

Chronology of Crucifixion and Resurrection Events Presented in John Wenham's *Easter Enigma*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992)

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I. Thursday Night

A. Jesus ate the Passover with the Twelve in Mark's house in Jerusalem.¹ Judas left to arrange his arrest.

B. Jesus, the Eleven, and Mark² left the house and crossed the Kidron Valley. Jesus warned them that the Shepherd would be struck down and the sheep scattered.

C. They entered Gethsemane,³ where Jesus prayed.

D. Judas arrived with an arresting party consisting of members of the Temple guard and soldiers from the Roman garrison stationed at the Antonio Fort.⁴

E. Jesus came to them at the garden gate, and as they backed away in fear, they fell over one another in disarray. The disciples emerged and a scuffle ensued, which Jesus terminated by making clear that he chose to give himself up. He demanded that his disciples be allowed to leave.

F. The Eleven escaped up the Mount of Olives in the direction of Bethany; Mark was nearly caught.

¹ It is unlikely that the disciples had more than one large house in Jerusalem available to them for meetings, and Acts 12:12 identifies that dwelling as Mark's house (p. 47-48).

² Mark perhaps joined the disciples in Gethsemane, the other family property (see n. 96), to make room in the house for other Passover guests to spend the night (p. 49).

³ Gethsemane means "oil press" which suggests that the garden was actually a profit-making olive grove. Such property would include an oil press and some farm buildings. It may also have been surrounded by a high wall to protect it from Jerusalem's hungry populace, a supposition that is supported by the fact Jesus and his disciples could find privacy there even during the great festivals. Since Jesus had "often met there with his disciples" (Lk. 22:13; Jn. 18:2), the owner had apparently placed this garden at his disposal for some time. Mark's father, being a well-to-do Jerusalem citizen and a supporter of the Lord's cause, is a good candidate for the owner (p. 17, 48-49, 58).

⁴ Apparently Judas and the temple guard had gone ahead, followed by the chief priests and soldiers. Only when it came to the binding of Jesus did the Roman soldiers step into the limelight (p. 57-58, 73-74).

G. Jesus was taken back to the city. Peter and John thought better of their cowardice and joined the returning company, which went to the high priest's residence. At the house of Caiaphas, Peter denied Jesus.

H. John took Peter to his home in Jerusalem,⁵ where Zebedee and Salome, Clopas and Mary, and Jesus' mother were waiting for them.⁶

II. Good Friday Morning and Afternoon

A. As Good Friday proceeded on its fateful course, Salome, Mary of Clopas, and the Lord's mother, presumably supported by Zebedee, Clopas, and John himself, went out into the city and followed through the grim events. Peter, broken by shame, remained in the house.

B. The other disciples remained at Bethany in acute apprehension, worried about their friends and the three mothers in the city. Mary Magdalene⁷ ventured to Jerusalem from Bethany to find out what had happened and soon joined her friends at the crucifixion.

C. Early in the crucifixion, the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, Salome, John, and Mary of Clopas were evidently allowed by the centurion to come near to the cross; other relatives and well-wishers (including Joanna and Susanna) stood further back. Jesus committed his mother to John's care, and John and Salome took her to their home in the city.

⁵ That John had a home in Jerusalem is suggested by Jn. 19:27. John's roots were in Capernaum, but as his intimate knowledge of Jerusalem and its happenings show, he also spent much of his time in the capital. Zebedee's fishing business may have been large enough that sales in Jerusalem warranted maintaining a house there. If the family supplied fish to the high priest's palace, that would explain how John was "known to the high priest" (Jn. 18:15) (p. 39-42).

⁶ They were all in this house during the festival because they were all related. Matthew and Mark identify three women watching the crucifixion *at a distance*, while John mentions Jesus' mother and three other women standing *by the cross*. It seems that the three women were supporting the Lord's mother by the cross until John took her to his home (see, II C & D). The three women then moved back to observe the Lord's suffering at a distance. The first woman is called Mary Magdalene in all three Gospels. The second woman is called the mother of the sons of Zebedee (by Matthew), Salome (by Mark), and Jesus' mother's sister (by John). Therefore, Salome is the Virgin Mary's sister, and she and Zebedee are the parents of the apostles James and John. The third woman is called the mother of James and Joseph or the other Mary (by Matthew), the mother of James the younger and of Joses or the mother of Joses or the mother of James (by Mark), and the wife of Clopas (by John). Therefore, Mary and Clopas are the parents of James the younger, who is most likely the other ("lesser") apostle James. The fact James is described in the lists of apostles as the son of Alphaeus is no bar to this conclusion because Clopas and Alphaeus could well be two Greek transliterations of the same Aramaic name. (Another possibility Wenham does not mention is that Clopas could be the stepfather of James.) According to Eusebius, the second-century historian Hegesippus asserted that Clopas was the brother of Joseph, the Virgin Mary's husband (p. 34-39).

⁷ Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany appear to be the same person (p. 28-33). This Mary may also have been the sinful woman described in Lk. 7:36-50 (p. 22-28).

D. After staying with his new mother for several hours, John returned to the crucifixion and witnessed the end. After the Lord's death, Joseph of Arimathea got permission to bury him, and the body was taken to Joseph's tomb. There was insufficient time to adequately prepare the body for burial, so Joseph and Nicodemus temporarily packed it in a large supply of dry spices.⁸

E. Joanna⁹ and Susanna¹⁰ followed Joseph into the tomb and helped to lay out the body while Mary Magdalene and Mary of Clopas watched at a respectful distance. The four women conferred and agreed to return at first light on Sunday to anoint the body as best they could. Before leaving they saw Joseph's servants roll the great stone against the entrance of the tomb.

F. Joanna and Susanna returned to the Hasmonean Palace and prepared spices and ointments. Mary Magdalene and Mary of Clopas went to John's house, it being too late for Mary Magdalene to return to Bethany.

III. Saturday

A. Members of the Sanhedrin sent a deputation of Pharisees and Sadducees to Pilate to procure guards for the tomb. The tomb was sealed, and the Temple guard, backed by a contingent of Roman soldiers, set up a watch.¹¹

B. After the Sabbath rest, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Clopas, and Salome bought spices for the anointing. Perhaps Salome bought the spices on behalf of the three of them, while Mary Magdalene and Mary of Clopas (accompanied by her husband since it was after sundown) ventured to Bethany to tell the disciples what had happened.

IV. Easter Sunday

A. While it was still dark, Mary Magdalene and Mary of Clopas (accompanied by her husband) set out from Bethany to return to John's house. Clopas stayed at John's house while Salome, Mary Magdalene, and Mary of Clopas went to the tomb to anoint the body.

⁸ The usual burial practice was to wash the body, anoint it with perfumed ointments, and dress it in a clean garment. Short strips of cloth were tied around the wrists and ankles to keep the arms and legs in position, and a cloth was wrapped around the face to keep the mouth from falling open. (Note John's account of the raising of Lazarus.) John's statement that they bound Jesus' body in linen cloths with spices, "as is the burial custom of the Jews" (Jn. 19:40), simply means that they did not disembowel and embalm him as was the Egyptian custom or cremate him as was the Roman custom (p. 66-67).

⁹ Joanna is described as a well-to-do woman who helped to support Jesus financially. Her husband was steward to Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee and Perea. She would probably have been on easy terms with Joseph, the prominent Sanhedrist (p. 39, 64).

¹⁰ Susanna is another well-to-do woman who is mentioned with Joanna in Lk. 8:3 (p. 64).

¹¹ The apocryphal Gospel of Peter suggests that the Roman soldiers played a back-up role in this instance similar to the role they played in Jesus' arrest (p. 72-75).

B. There was an earthquake, and an angel rolled the grave stone away (not to let the body out but to permit the coming witnesses to enter in verification of the resurrection). The angel sat on top of the stone and frightened the guards away. The angel then withdrew into the tomb so as not to frighten the women when they arrived.¹²

C. The Jewish guards encouraged the senior Roman soldiers to go first with them to their authorities, rather than to report their failure to Pilate, thinking that Caiaphas might be a useful buffer between them and the governor.

D. The women arrived at the tomb and saw that the gravestone had been rolled away. Mary Magdalene jumped to the conclusion that the body had been stolen and ran off to tell Peter and John.

E. As Salome and Mary of Clopas were considering what to do, Joanna and Susanna arrived, having come as agreed to help complete the burial rites. Joanna led the group into the tomb to verify that the body was in fact missing. The angels made themselves visible and delivered their message, which included instructions to inform the disciples.

F. Led by Joanna, the women rushed back into the city and headed for John's house.

G. Peter and John, having heard from Mary Magdalene that someone had stolen the Lord's body, ran to the tomb with Mary Magdalene trailing behind. Joanna, being less familiar with Jerusalem, took a less direct route from the tomb to John's house, so the two groups did not meet.

H. Peter and John saw the empty tomb, but the angels did not make themselves visible. Mary Magdalene lingered behind after Peter and John returned home. She saw the angels in the tomb and then Jesus appeared to her. She returned to John's house and found a group of excited women and a group of confused and somewhat skeptical men.

I. Salome and Mary of Clopas headed to Bethany to tell the good news to the disciples there. On the way, they were met by Jesus.

J. Clopas¹³ and his companion set out for Emmaus. Jesus joined them and made himself known at the mid-day meal.

K. During the afternoon, Jesus appeared to Peter.

¹² The events recorded in Mat. 28:2-4 are not said to have occurred after the women arrived. Matthew probably intended his readers to understand that these things happened while the women were on the way (p. 76-78).

¹³ Cleopas is the nearest genuine Greek name to the transliterated name Clopas. Luke could have adopted this form in preference to the form derived from the Aramaic in writing up this story for his Greek-speaking readers (p. 37).

L. The apostles from Bethany (less Thomas) arrived and gathered with the others in the upper room. Clopas and his companion returned from Emmaus and joined them. Jesus appeared to the ten apostles and to the others present.

V. Following Sunday – Jesus appeared to the Eleven (Thomas included) while they were meeting in the house.

VI. Appearances in Galilee

A. The Passover festival being completed (which included Passover and the six days of unleavened bread), the Eleven returned to their home country in Galilee pursuant to Jesus' instruction. Jesus appeared to seven of the apostles as they were fishing on the Sea of Galilee.¹⁴

B. Jesus appeared to more than five hundred believers, including the eleven disciples, at a prearranged meeting on a remote mountainside in Galilee.¹⁵

C. Jesus appeared to his brother James.¹⁶

VII. Back in Jerusalem

A. The apostles were instructed to return to Mark's house in Jerusalem to wait for the final event which was to prepare them for their world mission. Jesus met with them there and taught them the night before his Ascension.

B. As dawn began to break, Jesus led them out of the city on the same route they had taken on the night of the Last Supper. He took them to the summit of the Mount of Olives, where the descent to Bethany began, gave them his last words, and then ascended to heaven.

¹⁴ When John declares this to be the Lord's third resurrection appearance to his disciples (Jn. 21:14), he is referring to collective appearances to the apostles (p. 112).

¹⁵ This was probably the meeting referred to in Mat. 28:16-20. Jesus may have revealed the specific place for this meeting when he appeared to the seven apostles at the Sea of Galilee. They then discreetly spread the word to known believers throughout Galilee. The fact the meeting was on a mountain suggests that the assembly was not a small one. Matthew's statement that when the eleven disciples saw Jesus "*they* worshiped Him, but some were doubtful" (Mat. 28:17) hints that more than just the apostles were present. Indeed, it is hard to believe that any of the apostles still doubted after the appearances to them in Jerusalem. Although the post-resurrection witness was to begin in Jerusalem, the strength of Jesus' following lay in Galilee, and it was his purpose to re-gather and to re-commission his scattered army there. He re-commissioned the apostles, along with a large group of faithful witnesses, who were to form the vanguard of the worldwide church (p. 112-16).

¹⁶ Since this took place after the appearance to the five hundred and before Pentecost (the Ascension being about ten days before Pentecost), the next festival to bring Galileans to Jerusalem, it probably took place in Galilee (p. 116-17).