

Luke 8:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

Analysis

And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—

Luke uniquely records women's prominent role in supporting Jesus' ministry. The Greek participle *tetherapeumenai* (τεθεραπευμένοι, perfect passive, "having been healed") emphasizes completed action with continuing results: these women remained in transformed states. The dual mention of *pneumatōn ponērōn* (πνευμάτων πονηρῶν, "evil spirits") and *astheneiōn* (ἀσθενειῶν, "infirmities/weaknesses") distinguishes demonic oppression from physical ailments, though overlap existed.

Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils—

Mary from Magdala (fishing town on Galilee's western shore) is identified by her most dramatic transformation. The phrase *aph' hēs daimonia hepta exelēlythei* (ἀφ' ἧς δαιμόνια ἑπτὰ ἐξεληλύθει, "from whom seven demons had gone out") uses the perfect tense indicating permanent deliverance. The number seven suggests complete or severe possession, not literal counting. This Mary is never identified with the sinful woman of Luke 7:36-50 (common but erroneous tradition). Her deliverance produced devoted discipleship—she appears at the crucifixion (Luke 23:49) and resurrection (Luke 24:10), making her the first resurrection witness.

Historical Context

In first-century Judaism, women rarely traveled with rabbis, making this detail remarkable. Respectable rabbis avoided public interaction with women to prevent scandal. Jesus' inclusion of women disciples violated social conventions, demonstrating the kingdom's radical nature. Women couldn't serve as legal witnesses in Jewish courts, yet Jesus entrusted them with gospel proclamation. Demon possession was widely recognized in the ancient world, though symptoms overlapped with epilepsy, mental illness, and other conditions. Seven demons indicates exceptionally severe affliction. Mary Magdalene's prominence in all four Gospels, especially as resurrection witness, establishes her historical importance. Her financial support (implied by v. 3) suggests she possessed independent means, unusual for women but not unknown in Greco-Roman society.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' radical inclusion of women disciples, especially those with scandalous pasts like demon possession, demonstrate the transformative power of the gospel to overthrow social hierarchies?
2. What does Mary Magdalene's transformation from severe demon possession to devoted disciple and first resurrection witness teach about God's ability to use the most broken people for His greatest purposes?
3. In what ways does Luke's careful identification of these women by name combat the historical erasure of women's contributions to early Christianity?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	γυναικῆς	τινες	ἧς	ἦσαν	τεθεραπευμένοι	ἀφ'
And	women	certain	which	had been	healed	of
G2532	G1135	G5100	G3739	G2258	G2323	G575
πνευμάτων	πονηρῶν	καὶ	ἀσθενειῶν	Μαρία	ἡ	
spirits	evil	And	infirmities	Mary		G3588
G4151	G4190	G2532	G769	G3137		
καλουμένη	Μαγδαληνή	ἀφ'	ἧς	δαιμόνια	ἑπτὰ	
called	Magdalene	of	which	devils	seven	
G2564	G3094	G575	G3739	G1140	G2033	
ἐξεληλύθει						
went						
G1831						

Additional Cross-References

Mark 16:9 (Evil): 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.

John 19:25 (Parallel theme): Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.