

# Which Is It?

*"Mary Magdalene came while it was still dark"*

*John 20:1*

*"...they came to the tomb when the sun had risen"*

*Mark 16:2*

**A**t the Seminary where I studied, the professors accepted the Bible as true—and at the university I went to they frequently sought to ridicule certain aspects of the biblical record.

I well recall one university professor having fun pointing out the two verses for today and asking, "Well, did they go to the tomb before dawn or after?" Not being as well read then as now, I was not sure of an adequate answer.

Now I know that both accounts are completely accurate and the writers were recording the truth. How I came to the understanding of how it could be said that they went to the tomb before dawn and they went to the tomb after dawn was made clear to me by a professor of law.

The brilliant law professor wrote in his book that one important aspect of determining the truthfulness of witnesses to the same event is to see conflicts or apparent mistakes in their testimony. If all the witnesses said exactly the same thing then it becomes clear to someone trained in the laws of

evidence that they have come together prior to giving testimony and agreed on what to say. Lawyers call it collusion.

We need to see a variety of testimony to the same event to be sure the witnesses are really telling the truth. In the verse for today we see just such a difference in the report. One way a lawyer would solve the problem of this apparent contradiction might be to determine how long it took for the sun to rise in that location and go from there.

The resurrection event took place in a country where the sun rises and sets rather quickly. So a lawyer examining the two accounts of the journey to the tomb would want to ask the two writers if they were speaking about when the people left Jerusalem for the tomb or were they reporting the time when the people arrived at the tomb.

It is very easy to see that John is referring to when Mary left for the tomb and Mark reports on when they arrived at the tomb. This readily clears up the apparent contradiction and assures us that both John and Mark are

honest reporters of the resurrection event.

Such a way of showing us the truthfulness of Scripture boosts our confidence in other matters where an apparent contradiction exists between a biblical promise and real life events. How does the Christian reconcile the promise of Scripture that the Lord is always with them and suddenly disaster strikes? The answer is in Psalm 40:1, (NIV)

*"I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry."*

This may be where you need to believe that the difference between the promise and your present reality will soon pass away.

*"Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass." Psalm 37:5.*

Trust the Bible when life seems to contradict the promise. Soon enough the Lord will prove to you that the promise is true.

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