

Agreement of The Easter Account in the Four Gospels

Time passes so fast. Just days ago, we yelled, “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” Now we are remembering that crucial event that changed history for all mankind, the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus, the Christ.

The event is recounted through several accounts given in the Gospels. As expected of witnesses, or scribes of witnesses, each tells the story of that wonderful Easter Day in his own words. Each writer reports different facets of a common event, as the Holy Spirit inspired him.

At the visitation of Bishop Clifton Daniel to St. Joseph’s Episcopal Church, Fayetteville, on 03 April 2005, he preached the wonderful Gospel message. He made the point, “Christians do not believe Jesus is alive because the tomb is empty. Christians believe the tomb is empty because Jesus is alive.”

Bishop Daniel remarked that the gospel accounts are not in agreement of events following the observation that the stone was rolled away.

The following is my comparison of the accounts. I have retained the order within each account, parsing phrases into a table to make easy the task of reconstructing the sequence of events. The consistency of the accounts is astounding. Each one contributes details, adding value to our understanding of the events of that wonderful morning. The accounts below have been taken from the Revised Standard Version. I have occasionally omitted an introductory word, replaced a personal pronoun with a name, or changed punctuation to end a sentence.

The Acts of the Apostles begins with an ever-so-brief summary of the highlights of this event:

In the first book, O The-oph’ilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. To them he presented himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the kingdom of God. And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me, for John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Sama’ria and to the end of the earth.” And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This

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Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

On Easter morning,

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
After the Sabbath	When the Sabbath was past,			
toward the dawn of the first day of the week			On the first day of the week	
Mary Mag'dalene	Mary Mag'dalene,		Mary Mag'dalene	Women preparing to go to tomb.
and the other Mary	and Mary the mother of James,			
	and Salo'me			
	bought spices,			
	so that they might go and anoint him.			
	Very early			Women enroute to tomb.
	on the first day of the week,	On the first day of the week,		
went to see the sepulcher.	they went to the tomb	at early dawn, they went to the tomb,	came to the tomb early, while it was still dark,	
	when the sun had risen.			
		taking the spices which they had prepared.		
	They were saying to one another,			Conversation before arriving at tomb.
	“Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the			

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Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
	tomb?”			
And behold, there was a great earthquake;				The stone is rolled away.
for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven				
and came and rolled back the stone,				
and sat upon it.				
His appearance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.				
And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like lead men.				
	And looking up,			
	they saw	And they found	And saw	
	that the stone was rolled back.	the stone rolled away from the tomb,	that the stone had been taken away from the tomb.	First observation of the stone having been rolled away.
	It was very large.			
			So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them,	Mary fetches Peter and John.
			“They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where	

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
			they have laid him.”	
			Peter then came out with the other disciple, and they went toward the tomb. The both ran, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.	Peter and John arrive at the tomb.
			Stooping to look in, he saw the linen cloths lying there, but he did not go in.	John looks in the tomb without going in.
			Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; he saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin, which had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths but rolled up in a place by itself.	Peter goes into the tomb.
			Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not know the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.	John enters the tomb.

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
			Then the disciples went back to their homes.	Peter and John depart.
			But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept, she stooped to look into the tomb;	Mary remains.
The angel said to the women,				Compassionate angel outside the tomb.
“Do not be afraid:				
For I know that you seek Jesus				
who was crucified.				
He is not here;				
For he is risen.				
As he said.				
Come,				
see the place where he lay.				
	Entering the tomb,	But when they went in		Women enter the tomb.
		they did not find the body.		
		While they were perplexed by this,		
		behold, two men stood by them	and she saw two angels	Angels in the tomb.
	They saw a young man			
	sitting on the right side,			
	dressed in a white robe;	in dazzling apparel;	in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at	

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Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
			the feet.	
	and they were amazed.	and as they were frightened		
		and bowed their faces to the ground,		
	He said to them,	The men said to them,	They said to her,	
			“Woman, why are you weeping?”	Conversation inside the tomb between Mary Mag’dalene and an angel.
			She said to them, “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.”	
	“Do not be amazed.			
		“Why do you seek the living among the dead?”		
	You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified.			
		Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee,		
		that the Son of man		
		must be delivered into the hands of sinful men,		
		and be crucified,		
		and on the third		

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Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
		day rise.”		
	He has risen.			
	He is not here.			
	See the place where they laid him.			
			Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus.	Jesus appears to Mary.
			Jesus said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?”	
			Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.”	We do not know why Jesus was not recognizable.
			Jesus said to her, “Mary.”	
			She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rab-bo’ni!” (which means Teacher).	
			Jesus said to her, “Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father;	
		And they		

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
		remembered his words,		
Then go quickly	Go,		but go	The first command to spread the Easter news was given to Mary.
and tell his disciples	tell his disciples		to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”	Only Peter and John know the tomb is empty. Others need yet to be told.
	and Peter			Peter had seen the empty tomb already, but does not know it is empty because Jesus is risen. Peter is to be told where to go to see Jesus.
that he has risen				
from the dead.				
Behold, he is going before you to Galilee.	that he is going before you to Galilee;			Jesus’ future itinerary, but not his next stop.
There you will see him.	There you will see him,			
	as he told you.”			
Lo, I have told you.”				
They departed quickly	They went out and fled	And returning		The women depart the tomb.
from the tomb	from the tomb	from the tomb		
with fear	for trembling			
and great joy,	and astonishment			

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Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
	had come upon them;			
	and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.			Said nothing to anyone they did not know and trust. Afraid of the temple authorities?
		and told all this to the eleven and to all the rest.		The women told the eleven and other followers.
	When he rose early			
	on the first day of the week,			
	he appeared first to Mary Mag'dalene,			Explanatory reference to an earlier event.
	from whom he had cast out seven demons.			
And ran.	She went	Now it was Mary Mag'dalene	Mary Mag'dalene went	
		and Jo-anna		
		and Mary the mother of James		
		and the other women with them		
to tell his disciples	and told those who had been with him,	who told this to the apostles;	and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.	
	As they mourned and wept			
	when they heard that			

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Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
	he was alive			
	and had been seen by her,			
		These words seemed to them an idle tale,		
	they would not believe it.	and they did not believe them.		The eleven did not believe Jesus was alive.
		That very day,		
		two of them		Two followers.
		were going to a village named Emma'us, about seven miles from Jerusalem,		
		and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.		
		While they were talking and discussing together,		
	After this he appeared in another form	Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing them.		Jesus appears to two followers. Again, we do not know why they did not recognize Jesus.
	to two of them,			
	as they were walking into the country.			
		And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as		

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
		you walk?"		
		And they stood still, looking sad.		
		Then one of them, named Cle'opas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem that does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"		One of the followers is Cleopas.
		And he said to them, "What things?"		
		And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened.		

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
		Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.		
		Some 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.”		
		And he said to them, “O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?”		
		Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things		Jesus reviews Scriptures (Old Testament) that speak of him.

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
		concerning himself.		
		So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.		
		When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them.		Jesus breaks bread with followers.
		And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight.		Jesus vanished.
		They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?"		
	They went back and told the rest,	And they rose that same hour and returned to		The followers on the road to Emmaus did

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
		Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together		not include one of the eleven.
		and those who were with them, who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"		Jesus has already appeared to Peter. This another event that was not recorded.
		Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.		"They" are the two followers on the road to Emmaus, which did not include Peter.
	but they did not believe them.			
			On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews,	
		As they were saying this,		
And behold, Jesus met them		Jesus himself stood among them.	Jesus came and stood among them	Jesus appears to the disciples in Jerusalem, but not with Thomas present.
		But they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit.		
and said,		And he said to	and said to	

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Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
		them,	them,	
“Hail!”				
			“Peace be with you.”	
		“Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see that I have.”	When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.	Jesus has followers touch him.
And they came up				
and took hold of his feet				
		And while they still disbelieved for joy, and wondered,	Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.	
		He said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them.		Jesus eats in front of them.
and worshiped him.				
Then Jesus said to them,		Then he said to them,		
		“These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about		

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
		me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled.”		
		Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,		Jesus reviews with disciples the Old Testament scriptures concerning himself.
		and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning with Jerusalem.		
		You are witnesses of these things.		
			Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.”	
		Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you;		
			And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them,	Jesus gives the Holy Spirit to the disciples. This precedes the event of

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
			“Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”	Pentecost, Acts 2. This is before Jesus ascended.
		but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high.”		Apparently, “power from on high” is separate from receiving the Holy Spirit.
“Do not be afraid;				
go				
and tell my brethren				
to go to Galilee,				
and there they will see me.”				
		Then he led them out as far as Bethany,		
			Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place	Thomas expresses doubt. Recall that others also doubted earlier. What is different is that Thomas states he will not believe unless certain conditions are fulfilled.

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
			my hand in his side, I will not believe.”	
	Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they sat at table		Eight days later, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, “Peace be with you.”	
	And he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.			
			Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing.”	
			Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!”	We are not told that Thomas actually did feel Jesus.
			Jesus said to	Jesus says

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
			him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."	Thomas believed because he saw Jesus. The main point is that those who believe without seeing are blessed.
			Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the 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.	
The eleven disciples				
went to Galilee,				Roughly a 60 – 70 mile trip, walking.
			After this Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberi-as; and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathana-el of Cana in Galilee, the sons of	Jesus appears to the fishermen disciples: Peter, Thomas the Twin, Nathanel, sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples (one is possibly John).

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
			Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat; but that night they caught nothing.	
			Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.	
			Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any fish?"	Jesus tells disciples where to fish.
			They answered him, "No."	
			He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some."	
			So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, for the quantity of fish.	
			The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the	

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
			Lord!”	
			When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea.	
			But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off.	
			When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish lying on it, and bread.	Jesus already had fish.
			Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.”	
			So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.	
			Jesus said to	

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
			them, "Come and have breakfast."	
			Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.	
			Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish.	
			This was the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.	Third appearance of Jesus to disciples.
			When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"	Jesus to Peter: Do you love me? Feed my lambs, tend my sheep, feed my sheep.
			He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you."	
			He said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"	
			He said to him, "Yes, Lord;	

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
			you know that I love you.”	
			He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him a third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?”	
			And he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.”	
			Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.	
			Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but then you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go.” (This was said to show by what death he was to glorify God.) And after this he said to him, “Follow me.”	Jesus foretells Peter’s death.
			Peter turned and saw following them	Peter asks about John.

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
			the disciple whom Jesus loved, who had lain close to his breast at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?"	
			Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!"	
			The saying spread abroad among the brethren that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?"	Pay attention to what Jesus actually says. It has precedence over sayings of the disciples.
			This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is	Often assumed to be John.

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
			true.	
			But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that could be written.	
to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.				
When they saw him, they worshiped him,				
but some doubted.				Still some doubters.
Jesus came				
and said to them,	And he said to them			
“All authority in heaven and on earth				
has been given to me.				
Go therefore and	“Go			Great commission.
make disciples				
of all nations,	into all the world			
	and preach the gospel to the whole creation.			
	He who believes			
	and is baptized			
	will be saved;			
	but he who does not believe			

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Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
	will be condemned.			
baptizing them in the name				
of the Father				
and of the Son				
and of the Holy Spirit,				
teaching them				
to observe				
all that I have commanded you;				
	And these signs will accompany those who believe:			
	In my name			
	they will cast out demons;			
	they will speak in new tongues;			
	they will pick up serpents.			
	If they drink any deadly thing, it will not hurt them.			
	They will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”			
And lo, I am				
with you always,				
to the close of the age.”				
		And lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them,		Ascension
	Then the Lord Jesus, after he			

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Matthew	Mark	Luke	John	Notes
	had spoken to them			
	was taken up into heaven,	he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven.		
	and sat down			
	at the right hand of God.			
		And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God.		
	They went forth			
	and preached everywhere,			
	While the Lord			
	worked with them			
	and confirmed the message			
	by the signs that attended it.			
	Amen.			