

Mark 15:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome;

Analysis

There were also women looking on afar off—Mark introduces the faithful women who witnessed the crucifixion from a distance. The Greek verb means to observe, behold, watch attentively—not casual onlookers but devoted witnesses bearing testimony. **Among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome**—Three named women represent the larger group. Mary Magdalene, from whom Jesus cast seven demons, became one of His most devoted followers. Mary the mother of James was likely Jesus's aunt. Salome was the mother of James and John. The prominence of women witnesses is historically significant—in first-century Judaism, women's testimony was not legally recognized. Yet God chose women as primary witnesses to Christianity's central events—death, burial, resurrection. This demonstrates the gospel's radical nature: Christ elevates the humble and honors the marginalized.

Historical Context

Crucifixion was designed for maximum humiliation and public spectacle. That these women remained present despite horror and danger testified to extraordinary devotion. They risked association with a convicted criminal yet refused to abandon Him. Mary Magdalene's prominence in all four Gospels' resurrection accounts establishes her as a foundational witness. Later Gnostic attempts to create romance theories between Jesus and Mary Magdalene are

baseless fabrications contradicted by all canonical evidence. She was a delivered disciple, not a romantic interest.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What does the faithful presence of women at the cross—when most male disciples fled—teach about courage and devotion?
2. How does God's choice of women as primary witnesses challenge first-century gender hierarchies and modern dismissal of women's testimony?
3. What does Mary Magdalene's transformation from demonized outcast to faithful disciple reveal about Christ's deliverance and grace?

Interlinear Text

ἦν δὲ καὶ γυναῖκες ἀπὸ μακρόθεν θεωροῦσαι ἐν
was **There** **also** **women** **off** **on afar** **looking** G1722
G2258 G1161 G2532 G1135 G575 G3113 G2334

αἷς ἦν καὶ Μαρία ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ καὶ Μαρία ἡ
whom **was** **also** **Mary** G3588 **Magdalene** **also** **Mary** G3588
G3739 G2258 G2532 G3137 G3094 G2532 G3137

τοῦ Ἰακώβου τοῦ μικροῦ καὶ Ἰωσὴ μῆτηρ καὶ
G3588 **of James** G3588 **the less** **also** G2499 **the mother** **also**
G2385 G3398 G2532 G3384 G2532

Σαλώμη

Salome
G4539

Additional Cross-References

Luke 23:49 (Parallel theme): And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

Mark 16:9 (Parallel theme): Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Matthew 13:55 (Parallel theme): Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

Matthew 28:1 (Parallel theme): In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

Matthew 27:61 (Parallel theme): And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.