



# **THE PASSOVER THAT CHANGED THE WORLD**

By R. Baruch, PhD

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A Study of the final events of Yeshua's First Coming  
- Explanations Of Seemingly Conflicting Statements  
In The Passover Account of The Four Gospels

Passover is known as the Festival of Redemption. Yeshua states in Mark 10:45 that He came to give His life to redeem many. During the "Last Supper" when they had finished eating, Yeshua took the cup and made the blessing saying that this cup (the wine inside the cup) represented His blood, that would be shed for the forgiveness of sins and the ratification of the New Covenant. The prophet Jeremiah spoke of the New Covenant in light of redemption and the forgiveness of sins (see Jeremiah 31:30-33). This being the case, it should not be surprising that the Festival of Passover would be used at the backdrop for interpreting the key events in Yeshua's First Coming.

The primary question that this study will address is, **are the events spoken of in the four Gospel accounts reliable?** Many individuals have looked at seemingly conflicting statements and concluded that the New Testament does not provide an historically accurate account of the events of Yeshua's final hours and hence should not be relied upon as the basis for establishing one's faith.

## Understanding the nature of the Scripture

Although the Bible is historically accurate, G-d's primary purpose was not to write an historical record. Rather His purpose was to reveal truth to mankind. Paul says it best when he writes, "*All Scripture is G-d breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for discipline, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of G-d may be perfect, established completely for good works.*" II Tim. 3:16-17. In order for this purpose to be achieved, this study will show how G-d inspired the authors of the Bible to record historical events in such a manner that the reader gleans spiritual revelation that will fulfill what Paul stated in the fore mentioned passage. This study will provide numerous explanations and examples of this in demonstrating that the Gospel witness is reliable and truthful; and therefore worthy to be accepted.

## The Methodology

This study will examine eighteen apparent conflicts within the four Gospel accounts of the final days of Yeshua's life. Each example will be evaluated according to several

criteria. First, it must be ascertained if the "conflict" is due to translational errors. That is, when the text was rendered into another language, did the translator fail to render all the nuances of the Biblical text accurately. Translational difficulties can not only be grammatical, but also contextual. That is, the translator fails to understand the cultural backgrounds for the textual situation. Second, if there is a conflict between two or more textual accounts, can this conflict be explained in a reasonable manner. Third, do literary devices play a role in the conflict. Finally, is the conflict scriptural in nature; that is, is there an actual conflict in the Biblical text or is the conflict between what has been widely accepted and understood and what the Biblical account states.

### **Conflict #1 When did the "Last Supper" take place?**

### **Conflict #2 Upon which day was Yeshua crucified?**

These two conflicts will be evaluated together because at the heart of the issue is establishing an accurate timeline for the Passover week in question. In dealing with these issues a number of peripheral matters must be addressed. First and foremost among them is to understand that the terms "Passover" and "Unleavened Bread" are used synonymously in the New Testament. Technically, there is a difference between them. Passover refers to the sacrificing of the lamb on the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan. The Festival of Unleavened Bread (Matzot) begins on the fifteenth of Nisan (sundown on the fourteenth) and continues seven days. The first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Fifteenth of Nisan) and the seventh day (twenty-first of Nisan) are special holidays within the Festival. These days are treated as Sabbath days **regardless** of which day of the week they fall.

If there is a difference between "Passover" and the Festival of "Unleavened Bread", then why does the New Testament blur the distinction between them? One must remember that the New Testament was written in Greek and its audience was not just Jewish individuals, but the whole world. The fact is that even today, as has always been the case, people refer to the entire holiday period by these two names. That is to say that people use these terms interchangeably. Although the New Testament follows this custom, **it does indeed define them separately and clues the reader in a most clear manner whether it is speaking about Passover or the Festival of Unleavened Bread.** The problem is that at times, the translators and readers of the New Testament are not aware of these clues and infer false impressions which are not contained in the text.

New Testament Greek is very precise. Sadly, many translators do not render all the translational clues which the text provides into other languages. Sometimes the reason is a deficiency in knowledge of the language; however most of the time the translator fails to recognize the issue due to cultural factors. Here is an example of a translational deficiency.

In Matthew 26:17 the text reads in the King James translation,

"Now the first *day* of the *feast* of unleavened bread the disciples came to Yeshua, saying unto Him, Where wilt Thou prepare for Thee to eat the Passover?"

However, if one renders the Greek text accurately, there are some significant differences.

th de prwth twm azumwn proshlqon oi maqhtai tw ihsou legonteV, pou qeleiV etoimaswmen soi fagein to pasca;

"And for the sake of the first *day of the festival* of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Yeshua saying, where doYou want that we should prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

The King James fails to render the significance of the fact that the phrase "the first *day*" th de prwth , is in the dative case. This means that it was not the first day of Unleavened Bread when the disciples asked Jesus this question, but rather they asked the question **in regard to** the first day of the festival. Hence one **cannot** conclude anything about the time that the question was asked from this verse alone. (The same is true about Mark 14:12)

In Luke's account of Yeshua's Passover there are two additional verses that add information to this issue. The first is Luke 22:1, hggizen de h eorth twm azumwn h legomenh pasca.

"And the Feast of Unleaven Bread approached, which is called Passover."

The significance of this verse is not found in language or grammatical nuances, but in the simple message that the verse contains. The verse clues the reader to that which has already been stated, namely that the terms Passover and Unleavened Bread are used interchangeably in the New Testament. Luke 22: 7 demonstrates the same point in reverse.

hlqen de h hmera twm azumwn, [en] h edei quesqai to pasca

"And came the day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread on which they bind to sacrifice the Passover offering."

Looking at this verse, the question that must be answered is, what is the date that Yeshua's disciples approached Him and asked about making the necessary preparations? At first glance it would appear on the fourteenth on Nisan, i.e. the day that the lambs are sacrificed, but internal evidence within the New Testament does not support this date.



It is interesting to note that in Matthew 26:2 and Mark 14:1 there is a verse that states that "**after two days is Passover**". Why stress "two days"? Because those Jews that came from the Galilee had a somewhat different tradition than those in Judea. This fact is recorded in the Mishnah, Tractate Pesachim chapter 4 Mishnah 5,

וחכמים אומרים ביהודה היו עושין מלאכה בערבי פסחים עד חצות ובגליל לא היו עושין כל עיקר הלילה בית שמאי אוסרין ובית הלל מתירין עד הנץ החמה

"The sages say in Judah they use to do work on the eve of Passover until noon (work would be permitted until noon on the fourteenth of Nisan), but in Galilee (among Galileans) they would not work at all (on the fourteenth of Nisan). On the evening (after sundown on the thirteenth), the school of Shammai forbade (work), but the school of Hillel permitted it until sunrise."

This fact has some significant implications. Yeshua and His disciples were from Galilee. Therefore they would have followed the tradition of the Sages that no work should be done on the fourteenth of Nisan. The Galilean preparation day would be the thirteenth of Nisan; that is, all work had to be completed before sundown. This is the reason why Yeshua's disciples asked Him about the arrangements for Passover not on the fourteenth of Nisan as many incorrectly assert, but on the thirteenth. This fact is supported by other pieces of information from the Gospels. For example, it is recorded in Matthew 26:5 and Mark 14:2 that the leaders who conspired to have Yeshua put to death did not want this death to occur on the Feast day, i.e. the fifteenth of Nisan.

"But they (chief priests, scribes, and the elders) said, not on the Feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people."

When one considers all the facts the following conclusions can be reached. First, the traditional term "The Last Supper" was not an "official Passover Seder" i.e., on the eve of the fifteenth of Nisan. Rather, this meal took place on the evening prior. As has been stated in the Mishnah, Galilean Jews observed the fourteenth of Nisan as a special day on which no work could be done, other than fulfilling one's obligation to offer of the Passover sacrifice. Galilean Jews had all preparations completed on the thirteenth of Nisan and ate a meal that night. This meal has special significance for the firstborn. Jewish tradition has established the fourteenth of Nisan as a special fast day for all firstborn males in order to remember the tenth plague that came upon Egypt. The fast begins at sunrise on the fourteenth and ends with the Seder meal. Yeshua was the firstborn of Miryam and Yoseph and He would have fasted on the fourteenth, therefore this meal would have been what is known as a seudah maphsehket or "last supper."

סעודה מפסקת

In Luke 22:15 a very important verse appears,

kai eipen proV autouV, epiqumia epequmhsa touto to pasca fagein meq umwn pro tou me paqein:

"And He said to them, I have desired greatly this Passover to eat with you before I suffer."

For a Galilean Jew Passover observance begins with the meal on the thirteenth of Nisan and continues into the holiday itself. Notice that Yeshua says in the next verse, (Luke 22:16) that He is not going to continue the observance of the festival, until the purpose of Passover, Redemption is fulfilled.

legw gar umin oti ou mh fagw auto ewV otou plhrwqh en th basileia tou qeou.

"For I say to you, that I will not eat it (Passover), until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of G-d".

It is clear that Yeshua began the Galilean observance of Passover, but He is now revealing that He will not be able to continue its obserance with them (the disciples) because He must suffer and die, in order to fulfill the purpose of Passover, i.e. bring redemption to mankind.

Hence in answering **Conflict #1: Upon which day did the "Last Supper" take place?** The answer is on the eve of the fourteenth of Nisan.

The view that the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) have the Last Supper occuring on a different day than John's Gospel is unfounded. All four Gospels reveal that the "Last Supper" took place one day prior to the traditional Seder meal as John clearly writes,

pro de thV eorthV tou pasca eidwV o ihsouV oti hlqen autou h wra ina metabh ek tou kosmou toutou proV ton patera, agaphsaV touV idiouV touV en tw kosmw, eiV teloV hgaphsen autouV.

"And before the Feast of Passover, Yeshua knowing that His hour had come; in order that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved those of His that were in the world, unto the end He loved them."

This verse provides the reason why it was so important for Yeshua to eat one last time with the disciples before he died. John's Gospel also includes the account of Yeshua humbling Himself and washing the feet of His disciples. This act of love, along with His words during the Last Supper served as the means for His disciples to understand what He was about to do for them. And, it was recorded in a manner for future readers to comprehend with the same significance.

John reveals in several additional places that Yeshua's crucifixion took place prior to the eating of the Passover.

agousin oun ton ihsoun apo tou kaiafa eiV to praitwrion: hn de prwi: kai autoi ouk eishlqon eiV to praitwrion, ina mh mianqwsin alla fagwsin to pasca

"Then they led Yeshua from Kaiafa into the Judgement Hall (Praetorium): and it was early: and they did not enter into the Judgement Hall, in order not to be defiled; but they should eat the Passover". John 18:28

hn de paraskeuh tou pasca, wra hn wV ekth. kai legei toiV ioudaioiV, ide o basileuV umwn.

"And it was preparation of the Passover it was about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, behold your King!" John 19:14

From these verses, there is no doubt whatsoever upon which day Yeshua was crucified.

Hence, the answer to **Conflict #2 Upon which day was Yeshua crucified?** There is agreement within all four Gospels that Yeshua was crucified on the fourteenth of Nisan.

### **Conflict #3 Who Carried the Cross?**

The Synoptic Gospels all state that a man by the name of Simon of Cyrene carried the cross for Yeshua ( see Mt. 27:32, Mk. 15:21, and Lk. 23:26). However, when one reads in John's Gospel, it seems to say that Yeshua bore His cross alone.

kai bastazwn eautw ton stauron exhlqen eiV ton legomenon kraniou topon, o legetai ebraisti golgoqa,

"And suffering Himself the cross, He went out into the place called the skull, the Hebrews called it golgotha."

While it is true that John does not mention Simon of Cyrene, some interesting observations are found when one compares what is recorded and how it is recorded by the Gospel writers. John emphasizes that Yeshua Himself carried the wood. However it must be stated that John also emphasizes the time from when he spoke, when Yeshua went out exhlqen from the place called the Pavement (Hebrew Gabbatha) John 19:13. It was after Yeshua had been scourged and beaten and had not slept the previous night that verse in question appears. John's emphasis is Yeshua's suffering and therefore chooses a word bastazwn which stresses Yeshua's suffering. Although most translators translate this word as "bearing" i.e. "carrying" this is not point of this passage. It is most significant that in Matthew 27:23 and Mark 15:21 this word bastazwn does not appear. Rather the Greek phrase ina arh ton stauron autou is used (in order that he carry His

cross). The key Greek word which is utilize in this verse is arh, which does not contain any nuance of "suffering" only "to lift up," "carry," or "take up."

The Synoptic Gospels reveal a fact, that Simon of Cyrene was forced to carry the cross which had been on Yeshua. John's Gospel chooses not to include this piece of information, rather he emphasizes the degree which Yeshua been afflicted, even before the crucifixion took place. Hence, there is no conflict whatsoever. The problem occurs because the reader is misled by the choice of most translators to render bastazwn as "carried," rather than by its proper meaning "suffering."

#### **Conflict #4 Which hour was Yeshua crucified?**

It has already been established that Yeshua was crucified on the fourteenth of Nisan, but there is an apparent conflict between Mark and John concerning the hour that He was crucified.

hn de wra trith kai estaurwsan auton.

"And it was third hour (9:00 am) and they crucified Him."  
Mk. 15:25



hn de paraskeuh tou pasca, wra hn wV ekth. kai legei toiV ioudaioiV, ide o basileuV umwn.

"And it was preparation of the Passover it was **about** the sixth hour (12:00 noon). And he (Pilate) said to the Jews, behold your King." John 19:14

There are several factors which play a role dealing with this apparent conflict. As has already been stated, the purpose of Scripture is not to simply render historical facts to the reader. Although all Scripture is factual and historical accurate, the primary purpose of Scripture is the revelation of spiritual truth. Numbers can play a significant role in this process. Numbers can contain a theological message. In Mark 15:25 the "third hour" is mentioned. The number "three" when it is applied to man, places upon the passage the idea of "testing". For example, Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. Jonah's was fleeing from the presence of the L-rd and even wanted to die. G-d placed Jonah threes days and nights in the belly of the fish in order to test Jonah's desire to flee from G-d and die. In the end Jonah prayed to G-d and longed for the Temple- the L-rd's habitation (see Jonah 2). Hence the three days and nights proved that Jonah really did not mean the things he said.

With this in mind, Mark was inspired to write about the crucifixion in a manner stressing the suffering of Messiah as proof of His love for man. In other words, the

crucifixion of Yeshua's and all the suffering that led up to it tested His commitment to redeem man from sin.

The number three can also reveal the concept of sanctification and perfection. In Isaiah 6:3 it says, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the L-rd G-d Almighty". The word Holy appears three times stressing the sanctity of G-d and His perfection. In looking at Yeshua's crucifixion, Mark reveals with the use of the phrase, "the third hour" that Yeshua was set apart (sanctified) for this purpose and that His death was the perfect atonement for sin.

In considering John's account and his use of the number six, the following conclusions can be reached. The number six in Hebrew numerology speaks of "grace". Whereas Mark emphasized the testing of Yeshua and the sufficiency of His atonement, John reveals the outcome of His death and atonement. This outcome is that the grace of G-d which provides redemption is now available to man.

Even though the use of numbers reveals different aspects of the same event, does not the Scriptural account have to be accurate in regard to the time Yeshua was crucified. The answer is yes. If one studies texts carefully, then a simple solution can be reached in regard to this apparent conflict. In speaking about the "sixth hour"; the Synoptic Gospels write,

apo de ekthV wraV skotoV egeneto epi pasan thn ghn ewV wraV enathV.

"And from the sixth hour, darkness happened upon all the land until the ninth hour". Mt. 27:45

kai genomenhV wraV ekthV skotoV egeneto ef olhn thn ghn ewV wraV enathV.

"And becoming the sixth hour, darkness happened upon all of the land until the ninth hour". Mk.15:33

kai hn hdh wsei wra ekth kai skotoV egeneto ef olhn thn ghn ewV wraV enathV

"And now it was about the sixth hour and darkness happened upon all the land until the ninth hour. Lk.23:44

It is clear from the context of these verses that Yeshua was already on the cross when the Synoptic Gospels record this verse. However, when John speaks of the sixth hour Pilate had just given the order for Yeshua to be crucified. If one studies the verses in question, the Synoptic Gospels only say it is **around** the sixth hour and John uses the phrase wra hn wV ekth "it was **about** the sixth hour". Hence one can conclude that it was about, near, approaching the sixth hour when Pilate gave the order for Yeshua to be crucified. From the place that the order was given (the place called the Pavement) to outside the city where Yeshua was crucified is only a short walk. Nailing Him to the tree and lifting

the cross in place is not a long process. One could safely estimate from Pilate's order unto Yeshua being crucified and hanging on the cross no more than an hour would have elapsed. None of the Gospel writers were specific to the minute, they only said that it was approximately noon time when the order was given and Yeshua hung on the cross. The exact time was not the primary concern of Scripture. Rather the emphasis was to tell the reader that G-d's provision of grace to mankind was totally obscured to the world. This is why it is stated that around the sixth hour (sixth revealing grace) darkness (not understood by the world) appeared until Yeshua died and the work of atonement was complete.

This brings one back to why Mark's Gospel contains the verse recording that it was the third hour when Yeshua was crucified? Mark utilizes the third hour to inform the reader that Yeshua's suffering began at this time, the beating, the scourging, and the other abuse that He suffered prior to the crucifixion itself. Mark wants to stress all of his suffering and put it within the previously mentioned context.

In conclusion of this apparent conflict, the primary purpose that times are recorded are not for a precise time line, but to place the certain historical events of Yeshua's final hours within the proper theological context.

### **Conflict #5 Did Yeshua drink while He was on the cross? And if so-what did He drink?**

There is not even an apparent conflict regarding this issue. This is a perfect example of people attacking the validity of the New Testament by manufacturing conflicts which are not even present. Rabbi Tovia Singer in his "Let Get Biblical" tape series and companion study guide states that there is a conflict between whether Yeshua drank or not during the crucifixion and what exactly did He drink (see pages 94-95).

Rabbi Singer states that the Gospels of Matthew and John assert that Yeshua drinks, while Mark's Gospel does not. Rabbi Singer says that Luke's Gospel does not deal with the issue. He also points out that there is confusion among the Gospel writers on what was actually drunk by Yeshua or refused by Him.

In regard to what was actually drunk or offered to Yeshua, Rabbi Singer says that Matthew wrote wine mixed with gall, Mark wrote wine mixed with myrrh, Luke wrote Vinegar (sour wine), and John wrote Vinegar (sour wine).

Rabbi Singer's error is that He confuses two separate situations into one. He fails to acknowledge that first, comes the offering of a drink prior to the crucifixion and secondly, comes the offering of a different drink while on the cross. When one studies these events thoroughly in the Gospel accounts, **there is no conflict.**

These two events have a different context and a different theological message. First

comes the offering of a drink prior to the crucifixion. Matthew writes that Yeshua was offered Vingerar mixed with gall and that although he tasted it, He **refused** to drink ( see Mt. 27:34). The next verse tells the reader then Yeshua was crucified. What was the purpose of this drink? The purpose was to lessen the pain that the individual would endure who was about to be crucified. Once again Yeshua refused to drink! Mark's Gospel reveals the same information (see Mk 15:23). Namely, Yeshua was offered the mixture and refused to receive it. Luke and John do not comment about this incident. **Hence there is no conflict whatsoever.**

In regard to this first incident before the crucifixion, is there any conflict between Matthew and Mark on what Yeshua was given to drink? Matthew states that Yeshua was offered wine mixed with gall oionon meta colhV memigmenon and Mark states a wine mixture esmurnismenon oionon . Is there any conflict between one person describing a beverage as a "mixture of wine with gall" and another person saying simply a "wine mixture"? Rabbi Singer mistakenly enters into the equation John's account of the **second incident** in which Yeshua does drink and says "there is a conflict."

Now let's look at the second incident. This occurred while Yeshua had already been on the cross for a period of time. It is true that a different drink was offered to Yeshua while He was on the cross than prior to the crucifixion. While on the cross (the Second Incident) all four Gospels say that it was oxoV. This a sour / bitter wine. There is no conflict whatsoever! The only conflict is one that is derived from those who wish to discredit the authenticity of the New Testament as Rabbi Singer does, and **confuse these two incidents as one.**

The Synoptic Gospels say that while Yeshua was on the cross, He was offered this drink, while only John states emphatically that Yeshua received it. Whereas the Synoptic Gospels in regard to the second incident do report it, John's Gospel reveals an additional aspect of why this incident occurred. John begins his reporting of this event in Jn.19:28 which states, "...Yeshua knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst'". John informs the reader that it was Yeshua's statement, "I thirst" that motivated Yeshua to be given the second drink. The primary concern was not Yeshua's physical thirst, but rather His strong desire (thirst) for every detail of His work of redemption to be fulfilled. This study began by stating that Yeshua's work of redemption is presented to man within the context of the Festival of Passover.



In the ninth chapter of the book of Numbers, Moses is commanded to review so of the laws of Passover Sheni \* to the children of Israel. Once of the laws of Passover is that the Matzah has to be partaken with something that is bitter.

...בחדש השני בארבעה עשר יום בין הערבים יעשו אתו על מצות ומררים יאכלהו:

"In the second month on the fourteenth day in the afternoon he shall do it (the observance of the Passover), with Matzah and bitters he shall eat it" Num.9:11

Yeshua wanting to fulfill every aspect of Passover and make it clear to all that He was indeed the Passover sacrifice that redeemed man from the bondage of sin and ended the spiritual exile from G-d cried out, "I thirst" so that the bitter wine would touch His lips and thereby fulfill this text that He, "The Bread of Life"(Matzah) and the bitters would be offered up to His Father together.

John reveals that once He had tasted the bitter wine He said, "It is finished" and died. The phrase (one word in Greek), "it is finished" has much significance. The one Greek word is tetelestai and reveals an important aspect which goes unnoticed in the English. This word does not just mean that something is over or completed, but that the purpose has been fulfilled. When this word is constructed as a noun it is often rendered into English as the "end". However it does not always mean "the end" as "finished". Rather it means the "goal" or the "main objective."

Within in the context of John 19:30, yes the atonement necessary for redemption has been made. But more than this, the reader is instructed that this sacrifice fulfilled the purpose for which Yeshua was sent in to this world.

**\* Passover Sheni is the observance of Passover in the second month for those who were not able to observe it in the first month. This law is also required for the regular Passover.**

### **Conflict #6 Did Either One of the Two Thieves Repent?**

This apparent conflict is a great example of the second criteria listed under **Methodology** on page one, "if there is a conflict between two or more textual accounts, can this conflict be explained in a reasonable manner"? Individuals have pointed out that in the Synoptic Gospels account there were two thieves who were crucified on each side of Yeshua. Matthew and Mark report that both thieves mocked and reviled Yeshua. There is no statement within these two Gospels that either one of them repented. However in Luke's Gospel one reads,

eiV de tw n kremasqentwn kakourgwn eblasfhmei auton legwn, ouci su ei o cristoV; swson seauton kai hmaV. apokriqeiV de o eteroV epitimwn autw efh, oude fobh su ton qeon, oti en tw autw krimati ei; kai hmeiV men dikaiwV, axia gar wn epraxamen apolambanomen: outoV de ouden atopon epraxen. kai elegen, ihsou, mnhsqhti mou otan elqhV eiV thn basileian sou. kai eipen autw, amhn soi legw, shmeron met emou esh en tw paradeisw.

"And one of the criminals who had been hung (on a cross), blaspheme Him saying, if you are the Messiah, save Yourself and us. But the other one answered rebuking him

(the other criminal) saying, Do you not fear G-d, because in the same condemnation are you? And we indeed justly, for it is proper that we receive this act, but this One has done nothing wrong. And he said, Yeshua, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom. And He (Yeshua) said to him, truly I say to you, today with Me you shall be in paradise. Lk.23:39-43

Is there a possible and reasonable explanation to this conflict? Yes. It can easily be explained by the fact that at first both criminals did in fact mock and revile Yeshua, but after seeing how Yeshua dealt with those people who were shouting insults and mocking Him and hearing Yeshua say, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." (Lk.23:34), it could be that the one criminal repented and made the request that Luke records in the fore mentioned passage. People do say things and then wish to retract them.

This explanation removes any conflict between the Gospel accounts. The question that one should ask is why Mark and Matthew do not include the account of the repentant criminal? One must remember that there is a reason why G-d inspired four accounts of the Gospels. This reason is to reveal additional truth about the same situation. When one considers the primary theme of Matthew's Gospel, the suffering Messiah as a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy it is not surprising that Messiah is present upon the cross at totally rejected. However Luke's Gospel focuses on Messiah as the Savior of the world; therefore it is not surprising that even within the climax of Yeshua's rejection, that there is message of salvation.

Although the Gospels are inspired by G-d and without error, they do reflect the personalities of their authors. In no way does this fact undermine their authority. As in any eye witness account, individuals are going to emphasize different aspects of the same event. Some will chose to ignore things that others feel are central to the event. In the end, the reader the reader has a fuller understanding of G-d's revelation to man.

This explanation of the nature of Gospels is a good introduction for the next conflict.

### **Conflict #7 What were the Last Words of Yeshua?**

Once again those who desire to attack the validity of the New Testament miss the essence of Scripture. While Yeshua hung on the cross He did speak from time to time. In Matthew and Mark Yeshua's statement from Psalm 22 is recorded as the last words that He spoke. While Luke records Yeshua's statement, "Into Your hands I commit My spirit" as His final utterance. Finally John states, "It is finished" was the final sentence that came from Yeshua.

However, what needs to be realized is that none of the Gospels ever assert that the last words they attribute to Yeshua were in fact His "last words". Rather these words were only the last ones that the Gospel wanted to leave the reader with prior to Yeshua death.

Once again Matthew's and Mark's desire to emphasize the rejection of Yeshua influenced them to record the words they did. Luke wanting to stress the inherent relationship between Yeshua and G-d leaves the reader with the statement about Yeshua committing His Spirit to His Father. John, who dedicated nearly half of His Gospel to events of Passover, uses Yeshua's statement about one of the laws of Passover to end Yeshua's testimony on the cross.

One can be assured that Yeshua said all these statements while on the cross, shortly before He died. Which one of these statements were the last? For the purpose of revelation, this question is not relevant. What is relevant is the theological message that each of these statements make when they are considered as Yeshua's "final words". Once again if any of the Gospel writers wrote, "The last words of Yeshua were....", then there would be a conflict.

So often the conflicts on which individuals comment stem from a failure to realize that Scripture is not intended to be a chronological historical writing. Rather Scripture is a literary work and employs well known literary devices to convey truth and reveal theological concepts that historical writings could not. Again, this is not to say that the Bible is not historically accurate, **because it is historically accurate!** But because Scripture uses events to help the reader understand and interpret its testimony, one may read of an event in one Gospel taking place within one context and that same event taking place within a different context and period of time within another Gospel. Because the Gospels and for that matter the rest of the Bible does not ever assert to be a chronological account, such literary tools should not be used to attack the validity of the testimony of Scripture. In fact these literary devices assist the Bible reveal its truth.

It is not surprising that the events surrounding the resurrection, the foundation of the Gospel, receives most of the attacks from those who desire to undermine the authenticity of the New Testament. The additional conflicts that the rest of this study will engage in, all have to do with events after the death of Yeshua.

### **Conflict #8 Who Prepared the Spices for Yeshua's Burial... and When?**

The issue of the spices is central in assisting the reader to understand the proper time line for many of the events surrounding the burial and resurrection of Yeshua. Critics of the New Testament assert that Mark's and Luke's Gospel state that it was Mary that prepared the spices for Yeshua's burial, while John's Gospel states Nicodemus prepared spices prior to the Sabbath. To add to the confusion, Mark states Mary prepared the spices after the Sabbath and Luke agrees with Mark that it was Mary who prepared the spices, but says she did so before Sabbath. Sounds confusing? Not at all,



there is a simple solution to these apparent contradictions which also will play a role in solving the question of how long was Yeshua in the tomb.

These contradictions can be solved by understanding two things. One, there were two separate occasions that spices were prepared. Secondly, the term Shabbat can be used for the first day of Unleavened Bread as well as the normal seventh day Sabbath. In considering the issues of "who prepared the spices?" it is clear that from John's Gospel that Yeshua died on the fourteenth of Nissan, shortly before sundown.

oi oun ioudaioi, epei paraskeuh hn, ina mh mein h epi tou staurou ta swmata en tw sabbatw, hn gar megalh h hmera ekeinou tou sabbatou, hrwthsan ton pilaton ina kateagwsin autwn ta skelh kai arqwsin.

"Therefore the Jews (Judeans) \* since it was preparation, in order that the body did not remain upon the cross on the **Shabbat**, for it was Great (day) that day of Shabbat, they asked Pilate in order that they break their legs and they be lifted (from the cross).

Therefore the Shabbat that John is referring to is not the seventh day Shabbat, but the first day of Unleavened Bread, which is treated as Shabbat with all of its restrictions. A dead body which is not buried presents a problem in regard to Jewish law; this explains why the Jewish leaders came to request that the legs of those who were crucified to be broken, as to speed up the dieing process. So they could be buried.

This verse makes it clear that time was an element in regard to burring Yeshua. The Synoptic Gospels state that a just and righteous man, who was a disciple of Yeshua named Joseph came and requested from Pilate the body of Yeshua, in order to bury Him. Joseph was a Jewish city called Arimathaea. John's Gospel also states these facts, but also includes that another man, Nicodemus came and joined Joseph and assisted in the burial. John also informs that Nicodemus brought spices (see John 19:39-40)

**\* The term "Jews" literally "Judeans" does not refer to the Jewish people in general, rather a small group of Jewish leaders.**

Since Joseph and Nicodemus took the body of Yeshua and wound it in linen cloths with spices according to Jewish custom (see Jn.19:40), then why did Mary and the women also prepare spices and when was this actually done? Luke's Gospel which offers the most information about the women and the spices states,

kai hmera hn paraskeuhV, kai sabbaton epefwsken. katakolouqhsasai de ai gunaikeV, aitineV hsan sunelhuquiai ek thV galilaiaV autw, eqeasanto to mnhmeion kai wV eteqh to swma autou, upostreyasai de htoimasan arwmata kai mura. kai to men sabbaton hsucasan kata thn entolhn,

"And (the) day was preparation, and the Shabbat was commencing. And the women were following closely, since they had come from Galilee with Him, gazed upon the tomb **and how His body was laid**, and they returned and prepared spice and ointment, but rested on the Shabbat according to the commandment." Lk.23:54-56

Once again the Scripture makes it clear that it was on the fourteenth day of Nissan that Yeshua died and was buried. This all took place moments before Shabbat law went into effect for the first day of Unleavened Bread. Luke's Gospel uses epefwsken (was commencing) to emphasize how close the Shabbat was when Yeshua was buried (see Lk. 23:54). It is safe to say that Joseph and Nicodemus had to hurry to complete the burial before Shabbat. The next verse (Lk.23:55) states the women (including Mary) saw the tomb and "**the manner His body was laid.**"

The "**manner**" wV His body was laid is stressed in the Greek text. It is clearly stated that the women saw not only the place, i.e. tomb; but also how (the manner) Joseph and Nicodemus laid Him. The next word in the text is upostreyasai, referring to the women who **returned** and prepared spices and ointments. An important question has to be answered. If the women saw that Yeshua was buried and spices were used, then why did they also prepare spices? The answer is that they saw **how** Yeshua was buried and this caused them to prepare spices themselves. Why? Perhaps they were not satisfied with the manner that the men buried Yeshua. Could it be that because the men had to hurry to complete the job before the Festival of Unleavened Bread began, that the women decided to improve the burial at a later time? Therefore it is not conflict on whether it was Nicodemus or the women who prepared the spices. Both Nicodemus and the women prepared spices, but for different times.

Now the question "when were the spices prepared" has to be addressed. In regard to the spices that Nicodemus brought, they were prepared before Yeshua was buried on the fourteenth of Nissan. Nicodemus may very well not have prepared any spices, but only had access to them and brought them with him to the tomb. The women however, prepared themselves. The question is when?

Mark's Gospel states prior to the Shabbat, while Luke says after the Shabbat. How can this be? Very simple, **to which Shabbat is each Gospel writer referring?** First of all Mark does not inform the reader when the spices were prepared, only when they were brought to the tomb (after Shabbat). The confusion can be easily cleared by realizing exactly what Luke's Gospel actually states.

First of all, the Gospel of John informs the reader that Joseph and Nicodemus had to hurry to complete the burial before Shabbat, the first day of Unleavened Bread. They began this process as the Shabbat was commencing with the women observing them (see Mt.27:61, Mk.15:40, and Lk.23:55). Luke 23:56 emphasize that the women were observant of Jewish law and according to the Torah commandment the rested on the

Shabbat, kai to men sabbaton hsucasan kata thn entolhn. To which Shabbat is this text referring? The answer is the normal seventh day Shabbat and not the first day of Unleavened Bread.

The reader as already been informed that after Yeshua was buried there was no time available to do anything but observe the Passover Seder. Imagine what it would have been like for the disciples and the women who now partook of the Seder meal, reflecting on what Yeshua had tried to teach them the previous night at the "Last Supper."

"After Yeshua was buried there was no time available to do anything but observe the Passover Seder."

Luke in his narrative states, "And they returned and prepared spices and ointment..." Lk.23:56, **when did this occur?** Luke is not speaking about returning from the tomb after Yeshua was buried. Rather Luke is referring to the day after the first day of Unleavened Bread. Hence the women, when they left the tomb, would have observed the Passover Seder that evening and not done any work until after sundown the next day. With this in mind, the preparing of spices and ointment would have occurred on **the sixteenth of Nissan.**

The work that is required to prepare spices and ointment for a proper burial is not simple. One need to remember that the women who took part in this were not from Jerusalem, but the Galilee and would have been required to acquire all the necessary ingredients. This takes time. It would have been impossible for them to have done this prior to Shabbat law going into effect on the Seder evening. Therefore the women would have waited until the sixteenth of Nissan to begin the process of acquiring all the ingredients and doing all the work required in the actual preparation. Once again this preparation takes time. Luke therefore is informing the reader that although the women completed their work there was not enough time left on the sixteenth of Nissan to go to the tomb and accomplish the work they intended. So Luke writes, "And rested on the Shabbat (seventh day Shabbat) according to the commandment." (Lk.23:56).

Did the women prepare the spices and ointment before or after the Shabbat? The answer is yes! If one is speaking about the Shabbat of the first day of Unleavened Bread, then it is after. However, if one is speaking about the seventh day Shabbat, then the answer is before. This explanation is central in dealing with the next conflict.

### **Conflict #9 How Many Days was Yeshua in the Tomb?**

Yeshua stated that as Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights, so would the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." (Mt. 12:40). Although numerous critics have said this was not fulfilled by Yeshua and others have defended it some most creative ways. The fact is that there is no conflict at all

concerning Yeshua's statement and the Gospel witness. This apparent conflict only surfaces because of Church tradition.

Church tradition says that Yeshua was crucified on a Friday. In fact this day is known as "Good Friday" in many spectrums of Christianity. The basis for this tradition which has been previously stated in this study is that there was a rush to remove the bodies from the tomb and bury them before Shabbat began. The Church assume that the Shabbat to which the Scriptures were referring was the seventh day Shabbat, hence Yeshua would have been crucified and died in fact on a Friday. However this is **not** the case, the Shabbat that the Scripture is speaking of is called in John's Gospel a "High" or "Great Shabbat" *hn gar megalh h hmera ekeinou tou sabbatou* . John is attempting to inform the reader that it was not a seventh day Shabbat, but the first day of Unleavened Bread.

This means that Yeshua was placed in the tomb at the beginning of evening, the conclusion of the fourteenth of Nissan \* The Seder was observed that evening and no work could have been done until the conclusion of the fifteenth of Nisan. At the conclusion of the fifteenth of Nissan Yeshua would have been in the tomb for one complete day.

It has already be stated that women acquired the ingredients for the spices and ointment on the sixteenth on Nissan, but did not have enough time to utilize the spices and ointment because the seventh day Shabbat was approaching. Hence with the beginning of Shabbat, at sundown Yeshua has completed two full days in the Tomb.

After the Shabbat is completed Yeshua has completed His third full day and rises from the dead. One must be careful not to confuse Scriptural facts with Church traditions and what has been widely accepted and understood (see page one under **Methodology** ). Tradition has the resurrection of Yeshua taking place early in the morning on the first day of the week. **However**, Scripture says that when the tomb was visited early on the first day of the week that Yeshua had already risen. The tradition of the resurrection taking place early in the morning of the first day of the week is not supported in the Biblical texts that deal with the resurrection accounts. Hence Yeshua rose from the dead shortly after that seventh day Shabbat was completed. It was not until the early morning that those who visited the tomb learned of the resurrection. More will be presented in regard to this issue when considering other apparent conflict. In summary, Yeshua was in fact in the tomb three days and three nights as He prophesied.



**\*According to Jewish law, the end of the calendar day is sundown and the evening begins the new day.**

**Dateline for the death, burial, and resurrection**

**Friday, the Ninth of Nissan:** Yeshua arrives in Bethany

**Shabbat, the Tenth of Nissan:** Yeshua and His disciples spend Shabbat in Bethany.

**Sunday, the Eleventh of Nissan:** Triumphant Entry and Yeshua teaches in the Temple and on the Mt. of Olives.

**Monday, the Twelfth of Nissan:** Two days before Passover

**Tuesday, the Thirteenth of Nissan:** The disciples ask Yeshua about the arrangements for Passover.

**Tuesday evening (under Jewish Law it is considered as Wednesday, the Fourteenth of Nissan:** Yeshua eats the "Last Supper" and departs to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane.

**Continuation of Wednesday, the Fourteenth of Nissan:** Yeshua is arrested while praying in the early hours (after midnight).

He is taken to be examined and tried. He is found guilty of blasphemy by the chief priests and Sanhedrin (early morning hours- perhaps between the hours of 2:00am to 6:00am).

He was then sent first to Pontius Pilate and then to Herod, who returned Him to Pilate for judgment. Both men were in Jerusalem and this it was Pilate who gave the orders to have Him scourged. The process began at the third hour.

The scourging, beating, and other acts of abuse continued near the noon hour when Pilate examines Yeshua an additional time. Pilate desired and tried to release Him offering the people a choice between Barabbas and Yeshua, according to the tradition of the Romans to release a prisoner before Passover. The people chose Barabbas and at the request of the people, Yeshua was crucified. This began once again near the noon time.

From the sixth hour (noon) to the ninth hour (3:00 pm) darkness was upon the land. It was during this time that the veil of the Temple (leading into the Holy of Holies) was torn in the middle from top to bottom. It was shortly after this that Yeshua gave up His Spirit and died.

His dead body hung on the cross until evening time approached. After the Jewish leaders requested that the bodies be removed, Joseph of Arimathaea came and asked for the body of Yeshua. It was Joseph of Arimathaea with the help of Nicodemus that buried Yeshua while the women looked on.

**Wednesday evening (Thursday, the Fifteenth of Nissan):** All Jewish people, including Yeshua's disciples ate the Passover and observed the Seder.

**Continuation of Thursday, the Fifteenth of Nissan:** The people would have awoken to observe this day as a Shabbat and therefore all work is forbidden. **Yeshua completes the first full day in the tomb.**

**Friday, the Sixteenth of Nissan:** The women prepared the spices and ointment to properly complete the task that Joseph and Nicodemus had began Wednesday late afternoon. Although the women finished preparing the spices for the burial, the seventh day Shabbat approached and they observed the commandment and waited unto the first day of the week to properly prepare Yeshua's body for burial. **Yeshua completes His second full day in the tomb.**

**Shabbat, the Seventeenth of Nissan:** The Shabbat is observed by all.

When the Shabbat is over (shortly after Sundown Saturday night-according to Jewish law this is the first day of the week) **Yeshua completes three full days and nights in the tomb and rises from the day.**

**Sunday- the first day of the week, the Eighteenth of Nissan:** Yeshua rises from the dead at the beginning of this day (Saturday night). Early in the morning the tomb is visited.

A detailed study of the events of the resurrection and the apparent conflicts surrounding these events will now be presented.

**Conflict #10 Does Scripture say that Yeshua resurrected in the early morning hours of the first day of the week?**

If one were to ask people who had some knowledge of the New Testament, when did Yeshua rise from the dead? The overwhelming response would be early Sunday morning. Many people are shocked to find out that the Scripture does not support such a view. It is most clear from the Gospel accounts that when the tomb was visited early in the morning on the first day of the week, Yeshua already had risen.

### **Matthew's Gospel**

Matthew does not report a single detail concerning the actual resurrection of Yeshua . When Matthew begins to reveal the fact the Yeshua had risen, he begins by informing the reader, **NOT** of the resurrection itself, but those who visited the tomb. As has already been stated, there were women, namely Mary Magdalene and the other Mary who wanted to complete the burial process of Yeshua. Matthew is clear that they arrived there in the morning as dawn was approaching.

oye de sabbatwn, th epifwskoush eiV mian sabbatwn, hlqen mariam h magdalthnh kai h allh maria qewrhsai ton tafon.

"And at the end of the Shabbat, as it began to dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came, and the other Mary to see the tomb" Mt.28:1

It was prior to the women's arrival that an earthquake shook the place. This "earthquake" was the angel of the L-rd descending from heaven. This angel was sent to roll the stone from the opening of the tomb. After completing his task, the angel sat upon the large stone which had been used to seal the tomb. Notice that the women who arrived at the tomb seeking Yeshua did not see the angel at this moment. They first spoke to the angel who informed them that Yeshua was not in the tomb, for He had risen. Then the angel showed them the place where Yeshua had laid.

ouk estin wde, hgerqh gar kaqwV eipen: deute idete ton topon opou ekeito.

"He is not here, for He has been raised just as He said. Come see the place where he was laid." Mt.28:6

Many Bibles translate hgerqh with the words, "He is risen". This is not correct. The Greek work is constructed in the aorist passive. This means that Yeshua did not rise by means of Himself, but rather He **was made** to rise, by G-d the Father. Although this is not proper English, the passive voice demands that the reader understand in rising from the dead, Yeshua depended upon His heavenly Father.

It was only after departing from the tomb with great joy that Yeshua met the women.

### **Mark's Gospel**

Mark, like Matthew does not tell about the resurrection itself. Mark does reveal why the women came to the tomb,

kai diagenomenou tou sabbatou maria h magdalthnh kai maria h [tou] iakwbou kai salwmh hgorasan arwmata ina elqousai aleiywsin auton.

"And when the Shabbat was complete, Mary Magdalene and Mary (the mother) of James and Salome brought spices in order that they should anoint Him" Mk.16:1

Mark also reveals that the women were concerned about the stone that had seal the tomb. Remember, they observed how Yeshua was buried and saw the large stone that was placed against the entrance. Mark tells that by the time the women arrived to the tomb, the stone had been removed. (Although Matthew tells how those who were guarding the stone feared greatly at the angel's arrival and action, Mark does not mention this).

## Luke's Gospel

Luke like Mark informs the reason why the women came to the tomb. He agrees also with all the Gospels it was very early in the morning. Once again the Gospels are clear that Yeshua had already risen by the time anyone arrived to the tomb. There are some interesting details in Luke concerning the angel that rolled away the stone. Luke states that there were two "men" at the tomb. This fact and others are viewed by many as "seemingly conflicting details". These issues will be addressed later in this study.

## John's Gospel

John only speaks of Mary coming to the tomb early that morning. There is no incident with any men or with an angel at first, rather she simply finds the stone had been rolled away and the tomb empty. She then departs to tell Peter and the disciple whom Yeshua loved. Mary did return to the tomb after Peter and the other disciple had come and

“As she turns  
she encounters  
Yeshua...”

gone. It is after the departure of Peter and the other disciple that Mary speaks to two angels. At this time the angels only question why she is weeping. As she turns she encounters Yeshua Who warns her not to touch Him and go tell others about His plan to ascend the G-d the Father. In examining the Gospels several additional conflicts surface.

The first conflict is: "Who did visit the tomb early that morning and was it light or still dark?"

The second conflict is: "Were there an angel or angels that met the visitors or were they actually men?"

The third conflict is: "Did Yeshua or the angels or the two men ever speak to the women before they returned and informed the disciples about the resurrection?"

**These conflicts will be addressed later in this study.**

In summary of the question at hand, Yeshua did not rise from the dead early Sunday morning as many people proclaim, rather He rose prior to dawn the first day of the week. In light of His promise of being in the tomb for three days and three nights the most likely time of His resurrection would be shortly after the conclusion of the seventh day Shabbat, i.e. Saturday evening ( according to Jewish law the evening begins the next day- the first day of the week).

**Conflict #11 Who did visit the tomb early that morning and was it light or still dark?**

Matthew reports Mary Magdalene and the other Mary visited the tomb. Mark states that it was Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome. Luke says that there

were women. Luke does Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James who were among the women who were at the tomb and who went and told the disciples (Lk. 24:10). Finally John's Gospels mentions Mary Magdalene. Do these statements represent a conflict among the Gospels? No. Luke emphasizes that a group of women visited the tomb the morning. The fact the other Gospels only give the names of one, two, or three of the women who were part of the group does not in any way present a conflict. For example, although John tells of Mary Magdalene, he never says that only Mary Magdalene came. Likewise, Matthew and Mark include Mary, the mother of James and Salome, but they never say that Joanna was not there. Nor do they say that others could not have been present. In fact careful reading of the accounts, do reveal other women present at the tomb beyond that of those mentioned.

This is another example of why G-d inspired four different, but non conflicting Gospels. G-d wanted to reveal additional theological nuances to the reader, but in doing so there are no historical or factual conflicts.

The second part of this conflict deals with the time that the women got to the tomb. **Many women did visit the tomb in the early as the scriptures state, but there are textual indicators that the women did not all travel to the tomb together, nor at the same precise time.** This issue will be examined in greater detail later on in this study.

Matthew in speaking about the time of the arrival at the tomb writes,

th epifwskoush eiV mian sabbatwn

"... becoming light on the first day of the week," Mt.28:1

Matthew chooses a word that contains the word "light" but attaches a prefix on to this word which means "near" or "upon". He also uses a present participle to convey is his intent. This means that "it was becoming light" or "coming near to light", but light had not shown. It has already been stated that the Greek language is most precise. Matthews employs a word with informs the reader that it was very early in the morning, just prior to dawn. It should be pointed out that in Jerusalem during this time of year, one can begin to see the darkness lessen well before 5:00 am.

Mark is less precise than Matthew and uses the phrase,

kai lian prwi th mia twn sabbatwn

"And at the very beginning of the first day of the week..." Mk.16:2

Mark uses of the word lian, which means "exceedingly" or "greatly". It is difficult to translate it literally in to English within this context. The next word prwi means "morning," hence the idea being presented here is exceedingly early in the morning. Whether there is light or not cannot be ascertain from this verse.

Luke writes,

th de mia twn sabbatwn orqrou baqewV

"And on the first of the week, very early in the morning," Lk.24:1

Luke uses the expression orqrou baqewV . The first word means "morning" and the second word mean "deep". Most scholars say that this phrase means at the earliest dawn. That is not fully light, but the darkness is beginning to lift.

The Synoptic Gospels contain no hint at any disagreement, but John seemingly presents the biggest problem.

John's Gospels testifies the following,

th de mia twn sabbatwn maria h magdalthnh ercetai prwi skotiaV eti oushV eiV to mnhmeion

"And the first of the week, Mary Magdalene came (at) morning darkness still being, to the tomb..." Jn.20:1

John informs the reader it was morning, but there was still darkness when Mary Magdalene "come" ercetai to the tomb. The Greek word is in the present indicative, that is, when John wrote that there remained a "morning darkness" Mary **was coming** to the tomb. The Synoptic Gospels use the same word but in the aorist which informs the reader that Mary was not in the process of coming to the tomb, but that she had already arrived to the tomb when other women are mentioned.

In summary of this point, one can accurately conclude that the Synoptic Gospels tells that it was at the very break of morning light, even slightly before when the women arrive at the tomb, while John's is simply revealing that when Mary started her journey to the tomb, there was still a degree of darkness. John writes "morning darkness" to show that it was not still the thick of night. Hence the apparent conflict stems from not recognizing the nuances the Greek tense can have on the text.

They may be a better explanation in regard to this issue. It has already been stated that the women may not have all traveled together. Carefully reading of John and Mark, seems to imply that Mary Magdalene visited the tomb twice (Jn. 22:1-2, 11-18 and Mark 16:9-10) \* . The first time she was in fact alone and it was dark and the second time when scripture speaks about her at the tomb there are also other women present at the tomb. This time it is later and is about dawn. This explanation will be studied in greater detail in the next conflict and provide the key hermeneutical tool for removing many of the apparent conflicts that are raised in study the resurrection accounts in the Gospels.

\* **One is strongly encouraged to read these verses and the context in which they are found in order to be prepared for the several next issues.**

### **Conflict #12 Was the stone removed before or after the women arrived?**

This is an example of individuals making an assertion based upon a cursory reading of the texts. All the Gospels except Matthew make it most clear that the stone was removed prior to the women's arrival to the tomb. The question is, does Matthew clearly state that the stone was not removed until after the women arrive at the tomb?

The answer is no! The relevant verse reads,

oye de sabbatwn, th epifwskoush eiV mian sabbatwn, hlqen mariam h magdalthnh kai h allh maria qewrhsai ton tafon.

"And at the end of the Shabbat, as it began to dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came and the other Mary to see the tomb" Mt.28:1

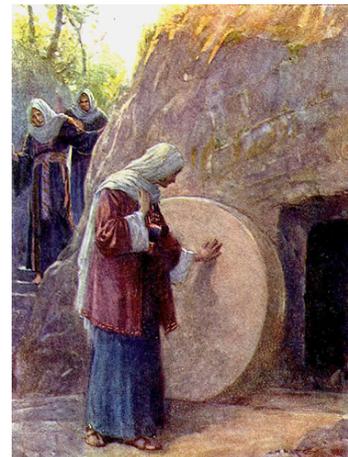
This verse is used by the Gospel writer to set the stage for explaining the events at the tomb. The reader learns the following information:

-Shabbat was over

-It was the first day of the week and morning light was approaching

-Mary Magdalene came and the other Mary to "see the tomb."

It is obvious that these women did not just come to see the tomb, but they had a greater purpose. It is clear from the other Gospels they had come to finish the process of burying Yeshua. Matthew does not mention anything about the spices or ointment that the women had brought.



**Matthew was inspired to write about the condition of the tomb at the time the women arrived.** The confusion stems from the fact that most translators fail to place the proper emphasis on this fact. Matthew continues in the next three verses in order to explain what **had taken place**.

kai idou seismoV egeneto megaV: aggelos gar kuriou katabaV ex ouranou kai proselqwn apekulisen ton liqon kai ekaqhto epanw autou. hn de h eidea autou wV astraph kai to enduma autou leukon wV ciwn. apo de tou fobou autou eseisqhsan oi throunteV kai egenhqhsan wV nekroi.

"And behold a great earthquake happened: for an angel of the L-rd (had) descended out of heaven and having come, he removed the stone and was sitting upon it. And his appearance was as star and his garment was white as snow. And from the fear of him the ones guarding (the tomb) were caused to shake and they appeared as dead." Mt.28:2-4

Matthew states the women had arrived at the tomb and then he **inserts what had happen that caused the tomb to be in the condition in which the women found it**, i.e. the angel had come and remove the large stone. The verbs that are used in these verses are in the past tense. This fact offers further proof that the activity of the angel was already completed when the women arrived.

It must be pointed out that at no time do any of the Gospels state that the women saw or interacted with the guards mentioned in the fourth verse. Apparently they had already departed. In the next verse Matthew wrote,

apokriqeiV de o aggelov eipen taiV gunaixin, mh fobeisqe umeiV, oida gar oti ihsoun ton estaurwmenon zheteite:

"And the angel responded and said to the women, you shall not fear, for I know that Yeshua, the one crucified are you seeking." Mt.28:5

A common mistake that translators and interpreters make in regard to this passage is assuming that the angel responded to the women with the words "you shall not fear" because of the earthquake which had just witnessed. This is not the case. The fear was due to seeing the angel.

Hence, all Gospels reveal that **the stone was rolled away from the tomb prior to the arrival of the women to the tomb.**

**Conflict #13 This section will continue our focus on what the women encountered at the Tomb. There are apparent conflicts with whether there were one or two angels; and if it was an angel (angels) at all or an ordinary young man (men). It will also be discussed whether this encounter took place (inside or outside the tomb) and was the angel (angels) or young man (men) sitting or standing?**

First, there are several accounts in the Bible where at one time angels are reported as angels and other times they are reported as men. In the book of Genesis we read about three "men" that appeared before Abraham,

וישׂא עיניו, וירא, והנה שלשה אנשים, נצבים עליו; וירא, וירץ לקראתם מפתח האהל, וישתחו, ארצה.

"And he lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, *there were* three men standing over him. And he saw and ran to meet them from the door of his tent, he bowed towards the ground. Gen. 18:2

In the next chapter two of the men depart from Abraham and they are not called men, but **angels**,

וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׁנֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים קִדְמָהּ, בְּעֶרְבֹ, וְלוּט, יָשָׁב בְּשַׁעַר-סֹדֹם; וַיֵּרָא-לוֹט וַיִּקָּם לַקְרֹאתָם, וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַפָּיִם אֲרָצָה.

"And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening and Lot was sitting at the gate of Sodom; and Lot looked and rose up (in order to) to meet them, he bowed his face (nostrils) to the ground." Gen. 19:1

Therefore, whether the Gospels describe what the women saw as angels or men is not critical to this discussion. The reality is that only angels were present, but some of the women describe the angels as men. Hence there is no conflict in a person describing something as he perceived it to be.

In order to properly understand the events at the tomb that morning one must carefully study exactly what the Gospel accounts say and how they say it.

The Gospel of John only reports Mary Magdalene visiting the tomb and states it was **still dark**. John informs us that Mary saw the tomb was open and immediately ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple, whom Yeshua loved. She tells them that "they have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not where they had laid Him" (Jn.22:1-2).

If one takes John's account at face value it can only be reconciled with the other Gospel accounts if Mary Magdalene came to the tomb **alone** that morning, before any of the other women. The clue that helps to confirm this is that John states it was still dark and lists no other visitors accompanying her.

John tells us that after Mary informed Peter and the other disciple they immediately ran to the tomb. The other disciple outran Peter and arrived at the tomb first, but did not enter the tomb. Peter, arriving shortly thereafter, did in fact enter the tomb. John reports that Peter saw the linen garments. It is clear that John emphasizes these linen garments. When the other disciple finally entered the tomb, John writes that he "**saw** and believed". What was John referring to when he says that the other disciple **saw** and believed? John informs the reader that the other disciple observed an additional garment which was folded and it was setting separate from the rest of the linen garments. John tells us that this garment had been around the head of Yeshua,

kai to soudarion, o hn epi thV kefalhV autou, ou meta tw n oqoniwn keimenon alla cwriV entetuligmenon eiV ena topon.

"And the garment that was upon His head was not placed with the (other) linen garments, but separate having been folded in one place" Jn.22:7

It was a tradition for religious Jews to be buried with their talit (prayer shawl) wrapped around their heads with the tassels **\*having been removed**. When the other disciple saw how the garment, which had been around Yeshua's head was folded and set aside from the other burial garments, this disciple knew that a religious Jew had been in the tomb. Who did this disciple think the religious Jew was? Yeshua! Yeshua folded the talit and treated it with the proper respect so to serve as a sign to those who would visit the empty tomb and clue them on what had happened.

### \*ציציות

Continuing in John's account, he reports Mary Magdalene weeping outside the tomb and looking inside and seeing two angels sitting. When did this occur? It is very likely that after informing Peter and the other disciple about the tomb being opened and seeing both of them immediately rush to the tomb that she also returned to the tomb.

“Yeshua! Yeshua folded the talit and treated it with the proper respect so to serve as a sign to those who would visit the empty tomb and clue them on what had happened.”

Remember that she had already ran from the tomb to where Peter and the other disciple were staying and therefore was slower arriving to the tomb the second time. When she arrived there, Peter and the other disciple had been and already departed. The fact that Peter and the other disciple had departed before Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb is supported by the verse,

aphlqon oun palin proV autouV oi maqhtai.

Then departed back again to their *own residence*, the disciples. Jn.20:10

The Greek text emphasizes the disciples' go away from the tomb back to where they were staying in Jerusalem. The translation provided is most awkward to demonstrate how the Greek clues the reader that Peter and the other disciple were not present when Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb.

It has already been stated that the women had prepared spices and ointment after seeing how Joseph and Nicodemus had hurriedly buried Yeshua shortly before Shabbat law went into effect on the first day of Unleavened Bread. The women had agreed to meet at the tomb after the seventh day Shabbat early in the morning.

The confusion arises from the Gospel accounts when one assumes that all the women had come to the tomb together in a group . This is **not** supported in the Gospels' accounts. Carefully consider Matthew's account of the resurrection,

oye de sabbatwn, th epifwskoush eiV mian sabbatwn, hlqen mariam h magdalthnh kai h allh maria qewrhsai ton tafon.

"And at the end of the Shabbat, as it began to dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came and the other Mary to see the tomb" Mt.28:1

At first glance there seems to be nothing unique about these words in this verse until one examines what is said about the arrival of Mary Magdalene to the tomb. The verb that is used is in the singular hlqen . The problem is that the text says that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb. The construction of the Greek informs the reader that Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and the other Mary was also present, but makes it very clear that the women did not come together. The fact the Mary Magdalene is mentioned first and the verb which is used "came" only modifies Mary Magdalene clues the reader that it was in fact Mary Magdalene who arrived first and then the other Mary later.

Although Matthew does not specifically mention any other women present at the tomb, the failure to do so does not necessary mean that there weren't other women there. Mark and Luke do in fact state that other women were at the tomb (see Mk 16:1 and Luke 24:1, 10). It is likely that there was an agreement to meet at the tomb early on the first day of the week and the women who lodged in Jerusalem at different places arrived to the tomb separately. Mary Magdalene was the first to arrive (while it was still dark) and seeing the tomb open she ran to Peter and the other disciple and then followed them back to the tomb.

It was during her second visit that other women started to arrive at the tomb. The Synoptic Gospels focus in on the time when Mary Magdalene arrived the second time and the other women came. It is during this time that accounts of angels are reported. Although the Gospels describe these angelic accounts collectively, there could have been an individualist aspect to them. That is, individual women may have experienced something different than what other women experienced.

If the women arrived at different times to the tomb and gazed in the tomb and / or entered the tomb they may have had different experiences (saw different things). Each Gospel account may list only one account and attribute it generally to "the women" when in fact there were several such experiences. Once again the Holy Spirit inspired the author to record the event that would convey the theological objective of that particular Gospel.

### **What the women saw:**

In continuing the discussion of what the women saw, Matthew tells of how the women were told by an angel that Yeshua was not there, but has risen from the dead. Then the angel showed them the place where He laid. Finally the angel commands the women to

depart and tell the disciples all they had seen and heard. The women depart to tell the disciples, but they encounter Yeshua (Mt.28:9). Upon seeing Him they worshipped Him and **held** His feet.

Critics have said that there several conflicts in this account. Notice that the women held Yeshua's feet, while John says Yeshua told Mary Magdalene not to touch Him (Jn. 20:17). Is this a conflict? Not at all; this is an example of two separate accounts.

The mistake that many interpreters make is asserting that John's account is the same event to which Matthew is referring. This apparent conflict can easily be solved by the information that Mark's Gospel provides.

Mark states that when the group of women enter the tomb and see a young man sitting on the right side clothed in white they were afraid (Mk.16:5). This young man tells them not to be afraid and that Yeshua has risen. Then he instructs the women to go and tell the disciples and Peter, to go to Galilee and there they shall see Him (Mk. 16:6-7).

Matthew then informs us whereas the women depart to carry out the command tell the disciples they encounter Yeshua,

wV de eporeuonto apageilai toiV maqhtaiV autou \* kai idou ihsouV uphnthsen autaiV legwn, cairete. ai de proselqousai ekrathsan autou touV podaV kai prosekunhsan autw. tote legei autaiV o ihsouV, mh fobeisqe: upagete apageilate toiV adelfoiV mou ina apelqwsin eiV thn galilaian, kakei me oyontai.

"And as they were going to tell His Disciples \* , (and) behold Yeshua met them saying, 'Rejoice'. And approaching holding his feet and they worshipped Him. Then Yeshua said to them, "Do not fear": you go and tell My brothers (disciples) in order they should go into the Galilee, there also they should see Me." Mt.28:9-10

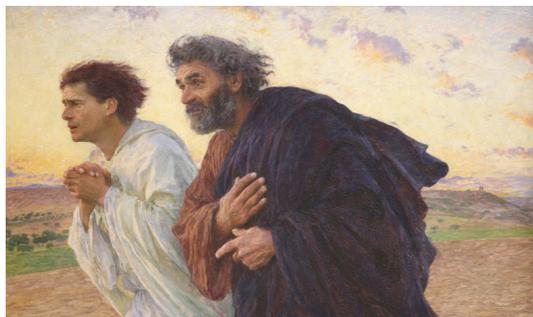
Returning to Mark's account, a critical piece of information is provided. Mark tells the reader that the women's encounter with Yeshua, was not the first such encounter. Mark clearly says that the first encounter was with Mary Magdalene alone and that she went and told others who had been with Him.

anastaV de prwi prwth sabbatou efanh prwton maria th magdalhnh, par hV ekbeblhkei epta daimonia. ekeinh oreuqeisa aphggeilen toiV met autou genomenoiV penqousi kai klaiousin:

"And after rising early the first day of the week He manifested first to Mary Magdalene, from whom He cast seven devils. From there she came and announced to those who had been with Him as they mourned and wept." Mk.16:9-10

Mark confirms that Yeshua appeared to Mary Magdalene first and separately from the women who responded to the command to go and tell the disciples and encountered Yeshua on their way (Mt.28:5-10). This being the case, Mark provides some key information in solving the apparent conflict concerning the angels.

John's Gospel records that after telling Peter and the disciple whom Yeshua loved about the open tomb, Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb. It was at this time that John reveals the following information,



maria de eisthkei proV tw mnhmeiw exw klaiousa. wV oun eklaien **parekuyen** eiV to mnhmeion, kai qewrei duo aggelouV en leukoiV kaqezomenouV, ena proV th kefalh kai ena proV toiV posin, opou ekeito to swma tou ihsou. kai legousin auth ekeinoi, gunai, ti klaieiV; legei autoiV oti hran ton kurion mou, kai ouk oida pou eqhkan auton. tauta eipousa estrafh eiV ta opisw, kai qewrei ton ihsoun estwta, kai ouk hdei oti ihsouV estin. legei auth ihsouV, gunai, ti klaieiV; tina zhteiV; ekeinh dokousa oti o khpouroV estin legei autw, kurie, ei su ebastasaV auton, eipe moi pou eqhkaV auton, kagw auton arw. legei auth ihsouV, mariam. strafeisa ekeinh legei autw ebraisti, rabbouni {o legetai didaskale}. legei auth ihsouV, mh mou aptou, oupw gar anabebhka proV ton patera: poreuou de proV touV adelfouV mou kai eipe autoiV, anabainw proV ton patera mou kai patera umwn kai qeon mou kai qeon umwn. ercetai mariam h magdalhnh aggellousa toiV maqhtaiV oti ewraka ton kurion, kai tauta eipen auth.

"And Mary stood before the tomb, outside weeping, and as she cried she entered into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Yeshua was laid. And they say to her in that place, woman why do you cry? She says to them because they have taken my Lord, and I do not know where they laid Him. Having said these things she turned backwards and she saw Yeshua standing, and she did know that it was Yeshua. Yeshua says to her, 'woman why do you cry?' 'Whom are you seeking'? She supposing He is the gardener, says to Him, 'Sir, if you took Him away, tell me where you have laid Him and I will take Him.' Yeshua says to her, 'Mary'. She turned saying to Him, 'Rabboni {that is to say, Teacher}'. Yeshua says to her, 'do not touch me' for I have not yet ascended to the Father: and to My brethren (disciples) go and say to them, I ascend to My Father and your (plural) Father; and My G-d and your (plural) G-d'. Mary Magdalene coming and proclaiming to the disciples that she had seen the L-rd, and these things He spoke unto her." Jn.22:11-18

There are many significant factors which are revealed in this passage. First, where was Mary Magdalene when she saw the two angels? Most translators render the first part of this passage in a manner that would lead the reader to conclude that Mary was outside the tomb looking in but had not in fact entered the tomb. For example the King James Version writes,

"But Mary stood without (outside) at the sepulcher weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, *and looked* into the sepulcher." Jn.20:11

Such a rendering demonstrates an improper understanding of the Greek word **parekuyen** . Although many lexicons render this word as "stooping down" or "looking in intently", this does not fit the context for other places that this word appears in the New Testament. Consider the following examples,

"But whosoever parakuyaV into the perfect law of liberty, and continues..." James 1:25

It is clear that rendering the word as "stooped down" does not really fit the context. The phrase, "looked intently" is better, but the actual intent of James is to say that "whosoever enters into the perfect law of liberty and continues..." There are no benefits in just "looking intently" into something, rather one benefits when he makes the commitment, i.e. enters into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it.

Peter writes,

"...which the angels desire parakuyai ." 1Pe. 1:12

This passage is discussing the glory that salvation brings. Angels are not a candidate for salvation. Those angels who are fallen are lost and those who remained faithful will continue in their present state. However individuals who are redeemed by the grace of G-d and experience salvation have the promise of the glory of G-d being bestowed upon them. The implication of this is that man in his redeemed state will rise above the angels. This is what Peter is speaking about and he ends the verse with the statement that the angels desire not just to "see" this, for they will see this event, rather they desire to "enter into" this state as well.

Hence, Mary did not just "look into" the tomb. She entered into the tomb and beheld the two angels. Why is this so important? Because Mark and Luke clearly write that the encounter with the angel(s) or man (men) took place in the tomb. What about Matthew?

Remember that Matthew begins his account of that morning by stating that Mary Magdalene came and the other Mary to see the tomb (Mt.28:1). It has already been pointed out that the verb that is used in this verse is singular and only modifies Mary Magdalene. Technically this verse does not say that either Mary Magdalene or the other Mary had arrived at the tomb. The verse only implies that journey to the tomb had started. The emphasis of this verse is not where were the women, but why did their journey begin? The answer is clearly stated, in order "to see the tomb". Once again it must be stressed that Matthew is informing the reader to the condition of the tomb. It is the next few verses (see Mt.28:2-4) that reveals what had in fact happened. Matthew states what all the other Gospels reveal, that all the women were shocked with the fact that the tomb was opened and concerned that someone had taken Yeshua's body.

Jewish law requires a proper burial according to a set of specific standards. The women are told not to fear by the angel. This fear was not generated by the appearance of the angel, but the women's concern that Yeshua's body had been removed and He would not receive the proper burial.

Careful study of Matthew shows that his Gospel is the least detailed in regard to the women's experience at the tomb. Matthew chooses to summarize a few major points which the other Gospel writers describe in greater detail. Matthew does, however, provide several details that the other Gospels do not include. This is simply another example of how the four Gospels work together to tell a "greater revelation" of truth than one Gospel alone could accomplish.

Matthew's account is unique in that it is the only Gospel that reveals the following:

**-tells how the stone was removed from the tomb (see Mt.28:2-4)**

**-speaks about the guards who watch the tomb (see Mt.28:4, 11-15)**

When Matthew writes his account of that morning he does so summarizing major events. He is not clear in regard to how much time elapsed between these events. For example informing that the guards who were assigned to secure the tomb shook in fear at the appearance of the angel who removed the tomb and the earthquake that accompanied his action, the reader does not know much time passed before the women arrived. Although Matthew reports that after the angel completed his work he sat on the stone, one does not know for certain that the angel was still sitting on the stone when the women arrived.

Remember that many women came to the tomb that morning and the accounts that the Gospels report are different because these accounts may in fact be reporting different experiences by different women. Consider what Luke writes in summarizing the women's visit to the tomb,

alla kai gunaikeV tineV ex hmwn exesthsan hmaV: genomenai orqrinai epi to mnhmeion kai mh eurousai to swma autou hlqon legousai kai optasian aggelwn ewrakenai, oi legousin auton zhn. kai aphiqon tineV tw'n sun hmin epi to mnhmeion, kai euron outwV kaqwV kai ai gunaikeV eipon, auton de ouk eidon.

"But also certain women from us astonished us: after being early at the tomb and did not find His body, they came and said also a vision of angels they had seen, saying (the angels) He is alive. And certain of those who were with us departed to the tomb and found this just as the women had said, but Him (Yeshua) they did not see." Lk.24:22-24  
These verses do in fact confirm the fact that many women visited the tomb. That Yeshua appeared to some and not to others. This being the case, it quite easy to explain the "so called" conflicts that some people have accuse the New Testament of containing.

This study will now examine the conflict surrounding the angels.

**List of conflicts :**

-Matthew has one angel.

-Mark has one young man sitting on the right side.

-Luke has two men standing witnessed by women. Luke only informs us that Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary (either the mother or wife) of James were **among** the women who told the events at the tomb to the disciples. Luke does not specify who among the women saw the two men standing and heard the proclamation that Yeshua had risen. Nor does he specify exactly what time this vision took place. **Hence, Luke's Gospel cannot be used to offer testimony in regard to any conflicting information about the visit to tomb as it relates to this issue.** The reason for this is that the account Luke provides may not be in regard to any of the experiences that the other Gospels address.

-John has two angels sitting witnessed by Mary Magdalene.

It has already been pointed out (see pages 25-26 of this study) that the Bible does speak of angels as men at times. The reason for this is that sometimes the Bible is speaking from the perspective of those who are witnessing the angelic occurrence and the witnesses are simply not aware that what they are seeing are in fact angels. There is no problem with this as the writer of the book of Hebrews reveals,

"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for some have entertained angels and were not aware of it" (see Hebrews 13:2).

In examining this issue in closer detail one can also conclude that Mark's account of the women seeing two young men sitting on the right side is not in conflict with John's account. This view can be supported in two ways. First, Mark states that the women say a young man sitting on the right side, while John states the there two angels sitting, one at the head and one at the foot. The fact that Mark choose to focus in on just one of the men / angels does not mean that the other was not there.

Even though G-d inspired the Bible to be written, it is clear that the writers of Scripture did in fact rely on various sources. One such source is eye witnesses. It could very well be that a group of women crowded into the tomb and reported to the four Gospel writers exactly what they saw. Perhaps the one(s) who reported to Mark did not see both young men sitting on the place where the body of Yeshua laid.

Perhaps the one(s) who reported to Mark had her or their vision obscured by the fact that there was a group of women in small quarters and each woman would not have had the same vantage point.

If one were considering the Gospel accounts as testimony in a court of law it would be pointed out that there is no conflict between witnesses when one says he saw one suspect and another witness who reports two suspects. Any lawyer would ask the witness who says he only saw one suspect, "Is it possible that there was an additional suspect present that you did not see?" If the first witness said, "No, there is absolutely no possibility that there was an additional suspect present" then there is a conflict. But if the witness responds, "I only saw one, but I suppose there is a possibility that other suspects were present and I did not see them". The testimony of the witness who testified that there were two suspects is not impeached.

The second way that one can state that there is no conflict between Mark's account and John's account is based on the fact that Mark tells us that that the women who met Yeshua as they departed to tell the disciples were not the first to meet Yeshua. Rather Mark tells us that Mary Magdalene first saw Yeshua (see Mk.16:8-10). When this is compared to John's account the reader is informed that Mary Magdalene turned away from the two angels she saw Yeshua. Hence it is reasonable to conclude that Mark's account of the women's vision in the tomb is not the same event to which John's Gospels is referring.

"This study has shown that there are no conflicts in regard to Mark's, Luke's, or John's accounts..."

This study has shown that there are no conflicts in regard to Mark's, Luke's, or John's accounts of the vision the angel(s). In regard to Matthew's Gospel it has already been stated on page 32 that his Gospel is the least detailed in regard to the women's experience at the tomb. Matthew chooses to summarize a few major

points which the other Gospel writers describe in greater detail. Matthew does however provide several details that the other Gospels do not include. With this in mind, it could very well be that some of the women did in fact see the angel sitting on the rock and heard his invitation to enter the tomb, while the other Gospels report about what the women saw inside the tomb. This possibility will be reexamined in the next conflict.

In summary of the "angelic" conflict one can accurately state the following:

**- Many different women visited the empty tomb that morning - Different experience were recorded by the Gospels**

Conflicts present themselves only when one incorrectly views the accounts as revealing one event in the following manner:

**- All the women travel to the tomb together**  
**-**  
**- All women entered the tomb together**

## **- All women had to have the same experience**

The Gospels do not affirm such conditions.

### **Conflict #14 What did the angels say to the women?**

There are those scholars who allow for the possibility of multiply experiences at the tomb that morning, but still state that there are inconsistencies in the content of the angelic instruction.

What was actually said by the angel(s)?

#### **Matthew 28:7**

kai tacu poreuqesai eipate toiV maqhtaiV autou oti hgerqh apo twn nekrwn, kai idou proagei umaV eiV thn galilaian, ekei auton oyesqe: idou eipon umin.

"And quickly go tell to His disciples that He has been raised from the dead, and behold, He goes before you into the Galilee, there you shall see Him: behold I have told you.

#### **Mark 16:6-7**

o de legei autaiV, mh ekqambeisqe: ihsoun zhteite ton nazarhnon ton estaurwmenon: hgerqh, ouk estin wde: ide o topoV opou eqhkan auton. alla upagete eipate toiV maqhtaiV autou kai tw petrw oti proagei umaV eiV thn galilaian: ekei auton oyesqe, kaqwV eipen umin.

"And he says to them, 'Do not fear: Yeshua of Nazareth you seek, having been crucified has been raised, He is not here. Look *at* the place He laid. But go say to His disciples and to Peter that He goes before you into the Galilee, there you shall see Him, just as He said to you'."

#### **Luke 24:5b-7**

...eipan proV autaV, ti zhteite ton zwnta meta twn nekrwn; ouk estin wde, alla hgerqh. mnhsqhte wV elalhsen umin eti wn en th galilaia, legwn ton uion tou anqrwpou oti dei paradoqhnai eiV ceiraV anqrwpwn amartwlwn kai staurwqhnai kai th trith hmera anasthnai.

"...they said to them, 'Why do you seek the Living among the dead? He is not here, but He has been raised. Remember how He spoke to you while He was in the Galilee saying of the Son of Man that it was necessary to be delivered into the hand of sinful men and to be crucified and on the third day to rise.'"

Before turning to John's account, this study will first examine the Synoptic Gospels.

Although Matthew, Mark, and Luke each contain slightly different information there is nothing that is contradictive in their accounts. Those who present conflicts usually state that in Matthew and Mark the disciples are instructed to go to Galilee and later on in Luke they are instructed to remain in Jerusalem. The apparent conflict is only present if one is not well acquainted with the New Testament. Rabbi Tovia Singer who has already been mentioned in this study states,

"In Luke's story (24:5-7), the women are specifically not instructed to go to the Galilee, but to 'Stay in Jerusalem' (24:49)

kai [idou] egw apostellw thn epaggelian tou patroV mou ef umaV: umeiV de kaqisate en th polei ewV ou endushsqe ex uyouV dunamin.

"And behold, I am sending the promise of the My Father upon you: but you remain in the city ( Jerusalem) until you be clothed from the highest heaven with power" Lk.24:9

First of all the angels **never instruct the disciples to go to Galilee, only that Yeshua will go there before them and they shall see Him there.** Secondly, the account in Luke when Yeshua commands the disciple (not the angels) to remain in Jerusalem is given at a later period. It is given after the disciples have in fact been in the Galilee and have returned to Jerusalem to observe the festival of Shavuot (Pentecost). How is this known? John's Gospel tells of Yeshua meeting the disciples along the Sea of Tiberias ( Sea of Galilee) and showing Himself to them (see Jn.21). It is after this appearance that the passage in Luke takes place (Lk.24:49-53). Can one be sure this is the proper chronological order? Absolutely, because in this section of Luke, when Yeshua commands the disciples to remain in Jerusalem is on the very day that He ascended into the heavens.



"And it came to pass, while He (Yeshua) blessed them, He departed from them, and was carried up into heaven." Lk.24:51

This took place on the fortieth day after His resurrection. Hence Yeshua did in fact go before the disciples into the Galilee and the disciples did in fact see Him there exactly as the angels had promised.

Because Yeshua commanded the disciples to stay in Jerusalem for Pentecost after these things were fulfilled is no conflict at all.

Therefore, when Rabbi Singer boldly states,

"Luke's post-resurrection tale does not permit any of his followers to leave Jerusalem because Luke must have the apostles stay in Jerusalem for Pentecost."

He totally ignores the account in John 21 and the fact forty days had expired between the angels' statement to the disciples and Yeshua's command to them. **He also ignores Mark 16:16 which says,**

"Then the eleven disciples went away into the Galilee, into a mountain where Yeshua had appointed them."

John's Gospel is not problematic at all, because John has the angels speaking different words than the Synoptic Gospels. Once again John is revealing a different event all together. John first speaks of Mary Magdalene coming to the tomb early, while it was still dark. She sees that the tomb has been opened and runs to Peter and the other disciple Yeshua loved. It is only upon her return to the tomb that she encounters two angels. There is nothing whatsoever contradictive in what they say to Mary from that recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. However is Mary's conversation with the angels different? Yes, and for good reason, it a different conversation altogether.

Critics have pointed out that it is Yeshua who reveals the resurrection to Mary Magdalene and not the angels as the Synoptic Gospels state. **This is simply not the case.** The Synoptic Gospels emphasize a few of the women who came to the tomb that morning by name, but in regard to the angelic experience in the tomb, one cannot be sure which of the women were present and actually witnessed the particular vision that is recorded. Hence, Mary Magdalene may not have been in the tomb with the women who heard the angels speak. This strongly supported in Mark's Gospel who informs the reader that Mary Magdalene had a different experience than the rest of the women (see Mk.16:9-10).

In summary, there are not any conflicts in the angelic proclamation to the women.

### **Conflict #15 Are there inconsistencies in the women's departure from the tomb as they went to inform the disciples?**

All four Gospels tell of the women, after receiving the angelic command to go and tell the disciples, that the women departed to fulfill this command. However, Matthew reveals that it is on the way to inform the disciples that the women met the risen Yeshua. Mark and Luke say nothing of this encounter. John only focuses on Mary Magdalene's experience. There is no problem if a piece of information is omitted. Such an occurrence does not represent a conflict. The problem is that Mark's Gospel states,

kai exelqousai efugon apo tou mnhmeiou, eicen gar autaV tromoV kai ekstasiV: kai ouden den ouden eipan, efobounto gar.

"And after coming out, they fled from the tomb, for fear and amazement seized them: and nothing to no one they spoke, for they were afraid." Mk.16:8

This verse does seem to contradict the rest of the Gospels, but only if one makes an assumption that the women upon arriving back to their residences remain silent. This assumption contradicts what the other Gospels reveal and common sense. There is a way to interpret this verse which removes all inconsistencies.

Is it possible that this verse is **not** speaking about the women in regard to their behavior upon arriving back to their residences, but only describing their behavior as they were rushing to do exactly what the angelic proclamation had instructed them to do? That is, the women who were seized with fear and amazement did not say a thing to each other as they rushed to tell the disciples. Mark's purpose is not to inform the reader that the women remained silent, but to reveal emotional condition due to what they had witnessed.

It could very well be that after traveling some distance as Matthew reveals, that the women did in fact encounter Yeshua, Who confirmed the words of the angel and also told them to tell the disciples. Mark ignores this, **not** because it did not happen. Rather he is led to inform the reader that the first appearance of Yeshua was not to the group of women who departed the tomb seized with fear and amazement, but to Mary Magdalene as John's Gospel writes. Hence all Gospels can be reconciled to each other.

### **Conflict #16 Is Mary Magdalene permitted to touch Yeshua?**

This conflict arises because Yeshua clearly commands Mary not to touch Him (see Jn. 20:17), while in Matthew's account the women do in fact touch Yeshua. The problem is that Yeshua seems to have no problem with the women clinching His feet and does not instruct to stop (see Mt.28:9). This apparent conflict is most easy to explain. It has already been stated in this study several times that the Gospels do not reveal one event in regard to the women visiting the tomb that morning but many. It is clear that Yeshua appeared first to Mary Magdalene and after that to the women who Matthew says "held Him by the feet and worshipped Him" (Mt.28:9).

Hence time elapsed from first appearance with Mary Magdalene and the second with the women. It is clear from the context that this time may have only been a few minutes, but this would have been enough time for Yeshua to accomplish various activities. If one fully reads the verse in which Yeshua commands Mary not to touch Him, then one would find that a reason was given why Mary should not do this.

legei auth ihsouV, mh mou aptou, oupw gar anabebhka proV ton patera...

"Yeshua says to her, 'Do not touch me, for I have not ascended to the Father...' Jn.20:17a

This statement clearly implies that after Yeshua ascended to the Father the prohibition would be removed. Therefore when Yeshua appeared to the women, He must have already ascended to the Father and had returned. \*

**\* Please note: this ascension is not referring to Yeshua's final ascension at the end of forty days. In regard to His final ascension a different Greek word is used, anefereto.**

This is supported by the fact that there were other instances where not only did people touch Yeshua, He invited them to do so (see Jn.20:27, Lk.24:39).

Those who attack the New Testament witness based on this issue (and many like it), fail to allow that time can alter prohibitions and even do away with them altogether.

For example, a police officer tells an individual that he is forbidden to drive a car because he has no license. This individual obtains a license later that same day and the same officer upon hearing this information tells the individual to drive safely. Is it legitimate for one to say the officer's statements an unexplainable conflict? Of course not! However those who attack the credibility of the New Testament do so, without allowing for the possibility that events could have transpired that reconcile to two opposing conflicts.



The remaining conflicts involve the resurrection appearance of Yeshua.

### **Conflict #17 Unto whom does Yeshua appear first?**

Mark's Gospel explicitly states that Yeshua appeared first to Mary Magdalene (see Mk. 16:9). There is nothing in John's Gospel to contradict this. Matthew's Gospels records both Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb that morning and it is while the women are responding to the angelic command to go and tell the disciples that they encounter Yeshua. Therefore, there are those who see a conflict because John clearly writes that Mary Magdalene was at the tomb when she met Yeshua and Matthew has the women in the midst of their journey to tell the disciples.

Two observations must stated, first there is no reason to assume that when Matthew speaks of the women encounter Yeshua on their way from the tomb to tell the disciples that Mary Magdalene had not already met Yeshua previously. The account in Matthew and Mark is similar and Mark tells the reader that Mary's experience was indeed separate from that of the other women.

Rabbi Singer writes in regard to this,

*"Mark's story does not indicate where this appearance takes place. It is quite clear, however that it occurs sometime after Mary fled the tomb. (16:8-9)"*

Rabbi Singer makes this comment because if he did not say that Mark alludes to a

different location than Matthew, Mark and John would pose no difficulty at all. The problem is that although he makes this bold statement, "*It is quite clear,...*" he does not provide any reason to support it.

The text Rabbi Singer quotes is inserted into the account by Mark in order to inform the reader that the women who encountered the angel and rushed to tell the disciples were not the ones who first encountered Yeshua. Mark gives no additional information about Mary Magdalene's experience that is, when or where. Therefore Rabbi Singer's statement is without foundation.

Thus far this study has not commented on Luke's account in regard to this issue. Once again Rabbi Singer attacks the Gospels as presenting information which are contradictory. This time Rabbi Singer does offer support for his claim. He states that whereas Matthew, Mark, and John have Mary Magdalene as the one who encountered Yeshua first, Luke's Gospel has Cleopas and the another individual meeting Yeshua first (see Lk.24:13, 18).

Rabbi Singer also states,

*"Contradicting Mark's resurrection tale, Luke asserts (24:34) that when the two followers who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus returned to Jerusalem and told the eleven about their encounter, the disciples declared 'It is true!,' whereas Mark insist that when the two reported their encounter, the disciples did not believe!-Mark16:13"*  
(see page 95)

Does Luke's account really represent a conflict? No. Luke does not state that it was the two followers who first met Yeshua. In fact whereas the other accounts have Yeshua appearing to the women early in the morning, Luke records that Yeshua appeared to the two travelers much later in the day.

"And they drew near unto the village, where they were going, and He (Yeshua) made it as though He would have gone further. But they constrained Him saying, "Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent..." Lk.24:28-29

Luke does not have Yeshua revealing His identity to the men until they ate the evening meal.

It is not reasonable to conclude that this was in fact the first encounter that any one had with the risen Messiah. Whereas the other Gospels record their encounter very early in the morning, Luke records his some twelve hours later. Luke simply chooses not to record what the other three Gospels do, rather he focuses on an account to which only Mark briefly alludes. It is within Mark's brief statement about the two travelers Rabbi Singer finds another conflict.

Rabbi Singer claims that in Luke's account the disciples believed the two's report, while he states that in Mark the disciple did not believe.

Rabbi Singer travels throughout the world speaking to large groups of people, he has a radio show and one can find him in newspaper columns even in Israel. He is always referred to as an expert on the New Testament and is the one that many other rabbis turn to in order to discourage Jewish individuals from accepting the claims of the New Testament. Although Rabbi Singer is called a New Testament "expert," he fails to disclose that he often attribute statements incorrectly.

If one checks out what is actually recorded in the Gospels in regard to this issue, Rabbi Singer's claim is not only without foundation, but is the opposite of what is recorded. He states that in Luke's account that "*the disciples declared 'It is true!'*"

The problem is that no such statement is found in Luke's Gospel. Notice that Rabbi Singer gives no citation as where such a statement can be found. Even if one gives Rabbi Singer the benefit of the doubt and allows this statement (It is true!) to be a general statement summarizing Lk.24:32, "And they said, one to the other, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?"

"If one checks out what is actually recorded in the Gospels in regard to this issue, Rabbi Singer's claim is not only without foundation, but is the opposite of what is recorded."

The problem is that this verse is speaking about the two travelers and the citation that Rabbi Singer provides as evidence of a conflict is about the eleven disciples (Mk.16:13).

There is no conflict if one Gospel account says that the two individuals who were traveling to Emmaus believed after Yeshua appeared to them, and the other Gospel account in speaking about the eleven disciples who were told by these two travelers about their experience with the risen Messiah did not believe.

Hence there is no conflict in regard to whom Yeshua appeared first.

### **Conflict #18 Inconsistencies about the Post-Resurrection appearances of Yeshua**

Does the New Testament state conflicting accounts of the post-resurrection appearances of Yeshua? The answer is clearly no. Then why do many people attack the New Testament citing there are conflicts in regard to the number of times Yeshua appeared,

what He said to those He appeared to, and the order of these appearances?

The answer is simple, a belief that the New Testament presents events chronologically and all four Gospels must reveal the same information. That is, if one writer is inspired to include additional information and events, while omitting other events this represents a conflict. It is interesting to note that the rules of evidence in a court of law has no problem with such testimony and does not discredit those who provide such accounts. As has been presented in this study, the Gospel writers did not set out to write an all inclusive historical account of the events of Yeshua's life.

Rabbi Singer and those who share his comments need to consider what John writes,

"And there are many other things which Yeshua did, the which, if every one should be written, I (John) suppose that even the world itself could not contain the book that should be written. Amen" Jn.21:25

It is with this verse that the four Gospels are concluded. John's statement has great hermeneutical value. In summarizing the Person and Work of Yeshua, John states that many things were omitted by the Gospel writers. In the previous verse John labels the Gospel accounts as testimony not historical narrative. Testimony is different in many ways to a historical narrative. While a historical narrative does have chronological concerns, testimony is compilation of one or more individuals who testify to what was seen. Perception is a key consideration. Although the Gospels contain testimony and is able to withstand any form of criticism, it should not be merely considered as testimony in the sense of a deposition.

It must be strongly emphasized that the primary concern of the New Testament is revelation. That is, the revealing of spiritual truth that the man of G-d is fully equipped to know G-d and serve Him properly.

In returning to the issue of Yeshua's post-resurrection appearances the following guidelines must be presented.

- Do the Gospel accounts ever state that they are revealing the order of His appearances?

-

- Do the Gospel accounts ever state that there is a precise number of appearances?

-

The answer to these questions are no. This being the case, can one then state without knowing the exact order and number that there is a conflict in where these appearances took place? Once again the answer is no. The reason for this is that the reader cannot be sure that the same appearance is being referred to by more than one Gospel writer.

## **Post-Resurrection Appearances**

### **Matthew:**

The Gospel of Matthew records two post-resurrection appearances.\*

The first is as the women are on the way to tell the disciples and encounter Yeshua (see Mt.28:9-10).

The second is after the eleven disciples departed from Jerusalem and entered into the Galilee. They met Yeshua at a mountain that He had appointed for them to meet Him (see Mt.28:16-20).

**\* Please note that Matthew concludes the second appearance with words that Yeshua may have said at His ascension. It is common for Scripture to be used in a different context than it appeared originally. Matthew places this authentic statement of Yeshua at the conclusion of Yeshua appearance in Galilee. This does not necessary mean that Yeshua said these words at this time. Rather it was after the Galilee appearance that Matthew was inspired to conclude his Gospel. In doing so the Holy Spirit inspired Matthew to leave his readers with the some of Yeshua's final instructions for His disciples. Hence these words may reveal a third post-resurrection appearance within Matthew's Gospel.**

### **Mark:**

The Gospel of Mark records four post-resurrection appearances.

The first is when the reader is informed about Mary Magdalene's experience (see Mk. 16:9).

The second is when Mark mentions the two travelers, most likely the Emmaus Road appearance (see Mk.16:12-13).

The third is when Yeshua scolds the eleven for their unbelief and hardness of heart (see Mk.16:14).

The fourth is when Yeshua appeared to them and then ascended into the heavens (see Mk.16:19).

### **Luke:**

The Gospel of Luke records three post-resurrection appearances.

The first is the Emmaus Road appearance (see Lk.24:13-35).

The second is while the two individuals whom Yeshua had appeared to on the Emmaus Road were explaining to the disciples what had happened to them (see Lk.24:36-48).

The third is when He instructed them and then ascended from Bethany (Lk.24:50-52).

### **John:**

The Gospel of John records four post-resurrection appearances.

The first is when Mary Magdalene meets Yeshua early in the garden (see Jn.20:14-17).

The second is still on the first day of the week, but in the evening when the disciples were behind lock doors and Yeshua appeared (see Jn.20:19-23). Please note that Thomas was not present at this appearance.

The third is eight days after the second appearance. Thomas is with the rest of the disciples and Yeshua invites Thomas to examine His hands and His side as proof that He has risen (see Jn.20:26-29).

The fourth is set in Galilee on the Sea of Tiberias. The entire twenty-first chapter of John is dedicated to this appearance.

### **Acts:**

Luke continues his account of Yeshua in the book of Acts. He writes,

"To whom (the apostles) He (Yeshua) showed Himself alive after His suffering, by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of G-d." Acts 1:3

Luke also writes about Yeshua's ascension in to heaven (see Acts 1:4-11).

### **Paul:**

The Apostle Paul also provides a brief list of post-resurrection appearances,

"And that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that, He was seen by more than five-hundred men at one time; of whom most are still alive today, but some are fallen asleep (dead). After that, He was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen by me also, as one born out of due time." 1 Cor. 15:5-8.

### **Inconsistencies about the Post-Resurrection appearances of Yeshua:**

Is there a problem in the number of disciples who saw Yeshua after His resurrection?

-Matthew says that Yeshua appeared to the eleven disciples in Galilee (see Mt.28:16).

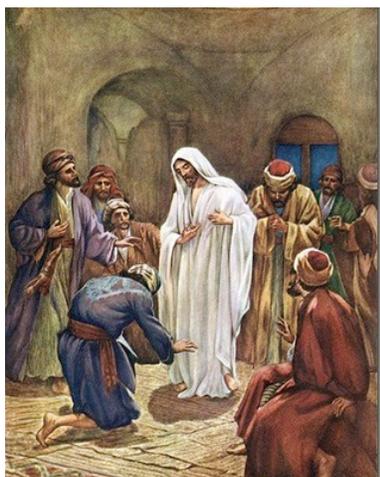
-Mark says the Yeshua appeared to the eleven disciples (see Mk.16:14). This appearance most likely occurred in the Galilee or in Jerusalem. The text does not specify. Mark also tells of another appearance when Yeshua ascended into the heavens (see Mark 16:19). The text is not clear the number of disciples who were present.

-Luke says the Yeshua appeared to the eleven disciples while in Jerusalem (see Lk. 24:33). Luke also records a latter appearance which took place in Bethany on the day Yeshua ascended into the heavens (see Lk.24:50-51). There is no way of knowing how many disciples were present.

-John says that Yeshua appeared to the disciples three times. One of those times Thomas was not present. This fact would mean that the most disciples that could have been present on Yeshua's first appearance \* with His disciples ten.

Many see the fact that only ten disciples being present when Matthew, Mark, and Luke record eleven as an inconsistency. This is not the case.

**\* This is the first appearance that John records.**



When Matthew speaks of the eleven disciples he is referring to an appearance which took place in the Galilee,

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee..." Mt. 28:16

When Mark speaks of the eleven disciples he is referring to an appearance which the text is unclear as to when it took place (see Mk.16:14). Therefore there is no reason to assume that this is the same appearance as the one which John has only ten disciples present.

When Luke writes of the eleven disciples it is when the two travelers returned to Jerusalem and began to tell how Yeshua appeared to them (see Lk.24:33). It is during that evening that Yeshua appears to them. The point which must be stressed is the possibility that Thomas was present when the two travelers arrived, but sometime later departed before Yeshua appeared to them. There is textual support for this view in John's account of this event.

When John states that Thomas was not present he qualifies the time period when Thomas was not there.

qwmaV de eiV ek twN dwdeka, o legomenoV didumoV, ouk hn met autwn ote hlqen ihsouV.

"But Thomas one of the twelve, the one called Didumos, he was not with them **when Yeshua came.**" Jn.20:24

One must ask why John emphasizes the fact the Thomas was not there **when** Yeshua came ouk hn met autwn **ote** hlqen ihsouV ? The reason is simple, for when the Gospel writers (Mark and John) begin their narrative of this event Thomas was present,

"Then the same day at evening, being the first (day) of the week, when the doors were shut where **the disciples were assembled...**" Jn.20:19

John clues the reader into the fact that when Yeshua appeared Thomas was not with them. This is the reason for the Greek word **ote (when)** and why John adds the phrase "when Yeshua came". If Thomas was not there at all that evening John could have simply written,

**But Thomas one of the twelve, the one called Didumos, was not with them .**

G-d inspired every word included in Holy Scripture. There are no words which do not serve a purpose. This being the case, John was inspired to write this verse (Jn.24:20) in this manner in order to remove any conflict between the recorded number of disciples present when Yeshua appeared that evening.

Many have pointed out another inconsistency related to the number of disciples to which Yeshua appeared. Paul writes in 1 Cor. 15:5,

"And that He was seen of Cephas, then by the twelve."

How could Yeshua appear to the twelve disciples the critics ask? Skeptics of the validity of the New Testament mock Paul by asking whether Paul knew that Judas had committed suicide (see Mt.27:5 and Acts 1:18)?

Once again this is another example of individuals attacking a book to which they are not that familiar. Long before Paul every became a follower of Yeshua the eleven disciples selected by lot Matthias (see Acts 1:26),

"And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; **and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.**"

Matthias was selected before the first Pentecost, i.e. within fifty days after the resurrection. Another incorrect assumption that critics make is that Paul in 1 Cor. 15:5 is

stating that Yeshua had to appear to the "twelve" at one time. This is not the case. As long as Yeshua during his forty days was seen by Matthias it is a correct statement for Paul to make. Paul writes in the next verse, 1Cor.15:6 that five hundred men saw Him at one time. It is not possible that Matthias was present in that number? Maybe all twelve disciples were at that appearance? For critics to pose 1Cor.15:5 as a "serious inconsistency" as many do (Rabbi Singer being one, page 95 of his Study Guide) demonstrates a serious deficiency in basic New Testament content.

It is well established fact that before should attempt to interpret the Word of G-d, one should have a strong understanding of its content.

The final inconsistency that this study will examine in regard to the post-resurrection appearances of Yeshua relates to when the Holy Spirit was received by the disciples?

Critics cite Luke in the book of Acts (Acts 2:1-4) who states it was on Shavuot (Pentecost) that the Holy Spirit was given, while John seems to say that the Holy Spirit was bestowed upon the disciples on the evening following Yeshua's resurrection (see Jn. 20:22).

These separate events had two distinct purposes. The occurrence in John was not the giving of the Holy Spirit upon all who believe in Him. This is what took place in Acts chapter two. In John Yeshua was commissioning His disciples not as disciples any longer, but they had graduated becoming the ones He now ordained to continue His ministry. Yeshua came to reconcile man to G-d. His death provided the propitiation for sins (see 1Jn.2:2). This is why immediately after breathing the Holy Spirit upon them, Yeshua said in the next verse,

“...in regard to the post-resurrection appearances of Yeshua revealed in the Scripture which cannot be reasonably explained.”

"Whom ever sins you forgive, they are forgiven unto them; and whom ever sins you retain, they are retained." Jn.20:23

Hence, the event recorded in John 20:22 is similar to when the prophet anointed the new king and poured oil upon his head and the spirit came upon him. John is revealing that the fact that the disciples received the Holy Spirit first is proof they had been called to this position in the same way the descending of the Holy Spirit upon the kings, showed their selection as Israel's leader.

In summary of the eighteenth conflict, there is not any testimony in regard to the post-resurrection appearances of Yeshua revealed in the Scripture which cannot be reasonably explained.

In conclusion after nearly two thousand years of criticism, the Gospel witness of the New Testament has stood the attacks of its critics. One can be assured that trusting in the revelation of both the Old and New Testaments is God's complete and final written revelation to man.

The author of this brief study is of the utmost conviction that the words which John was inspired to conclude the Book of Revelation are also most appropriate for all of Scripture,

***"For I testify unto every man that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that were written in this book:***

***And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.***

***He which testifies these things says, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.***

***The grace of our Lord Messiah Jesus be with you all. Amen ." Rev. 22:18-21***



*R. Baruch, Ph.D.*

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