

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* (τεθεραπευμέναι, 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' ἣς δαιμόνια ἐπτὰ 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 γυναῖκές τινες ἥς ἥσαν τεθεραπευμέναι 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' ἥς 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.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org