

After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, <sup>2</sup> and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: **Mary (called Magdalene)** from whom seven demons had come out; <sup>3</sup> Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them **out of their own means**.

Luke 8:1-3

### 1. Magdala -

- Different names:
  - **Aramaic** - Magdala – “Tower”
  - **Greek** – *Taricheaea* – “salted fish.”
  - **Hebrew** (Talmud) – *Migdal Nunnaya* – “Tower of Fish”
- A Wealthy city from the distribution of salted fish around the region.
- Romans destroyed Magdala in 67.
  - The only sea battle conducted by Rome on the Sea of Galilee was against the rebels at Magdala.
  - According to the historian Josephus – the citizens of Magdala fled from the Romans to Tiberias. <sup>1</sup>
    - Vespasian slaughtered one thousand two hundred refugees in the stadium of Tiberias.
    - Six thousand were sent as slaves to build a canal at Corinth
    - Thirty thousand four hundred were sold as slaves.

### 2. Magdala Synagogue:

- Discovered in 2009 during the construction of a hotel.
- Coins from 5-63 BC were found.
- Archaeologists believe the Jews of Magdala dismantled the synagogue instead of allowing it to be destroyed by the Romans.

### 3. Mikveh – Ritual Baths

- Wealthy homes within Magdala contain Mikveh
- The natural water table supplies the “Living Waters” of the Mikveh.
  - These water-table-supplied mikvehs are the only one of their kind found in Israel and are an engineering marvel.

### 4. Magdala Stone:

- The stone is an artistic representation of the Temple in Jerusalem.
- It was believed to be used as a table for reading the Torah scroll.

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<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Jewish Wars*, Book 3, chapter 10, 539-540.

#### 5. Mary Magdalene:

- A follower of Jesus.
- Supported Jesus and the Disciples out of her own means (Luke 8:3)
- The first witness of Jesus post-resurrection (Matt. 28:9-10; John 20:11-18)
- Given the mission to proclaim that Jesus resurrected to the disciples (Matt. 28:7; Mark 16:7; John 20:17)

#### 6. Prostitute?

- Scripture never tells us that Mary was a prostitute.
- There is a conflation of the sinful woman in **Luke 7:36-50** with Mary Magdalene in **Luke 8:3**.
- 591 AD – Pope Gregory the Great – gave a sermon (Sermon 33.1) in which he essentially named Mary Magdalene a prostitute.

#### 7. Mary “the Magdalene” –

- One suggestion is that the “seven demons” (Luke 8:2) were **sins of affluence** – extravagance – pride – greed – or avarice.
- Rabbis interpret Magdala’s destruction due to the “moral depravity” of its citizens.<sup>2</sup>
- Mary is only associated with the city and not with a male family member<sup>3</sup>

#### 8. Women owning property:

- Numbers 27:1-11
- Zelophehad’s daughters were legally allowed to accept property from their father.

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<sup>2</sup>Zapata-Meza, Marcela, and Rosaura Sanz-Rincón. “Excavating Mary Magdalene’s Hometown,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 43, no. 3 (2017): 37–42.

<sup>3</sup>Shanks, Hershel. “BAR Exclusive! Major New Excavation Planned for Mary Magdalene’s Hometown,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 33, no. 5 (2007): 52–55