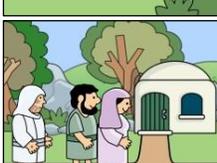


Law & Order, V

Mary the Watchtower

May 1, 2016



Let's weave the Word and learn the love of the One who loves us most!

We're taking atheist Dan Barker's *Empty Tomb Challenge*, to weave the resurrection accounts into one congruent story, even though Dan says it wouldn't mean it's true. Dan writes: "Thomas Paine was one of the first to point out that **outrageous claims require outrageous proof**. ... But first things first: Christians, either tell me exactly what happened on Easter Sunday, or let's leave the Jesus myth buried ..."

Okay; here's our *woven* Empty Tomb Timeline *thus far* (and remember, no verse was left out or taken out of order):

[#1] Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb, first, while it's dark. She finds a gap between the shifted stone and the tomb-wall. **[#2]** She brings back a beloved disciple ... *and Peter*. The two men leave to gather everyone for an emergency meeting. **[#3]** Mary stays behind and two angels appear inside the tomb; and ... **[#4]** as the sun rises Jesus appears, but she thinks He's a gardener. **[#5]** She goes to get Jesus' mom, to come and see the tomb. An earthquake-angel rolls the stone and stuns the soldiers. The angel tells the two arriving Marys to go inside. Inside the tomb, they encounter a young man in white. They flee, the angel leaves, and some of the soldiers depart.

[#6] The Galilean women arrive with spices and are very confused. Two men in white remind them of what Jesus taught them. Back on the trail, Jesus is appearing to Mary and Mary. The women tell the others they must go meet Jesus in Galilee. But, their seemingly nonsensical testimony is disregarded.

[#7] But ... *Peter* returns *alone*, encounters Jesus, but says *nothing*.

[#8] Jesus appears to two followers on their way home to Emmaus.

[#9] They return and report that He's appeared to them *and Peter*. Later, Jesus rebukes Group B for refusing to believe Group A.

Seeing how it comes together so harmoniously, so perfectly, **do you wonder why God composed it in such a puzzling, discombobulated manner?**

Well, outrageous claims *do* require outrageous proof; and, this is exactly what God's Word provides ... **to those with eyes to seek.**

The reason the *foundation* of Christianity is presented in the prophesied, fractured, “line-upon-line” and “here-a-little there-a-little”, format we find it, (Is 28:9-10) is *free will*.

It provides all who truly desire to know Him deeply, an astonishing path upon which to follow Him, find Him, and figure Him out. *But*, it also offers distracting surface level discrepancies for those who desire to justify their rejection and alienation, in order to embrace the dark lie that *they answer to no one*.

Want to see one of the most sobering scriptures in the NT?

They perish because **they refused to love the truth** and so be saved. **For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie** and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but **have delighted in wickedness**. – 2 Thessalonians 2:10b-12 NIV



The Lord has delivered His Word in a way that requires you to choose what you desire to see. And, *so you shall see ... or not see*. It reminds me of the scene in The Matrix when the bad guy is eating the steak and making a deal to have his own memory wiped: *“I know this steak doesn’t exist. I know that when I put it in my mouth, the Matrix is telling my brain that it is juicy and delicious. After nine years, you know what I realize: **ignorance is bliss.**”* **Till it’s time to face the truth; then it’s hell.**

When Jesus appeared to the eleven, He rebuked them because they stubbornly refused to open their eyes to the truth. *How ‘bout you?* As for me, I *want more* than a flawless timeline. I *want more* than even the incredible motives the story offers for every action. ***I want to see the outrageous proof of the very signature of God!*** Like Mary Magdalene, the *only one* to go to the tomb ... and *to stay ... just to see*.

Several disciples had nicknames: Simon, *Cephas/Peter: the Rock of the flock* (John 1:42); James and John, *Boanerges: Sons of Thunder* (Mark 3:17); Thomas, *Didymus: the twin* (John 11:16); Simon the *extremist* (Acts 1:13); and the *beloved* (John 19:26).



The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: **Mary (called Magdalene)** [*The Tower – as in “Watchtower”* (Greek: *Magdalēnē*; Hebrew: *migdal*)] from whom seven demons had come out; **Joanna** the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod’s household; **Susanna**; and many others. **These women were helping to support them out of their own means.** [*Yet, only one was called by a nickname*] – Luke 8:1b-3 NIV

And, despite what you’ve heard, ***Mary the Watchtower, was a wealthy aristocrat who helped finance Jesus’ ministry from personal means; very rare*** for a woman, and exclusively the noble class.

Some commentators guess her nickname indicates that she's from a town called, *Migdal* or *Magalene*. Trouble is, there were a few tower-towns, and it's only the first half of a *tower-town's* name. Some guess that she was tall. But, for whatever reason, **for about two years, Jesus called her the Tower of His flock.** And, **throughout the crucifixion, from beginning to end, in all four Gospels, one name towers, or rather, *magdalenes*, above the rest.**

[For instance, Mark writes that] Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were **Mary [the] Magdalene** ... – Mark 15:40a NIV

[John records that] Near the cross of Jesus stood ... **Mary [the] Magdalene**. – John 19:25 NIV

When Matthew describes this group of women, he says that ...

They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were **Mary [the] Magdalene** ... – Matthew 27:55b-56a NIV

What did Jesus first say to *the Tower of His flock*, after the cross, when she turned to Him? *“Woman, why are you crying?”* (John 20:15)

[But, on His way to the cross, when] A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them, **“Daughters of Jerusalem, [another nickname to remember] do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children.** [*“Woman, why are you weeping?”*] – Luke 23:27-28 NIV

Many followed, many watched, and many wept; but, one kept watch! Only one “Daughter of Jerusalem” went to the tomb to weep. **Are you among those who only watch from a distance?**

What do you think your nickname would be? Anchor or Storm? Rock or Mud? Watchtower or TV Antenna? *Who even has antennas anymore?* **Many were watching, but only one went looking, seeking, trying to see, while it was still dark, while she was still in anguish.**

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, **Mary [the] Magdalene [the Watchtower]** went to the tomb and saw ... – John 20:1 NIV

[And, so] **When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary [the] Magdalene [the Tower of the flock; the Daughter of Jerusalem]** ... – Mark 16:9a NIV

Well, He knew all along he would. That's why He called her *Magdalene*. He could see that she would be the only one to come. **Watchtowers were built to watch for the enemy.** But, **only one, in scripture, was repurposed to watch for the Savior:** the Migdal Eder, the *Tower of the flock*.



Yad Hashmonah Watchtower

Mary [the Watchtower] stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, “Woman, **why are you crying?**” **“They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don't know where they have put him.” At this, she turned around** and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. – John 20:11-14 NIV

Wait. **Why'd she suddenly turn around?** Something she said or heard in her head? A prophecy perhaps, once taught by her Lord, that had caught her attention having contained her nickname?

And you, **O tower [Magdalene/Migdal] of the flock**, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, **to you shall it come**, even the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the **daughter of Jerusalem.**" Now **why do you cry aloud? Is there no king in your midst? Has your counselor perished?** For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor. – Micah 4:8-9 NKJ

As Mary, the Tower of the flock, wept and bent over, and was asked "Why are you crying?" and said, "They've taken my Lord away." **She heard the hidden Word**, and at *this* she spun around. But alas, **it's only the Gardener**. And *so it was*. Five verses before, **Micah says, He comes to His Magdalene with garden tools!** (Micah 4:3-6) *She's so close to seeing it!*

"Woman," he said, "**why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?**" Thinking he was the gardener, **[it went over her head, and]** she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher). – John 20:15-16 NIV

But, the Bethlehem prophecy (Micah 4:8-5:2) was fulfilled at His birth.

And you, **O tower of the flock**, **[where I believe Jesus was born¹]** the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, even the former dominion shall come, the kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem." Now **why do you cry aloud? [She's giving birth!]** **Is there no king in your midst? [Literally, in your belly?]** **Has your counselor perished? [Or, is He about to come forth into life?]** **For pangs have seized you like a woman in labor.** – Micah 4:8-9 NKJ

It's true. **It was fulfilled at His birth. Only: He was born twice. The second time, as the firstborn of the dead.** (Col 1:18; Rev 1:5) So, having two births, and just the one prophecy, **He simply repurposed it, by calling Mary the Tower of the flock.** And, it works perfectly for both. And as far as I'm concerned, **that's the signature of God!** So, what's Mary, the Magdalene, do? She quickly returns with Jesus' mom, so that the two who fulfill the one, can examine the tomb, and look for the Son.

On behalf of the Word becoming flesh, Isaiah writes that ...

"The Lord has called Me from the womb; **from the matrix of My mother** He has made mention of My name. And He has made **My mouth like a sharp sword; [the Word of God (Heb 4:12)]** in the shadow of His hand **He has hidden Me ...**" – Isaiah 49:1b-2a NKJ

Are you trying to find Him, or trying to deny Him? It's always one or the other. And, if you don't know, then ... *I think you do. Open your heart to His Word, or open your eyes to delusion, and distraction, and self-deception ... till you have to face the truth.*

We know what He saw in Mary; but, what will He see in you?

¹ See the sermon: Keeping Watch, The Rabbinical Shepherds of Bethlehem, 12/23/12