

Did Mary Magdalene go to the tomb alone?

Question: In Matt. 28:1-10, Mark 16:1-8, and Luke 24:1-12, Mary Magdalene is accompanied by other women who were going to the tomb of Jesus on Sunday morning. However, John 20:1 mentions only Mary Magdalene going to the tomb, as if she went alone. Is this a contradiction in the Bible?

Answer: No, this is not a contradiction. Although John did not mention the other women, he did not say that Mary went to the tomb alone. In fact, Mary Magdalene admits in verse 2 that she was not by herself. When she found Peter and John, she said, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him" (John 20:2).

Just because only one person is mentioned doesn't mean others weren't present. In 1824, Lafayette visited the United States. Some historians record that he was honored on his visit. Other historians record that his visit was enjoyed by two persons—Lafayette and his son. Even though his son came along with him, some historians didn't record that fact. That doesn't make them wrong; they just chose to emphasize Lafayette as the centerpiece of their journalism.

The same can be said about the apostle John's emphasis of Mary Magdalene. The four gospel writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) each described their situations differently. When you go to a movie, the film isn't shot from just one camera angle. Instead, you watch scenes from cameras set up in different places, which show you various angles.

Some shots are up close, showing only one person, and leaving out the other people in the room. If you only saw the close-up view, you would think the person was alone. But another camera films a wider angle, showing the entire room, and you see other people in the room. Then you understand that person wasn't alone after all.

The four gospel writers were like four cameras filming the scene from four different angles. The way to get the complete picture is to read them as complementing each other and in harmony, not contradicting each other.

For further study, we highly recommend *Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, by John W. Haley (Baker Books).