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Mary Magdalene and Some Other Women Supported Jesus Out of Their Own Means
Luke 8: 1-3

Mary Magdalene and some other women supported Jesus out of their own means DIG: What do you think the Twelve thought of this arrangement? Why did Jesus include Mary Magdalene and the other women? Was He merely trying to be fair? Was this some early form of affirmative action? Why couldn't the women just listen whenever a crowd gathered or when Yeshua occasionally taught them in private, as He did with Mary of Bethany? How does He treat women generally in the New Covenant?

REFLECT: What made it so unlikely that Mary Magdalene would become such a significant leader among the followers of the Messiah? Why do you think the past has such a strong hold on us, even though we are certain of our forgiveness in Christ? Why is it so hard to forgive others? Why do people even blame God for the misery caused by the Adversary in their lives?

This was **the Lord's** third major preaching tour, when for the first time **He** was not only followed by **His twelve talmidim**, but also attended to by the loving service of those who owed everything to **His** ministry.[648] **After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom of God (Luke 8:1).** This demonstrated that a new stage in the messianic message had begun. It is probable that this tour was preparatory for the next big evangelistic push in **Luke 9:1-50**.



Mary Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Chuza (seen on the left), **the manager of Herod's household, Susanna, and many others** traveled with **them** (art by Sarah Beth Baca: see more information on Links and Resources)**.** This was how **Christ's** preaching tour was financed. Evidently **some** of those **women had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Mary Magdalene** had been **demon** possessed **(Luke 8:2)**, but, **the Meshiach** had delivered **her** from that and **she** owed everything to **Him**. Although **she** was not the **Mary** who anointed **Jesus** with **pure nard** for burial about 28 hours before being laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (that was **Mary**, the sister of Lazarus in **John 12:3**), or **the woman** who had **lived a sinful life weeping and wiping Christ's feet with her hair** as **she poured perfume on them (Luke 7:38), she** had just as much reason to **weep** tears of gratitude at **His** feet.

Instead of **weeping**, **Mary** and **other women** turned **their** gratitude into action. **These women**, apparently well-to-do, **were helping to support them out of their own means (Lk 8:3).** The verb **were helping** is the Greek term *diekonoun* from which we get the word *deacon* **(Mk 15:41; Acts 6:1-6).** Who knows how many lives were touched, how many more people were exposed to the teachings of **Christ**, how often a weary **Yeshua** and **His** fatigued **apostles** were refreshed and revived because of the kindness of these **women**? In the process of caring for **Jesus**, they soaked up **His** teaching and were on the scene to witness **His** character, ministry and miracles. Again it is **Luke** who tells us about **women's** roles in the life and ministry of **Messiah**.

There was certainly nothing inappropriate about **Jesus'** practice of allowing women

disciples to be **His** followers. We can be certain that whatever traveling arrangements were made for the group, **Messiah's** name and honor (as well as the reputations of *all* the men and women in the group) were carefully guarded from anything that might hint of any criticism. After all, **Christ's** enemies were looking desperately for reasons to accuse **Him**. If there had been any way whatsoever for them to drum up doubts about the propriety of **the Lord's** relationships with **women**, that issue would have been raised. However, even though **His** enemies regularly lied about **Him** and even accused **Him** of being **a glutton and a drunkard (Matthew 11:19)**, no accusations against **Him** were ever made on the basis of how **He** treated **the women** in **His** band of disciples.

These were godly **women** who devoted **their** whole lives to spiritual things. **They** evidently had no family responsibilities that required **them** to stay home. If **they** had been negligent with any of **their** duties, you can be certain **Messiah** would not have permitted **them** to accompany **Him**. There is never the slightest hint of unseemliness or indiscretion in the way any of **them** related to **Him**. While most rabbis didn't allow **women** to be their disciples, **Christ** encouraged both men and **women** to learn from **Him**. This is yet another example of how **women** are honored in the Bible.[649]

Our twenty-first-century perspective makes it harder to detect the drastic changes **Jesus** was introducing to **women's** lives. Within the first-century patriarchal culture, **women** led more sheltered lives and moved in separate, more confined spheres than men. In **Mary's** world, men and **women** didn't freely associate together as we do today. Men tended to avoid public encounters with **women**, which explains why **Yeshua's talmidim** were dumbfounded when they found **Him** talking with the Samaritan woman **(John 4:27)**. Also, education was a male privilege. A **woman** could pick up a lot from synagogue teachings and from **her** father, if he chose to teach **her**. But, **women** never studied under rabbis. Church historians tell us that, it would have been unheard of for **women** to travel with a rabbi. Also, **women** didn't have a voice in legal matters and were not accepted as credible witnesses in a court of law.

In these matters, and many others **Rabbi Yeshua** radically broke with tradition. **He** didn't isolate **Himself** from **women** like other rabbis. **He** taught **them** openly, engaged **their** minds, recruited **them** as **His** disciples, and counted **them** in important matters. **He** gave **His** male disciples a lot to think about when they heard **Him** teaching **women** the same deep theology **He** taught them. Furthermore, instead of dismissing **women** as legal witnesses, **Christ** affirmed **them** as key

witnesses to the most crucial events of human history – **His** own death, burial and resurrection (**to see link click Me – Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene**).[650]

Miryam (called Magdalene): Of the **women** who knew **Jesus**, only Mary of Nazareth is mentioned with greater frequency than **Mary Magdalene**. **She** was born in the booming city of Sepphoris, home to some forty thousand residents, an hour's walk north from Nazareth. It was walled, just like Jerusalem, and donkey caravans appeared at the city gates each week begging for entry so they might sell their wares. It was a city unlike any other in Galilee. Since Herod Antipas rebuilt it, it experienced a rebirth. It was home to doctors, lawyers, craftsmen, tax collectors, and entertainers who performed mime and comedic plays at the theater. But, the building of that wondrous metropolis came at a great cost. Thanks to Antipas, Sepphoris had also become home to many people who had lost their farms due to excessive taxation. With no fields to till or homes to call their own, they crowded into the poorest sections of the city, making a life by stealing, begging, or selling their bodies.

Sepphoris was called Magdala – "Magdalena" to the Romans and **Magdalene** in Greek, the language of the gospels. And as **Jesus of Nazareth** walked the streets of Sepphoris, a vibrant young **girl** named **Mary** was there also. In the Bible, **she** became known as **Mary Magdalene** because **she** came from the town of Magdala. **Her** parents had nothing. **Miryam's** life would inevitably be shattered by **demon** possession. We don't know how or when.

All four gospel writers identify **Miryam** as one of **Messiah's** most **devout** followers. **She** appears in nine different lists of **women (Matthew 27:55-56, 61, 28:1; Mark 15:40-41, 47, 16:1; Luke 8:1-3, 24:10** and **John 19:25)**, and in all but one, **her** name heads the list. This points to **her** prominence. Not only that, but among the followers of **Jesus**, **Mary's** name occurs more often in the Bible than most of **the twelve Apostles**.

Miryam had started on the wrong side of the spiritual war. **She** was an **enemy** stronghold, providing food and shelter for **the devil's troops** – seven in all, because **she** was **a woman from whom seven demons had come out (Luke 8:2).** The Bible gives us no hint as to how **Mary** became **demon** possessed, how long **she** lived in that desperate state, or the circumstances surrounding **her** encounter with **Yeshua** that led to **her** deliverance. From what we know of other demoniacs in the Scriptures we can safely assume that until she met **the Messiah**, **she** lived a deranged existence that pushed **her** to the fringes of society.

We can only imagine how many times **Mary** experienced erratic episodes when, driven by the dark powers within, **she** screamed, foamed at the mouth, convulsed, and thrashed around on the ground. Normal people tend to avoid someone like that. Perhaps, like the infamous Gerasene demoniac, **she** lived naked among the tombs or possessed abnormal strength that frightened away any who attempted to help **her**. But, such strength was useless to break the grip of **the seven demons** that held **her** captive. **Miryam** needed **Yeshua** to set **her** free.

We know of no **demon**-possessed person who even went to **Jesus** for help. The sick desperately wanted **His** help. They traveled for miles, disrupted **His** work, pulled up roofs, badgered **Him**, and generally made nuisances of themselves just to get to **Him**. But, no demonic ever sought **the Savior of Sinners** out. Usually someone else – a desperate parent or a compassionate friend – went to **Messiah** on their behalf. Sometimes, without being asked, **Jesus** simply intervened. Around **Him**, **the demons** were helpless.

Mary didn't seek **Yeshua** out. **Her** story isn't about a lost lamb who found **the Shepherd**, but of **the Shepherd** who searched and rescued this lost lamb despite **her demonic** state. It is possible **Miryam** had no family or friends pleading for **ADONAI** to deliver **her**. The strong arm of **the Lord** reached into the black darkness that engulfed **her** and pulled **her** out to safety anyway.

What a powerful encouragement for those of us with loved ones who have no time for **God**, who resist the Good News and want to be left alone. Most people hold out little hope for someone like **Mary**. But **Jesus** doesn't give up on seemingly hopeless cases and neither should we. There's no telling what **He** will do. **Miryam's** descent into hell ended that day **she** met **the King of kings**. **He** brought a sudden end to **her** savage bondage, restored **her** to **her** right mind, and freed **her** to follow **Him**. Never in **her** wildest dreams could **she** have imagined where **her** walk with **Him** would end.[651]