

### HOW DO THE GOSPELS COMPARE CHRIST'S RESURRECTION?

No other doctrine within the Christian faith is more important than the doctrine of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is upon this doctrine that the church stands or falls. If the tenets of this doctrine are not true, then we are no better off than the occult world.

In fact, Christianity rests on the certainty of Jesus' resurrection as a historical fact. Each gospel writer (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) tells the story of Christ's resurrection. Matthew records that when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the sepulchre, "the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (cf. Matthew 28:1-10).

Mark gives more light to the story by telling us that the women were concerned about the great stone that covered the entrance to the sepulchre. Their words were: "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre." But when they arrived at the sepulchre "they saw that the stone was rolled away." Upon seeing that the stone was rolled away, they entered the sepulchre. And to their utter amazement, "they saw a young man [angel] sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment." The angel recognized immediately their fear: "And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen, he is not here." (Mark 16:1-8).

Luke gives us even more detail concerning the Resurrection of Jesus. Luke says that the women had entered the sepulchre, "and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men [angels] stood by them in shining garments: And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth," the angels said this: "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen" (cf. Luke 24:1-12).

With each gospel writer we find added details, not contradictions. But now we enter the royal court – material only fit for a King. And no one can tell it better than John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

John begins his narrative with even more detail. He begins by saying it was "The first day of the week." It was Sunday. And Sunday would forever be the day believers celebrate or commemorate Jesus' resurrection. Early that morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre. The Synoptic Gospels record various women who came to the sepulchre, but John mentions only Mary. And John mentions that it was still dark when Mary Magdalene arrived at the sepulchre. Therefore, it must be that Mary Magdalene left the other women and arrived at the sepulchre first. Finding the stone removed from the entrance, Mary must have feared the worst.

She no doubt assumed that grave robbers had come and stolen the body of Jesus. "Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple [John], whom Jesus loved." Mary then explains to Peter and John, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him." Thus Mary, running to find Peter and John, was not present at the tomb when the angels appeared to the others and announced Christ's resurrection (Matthew 28:5-7, Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-7).

But John records, upon the arrival of Mary back at the sepulchre, she "stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom

seekest thou? She supposing him to be the gardener saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master” (cf. John 20:1-18).

Mary was mistaken, grave robbers had not taken the body of Jesus, He was alive. He has resurrected. Even “the napkins, that was about his head,” was “not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself” (John 20:7). The sepulchre was left in a neat and orderly condition. Grave robbers would have scattered the grave clothes – they would not have taken the time to unwrap the body of Jesus and lay His facecloth and linen garment in an orderly fashion.

Jerry W. Arnold  
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