

INTRODUCTION

Christ is Risen! *He is Risen indeed!* People of God, the Lord Jesus Christ has indeed risen from the dead. He is the First and The Last, and the Living One. He died, and Behold, He is alive forevermore, and He has the keys to Death and Hades! Christ our Lord tramples down death by death. He gives life to those who were in the tomb, and salvation to those who lay in the darkness of the shadow of death. By His resurrection from Hades, Christ our Lord has shattered the dominion of the devil, by emptying the Grave, and removing from us the fear of death. Alleluia!

Because our Lord Jesus Christ now has the keys to death and Hades, and has the power of an indestructible life, He has at His disposal the power of New Creation. As His Bridal people, we have been restored back to union with God, providing us with a New Spiritual Condition. This New Condition emboldens us to follow Christ who has gone before us in a New Worldwide Conquest with the Gospel of His resurrection.

New Creation

New Couple

New Condition

New Conquest

Let us now consider Mark 16.

A NEW CREATION

Many people consider Mark to be the simplest of all the Gospels. But Mark is a Master storyteller, who requires much from his readers. He frequently uses condensed phrases, images, and

symbols from the OT to shine greater light on the story of Jesus. He does not often write like Matthew, and say, *“This was to fulfill the Scripture which says...”*

Mark shows that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is the beginning of the New Creation. We will jump ahead to verse 2 and come back to verse 1 in a few minutes.

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

Just as the old world was created on the first day with the introduction of light shining in the darkness, so is the New Creation marked by the entrance of the uncreated Light of the World emerging from the darkness of death and Hades. This is why Christians worship on Sunday.

Malachi 4:2 says that the Sun (S-U-N) of righteousness would rise with healing in his wings. Thus, when Mark records that it was very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, he is doing more than showing that Christ triumphed over death. He has brought history into a New Phase. History has moved out of darkness and into light.

As St. Paul says, *If anyone is in Christ, New Creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come.* Symbolically, the Old Covenant age took place at night. The flow of the day went from evening to morning, just as the flow of redemption goes from Old Covenant to New Covenant. The Old Covenant takes place at evening, signified by the Moon, which is why they used a lunar calendar. But the New Covenant age takes place during the day,

signified by Christ the Sun of Righteousness, which is why we use a solar calendar.

As Christians, we are called to be children of the day, and to walk in the light of Christ, living our lives in a way that reflects the light and love and grace of our Savior.

As St. Paul says to the Thessalonians –

⁵You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. ⁶Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. ⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. ⁸But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.

Christ's resurrection moved history forward out of the darkness and into the Light. And we now live in the time of the New Creation. And anyone who is in Christ is likewise a New Creation. Therefore walk in the Light, as He is the Light.

A NEW COUPLE

Going back to verse 1, Mark shows that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, a New Couple is united.

Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. ²Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" ⁴But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large.

The Women

The first creation was completed after Adam was put into a death-like sleep and from his side came forth His Bride. So the New Creation must likewise have a theology of a New Bride. And we see this New Bridal theology in three interesting ways.

First, let us consider the significance of the women being the first witnesses to bring back a faithful testimony concerning Jesus.

As you know, Eve listened to the lies of the serpent, and brought back a false report to Adam. This resulted in sin and death entering the world.

Though there be three women present at the empty tomb, they are collectively a picture of a restored Eve. Mary Magdalene, out of whom our Lord cast out seven demons, and who is the first to see Jesus, as v. 9 tells us, is especially a picture of a restored Eve.

These new Eve's, hear the testimony of the young man clothed in white, and they bring back a true threefold witness to the apostles about Christ being risen from the dead.

Christ's resurrection undoes the strife at the heart between Adam and Eve, restoring the mystic union betwixt Christ and His Church.

The Stone Rolled Away

Mark gives us another indication that at the resurrection a Bride is found for Christ. Mark 16:3 says, "*And they were saying to one another, 'Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb.'*" The word "roll away" is unique. In the NT it only ever has reference to the rolling of the stone of Jesus' tomb. But in the

LXX Jacob found himself a bride in Rachel when he rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well to give water to her flocks.

Just as His father Isaac found his bride Rebekah at a well in Gen. 24, so did Jacob. Thus every good Jew knows that you find a wife at a well.

The connection between these two incidents – the rolling away of the stone from the mouth of the well, and the rolling away of the stone from the tomb should not be trivialized. The tomb with the stone rolled away from its entrance has become a well of salvation where Jesus finds for himself a Bride.

This is made even more explicit in the person of Mary Magdalene. Mark reports in v. 9 that Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene. And we know from John's Gospel that when Mary first saw Jesus, she mistook him for the Gardener. That is not without significance. Jesus is a New Adam, in a New Garden, and Mary perceives Him to be the Gardener. He rolls the stone away and Jesus and His Bride are together at last.

God and His people are One. Christ's love for His bridal people is stronger than death, and His jealousy is fiercer than the grave. The waters of the Abyss and the floods of the grave could not quench or drown it (Song 8:6,7). In fact, the waters of the grave become an overflowing flowing fountain of life and love for the world.

The Young Man

The presence of the Young Man also confirms the marriage theme. For the Prophet Isaiah speaks of this glorious day as a Marriage, saying,

³*You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.*

⁴*You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate,
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land Married;
for the LORD delights in you,
and your land shall be married.*

⁵*For as a young man marries a young woman,
so shall your sons marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.*

Therefore with the presence of the women bringing forth a truthful testimony, the rolling away of the stone, and the presence of the Young Man, we see the bridegroom rejoicing over the bride, and God rejoicing over His New Couple in the world.

A NEW CONDITION

Let us move on to our next point. A New Condition.

Mark 16:5 says, “And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.”

The Young Man made an appearance earlier in Mark’s Gospel in the Garden of Gethsemane. He was following Jesus wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body. And as the guards

attempted to seize him, he left the linen cloth and ran away naked. Jesus said,

“Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? ⁴⁹I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled.”

⁵⁰Then they all forsook Him and fled.

⁵¹Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, ⁵²and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

That he is called a Young Man means more than just the fact he is a youth. This phrase is often used to describe a man of fighting age. He is a warrior. As *the glory of young men is their strength*. (Prv. 20:29).

Now in Amos 2 God promises to punish Israel to such an unbearable degree that even *“he who is of stout heart among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day.”*

Now this starts to make a bit more sense of what Jesus meant when he said that the Scripture must be fulfilled.

Mark is showing that the Jesus’s suffering and death is the day of God’s wrath in fulfillment of Amos 2. Like the rest of the disciples who swore to fight for Jesus even to the death, but abandoned him, this young man, this stout-hearted warrior also flees showing the weakness of the human condition.

But this young man is a representative character of us. Like Adam in the Garden, who was naked and afraid and hid himself from

God, this young man fled from God the Son in Garden, running away naked.

Rather than being loyal unto death, we all fail and fall away and abandon Jesus. We are like Adam in the Garden, naked and afraid and hiding from God because He know our sins.

But thanks be to God, that is not the end of story for this character, nor the end for us.

This young man shows up again at the empty tomb. The women came to the tomb, and they found the stone rolled away, and on the inside of the tomb they find a young man, wearing a white robe, and he is sitting on the right side. These two scenes need to be interpreted together.

The once naked and afraid young man, who abandoned Christ in the Garden, is clothed in white robe, sitting on the right side, or at the right hand of Christ, as a result of the death and resurrection of Christ.

The story arc of the naked young man is our story arc. He is us, and we are him. We were once in Adam, naked, afraid, and running away from God in the Garden. Now we are in Christ, seated with Christ in the Heavenly Places clothed with glory, honor, and immortality, ruling and reigning with Him at His right hand.

A NEW CONQUEST

And this then brings us to our final point. A New Conquest.

In Mark 16:7 the Young Man wearing a White Robe sitting on the right side of the Tomb said to the women, *“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. ⁷ But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that **He is going before you** into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you.”*

By **going before** the disciples to Galilee Jesus is restoring the apostles to their apostolic office and ministry. Jesus called his first apostles, including Peter, in Galilee. At His arrest those apostles betrayed Him, abandoned Him, and denied Him. So Galilee is going to be the place where Jesus restores them back to apostolic service after they all fell away and abandoned Him.

John’s gospel retells the story beautifully when our Lord asked him three times, “Peter, do you love me?” Thus forgiving him of His three-fold denial. So restoring the apostles is clearly one reason Jesus is going before them to Galilee.

But Jesus *going before them* is also an echo of something else in the OT. Do you remember that to prepare the land for conquest under Joshua, the Angel of the Lord **went before** Israel?

Ex. 23 says - ²⁰ “Behold, I send an Angel **before you** to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. ²¹ Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for **My name is in Him**. ²² But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. ²³ For My Angel **will go before you** and bring you into the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. ²⁴ You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars.

The Angel of the Lord went before Israel to Canaan. Now Jesus goes before His apostles into Galilee. And so does Our Lord go before the Church to help her in her mission to spread the Gospel of His Kingdom throughout the world. And because He goes before us, we have the assurance that our mission will be victorious, provided we don't fear. The Gospel will convert the world and bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including our own.

Jesus sends His disciples on a mission in Mark 16:15. "*Go into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to the whole creation.*" But the disciples were not on their own. Just as the Angel of the Lord prepared the way for Israel's conquest in Canaan, so now we are to take comfort that Christ goes before us, that He enables us to conquer the world with the Gospel. As the Gospel converts the world and brings about the obedience of faith among all nations, our mission will be victorious.

However, this will not happen without a fight. The world does not want to be reconciled to God. And Satan opposes the Gospel of Christ's Lordship at every turn. And why? Because the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes. This is why the Church is called to proclaim the Gospel to all creation, telling the whole world, "Be reconciled to God."

Our religion is a religion of the Word, and we must use that Word to destroy strongholds and take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. That is how Satanic strongholds are destroyed!

But when faithfully proclaimed, the Gospel will provoke the attacks of the world. Yet, Jesus instructed us not to fear them. We

must not be afraid of having a poor reputation among critics or compromisers, but rather, we should strive to be faithful to Christ the Lord and fight valiantly in the arena of faith.

As Teddy Roosevelt once said -

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

Christianity may be a religion of the meek, but that does not at all mean that we are called to be milquetoast. Neither does it mean that Christians should never openly resist prevailing cultural ideas, especially ones that at their core are an attack against Christ and the Image of God. The Church is not to be afraid of the enemies of the Christian faith, nor should we cower because some of our own people are overly sensitive to argumentation.

The Church should never stop pushing the antithesis between the way of life and the way of death, the way of Christ and the way of Anti-Christ. Yes, the things we believe make our secular anti-Christ neighbors upset. And they will in turn say evil things about us. But that is no reason to retreat from the public arena.

For that is what the enemy wants – to have the Church silenced, impotent, and fearful.

Fear is why Israel failed to enter into the land. Deut. 1 records the people saying:

“The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.” ’

*²⁹ “Then I said to you, ‘**Do not be terrified, or afraid of them.**’ ³⁰ **The LORD your God, who goes before you,** He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, ³¹ and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.’ Yet in spite of this word you did not believe the Lord your God, who went before you in the way...”*

So do not be afraid, People of God. Do not fear when Presidents and Governments rise against the Christian faith. Do not fear when the enemies of Christ come clanging their swords, so to say, provoking a fight from the Church. Be strong and courageous.

Tell of His fame among the nations. Go forth with the Gospel of His resurrection from the dead. Destroy every argument and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of Christ. Take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. For Christ goes before you to win the world. And so we are more than conquerors through Christ who loved us.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Mark's Gospel presents the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a New Creation, a New Couple, a New Condition, and a New Conquest.

Jesus Christ marked the New Creation on the first day of the week by the entrance of the uncreated Light of the World, which brought history into a New Phase. As Christians, you are called to be children of the day, walking in the light of Christ, and reflecting His love and grace.

Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has restored the mystic union between Himself and His Church, the true Adam and Eve. The empty tomb with the stone rolled away has become a well of living water, giving salvation to the world, and it is here where Jesus finds His Bride.

Jesus transformed the once weak and fleeing naked young man into a glorious figure clothed in a white robe, sitting at the right hand of God. Jesus' resurrection elevates your humanity and grants you a place of honor and glory in His Kingdom.

Therefore, as Christ goes before you, He calls His Church to engage in spiritual battle with the enemy, using the weapons of the Word to destroy strongholds and arguments raised against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

By standing firm in your faith and proclaiming the Gospel to the whole creation, you participate in the ongoing conquest of Christ's Resurrection Kingdom, bringing about the obedience of faith among all nations. Christ is Risen! *He is Risen indeed. Amen.*