

Matthew 28:1-10
History as Recorded by the Victor
WRCoB 4.9.23

History is recorded by the victor
So the saying attributed to Winston Churchill goes.

In other words, history has always been a tad slanted
Depending on where you view it from.

I think that's why
We have this ongoing debate over CRT.

Proponents of the battered term, Critical Race Theory
Desire to present an accurate history that includes
The perspective from Black America.

To present another viewpoint history
Not presented in current history books.

Even in Biblical times
The recording of history can be a bit slanted.

For instance
If we were to rely solely on the Apostle Paul's account
Of Jesus' crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection

We would miss the important part women played
In those significant events.

Here's how Paul describes the eyewitness accounts

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 CEV

³ I told you the most important part of the message exactly as it was told to me. This part is:

**Christ died for our sins,
as the Scriptures say.**

**⁴ He was buried,
and three days later
he was raised to life,
as the Scriptures say.**

**⁵ Christ appeared to Peter,
then to the twelve.**

**⁶ After this, he appeared
to more than five hundred
other followers.**

**Most of them are still alive,
but some have died.**

**⁷ He also appeared to James,
then to all of the apostles.**

**⁸ Finally, he appeared to me, even though I am like
someone who was born at the wrong time.**

Notice, he never mentions anything about the women.

I'm not being critical of Apostle Paul's account.

I'm just trying to say historical writings
May not always record all the details or facts
Of any given event.

In his defense, it could be this was how it was told to Paul.

Paul's letter was written earlier than Gospel accounts.

He wouldn't have those sources available.

It is also true that the Jewish or Roman culture of the day
(For Paul was both a Jew and a Roman citizen)
Had little regard for women

Paul perhaps, didn't think it necessary to include them.

But thank God for Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

They all include the women followers of Jesus
In the events of Holy Week and Easter.

What's even more astounding is that all four gospels
Have Mary Magdalene, an ex-prostitute
The key witness in all four accounts!

Which, to me
Makes the Easter account all the more authentic.

In ancient Israel during the time of Christ
The culture was male-dominated.

Women had no rights outside the home
And little rights within.

The husband/father had complete authority over them.

The Misnah, a Jewish writing, states that a woman
Could be obtained through intercourse, money, or writ.

A woman's testimony in a Jewish court
Was considered unreliable
And often not even permissible.

According to Albert A. Bell Jr.
Author of "Guide to the New Testament World"

Women did not count for much, quite literally. They were not included in census figures. Not even the NT writers were enlightened enough to count them.

When describing the feeding of the five thousand, Matthew (14:21) concludes, 'Those who ate were about five thousand men, beside women and children.'

The fact remains, however, that all four gospels
To be true to the historical account

Placed the women as the first eyewitnesses
At the empty tomb on Easter Sunday.

True, the gospel writers can't agree
Which of the women were present

They nevertheless authenticate their presence.

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All this to say
Women contributed in a important way
In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

We often think there were only the 12 disciples
Who followed Jesus around.

But that is just not true.

It was important to the writers of the gospels
That 12 disciples were designated
To represent the 12 tribes of Israel

To emphasize the divine nature of Jesus

When in all actuality the story of Jesus
Has a very gender-inclusive nature to it.

Unlike the male disciples
The women were present at four crucial moments.

- The crucifixion
- The burial
- The empty tomb
- The first to see the Risen Lord!

There is no historical record of any of the other disciples
Present at all four of these events.

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Matthew records their presence at the cross
In Matthew 27:55-56.

Matthew 27:55-56 CEB

⁵⁵ Many women were watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to serve him. ⁵⁶ Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

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These women traveled with Jesus
Caring for his needs throughout his ministry.

They were present at the crucifixion.

According to the Gospel of John
The only disciple present at the crucifixion was John.

We assume the other disciples fled in fear
That they might be arrested too!

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The women were also there when Jesus was buried.

Joseph of Arimathea received Jesus' body.

Matthew 27:60-61 NRSVUE

⁶⁰ and laid it in his new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. ⁶¹ Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

Again, as recorded, none of the disciples were present.

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What also seems to be a historical fact
Is that all the four gospels
Have women arriving first at the tomb
At first light on Easter morning.

In our Scripture Lesson today
Matthew records Mary Magdalene and the other Mary
As the first eyewitnesses.

Mark includes a woman named Salome.

Luke has, “the women” there first
And then later identified them.

Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James,
And the “others” with them.

The Gospel of John has only Mary Magdalene at the tomb.

The women were the first to arrive
The first to see the Risen Lord.

Matthew 28:8-9 CEB

⁸With great fear and excitement, they hurried away from the tomb and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹But Jesus met them and greeted them. They came and grabbed his feet and worshipped him.

In all, the historical account from the four gospels
Gives credit where credit is due.

The women disciples were there from beginning to the end.

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If history, then, is written by the victors,
What are we to make of the Easter Story?

Besides the seeming discrepancies
In the historical accounts of the Easter Story

Besides the beyond-belief event of the Resurrection.

Besides all these incredible hard-to-believe reports

The history of the Easter Story
Is presented as historical fact
From several viewpoints.

Christ Jesus was crucified
Having died for our sins
According to the Scriptures.

That he was buried
And raised on the third day
According to the Scriptures.

And that he appeared first to the women disciples
And then to over 500 others.

It's left for you to decide what to make of it.

Fact?

Fiction?

Despairing hope?

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder?

An intentional slant to historical fact?

What are we to make of the Easter Story?

Dr. S. Joshua Swamidass M.D. PhD is a physician/scientist.

He is also an Assistant Professor of Laboratory
And Genomic Medicine at Washington University.

He is a scientist and a Christian

He recently wrote of his convictions as a Christian.

I am a scientist. Still, on Easter, I celebrate that Jesus rose from the dead about 2,000 years ago. This event, in first-century Palestine, is the cornerstone of everything.

In the same way that trust-like faith in science is connected to evidence, so is the faith I have in the Resurrection. The final verdict, for me, is that the Resurrection makes sense through the lens of history.

I find the Creator of all that science studies comes to us in this way. The evidence is compelling, but not definitive. Faith in Jesus is reasonable and is certainly not without evidence.

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If history is written by the victor

As Winston Churchill stated

Then victory is in Christ's resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 NRSVUE

⁵⁵ “Where, O death, is your victory?

Where, O death, is your sting?”

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The victory though, is not only

In our own personal salvation through belief in Jesus

Victory is achieved when all are saved
Spiritually and physically
In the graces of Jesus Christ.

N.T. Wright has written:

*The message of the resurrection is that this world matters!
That the injustices and pains of this present world must now
be addressed with the news that healing, justice, and love
have won.*

*If Easter means Jesus Christ is only raised in a spiritual
sense—[then] it is only about me, and finding a new
dimension in my personal spiritual life.*

*But if Jesus Christ is truly risen from the dead, Christianity
becomes good news for the whole world—news which
warms our hearts precisely because it isn't just about
warming hearts.*

*Easter means that in a world where injustice, violence and
degradation are endemic, God is not prepared to tolerate
such things—and that we will work and plan, with all the
energy of God, to implement victory of Jesus over them all*

Together, we have victory in Jesus
Our Savior, Redeemer.

For the Glory of God
And our Neighbors' good

History as recorded by God.