

<https://joelswagman.blogspot.com/2025/04/contradictions-in-resurrection-story.html>

### Footnotes:

(\*1) I grew up in the Christian school system, so we studied the Bible as one of our core subjects.

(\*2) [Some years ago, I linked to an article](#) written by someone making fun of the *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties* ([A](#)) attempts to harmonize the 4 different resurrection accounts. After going through the harmonization narrative beat by beat [she concludes](#):

And there you have it. The tomb is a kind of Grand Central Station. Mary Magdalene is an idiot. The disciples need a whole lot of telling. Jesus is a master of disguise. And harmonization is a specially dishonest form of special pleading, but also - well, a bit of a joke.

I've not actually encountered any other attempts at harmonizing the resurrection accounts. If someone knows of something out there, let me know.

(\*3) [The general view in my religious community was that the first 11 chapters of Genesis might not be literally true](#), because they were a metaphor--or something. But once we entered into the historical parts of the Bible, I had been taught to believe there were no mistakes in it.

(\*4) I had a similar feeling many years later when I learned that there are two contradictory accounts of creation in Genesis: there is the 6 day account in Genesis 1 (in which animals were created before man) and the Adam and Eve creation story in Genesis 2 (in which Adam was created first, and then the animals). I had heard both of these stories so many times, why had I never realized they contradicted each other?

(\*5) One of the reasons I've held off on writing this post over the years is that I thought it was silly to write a long rebuttal to something someone said to me once in 8th grade, unless I got more evidence that this is something that was widely believed by more people than just my 8th grade teacher. But, like I said at the top of the post, this lesson has been living rent free in my head for so many years, I suppose I might as well write about it.

As to not knowing how widespread these beliefs are in Christian circles, I suppose it's somewhat on me for not reading more Christian apologetics over the years. If I was more widely read, maybe I'd have more of an idea of what the official conservative Christian line on this is.

As [I mentioned in my review of \*The Case for Christ\* by Lee Strobel](#), Lee Strobel dips his toe into the water here and suggests that perhaps the contradictions in the resurrection account might prove the lack of collusion between the disciples. But then, on the very next page, Lee Strobel goes on to also say that properly understood, there are no contradictions in the resurrection account. This is something that is typical of Lee Strobel (as I complained about [in my review](#)). He'll often try to advance two contradictory arguments at once. Also, Lee Strobel does absolutely no work to try to prove that the resurrection accounts don't contradict each other. He just claims that they don't. Declaring something without evidence is also something that's very typical of Lee Strobel, as I also complained about in my review. To be fair, I guess I should acknowledge that there's one other Christian writer I know who dealt with the contradictions in the resurrection story: [Peter Enns in \*The Bible Tells Me So\*](#). Peter Enns' book was an attack on the inerrantist position from a liberal Christian perspective, so Peter Enns was very good at pointing out all the contradictions in the Bible. But, in my opinion, Peter Enns was not very good at giving the reader any other alternative framework. It's like, okay, so, all the gospels have contradictory accounts of the resurrection. So what am I supposed to do with this information? Do I still believe in the resurrection now, or what?

(\*6) For the record, [the gospels are not based on eye-witness testimony](#), but we'll just pretend they are for the purposes of illustrating why this argument still wouldn't work.

(\*7) Technically, scholars don't think Matthew and Luke themselves made up these stories--they believe they were drawing on previous sources. But somebody must have made them up.

(\*8) I know longer remember which of Bart Ehrman's books he advances this theory in. I think he's mentioned it a few times, actually, but the Ehrman books that I've read all kind of run together in my memory. It was one of these: [The History of the Bible: The Making of the New Testament Canon](#), [Did Jesus Exist?](#), [Forged](#), [Jesus, Interrupted](#) or [Misquoting Jesus](#).

(\*9) Incidentally, there's a similar thing going on at the beginning of Jesus's life. Neither the letters of Paul, nor the gospel of Mark, mention anything about the birth of Christ, and so both Matthew and Luke come up with their own accounts of how Jesus was born, and both Matthew and Luke create completely different accounts of the birth of Jesus--this was something I wrote about before in a previous post: [Historical Problems With the Christmas Story](#)