

More than the Weekend

—On the Way with Jesus, in Jerusalem: Week 21—

Mark 15:40–47 (ESV)

I. _____ as (_____) Disciples

⁴⁰ There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹ When he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him, and there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem.

II. A _____ in _____

⁴² And when evening had come, since it was the day of Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, ⁴³ Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

⁴⁴ Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. ⁴⁵ And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

⁴⁶ And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

III. Women as (_____) _____

⁴⁷ Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses saw where he was laid.

The Bottom Line

When the _____ most _____,
_____ on _____.

On the Women Witnesses Listed in Mark, Matthew, and Luke

(Richard Bauckham, “Names in the Gospel Traditions,” in *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*, pages 39-55 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006])

“The divergences among the lists [of women named as witnesses in Mark, Matthew, and Luke] have often been taken as grounds for not taking them seriously as naming eyewitnesses of the events. In fact, the opposite is the case: these divergences, properly understood, demonstrate the scrupulous *care* with which the Gospels present the women as witnesses. Mark names three women at the cross and the same three women as those who go to the tomb, but only two of the three are said to observe the burial of Jesus. The explanation must be that in the known testimony of these three women the two Marys were known to be witnesses of the burial but Salome was not. Similar care is perhaps even more impressive in Matthew. For Matthew Salome was evidently not a well-known witness of these events. Matthew could so easily have used her to make up the number at the tomb but instead he is scrupulously content with the only two women well known to him as witnesses. Luke, who names the women only at the end of his account of their visit to the tomb, lists, besides the indispensable Mary Magdalene, Joanna, who is peculiar to his Gospel and has already been introduced at 8:3, and Mary the mother of James. This third name may be Luke’s only borrowing from Mark in his narrative of the empty tomb. Like Matthew Luke omits Mark’s Salome, but he does not simply reproduce the list of women followers of Jesus he has employed earlier in his Gospel (8:2-3; Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna). Mary Magdalene and Joanna he knew to be witnesses of the empty tomb, Susanna he evidently did not. In this way my proposal that the Evangelists were careful to name precisely the women who were well known to them as witnesses to these crucial events in the origins of the Christian movement explains the variations among their lists of women as no other proposal has succeeded in doing.

It is natural to suppose that these women were well known not just for having once told their stories but as people who remained accessible and authoritative sources of these traditions as long as they lived. Which women were well known to each Evangelist may have depended on the circles in which that Evangelist collected traditions and the circles in which each woman moved during her lifetime. The differences among the Gospel narratives of the women’s visit to the tomb may well reflect rather directly the different ways in which the story was told by the different women. These women were not all already obscure figures by the time the Synoptic Evangelists wrote. The omission of Salome by both Matthew and Luke shows that the Evangelists did not retain the names of women who had become obscure. Those named by each Evangelist were, like their stories, still fresh in the memories of that Evangelist’s informants, if not in the Evangelist’s own memory” (49-51).