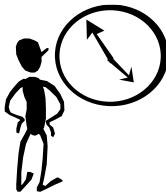


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### Time of Assembly



#### **Sunday:**

Bible Study 4:00 p.m.  
Worship 5:00 p.m.

#### **Wednesday:**

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

## That Preacher Offended Me!

By Harry Osborne

What would you think of a preacher whose sermons offended people and were taken as insulting by the hearers? What if a preacher caused the audience to be filled with anger because of the hard things that he said? What if he went so far as to mock false beliefs? Regardless of his intent, many would denounce such preaching as wrong. Even if he did not intend to insult people, but merely sought to preach the truth boldly, many would condemn him for offending others.

However, the Bible is filled with cases of those who preached the truth boldly in an effort to bring sinners to repentance, only to see those addressed react with anger because of taking offense at the message. Preachers of the truth in Bible times were not men of timidity and a totally "positive" message which was pleasing to the hearers. Their message had elements that were not always appreciated by all who heard it. Notice the reactions to Jesus' preaching.

In [Matthew 15](#), Jesus reproved the Pharisees for their replacement of the law of God with their human commands and traditions. This reproof was in forceful terms as He said, "*You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men*" ([Matthew 15:7-9](#)).

How did the hearers take this reprimand? Did they accept it gladly? No, that is made clear by the disciples who came to Jesus about the matter. "*Then the disciples came and said to Him, Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?*" (v. 12). Jesus did not apologize for offending the hearers but rather reinforced His rebuke as He answered His disciples in the next verse. Did Jesus do anything wrong?

In a rebuke found in Luke, Jesus brought a similar reaction from the audience. After He finished exposing the hypocrisy of many who heard Him, we read of one man who responded to Jesus. *"And one of the lawyers said to Him in reply, Teacher, when You say this, you insult us too"* (Luke 11:45). Did Jesus make a mistake in His approach?

In another case, Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath and then taught about the proper use of the Sabbath. The hearers did not appreciate Jesus' teaching. In fact, the Bible says, *"But they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus"* (Luke 6:11). Was Jesus at fault for their reaction?

When Jesus did the same thing on the Sabbath later, there was a mixed reaction from the crowd. The record says, *"And as He said this, all His opponents were being humiliated; and the entire multitude was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by Him"* (Luke 13:17). The same message which put some to shame caused others to rejoice. The difference was not in the approach of the preacher, but the attitude of the hearers toward the truth.

Long before the time of Jesus, Elijah reproved the prophets of Baal (a false god) and challenged them to a contest on Mount Carmel to prove who was the true God. When the prophets of Baal prayed for their god to bring fire down upon their sacrifice, nothing happened. After this continued from morning until noon, Elijah began to emphasize the folly of their actions as is recorded in the Bible. *"And it came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened"* (1 Kings 18:27). Clearly, the statements of Elijah were meant to mock the foolishness of believing in Baal and bring rational people to reject such error. Was Elijah wrong for so mocking that error and openly exposing its folly? No, for the very next verse we see is that God was with Elijah. In fact, God continued to be with Elijah as His prophet. Remember that God defined the concept of a prophet from the time of Moses and Aaron onward as one whom God used as a mouthpiece. If Elijah was God's mouthpiece, God must have approved such speech. If God approved such speech by causing inspired men to so speak, should we not respect the fact that an approved example authorizes such speech at times when it is needed to pierce the arrogance or folly of error?

We could look at many, many more cases where teachers of truth in the Bible were not well received by their offended, humiliated or enraged hearers. In every case, the attempt of the teacher was to boldly declare the truth, not to maliciously mistreat or intentionally anger the hearer. However, the sinner who refuses to repent of sin will not react positively to being exposed as a sinner. God desires those who have first been humbled (Isaiah 57:15; James 4:10).

Several years ago, I heard a wise older preacher make a statement about the un-

pleasantness of the sinner accepting the fact of his sins. He said, "You know, there must be a hundred ways to skin a cat, but from a cat's point of view, there's not a good way." When we are tempted to condemn the messenger because we do not like the message, let us examine ourselves to see if we are reacting properly. It may not be pleasant, but the lesson is needed if it is the truth.

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## The Timeline of the Resurrection

By Matthew W. Bassford

Recently, I've become aware that there is this thing floating around on the Internet called "The Easter Challenge." The inventor of this challenge is an atheist. He asserts that the Biblical accounts of the resurrection of Jesus contradict each other so significantly that they are clearly false and so provide no basis for belief in Jesus.

If true, this indeed would be fatal to the Christian faith. If we don't have reason to believe that Christ is risen, we also don't have reason to be here this evening. However, as always, rather than taking the claims of atheists for granted, we need to evaluate those claims against the Scriptures. Once we do so, it becomes obvious that rather than being impossible, reconciling the various Biblical accounts of the resurrection is quite easy, even trivial.

Nonetheless, I think this is a worthy topic for a sermon. We need to know the truth about this for ourselves, and we also need to know how to rebut those who want to undermine our faith. This evening, then, let's contemplate the timeline of resurrection.

In this attempt, though, we must keep two things in mind:

1. Even though each gospel account of the resurrection is true, none of them are comprehensive. All of them leave things out because each Evangelist was writing with different purposes in mind. However, the silence of a writer concerning a resurrection event does not prove a contradiction.

2. Here as elsewhere, the gospels are not terribly concerned with strict chronology. They will relate events out of sequence, just as we do when we tell a story, whenever doing so advances their purpose. These out-of-sequence sections also do not establish a contradiction.

Having said that, it's time to craft our master narrative. There is so much material here that I simply don't have time to read every passage or discuss every story. I'm only focusing on the parts that supposedly include contradictions. However, I've included Scripture citations to everything so you can look them up at home if you so desire.

### The Opening of the Tomb

The first event is the opening of the tomb. It is recorded in [Matthew 28:1-4](#). Some want to suppose that there's a contradiction here because the earthquake, etc., is

recorded after the mention of the women going to the tomb, and none of the other writers mention the earthquake. However, I don't think that's the most natural reading. Instead, I think Matthew is parenthetically describing something that had previously happened. If not, the women would be not merely witnesses to the empty tomb. They would have been witnesses to Jesus coming out of the tomb! This is simply Matthew telling the story out of chronological order, something Matthew frequently does.

## **The Women Come to the Tomb**

Second, the women come to the tomb. We find this in [Mark 16:1-4](#). The key event here is that the women, including Mary Magdalene, notice that the stone has been rolled away from the tomb.

## **Mary Magdalene Fetches Peter and John**

Third, Mary Magdalene fetches Peter and John. Look at [John 20:1-2](#). This is subtle but important. Mary is with the other women when they see that the stone has been rolled away. However, she does not continue with them to the tomb. Because she is convinced that someone has stolen Jesus' body, she runs off to find Peter and John. Thus, she is not present for the other women's conversation with the angel and is not told that Jesus has risen.

It's worth noting that finding Peter and John does not mean that Mary has gone to all the disciples. Peter and John are staying by themselves, so at this point, Mary has not had contact with the others.

## **The Other Women Talk to the Angel**

Fourth, while Mary is running to Peter and John, the other women talk to the angel. Consider [Mark 16:5-8](#). They see that the tomb is empty, the angel tells them that Jesus is risen, and they leave. Thus, they are not around when Peter and John show up in a bit.

One other note before we leave this passage. Some try to set up a contradiction between [Mark 16:8](#), which says the women told no one, and other passages that say the women told the disciples.

I think, though, that Mark is answering a different question than the other gospels. He's explaining why the women didn't go down the street telling everybody that they met that Jesus had risen. They were afraid. They were afraid — with justification — of being disbelieved and probably also afraid of getting imprisoned by the Jewish leadership. So they keep it to themselves until they reach the disciples.

## **Jesus Appears to the Other Women**

Fifth, Jesus appears to the other women. This is revealed in [Matthew 28:8-10](#). Probably, after this Jesus heads back to the tomb to encounter Mary Magdalene.

## **Peter and John Come to the Tomb**

Sixth, Peter and John come to the tomb. This is recorded in [John 20:3-10](#). They see grave wrappings, but no angel and no Jesus, and they leave.

## Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

Seventh, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene. This story is found in [John 20:11-17](#). Peter and John have cleared out by now, so Mary is by herself. She hasn't talked to the angel, so she still is confused about what has happened. Jesus resolves her confusion by revealing Himself to her.

## The Disciples Disbelieve

Eighth, the disciples disbelieve. Here, let's read [Luke 24:9-12](#). Mary comes to the disciples, the other women come to the disciples, but they aren't having any of it. Notice, though, that Luke is doing some story-collapsing. He's combining the story of Mary going to Peter and John about body-snatching with the story of Mary and the other women going to the disciples with stories about the risen Lord.

Some might suppose there's a contradiction here, but there isn't. All Luke is doing is summarizing a complicated series of events as quickly as he can so he can get to the resurrection story he really cares about — the encounter on the road to Emmaus. He doesn't mention previous appearances because that would have pulled the focus away from Emmaus, where he wanted it. He concludes the story with Peter going off by himself (which is true, even if it happened earlier) to explain how Jesus appeared to Peter and not to the others.

## Jesus Appears to Peter

Ninth, Jesus appears to Peter. This is only found in the gospels in [Luke 24:34](#), though it also is recorded in [I Corinthians 15](#). Note, by the way, that even though Luke knows this happened before Jesus appeared on the road to Emmaus, he tells the story so that it is revealed afterward, so as not to detract from his main resurrection appearance.

## Jesus Appears on the Road to Emmaus

Tenth, Jesus appears on the road to Emmaus. We see this in [Luke 24:13-35](#). This is the centerpiece of Luke's resurrection account, just like Mary Magdalene is the centerpiece of John's. He gives it far more time than anything else in the narrative.

## Jesus Appears in the Upper Room

Eleventh and last, Jesus appears in the upper room. Here, let's go to [John 20:19-20](#). Notice first of all that the doors are locked for fear of the Jews. The disciples are very concerned about attracting notice from the authorities. Second, by this point everybody but Thomas is gathered together, they're convinced something strange has happened, and Jesus' appearance only seals the deal.

Did you notice, brethren, how neatly the pieces from these four accounts fit together? It's because they're all reporting the same historical event! Just as contradiction would cast the story of the resurrection into doubt, so the harmony of these stories affirms our faith. As John observes in [John 20:31](#), these things were written so that we might believe.