

There Were Two Angels Within the Sepulcher (Part II)

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There Were Two Angels Seen by the Women at the Sepulcher, and They Were Standing Up
(*Luke 24:4*)

There Was but One Angel Seen, and He Was Sitting Down
(*Matthew 28:2, 5*)

There Were Two Angels Seen Within the Sepulcher
(*John 20:11-12*)

There Was but One Angel Seen Within the Sepulcher
(*Mark 16:5*)

As Christ's resurrection was such an important event, there had to be at least two or three firsthand witnesses to verify that it occurred.

But if he (a brother in the faith) will not hear you, take with you one or two more, that **'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established'** (Mt. 18:16; cf. Dt. 17:6; 19:15; Jn. 8:17; 2Cor. 13:1; 1Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

As no human being witnessed Christ's resurrection from the dead, it was necessary for two or three trustworthy spirit-beings to confirm they had seen this occur. Without their firsthand accounts, many would claim it did not occur. In fact, even one of Christ's own followers thought that someone had stolen his body from the tomb.

Then they (two angels) said to her (Mary Magdalene), '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' (Jn. 20:13; Ed. notes in parentheses).

By combining the accounts of the four gospel writers, it will become apparent that there were three angelic witnesses to Christ's resurrection from the dead. The first witness was actively involved in rolling away the stone in front of Christ's tomb.

And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His countenance was like lightning, and **his clothing as white as snow** (Mt. 28:2-3; emphasis added).

After rolling away the stone that blocked the entrance to Christ's tomb, Mark records that this same angel appeared inside the tomb.

And entering the tomb they (the women) saw a young man clothed in **a long white robe** sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed (Mk. 16:5; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

This angel then told the women not to be alarmed, confirmed that Christ had risen from the dead, and then showed them where Christ's body had been placed as recorded in both Matthew's and Mark's accounts.

But the angel answered and said to the women, **'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 the Lord lay'** (Mt. 28:5-6; emphasis added).

But he (the angel) said to them (the women), **'Do not be alarmed.** You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. **He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him** (Mk. 16:6; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

After showing the women where Christ's body had been placed, this angel gave them instructions which were recorded by both Matthew and Mark.

And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead, and indeed he is going before you into Galilee; there you will see him. Behold, I have told you (Mt. 28:7).

But go and tell his disciples – and Peter – that he is going before (ahead of) you into Galilee; there you will see him, as he said to you (cf. Mt. 26:32) (Mk. 16:7; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore the angel, in both Matthew's and Mark's accounts, is the same one. The other two angels, who appeared together, were in a standing position outside of Christ's tomb at one point, and then moved inside. The chronological sequence of events indicates that these two angels spoke with the women after they finished communicating with the angel who had rolled the stone away from the tomb.

And it happened as they (the women) were perplexed about this (following their encounter with the angel who rolled the stone away from the tomb), that behold two men stood by them in shining garments (Lk. 24:4; Ed. notes in parentheses).

John's account of these two angels confirms that the women encountered them upon their second visit to Christ's empty tomb because Mary ran to Peter and John and told them what she had seen following her communication with the angel who

rolled the stone away from Christ's tomb, and then she went back to the tomb with the two disciples.

Then she (Mary) ran (after encountering the first angel) and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple (John), 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.**'³Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb.⁴So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first (Jn. 20:2-4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It is important to note that when Mary left the tomb, following her experience with the first angel, she was not convinced that Christ had risen from the dead, even though the first angel confirmed that this had occurred. Consequently, two more witnesses were needed. Therefore, as soon as Peter and John had departed, Mary came into contact with two more witnesses. At first, she stooped down, looked into Christ's tomb, and the two angels asked her a question. However, she did not go inside the tomb.

Consequently, the two angels came out and stood close to Mary, and the women that accompanied her (see study: There Were Three Women Who Came to the Sepulcher), and continued speaking with her as recorded by Luke.

Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.¹¹But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb (this would have been the second time).¹²And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.¹³Then 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' (Jn. 20:10-13; Ed. note in parenthesis).

...behold, two men stood by them (Mary and the other women after they had peered into the tomb) in shining garments. ⁵Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they (the two angels) said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here, but is risen (two more witnesses to this event)! Remember how he spoke to you when he was still in Galilee (cf. Lk. 9:22) (Lk. 24:4b-6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

John's account added another event that occurred immediately after the two angels had finished speaking with Mary outside Christ's tomb.

Now when she had said this (i.e. 'I do not know where they have laid him' – followed by the response of the two angels; cf. Lk. 24:6-7), she turned around (from facing the two angels) and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus (Jn. 20:14; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So by combining the accounts of all four gospel writers, it is clear that there was a total of three angels who were firsthand witnesses to Christ's resurrection. Each of the four accounts, of this series of events, provides different aspects but when organized chronologically there are no contradictions.

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