

Resurrection Timeline from the Gospels

The Gospels make for an interesting, challenging, and even puzzling timeline for the events following the resurrection of Jesus. All four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) indicate that a half-dozen or more women head to the tomb very early Sunday morning, after the sabbath day, to finish Jesus' burial, bringing the spices they need to do so.

1. The Women Return to the Tomb to Complete Jesus' Burial

(Luke 24:1) Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared.

(Matt 28:1) Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb.

(Mark 16:1-2) Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. ² Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.

(John 20:1a) ¹ Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark.

2. An Angel Rolls Away the Tomb, and the Guards Shake in Fear

(Matt 28:2-4) And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. ³ His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴ And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead *men*.

3. The Women Worry About How to Roll Away the Stone

(Mark 16:3) And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?"

4. The Women Find the Stone Rolled Away from the Tomb

(Luke 24:2) But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb.

(Mark 16:4) But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away-- for it was very large.

(John 20:1b) ^{1b} and saw *that* the stone had been taken away from the tomb.

5. Mary Magdalene Runs to Tell Peter (& John)

(John 20:2) Then she [Mary Magdalene, cp. 20:1] ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

6. Peter (and the Other Disciple) Enter the Tomb, and Observe the Linen Cloths

(John 20:3-9) ³ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. ⁴ So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵ And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying *there*; yet he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there*, ⁷ and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. ⁹ For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

7. The Two Disciples Return to Their Own Homes

(John 20:10) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

8. Mary Stays at the Tomb, Weeping

(John 20:11a) ¹¹ But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb.

9. Mary Looks into the Tomb, and Sees Two Angels Sitting at Either End of Where Jesus' Body Had Lain

(John 20:11b-12) ^{11b} and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

10. The Two Angels Question Her, and She Answers

(John 20:13) ¹³ Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

11. Mary Turns and Sees Jesus, but Does Not Know That It Is Him

(John 20:14) ¹⁴ Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there*, and did not know that it was Jesus.

12. Jesus Questions Mary, and She Answers

(John 20:15) ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

15. The Women Do Not Find the Body of Jesus in the Tomb

(Luke 24:3) ³ Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

16. The Women Are Met by a White-Robed Man Sitting on the Right

(Mark 16:5) ⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.

17. The Women Are Surprised by Two Men in Shining Garments

(Luke 24:4-5a) ⁴ And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth,

13. Jesus Speaks Mary's Name, and She Recognizes Him

(John 20:16) ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).

(Mark 16:9) ⁹ Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.

14. Jesus Explains His Temporary Status and Ascension, and Instructs Mary to Tell the Disciples

(John 20:17) ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"

20. The Women Quickly Head to Tell Jesus' Disciples

(Matt 28:8) ⁸ So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

(Mark 16:8) ⁸ So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

21. The Women Meet Jesus on the Way, He Speaks to Them, and They Worship Him

(Matt 28:9-10) ⁹ And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

22. The Guards Report to the Chief Priests, and the Priests Pay Off the Guards and Give Them a Story to Tell

(Matt 28:11-15) Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. ¹² When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³ saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'" ¹⁴ "And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." ¹⁵ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

23. Mary Returns and Tells the Disciples That She Had Seen Jesus, and Relays His Words

(John 20:18) ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

(Mark 16:10) ¹⁰ She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept.

24. Those Hearing Do Not Believe Mary (Again)

(Mark 16:11) ¹¹ And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

25. The Women Tell the Apostles (& Others)

(Luke 24:9-10) ⁹ Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.

26. The Women Are Not Believed by Those They Told

(Luke 24:11) ¹¹ And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.

27. Peter Returns to the Tomb, and Observe the Linen Cloths

(Luke 24:12) But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

28. [Jesus Appears to Peter]

(Luke 24:34) ³⁴ saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

(1 Cor 15:5) ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

29. Jesus Appears to the Disciples on the Eve of the First Day

(John 20:19-20) ¹⁹ Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." ²⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. e4

18. The Visitors Question the Women, Declare Jesus' Resurrection, and Remind the Women of Jesus' Words

(Luke 24:5b-8) they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ "He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷ "saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" ⁸ And they remembered His words.

(Matt 28:5-6) ⁵ But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

(Mark 16:6) ⁶ But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.

19. The Women Are Instructed to Go Tell Jesus' Disciples of Jesus' Resurrection, and to Meet Him in Galilee

(Matt 28:7) ⁷ "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

(Mark 16:7) ⁷ "But go, tell His disciples-- and Peter-- that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."

WHAT Happened WHEN After the Resurrection?: A Reliable Timeline

(Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20-21; Acts 1; 1 Corinthians 15)

The Challenge: Each Gospel account is accurate, but none of them records every detail. They may appear to contradict, but a workable timeline can be traced.

1. Several Women Visit the Tomb Early Sunday Morning

(Mark 16:1-2) ¹ Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. ² Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. (cf. Matt 28:1; Luke 24:1; John 20:1a) [*Began before dark...*]

2. These Women Find the Stone Rolled Away

(Matt 28:2-3) ² And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. ³ His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. ⁴ And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men.

(Mark 16:3-4) ³ And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" ⁴ But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away-- for it was very large. (cf. Luke 24:2; John 20:1b)

3. Mary Magdalene Runs to Peter & John to Report Jesus' Taken Body

(John 20:2) ² Then she [Mary Magdalene, 20:1] ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

4. Peter and John Arrive at the Tomb (Mary follows...)

(John 20:3-9) ³ Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. ⁴ So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. ⁵ And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. ⁶ Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, ⁷ and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. ⁸ Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. ⁹ For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead.

5. Peter and John Leave the Tomb

(John 20:10) ¹⁰ Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

6. Mary Magdalene Lingers Near the Tomb, and Is Met by Two Angels

(John 20:11-13) ¹¹ But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. ¹² And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³ Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

7. Mary Unknowingly Speaks to Jesus as She Searches for His Body

(John 20:14-17) ¹⁴ Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener,

said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'"

8. The Remaining Women Are Met by 2 Angels, & a 3rd in the Tomb

(Luke 24:3-7) Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'" (cf. Mark 16:3-7; Matt 28:5-7)

9. The Women Leave the Tomb to Tell the Disciples

(Matt 28:8) ⁸ So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. (cf. Mark 16:8)

10. The Remaining Women Meet Jesus Just After He Spoke with Mary

(Matt 28:9-10) And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

11. All the Women Report to the Disciples as Jesus Directed

(Luke 24:11) And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. (cf. Mark 16:11)

12. Peter Makes a Second Trip to the Tomb

(Luke 24:12b) ¹² But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

13. Jesus Appears to Peter

(Luke 24:34) ³⁴ saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" (1 Cor 15:5) ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.

14. Jesus Appears to Two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus

(Mark 16:12-13) ¹² After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. ¹³ And they went and told it to the rest, but they did not believe them either. (cf. Luke 24:13-35)

15. Jesus Appears to the Eleven (Minus Thomas) Resurrection Day Eve

Luke 24:36-43 ³⁶ Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." ³⁷ But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. ³⁸ And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Behold My hands and My feet...for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."...He showed them His hands and His feet. ...⁴³... and ate in their presence. (cf. Jn 20:19-25).

REF: http://www.sunnybrookepub.com/harmonizing_the_resurrection.html