

The Resurrection Appearances of Jesus

I. Introduction

Jesus died in public and his body was released by the Roman authorities to Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who placed him in a sepulcher (tomb) which was also observed by the women from Galilee. Matthew records that a “great stone rolled to the door of the sepulcher”. **Matt.27:60.**

The chief priests remembering that Jesus had prophesied that he would rise again after 3 days went to Pilate who commanded in **Matt 27:64** that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day lest his disciples come by night and steal his body saying ‘he is risen from the dead’. To the ever-cautious Pilate this would have given him some security and an action to keep the appearance of control. They also sealed the stone and set a watch. The seal meant that if the stone were moved it could be shown that the grave had been tampered with. The guard meant no one could come in or out without being seen and noted by the guard.

Everything was secure by Friday evening according to our manner of describing days. The Sabbath day rest ended at 6p.m. on the Saturday and by then it would be too dark to work and so no one, like Mary Magdalene, would come to the tomb until the first day of the Jewish week. That would be Sunday.

The appearances of Jesus after his resurrection from Easter Sunday onwards are:

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- ~~1. 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 was written 53-55 AD.~~
- 2. Mary Magdalene** (John 20:14-17; Matthew 28:9-10; Mark 16:9)
- 3. The other Mary** (Matthew 28:9-10)
- 4. Peter** (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5)
- 5. Cleopas and another disciple** on the road to Emmaus Sunday afternoon (Luke 24:13-35; Mark 16:12)

6. **Disciples (without Thomas)** in Jerusalem Sunday evening (Luke 24:36-43; Acts 1:4; John 20:19-23; Mark 16:14; 1 Corinthians 15:5)
7. **Thomas and the other disciples**, a week later (John 20:24-29)
8. **Disciples** in Galilee (Matthew 28:17)
9. **Disciples (Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and two others)** while fishing on the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1-23)
10. **500 at one time** (1 Corinthians 15:6)
11. **James, Jesus' brother**, who later became the leader of the Jerusalem congregation (1 Corinthians 15:7) P14 P
12. **Disciples** at the ascension (Matthew 28:51-52)
13. **Paul** (1 Corinthians 15:8), much later

II. The Resurrection Appearances of Jesus

Q1. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, I am the resurrection and the life? John 11:23-25 -

Q2. What role will Jesus play in the resurrection of the dead?

Q3. What does Jesus' Promise about His Own Resurrection?

Matthew 16:21

Matthew 17:22-23

Matthew 20:17-19

A. The Third Day, Three Days

John 2:18-22; remembered by his enemies. Matthew 27:40; Mark 14:58
Matthew 12:39-40, Matthew 27:62-64

Q4. Why did Jesus' enemies heed his prediction of being raised on the third day even more than his disciples? Did his enemies expect him to rise? Did his followers?

III. The Gospel Accounts of Christ's Resurrection from the Dead

Before beginning, read the Resurrection accounts in the Gospels. Try looking at them as for the first time.

Q5 : What happened here that prompted these stories? Look for differences as well as similarities.

Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-14, Luke 24:1-44, John 20:1-29

A. The Synoptic Problem

Synoptic Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke

Q - which stands for the German word Quelle, meaning source.

Mark – earliest gospel, Mark 16:9-19, the so-called longer ending of Mark

Matthew – Palestinian Jews

Luke – Hellenistic audience

John – eyewitness

B. Resurrection Differences

1. Women. In the Synoptic Gospels, Mary Magdalene and other women go to the tomb. In John's account, Mary Magdalene goes alone.

2. Appearance to the women. In Matthew 28:9, Jesus appears to the women before they tell the disciples.

In John 20:13-17, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene first (also in the longer ending of Mark) – after she reports to the disciples. In Mark, the women tell no one of what they had seen.

3. Number of angels. In Matthew and Mark one angel appears; in Luke and John there are two angels.

4. Purpose of the women's visit. In Matthew they go to look at the tomb. In Mark and Luke they bring spices to anoint Jesus' body. In John the anointing took place on Friday night and no purpose for Mary's visit is given.

5. Grave clothes. In Matthew and Mark, Jesus is wrapped in a large linen shroud (sidrōn). In John 19:40; 20:5-7 and Luke 24:12, Jesus is wrapped in strips of linen (othonion). See the discussion below.

6. Location. In Matthew and Mark, Jesus' resurrection appearances are in Galilee, while Luke only records appearances in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

IV. The Parallel Accounts of the Resurrection from Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, John 20

See the Chart**

Q6. Who are: The Six women who go to the tomb.

“Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, **Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph**, and Salome. (Mark 15:40).

Near the cross of Jesus stood *his mother*, his **mother's sister**, **Mary the wife of Clopas**, and Mary Magdalene. (John 19:25).

Among them were Mary Magdalene, **Mary the mother of James and Joseph**, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. (Matthew 27:56).

Mary - Mother of Jesus

Mary - Wife of Clopas and mother of James and Joseph

Clopas - brother of Joseph (Jesus' foster father)

So, Mary of Clopas is sister for Jesus's mother - Mary

Salome - wife of Zebedee.

Joanna -

1. Joanna (wife of Chuza)

- Among the first women to discover the empty tomb ([Luke 24:10](#))
- Her husband was Chuza, the household manager or steward of King Herod Antipas ([Luke 8:3](#)).
- She was a follower of Jesus and helped to provide financially for Jesus's ministry, along with Susanna and many others ([Luke 8:3](#)).

2. Mary Magdalene

- She was a Galilean, probably from the town of Magdala (on the west bank of the Sea of Galilee).
- Jesus delivered her from seven demons ([Luke 8:2](#); [Mark 16:9](#)).
- She became a follower of Jesus ([Matt. 27:57](#)).
- She was a witness to the crucifixion and burial ([Matt. 27:61](#); [28:1](#); [Mark 15:40, 47](#); [John 19:25](#)).
- She was among the women who went to the tomb on Sunday ([Mark 16:1](#); [John 20:1](#)).
- She was the first person to see Jesus alive ([Mark 16:9](#)).
- She told the other disciples about his resurrection ([Luke 24:10](#); [John 20:18](#)).

3. Mary (mother of Jesus, widow of Joseph of Nazareth)

- She gave birth to Jesus in Bethlehem, moved with her son and her husband Joseph to Egypt for a couple of years, then moved to Nazareth where they raised him.
- She was present at Jesus's execution and burial, and she witnessed his resurrection life.
- From the cross Jesus entrusted his (apparently) widowed mother to John's care, and she went to live in his home ([John 19:25-27](#))—

perhaps because Mary's other sons were not yet believers ([John 7:5](#); see also [Matt. 13:57](#); Mark 3:21, 31; 6:4).

- Mary had at least six other children ([Matt. 13:55](#); [Mark 6:2-3](#); [Acts 1:14](#); [1 Cor. 9:4-5](#); [Gal. 1:19](#)), including four sons—James (author of the biblical book of James), Joseph/Joses, Simon, Judas/Jude (author of the biblical book of Jude)—and least two daughters ([Mark 6:3](#)).

4. Mary (mother of James and Joses/Joseph)

- She was a witness of Jesus's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection appearances.
- Her sons were named James the Younger (hence her husband must have been named James) and Joses/Joseph ([Matt. 27:61](#); [27:56](#); [Mark 15:40, 47](#)).

5. Mary (wife of Clopas)

- She was a Galilean witness of Jesus's crucifixion.
- In [John 19:25](#), it seems most likely that grammar indicates "his mother's sister" = "Mary the wife of Clopas," rather than two separate women being referenced ("his mother's sister" + "Mary the wife of Clopas").
- According to Hegesippus, as quoted by the historian Eusebius, her husband Clopas was the brother of Joseph of Nazareth (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.11; 3.32.6; 4.22.4). If so, Jesus was Mary and Clopas's nephew.
- Their son Simeon (Jesus's cousin) became a leader of the Jerusalem church succeeding James the brother of Jesus.

6. Salome (mother of James and John)

- She was one of Jesus's followers in Galilee.
- She witnessed the crucifixion and went to the tomb on Sunday ([Mark 15:40](#); [16:1](#)).
- She is likely the mother of the sons of Zebedee (i.e., James and John).

V. Relevant Questions

A. Eyewitness Accounts

Q1. What differences do you find between the various resurrection accounts?

How do you account for differences in eyewitness testimony?

How might these differences add to the credibility of the witnesses?

B. Points of Agreement

1. Jesus was dead and buried.
2. The disciples were not prepared for Jesus' death. They were overcome with confusion.
3. The tomb was found on Easter morning to be empty. But this in itself didn't inspire faith. Mary thought the body was stolen.
4. The disciples encountered certain experiences which they took to be appearances of Jesus risen from the dead.
5. Contemporary Judaism had no concept of a dying and rising Messiah.
6. The disciples proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus in Jerusalem, near where he had been buried

C. What Happened Easter Morning?

1. Mary Magdalene saw him first and spoke to him (Mark 16:9, longer ending; John 20:16)
2. Other women also saw him and touched him (Matthew 28:9).
3. Jesus appeared to Peter and the other apostles (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:5; Mark 16:14 longer ending; Luke 24:36).
4. Jesus appeared to Thomas (John 20:26-28).

5. Later, Jesus appeared to more than 500 at one time (1 Corinthians 15:6). 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Q2. What similarities do you find in the resurrection accounts? Based on the agreements between the accounts, what seems to have happened?

D. The Grave Clothes

When you compare Luke 23:53 (sindōn) with Luke 24:12 (othonion) it appears that Luke, at least, is using the terms synonymously.

Luke 24:12, John 20:6-8

Q3. (Luke 24:12; John 20:6-8) What about the grave clothes brought Peter and John to faith? What was so peculiar about them?

What Was Jesus' Body Like?

1. Jesus described it as flesh and bones (Luke 24:39c).
2. He could eat (Luke 24:42-43; Acts 1:4)
3. His body could be touched and handled by others (Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:39b)
4. He could walk and talk (Luke 24:15), even cook (John 21:9), just as a normal human body.
5. Yet Jesus' wounds were still visible in his renewed body (Luke 24:39-40; John 20:20, 25-27)
6. Jesus could enter locked doors (John 20:19, 26) disappear (Luke 24:31) and appear (Luke 24:36) at will.

A Possible Harmonization of the Resurrection Accounts (No real way to know)

1. The earthquake and removal of stone occurs before dawn.
2. A group of four women come early to the tomb, wondering who will move the stone. As they approach, they are amazed to see that the stone has been rolled away.
3. Mary rushes off to tell Peter and John that the body of Jesus has been stolen (John 20:2).
4. The other women stay in the garden. They enter the tomb and are met by two angels, who tell them to carry the word of the resurrection to the disciples.³
5. The women rush away from the garden, filled with mingled emotions of fear and joy, speaking to no one about the vision of the angels at the empty tomb (Mark 16:8).
6. Later in the day, Jesus met them. (Matthew 28:9 does not say that this meeting occurred in the garden.) They had to run away from the tomb. Jesus tells them to bear the word to the disciples; they depart to find the disciples, who are not together but scattered (Matthew 26:56).
7. Peter and John, having been informed by Mary, come to the tomb after the women have left. They see the clothes; vague comprehension dawns on John. they rush off to gather the disciples.
8. Mary returns to the tomb after Peter and John have left; they had run to the tomb (John 20:4), leaving Mary behind. She still thinks the body has been stolen. She is weeping outside the tomb, knowing nothing of the experience of the women she had left in the garden. She sees the two angels, then Jesus (John 20:11-17).⁴
9. After the first shock of amazement had worn off, the women find some of the disciples; the disciples cannot believe the fanciful story (Luke 24:11)
10. The disciples have gathered together.
11. Mary arrives and tells her experience (John 20:18)
12. That afternoon, the walk to Emmaus.
13. Sometime that afternoon, an appearance to Peter (Luke 24:34).
14. That evening, the disciples are all together in the closed room. They had been scattered, but the testimony of the women, of Peter and

John, then of Mary, serves to bring them all together. Thomas was absent.

15. A second appearance to the eleven, including Thomas.
16. Galilee (Matthew 28:16). The appearance by Tiberias (John 21) and to the 500 brethren (1 Corinthians 15:6).
17. Return to Jerusalem; the final appearance and ascension.

"This harmonization IS NOT INTENDED suggest that the events actually happened in this order. WE CANNOT KNOW."

Matthew 28:1 - Matthew names 2 women, Mary and Mary

In the Old Testament, the requirement for two witnesses to establish a matter as true is found in **Deuteronomy 19:15**, which states:

"One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

This principle underscores the importance of corroborating testimony and ensuring fairness and accuracy in legal proceedings.

When examining Matthew 28:1, several questions can help deepen our understanding of the passage:

1. Who are the main characters mentioned in this verse?
2. What is the significance of the timing mentioned—"after the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week"?
3. Why are Mary Magdalene and the other Mary going to the tomb?
4. What does the act of going to the tomb reveal about the women's intentions or emotions?
5. How does this verse connect to the broader narrative of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection in the Gospel of Matthew?

6. What role do the women play in the events surrounding Jesus' resurrection?
7. How does the mention of the two Marys reflect the Gospel's emphasis on the testimony of women in the resurrection account?
8. What themes or theological concepts are introduced or reinforced in this verse?
9. What does the empty tomb symbolize or represent in the context of Matthew's Gospel?
10. How does this verse set the stage for the subsequent events in the resurrection narrative?