

QUESTION:

So, on Ludemann's account, how do the stories of the women at the tomb found in the canonical gospels come to be told? As many scholars I've read have pointed out, having women, who were considered untrustworthy witnesses, as the first to see the risen Christ, was not exactly a way to get people to believe the stories. So why would the gospel writers tell the stories with the women in such a prominent place?

RESPONSE:

I'm not sure how Lüdemann would answer your question (I.e., I don't recall off hand how he deals with it). But I thought that maybe I should give it a shot. I am not responding here with a long-held position that I have carefully thought through and worked out. I'm really just "thinking out loud" (well, thinking silently, at my keyboard, in any event).

I have indeed heard this argument for many years. In fact, I used to make it myself. The argument is that since women were not considered reliable witnesses (since their testimony was not acceptable even in a court of law), then no one would have invented the idea that it was precisely women who discovered that Jesus' tomb was empty and that he was, therefore, raised from the dead.

I have lots of comments about that view - the one I used to hold - but will give them only in short order now.

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