

Doctrine of Mary Magdalen

1. Mary Magdalen is one of the best known women in the New Testament, and one of the most misunderstood figures as well.
2. The misunderstanding of Mary comes because her name is associated with the town called Magdala which means “tower,” or “fortress”. Magdala was located on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. It is the same as the modern village of El-Mejdel.
3. Unfortunately for Mary, the town of Magdala had an unsavory reputation which became associated with her name, much like Bourbon Street in New Orleans.
4. To further tarnish her character, tradition has arbitrarily associated Mary Magdalene with the woman who anointed the feet of Jesus with her tears and ointment. This woman is described as a “sinner” which was a veiled word for a prostitute. However, there is nothing in the biblical text to indicate this particular “sinner,” this “prostitute” was Mary Magdalene.

Luke 7:36 And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. 37 And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, 38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. 40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. 41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? 43 Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. 44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. 45 Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. 48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. 49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? 50 And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”

5. This anointing of Christ by an unknown sinner during our Lord’s Galilean ministry should be distinguished with another anointing that took place at Bethany where the Lord stayed prior to His triumphal entry in Jerusalem (Matthew 26:7; Mark 14:3; John 12:3). On this second occasion it was Mary, the sister of Lazarus who anointed the Lord.

6. There is no reliable evidence to connect Mary Magdalene with either anointing
7. It is unfortunate that Mary Magdalene is so closely associated with prostitution and thus a question reputation because she does not deserve that characterization. What is Biblically known about Mary Magdalene is that she was a woman of the Lord's redeeming grace.
8. Mary Magdalene enters the gospel narrative, with certain other women, as ministering to the Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples "out of their private means".
 - *Luke 8:2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, 3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.*
9. Mary Magdalene and the other women were grateful to Jesus from their deliverance from "evil spirits and sicknesses." Anyone who has been mentally ill, desperately sick, or demonically possessed would be grateful for divine deliverance.
10. Of Mary it is said that "seven demons had gone out" of her.
 - *Luke 8:2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,*
 - *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.*
11. Once Mary Magdalene came to Christ and was delivered of demons by Him, she was devoted to Jesus for the rest of her life. She would never let go of the one who saved her and made her whole.
12. At the end, when the soldiers came to arrest Jesus and crucify Him, Mary Magdalene was among the women who witnessed from a distance all that transpired.
 - *Luke 23:49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.*
13. During the final hours of Christ's agony on the cross, Mary Magdalene stood and entered into His sufferings. She remained by the cross until Jesus' death, and she waited till the body was taken down, and wrapped in the linen cloth, and placed in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.
 - *Matthew 27:61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.*
 - *Mark 15:47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where he was laid.*

- *Luke 23:55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.*
14. On the third day after the body of Jesus was taken down from the cross, Mary Magdalene, with Salome and Mary, the mother of James, "brought spices, that they might come and anoint" the body. This was done in the earliest dawn of the day.
- *Matthew 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.*
 - *Mark 16:1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.*
15. Apparently Mary Magdalene had been to the tomb, had found it empty, and had seen the angels.
- *Matthew 28:5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.*
 - *Mark 16:5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted.*
16. Leaving the tomb, Mary Magdalene went with her cry of sorrow to Peter and John, returned with them to the sepulcher, and then lingered after they went back to Jerusalem.
- *Luke 24:10 It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.*
 - *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. 2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.*
17. Looking into the tomb, Mary Magdalene saw the angels, and then she replied to their question as to her reason for weeping.
- *John 20:13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.*
18. Turning back, Mary Magdalene saw Jesus, but did not at first recognize Him, no doubt because the last image she had seen of Jesus had been that of a disfigured form from the severe beating the Lord of Glory had taken.

19. But when Jesus spoke and called her by name, Mary Magdalene knew His voice and exclaimed, "Rabboni" (Teacher). Then, Mary rushed forward to embrace His feet.
20. The Lord's response to this act of love and wonder was to teach Mary Magdalene a spiritual truth. Her dependence upon Christ could live without His visible presence.
 - *John 20:18 Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.*
21. Mary then went to the disciples and told them what she had seen and heard.
22. Great gospel privileges had been given to Mary Magdalene. Mary had been delivered of demons by Jesus. She had been allowed to minister to His physical needs during the days of His humiliation. Mary Magdalene had witnessed the crucifixion. And then she had seen, felt, and spoken to the resurrected Lord of Glory.
23. Go now and tell others the true story of Mary Magdalene. Exonerate her name and share her life's experience of being a trophy of redeeming grace by loving Christ as she loved Jesus.