By whom and where was Jesus first seen?

Matthew: Mary Magdalene and the "other Mary," on the road to tell the disciples.

Mark: Mary Magdalene only, no mention where.

Luke: Two of the disciples, en route to "a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem."

John: Mary Magdalene, outside the tomb.

So where does this leave us, if not wondering whose idea of scripture this is?

(End of Part 1)

Endnotes

[1] Ehrman, Bart D. *Lost Christianities*. p. 3, 235. Also, see Ehrman, Bart D. *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. p. 49.

[2] Stanton, Graham N. 1989. *The Gospels and Jesus*. Oxford University Press. p. 19.

[3] Buttrick, George Arthur (Ed.). 1962 (1996 Print). *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Volume 4. Nashville: Abingdon Press. pp. 594–595 (Under Text, NT).

[4] Ehrman, Bart D. *The New Testament: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings*. 2004. Oxford University Press. p. 12.

TRUE TO JESUS
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Religious Mysteries 101 – The Crucifixion, Part 1

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Of all the Christian mysteries, none rank as highly as the concept of Christ's crucifixion and atoning sacrifice. In fact, Christians base their salvation on this one tenet of faith. And if it really happened, shouldn't we all?

If it really happened, that is.

Now, I don't know about you, but the concept of Jesus Christ having atoned for the sins of mankind sounds pretty good to me. And shouldn't it? I mean, if we can trust that someone else atoned for all of our sins, and we can go to heaven on that concept alone, shouldn't we instantly close on that deal?

If it really happened, that is.

So let's check this out. We're told Jesus Christ was crucified. But then again, we're told a lot of things that later prove to be doubtful or even untrue, so it would be reassuring if we could verify the fact.

So let's ask the witnesses. Let's ask the gospel authors.

Umm, one problem. We don't know who the authors were. This is a less popular Christian mystery (i.e., *waaay* less popular) – the fact that all four gospels of the New Testament are anonymous.[1] Nobody knows who wrote them. Graham Stanton tells us, "The gospels, unlike most Graeco-Roman writings, are anonymous. The familiar headings which give the name of an author ('The Gospel according to . . .') were not part of the original manuscripts, for they were added only early in the second century."[2]

Added in the second century? By whom? Believe it or not, that is anonymous as well.

But let's forget all that. After all, the four gospels are part of the Bible, so we must respect them as scripture, right?

Right?

Well, maybe not. After all, The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible states, "It is safe to say that there is not one sentence in the NT in which the MS [manuscript] tradition is wholly uniform."[3] Add to that Bart D. Ehrman's now famous words, "Possibly it is easiest to put the matter in comparative terms: there are more differences in our manuscripts than there are words in the New Testament."[4]

Whoa. Hard to imagine. On one hand, we have Matthew, Mark, Luke and John telling us . . . oh, excuse me. I meant to say, we have Anonymous, Anonymous, Anonymous and Anonymous telling us . . . well, what? What do they tell us? That they can't even agree on what Jesus wore, drank, did or said? After all, Matthew 27:28 tells us the Roman soldiers dressed Jesus with a scarlet robe. John 19:2 says it was purple. Matthew 27:34 says the Romans gave Jesus sour wine mingled with gall. Mark 15:23 says it was mixed with myrrh. Mark 15:25 tells us Jesus was crucified before the third hour, but John 19:14–15 says it was "about the sixth hour." Luke 23:46 says Jesus' last words were "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit," but John 19:30: says they were "It is finished!"

Now, wait a minute. Jesus' righteous followers would have hung on his every word. On the other hand, Mark 14:50 tells us that all the disciples deserted Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane. But okay, some people – not disciples, I guess, but some people (anonymous, of course) – hung on his every word, hoping for some parting words of wisdom, and they heard . . . different things?

Believe it or not, after this point, the gospel records become even more inconsistent.

Following the alleged resurrection, we hardly find a single issue the four gospels (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20) agree upon. For example:

Who went to the tomb?

Matthew: "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary"

Mark: "Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome"

Luke: "The women who had come with him from Galilee" and "certain other women"

John: "Mary Magdalene"

Why did they go to the tomb?

Matthew: "To see the tomb"

Mark: They "brought spices, that they might come and anoint him"

Luke: They "brought spices"

John: no reason given

Was there an earthquake (something nobody in the vicinity would be likely to either miss or forget)?

Matthew: Yes

Mark: no mention

Luke: no mention

John: no mention

Did an angel descend? (I mean, come on, guys – an angel? Are we to believe that three of you somehow missed this part?)

Matthew: Yes

Mark: no mention

Luke: no mention

John: no mention

Who rolled back the stone?

Matthew: The angel (the one the other three anonymouses – now, let's see, would that be "anonymouses" or "anonymice"? – didn't see)

Mark: unknown

Luke: unknown

John: unknown

Who was at the tomb?

Matthew: "an angel"

Mark: "a young man"

Luke: "two men"

John: "two angels"

Where were they?

Matthew: The angel was sitting on the stone, outside the tomb.

Mark: The young man was in the tomb, "sitting on the right side."

Luke: The two men were inside the tomb, standing beside them.

John: The two angels were "sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain."