusal to believe. Despite Jesus' repeated predictions (8:31, 9:31, 10:34), resurrection seemed impossible. Their skepticism actually strengthens the historical case: disciples weren't credulous fools ready to believe anything.

The phrase **he was alive** (Ζῇ, zē—present tense, "He is living") emphasizes ongoing life, not mere resuscitation. The disciples' unbelief mirrors our own resistance to truths that overturn our assumptions. Faith doesn't come from human testimony alone but requires the Holy Spirit's conviction (John 16:8) and personal encounter (v.14).

Historical Context

First-century Jews had diverse resurrection beliefs: Pharisees expected general resurrection at the end of the age; Sadducees rejected it entirely (12:18). No one expected an individual to rise bodily in the middle of history. This conceptual impossibility, not mere skepticism, explains the disciples' disbelief. Pagan culture mocked bodily resurrection as absurd (Acts 17:32).

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What truths about Christ do you intellectually affirm but functionally disbelieve through your actions?
2. How does the disciples' skepticism challenge modern claims that resurrection faith was naive credulity?
3. Why is personal encounter with the risen Christ necessary beyond merely hearing testimony?

Interlinear Text

κάκεῖνοι ἀκούσαντες ὅτι ζῆ καὶ ἐθεάθη ὑπ'
And they when they had heard that he was alive and had been seen of
G2548 G191 G3754 G2198 G2532 G2300 G5259

αὐτῆς ἡπίστησαν
her believed not
G846 G569

Additional Cross-References

Luke 24:11 (Faith): And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

Mark 9:19 (Faith): He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.

Job 9:16 (Faith): If I had called, and he had answered me; yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.

Exodus 6:9 (Parallel theme): And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

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