

Responding to the atheists and skeptics-6: Mary sees Jesus and then returns to disciples; touching the Lord.

SUMMARY OF THE RESURRECTION EVENTS

- Event #1: Saturday, 5:45 p.m., April 4, 33: Two Marys go to “look” at tomb then return, 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.: 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.
- Event #10: Sunday, 6:30 a.m.: Women enter tomb; 3 angels, Mt. 28:5-7; Mk 16:4-7; Lk. 24:3-8.
- Event #11: Sunday, 7:00 a.m.: Women run in fear; Jesus meets them, Mt. 28:8-10; Mk. 16:8.
- Event #12: Sunday, 8:00 a.m.: Women went to tell disciples; soldiers report, Mat 28:11-15.
- Event #13: Sunday, 8:10 a.m.: Once again, the disciples do not believe the women, Lk. 24:9-11
- Event #14: Sunday, 8:30 a.m.: However, Peter runs to the tomb a second time, Lk. 24:12.
- Event #15: Sunday, 8:45 a.m.: Private meeting between Jesus and Peter, 1 Cor. 15:5; Lk. 24:34.
- Event #16: Sunday, 10 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Jesus & 2 travelers to Emmaus, Mk. 16:12; Lk. 24:13-32.
- Event #17: Sunday, 5:00 p.m. The 2 travelers tell the 11 Disciples, Mk. 16:13; Lk. 24:33-35.
- Event #18: Sunday, 5:20 p.m. Thomas leaves; Jesus appears, Lk. 24:36-49; Jn. 20:19-25.
- Event #19: 8 days after the resurrection. Jesus appears to Thomas, Mk. 16:14-18; Jn 20:26-31.
- Event #20: 2 weeks after the resurrection. Jesus appears to disciples on shore of Galilean Sea, Jn 21:1-25.
- Event #21: 3 weeks after the resurrection. Jesus appears to eleven disciples on mountain, Matt. 28:16-20.
- Event #22: 40 days after the resurrection. Jesus’s last group appearance, and His ascension into Heaven, Mk 16:19-20; Lk. 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-12.
- Event #23: 3-6 years after the resurrection. Jesus appears to Saul of Tarsus, Acts 9:3-9.

We are now in the final chapter of these studies where I will directly answer the specific attacks on the resurrection narratives by various atheists and skeptics. **The charges of discrepancy are in red; my responses are in bold black.** A good representation of the attacks on the resurrection accounts of Jesus Christ is found at Dan Barker's website, <http://www.ffrf.org/legacy/books/lfif/?t=stone>.

1. When did Mary first see Jesus?

- Matthew: Before she returned to the disciples (28:9)
- Mark: Before she returned to the disciples (16:9,10)
- John: After she returned to the disciples (20:2,14)

When did Mary first see Jesus? The narratives are straight forward: Mary visited the tomb alone before daylight and upon seeing empty tomb (NOT JESUS) returns to tell to the disciples that the body was missing. They go to the empty tomb and return home. Then Jesus appears to her after which she tells the disciples. John 20:14 records Mary seeing the risen Lord before she tells the disciples as per John 20:18. I suspect Barker's listing of John 20:2 is an attempt to obfuscate; it has nothing to do with the appearance of the Lord.

- Matthew: Before she returned to the disciples (28:9) See event #11.
- Mark: Before she returned to the disciples (16:9,10) See event #8.
- John: After she returned to the disciples (20:2,14) See event #4. **Summary: Mary sees empty tomb and tells disciples the body of Jesus is missing. Then back at the tomb the Lord appears to her and tells her to give this news to the disciples which she does (John 20:18). Ergo, in John she sees the Lord before returning to the disciples.**

2. Could Jesus be touched after the resurrection?

- Matthew: Yes (28:9)
- John: No (20:17), Yes (20:27)

Could Jesus be touched after the resurrection? The only way this could be classified as a contradiction and thereby violate the law of contradiction is if on the same event the same person was told that she could and could not touch Jesus in the same way at the same time. Each of the events listed occurred at different times with different issues. Mary was told to stop clinging to Jesus (John 20:17), the women who ran from the tomb at the sight of Jesus "took hold of His feet and worshipped Him" (Matt. 28:9), and then when the Lord appeared to Doubting Thomas, He invited him to touch Him to help him deal with his doubt—which by the way Thomas never died. Again, there is no contradiction.

- Matthew: Yes (28:9). **Jesus appeared and greeted the group of women who were running in fear from the angels in the tomb, and they took hold of his feet and worshipped Him (7:00 a.m., event #11).**
- John: No (20:17), Yes (20:27). **In John 20:17, the first appearance, Mary was told to stop clinging to Him for He had not yet ascended. John 20:27 took place eight days after the**

resurrection when doubting Thomas was invited to put his hands in the pierced side of Jesus.

It all fits together *perfectly* as one would expect from the infallible inspired Word of God. However, there is more. It not only fits together perfectly, it also fits together *beautifully* on a very profound spiritual level! Guess who Mary Magdalene is? She is none other than Mary of Bethany! That's right: the prostitute in Luke 7 is Mary of Bethany of John 11 who is also Mary Magdalene in John 20. While I do not have the time to present, examine, and adjudicate the large historical and contemporary literature on this subject, I agree with the long history of Patristic and medieval biblical commentators who identify Mary of Bethany with the sinner in Luke 7 and Mary Magdalene in John 20. So what is the beautiful and profound spiritual truth? Just reflect on how Jesus solved the problem of shame by raising her to new heights of honor in Luke 7, and then after she failed in John 11—to the point of causing Jesus to be frustrated and even cry—she was raised to honor in John 12, and now even further at the resurrection being *honored* by Jesus as being the first to see the Risen Lord. Wow! A former harlot who was despised by Simon the Pharisee and society was honored beyond what she could have asked or imagined. That is just what grace will do for anyone who is willing.

Matthew 26:13 "Truly I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done shall also be spoken of in memory of her."

1 Cor. 2:9 But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

Review of the atheistic and skeptical charges of “discrepancies” in the resurrection narratives of Jesus Christ:

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| 1. It is impossible to provide a reasonable and non-contradictory narrative of the resurrection narratives that includes every single passage. | FALSE: See above for hour-by hour narrative—not a single passage is omitted. Above is a reasonable account--it is very plausible. |
| 2. There is a contradiction regarding the earthquake occurring after the women visit the tomb (Matt 28:1-2) versus before visiting the tomb. | FALSE: Matt. 28:1-2 occurred Saturday evening (see event 1 above) before earthquake and should not be confused with event 9. |
| 3. There is contradiction between the times of morning the women visited the tomb | FALSE: Skeptics make the <i>error</i> in conflating events 1, 3, and 9. |
| 4. There is discrepancy in the names of the women; or at least we do not | FALSE: There is no discrepancy. All of the accounts list Mary Magdalene as |

know who they were.

5. Somehow there must be a conflict among purposes of woman coming to the tomb.
6. There is discrepancy regarding the tomb being opened
7. There is a discrepancy on the number of angels they saw
8. There is a discrepancy on where the angels were situated
9. There is a discrepancy between the messages of the angels.
10. There is a discrepancy on the women “telling others.” This is the only charge that could truly be labeled a “discrepancy.”

a principal witness. Lack of ability to identify other Marys is not an argument against the historicity of resurrection accounts in the Gospels.

FALSE: The Bible is clear that the women came to the tomb at least twice: once before Sunday to see the tomb and *then* on Sunday morning to anoint the body

FALSE: What is taken as a discrepancy (closed tomb of Matthew) is a previous visit on Saturday when it was closed (before the earthquake).

FALSE: Different angels were seen at different times. For there to be “objective” discrepancy, the text would have to say something like ‘there was *only* one or two angels.’”

FALSE: The variation of situations are due to the different events.

FALSE: There is no discrepancy. One angel told Mary Magdalene one thing before daybreak, *then* later one angel gave the women in the tomb another message, and *then* two angels appeared and gave another message.

FALSE: While on the surface it does appear that we have a discrepancy here, a closer look indicates that when we are told that the women did not tell anyone it did not mean that they never told anyone. Even the skeptics do not believe they forever kept quiet. The point of the passage is that they were so afraid that they did not stop to tell anyone as they fled from the tomb.

After Jesus appeared to them and encouraged them, of course they would report to disciples as per the other accounts.

11. There is a discrepancy between the Gospels in that the Synoptics say that Mary M. knew that Jesus was resurrected when she returned from the tomb whereas in John she did not know.

FALSE: When Mary M. first returned from the tomb before daybreak, she did not know (John). As noted there were several visits and all of the Synoptics agree that later she did know—for the Lord had personally appeared to her later as noted in John.

12. There is a discrepancy between Mary M. first seeing Jesus *before* she returned to the disciples and *after* she returned to the disciples.

FALSE: It was *after* Mary M. saw the empty tomb—NOT JESUS, that told the disciples (John 20:2), then Jesus appeared to her after which she told them as recorded in Matthew, Mark, and John 20:18.

13. There are discrepancies regarding people touching Jesus

FALSE: Mary Magdalene was told to stop clinging to Him. Hours later women saw Him and touched Him as they worshipped Him. Eight days later Doubting Thomas was invited to put his hand in the side of Jesus.

Blessed,

Pastor Don