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## Burial of Jesus, Discovery of Empty Tomb, and Resurrection Appearance Stories in Mark and Matthew, Compared

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Mark 15:40 There were also women looking on from a distance; among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. 41 These used to follow him and provided for him when he was in Galilee; and there were many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

15:42 When evening had come, and since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 44 Then Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he had been dead for some time. 45 When he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. 46 Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where the body was laid.

16:1 When the sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. 2 And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. 3 They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" 4 When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. 6 But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you." 8 So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

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Matt 27:55 Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. 56 Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

27:57 When it was evening, there came a **rich man** from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also **a disciple of Jesus.**

58 He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus;

then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59 So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth 60 and laid it in **his own new** tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a **great stone** to the door of the tomb and went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and **the other Mary** were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

**Matt. 27:62** The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate 63 and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' 64 Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than the first." 65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." 66 So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

Matt. 28:1 After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and **the other Mary** went **to see the tomb.**

early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb.

3 They had been saying to one another, **“Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?”** 4 When they looked up, they saw that the stone, **which was very large, had already been rolled back.** 5 **As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side;** and they were alarmed. 6 But he said to them, **“Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him.** 7 But go, tell his disciples **and Peter** that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” 8 So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; **and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.**

**2 And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4 For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men.**

5 But **the angel** said to the women, **“Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him.’ This is my message for you.”** 8 So they left the tomb quickly with fear **and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me.”**

**Matt. 28:11 While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. 12 After the priests had assembled with the elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers, 13 telling them, “You must say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ 14 If this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” 15 So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told among the Jews to this day.**

**Matt. 28:16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."**

- In the final verses of Mark, there are four male characters mentioned (Joseph of Arimathea, Pilate, a centurion, and the young man inside the tomb). Would you have expected other male characters to be included in the story? Who?
- There are also three female characters mentioned here, a total of three times: Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James and Joses, and Salome. Although Mark tells us that they followed Jesus when he was in Galilee, and that they and "many other women" had come with him to Jerusalem, Mark has not bothered to say anything about these women disciples until the very end of his gospel. How do you feel when you are told at the very end of the story that in all the places earlier in the gospel when women disciples were not included in episodes, they were actually also there, but invisible and silent?!
- Correction: Mark may have already told us about one of the three women who are present at the end, "Mary, the mother of James and Joses," who did already appear in Mark 6:3. Unless there are two different Marys in Mark, both with sons named James and Joses? An unlikely coincidence, wouldn't you think? So, the same Mary is probably being referred to in 6:3, 15:40,47, 16:1. But who is this Mary? News flash: this is the mother of Jesus. But why does Mark not bother to remind us that this is the mother of Jesus? For the sad, painful answer, see Mark 3:21,31-33; 6:3-4. In this gospel, sorry to say, Jesus is estranged from his mother and his siblings.
- Do you find it odd that three women would have the foresight and persuasiveness to find a shopkeeper from whom to buy spices (at dawn?!) to anoint a dead body but fail to arrange for muscle to remove the "very large" stone from the front of the cave tomb? Couldn't the women have recruited some male muscle to assist them in gaining entrance to the tomb? To whom might they have turned for assistance but did not? In other words, what men should have been alongside them there at the tomb, but were absent?
- There are two locations in Mark where a "young man" appears: Mark 14:51 and 16:5. In both instances the young man is described primarily by his clothing, or lack thereof. Could this be the same young man? How can we make sense of this strange echo within the story? (Confession: this is not clear—he is one of Mark's many mysteries!)

•In Mark, the young man inside the tomb tells the three women to "go and tell" the disciples, AND PETER, that Jesus is going ahead of them to Galilee, and THERE they will see him. The women run from the tomb in "terror, amazement, and fear," and said "nothing to anyone," and so the story of the empty tomb and Jesus' resurrection was never told to anyone, no one went to Galilee to see Jesus there, and the Jesus Movement died along with Jesus on Golgotha, never getting off the ground. Faith in the resurrection of Jesus never happened. At least not in Mark's gospel! But we know the story *did* get out somehow, and we know that Christian discipleship *did* take root and flourish, so if the women in Mark never told anyone, and the AWOL men in Mark never got the message, how did the story get out? Who did receive the story, embrace it, and live by it? → Hint: go look in a mirror!

•Mark's story was too mysterious, too radical, too demanding, too challenging to live with, at least for Matthew, so he softened and clarified it. Puzzles were solved, mysteries clarified, and a gloriously happy ending added!

And thus did Matthew elbow Mark aside and become the #1 gospel in the New Testament.