

Four In One Gospel Part Two: *The Resurrection*

Compiled by Gary T. Panell

Bible Questions Answered by Paul R. Van Gorder (Radio Bible Class)

Question: A young believer has asked the following question: "If Jesus was crucified on Good Friday and rose on the first day of the week, how could He have been in the grave for 3 nights?"

Answer: First of all, I am aware that there is a great difference of opinion among equally sincere students of the Word of God as to what day our Lord was crucified. Please allow me to sketch briefly what I believe to be the order of events.

It is important to realize that two Sabbaths occurred in the week of Christ's death. Thursday was the "great" or Passover Sabbath, while Saturday of that week was the regular weekly Sabbath. Matthew 28:1 makes reference to "the end of the Sabbath." Literally, this statement should read "the Sabbaths having just passed," or "after the Sabbaths." The word "Sabbath" in Matthew 28:1 is in the plural, indicating that two Sabbaths occurred that week.

Tuesday night of the final week of His earthly life, the Lord Jesus ate the Last Supper with His disciples. Remember, the Hebrew day began at sunset. So the Last Supper was actually eaten on Wednesday; that is, sometime after 6 o'clock on what we would call Tuesday night. Then followed His prayer in the garden, His arrest, and His appearance before Pilate, Herod, and Caiaphas. Finally, He was taken back to Pilate, condemned to death, and led out to be crucified. I believe this all occurred on Wednesday.

In John 19:31 it is recorded, "The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that Sabbath day was an high day), [the Jews] besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." The Sabbath day referred to in this verse was the "great Sabbath" and occurred on Thursday. So our Lord's body was taken down from the cross on Wednesday and buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. His body was in the tomb that Thursday (the great Sabbath), Friday (a work day), and Saturday, the regular, weekly Sabbath. This fulfills the 3 days and 3 nights (Matthew 12:40).

Our Lord arose from the grave some time before sunrise on Sunday, the first day of the week. Remember that when Mary arrived at the tomb before sunrise, He had already risen (John 20:1, 2)

Therefore, even though we commemorate our Lord's death on Good Friday, I believe He actually was crucified on Wednesday. {Maybe we should have Good Wednesday services.}* This

accounts for His being in the tomb 3 days and 3 nights, and it fulfills the type of Jonah being in the belly of the fish for the same amount of time.

{I have used the book of Luke as an anchor to hold us to the sequence, since Dr. Luke said, "...To write to you an orderly account." (Luke 1: 3b)}*

"That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. (And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph observed where He was laid. Mark 15:47) Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. (1)

Now after the Sabbath(s), as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (the mother of James, Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10) came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. (2)

Now while they (the women)* were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' "And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. (3)

Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. (4) (...they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away--for it was very large, Mark 16:2b-4).

On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him." (5)

(1) Luke 23:54-56; (2) Matthew 28:1-4; (3) Matthew 28:11-15; (4) Luke 24:1; (5) John 20:1-2

{The women, except for Mary Magdalene now (she had left before looking inside), because she wanted to tell the apostles that the stone had been removed from the entrance of the tomb.}*
"But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, (And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed, Mk.16:5) (But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be

afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus (of Nazareth, Mk. 16:6b) who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come; see the place where the Lord lay, Mt. 28:5-6). behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered His words' (6) (And go quickly and tell His disciples (--and Peter-Mk. 16:7) that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him (as He said to you, Mk. 16:7b). Behold, I have told you. So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word, Mt. 28:7-8.) (So they went out quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid, Mk. 16:8) {Some have said there is a contradiction here because one account says two angels, and another says one, believe me there are no contradictions in the Bible, one angel appeared, and then another one, so that at least part of the time two angels were present speaking, maybe in unison.}*

{The other ladies have left now, and Mary Magdalene is back from telling Peter and John about the stone being rolled away. She is very distraught over the whole affair and the possibility that someone may have stolen Jesus body!}* Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. (7) But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

{I believe Mary was so sad, and weeping so much that she did not even notice that she was talking to unusual beings inside the tomb, nor did she recognize Jesus right away.}*

Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus, Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God. (8)

{Then Jesus appears to the other women on the road, that had left before Mary Magdalene had gotten back to the tomb, there were probably several ways to get there so they did not see each other nor Peter and John on the road. They were all coming and going at different times.}* And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" And they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me." (9) It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. (10) She (Mary Magdalene) went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. (Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these

things to her. John 20:18). And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe. (11) (Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. Luke 24:9-11)

(6) Luke 24:2-8; (7) Mark 16:9; (8) John 20:11-17; (9) Matthew 28:9-10; (10) Luke 24:10; (11) Mark 16:10-11

{The "other disciple" is John, but since he is writing, and since he is very humble, he does not say "I" John.}* Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. And he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb (stooping down, Luke 23:9); and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. For as yet they did not know the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again to their own homes. (12) (Peter) he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened, Luke 24:12b).

{Only men could testify in a court of law, so when Paul gives his list of who saw Jesus in what order he only mentions the men as witnesses. He does not mention Mary Magdalene or any of the other women Jesus appeared to first, because their word would not have been acceptable in a court of law at that time. Jesus may have appeared to Peter just briefly after Peter was coming back from the tomb, because by evening when the "twelve" (which is what they were called even when Judas was already dead) were assembled (except for Thomas); Peter had already seen the Lord. It seems from the list, that Paul gives, the main emphasis is men that are apostles (Paul is making this point that he is an apostle because he has seen the Lord also) and how Christ appeared to each one of them individually at some point.}*

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. (13)

Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" And He said to them "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a

Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.

(12) John 20:3-10; (13) 1 Corinthians 15:3-7

Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread. Now as they said these things.

(Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." John 20:19) But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? (.and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. Mark 16:14b) (When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. John 20:20a) "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself, Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have. When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy and marveled, He said to them, Have you any food her?" So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence." (14) Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, Receive the Holy Spirit. "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (15)

(14) Luke 24:13-43; (15) John 20:20b-23

Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to You!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (16)

After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No." And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.

But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught." Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.

Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"-knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and like-wise the fish. This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead. So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where

you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."

(16) John 20:24-31

Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what about this man?" Jesus said to him, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you? You follow Me." Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what is that to you?" This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen. (17)

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (18)

And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." (19) "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (20)

(17) John 21:1-25; (18) Acts 1:1-8; (19) Mark 16:15-18; (20) Matthew 28:18-20

Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.

And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. (Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. Acts 1:9). Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. (21) And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven." Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. (22)

So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen. (23)

(21) Luke 24:46-51; (22) Acts 1:10-12; (23) Mark 16:19-20

{My personal comments}* G.T. Panell

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