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Part 1: Discussion Notes

Is the Bible Trustworthy? Responding to Bart Ehrman

Discussion #3 & #4 on Accounts of the Empty Tomb • December 4 & 11, 2011

A. Initial comment on Ehrman's approach:

1. Don't confuse *grammatical-historical* approach to studying the Bible with the *historical-critical* approach to studying the Bible
 - a. I would advocate the *grammatical-historical* approach to studying the Bible (so long as that is understood rightly)
 - b. Ehrman is advocating the *historical-critical* approach to studying the Bible
 - i. Historical-critical approach includes:
 - (A) Textual criticism
 - (B) Source criticism
 - (C) Form criticism
 - (D) Redaction criticism
 - (E) And an ever-growing profusion of other newly-minted forms of "criticism"
2. Form "criticism" ASSUMES a particular story about how the text of the gospels was created.
 - a. Here is where the academic fiction used to escape from the truth of the biblical texts was created!

B. Peter's Denials: Review and further discussion

1. Accounts of Peter's denials are perfectly compatible if I ...
 - a. recognize that they are descriptions of complex occasions of Peter denying Jesus repeatedly, not descriptions of simple statements of denial;
 - b. recognize that the statements of accusation are not verbatim; rather, they capture the gist of what transpired;

- c. recognize that Mark is giving a detailed account of the prediction and its fulfillment while the other accounts are simply capturing the substance of the prediction and its fulfillment.
2. Objection: But, if JAC is right, then John's account of Peter's denials is incredibly misleading!
 - a. It is only misleading if I bring to John's account a certain template through which to look at it. That is, if, among other things...
 - i. I assume that John is giving me the whole story;
 - ii. I assume that John is intending to explain the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction;
 - iii. I assume that John's purpose is to re-create the real drama of each occasion of denial and to accurately capture the flavor and intensity of each occasion.
 - b. Critique of the above assumptions:
 - i. I assume that John is giving me the whole story.
 - (A) This can never be true of any historical account.
 - (B) John, in particular, seems intent on recording what he himself knows directly. John is giving the accounts of Peter's denials as an eyewitness.
 - ii. I assume that John is intending to explain the fulfillment of Jesus' prediction.
 - (A) While John had, in fact, previously included Jesus' prediction that Peter would deny him, it is striking that John says nothing in his account of Peter's actual denials to draw the reader's attention to the fact that they fulfilled an earlier prediction by Jesus.
 - (1) *Unlike all the other accounts, John does not indicate...*
 - (a) that the cock crow causes Peter to remember what Jesus had said;
 - (b) that Peter goes away and weeps;
 - (c) etc.
 - (B) I think it is likely that John does not explicitly indicate that what he saw was a fulfillment of Jesus' earlier prediction precisely because, from his perspective as an eyewitness, he only experienced TWO occasions when Peter denied Jesus, not three. Therefore, from the standpoint of his knowledge as an eyewitness, he could not vouch for Jesus' prediction being fulfilled.

iii. I assume that John's purpose is to re-create the drama of each occasion of denial and to accurately capture the flavor and intensity of each occasion.

(A) This is certainly a misplaced assumption. Note how John himself records one of the occasions (18:25): now *THEY* said to him, "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?"

(1) *This is clearly NOT attempting to re-create the drama and tension of the occasion. It is a very detail-poor, capturing-only-the-essence-of-it, sort of account.*

C. Accounts of the Empty Tomb

This is Ehrman's third example of contradictions / defects in the Bible.

1. Note Ehrman's paragraph on empty tombs, page 7*

a. Note problems with the accounts.

2. Review the events surrounding the empty tomb.

a. The story that a reconciliation of all the accounts would tell.

b. There are two keys to understanding how the accounts of the empty tomb are reconcilable:

i. Luke records a different event from Matthew and Mark.

(A) Different set of women.

(B) Event that occurred at a later point in time.

ii. John's account of Mary Magdalene's visit is a second episode that Mary experienced at the empty tomb; John does not detail her first visit.

c. Objections:

i. Matthew's account is inconsistent with JAC's version:

(A) Matthew's chronology is a Friday death, a Saturday Sabbath, a Sunday visit to tomb [see 27:57, 27:62, 28:1].

(1) *No! That is not Matthew's chronology.*

(a) Note the different designation: Matthew 27:62, "on the next day, the day after the preparation" (the day after the preparation is a Sabbath day, but there is no explicit mention of the Sabbath, the last day of the week, the first day of the week, or anything to explicitly identify

it as the weekly Sabbath) versus Matthew 28:1, “Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week” (indicating the weekly Sabbath). Matthew is intimating two distinct Sabbaths. But, like most features of his account, he does not make that fact explicit. But, in any event, the traditional Friday death, Saturday Sabbath, Sunday resurrection chronology is certainly not required by Matthew’s account.

(B) No mention of Nicodemus [see 27:57].

(1) This is a valid practice in writing history. Matthew is simply being selective in the details he includes (if, in fact, he was aware of Nicodemus’ participation). For his purposes, he does not need the detail of Nicodemus participation. Matthew’s account is not about Nicodemus!

(a) Arguably, John’s account is, in part, about Nicodemus. John had a whole story about Nicodemus earlier in his gospel.

(C) Matthew thinks Mary Magdalene saw the angel who rolled the stone away [see 28:5, “the” angel] actually sitting on the stone.

(1) This is only true if we make certain assumptions about the intrinsic nature of Matthew’s account. If we understand the nature of his account differently and adjust our expectations, then we have no reason to conclude that Matthew thought Mary Magdalene saw the angel sitting on the stone.

(D) Matthew reports that the women saw Jesus just after leaving the tomb [see 28:9].

(1) This is only true if we make certain assumptions about the intrinsic nature of Matthew’s account. If we understand the nature of his account differently and adjust our expectations, then we have no reason to conclude that Matthew thought Mary Magdalene and the other women encountered Jesus immediately upon leaving the tomb to go tell the disciples (the first time).

ii. Mark’s account is inconsistent with JAC’s version:

(A) Mark’s chronology is a Friday death, a Saturday Sabbath, a Sunday visit to tomb [see 15:42, 16:1]

(1) No! If “when the Sabbath was over” in Mark is intended to indicate the weekly Sabbath, then how could the women have had time to buy spices between the end of the weekly Sabbath and their coming to the tomb at early dawn on Sunday? The only time after the Sabbath ends and dawn

Sunday is nighttime (and I do not believe they had a 24-hour Walmart to shop at.) I surmise that in the pre-Edison era, nighttime activity was conducted close to home and the home lamps; and that market activity did not happen at night. If that is right, then Mark's account clearly implies two distinct Sabbaths. Again, in any event, the traditional Friday death, Saturday Sabbath, Sunday resurrection chronology is certainly not required by Mark's account.

(B) No mention of Nicodemus [see 15:42].

(1) See response with respect to Matthew's account above. Same applies to Mark.

(C) Young man, not angel! [see 16:5]

(1) "Angel" is the designation of a role. "Young man" is a description of visual appearance. These are not contradictory or mutually incompatible descriptions.

(D) Said nothing to anyone, out of fear [16:8]

(1) Mark's purpose seems to be to indicate how awesome and fearful and "confused" these women were. He does not mean to suggest that they did not do the very thing they set out to do—namely, go tell the disciples gathered together. Mark's suggestion is that they did not announce what had happened to anyone and everyone they met along the way. That is, they did not make a PUBLIC pronouncement of what they had witnessed. (They wanted to process the event with the other disciples before they were prepared to go public with it. [We have plenty of evidence to suggest that they did not yet even believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead.])

iii. Luke's account is inconsistent with JAC's version:

(A) Luke's chronology is a Friday death, a Saturday Sabbath, a Sunday visit to tomb [see 23:54,56; 24:1]

(1) No! For Luke's account to make sense, there needs to be a time for them to prepare spices and perfumes between their observing Jesus' burial the few minutes before the Sabbath begins and their beginning their Sabbath day rest the day before they go to the empty tomb at early dawn on Sunday morning. If Jesus was buried just before Sabbath began on Friday night, there would be no non-Sabbath, work-permissible time for the women to prepare the spices before the Sabbath began, as Luke's account requires. Hence, Luke's account implicitly assumes a non-Sabbath day (where work was permissible) between the time of Jesus'

burial and the Sabbath just before the first day of the week. This is only possible if Jesus died and was buried Wednesday night and Thursday was the Sabbath connected with the Feast of Unleavened Bread. So, in Luke's account, the Sabbath he mentions in 2:56 was the weekly Sabbath. The women rested on that Sabbath following a day of preparing spices on Friday. Therefore, one must assume a different, previous Sabbath in 23:54 in order to even make sense of Luke's account.

(B) No mention of Nicodemus [see 23:50].

(1) See response with respect to Matthew's account above. Same applies to Luke.

iv. John's account is inconsistent with JAC's version:

(A) Mary Magdalene came alone [see 20:1].

(1) No! We cannot conclude this from John's account.

(2) Being selective in what details to include is a valid practice in writing history. John has simply chosen not to include the detail that two or more other women accompanied Mary Magdalene. For his purposes, he does not need this detail. John's account is about Mary Magdalene and what she experienced. (It is probable that Mary Magdalene is the particular individual who played the most significant role in getting John [and Peter] to go visit the tomb.) Since John is telling his story, if Mary Magdalene was the most significant influence on his actions, that is whom John mentions. His account is not adversely affected by not including the presence of other women with Mary Magdalene.

(B) She reports to Peter and John, not to disciples gathered [20:2].

(1) NO! This is the report to all the disciples gathered together, including Peter and John [see Luke 24:10-12]. But see the answer just above. John is telling his story, not the story of all the gathered disciples. Accordingly, Mary Magdalene and Peter are mentioned because theirs are stories that most intersected and impacted his.

(2) John's account is only misleading if I make false assumptions about the intrinsic nature of his account—specifically, that he is giving a comprehensive account of the experience of all the disciples, rather than a personal account of his own experience.

D. NOTE: If I have a FALSE *a priori* assumption about the intrinsic nature of an account (that is, its style, purpose, logic, structure, sources, rhetorical framework, etc.), then I will necessarily be MISLED in the interpretive conclusions I reach.

1. Explain how this is operative in John's account of Peter's denials.
2. Explain how this is operative in Matthew's account of the visits to the empty tomb.
3. So, when I reconstruct an event from several gospels, if I have false *a priori* assumptions about the intrinsic nature of a particular gospel account, then there is a HIGH PROBABILITY that that particular gospel account will seem misleading (that is, it will not lead me to see my reconstruction of the event reflected in and by that account).
 - a. Accordingly, if I reconstruct an event from all the various gospel accounts...
 - i. to do so will require that I reevaluate the intrinsic nature of each gospel account at the same time that I reconstruct the event;
 - ii. the process of doing so will prove valuable to my discovering the right intrinsic nature of each gospel account.
 - b. THEREFORE, even if I had no need to demonstrate the integrity of the gospel accounts against the criticism of someone like Bart Ehrman, I would still engage in the task of reconstructing more fully the exact nature of an event recorded by the different gospels. I would feel the need to do this in the course of doing exegesis. For how can I understand the intrinsic nature of the gospel account I am interpreting and the nature of its implications unless I seek to understand the relationship between the account I am studying and WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED, as best I can understand it by reconstructing the event from all the gospels.

E. Question: does it really matter how many times the rooster sounded? Or, how many angels were in the empty tomb? Why are we trying to reconcile these passages?

1. NOT so that we might have an accurate knowledge of all the details!
2. RATHER, so that we can have confidence in the integrity of the biblical accounts as coherent accounts that are the product of a single mind (one person) who has based his account on eye-witness sources and who has given us his account for the purpose of giving us a true and accurate picture of what actually happened, what was actually said, and what is the true significance of the event.
 - a. Biblical criticism maintains (and it tries to persuade us of) the contrary.
3. Ehrman's argument from the accounts of Peter's denials and the visits to the empty tomb:

- a. Doesn't the incoherence of these accounts demonstrate that these accounts are not coherent accounts that are the product of a single mind (one person) relying on eyewitness sources? Does their incoherence not prove that they are the accidental or random result of many minds with diverse agendas?
4. By "reconciling" these accounts, I am arguing that they could very well be coherent, reliable accounts written by single individuals.
 - a. In other words, if these accounts can be reconciled, then they do not provide any evidence whatsoever of Ehrman's view: namely, that the gospel accounts are a patchwork of bits and pieces of tradition invented and concocted by many anonymous people over the course of time.
- F. More on Ehrman's comment:** "Isn't it a bit absurd to say that, in effect, only "my" Gospel—the one I create from parts of the four in the New Testament—is the right one, and that the others are only partially right?"
1. Think about what a detective does (in real life and on a detective show) everyday: he reconstructs events from the fragments of facts and details that he uncovers in his investigation of many different sources.
 - a. Ehrman is suggesting the equivalent of "isn't it a bit absurd to say that, in effect, only the detective's version of a crime—the one he creates from parts of all the eyewitness testimony and forensic evidence he has found—is the right one, and that any others are only partially right?"
 - i. Can he be serious?
 - ii. It should be immediately obvious that, as a reader of four gospels, I am in a much better position to understand exactly what transpired than is a person who has read one and only one gospel.
- G. Abductive reasoning** and the process of reconstructing an event from the gospel accounts.
1. Explain abductive reasoning.
 2. Harmonizing a gospel account as reconstruction through the employment of abductive reasoning.
 3. Bottom line: a reconstruction of an event from the four gospel accounts is NOT a matter of having "deduced" the truth.
 - a. The conclusion of abductive logic is always, "I can give you a coherent, plausible account that takes all the information that I have into account and adequately explains all of it. Can you offer me anything better? If not, then I'm thinking that my account captures what actually happened."

- i. I am not an eyewitness; so, my reconstruction might have it wrong. I can never know with deductive certainty!
- H. Ehrman fancies himself a “historian.” But every historical reconstruction of an event engages in exactly the kind of abductive logic that I have just described.
 1. How do we reconcile the irony that Ehrman claims to embrace a historical approach to the Bible, and yet he objects to someone like me using the very kind of abductive logic that the historical approach must necessarily employ?
 2. Ehrman’s likely response:
 - a. History, in its abductive reasoning, must reason from reliable and trustworthy sources. The gospel accounts are not historically reliable sources, so they cannot be used as the basis for a historical reconstruction using abductive reasoning.
 - i. It is a GIVEN for Ehrman that the gospels are not reliable and trustworthy sources.
 3. Here is where Ehrman and his ilk engage in circular reasoning:
 - a. The gospel accounts are not trustworthy and reliable eyewitness accounts.
 - b. I know they are not reliable, because they are hopelessly irreconcilable.
 - c. You have proposed a reconciliation of the accounts, but—because one cannot validly reconstruct an event from unreliable sources—your reconciliation of the accounts is not valid; it is just a creative, imaginative invention. So, your so-called reconstruction does not offer a valid reconciliation of the accounts and does not vindicate these gospel accounts as reliable.
 - i. Hopefully, that this is a logically circular argument is apparent! He assumes that the gospel accounts are unreliable in order to conclude that any reconciliation of the accounts that would vindicate their reliability is invalid.

Note: Ehrman and his ilk ASSUME *a priori* that the gospel accounts are untrustworthy and then use that “FACT” to invalidate any reconciliation of the accounts that would vindicate them as trustworthy.

Note: in Ehrman’s eyes, you are damned if you do and damned if you don’t. If you DO NOT attempt to reconcile the gospel accounts, conceding that they cannot be reconciled, then you concede the foundational assumption of Ehrman’s argument: the biblical accounts are not trustworthy and are not historically reliable. But if you DO offer a reconciliation, you are charged with engaging in an entirely bogus enterprise that has resorted to such extreme measures to reconcile the accounts that that fact itself proves the biblical accounts are hopelessly irreconcilable. Surely there is something fundamentally flawed about this “heads I win, tails you lose” line of reasoning.

Part 2: Visits to Empty Tomb: Problems between the Accounts

Matthew 27:57–28:15

Mark 15:40–16:11

Luke 23:49–24:12

John 19:38–20:18

Matthew 27:57–60	Mark 15:42–46	Luke 23:50–54	John 19:38–42
Buried by Joseph of Arimathea	Buried by Joseph of Arimathea	Buried by Joseph of Arimathea	Buried by Joseph of Arimathea, helped by Nicodemus
Matthew 28:1	Mark 16:2–4	Luke 24:1–9	John 20:1
Mary Magdalene and other Mary came early to tomb	Mary Magdalene and Mary of James and Salome came early to tomb	Women came at early dawn bearing spices	Mary Magdalene came early to tomb
Matthew 28:5–7	Mark 16:5–7	Luke 24:1–9	<i>John</i>
The angel instructs these women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Don't fear •Jesus risen •See place •Tell disciples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > he is risen > go to Galilee 	A young man in white robe instructs these women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Don't fear •Jesus risen •See place •Tell disciples <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > he is risen > go to Galilee 	After seeing empty tomb, Two men in dazzling clothing instructed these women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Why seek living among dead? •He is risen •Remember what Jesus told you? 	
Matthew 28:8	Mark 16:8	Luke 24:1–9	John 20:2
Ran to report to disciples	Said nothing to anyone	Returned and told eleven and all the rest	Ran and told Simon Peter and other disciple (John)

Part 3: Parallel Accounts of the Discovery of the Empty Tomb

(English texts below are adapted from the NASV, 1995)

Narrative element #1: Many of the women disciples who had followed Jesus to Jerusalem from Galilee stood apart—a significant distance away—and witnessed Jesus' crucifixion and death.

Matthew 27:55–56	Mark 15:40–41	Luke 23:49	John
Many women were there looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee while ministering to Him. Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.	There were also <i>some</i> women looking on from a distance, among whom <i>were</i> Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome. When He was in Galilee, they used to follow Him and minister to Him; and <i>there were</i> many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.	And all His acquaintances and the women who accompanied Him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things.	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>

Narrative element #2: Jesus' crucifixion transpired on Passover [Wednesday]. The next day [Thursday] was a High Sabbath (the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread). Jesus' body needed to be buried before sunset, when the Sabbath was to begin. Accordingly, Joseph of Arimathea obtained permission from the Romans (Pilate) to take Jesus' body and bury it. With the help of Nicodemus, he wrapped it in linen with spices, placed it in a nearby, newly hewn tomb that belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, and sealed the tomb with a large stone.

Matthew 27:57–60	Mark 15:42–46	Luke 23:50–54	John 19:38–42
When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given <i>to him</i> . And Joseph took the body and wrapped it	When evening had already come, because it was the preparation day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea came, a prominent member of the Council, who himself was waiting for the kingdom of God; and he gathered up courage and went in	And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man (he had not consented to their plan and action), <i>a man</i> from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God; this man went to Pilate and asked for	After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret <i>one</i> for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body. Nicodemus, who had first come to

<p>in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb and went away.</p>	<p>before Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate wondered if He was dead by this time, and summoning the centurion, he questioned him as to whether He was already dead. And ascertaining this from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.</p>	<p>the body of Jesus. And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid Him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain. It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin.</p>	<p>Him by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds <i>weight</i>. So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen wrappings with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. Therefore because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.</p>
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Narrative element #3: At least two of Jesus' female disciples from Galilee followed Joseph and Nicodemus and watched them to see where they put Jesus' body. Presumably they wanted to know where Jesus' body was so that they could return later to properly prepare it for burial.

Matthew 27:61	Mark 15:47	Luke 23:55	John
<p>And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the grave.</p>	<p>Mary Magdalene and Mary the <i>mother</i> of Joses were looking on <i>to see</i> where He was laid.</p>	<p>Now the women who had come with Him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb and how His body was laid.</p>	<p><i>This element is not included in his account.</i></p>

Narrative element #4: On the next day [Thursday], a High Sabbath, the day after Jesus' death, members of the Sanhedrin got permission to seal the tomb and to set an armed guard to prevent Jesus' disciples from stealing the body—out of fear that they might attempt to steal the body and falsely claim a resurrection.

Matthew 27:62–66	Mark	Luke	John
<p>Now on the next day, the day after the preparation, the chief</p>	<p><i>This element is not included in his account.</i></p>	<p><i>This element is not included in his account.</i></p>	<p><i>This element is not included in his account.</i></p>

<p>priests and the Pharisees gathered together with Pilate, and said, “Sir, we remember that when He was still alive that deceiver said, ‘After three days I <i>am to</i> rise again.’ Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away and say to the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last deception will be worse than the first.” Pilate said to them, “You have a guard; go, make it <i>as</i> secure as you know how.” And they went and made the grave secure, and along with the guard they set a seal on the stone.</p>			
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Narrative element #5: On the next day [Friday], some of Jesus’ women disciples from Galilee purchased and prepared the appropriate spices to be used to properly prepare Jesus’ body for burial.

Matthew	Mark 16:1	Luke 23:56a	John
<p><i>This element is not included in his account.</i></p>	<p>When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the <i>mother</i> of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him.</p>	<p>Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes.</p>	<p><i>This element is not included in his account.</i></p>

Narrative element #6: The next day [Saturday], was the weekly Sabbath. The women—unable to perform any work on that day—rested in accord with the Mosaic Covenant.

Matthew	Mark	Luke 23:56b	John
<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>

Narrative element #7: Very early the next morning [Sunday], two or more of Jesus' female disciples from Galilee proceeded to the tomb where Jesus' body was laid, in advance of another group of women who were preparing to come and prepare Jesus' body for burial. They had gone on ahead in order to reconnoiter the scene and determine how they might gain access to the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid.

Matthew 28:1	Mark 16:2-4	Luke	John 20:1
			<i>An abbreviated version that describes Mary Magdalene's experience in particular.</i>
Now after the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.	Very early on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. They were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance of the tomb?" Looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away, although it was extremely large.	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone <i>already</i> taken away from the tomb.

Narrative element #8: Sometime late Saturday night or very early Sunday morning (sometime before the women arrived to reconnoiter the tomb), accompanied by a great earthquake, an angel had descended from heaven, had rolled the stone away from the tomb, and had sat down upon the stone. The guards who were present—the ones who had been standing guard at the tomb—shook with fear at the sudden appearance of the angel, dropping to the ground like dead men.

Matthew 28:2-4	Mark	Luke	John
And behold, a severe	<i>This element is not</i>	<i>This element is not</i>	<i>This element is not</i>

earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. And his appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men.	<i>included in his account.</i>	<i>included in his account.</i>	<i>included in his account.</i>
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Narrative element #9: The women who had arrived early to reconnoiter the tomb, having found the stone rolled away from the mouth of the tomb, entered and saw an angel (with the appearance of a young man in a white robe) sitting to their right. The angel told them not to be afraid and that Jesus had been raised from the dead. The angel showed them the empty shelf where Jesus had been laid and told them to go tell the disciples about his resurrection and that he intended to meet them in Galilee just as he had told them previously.

Matthew 28:5–7	Mark 16:5–7	Luke	John
The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you.”	Entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting at the right, wearing a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, “Do not be amazed; you are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who has been crucified. He has risen; He is not here; behold, <i>here is</i> the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.’”	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>

Narrative element #10: These women who had arrived early to reconnoiter the tomb then ran off to report their encounter with the angel in the empty tomb to the disciples (presumably gathered in hiding in the upper room).

Matthew 28:8	Mark 16:8	Luke	John 20:2
			<i>Limited to John's account of Mary Magdalene's report.</i>
And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples.	They went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had gripped them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	So she 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."

Narrative element #11: The second group of women arrived at the tomb later, after the first group had departed to report to the gathered disciples. This group of women had been bearing the heavy spices and cloth needed to prepare Jesus' body. Finding the stone rolled away from the mouth of the tomb, they entered and found the tomb empty. Standing there perplexed, suddenly two angels in the form of men appeared beside them. The angels asked them whom they sought. Then they told the women that Jesus had been raised from the dead, reminding them that Jesus had told them in Galilee that he would be crucified in Jerusalem and, yet, would then be raised from the dead after three days. The women then ran to tell the disciples gathered in the upper room. Presumably, they arrived shortly after the earlier group of women and joined them in reporting all that they had seen.

Matthew	Mark	Luke 24:1-9	John
<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>

		<p>suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; and as <i>the women</i> were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, <i>the men</i> said to them, “Why do you seek the living One among the dead? He is not here, but He has risen. Remember how He spoke to you while He was still in Galilee, saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.” And they remembered His words, and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest.</p>	
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Narrative element #12: All these women told their stories to the disciples gathered in the upper room. Since the women had arrived at different times, had had somewhat different experiences, and had witnessed somewhat different things, their stories were not entirely harmonious and consistent with one another. The disciples in the upper room did not believe these women’s accounts.

Matthew	Mark	Luke 24:10–11	John
<p><i>This element is not included explicitly in his account, but it is implicit in Matthew 28:8.</i></p>	<p><i>This element is not included explicitly in his account, but it is implicit in Mark 16:8.</i></p>	<p>Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.</p>	<p><i>This element is not included explicitly in his account, but it is implicit in John 20:2 (which is strictly from the point of view of John’s report from Mary Magdalene).</i></p>

Narrative element #13: Peter and John, wanting to investigate for themselves, ran back to the tomb where Jesus had been buried. They found the tomb empty. When John entered the tomb and saw the wrappings, he believed that Jesus had been raised. (But he did not yet understand from the Scriptures the necessity of his death and resurrection.) Astounded by discovering the tomb empty, Peter and John returned to where they were dwelling.

<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	Luke 24:12	John 20:3–10
		<i>An account of the visit from Peter's perspective.</i>	<i>John's account of this visit from his standpoint.</i>
<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings only; and he went away to his home, marveling at what had happened.	So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb. The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first; and stooping and looking in, he saw the linen wrappings lying <i>there</i> ; but he did not go in. And so Simon Peter also came, following him, and entered the tomb; and he saw the linen wrappings lying <i>there</i> , and the face-cloth which had been on His head, not lying with the linen wrappings, but rolled up in a place by itself. So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. So the disciples went away

			again to their own homes.
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Narrative element #14: When Peter and John had run off to investigate the state of things at Jesus' tomb, Mary Magdalene followed behind, returning to the tomb to take a second look. She (apparently) arrived there after Peter and John had departed. She stood outside the tomb and wept until, eventually, she stooped down and looked into the tomb. There she saw two angels. They sat, one each, where the head and feet of Jesus had lain. The angels asked her why she was crying. She answered that she did not know where Jesus' body had been taken. Then, turning around, she saw a man whom she mistook for the gardener. She pled with the man to return Jesus' body, if he happened to know where it was. But, in truth, the man was Jesus himself. He called Mary by name. She recognized him and grasped onto him. He then instructed her not to cling to him but to go back and tell his disciples that he would soon be ascending to his Father.

Matthew	Mark 16:9	Luke	John 20:11–17
<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. [Probably not in the original text of Mark.]	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. And 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." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing <i>there</i> , and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing Him to be the gardener, she said to

			<p>Him, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.” Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, “Rabboni!” (which means, Teacher). Jesus said to her, “Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’”</p>
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Narrative element #15: Mary Magdalene returned to where the disciples were gathered and reported to them that she had seen the risen Jesus.

Matthew	Mark 16:10–11	Luke	John 20:18
<p><i>This element is not included in his account.</i></p>	<p>She went and reported to those who had been with Him, while they were mourning and weeping. When they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it.</p> <p><i>[Probably not in the original text of Mark.]</i></p>	<p><i>This element is not included in his account.</i></p>	<p>Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and <i>that</i> He had said these things to her.</p>

Narrative element #16: Some of Jesus' other female disciples, also wanting to return to the tomb to take a second look, had followed Mary Magdalene. They arrived as Jesus was speaking with Mary Magdalene. He greeted them; they fell to the ground and grasped his feet; and Jesus told them to take word to the brothers that he would meet them in Galilee.

Matthew 28:9–10	Mark	Luke	John
And behold, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they came up and took hold of His feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and take word to My brethren to leave for Galilee, and there they will see Me.”	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>

Narrative element #17: While the swarm of events had been occurring at and around the empty tomb, the soldiers who had been guarding the tomb when the angel rolled the stone away went back into the city and reported what had happened to the chief priests. The Sanhedrin was called together and they decided to bribe the soldiers with a large sum of money to say that the disciples had come and stolen the body.

Matthew 28:11–15	Mark	Luke	John
Now while they were on their way, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened. And when they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and said, “You are to say, ‘His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.’ And if this should come to the	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>	<i>This element is not included in his account.</i>

governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble." And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, <i>and is</i> to this day.			
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Part 4: Chronology of Jesus' Death and Resurrection

		Evening (sundown– midnight)	Night (midnight– sunrise)	Morning (sunrise–noon)	Afternoon (noon– sundown)
DAY 1 Tuesday sundown– Wednesday sundown	PASSOVER & Preparation Day for High Sabbath the following day	•Passover meal = “Last Supper” •Gethsemane	•Jesus’ arrest •Jesus’ trial before Sanhedrin •Peter’s denials	•Jesus’ trial by Pilate and Herod •Jesus’ crucifixion	•Jesus dies and is later buried while the women disciples look on
DAY 2 Wednesday sundown– Thursday sundown	SABBATH First Day of the seven days of the Feast of Unleavened Bread	•Jesus’ night #1 in tomb •Disciples (women) rest on Sabbath	•Jesus’ night #1 in tomb •Disciples (women) rest on Sabbath	•Jesus’ day #1 in tomb •Tomb sealed & guard posted by Sanhedrin	•Jesus’ day #1 in tomb •Disciples (women) rest on Sabbath
DAY 3 Thursday sundown– Friday sundown	Preparation Day for the weekly Sabbath	•Jesus’ night #2 in tomb	•Jesus’ night #2 in tomb	•Jesus’ day #2 in tomb •Women buy and prepare spices for burial	•Jesus’ day #2 in tomb
DAY 4 Friday sundown– Saturday sundown	SABBATH Weekly Sabbath	•Jesus’ night #3 in tomb •Disciples (women) rest on Sabbath	•Jesus’ night #3 in tomb •Disciples (women) rest on Sabbath	•Jesus’ day #3 in tomb •Disciples (women) rest on Sabbath	•Jesus’ day #3 in tomb •Disciples (women) rest on Sabbath
DAY 5 Saturday sundown– Sunday sundown	FIRST DAY OF WEEK	•Jesus’ resurrection (anytime Saturday night or early Sunday morning)	•Jesus’ resurrection (anytime Saturday night or early Sunday morning) •Angel of Lord with earthquake rolls stone away from tomb	•Two groups of women visit empty tomb •Women give report to disciples •John and Peter visit empty tomb (women follow) •Jesus appears to women •Women give report to disciples a second time •Guard reports to (and is bribed by) the Sanhedrin	•Jesus appears to Simon Peter (Luke 24:34) •Jesus appears to two disciples on road to Emmaus