

“Meet Me in Galilee”

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One question that skeptics frequently ask regarding various events in the Bible is “Why?” Why did God create the Sun on day four after creating light on day one? Why did God command the Israelites to walk around Jericho one time a day for six days, and seven times on the seventh day before the city was destroyed? Why did Jesus choose Judas as an apostle if He knew that he would betray Him? And so on. Since skeptics are unable to find legitimate internal contradictions about various occurrences in Scripture that seem peculiar to them, they simply ask questions beginning with “Why...?” in hopes that doubt will take hold of the Bible reader—seeds of doubt that they hope eventually will grow into full-fledged disbelief in the trustworthiness of the Bible.

One question I was asked by a skeptic is **why** an angel (and later Jesus) informed Mary Magdalene and the other women who came with her to the tomb of Jesus on the day of His resurrection, to tell the disciples to go meet Him in Galilee? If Jesus was going to meet the disciples in Jerusalem that very day anyway, why did He instruct the women saying, “Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me” (28:10)? Allegedly, “If Jesus was going to meet with the disciples at Jerusalem first, then there was no need for Jesus to tell Mary to remind the disciples about the scheduled meeting (cf. Matthew 26:32) in Galilee. Jesus Himself could have informed them about the Galilean meeting when He appeared to them later that evening in Jerusalem.”

Although Christians are not obligated to answer knowledgeably every single question beginning with “Why...” (cf. Isaiah 55: 8-9; Romans 11:33), most of the time either the Scriptures or reason reveal(s) logical answers. Such is the case with the question concerning why Jesus commanded Mary Magdalene and the other women to tell the disciples to go meet the Lord in Galilee when the Lord was going to appear to them that evening in Jerusalem anyway.

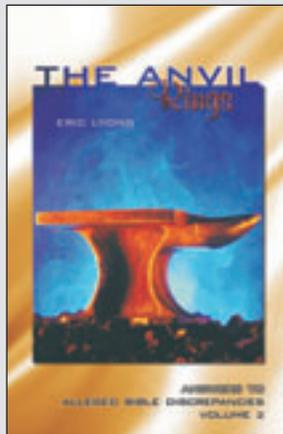
Before consulting Scripture to answer this question, consider the following illustration. Your boss informs you at your house on a Thursday night that he has scheduled a meeting for you, your ten co-workers, and numerous others the following week beginning on

Monday in Atlanta. However, on Friday morning, you awake to hear on the news that your boss was in a terrible accident on his way home from your house the previous night. He was run off of the road by a drunk driver, after which his car rolled down an embankment while he was thrown out of the front windshield. Reports are that he died in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. On Sunday afternoon, however, your son returns from visiting a friend in the hospital who just had knee surgery. He informs you that, to his surprise, he saw your boss checking out of the hospital—**alive!** Your son says: “He told me that he would meet you in Atlanta tomorrow.” What would your reaction be? Although your son is a trustworthy teenager, how could your boss really be alive? And even if somehow he was resuscitated from an apparent death, surely he would not be checking out of the hospital already? Surely your son was just mistaken.

And surely the meeting is not still going to occur?

If your boss got word about your unbelief in his well-being, do you think it would be appropriate for him either to contact you, or visit you, and show you firsthand that he is well? Of course it would. Even though he indicated to you on Thursday night, and to your son on Sunday, that he would meet you in Atlanta for a business meeting with dozens of others, it still would be appropriate for him to contact you (again) and let them know that the meeting is still on schedule. No one would see his “repetitious” testimony and presence in your home as something superfluous considering the ordeal he had just recently experienced.

If the skeptic can see the rationality of this illustration, one wonders why he cannot see the rationality of Jesus appearing to the disciples **in Jerusalem**, even after informing Mary Magdalene to remind them to meet Him **in Galilee**? The disciples had just seen their Lord arrested, tortured, and crucified. They were scared for their own lives. Some of the disciples even “forsook him” during His arrest in the garden (Mark 14:50; cf. 14:27). Peter denied knowing Him three times, just a short while later (Mark 14:66-72). And, on the day of Jesus’ resurrection, John recorded how the disciples (except Thomas) met behind closed



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doors “for fear of the Jews” (John 20:19). These men obviously were traumatized by all of the events of the past 72 hours. “They mourned and wept” for the loss of their leader (Mark 16:10). They were mentally and emotionally troubled.

Then entered Mary Magdalene and the other women who told the apostles (and those who are gathered together with them) that they had seen Jesus—**alive** (Luke 24:9-10)! Sadly, the disciples rejected the women’s testimony. Luke recorded: “Their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them” (24:11). The apostles doubted that Jesus was alive (cf. Luke 24:38). Later on that same day, Mark wrote that two other disciples informed them of Jesus’ resurrection, but “they did not believe them either” (16:12-13). In fact, when Jesus appeared to the apostles (except Thomas) on the evening of His resurrection, He said: “Why are you troubled? And why do **doubts** arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have” (Luke 24:38-39, emp. added).

The apostles later reported Jesus’ appearance to their fellow apostle, Thomas, who had missed the opportunity to see, touch, and eat with Him. Like his fellow apostles, who previously had rejected the eyewitness testimony, Thomas responded, saying, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe” (John 20:25).

Multiply many times the doubts you would have of seeing your employer for a meeting three days after he was ejected through the front windshield of his car and reported on the news to be dead. Only then might you come close to the frazzled mindset of the unbelieving apostles.

Why did Jesus appear to the apostles in Jerusalem before meeting with them (and many others—cf. 1 Corinthians 15:6) a three-days’ journey away in Galilee? Both common sense and the Scriptures indicate that it was due to their unbelief in His resurrection. Jesus wanted to ensure that they believed He had risen!

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IN THE NEWS

On July 1, 2005, the Apologetics Press Spanish Web site will go live and begin its outreach to millions of Spanish-speaking individuals. Moisés Pinedo and Michael Cortez have been diligently working for many months to provide the Spanish-speaking community with high-quality material on Christian evidences.

We are thrilled and delighted to offer this new medium to provide individuals with helpful materials that defend the Christian Faith. We make it our aim to serve people. We want to assist people of all languages and nationalities in their quest to know the one true God.

What will visitors find on this new Web site? Quite frankly, they will find answers to the most pressing matters of life. They will find answers to questions like: Where did humans come from? Do humans owe their origin to God? Or are humans the result of mindless, naturalistic forces? How old is the Earth? How long have humans been on Earth? Can the Bible be proven to be the inspired Word of God? Is Christianity the one true religion? Where do we go when we die? Are all churches acceptable to God? Do modern-day miracles actually occur?

As they browse the new site, we believe they will be very pleased with the vast resources that are available and more to come. Our sole purpose is to point people to God and His Son in hopes that they will live life in harmony with the Bible.

We simply want to teach people the truths that God wants presented to the world. We would be happy to hear from you and to receive your input. We are also happy to answer any questions you may have. Please help us spread the word about the availability of this new outreach. If we may assist you, please do not hesitate to contact us. In the meantime—*disfrute el sitio Web*.

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