



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

BIBLE FOUNDATIONS

Mary Magdalene

Delivered, Devoted, and a Witness to the Risen Jesus

The Short Answer

Mary Magdalene is one of the most recognizable women in the New Testament, but many popular ideas about her do not actually come from Scripture. The Bible never calls Mary Magdalene a prostitute. It never identifies her as the unnamed sinful woman who anointed Jesus in Luke 7. It never identifies her as Mary of Bethany. What Scripture does tell us is powerful enough. Jesus delivered Mary from seven demons. She became one of the women who followed Jesus and helped support His ministry. She remained near Him during His crucifixion, watched where He was buried, returned to His tomb, and after Jesus rose from the dead became one of the earliest witnesses to the greatest event in human history. Her story moves from deliverance to discipleship, from discipleship to devotion, and from devotion to witness. But Mary Magdalene's story is not ultimately about how devoted Mary was to Jesus. It is about the Jesus who delivered her, died for sinners, rose from the dead, called her by name, and sent her to tell others that He was alive.

Luke 8:1-3 · Matthew 27:55-61 · Mark 15:40-47 · Luke 23:49-56 · John 19:25 · Matthew 28:1-10 · Mark 16:1-8 · Luke 24:1-12 · John 20:1-18

Opening Memory Anchor

Mary Magdalene's story is not primarily about who she was before Jesus. It is about what Jesus did - and how she followed Him afterward.



PART ONE BEGINNER GUIDE

1. WHO WAS MARY MAGDALENE?

Mary Magdalene was a woman who became a devoted follower of Jesus. Her name appears repeatedly in the Gospel accounts, particularly near Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. 'Magdalene' most likely identifies Mary with Magdala, a town associated with the region around the Sea of Galilee. This helped distinguish her from several other women named Mary in the New Testament.

Read Luke 8:1-3. Jesus was traveling from town to town proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve disciples were with Him. Luke then tells us that several women also traveled with Jesus and supported the ministry. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and others. Joanna is identified as the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household, and appears again in Luke 24:10 among the women who reported the empty tomb. Susanna is named in Luke 8:3 but is not described further.

This helps show that Mary Magdalene was not an isolated follower. She was part of a real community of women who traveled with Jesus and helped support His ministry. Luke identifies Mary specifically as 'Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out' (Luke 8:2). She had experienced severe spiritual bondage. Jesus had delivered her. But Scripture does not spend much time describing Mary's past. Instead, it shows what happened afterward. Mary followed Jesus.

2. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT SEVEN DEMONS HAD COME OUT OF MARY?

Scripture explicitly says Mary Magdalene had been delivered from seven demons. It does not explain exactly how that oppression affected her. The Bible does NOT tell us that Mary was sexually immoral, that she was a prostitute, or what behaviors, symptoms, or circumstances accompanied the demonic oppression. It simply tells us that Jesus delivered her.

The number seven sometimes carries associations of completeness or fullness elsewhere in Scripture. Some interpreters therefore understand Luke's mention of seven demons as emphasizing the severity or completeness of Mary's oppression. That is possible, but Luke does not explain the number's significance in Mary's particular case. It should remain an inference rather than an explicit biblical conclusion.

Memory Anchor

Scripture tells us enough to know what Jesus did. It does not give permission to invent what Scripture leaves unsaid.

3. DOES MARY'S STORY MEAN SEVERE SUFFERING IS CAUSED BY DEMONS?

No. Scripture clearly recognizes demonic activity, but the Bible also describes physical illness, emotional suffering, grief, disability, trauma, human sin, consequences of other people's actions, and the ordinary brokenness of living in a fallen world. Not every problem is identified as demonic.

Mary Magdalene's experience should never be used to diagnose another person's suffering. Mental illness, trauma, addiction, or unusual behavior should not automatically be labeled demonic. Scripture tells what happened to Mary; it does not authorize Christians to speculate carelessly about someone else. The central truth is the authority and compassion of Jesus.



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4. WHAT DID MARY DO AFTER JESUS DELIVERED HER?

She followed Him. Read Luke 8:1-3 again. Mary was among several women traveling with Jesus and His disciples. Luke says these women 'were helping to support them out of their own means' (Luke 8:3). Mary was therefore not merely someone Jesus had helped once. She became part of the community surrounding His ministry. She listened, followed, served, and gave.

Her response to grace became a life of discipleship. That does not mean Mary somehow repaid Jesus for delivering her. Grace cannot be repaid. Her devotion was a response to grace, not payment for it. Jesus saves. Grace comes first. Then the follower of Jesus responds with faith, obedience, worship, generosity, and service.

5. WAS MARY MAGDALENE A PROSTITUTE?

Scripture never says she was. In Luke 7:36-50, an unnamed woman described as living a sinful life enters the home of a Pharisee and anoints Jesus' feet. Immediately afterward, Luke 8 introduces Mary Magdalene. Because the stories appear next to one another, some readers eventually connected the unnamed woman of Luke 7 with Mary Magdalene.

Mary Magdalene has also sometimes been confused with Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, who anointed Jesus in John 12. Again, Scripture does not identify these women as the same person. Mary Magdalene is Mary Magdalene. Mary of Bethany is identified as Mary of Bethany. The woman in Luke 7 is unnamed. It is better to preserve the distinctions Scripture gives than to combine people the Bible does not combine.

6. HOW DID THE PROSTITUTE TRADITION BECOME SO COMMON?

The idea did not come directly from the biblical text. In the Western Church, the identification became especially influential after Pope Gregory I, also known as Gregory the Great, preached a homily in AD 591 that treated Mary Magdalene, the unnamed sinful woman of Luke 7, and Mary of Bethany as the same woman. That interpretation became deeply embedded in Western Christian art, preaching, and popular imagination.

Eastern Christian traditions generally preserved these women as distinct figures. This history helps explain why the misconception became so widespread. But church tradition should still be distinguished from Scripture. The Bible itself never says Mary Magdalene was the sinful woman of Luke 7 or Mary of Bethany.

Biblical Literacy Connection

Study #211 and Study #212 illustrate the same important Bible-study discipline: honor later Christian tradition where appropriate, but distinguish it carefully from what Scripture explicitly states.

7. WHY DOES THIS MISUNDERSTANDING MATTER?

Because accuracy matters when reading Scripture. Calling Mary Magdalene a prostitute may seem harmless when the intended message is that Jesus forgives sinners. Jesus certainly does forgive sinners. But that truth does not require changing Mary's story.

Mary's actual testimony is already powerful: she was oppressed, Jesus delivered her, and she followed Him. One goal of Bible study is learning to ask: What does the passage actually tell us? What have people inferred? What has later tradition added?

Memory Anchor

A powerful testimony does not need embellishment. What Jesus actually did is enough.



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8. WHERE WAS MARY DURING JESUS' CRUCIFIXION?

Mary remained near Jesus. All four Gospels identify women present around the events of Jesus' crucifixion, and Mary Magdalene is repeatedly named. Read Matthew 27:55-56; Mark 15:40-41; Luke 23:49; John 19:25.

Matthew says many women watched from a distance. Mark explains that these women had followed Jesus in Galilee and cared for His needs. Mary Magdalene was among them. Jesus had once delivered Mary. Now she watched Him suffer. Scripture does not tell us everything Mary thought or felt. There is no need to invent her emotions. Mary stayed near Jesus when following Him had become heartbreaking.

9. DID MARY ALSO SEE WHERE JESUS WAS BURIED?

Yes. Read Matthew 27:57-61 and Mark 15:42-47. Joseph of Arimathea received permission from Pilate to take Jesus' body, and Jesus was placed in a tomb. Matthew says, 'Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb' (Matthew 27:61). Mark likewise says Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where Jesus was laid.

This detail becomes extremely important. Mary knew Jesus had died. She knew where His body had been placed. She was not going to the wrong location when she returned after the Sabbath. The Gospel writers connect the women who witnessed Jesus' death and burial with the women who later discovered the empty tomb. The resurrection story begins with people who knew Jesus had truly died.

10. WHY DID MARY RETURN TO THE TOMB?

Mary and other women returned after the Sabbath in connection with burial preparations. Read Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-3; Luke 24:1; John 20:1. The Gospel writers emphasize different details and name somewhat different groups of women, but Mary Magdalene appears prominently in all four resurrection narratives.

John says, 'Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb' (John 20:1). Mary was not going there because she expected a resurrection. She expected a tomb, death, and Jesus' body to be there. Instead, she discovered that the stone had been moved.

11. WHAT DID MARY DO WHEN SHE FOUND THE EMPTY TOMB?

According to John, Mary immediately ran to Simon Peter and the disciple Jesus loved. She said, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!' (John 20:2). Her initial conclusion was not 'Jesus has risen,' but 'someone has taken His body.'

This matters. Mary was not expecting a resurrection and then imagining one because she desperately wanted it to happen. The empty tomb confused her. Peter and the other disciple ran to investigate, entered the tomb, saw the burial cloths, and then returned to where they were staying. Mary remained.



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12. WHAT HAPPENED WHEN MARY REMAINED AT THE TOMB?

Read John 20:11-18. Mary stood outside the tomb crying. She looked inside and saw two angels. They asked why she was crying. Mary answered, 'They have taken my Lord away... and I don't know where they have put him' (John 20:13).

Then Mary turned and saw someone standing nearby. It was Jesus, but she did not recognize Him. Jesus asked why she was crying and whom she was looking for. Mary thought He was the gardener. Then everything changed with one word. Jesus said, 'Mary' (John 20:16). She recognized Him. The Shepherd who had once delivered her now stood alive before her. Jesus had died. The tomb was empty. And the risen Christ called Mary by name.

Memory Anchor

Mary came looking for a body. She encountered the risen Jesus.

13. WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT THAT JESUS CALLED MARY BY NAME?

Throughout Scripture, God knows people personally. Jesus had earlier described Himself as the Good Shepherd. Read John 10:1-18. Jesus said of the shepherd, 'He calls his own sheep by name' (John 10:3). John does not explicitly tell readers that John 20:16 is a direct fulfillment of John 10:3, but the connection is striking.

Mary did not recognize Jesus merely because she examined evidence more carefully. Recognition came when Jesus spoke her name. Her response was 'Rabboni!' (John 20:16), meaning 'Teacher.' The moment is deeply personal, but it is also larger than Mary's experience. The risen Jesus had something for Mary to do.

14. WHAT DID JESUS TELL MARY TO DO?

Jesus sent her with a message: 'Go instead to my brothers and tell them...' (John 20:17). Mary obeyed. She went to the disciples with the announcement, 'I have seen the Lord!' (John 20:18), and told them what Jesus had said.

Mary had arrived at the tomb grieving. She left as a witness. Jesus delivered her. Mary followed Him. She remained near Him. She sought Him even when she believed He was dead. She encountered Him risen. And Jesus sent her to testify about Him.

PART TWO

WANT TO GO DEEPER?

INTERMEDIATE

15. WAS MARY MAGDALENE THE FIRST PERSON TO SEE THE RISEN JESUS?

John 20 presents Mary Magdalene's encounter with Jesus as the first resurrection appearance described in that Gospel. Mark 16:9 also states that Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, although Mark 16:9-20 raises an important manuscript question discussed later in this study. Matthew 28 describes Jesus appearing to women returning from the tomb.

Paul's summary in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 begins its list of resurrection appearances with Peter rather than Mary. That does not necessarily mean Paul believed Peter was chronologically first; he is summarizing appearances for his particular argument rather than giving a complete chronological list. The Gospels preserve Mary's remarkable role clearly: she was among the earliest people to encounter the risen Jesus and was commissioned to announce what she had seen.



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16. WHY IS MARY'S ROLE AS A RESURRECTION WITNESS IMPORTANT?

The resurrection is not presented in Christianity merely as an inspirational idea. It is proclaimed as something that happened. Jesus died. He was buried. The tomb was discovered empty. His followers testified that they encountered Him alive. Mary Magdalene stands near the beginning of that eyewitness testimony.

Paul later wrote, 'If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile' (1 Corinthians 15:17). Mary did not preach an abstract philosophy when she returned to the disciples. Her testimony was concrete: 'I have seen the Lord!' (John 20:18). Christian hope rests not merely on the teaching of Jesus but on the claim that the crucified Jesus truly rose from the dead.

17. IS MARY MAGDALENE CALLED "THE APOSTLE TO THE APOSTLES"?

Not in Scripture. The expression 'apostle to the apostles' became a later Christian description of Mary Magdalene because Jesus sent her to announce His resurrection to the disciples. The phrase captures something true about her role in John 20, but Scripture itself does not give Mary Magdalene the formal title 'apostle.'

The Greek word translated 'apostle' can carry the general idea of someone who is sent, but the New Testament also uses 'the apostles' for a particular group commissioned by Jesus. It is reasonable to recognize why later Christians used the phrase to honor Mary's resurrection witness while also being precise: it is a historical Christian description, not a biblical title assigned to Mary.

18. DO THE FOUR GOSPELS DISAGREE ABOUT WHO WENT TO THE TOMB?

At first glance, the accounts can seem different. Matthew names Mary Magdalene and 'the other Mary.' Mark names Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome. Luke names Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and 'the others with them.' John begins by focusing specifically on Mary Magdalene.

Naming one person does not necessarily mean no one else was present. John's wording provides an important clue: Mary tells Peter, 'We don't know where they have put him!' (John 20:2). The word 'we' naturally suggests Mary was not necessarily alone even though John focuses on her.

The Gospel writers appear to select different details from a larger group of events. Readers should resist pretending every chronological detail can be reconstructed with absolute certainty. The central claims remain consistent: Jesus died, was buried, women who knew the tomb returned, the tomb was empty, angelic messengers announced His resurrection, Jesus appeared alive, and His followers became witnesses.

Reader Safeguard

These questions involve historical reconstruction. The central truth of the resurrection does not depend on mastering every chronological detail.



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19. WHY DO THE GOSPELS EMPHASIZE WOMEN AT THE TOMB?

This is an important feature of all four Gospel accounts. Women were present at Jesus' death, observed His burial, discovered the empty tomb, received the resurrection announcement, and were sent with the news.

Some Christian apologetic arguments emphasize that women's testimony was sometimes treated differently from men's testimony in parts of the ancient world and therefore claim that no one inventing the resurrection story would have chosen women as the first witnesses. There is something worth considering in that argument, but it should not be overstated. Social and legal treatment of women's testimony varied by time, place, setting, and circumstance.

Scripture itself does not say, 'Women were chosen because nobody would invent this story.' What Scripture clearly shows is enough: the Gospel writers did not remove the women from the story. Mary Magdalene's role remained prominent. The resurrection accounts preserve her witness.

20. WHAT IS THE MANUSCRIPT QUESTION ABOUT MARK 16?

Many modern Bibles include a note around Mark 16:9-20 because some of the earliest and most important surviving Greek manuscripts end Mark's Gospel at 16:8, while other manuscripts contain the longer ending. Mark 16:9 says Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene.

Because the manuscript evidence for Mark's longer ending is disputed, major theological conclusions should not depend solely upon Mark 16:9-20. Textual criticism is the process scholars use to compare ancient biblical manuscripts in order to determine, as carefully as possible, the earliest recoverable wording of the text. This does NOT mean scholars are rewriting the Bible. It means surviving manuscript copies can be compared when variations exist. Most differences are minor.

Importantly, the resurrection of Jesus does not depend on Mark 16:9-20. It is taught throughout the New Testament.

Reader Safeguard

You do not need to master manuscript studies to trust the New Testament's central resurrection testimony. The resurrection is supported across multiple New Testament writings, not by one disputed passage.

21. WHAT ABOUT THE "GOSPEL OF MARY," THE "GOSPEL OF PHILIP," AND CLAIMS THAT MARY MARRIED JESUS?

These claims come from sources outside the New Testament. The so-called Gospel of Mary and Gospel of Philip are later non-canonical writings composed after the New Testament period. They reflect theological debates and movements that developed later in Christian history and are not eyewitness biographies written by Mary Magdalene or by the apostles.

The Gospel of Mary survives only partially and presents Mary as a prominent disciple in a debate among Jesus' followers. The Gospel of Philip contains symbolic and theological language about Mary and Jesus that modern popular culture has sometimes interpreted as evidence of a romantic or marital relationship. But it does not provide reliable historical evidence that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married. The canonical Gospels and the rest of the New Testament never identify Mary Magdalene as Jesus' wife or romantic partner.

Modern novels, television programs, documentaries, and films - famously The Da Vinci Code - have popularized these theories. A helpful distinction is that the canonical Gospels are first-century sources at the center of the earliest Christian testimony about Jesus, while later non-canonical writings tell historians about later Christian movements and beliefs.

Memory Anchor

Later writings may tell us about later beliefs. They do not automatically tell us what happened during Jesus' ministry.



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22. WHAT DOES MARY'S STORY TEACH ABOUT DELIVERANCE?

Mary's story begins in Scripture with something Jesus had already done for her: she had been delivered from seven demons. But Luke does not leave Mary permanently identified by her bondage. Her past explains something about the grace she had received; it does not become the only thing Scripture says about her.

After deliverance, Mary is increasingly known as a disciple, supporter of ministry, witness to the crucifixion, witness to the burial, visitor to the empty tomb, eyewitness of the risen Christ, and messenger of the resurrection. Scripture does not erase Mary's past, but neither does it imprison her inside it.

Memory Anchor

Jesus did not merely deliver Mary from something. He called her to follow Someone.

23. DOES FOLLOWING JESUS GUARANTEE THAT LIFE WILL BECOME EASIER?

No. Jesus delivered Mary, then Mary followed Him into circumstances that eventually brought her to a cross and a tomb. Deliverance did not mean she would never grieve again. Following Jesus did not shield her from sorrow. Faithfulness did not guarantee comfortable circumstances.

Mary watched the One who had changed her life be crucified. For a time, she believed He was dead. She stood outside His empty tomb crying because she did not yet understand what had happened. This protects Christianity from a shallow message that says, 'Come to Jesus and everything will become easy.' Jesus gives something far greater than an easy life. He gives Himself. And because He rose, suffering and death do not have the final word.

24. WHAT DOES MARY TEACH ABOUT DEVOTION?

Mary's devotion appears primarily through presence. She followed Jesus during His ministry, helped support the ministry, remained near His crucifixion, watched His burial, returned to His tomb, and remained outside the tomb after Peter and the other disciple left.

But Mary's devotion should not become the ultimate focus. The Gospel is not, 'Love Jesus as much as Mary did and He will reward you.' Mary's devotion was itself a response to grace. Jesus acted first. Jesus delivered, taught, died, rose, revealed Himself, and sent. Mary responded. Christian devotion follows the same order: grace first, response second.

25. WHY DID MARY NOT RECOGNIZE JESUS IMMEDIATELY?

John 20:14 says Mary saw Jesus but did not realize it was Him. Scripture does not explicitly explain why. She was crying; it may still have been relatively dark; she was not expecting Jesus to be alive; or His resurrected appearance may in some way have been different. Other resurrection accounts also include moments when Jesus is not immediately recognized. Read Luke 24:13-35 and John 21:1-14.

First Corinthians 15:35-49 provides broader teaching about the resurrection body and transformation associated with resurrection, but Paul does not use that teaching to explain Mary's failure to recognize Jesus in John 20. The safest conclusion remains simple: Mary initially did not recognize Jesus. Then He spoke her name, and she knew Him.



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26. WHAT DOES “DO NOT HOLD ON TO ME” MEAN?

After Mary recognized Jesus, John records Him saying, 'Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father' (John 20:17). Some translations render the expression more like 'Do not cling to me.' Jesus was clearly not teaching that physical contact with His resurrected body was forbidden because other resurrection accounts describe people touching Him. Read Matthew 28:9 and John 20:27.

The point appears instead to involve Mary's response to Jesus and the next stage of His mission. She could not simply hold onto Jesus as though everything had returned to the way it was before the crucifixion. Jesus had risen. His ascension was coming. And Mary now had a mission: 'Go... and tell.' The resurrection did not restore the old situation. It inaugurated something new.

27. WHAT DOES MARY MAGDALENE'S STORY REVEAL ABOUT JESUS?

Mary's story reveals a Savior with authority over evil; a Savior who receives followers from very different backgrounds; a Savior whose grace produces discipleship; a Savior who willingly went to the cross; a Savior who truly died; a Savior whose tomb could not hold Him; a Savior who sees a grieving woman; a Savior who calls His follower by name; a Savior who turns mourning into witness; and a Savior who entrusts the good news of His resurrection to ordinary people.

And ultimately: a Savior who is alive.

THE GOSPEL IN MARY MAGDALENE'S STORY

Mary Magdalene's story reaches its climax at an empty tomb. That is also where Christianity's central claim becomes unavoidable. Jesus did not merely teach people how to live. He came to save sinners. He died on the cross. He was buried. And on the third day, He rose.

Mary arrived expecting death. Instead, she encountered Life. Her announcement was simple: 'I have seen the Lord!' (John 20:18). Because He lives, sin can be forgiven. Because He lives, death has been defeated. Because He lives, those who belong to Him have hope beyond the grave. Following Jesus is not devotion to a dead teacher. It is relationship with the risen Lord.

Mary's story begins with Jesus delivering her, but it ultimately points toward the greater deliverance Jesus offers through His death and resurrection: deliverance from sin, reconciliation with God, resurrection life, and eternal hope through Jesus Christ.

Gospel Memory Anchor

Mary went to announce what every generation of Christians has been entrusted to proclaim: Jesus is alive.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

1. LET SCRIPTURE DEFINE PEOPLE. Do not repeat assumptions simply because they are familiar. Ask what the Bible actually says.
2. DISTINGUISH SCRIPTURE FROM TRADITION. Christian tradition can preserve valuable insights. It can also preserve interpretations that go beyond the biblical text.
3. REMEMBER WHAT JESUS HAS DONE. Mary's life after deliverance was shaped by the grace she had received.
4. FOLLOW JESUS BEYOND THE MOMENT OF RESCUE. Christianity is more than receiving help from Jesus. It is becoming His disciple.
5. SERVE FROM GRACE, NOT TO EARN GRACE. Mary's generosity followed Jesus' work in her life. It did not purchase it.
6. REMAIN FAITHFUL WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES BECOME PAINFUL. Mary followed Jesus through ministry, crucifixion, burial, and grief.
7. DO NOT ASSUME CONFUSION MEANS FAITH HAS FAILED. Mary stood at the empty tomb without understanding what had happened. Jesus was already risen.
8. TESTIFY TO WHAT JESUS HAS DONE. Mary's message was not complicated: "I have seen the Lord!" A Christian witness points away from self and toward Jesus.



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DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

1. Before reading this study, what assumptions had you heard about Mary Magdalene? Which are actually stated in Scripture?
2. Why is it important that Scripture tells us Mary had been delivered from seven demons without giving detailed information about her previous life?
3. What difference does it make to see Mary as part of a wider community of women following and supporting Jesus?
4. Why is it useful to know how the prostitute tradition developed historically?
5. What is the difference between being helped by Jesus and becoming a disciple of Jesus?
6. What does Mary's financial and practical support of Jesus' ministry teach about responding to grace?
7. Why is Mary's presence at the crucifixion and burial important to the resurrection story?
8. Mary arrived at the tomb expecting Jesus to be dead. How does that affect the way the resurrection account is understood?
9. What stands out about Jesus calling Mary by name?
10. Why distinguish Mary's biblical role as a resurrection witness from later titles such as 'apostle to the apostles'?
11. What can differences among the four Gospel resurrection accounts teach about careful Bible study?
12. How should later writings such as the Gospel of Mary or Gospel of Philip be evaluated differently from the canonical Gospels?
13. Mary's story moves from deliverance to discipleship to witness. Where should that movement appear in a Christian's life today?

REVIEW AND RETENTION

1. What did Jesus deliver Mary Magdalene from? Seven demons.
2. Does Scripture say Mary Magdalene was a prostitute? No.
3. Is Mary Magdalene identified as Mary of Bethany? No.
4. Who were two other women Luke names alongside Mary? Joanna and Susanna.
5. What did Mary and other women do during Jesus' ministry? They followed Jesus and helped support the ministry from their own resources.
6. Where was Mary during Jesus' crucifixion? Among the women who remained nearby and witnessed His death.
7. Did Mary know where Jesus was buried? Yes. The Gospel accounts describe her observing His burial.
8. What did Mary initially think when she discovered the empty tomb? She thought Jesus' body had been taken away.
9. What caused Mary to recognize the risen Jesus? Jesus called her by name.
10. What did Jesus tell Mary to do? Go and tell His followers.
11. What did Mary announce? "I have seen the Lord!"
12. Is "apostle to the apostles" a biblical title for Mary? No. It is a later Christian description.
13. Do all four Gospels emphasize exactly the same tomb details? No, but their central resurrection testimony is consistent.
14. What should be remembered about Mark 16:9-20? Its manuscript history is disputed, so major doctrine should not depend solely on it.
15. Do later writings prove Jesus and Mary Magdalene were married? No.
16. Central truth? Jesus Christ delivered her, she followed Him, and she became a witness to the risen Lord.

FINAL MEMORY ANCHORS

- Mary Magdalene's story is not primarily about who she was before Jesus. It is about what Jesus did - and how she followed Him afterward.
- Scripture tells us enough to know what Jesus did. It does not give permission to invent what Scripture leaves unsaid.
- A powerful testimony does not need embellishment. What Jesus actually did is enough.
- Mary came looking for a body. She encountered the risen Jesus.
- Later writings may tell us about later beliefs. They do not automatically tell us what happened during Jesus' ministry.
- Jesus did not merely deliver Mary from something. He called her to follow Someone.
- Mary went to announce what every generation of Christians has been entrusted to proclaim: Jesus is alive.

A SCRIPTURE PATH FOR CONTINUED STUDY

Luke 8:1-3 - Mary, Joanna, Susanna, and other women follow and support Jesus · Matthew 27:55-61 - Mary at the crucifixion and tomb · Mark 15:40-47 - Mary witnesses Jesus' death and burial · Luke 23:49-56 - The women observe Jesus' death and burial · John 19:25 - Mary near the crucifixion · Matthew 28:1-10 - Women discover the empty tomb and encounter Jesus · Mark 16:1-8 - Women arrive at the empty tomb · Luke 24:1-12 - Women receive the resurrection announcement · John 20:1-18 - Mary encounters the risen Jesus · John 10:1-18 - Jesus the Good Shepherd · Luke 24:13-35 - Road to Emmaus · John 21:1-14 - Another resurrection appearance · 1 Corinthians 15:1-28 - Resurrection · 1 Corinthians 15:35-49 - Resurrection body

FINAL SUMMARY

Mary Magdalene has accumulated centuries of stories, assumptions, artwork, traditions, and speculation. But Scripture gives something better: Mary as she actually appears in the biblical story. A woman once oppressed by seven demons. Jesus delivered her. Mary followed Him. She joined a community of women who traveled with Jesus and helped support His ministry. She remained near Him when He was crucified, watched where He was buried, returned to the tomb, and wept because she believed the One who had transformed her life was gone. Then Jesus spoke her name. 'Mary.' The crucified Savior was alive. Her grief became astonishment. Her searching became seeing. Her devotion became witness. Jesus sent her to tell the others, and Mary went: 'I have seen the Lord!'

Mary Magdalene's story should not be reduced to speculation about her past, reshaped by later traditions, or confused with later writings or modern theories about a relationship with Jesus that the New Testament never describes. The Bible's emphasis is far more powerful. Jesus had authority over what once held her captive. His grace changed the direction of her life. His death did not end her story. His resurrection transformed it. The woman who came to a tomb expecting death left proclaiming life. That is where Mary Magdalene's story points every reader: not ultimately toward Mary, but toward Jesus - the One who delivers, died, rose, knows His followers by name, and still sends His people into the world with the good news that He is alive.

Final Memory Anchor

The most important thing about Mary Magdalene is not what once held her. It is the One who set her free.