

Resurrection Morning Timeline

When I first set out to teach on the chronological order of events of Resurrection Morning, I began by going through Matthew, Mark, and Luke. The accounts lined up very easily and each added a bit more information than the others. The combined account started to come together in my mind. I then began into the Gospel of John's account in Chapter 20 and I was confused.

The accounts didn't line up anymore. John 20:1-2 show Mary Magdalene arriving at the tomb, seeing it was empty, and running to tell Peter and John that the tomb is empty. However, in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Mary came to the tomb and saw an angel who said Jesus was risen (or did she?). Then the women went to tell the disciples. In Luke's account Peter is alone and stoops and investigates the tomb, but in John's account, Peter and John run to the tomb. John gets there first, but Peter catches up and runs straight into the tomb. What was I missing? Can the accounts be reconciled or not? Did I just find a Bible contradiction?

I was confused. I flipped back and forth between accounts, but I couldn't figure out what I was missing. I remembered a conversation I had with a friend three years before at a men's retreat in Georgia. We had been discussing the timeline of events after the Resurrection and he seemed to have it all figured out.

I texted him and told him I had run into a roadblock. I explained my confusion and he responded with "Chances are John's account is throwing off your chronology because you are envisioning Peter as only going to the grave once."

Then it clicked! I hadn't even considered that Luke 24 and John 20 may have been giving information on different trips to the tomb by Peter to look for Jesus. As soon as I realized this, things began to click for me. I sat down with fresh eyes and went through the accounts again. Here is the result of that study.

Thursday evening Jesus assembled in an upper room with his disciples. He washed the disciple's feet, instituted the Lord's Supper, and finally discussed the coming Holy Spirit and the Inspiration He would bring them (Matthew 28, John 13-17). They sang a hymn and went out over the Brook Kidron towards the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed to His Father, while Peter, James, and John slept not far away.

John 18 tells us of the crowd led by Judas that would have weaved back and forth down the hill from the city gates of Jerusalem with their torches and weapons to arrest Jesus. After Jesus was arrested, He was taken before Annas, the deposed high priest, and then to Caiaphas, the current high priest appointed by Rome. Jesus was spat upon, struck, and mocked as the Sanhedrin ignored their responsibility to seek Truth and sought false witnesses to put Jesus to death (Matthew 26:59).

After a mockery of Jewish trial, Jesus was taken to Pilate in Luke 23 where false charges were leveled against Him that were not even the original charges, they sought to kill Jesus over. Pilate found Jesus not guilty repeatedly (Luke 23:4,14,15,22) as did Herod (Luke 23:15). Pilate wanted to release Jesus, but the crowd chanted "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." Many of those knowledgeable in the Greek language point to the fact that this chant is in the Imperfect Active tense in Greek. This tells us that this was not something they said twice, but it was a continuous chant like what we may imagine at a football game where the crowd is changing "Defense, Defense, Defense."

However, instead of releasing Jesus, Herod to appease the crowds, released Barabbas. Have you ever thought of Barabbas sitting in his cell, likely not far from Pilate's palace? Imagine that you are a convicted murderer and insurrectionist (Luke 23:18) and you hear this chant over and over of "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." I can only imagine Barabbas thinks this chant is for him. He thinks back about his life. His childhood maybe. The friends he grew up with. Maybe the first crime he ever committed which was likely not as serious as his current crimes. Maybe

he was thinking to himself that if he could go back, he would clean up his life. He would do things differently. Maybe he was even bargaining with God. “God if you get me out of here, I will live differently.”

Barabbas may have looked up to see the Roman guards walking down the hall with their keys in hand. He knows this is his time and he is about to be led to his own crucifixion. The guard inserts the key into the iron lock, swings open the creaking door, and opens it. As Barabbas stands up to be led to his death, the guard says, “You are free to go.” Barabbas stands there, not moving, obviously thinking this is some kind of joke by the notoriously cruel Roman soldiers. He stands there not moving for fear of being struck. The Roman soldier says “Did you not hear me? You are free to go.”

I wonder if there was a conversation with the guards. I wonder if Barabbas was told that one named Jesus of Nazareth had taken his place. I wonder if Barabbas, likely a Jewish man, would have understood that Jesus’s name, Joshua/Yeshua meant salvation. Jesus was the salvation for Barabbas, just like He is for us. Every time I read the story of Barabbas, I can’t help but imagine myself in that cold jail cell. Imprisoned under sin for my actions and deserving of the death penalty (Romans 6:23). I can relate with Barabbas, and I think we all can. We all deserved to be punished, but Jesus willingly took our place (Rom. 5:8-9).

I wonder if Barabbas ran as far as he could from the proceedings or if he walked outside and took his place among the crowds. I wonder if he watched what took place next...

The Scourging

After releasing Barabbas, Pilate washed his hands to somehow relieve himself of the guilt of what was about to happen next. Matthew 27:26 says, “after he (Pilate) had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.” I used to wonder why the Bible did not describe scourging in more detail. Then I studied and realized it is because scourging is such a

horrifying punishment, that in Bible times it didn't need to be explained. It was called the "Little Death" because it preceded the "Big Death" of crucifixion. It normally consisted of strapping the one to be scourged over a granite column with rings or some other mechanism to fasten the victim's hands and feet. Normally the person was stripped down to likely their loin cloth or underwear. They were surrounded on each side by Romans soldiers and normally two soldiers would each have a scorpion, or scourge. They would take turns striking the victim on each side with this whip that had balls of metal, hooks of metal or bone, and other implements to bruise and then rip open to skin. An early church historian named Eusebius of Caesarea said this:

"Bystanders were struck with amazement when they saw them lacerated with scourges even to the innermost veins and arteries, so that the hidden inward parts of the body, both their bowels and their members, were exposed to view."

The scourging would have lacerated Jesus' back possibly down the ribs and backbone. Then every time they placed a robe on His bloody back, and it began to soak with the blood, it would reinjure His back as it was removed again. Jesus began to walk to the tomb with His cross, but Simon of Cyrene was selected to help Jesus. This must have been caused by the Roman soldier recognizing Jesus with such a destroyed back could not possibly carry the 110 lb. wooden cross beam of the cross all the way to Calvary, also known as Golgotha, the place of the skull.

Jesus was nailed to the cross and for 6 hours suffered in horrible agony. The details of that are for another lesson, but finally at 3PM, Jesus gave up the ghost. Joseph of Arimathea gathered up his courage and asked to take Jesus's body to bury it in his own tomb. It was granted to him, and Jesus was laid to rest on what would be our Friday evening just before sundown.

On Saturday, the seal was set to prevent anyone tampering with the body (Matthew 27:62-66). They all knew Jesus said He would resurrect on the

3rd day and so the chief priests and Pharisees received authority from Pilate to seal the stone and set guards there. I always wonder why they didn't consider sealing the stone "working on the Sabbath day" which should have been punished by the death Penalty under the Law of Moses.

Most of the Sabbath was spent weeping over their Lord.

Sunday

The Trip to and Arrival at the Tomb (Matthew 28:1-4, Mark 16:1-5, Luke 24:1-2, John 20:1-2)

It is before dawn on the first day of the week, Sunday. The women get up before dawn, while it is dark. They are on their way to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus and they are likely wondering how they will move the massive stone in front of the tomb. They likely don't know about the soldiers who were stationed there, likely not knowing the tomb has been sealed on the Sabbath.

Prior to their arrival there is an earthquake, and an angel forcefully rolls away the stone, and sits on it. The soldiers are obviously frightened as anyone ever was who saw an angel and they pass out. The women arrive and see the stone is gone. (I assume the soldiers are still passed out or possibly awoke and took off.) It seems for now the angels are not still outside of the tomb. The women go into the tomb and there is no body.

Mary immediately realizes she must tell the apostles and so she runs to tell Peter and John. The only info she has so far is that the tomb is empty.

Women see the angels and the angels speak to them (Matthew 28:5-8, Mark 16:5b-8, Luke 24:4-9)

As Mary runs to tell Peter and John, the other women remain there in the tomb perplexed as to where the body went. Two angels appear to the women and tell them “Fear not, I know you seek Jesus, He is not here, He is Risen. Come see where He lay. Go and tell His Disciples that He goes ahead of them to Galilee.” The women leave both with fear, but also great joy!

Mary arrives, tells Peter and John, who run to the tomb (John 20:3-10)

Remember, Mary does not know what the angels told the other women, that Jesus has risen. She has already left to tell Peter and John. She tells them and they run to the tomb, possibly passing the other women on a different route. Peter runs in first, John follows, and they see nothing. They both go in and see the clothing, see the face covering folded or rolled up, and Peter and John finally decide to leave.

Mary Sees Jesus (Mark 16:9, John 20:11-18)

Mary is still at the tomb, having returned with Peter and John. She is now standing outside weeping. John and Peter have already gone. She still does not know what has happened to Jesus. She did not hear the angel’s message or else she would not be weeping. The women who encountered the angels had already left.

While most of this I have tried to summarize to make the accounts flow together. I cannot obviously improve on God’s Word. If you want to feel the emotions Mary must have felt, stop reading here and go read John 20:11-17 for yourself.

Other women see Jesus (Matthew 28:9-10)

While Mary is speaking with Jesus at the tomb, the other women who saw the angels previously have already departed to go and tell the others. As the other women were going to see the disciples Jesus appeared to the women and they worshipped Him.

News Delivered to the Rest of The Apostles (Mark 16:10-11, Luke 24:10-11)

The women who were already further along their route back to the city arrive first to mourning and weeping (Mark 16:10-11) and tell the other apostles all together about seeing Jesus. They don't believe them. Mary arrives and tells same thing, "Jesus is alive, He appeared to me!" They still don't believe her!

Side Note: Jesus appeared first to women. This shows Jesus loves women and doesn't think they are less valuable. Women back then were normally not considered "reliable witnesses", yet Jesus chose them to give the greatest news of all time.

Peter goes back to the tomb a second time (Luke 24:12)

Peter hears the news and says I am going back. I have to see Him. I have to apologize for betraying Him. I am going to do exactly what Mary did in John 20:11. Peter runs back, stoops, and looks in the tomb like Mary did before she saw Jesus. He doesn't go in like before. He still doesn't see Jesus but leaves marveling. Can you imagine the roller coaster of emotions for Peter?

Soldiers Discuss What Happened With the Jewish Authorities (Matthew 28:11-15)

Meanwhile, the soldiers have gone to tell the Jewish authorities what they saw. They are told to say "the disciples stole the body while we slept"...Really? If they stole it while you slept, how did you know it was them? Are we to expect these disciples who had just days ago abandoned Jesus at the thought of conflict, have now become brave and bold enough to fight soldiers to steal the body of their Lord? Let's say for the sake of argument this did happen. Would all the disciples

except for the Apostle John have endured martyrs' deaths for something they knew to be a lie?

Road To Emmaus (Mark 16:12, Luke 24:13-35)

Later on Sunday, Cleopas (Luke 24:18) and Simon Peter (Luke 24:34, 1 Cor. 15:5) were on their way to Emmaus talking about all that had happened. Jesus comes to them, but they don't know it's Jesus. Jesus asks what they are talking about? Cleopas says, "Are you the only one that doesn't know what has happened?" Jesus says, "What things?" Cleopas says "Jesus was a mighty prophet, and our leaders delivered him to death, But we were hoping He would redeem Israel. and today it's the 3rd day, but women went to the tomb, and he wasn't there, and they saw angels who said he was alive, but some of us went to the tomb and didn't see Him"

Jesus begins to preach to them, but they still don't know it's Jesus (Luke 24:25-27) They arrive at their destination and Jesus says He is going to keep going and they beg Him to stay. He does and they are sitting to break bread. Jesus took it blessed it and gave it to them and their eyes are opened! (Luke 24:31-33) Maybe Peter had a flashback to the Lord's Supper three days earlier on Thursday night? He probably thought "how did we not know that was Him on the road?! The way He explained Scripture!" Even though it had been late and now was likely dark, they rush back to Jerusalem (Luke 24:33)

Sunday Evening Assembly (Mark 16:14-18, Luke 24:36-49, John 20:19)

They were in a room with the door shut, they were afraid of the Jews. Jesus appears out of thin air, and they are scared. He calms them down and shows them His Hands and feet. I can imagine them wiping tears back from their eyes seeing their risen Lord as Jesus says "Do you all have any food? I'm hungry." They give Him a piece of fish and honeycomb and He eats it in front of them.

8 Days Later Jesus appears again (John 20:24-29)

9 Thomas was not present with them the week before and said “until I touch and see I will not believe.” Eight days later Jesus appeared and gave Thomas his opportunity.

Then the Disciples went away into Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. (Matthew 28:16-20, John 21:1-25)

The disciples go to Galilee and while waiting for Jesus they fish. Jesus appears on the coast and says, “Cast your net on the right side of the boat.” They do and catch a net full of fish. John says to Peter, “It is Him!” Peter plunges into the water and rushes to land while the others row the boat in. This was the third time he showed Himself to all the disciples together. Jesus gives Peter the chance to redeem himself 3 times for the 3 times he denied Jesus and then Jesus tells Peter one day he will be crucified also. They also have a short discussion about the Apostle John.

Other Scriptures tell us that Jesus spent 40 days with His Disciples and during that time they traveled from Galilee back down to Jerusalem/Bethany (Acts 1:3). J

Jesus spent 40 days with His Disciples and during that time they came from Galilee back down to Jerusalem/Bethany (Acts 1:3). Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem until the Promised Holy Spirit which would guide them into all Truth (John 16:12-15) would happen in Jerusalem. (Acts 1:4, Luke 24:44-49)

The Ascension in Bethany (Mark 16:19-20, Luke 24:49-53, Acts 1:9-11)

Mark and Luke’s account of the Great Commission seem to be after they come from Galilee back to Jerusalem. Jesus then leads them out to Bethany where He ascends into heaven and Marks account said Jesus said down at the right hand of God. Following Christ’s ascension, He was welcomed back in with Glory and Honor (Psalm 24:7-10, Daniel 7:13-14). He is currently sitting on His Throne until Judgement Day. He is Our Mediator sitting at the Right hand of the Father (1 Timothy 2:5).

He is our Advocate, Our attorney, vouching for us (1 John 2:1-2). He will be the Judge (John 5:22).

Jesus did all this from eternity past to eternity future, to save us from our sins and we should be forever thankful, and it should make us want to serve Him no matter what. Maybe you have not been serving Him. Maybe He is not the Lord of your life...yet. He wants to be.

Here is what you need to do, and you should do it immediately.

- Hear The Gospel which Generates Faith in those that believe it (Hebrews 11:6, Romans 10:17, John 3:16)
- Repent of Your Sins and turn to follow God so that you will not perish (Luke 13:3,5, Acts 17:30)
- Confess Him before Men (Romans 10:9-10)
- Be Buried in Water for the Forgiveness of your sins where contact His cleansing Blood and start your new life as a Christian (Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16, 1 Peter 3:21, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Col. 1:13-14)
- Live faithfully until you leave this earth, and you will have a home in heaven eternally with the Godhead, The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Rev. 2:10, John 14:1ff)