

A Harmonized Chronology of the Resurrection

Time/Place	Event	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Earlier	Women watch Joseph entomb Jesus	27:61	15:47	23:55	
	Women prepare spices before & after Sabbath ¹		16:1	23:56	
Sunday, dawn in Jerusalem	Angel rolls stone away	28:2,3			
	Guards panic, recover, run & tell chief priests	28:4,11-15			
	Women visit tomb near dawn, find it empty	28:1	16:1,2-4	24:1-3	20:1
	Angels appear, tell women Jesus is alive	28:5-7	16:5-7	24:4-8	
	Women run to tell disciples, and are doubted	28:8	16:8	24:9-11	20:2
	Peter & John run to tomb, find it empty, leave			24:12	20:3-10
	Mary M. returned to tomb, is alone, crying				20:11
	She sees angels, Jesus; returns to disciples		16:9,10		20:12-18
Jesus appears to rest of women later ²	28:10				
Afternoon in Jerusalem	Jesus appears to Peter; he tells group ³			24:34	
	Jesus appears to 2 men to going to Emmaus		16:12	24:13-32	
Evening in Jerusalem	They return to disciples to tell them		16:13	24:30-33	
	Group tells them Peter saw Jesus			24:34	
	They say they saw Jesus but are doubted		16:13	24:35	
	While explaining, Jesus appears to the group		16:14	24:36	20:19
	The group doubts it's really Him			24:37,38	20:20
	Jesus rebukes them, shows His wounds		16:14	24:38,39	20:20
Thomas is absent; returns, doubts group				20:24,25	
8 days later	Thomas sees Jesus' wounds & believes				20:26-29
Afterwards in Galilee,	Peter & others see Jesus after night fishing				21:1-14
	Jesus reconciles Peter				21:15-23
unknown, in Jerusalem,	Disciples see Jesus at selected mountain	28:16,17			
	Unknown events				20:30-31
in Bethany	Jesus gives Great Commission ⁴	28:18-20	16:15	24:44-49	
	Disciples to wait for power of Holy Spirit			24:49	
	Jesus leads disciples to Mt. Olivet in Bethany			24:50	
	Jesus ascends to heaven		16:19	24:51	

1 It seems that some women prepared spices they owned before the Sabbath; others had to purchase spices and prepare them after the Sabbath

2 Since this section of Matthew is not strictly sequential, it does not seem to damage the text by reading this as not happening immediately as they return

3 It's unclear if the group is telling the two that Simon [Peter] saw Jesus, or if the two are saying that they saw Jesus

4 Variations of the Great Commission may have been given multiple times, including in the upper room and in Galilee

Why do we need "Harmony"?

Given just a cursory reading, the four Gospels appear to have serious contradictions. With careful reading and some thought, all but a few minor details find their place, revealing a rich, detailed story. This chart outlines the key events in that story, with verse references.

Four different camera angles!

The Gospels were written by different authors with varying styles. Each gives a different view of the action, emphasizing certain people and events while ignoring others. This explains most of the apparent contradictions.

Conflicts don't kill history!

"[T]he historian looks at these narratives and says, 'I see some inconsistencies...[but] they're all in the secondary details.'... He says, 'This suggests that there is a historical core to this story that is reliable and can be depended upon....' Those kinds of secondary discrepancies wouldn't bother a historian." — Dr. William Lane Craig, Historian