



MARY MAGDALENE: A DEVOTED FOLLOWER

INTRODUCTION

A person's life is never the same once they encounter the Savior. This was especially true in the life of Mary Magdalene, a woman who had been possessed by seven demons. After she met Jesus face to face and He set her free, she then became one of Christ's most devoted followers.

Mary Magdalene was a passionate servant, who gave her whole life to the Lord's work. She faithfully followed Jesus in His ministry, and served Him with her time, energy, and substance. When Jesus was arrested many of His closest followers fled in fear. They lost hope when He was crucified, but Mary Magdalene remained ever loyal to her Savior.

She stayed close to Him, lovingly devoted, all the way to the cross. Inseparable even after His death, she followed Him to the tomb where He lay. Mary Magdalene was a privileged disciple: she was the first person to witness the risen Christ.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance (Luke 8:2, 3).

Names Given to Mary Magdalene

- Mary . . . *Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils* . . . (Luke 8:2).
Mary in Hebrew means - bitter. Mary is always identified as Mary Magdalene.
- Magdalene *Magdala* in Hebrew means - tower. Magdala was a thriving town at the time of Christ.
Mary was from Magdala, thus she was called Mary Magdalene after her place of birth.

SECTION 1 - A Freed Follower

READ Luke 8:1-3.

In Luke 7:36-50, an unnamed, sinful woman washes Jesus' feet with her tears of repentance and anoints them with ointment from an alabaster box. In Chapter 8, He continues on His ministry journey.

1. Where do we find the Lord and what was He doing (v. 1)? _____

Who was with Him? _____

2. Who else accompanied Jesus throughout every city and village (vv. 2, 3)? _____

What had Mary Magdalene been freed from? _____

LOOK DEEPER

The New Testament describes people who were demon possessed. What symptoms do they experience?

Matthew 9:32, 33 _____

Matthew 12:22 _____

Mark 1:23-26 _____

¹ Joanna - Greek Jehovah is a gracious giver.

² Susanna - Greek Lily.

³ devils: demons, evil unclean spirits; fallen angelic spiritual beings of the underworld; demon-spirits: Demonic spirits operate above the laws of the natural realm and are invisible and incorporeal. As spirit personalities, demons have an intellectual nature through which they possess superhuman knowledge and strength; they are mentally, morally, physically, and spiritually depraved.

Luke 9:37-42 _____

Whether Mary Magdalene's demon possession was mental, emotional or physical is not specifically mentioned. However, when her life was in Satan's grip, she experienced torment, anguish and despair – until she met Jesus.

4. Who cast seven devils from Mary and healed her (Mark 16:9)? _____
5. What were Mary and many other women doing for Jesus (Luke 8:3)? _____

PERSONAL

Are you a follower of Christ? Is there a way in which you provide for Jesus and His ministry?

There were other women who followed Jesus throughout every city and village who were also healed from demon possession and various infirmities, but once they met Jesus they were all healed spiritually. They became an integral part of His ministry.

LOOK DEEPER

What insight does Ephesians 2:1-3 give to us concerning the spiritual condition of man before he meets Jesus?

What has God so richly done for them (Ephesians 2:4-7)? _____

⁴ substance: property and possessions, means; wealth, goods.

6. These women demonstrated their praise and thanksgiving to Jesus by their actions. What do the following Scriptures say about praise and thanksgiving?

Psalm 34:1-6 _____

Psalm 95:1-3 _____

Psalm 150 _____

Philippians 4:4-7 _____

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PERSONAL

How can you offer praise and thanksgiving to God for your spiritual freedom today? _____

How is this demonstrated in your life? _____

SECTION 2 - A Passionate Follower

Mary Magdalene followed Jesus throughout His ministry. After three- and one-half years Jesus is arrested. He was scourged, mocked and sentenced to crucifixion. Most of His followers forsook Christ at this time, but Mary Magdalene was one of the very few disciples that continued to passionately follow Him.

READ John 19:1-30.

1. DESCRIBE how Jesus suffered (John 19:1-25). _____

⁵ moderation: gentleness, patient.

Where do you find Mary Magdalene? _____

LOOK DEEPER

Isaiah predicted Christ's suffering. What can you learn from Isaiah 53? _____

Jesus' passion and love for us was expressed openly on the cross. Mary's passion and love for Jesus was expressed openly as she stood by Him at the foot of the cross in His darkest hour.

PERSONAL

How passionate is your love for Christ today? _____

In what ways could you cause your love for Him to grow? _____

LOOK DEEPER

DESCRIBE the love of God, and how it moves and works through us.

John 15:13 _____

II Corinthians 5:14a _____

I John 3:16 _____

I John 4:19 _____

Mary watched the Lord suffer. The love of Christ permeated her being. How is this love⁷ described in the following verses (I Corinthians 13:1-8a, 13)?

⁶ constraineth: to hold together; to compel; to arrest; keep in; be taken with.

⁷ love: in the King James Version, the word *charity* is used for love. This love is *agape* love, sacrificial love, love of choice, Christ-like love, divine love.

2. What other women demonstrated loving devotion for Jesus (John 19:25)? _____

What did the women observe (John 19:28-30)? _____

The women continued in vigilance.

3. What happened beginning at the sixth hour⁸ (Mark 15:33-41)? _____

What statement did the centurion make concerning Jesus? _____

Who were those looking from afar off at the cross? _____

SECTION 3 - An Active Follower

READ Matthew 27:55-66, Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23:50-56, and John 19:38-42.

Mary continued to follow her LORD.

1. After Jesus' death on the cross, who asked for His body (Matthew 27:57, 58)? _____

What steps did Joseph take to acquire the Lord's body? _____

2. DESCRIBE the details of how Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus carefully buried the Lord from the following verses:

Matthew 27:59, 60 _____

⁸ sixth hour: about mid-day.

Mark 15:45, 46 _____

Luke 23:53 _____

John 19:39-42 _____

3. What were Mary Magdalene and the other women doing at the tomb?

Matthew 27:61 _____

Mark 15:47 _____

Luke 23:55, 56 _____

4. Mary Magdalene and the other women demonstrated an active faith by following Jesus to the cross and even to the sepulchre. What do the following Scriptures say about faith in action?

Romans 10:17 _____

Hebrews 11:1 _____

Hebrews 11:6 _____

James 2:26 _____

PERSONAL

Does your life demonstrate an active faith in Jesus Christ? What have you done to deny yourself, and completely surrender your life and service to Him?

SECTION 4 - A Faithful Follower

Mary's encounter at the tomb is recorded in all four Gospels. Although, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John's accounts may appear to contradict one another, they do not. Just as two reporters can witness the same event, but their stories will vary according to what impacted them, the same is true of the accounts written by them.

READ Mark 16:1-11 and Luke 24:1-12.

1. Why did Mary Magdalene and the other women return to the tomb after the Sabbath⁹ (Mark 16:1)?

2. When, specifically, did they return (vv. 2, 3)?

What problem did they foresee?

3. What did the women find when they arrived at the tomb (v. 4)?

4. How did the stone roll away (Matthew 28:1-3)?

DESCRIBE the angel of the Lord.

5. When they entered the tomb, what did they discover (Mark 16:5, Luke 24:3)?

6. What instructions did the angel give to Mary and the other women (Mark 16:6, 7, Luke 24:5-7)?

7. How did the women respond to the angel's instructions (Mark 16:8)?

8. What was the disciples' response to the news given them by the women (Luke 24:8-11)?

⁹ Sabbath - Hebrew *shabbath* to desist, cease, rest: the weekly day of rest and worship of the Jews; it was instituted at creation (Genesis 2:3).

9. How did Peter react (v. 12)? _____

PERSONAL

Mary Magdalene and the other women acted in faith by believing and sharing the news of the risen Lord. The lives of these women were dedicated to the service of Christ, whatever the need. How can you serve the Lord and His servants today?

SECTION 5 - A Privileged Follower

The disciple mentioned as *the other disciple whom Jesus loved*, is John, the author of this Gospel. This is his account of the resurrection.

READ John 20:1-31.

1. John gives a more detailed account of Peter and himself on resurrection morning. What additional information does he give? COMPARE these two references: John 20:1-10 to Luke 24:12.

2. What was John's reaction to the empty tomb (John 20:8)? _____

3. How did Mary Magdalene respond, as she stood outside the empty tomb (v. 11)? _____

4. Who did Mary see in the tomb (v. 12)? _____

5. What did the angels ask Mary (v. 13)? _____

Why was she grieving? _____

6. Though she did not recognize Him, who appeared to Mary (v. 14)? _____

7. What did Jesus ask her (v. 15)? _____

Supposing He was the gardener, what did she request of Him? _____

8. What happened that caused Mary to recognize her Lord (v. 16)? _____

What did she call her Lord? _____

At that moment Mary Magdalene became the first person to witness the resurrected Christ. The central truth on which the Gospel¹⁰ stands was first revealed to her! What a tremendous privilege she was given.

9. Jesus gave Mary instructions. What were they (v. 17)? _____

Who is the Father? What is His relationship to Christ and to us? _____

10. How did Mary follow the Lord's instructions (Mark 16:9-11)? _____

What is recorded about the disciples? _____

PERSONAL

God desires each one of us to faithfully follow His every instruction. We find His instructions to us in His Word. Mary Magdalene was a woman who followed after Jesus wholeheartedly. She was blessed and privileged to be the first person to see the risen Lord. Do you obey the Lord by faith even when His directions seem frightful?

LOOK back on the lesson. What kind of follower are you? How do you feel you still need to surrender to God to be a:

freed follower _____

¹⁰ Gospel: good news: the birth, death and resurrection of Christ to redeem man of his sins.

passionate follower _____

active follower _____

faithful follower _____

privileged follower _____

MEMORY VERSE

_____ (Luke 8:2, 3).

Mary Magdalene truly loved God. Her passion for Him overflowed in thanksgiving and loyal service to Him. By following close to Jesus, she lived to witness Christ as He defeated Satan on the cross and conquered death and the grave; thus, granting to all who will believe on Him, eternal life.

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