

Synchronizing the Resurrection Narratives, Event #9: Mary Magdalene and a group of women go to the tomb of Jesus (part 2), Mark 16:1-3; Lk. 24:1-2.

Review of the resurrection narratives up to this point (I have narrowed down the *approximate* hour of the events; 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., MM visits the tomb before daybreak, Jn. 20:1.
- Event #4: Sunday, 4:15 a.m., MM reports empty tomb to John & Peter, Jn. 20:2.
- Event #5: Sunday, 4:30 a.m., Peter and John run to the tomb, Jn. 20:3-9.
- Event #6: Sunday, 4:40 a.m., MM returns to tomb & sees 2 angels, Jn. 20:10-13.
- Event #7: Sunday, 4:50 a.m., MM sees the Risen Lord, Jn. 20:14-17.
- Event #8: Sunday, 5:00 a.m., MM tells disciples who do not believe her, Jn. 20:18; Mk. 16:9-11.
- Event #9: Sunday, 6:00 a.m., MM & other women go to tomb of Jesus, Mk. 16:1-3; Lk. 24:1-2.

Review of the resurrection accounts chronologically laid out in the Bible thus far: Matthew 28:1-4; John 20:1-18; Mark 16:9-11; Mark 16:1-3; Luke 24:1-2. The ninth event:

Mark 16:1 And when the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. ² And very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. ³ And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?"

Luke 24:1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. ² And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,

After Mary Magdalene tells the disciples that she has seen the Lord, but they do not believe her (a detail Mark provides that is not mentioned in John), she meets up with other women who are traveling to the tomb of Jesus on Resurrection Sunday morning with the intent of gaining access to add spices to the body of Jesus. The question arises concerning the question that was discussed among *some* of the women, “Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb.” Since Mary Magdalene already knew that the stone had been rolled away, why didn’t she tell the women? Here is some background information which provides us with reasons for her silence during this discussion.

1. Let's try to imagine the state of Mary at this point. First, she told the disciples that someone had stolen the body of Jesus only to result in them checking out the tomb and leaving with apparent incredulity. Second, upon seeing the Lord Jesus Christ she ran and told them that she had seen Him only to be disbelieved by the disciples once more. She must have been exuberant as she told the disciples about how she had seen the Lord and how she first thought was a gardener. Imagine the shock and disappointment she must have felt when they refused to believe her. She had already knocked on their door around 4:00 a.m., distraught at discovering the stone missing from the tomb. Now she had returned, bubbling over with joy and saying that now she had seen Him alive. Imagine how she felt as she would relay the incident of how she thought she was talking to a gardener, but it was really Jesus and how she reached out to grab Him and how He told her not to cling to Him and to go and tell them this news, and how He said He was ascending to His God and your God and to His Father and your Father. By the end of the speech, Mary must have felt a crushing disappointment as they looked at her like she was mad. Perhaps they not only gave her a dismissive look due to the nature of her story but also rebuked her sharply thinking that there is no way Jesus would *first* appear to a *woman*—especially that woman. If Jesus was alive, certainly He would appear to His male disciples first, they thought. The fact that she mentioned that Jesus said “I ascend” also might contribute to their skepticism thinking that she is just covering her tracks in case they can't find Him.
2. Another factor is that Jesus specifically told Mary to tell “my brethren”—He did not tell her to tell the women or anyone else. Perhaps her silence among the other women is a matter of her obedience to Him—as well as her being in shock that morning. The whole thing must have been confusing for her: ‘Why did He appear to me? Why did He tell me to tell the disciples who would not believe me? Now what? Maybe I really am imagining things? Maybe I just need to keep my mouth shut and let the women see and confirm these unbelievable things? I think I will just do what He says by telling only the disciples.’
3. Furthermore, she must have felt very uncomfortable among the other women to tell of such news. These other women were also in unique positions as far as relationship with Jesus Christ. If Mary had told the other women of her having seen Jesus and having talked with Him, might they not have reacted negatively? She may have feared a bit of jealousy, e.g., “What makes you so special that He would appear to you before anyone else—including His own disciples?” What makes you think He loves you more than us?” She was already in a fragile state having experienced emotional extremes—on top of being sleep deprived.
4. Since the male disciples did not believe her, how likely would it be that these women would believe her? Whatever the case, the evidence suggest that Mary wasn't telling what she knew. She kept her mouth shut as the other women were discussing the issue of who would remove the stone.

5. Given the above, it is not difficult at all to account for her silence. In fact, given the circumstances it is understandable. At any rate, this “problem” does not even come close to rising to the level of *contradiction*.

In Christ,

Pastor Don