

## Synchronizing the Resurrection Appearances of the Lord Jesus Christ – The “Problem” (Part 3- Those Pesky Obstreperous Presuppositions)

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Before I exegete the resurrection accounts and demonstrate that there are no contradictions—nothing that violates the law of non-contradiction—I would like to touch on the problem of presuppositions. The real problems are not with the resurrection accounts; rather, the trouble is in a person’s presuppositions. The problem is not in the texts; it is in the “knower.” In my philosophical studies I am frequently aghast at just how blinding a person’s presuppositions can be: How blind they can make a person in regard to understanding reality as well as how blind they are to those very presuppositions. In the last essay I touched on how *authentic* independent eyewitness testimony always varies in emphases. Someone with skeptical presuppositions (in regard to the Bible or supernaturalism) will often take variances as proof that those accounts are untrustworthy. Yet, if the Gospel accounts are the same, they will gratuitously posit that there was collusion among the writers. Clearly, something else is going on here. Clearly, there are other factors in play: pesky presuppositions that produce conceptual legerdemains.

Before I move into the exegesis of the narratives in the next essay, I would like to touch on a few issues related to presuppositions and how Barker frames this whole issue. To his credit, atheist Barker admits that “contradictions” do not prove that the resurrection of Jesus Christ never occurred. However, then, he proceeds to frame his whole foray on these differences and concludes that the resurrection is a myth and likens it to Ishtar (his mention of Ishtar alone indicates his lack of scholarship in this area and/or his attempt to bamboozle others). He knows it is a non-sequitur to say that the resurrection did not occur because one cannot synchronize the resurrection narratives in the Gospels. There are countless books and debates on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. I know of none that focuses on synchronizing the Gospel accounts; not one that focuses on or depends upon inerrancy of Scripture. The *fact* of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a historical issue that does not *depend* on inerrancy of the accounts. I do believe in inerrancy. However, even if one could show that there were problems in the texts, this does not mean that the event never occurred. There are theories of truth (e.g., coherence, functional, existential, pragmatic, correspondence) and tests for truth. Tests for truth must be according to the appropriate discipline. To determine the historical truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ requires using historical tools. Historians, both believers and unbelievers, have acknowledged that Christ did in fact die on the cross and the disciples did in fact see Him afterwards. The resurrection of Jesus Christ has been proven again and again using *only* the established secular historical tools (multiple, independent sources; attestation by enemies; embarrassing admissions; eyewitness testimony; early testimony; et al). Given all of the historical evidence, why do you think someone would still reject the resurrection of Jesus Christ? You got it: those pesky indecent anti-theistic presuppositions.

The overwhelming evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ in no way depends upon the synchronization of the resurrection accounts. Historians have canons they use in evaluating history: explanatory scope, explanatory power, plausibility, less ad hoc, no rival hypothesis. There is early historical evidence (outside of the Gospels) for the crucifixion, death, the empty tomb, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (e.g., 1 Cor. 15:1-3; Galatians 1-2; Josephus; Hegesippus, et al). As far as the accounts in the Gospels, they have multiple attestation, are dissimilar, have embarrassing facts, lack embellishment, are coherent, and led to dramatic effects like the conversion of James and Paul and faith in resurrection by disciples. These are all powerful *historical* indications accepted by Christian as well as non-Christian historians. Again, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is established by the methods used by professional historians. Now with that in mind, do you think that Barker would accept the resurrection of Jesus Christ if all of the Gospel accounts were exactly alike? Why do you think he rejects all of the other historical evidence? Those pesky presuppositions have already made up his mind.

Take the countless hours of debates by Christian apologists (like William Lane Craig, Gary Habbermas, and Mike Licona) against unbelievers. The arguments for the resurrection never hinge on the supernatural inspiration of Scripture. The Christian apologists always defeat the skeptics *and they do so on secular historical grounds, not on a particular view of inspiration of the Gospels*. I am not saying that inspiration is not important. I will provide a synchronized account of the resurrection narratives. However, let's just quit this nonsense of Dan Barker that since the narratives are different, then the resurrection must be myth. Isn't that his point? Isn't that the *fear* he is trying to instill in believers? Furthermore, let's not kid ourselves by believing that he will change his mind when I synchronize them. Since he has already cast aside or ignored all of the secular historical evidence for the resurrection, on what grounds would he accept the resurrection if the accounts in the Gospels were synchronized? Hasn't he already revealed a willful suppression of the truths from secular historiography *because* they point to the resurrection of Jesus Christ? With that in mind, how are we to believe that he would accept the Gospels at all?

There are well known skeptics who have actually taken the time to investigate the historical basis for the resurrection of Jesus Christ and who subsequently became believers by applying the *historical* tools of evidence based on news reporting, law and history (e.g., Lee Strobel; Albert Henry Ross a.k.a. Frank Morrison, author of "*Who Moved the Stone*"). The only things standing in the way of a person accepting all of the evidence are those pesky presuppositions that people use in the suppression of Truth (Rom. 1:18-20). It never ceases to amaze me just how ignorant very intelligent people can become once they reject God. I guess I should not be surprised since this is exactly that the Bible teaches (Rom. 1:22). How can they reject so much historical evidence? How can they believe that the 20 gigabytes of intelligent information in a single cell is just the product of random and chance occurrences—and we have 10 trillion cells in our bodies? How can they believe that the universe was created out of nothing by nothing—and with such fantastic precision? How can they believe that they do not really have a soul or an independent mind—that they are just some emergent blah-blah-blah from matter; nothing but an inchoate blob of sensations that emerges into consciousness? How can they say they are logical and only believe in what they can see, when they cannot see or even justify logic on materialistic grounds? How can they deny the *real existence* of love, justice, truth, purpose, and meaning (which a materialist must)? The bottom line is that by rejecting God, Christ, and metaphysics they are reduced to a life that is unlivable. The only way they can live out their intellectual schizophrenia per se is by ignoring what they say they really believe. What a fool's errand! They often live the polar

opposite of their materialistic convictions. They will say there is no objective right or wrong, yet they will be the first to protest against some *injustice*. They will both assault and defend natural law. They are guilty of an unalloyed material fideism. However, when it comes to God and the Lord Jesus Christ, their impregnable skeptical walls of presuppositions are always there to “save” them in their antipathetic attitude to God. They are culpable for refusal to submit to all of the evidence God plainly provides a la Romans 1. This is their impasse. This is the gist of it all. This is their insoluble *problem* unless there is a change in their pesky obstreperous “presups.”

On the Glory Road,

Pastor Don