

Mark 16:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid.

Analysis

They fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed (ἐφυγον ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου, εἶχεν γὰρ αὐτὰς τρόμος καὶ ἔκστασις, ephygon apo tou mnēmeiou, eichen gar autas tromos kai ekstasis)—tromos (trembling) and ekstasis (ecstatic astonishment) capture holy terror before the supernatural. **Neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid**—most ancient manuscripts end Mark here abruptly at φοβοῦντο γάρ ("for they were afraid"), creating interpretive challenges.

This shocking ending fits Mark's theme: following Jesus leads not to triumphalism but to awe, fear, and mystery. The women's silence wasn't disobedience but being overwhelmed—the good news was too great to process immediately. Mark's original readers knew the story didn't end here (the gospel itself proves the news spread!), but the abrupt finale forces reflection on how we respond to resurrection reality.

Historical Context

Textual criticism debates whether Mark intended to end at v.8 or whether the original ending was lost. Verses 9-20 appear in later manuscripts but differ stylistically. Many scholars see v.8 as Mark's deliberate ending—raw, unpolished, leaving readers confronting the resurrection's terrifying joy. Early Christians faced this same fear preaching a crucified and risen Lord.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why does genuine encounter with the resurrection produce fear alongside joy?
2. How does Mark's abrupt ending challenge comfortable, triumphalistic faith?
3. Have you ever been so overwhelmed by God's work that words failed—and what did that teach you?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐξελθοῦσαι	ταχὺ	ἔφυγον	ἀπὸ	τοῦ	μνημείου
And	they went out	quickly	and fled	from	G3588	the sepulchre
G2532	G1831	G5035	G5343	G575		G3419
εἶχεν	δὲ	αὐτὰς	τρόμος	καὶ	ἔκστασις·	καὶ οὐδὲν
they trembled	for	G846	G5156	And	were amazed	And any thing
G2192	G1161			G2532	G1611	G2532 G3762
οὐδὲν	εἶπον,	ἐφοβοῦντο	γὰρ			
any thing	said they	they were afraid	man for			
G3762	G2036	G5399	G1063			

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 28:8 (Parallel theme): And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

Luke 24:37 (Parallel theme): But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

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