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DECEMBER

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 12

## Mary Magdalene: The First Eyewitness of the Resurrected Christ

The Appearance to Mary, Cont'd from November Newsletter

*<sup>11</sup> Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb <sup>12</sup> and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. <sup>13</sup> They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." <sup>14</sup> At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. <sup>15</sup> He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). <sup>17</sup> Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" <sup>18</sup> Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her. Jn 20:11-18*

Recall from the previous articles the question Mary Magdalene's eye witness account of Christ's resurrection begs: Will you believe in the Christ as the resurrected Savior of the World and Son of God? As discussed, a good way in which to approach the appearance of the resurrected Christ to Mary is from a three-fold approach: the biblical, systematic and pastoral theological perspectives. This final article presents Mary Magdalene's eyewitness account of the resurrected Christ from the pastoral or personal perspective. How does the resurrection fit within the context of the believer's individual life, that of Mary's and of ours?

**"To Mary belongs the glory of being the first person to see the Risen Christ." Barclay.**

Why Mary? She's not one of the twelve, now eleven. She's not later mentioned in the record of the early church. She's mentioned very little prior to the account of the resurrection in the scripture. She's a woman. She was a woman with a demonic past. For weeks, I asked this question of the Scripture and of the Lord. I was having a one-sided conversation with the Lord, constantly asking a single question, "Why Mary?"

Finally, the answer came from the Scripture and the life of Christ. It is the wrong question. The proper question is, "Why not Mary?" At the time of the ministry of Christ, among the Jewish religious leaders and teachers, as well as among the culture at large, Greek and Roman, women were counted as among the lowest in society, as even now in so many cultures and religions of the world. Women were equivalent to property. They were not allowed to give testimony in court. They were passed from father to husband, often with little say in the matter. They could not divorce their husbands. Women did not hold membership in the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling religious body. The prayer of the rabbi of the day was, "I thank you, Lord, that I am not a Samaritan, a tax collector or a woman."

I was asking the question, "Why Mary?" from the perspective of the disciples of Jesus being men, a false perception, and from the perspective of the time in which Jesus lived, as described above, rather than from a scriptural perspective that God created them, male and female, with equal value in His creation, and, as seen in the life of Christ, with equal value in His Kingdom.

The Lord Jesus Christ exalts women in his ministry: praising Mary the sister of Lazarus because she sat at his feet among men to receive theological teaching; stating there is neither male nor female in heaven; having women disciples among his disciples supporting his ministry; making certain in the moment of his death that his earthly mother is given into the care of John the Apostle. Imagine the shock toward the ministry of Christ Jesus, as he travels through Samaria to share the Gospel, his identity as Messiah and Savior of the world, with not only a Samaritan but a Samaritan woman. In fact, the Samaritan woman is the first person in the Scripture to whom Jesus reveals himself as “Messiah.” More shocking, Jesus welcomes women to become his disciples, to take part in learning from his teaching. This is the most dramatic point of Mary and Martha’s encounter with Christ in their home—that a Jewish rabbi would welcome a woman to sit and learn from his teaching. This was the better choice that Mary made, to sit and learn from Christ. Throughout his ministry, Christ upholds the equal value of all people as created in the image of God and therefore, one is no less valuable than the other in the kingdom of God.

No other world religion gives women equal value to men nor makes an equal place of practice for women with men. Only Christianity offers this equal value and equal freedom of worship to women. As John MacArthur says, “Christianity is the only true women’s liberation movement.”

It was necessary to see Mary as the first eyewitness to the resurrected Christ within this context, the context of Christ’s ministry and the context of God’s kingdom, to understand the question was always, “Why not Mary?” If this is the Messiah and Savior Mary Magdalene chose to follow, the one who said his life and teaching were as new wine that would burst old wine skins, shattering the religious righteousness of the day’s Pharisees and Sadducees who loved law and sacrifice more than God himself, then it should be no surprise that this same God would choose a faithful follower, a woman with a dreadful past saved and set free by a marvelous Savior, to be the first to see the resurrected Christ.

Because of so great a rescue in her life, Mary’s love for Christ as her savior cannot be quantified. As in the parable of the debtors told by Christ, the greater the debt relieved, the greater the love and loyalty to the one who brought about the relief. The love is in proportion to the salvation received. It is out of this great love that Mary is the first at the tomb of Christ following the Sabbath. She wants to provide the utmost care for His dead body not anticipating there wouldn’t be a dead body. Mary is no different than any of the other disciples of Christ. None of the disciples anticipate Christ’s resurrection, which is obvious when we find them hiding out from the Jewish and Roman authorities in a house together as Mary Magdalene comes to tell them Christ is risen. Although Christ has prophesied his own resurrection to his disciples during his ministry, the Scripture states they did not understand what he was saying at the time. Although Lazarus is resurrected from the dead, this is brought about by Christ himself. The disciples’ confusion over Christ’s words regarding his resurrection are reasonable: if Christ were dead, who would raise him?

As the disciples hide away, Mary and the other women venture to the tomb in the dark, between 3 and 6 a.m. They are absolutely committed to their duty of caring for the dead body of Christ, whatever the cost, be it arrest or whatever.

Mary Magdalene then encounters the resurrected Jesus without recognition at first. She’s certain of his death and now certain his dead body has been stolen, either by the Jewish authorities or grave robbers, of which she’s not certain. She’s grieving, distraught and sobbing. It’s dark, without the ambient light of a 21st century which we enjoy. The resurrected Christ has a new glorified, post-resurrection body, an immortal body, which we do not yet fully understand. He’s still recognizable in some way but yet also changed. Don’t imagine that the Lord Jesus is harsh in his response to Mary. “Woman” in the Aramaic is a term of respect, like saying, “Ma’am,” in the southern United States. Now we understand, in light of all these things, how Mary might not recognize him at first glance. In fact, none of the disciples recognize the resurrected Christ without him revealing himself as he does to the disciples on the road to Emmaus and the eleven in the upper room.

## Christmas Events



## Children's Ministry



**Wednesdays, 6:30 PM**

For children 3 years by September 1st through 6th grade.  
Children work on Scripture memorization,  
have a time of Bible study, and play fun games.

## Music Ministry





## Women's Ministry

### Weekly Bible Studies:

#### **Sunday Mornings**

Rachel Sullenger & Tiffany Marich -

The Book of James, Library, 9:45 AM

Various Leaders -

The Book of Ephesians, Lecture Room (by water fountain), 9:45 AM

#### **Sunday Nights**

Meg Trihus -

Old Testament Survey, Conference Room, 5:00 PM

#### **Wednesday Nights**

Diana Hines -

The Life of David, Lecture Room (by water fountain), 6:45pm

Cyndi King -

Minor Prophets, Conference Room, 6:45 PM

#### **Friday**

Cyndi King -

The Minor Prophets, Chick Fil A (Camp Wisdom), 9:00 AM



**What is it?** A gathering of moms who are looking for support and answers, a safe place to bring our "junk" that we are dealing with on a daily basis and know that we are not alone!

**Who is it for?** ALL MOMS!

**When is it and what time is it?** The 3rd Monday of every month at 6:45pm.

**Where is it?** Matthew Road Baptist Church in the Conference Room

**Is childcare available?** Yes, for \$5/child pre-paid for the semester (\$20/child for Sept.-Dec.)

#### **Contact Information:**

Cyndi King 214-762-9437 or cyndikking@msn.com

*Join us on Friday, December 6th,  
as we begin the Christmas Season  
with a time of Advent.*

*We will Worship  
We will read Scripture  
We will join  
together in Praise  
And end the night  
with a pie bar!*

*Friday, December 6th, 7:00pm, CommonGrounds*



Contact Rachel at  
rachel@matthewroad.org  
to find out the latest events & activities!

Then Mary Magdalene hears her name called by his voice. Just as Jesus taught—just as the sheep recognize the shepherd's voice so his followers recognize his. Mary, in the moment of hearing her name called by her Lord, recognizes the one to whom she owes all her life and love, Christ Jesus. Her response is immediate: worship. She falls at the feet of Jesus and begins to worship him as Lord and Savior. The Lord Jesus clarifies for her that he is not here to stay. He must leave again to go to his heavenly Father. His return is for a limited time so the Apostles and disciples may witness the Risen Christ and so that he may teach them the Gospel once again from all the Scriptures. He will leave them again to ascend to the throne of the Father until his second appearing. His instruction to Mary Magdalene is to go and tell his disciples that he is risen and will ascend to the Father, as he told them. Mary is faithful to obey her Lord and returns to the disciples to tell them, "I have seen the Lord."

**"I have seen the Lord."—Mary's news.**

This is Mary's eyewitness account of the resurrected Christ. This is Mary's perspective of the resurrection. That Christ is resurrected, and as such, he is her Lord and Savior. There is then Christ's appearance to the ten and then the eleven Apostles, as well as later, to James, his brother, and to more than 500 disciples, prior to his ascension. Do we believe Mary? Do we believe the Apostles? Why would they concoct a story of the resurrected Christ and hold to it until their deaths resulting from their belief in Christ if it were not so? The church died in mass, by the millions, in its first 300 years under the Roman emperors because of her refusal to denounce Christ as Lord and Savior of the world. And so she continued throughout the centuries, even up until the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as our brother and sisters in Iraq refused to denounce Christ and lost their lives at the hands of ISIS, even little children who would not give up Christ for the sake of their very young lives. Martyr upon martyr testifies to the truth of the resurrected Christ and his Spirit residing in each of them to testify to the truth of who he is, the resurrected King of the universe and Savior of the world, in the face of death, certain of an eternal life in Christ because of his resurrection.

**"In that message of Mary [I have seen the Lord] there is the very real essence of Christianity, for a Christian is essentially one who can say: 'I have seen the Lord.' Christianity does not mean knowing about Jesus; it means knowing him. It does not mean arguing about him; it means meeting him. It means the certainty of experience that Jesus is alive." Barclay**

So what then is your perspective, what is my perspective, of the resurrection of Christ? Either Christ is who he says he is, God, and he is resurrected from the dead, a promise of eternal life to those who trust in him as God and Savior, or he isn't who he says he is, rather he's a maniac who thought he was God, who died and who did not resurrect from the dead. He's nothing in between. One must choose to believe one of these two things about him. One choice results in hope and life forever. The other results in death and eternal separation from the God and creator of the universe. Again, this is the question Mary Magdalene's eye witness account of Christ's resurrection begs: Will you believe in the Christ as the resurrected Savior of the World and Son of God?

**Salvation that leads to eternal life comes through believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, sent into the world by God the Father, by embracing His broken body and spilt blood as a substitutionary death for our sins and His resurrection as proof of our eternal life with the Father and with the Son.**

# **December 2019 Events & Activities**

For more information, please see our website, [www.matthewroad.org](http://www.matthewroad.org) or call the church office at 972-641-2717.

- December 1st:** Christmas Choir Musical, all three services
- December 5th:** Young @ Heart Breakfast at Outlaws, 8:30am
- December 6th:** Women's Ministry Advent, 7:00pm, CommonGrounds
- December 8th:** Deacon Meeting, 4:00pm, Library
- December 13th:** Parents Night Out, 6:30pm, Worship Center \*must RSVP to [cyndikking@msn.com](mailto:cyndikking@msn.com)
- December 18th:** Christmas on the Lawn, 6:30pm, MRBC Campus
- December 20th:** Youth Christmas Party, please contact [ben@matthewroad.org](mailto:ben@matthewroad.org) for more info
- December 24th:** Church Office closes early at noon  
Candlelight Services, 5:30pm (with childcare) & 7:00pm (no childcare)
- December 25th - January 1st:** Church Office Closed
- January 2nd:** Church Office reopens at 8:30am

## ***Regular Weekly Activities***

### **Sundays**

Morning Worship	8:30 & 11:00 AM
Morning Bible Study (all ages)	9:45 AM
Evening Bible Study (all ages)	5:00 PM
Evening Worship	6:15 PM

### **Mondays**

K2 Primary Academy (during the school year)	8:45 AM
PAW Program	9:00 AM

### **Tuesdays**

MRA (during the school year)	8:30 AM
Young @ Heart Activities	9:45 AM

### **Wednesdays**

K2 Primary Academy (during the school year)	8:45 AM
PAW Program	9:00 AM
Student Ministry (youth)	6:30 PM
Adult Choir (during the school year)	6:30 PM
AWANA Clubs (children)	6:30 PM
Adult Bible Studies	6:45 PM

### **Thursdays**

MRA (during school year)	8:30 AM
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### **Fridays**

Chick Time, at Chick-Fil-A (Camp Wisdom)	9:00 AM
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### **Saturdays**

Men's Coffee Group (Good Day Café, GP)	7:30 AM
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## YEAR-END GIVING

The last Sunday to turn in offering for the 2019 tax year is Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>. To ensure the deductibility of your contributions, please do not file your tax return until you have received your tax statement from the church. Statements will be mailed by January 31<sup>st</sup> to the address we have on file for you.

If your address has changed, please email the church office at [christy@matthewroad.org](mailto:christy@matthewroad.org).

*\*If you are unable to drop your giving in the plate by Sunday, December 29<sup>th</sup>, then you may also mail it; however, it must be postmarked by December 31<sup>st</sup> in order to be credited to the 2019 year. If your giving is postmarked after December 31<sup>st</sup>, regardless of the date on the check, then, by law, it must be credited to the 2020 year.*

### **Financials as of November 7, 2019**

<b>Budget Income</b>	<b>\$ 855, 345</b>
<b>Budget Expense</b>	<b>\$ (882, 163)</b>
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>\$ (26, 818)</b>