

# Mary Magdalene

*An Early Follower Of Jesus*

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

## Overview:

### MARY MAGDALENE WAS AN EARLY FOLLOWER OF JESUS

Mary Magdalene's story is told in Matthew 27-28; Mark 15-16; Luke 23-24; John 19-20. She is also mentioned in Luke 8:2.

The absence of women among the 12 disciples has bothered a few people. But it is clear that there were many women among Jesus followers. It is also clear that Jesus did not treat women as others in his culture did; he treated them with dignity, as people with worth.

Mary of Magdala was an early follower of Jesus who certainly deserves to be called a disciple.

An energetic, impulsive, caring woman, she not only traveled with Jesus, but also contributed to the needs of the group. She was present at the crucifixion and was on her way to anoint Jesus body on Sunday morning when she discovered the empty tomb. Mary was the first to see Jesus after his resurrection.

Mary Magdalene is a heartwarming example of thankful living. Her life was miraculously freed by Jesus when he drove seven demons out of her.

In every glimpse we have of her, she was acting out her appreciation for the freedom Christ had given her. That freedom allowed her to stand under Christ's cross when all the disciples except John were hiding in fear.

After Jesus' death, she intended to give his body every respect. Like the rest of Jesus' followers, she never expected his bodily resurrection—but she was overjoyed to discover it.

Mary's faith was not complicated, but it was direct and genuine. She was more eager to believe and obey than to understand everything.

Jesus honored her childlike faith by appearing to her first and by entrusting her with the first message of his resurrection.

## **Jesus cast demons out of her.**

### **Mark 16:9**

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.

### **Luke 8:2**

And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

## **Present at the crucifixion**

### **Matthew 27:56**

Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

### **Mark 15:40**

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;

### **John 20:1**

The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

## **John 20:11-13**

But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

And they say unto her, Woman, why weepeth thou? She saith unto them, because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

As proof that the disciples did not fabricate this story, we find that Peter and John were surprised that Jesus was not in the tomb.

When John saw the grave clothes looking like an empty cocoon from which Jesus had emerged, he believed that Jesus had risen. It wasn't until after they had seen the empty tomb that they remembered what the Scriptures and Jesus had said—he would die, but he would also rise again!

Jesus' resurrection is the key to the Christian faith. Why?

(1) Just as he said, Jesus rose from the dead. We can be confident, therefore, that he will accomplish all he has promised.

(2) Jesus' bodily resurrection shows us that the living Christ, not a false prophet or imposter, is ruler of God's eternal kingdom.

(3) We can be certain of our own resurrection because Jesus was resurrected. Death is not the end—there is future life.

(4) The divine power that brought Jesus back to life is now available to us to bring our spiritually dead selves back to life.

(5) The resurrection is the basis for the church's witness to the world.

## **Recognizes Jesus after the resurrection**

### **Matthew 28:8-10**

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

The angel who announced the good news of the resurrection to the women gave them four messages:

(1) Do not be afraid. The reality of the resurrection brings joy, not fear. When you are afraid, remember the empty tomb.

(2) He is not here. Jesus is not dead and is not to be looked for among the dead. He is alive, with his people.

(3) Come and see. The women could check the evidence themselves. The tomb was empty then, and it is empty today. The resurrection is a historical fact.

(4) Go quickly and tell. They were to spread the joy of the resurrection. We too are to spread the great news about Jesus' resurrection.

**28:6** Jesus' resurrection is the key to the Christian faith. Why? (1) Just as he

### **Mark 16:9**

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.

## **John 20:14-18**

And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepeth thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabbinic; which is to say, Master.

Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

Mary did not want to lose Jesus again. She had not yet understood the resurrection. Perhaps she thought this was his promised second coming (John 14:3). But Jesus did not want to be detained at the tomb. If he did not ascend to heaven, the Holy Spirit could not come. Both he and Mary had important work to do.

Mary didn't recognize Jesus at first. Her grief had blinded her; she couldn't see him because she didn't expect to see him. Then he spoke her name, and immediately she recognized him. Imagine the love that flooded her heart when she heard her Savior saying her name. Jesus is near you, and he is calling your name. Can you, like Mary, regard him as your Lord?

**20:18** Mary did not meet the risen Christ until she had discovered the empty tomb. She responded with joy and obedience by going to tell the disciples. We cannot meet Christ until we discover that he is indeed alive, that his tomb is empty. Are you filled with joy by this good news, and do you share it with others?

### **Strengths and accomplishments:**

Contributed to the needs of Jesus and his disciples  
One of the few faithful followers present at Jesus death on the cross  
First to see the risen Christ

### **Lessons for life:**

Those who are obedient grow in understanding  
Women are vital to Jesus ministry  
Jesus relates to women as he created them—as equal reflectors of Gods image

### **Key verse:**

“When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons” (Mark 16:9).

### **To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:**

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

### References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: Life Application Study Bible. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print

Matthew Henry Concise Bible Commentary