



Why Resurrection Eyewitness Accounts Clash

The resurrection narratives in the Gospels are among the most scrutinized passages in all of Scripture. One frequently raised objection concerns the role of Mary Magdalene at the tomb—specifically, what she saw, what she said, and the sequence of events. Critics point to differences between John 20, Matthew 28, Mark 16, and Luke 24 and claim that the accounts cannot be reconciled. For example, John 20:1–2 records Mary Magdalene coming early to the tomb and saying, “They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.” Yet Matthew 28:5–6 records an angel declaring, “He is not here: for he is risen.” Luke 24:10–11 records multiple women reporting to the apostles, whereas Mark 16 presents a different sequence of events.

At first glance, these differences appear problematic. However, a careful and structured reading reveals that these accounts are not contradictory but complementary. Each Gospel writer emphasizes different aspects of a complex sequence involving multiple individuals, multiple visits, and multiple interactions. The resurrection morning was not a single, static moment but a series of unfolding events. When these events are properly sequenced, the accounts align with remarkable coherence.