



Women
Disciples

Women Disciples

Welcome to Jesus Time where we spend time with Jesus in His time and culture.

✚ Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³ and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means. Dr. Luke 8:1-3 ESV

Here there is a very specific reason Dr. Luke mentions that women also by now had joined Jesus within His traveling Ministry. Indeed great care has been given to specifically record the exact names of three of the more prominent women.

Remember by Pharisaical Law it was forbidden for a Jewish man to even be seen out with a woman other than his wife or a direct family member.

While oppositely it was also actually illegal and punishable even divorceable for a grown woman to dare having her face uncovered publicly especially around a man not her husband or father at any time.

Remember it was only the year before when Jesus had His appointment with the Samaritan "Lady at the Well" when the Disciples were astonished that Jesus was even speaking with a woman:

✚ Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you seek?" or, "Why are you talking with her?" John 4:27 ESV

Now roughly one year later women believers being Disciples were openly traveling & serving Christ. Also note that the Biblical Passage also stated "many others & who" (women) have been underlined above for emphasis.

Accordingly per study resources within the original Greek, Dr. Luke used the feminine gender connotations as for each the phrase of "many others" & the pronoun of "who."

As in making it plain here that there were many more female Disciples with and supporting Jesus.

So not only now are Jesus's female followers publicly acknowledged by Dr. Luke, these women are also given historical Gospel credit for their monetary support AND proclaiming the Gospel of Christ.

Jewish women supporting a Rabbi and his Ministry was not altogether uncommon however it is safe to say that a traveling band of male & female Disciple students with their teacher was quite unique.

As in Dr. Luke against all societal norms is painstakingly going out of his way to be sure the full truth of Christ our Lords Ministry including women Disciples who were financial providing and proclaiming the Kingdom of GOD is recorded here even though the Pharisee's themselves would never recognize said lady Believers actions or words to be creditable.

This fact will become a paramount issue later when the totality of all four Gospels do in fact each record that it will be women Believers of Jesus whom were the first to discover His empty tomb.

As in no one else but a Christian at this time and place would state or claim this discovery was by women. The Gospels undisputedly record women found the empty tomb first is a truth proof. Only Christians would recognizing this truth by women it was not covered-up denied or lied about.

What Dr. Luke is beginning to do here is; the initial Gospel detailing of the respect and acceptance of women Disciples, providers, teachers & preachers in service to Jesus Christ.

This is an honest recognition of Jesus's Ministry the historical facts with the full truth being relayed.

Luke's Gospel just gave to us specifically the names of three from the group of the lady Disciples of Jesus. So what do we know about them?

Mary of Magdalene: (Myriam in Old Testament Hebrew)

Apart from Jesus's mother now forever known as the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene is perhaps the most recognizable name of female fame from within the Gospel accounts of Christ Jesus.

Mary Magdalene by Holy writ personally witnessed Christ's Crucifixion, Burial, and Resurrection.

Magdalene is also mentioned by name over a dozen times within the Biblical Gospel accounts even more so than many of the actual lesser known 12 Apostles.

Mary's hometown of Magdala was originally a fortress then became a Jewish village having yet later been destroyed and dispersed by the Romans in 67 AD. This is where today a small Arab Islamic village named El-Mejdel (GOD'S Tower) stands today upon the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Magdala was geographically located at the far end of what is known as the plain of Gennesaret with a population comprised of mostly a Gentile majority in Jesus Time.

Fishing and its related trades along with agriculture were the predominantly respectable sources of income. However Magdala was also infamously known as a city of "licentiousness" as in being a city of Sin comparable to what Las Vegas is for us today except having no morality rules at all save for those doing business within Magdala having to pay their required taxes.

This is based upon the Midrash commentary upon Lamentations 2:2 being forever linked to Magdala :

✝ The Lord has destroyed without mercy all the habitations of Jacob; in his wrath he has broken down the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; he has brought down to the ground in dishonor the kingdom and its rulers.

Additionally the Talmud Ta'anit 4.69c states that "Magdala" that is the original Jewish settlement was wealthy and immoral being destroyed (allowed by GOD) for prostitution. Although being Greek in lifestyle the term "prostitution" can also mean Spiritual idolatry meaning forbidden Pagan practices. (Breaking of the 1st 2nd & 4th Commandments)

There is debate as for the timing of the original totally Jewish Magdala's destruction, either by Sargon II of Assyria, or Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon, either way the Magdala of Jesus Time was fully Hellenistic.

Being such was the reputation of Magdala & as for anyone wealthy from there with Mary Magdala being a woman of means from there- now you get the idea as for the automatic assumptions inuendo and rumors pertaining to Mary Magdalene's personal wealth.

The Biblical narrative of Madalene's past is that she was freed from multi demonic possession by Jesus.

This is where the scriptural version of Mary Magdalene ends and the speculation fueled by interpretation, Theologians and Popes does begin. The unnamed "sinful woman" referenced in Luke 7:36-50 was never identified as a prostitute. In Jewish society at that time, "sinful" could have simply meant that she did not follow the Law of Moses. This is where things get muddled.

The Roman Catholics were increasingly over the centuries becoming more and more troubled and no doubt the Priesthood itself felt threatened with the notion of a strong woman within Jesus's Ministry.

Meaning the Christian/Catholic notion that Mary Magdalene being a former prostitute dates to a narrative of Pope Gregory 1st during a Homily (Discourse/Commentary) he delivered in the year 591:

“She whom Luke calls the sinful woman, whom John calls Mary, we believe to be the Mary from whom seven devils were ejected according to Mark,” “What did these seven devils signify, if not all the vices?”

“It is clear, that the woman previously used the unguent to perfume her flesh in forbidden acts.”

“What she therefore displayed more scandalously; she was now offering to God in a more praiseworthy manner. “What She had coveted with earthly eyes, but now through penitence these are consumed with tears.” (End Quote)

This reasoning of course totally disregards that a woman of means in the hot middle east would have certainly had and used perfume. So just by having perfume this surely does not indicate any guilt of this woman even if she was likely in fact Mary of Magdala.

Additionally Pope Gregory’s interpretation as for the seven demons expelled from Mary Magdalene by Jesus Himself, were in time by legend transformed into the “Seven Deadly Sins” of medieval Christianity.

Yes indeed it does appear that the Papacy was so threatened by the strength, character and Faith of Mary Magdalene- that they insinuated the totality of the “Seven Deadly Sins” came from the evil (demoniacs) previously residing within Magdalene.

This foolish manmade tradition of superstition was further fueled down through the ensuing centuries within Western art by the negative depictions of Mary Magdalene in many famous paintings and illustrations.

However the Eastern Orthodox as do many Protestants by in large do reject this notion of Mary Magdalene as an unsaid prostitute who then found repentance through Christ our Lord.

So much so was the divide concerning Magdalene that she along with the sale of Indulgences and including the non Biblical Purgatory with these 3 becoming the major points of contention in the ensuing years leading up to the Protestant Reformation.

With Magdalene serving as the prime example of the Roman priesthood’s theoretical overreach then becoming a manmade assumption deliberately used and abused as tradition instituted as Doctrine.

Get that?

Magdalene her name became synonymous as in she served as chief example against all of the combined Scriptural errors, omissions, and wittingly false interpretations of the Roman Pontiffs.

Today the Mary Magdalene controversy remains as in differences between the Orthodox & many Protestants vs Catholic.

Whatever the happenstance of Mary Magdalene’s Sins committed while under the 7 fallen demoniacs influence, her Sins are not Biblically recorded nor do they appear to be important to our Christ in Lord Jesus save for His banishment from Mary of the fallen demonic.

As in our Lord Jesus forgave what she did while persuaded by evil and set her free of the demons.

Now as a hostile witness the Talmud (recording of Jewish Law & Torah commentary) does in fact record the name of Mary Magdalene (Miriam Megaddela) also as the very same woman recorded in Luke 7:37 as the woman of Sin who anointed Jesus feet when the host of a gathering a Pharisee was rude to Christ.

Ok, so was Mary Magdalene the very same woman of said Dr. Luke passage?

The Pharisee’s claim so as do many Biblical expositors and historians but only Jesus truly knows.

However what is important is the historical legal recording of Mary Magdalene’s name outside of the scriptures as in an verifiable historical truth of proof of the life and Ministry of Jesus our Christ.

The Talmud does in fact clearly record not only Jesus Himself, but also Peter, Saul/Paul, John the Baptist, John the Apostle, Levi/Matthew, Lazarus, Master Nicodemus, & Mary Magdalene.

Indeed Mary Magdalene is mentioned by name no less than 11 times by other early Christian writers or found within first and second century non Biblical resources affirmatively as Jesus's clearly appointed lead Disciple of His women Believers.

The Talmud does record many other so called "wild" claims as for Mary Magdalene including that she was the owner of a Tavern of ill repute. However the one entry most probably true was that she was an official twiner, curler, or plaiter of hair with herself being described as easily identifiable as in a former/past tense sinning woman with exquisite though illegal uncovered braided hair.

This no doubt means that uncovered braided hair was suspect of prostitution. (Paul 1Tim.2:9 & Peter 1Pet.3:3)

With Mary Magdalene being officially recognized even by the Pharisee's as a reformed former sinning woman yet still easily recognizable & identifiable by her brazenly unlawful uncovered braided hair.

If she was as so; was this a defiant quiet stubbornness or was she so as in with uncovered braided hair to serve as an example in order to show that everyone was welcome in Christ Jesus?

Another thought here is that if it is true "braided hair" that each Peter & Paul within the "Way" each went out of their way to advised Christian women to not publicly wear braided hair now as we know possibly did Mary Magdalene. Did she?

Question? Does this mean she started a rebellious trend amongst Christian women? Just a thought.

Also within an extra Talmudic writing similar to what we as Christians do call the Apocrypha within Sabbath 104.2 is a man called "the son of Stada." He is recorded to be the son of Mary Magdalene. The Hebrew meaning of "son of Stada" is someone born of unfaithful adultery or prostitution.

Note as Mary Magdalene's son his actual name was not recorded as in not officially recognized as legitimate. This means he was legally socially & financially an outcast & by Temple condemned to hell. Magdalene's son no doubt like his mother- were officially double shunned each for his birth as in from his mothers reputation and for her becoming an open leading public Disciple of Jesus Christ.

Jerome the early Christian author being the translator of the Latin Vulgate Bible, often within his writings he referred to Mary Magdalene as the "watch tower." in English. (Fortress Hebrew/Aramaic)

This is because tradition holds that after being healed just as Jesus had renamed Simon to Rock (Peter) & Levi to Matthew (gift of GOD) Christ also then renamed Magdalene fortress with the "tress" portion emphasizing the feminine. This is fitting since the small village that now stands where Mary's hometown once stood is literally called GOD'S Tower! (El-Mejdel)

Jerome was indeed implying that Jesus played upon Mary's name as for her Faith reminding Him that her hometown of Magdala was a fortress.

Finally all the of the early Christian authors also clearly thought and taught that what Mary Magdalene was to the early women Disciples of Christ- was the very same thing as Peter was to the male Believers of Jesus. Their assigned leader.

So much so that the Gospels do afford on several occasions that Mary Magdalene was seen as in overseeing? As in the care and welfare of Jesus's direct female family now all advancing in age in attendance within Christ's Ministry. (None of Christ's younger brothers or sisters attended pre-resurrection)

Scriptures do mention that each Mother Mary (Virgin/Jesus) Salome (sister of Virgin Mary) being the mother of the Apostle brothers James and John, along with Mary of Cleophas (husband name the Virgin Mary's sister in law) being the sister of Joseph Jesus's human step father, that all 3 of these women were Gospel accountingly found in the attendance of Mary Magdalene.

Joanna the wife of Chuza : (Herod Antipas's personal house manager.)

Where as Dr. Luke gave credit to Mary Magdalene where credit was due her-
Magdalene serves as a marvelous second chance redemption story with little doubt of her initially being a source of ridicule within the Pharisee's. (likewise for Levi/Matthew)

While opposingly Luke now includes Joanna a more positive prominent female figure.

Some do speculate that Joanna's husband Chuza was in fact dead at this time.

However this does not equate with the present tense verbiage Dr. Luke uses that Chuza was the present tense at this time or current household administrator of Herod Antipas.

The Tetrarch or Governor of Galilee. (under Rome reporting to Pilate)

Think about that.

At this very moment- Herodias, the former sister in law now wife of Antipas is scheming and plotting to rid herself of her ever Law minding nemesis John the Baptist.

The only semi public figure brave enough and uncorruptible to have called her out. (adultery)

Now her very own house managers wife is publicly traveling around and financially supporting this miracle working Prophet Preacher Teacher Jesus- rumored to be the Messiah.

The very same one the unsilenced incarcerated Baptizer is publicly proclaiming to be the Christ!

Question?

Did Joanna's very public Love and support of Jesus add to the sense of urgency and the paranoia of self preservation of Herodias Herod?

Was she fearful that Jesus could add His mighty voice to the Baptizer's?

Was she in fear that this would finally force the Pharisee's to seek a legal annulment of her marriage to Antipas effectively ruining all of her unbridled political ambitions?

Speculative of course.

But one wonders, did the presence of Joanna within Christ's public Ministry garner the attention from Joanna's husband Chuza's powerful higher ups?

Unsubstantiated tradition holds that Chuza, Joanna's husband was ultimately dismissed as Herod's steward due to her Faith and support of Jesus.

& by the "Way" (early name for Christians) it was never disputed that "Joanna" the wife of Chuza, the caretaker of Herod Antipas was in service to Christ our Lord.

Joanna is listed along with Mary Magdalene and Salome Mother Mary's sister who are recorded as the 3 prominent of the women who discovered Jesus's empty Tomb that first Blessed Easter morn.

Susanna :

This would be a wonderful place to inform you about the third woman Dr. Luke credits within his Gospel account of the Life and Ministry of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ except that her story other than of her being mentioned as an affluent woman supporting Jesus has been lost to time.

The two things that can be said here is first this Susanna is certainly not the woman of the same name found in the Apocrypha Book titled "Susanna."

While further this woman from Christ's Ministry serves as a prime example of how the early Church Disciples, Apostles, Teachers, and Historians chose to keep their focus totally upon Christ as our Divine King Messiah.

As in Dr. Luke did a splendid job with dates, places, names, peoples titles, positions, and even fame. But not even once did he ever circle back later and fill in all of the personal details of people just like Susanna. Even though she financially supported Jesus or even likewise other people like Simon of Cyrene who was forced by the Romans to carry our Christ's cross when our Lord could no longer physically do so.

Even knowing a little bit of scripture of how GOD aligns people and events as He deems fit one can not help but to suppose there is more to that story.

Simon of Cyrene at that exact place at the exact time to carry the precious terrible load for Jesus- There has to be more to this than just the plain chance of happenstance.

This point being Dr. Luke quite obviously did know a lot of these details about many of the people found within his Gospel account of the life of Christ. Yet he kept the focus rightfully so upon Jesus. Tradition serves- at least the dominate rumor that is, that Dr. Luke took such said life stories and details to his grave at the age of 84 in the Greek city of Thebes being himself also martyred for Jesus by hanging from an olive tree.

So only GOD knows the details of Susanna and the conclusion of the story of Joanna.

While it is with a concluding certainty by these scriptures & others that Jesus Himself did include women within His Ministry. This is an unchallengeable Biblically and historically verifiable fact. This is verified by the additional non Biblical hostile witness accounts found within the Talmud & Mishna recordings.

There can also be no question that if any chance of fraternization amongst Christ's leading Apostles and Disciples especially conversely including Magdalene, if they or she could have been charged with any impropriety by the Pharisee's who spied upon their every move they would have gladly done so.

Legend holds that the lead Disciple called the "watch tower" Mary Magdalene along with Jesus's Mother the Virgin Mary, & John our Revelator Apostle each lived and taught at what is considered to be the First Christian Seminary in Ephesus.

Ephesus being in modern day Turkey with said Seminary having been previously established by the Apostle Paul then later Pastored by Timothy is famously Biblically documented through Saul/Paul's correspondence of recommendations and instructions unto Timothy within the New Testament Epistle of Ephesians.

Amongst the ruins of this Seminary are portions of walls that on what was their interior side were exquisitely hand painted murals of previous teachers and preachers dating all the "Way" back to the 1st century AD including amongst them as a preacher/teacher is Mary Magdalene. (named portrait)

While all three of these most important eye witness's Mother Mary, Leading Disciple Mary Magdalene, and the Apostle John ultimately with each being buried there in unmarked graves.

Mary Magdalene is rumored to be near or within the now fabled legendary "Cave of the 7 Youths." (Christian youths hid escaping certain death/slept/& emerged 200 years later 250 to 450 AD Christian & Islamic story)

Magdalene's grave unmarked because she did not want any attention or post-repose accolades.

Finally think about this; what do you remember from Mary Magdalene's autobiography?

Obviously she worked at a Seminary so where is her book?

Or Peter's or John's even Mother Mary where is her story other than the needed Gospel info?

Like Dr. Luke's writings staying focused upon Jesus all of the other Disciples being the eye witnesses of Christ Jesus's every action, every word, even in their own personal deaths they all chose to suppress themselves as in no unnecessary attention in order to keep the focus and honor upon Him.

Why? Because Jesus Forgives & Saves!

Because they all know- (alive & well in Heaven) that Christ is the Divine King of Kings and Lord of Lords!!