

MARY

JOHN 19:25	MATTHEW 27:56	MARK 15:40
1. Mary, mother of Jesus		
2. Jesus' mother's sister	mother of Zebedee's children	Salome
3. Mary, wife of Cleophas	Mary, mother of James and Joses	Mary, mother of James the less and Joses
4. Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene	Mary Magdalene

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The first chart is the correct resolution. The second chart gives a "popular" solution based on John 19:25; however, it seems highly improbable that two sisters (Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Mary, the wife of Cleophas and mother of James the less and Joses) would have the same name. This identification is all the more improbable as it carries with it the further unlikely circumstance that the two sisters also gave their first "natural" born sons the same name (i.e., James.). The third solution below exhibits the same weakness. .)

The second and third solutions also fall short in that they fail to explain why Jesus placed Mary in John's keeping at the cross: "Son, behold thy mother" (John 19:27). As James' and John's father was Zebedee (Mat.4:21, 10:2 etc.), it may be determined from the topmost chart that they were our Lord's first cousins. As Jesus' brothers (James, Joseph, Judas and Simon - Mar. 6:3) were unbelievers until after the Resurrection (Joh. 7:2-3, cp. Acts 15:4-7), the Lord could not place Mary under their protection. Thus, as one of the two nearest kinsman-redeemers that was a converted follower, John was given this charge.¹

Accordingly, Mary, the wife of Cleophas and mother of James the less² and Joses (Joseph), seems to be identified with Alphaeus (Mat.10:3; Mar.3:18; Luk.6:15) who is also said to be the father of an Apostle named James. The two names, Cleophas and Alphaeus, are thus variant forms of the same Aramaic original (H.S. Gehman, *New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, p 592 [Mary 1]).

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5.		Salome

¹ Perhaps as God foreknew that James the Apostle would be slain in AD 44 by Herod Agrippa when Mary was but c.65 (were Mary 18 when she gave birth and AD 30 the year of the Cross, she would have been 18+33+14 [44-30] = 65 in 44 AD), our Lord selected John over his older brother.

² Or "little", probably meaning that he was of shorter stature than James the son of Zebedee, although the Greek adjective could equally be translated "the younger".