

## Synchronizing the Resurrection Narratives, Event #7: Mary Magdalene is the first to see the Risen Lord, John 20:14-17.

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Review of the resurrection narrative up to this point (I have narrowed down the *approximate hour* of the events in relation to the times of sunset and sunrise in the narratives; MM is Mary Magdalene):

- Event #1: Saturday, 5:45 p.m., April 4, 33: Two Marys go to “look” at tomb, Matt. 28:1.  
Event #2: Sunday, 3:00 a.m., April 5, 33: Earthquake and angel from heaven, Matt. 28:2-4.  
Event #3: Sunday, 4:00 a.m., April 5, 33: MM visits the tomb before daybreak, Jn. 20:1.  
Event #4: Sunday, 4:15 a.m., April 5, 33: MM reports empty tomb to John & Peter, Jn. 20:2.  
Event #5: Sunday, 4:30 a.m., April 5, 33: Peter and John run to the tomb, Jn. 20:3-9.  
Event #6: Sunday, 4:40 a.m., April 5, 33: MM returns to tomb & sees 2 angels, Jn. 20:10-13.  
Event #7: Sunday, 4:50 a.m., April 5, 33: MM sees the Risen Lord, Jn. 20:14-17.

**John 20:14-17** When she had said this, she turned around, and beheld Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away." <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). <sup>17</sup> Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them, 'I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'"

After bending down and seeing two angels in the tomb (who appeared as men), Mary turned around (perhaps the angels looked behind her, or she heard His footsteps) and saw someone near whom she assumed to be the gardener. She was not expecting to see Jesus; she still thought that someone had stolen His body. Her eyes were full of tears, and this may have impaired her vision at the moment. Jesus puts to Mary exactly the same question as the angels had done: “Woman, why are you weeping?” but He adds “Who are you looking for?” The form of the question is significant: Mary was looking for a thing, a body, whereas she should have been looking for a person, Jesus. But Mary apparently was still too much taken up with her grief to take in the significance of what was said to her. She wanted a body, and would settle for nothing else.

As far as the “gardener,” John tells us that the tomb was in a garden (John 19:41). Mary thought that the gardener was responsible for the area and therefore might know what happened to Jesus’ body. She may have thought that he did not want the body in his beautiful garden and put it somewhere else: “tell me where you have laid Him.” At any rate, the body was gone and she wanted it back.

Jesus speaks only one word, “Mary/Mariam.” It was the pronouncing of her name that she came to realize that it was Jesus who was speaking. He gave her a message to take to His “brethren,” which after being the first to see the Lord alive, she did. Given the cultural setting of the time, what a blow it must have been to the “brethrens” male egos that Jesus appeared to her first. There was probably already some tension from the fact that a short time ago she had been pounding on their doors to tell them that the someone stole the body (event #4). Since the Lord had already risen when the disciples visited the tomb about twenty minutes earlier (event #5), the question arises as to why He appeared to Mary Magdalene first. Why do you think He honored Mary Magdalene over His own disciples by letting her be the first to see Him as the Risen Lord? Remember the disciples had just been there when the tomb was empty so Jesus was already “around.” But He waited to appear to Mary Magdalene. Why?

In Christ,

Pastor Don