

JESUS CHRIST AND HIS ENCOUNTERS WITH WOMEN

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The purpose of this study is to review the encounters of Jesus Christ with women with the hope that it will serve as a primer as to how women should be treated not only by men but by the church. As a man who follows Christ, I want to know more about how Jesus dealt with various women and how he treated them so I may emulate Jesus. If this study is a primer, then Jesus is the teacher and I am the student. I want to investigate and see what type of attitudes Jesus had in dealing with women. If I were a woman reading this, I would want to understand what types of attitudes Jesus had in connection with women. Just knowing that would tell me how God sees women and the needs of women.

One thing I know about Jesus. Jesus loved little children. He said that if we were to enter into heaven then we should have a heart like a little child (Matt. 18:3). I would know that when people did not want the little children coming to him, he said that they were not to forbid people from bringing their children to him. (Matt. 19:14; Lk. 18:16; Mk. 10:14). He also said that if someone were to harm a little child, they should have a mill stone tied about their neck and be thrown into the sea (Matt. 18:6). From the perspective of a woman, I would think that the love and protection of children would be a high recommendation for Jesus and would endear him to hearts of mothers and those who hope to become mothers.

As I review Jesus' encounters with women, there are certain things that this study will NOT do. This study will not attempt to straighten out the tangled weave among the women following Jesus. The Gospel accounts were in most cases written years after Jesus died and was resurrected. There are a plethora of accounts and personalities and not all of them can be put into harmony since we have limited information. Around Jesus were a group of women. The women were not only avid supporters of Jesus but provided much of the finances for the ministry of Jesus and his apostles. When the Apostles fled the scene after Jesus was captured and imprisoned, these women were there and a number of them were there at the cross when he died. While there was only one apostle at the cross, John, there were numerous women. Some of those mentioned at John 19:25 were Mary, the Mother of Jesus; Mary's sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas; and Mary Magdalene. Therefore, at the cross, we have three Mary's. And the confusion has just begun.

One of the questions theologians deal with was whether Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, was the same person as Mary Magdalene. In addition Bible scholars are never quite sure who it was exactly that anointed Jesus' feet with her hair and did that event occur once or did it occur twice. This study will not resolve these types of questions. Instead our focus is narrower and centers on how Jesus dealt with women even if we are not sure of exactly which woman he was dealing with at the time.

We do know this. Jesus had a higher concept of the place of women than what was normal for the time. We know that Jesus had a group of women who were his supporters and these women were of all different backgrounds and ages. We know that women were around him when he died. We know that after he died, it was women who went to the tomb first. We know that Jesus appeared to a woman, Mary Magdalene, before he appeared to any of his apostles. We know that when Pentecost came both men and women were praying in the same place (Acts 1:14). We know that the Holy Spirit fell on both men and women. In fact when Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, he quoted Joel 2:28-32 which among other things said:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...
 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those Days...That whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Women received the Holy Spirit and the gifts of God. God's Spirit was for both men and women.

It would be women who opened their homes, held prayer meetings and even led small groups of believers.

As the Gospel would spread to Greece, it would first begin with a woman Lydia who opened her home for a church. In later years, as persecution began against Christians by the Roman government, some of the first martyrs were women.

This particular study will not deal with the expansion of the church but I wanted to make some introductory comments that God's outreach to women was perhaps greater than we have been taught by the church and in that sense we have done a disservice both to the Gospel and to women.

Finally, this study will not deal with the many pieces of stories regarding Mary outside of the canon of Scripture. The early Christian church found that most of these stories were not reliable and were figments imaginations of writers who were not closely tied to the events of the Gospels. This study will not deal with those apocryphal writings.

Now that I have told you what I am NOT going to cover, perhaps it is time to take a closer look and see how Jesus dealt with women in his many encounters with women.

Jesus and His Mother Mary

Jesus at the Temple at 12

One of the few places in Scripture where we see Jesus reacting with his mother is in the passage where Jesus and his family, along with relatives and friends, have gone to Jerusalem for their annual celebration of Passover. The account is found in Luke 2:41-51. After Passover, the group from Nazareth begins the return trip back to Nazareth. After the first day of travelling Mary and Joseph find out that Jesus is not with them and return to Jerusalem to look for him. After 3 days, they find him with the teachers at the Temple asking and answering questions. Mary says to Jesus, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." (Luke 2:48). Jesus' response was "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). Scripture says that his parents did not understand his response. However, Scripture also says that Jesus returned to Nazareth and was "subject to them" and that Mary kept all of these things in her heart. (Luke 2:51-52).

This account is from Luke and it probably originated from Mary herself. At any rate, Jesus was not your average young person. At 12, Jesus was becoming very much aware of who he was. This account also shows that Jesus was fairly independent and was not afraid to away from his parents. He was keenly aware that he was a child of God and that His real father was God.

In Missouri, where I spent forty years, we have an expression called “Missouri Blunt.” It means that you tell it like it is. Sometimes your answers are direct and not embellished. Here Jesus gives his answer directly and seems a little mystified that his parents did not understand that he would be in the house of his Father. Further, Jesus must have been of keen intellect. Apparently he could read and probably had already read the Scriptures. It is said that the Teachers were astonished at his at his questions and his answers (Luke 2:47).

Despite the independent personality and high intellect of Jesus, Jesus returns to Nazareth where he will work in the carpenters/stone masons trade and we will hear nothing more about him in Scripture until he is about 30 years old. When Jesus left Jerusalem, it says that he was “subject to his parents.”

Joseph, the husband of Mary, will disappear from history some time during this period. Most authorities believe that Joseph died before Jesus began his ministry. Jesus works at his trade to help support his mother. In addition there are other family members or relatives involved which we will discuss shortly.

Although it cannot be proved, it is my belief that Jesus did not begin his ministry until 30 because both he knew the exact timing of God and he was helping to support his family after the death of Joseph.

Jesus at Wedding in Cana

In John 2:1-12, the account is given of a wedding at Cana. Attending at the wedding was Jesus, his mother, his brothers or cousins, his disciples and others . (Jn. 2:1,2, 12). It is believed that the first miracle recorded in Scripture was performed by Jesus at this wedding.

In the course of festivities, the wedding hosts run out of wine which both then and now would not be a good thing to happen at a wedding celebration. Jesus’ mother goes to Jesus and says, “They have no wine.” (Jn. 2:3). This to me is very interesting because it seems that Mary expects Jesus to do something about the fact that the wine has run out suggesting that she may have seen miracles performed by Jesus before. However, this is only my conjecture. It is also interesting to me that Mary goes to Jesus and not to the other relatives.

The response of Jesus is interesting. He does not automatically agree to fulfill his mother’s request. Instead he responds: “Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.” The Greek seems to say “what does that have to do with you and me.” The New American Standard Bible translates it as, “Woman, what does that have to do with us.” (Jn. 2:4). Jesus apparently feels that his time has not yet come and so he appears to be hesitant to take any action or do any miracle.

The other thing which is of interest to me is that Jesus does not address Mary as mother. He addresses her as “woman” or “gunai” in Greek. He will use the same form of address to his mother when he is on the cross. (Jn. 19:26-27).

Mary instead of answering Jesus’ question, simply tells the servants “Whatever He says to you, do it.”

Jesus commands the servants to fill 6 large water pots of stone with water (about 120-180 gallons) and then draw some of the water and take it to the Master of the Feast who proclaims it to be the best wine of the Feast.

Jesus was not sure that the timing was correct but carried out his mother's wishes anyway. The miracle of Cana illustrates that Jesus respected his mother's wishes even if he was not sure that the timing was correct.

The miracle at Cana account of Mary making a request of Jesus and the granting of that request has had great significance in the Catholic Church. In short, Catholics believe that a request by Mary is very powerful. They believe, as do other Christians, that the saints are in heaven and can observe what is going on in day to day life. By praying to Mary, they ask Mary to make intercession with Christ for the answers to prayers. We will discuss this more in depth in a future study.

After the wedding at Cana, Jesus, his disciple, Jesus' mother and Jesus' brothers went to Capernaum (Jn.2:12).

Mary and Jesus' Brothers Come to Get Him

At some point, after the calling of the Twelve Apostles, the ministry of Jesus is beginning to grow. Miracles are happening. Jesus has healed a man with a withered hand on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1). The possessed are delivered. The scribes who had come from Jerusalem claim that Jesus does his acts of deliverance because Jesus Himself is possessed by the Ruler of the Demons, Beelzebub. (Mark 3:22). In fact Mark 3:21 says, "But when His own people heard, they went out to lay hold of Him, for they said, "He is out of His mind." Jesus has met resistance in his ministry.

It is at this juncture in the early ministry of Jesus that Mary and his brothers decide that perhaps things have gone too far and come to have a chat with Jesus about the situation that is going on. At the time, that they arrive, Jesus is apparently inside a building with his apostles teaching and the building is full. The account about Jesus' mother and brothers coming to get him are found in two passages of Scripture and are almost identical. The first passage is at Mark 3:31-35 and the second at Matt. 12:46-50.

Before we move to the response of Jesus to the arrival of his mother and brothers, let me say a few words about the brothers of Jesus. The teaching of the Catholic Church relating to Mary was that Mary remained a virgin after the birth of Jesus. This teaching is known as the Perpetual Virginity of Mary and will be dealt later in another study regarding Mary. Obviously, at least to Catholics, Jesus did not have any brothers born of Mary. Protestants do not necessarily agree with the position of the Catholic Church on this. Of course, both Protestants and Catholics agree that Jesus could not have had any full brothers because there was only one incarnation and that was of Jesus. However, some Protestants believe that Mary and Joseph may have had children after Jesus who would have been half-brothers and half-sisters to Jesus. However, there are other possibilities. Joseph may have had children from a deceased wife prior to Mary accounting for brothers and sisters.

The word used in Greek for brother is "adelphos" and the word for Greek for sister is "adelphē." The word can be used to mean brother and sister but it can also be used for close relatives such as a first cousin. We know that Mary and Joseph had close relatives in Nazareth including a "sister" or half-sister to Mary who also had the name of Mary. This Mary was also at the cross at the time of the Crucifixion of Jesus and was known as Mary (Wife?) of Clopas. (See John 19:26-27). Whether the brothers of Jesus were half-brothers or cousins, for purposes of this study, they will simply be called brothers. Some verses regarding Jesus' brothers and sisters can be found in Matt. 13:55-56; Mark 6:3; Acts 1:14.

Jesus' brothers did not believe in him. "A prophet is not recognized in his own country." (Lk. 4:24; Mk. 6:4; Jn. 4:44). The conflict between Jesus and his unbelieving brothers is found in John 7:3, 6,8. His brothers challenged him to go to Jerusalem and Scripture says that they did not believe in him. Jesus told them that he was not going and then decided to go to Jerusalem secretly. Intriguingly, apparently his brothers never believed in Him until after the resurrection when he appeared to one or more of them. His brothers and Mary were in the Upper Room at the time of Pentecost (Acts 1:14). Also, James the Brother of Jesus later became the leader of the Jerusalem Church. Some of the Scriptures relating to James include Acts 12:17, Acts 15:13; Acts 21:18, 1 Cor. 15:7, Gal. 1:19 and Gal. 2:19.

Returning to our account, Mary and the brothers of Jesus are standing outside the door and send a message to him that they are there to see him. Instead of inviting them in or going out to see them, Jesus looks around at those sitting around Him and says, "Here are my mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother." (Mark 3:34-35).

The words of Jesus are pretty blunt. Just as Jesus saw Himself doing "the Father's business" when he was a twelve year old in Jerusalem, here Jesus defines as his family those who follow and obey God. It is no wonder that at other places in Scripture that he warns his followers that He comes to bring a sword into family life when relatives will be separated from one another due to their obedience and following of God. (Matt. 10:34-36).

Sometimes, Satan tries to prevent us from carrying out the commands of God and doing the will of God. Here, Jesus was moving in the direction that God had for him, but his family was ready to question it and prevent him from moving in God's direction. This would not be the only time in which that would occur. In one instance, his disciple Peter tried to prevent Christ from dying for the sins of the world. Jesus' response to Peter was "Get thee behind me, Satan." (Mk. 8:33; Matt. 16:23) It sounds like it is harsh however, Christ could not allow the will of his Father for the salvation of the world be thwarted by people (even the Apostle Peter) who did not know that will but who apparently had good intentions. Unfortunately their intentions were theirs and theirs alone, not the intentions of God.

Jesus in his response is letting his mother and brothers know (and his followers know) that he is following God and that it is the following of God which is paramount. He does not treat his mother and brothers differently because of gender or relationship but treats them as people.

Jesus and the Woman at the Well

In John 4:1-44, an account is given where Jesus met a Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob. Jesus and his disciples were returning from the Jordan River area where people were being baptized and were cutting through Samaria on their way back to the Galilee area. They are near a town called Sychar (now called Ascar). It is about noon. Jesus is tired and is sitting by the well of Jacob when a Samaritan woman comes to draw water. Normally, there was a mutually exclusive barrier between Samaritans and Jews including the fact that Jews worshipped at the Temple in Jerusalem and Samaritans had at one time worshipped at a temple at Mount Gerizim. Samaritans could not serve as witnesses in Jewish courts and they were publicly cursed from time to time in the Jewish synagogues. There are both barriers of religion and gender.

While the disciples are away trying to buy food, Jesus asks the woman for a drink. The woman instead of complying with Jesus' request, expresses surprise that a Jew would make a request from a Samaritan

woman since Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus responded that if she knew who he was, she would have requested living water from him and he would not have refused.

The woman points that she does not see how Jesus could give her living water because he does not have a bucket. Jesus responds that if one drinks from Jacob's well they will be thirsty again but that if one drinks living water, they will never thirst again. The woman asks for the living water and Jesus tells her to get her husband and return to the well. The woman responds that she has no husband. Jesus responds, "You have well said, 'I have no husband' for you have had five husbands and the man you are living with is not your husband". (Jn. 4:18)

The Samaritan woman changes the topic by pointing out that the Samaritans worship on Mt. Gerizim and the Jews worship in Jerusalem. Jesus responds that the day will come when true worshippers will neither worship on Gerizim or in Jerusalem but shall worship in spirit and truth. The woman says that she knows that one day the Messiah will come and Jesus says to her "I who speak to you am He." (Jn. 4:26)

At this point, the disciples return and the woman returns to Sychar, leaving her bucket. She tells the men of the town that Jesus has told her "all that I ever did." (Jn. 4:29) Jesus and his disciples are invited to Sychar and many people come to know Christ.

The passage in John is interesting in a number of respects. Jesus in speaking to the Samaritan woman crosses a number of barriers including the religious barrier of Samaritan-Jew but also the barrier of a Jewish man speaking to a Samaritan woman.

The Samaritan woman is not a bashful person. She has been married five times and presently is living with a man who is not her husband. She knows the differences between the Jews and Samaritans and is happy to discuss them with Jesus.

Jesus addresses her with patience and dignity. He does not discriminate against her because of her religion or her sex or her past history. It is of interest to me that the woman as she returns to the town leaves her pot behind so that Jesus can drink and the disciples as well. (Jn. 4:28)

Jesus had success with the Samaritans. After his resurrection in Acts 1:8 Jesus tells his disciples "you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." In Acts 8:4-8, Philip will go and preach the gospel in Samaria and a great revival will break out.

It is the encounter of Jesus with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well which will open the area up to ministry of Jesus and a later revival where Christianity spreads outside of Jerusalem and Judea.

Mary-Mother of James and John

Mary, mother of James and John is mentioned in a number of Scriptures, including various Scriptures regarding women at the cross, those bringing embalming spices to the tomb and those notifying the disciples regarding the empty tomb. (See Matt.27: 56, 61; 28:1; Mark 15:40, 47; 16:1 and Luke 24:10). Some authorities and traditions identify this Mary with Salome and call her Mary Salome whereas others see Mary the mother of the Zebedee sons as a separate person from Salome.

Interestingly there are two different accounts relating to James and John asking to sit on thrones on the right and left of Jesus. Although it is clear that the two Biblical accounts refer to the same set of events, the account in Matt. 20:21-28 has the request coming from the mother of James and John who came to Jesus with her two sons. The other account found in Mark 10:35-45 makes no mention of Mary the mother of James and John and has the request coming directly from the mouths of James and John.

For the purposes of looking at gender, we will look at the request of Mary made at Matt. 20:21-28. In that account Mary asks to make a request of Jesus and when Jesus says that she may, she requests that her two sons someday sit upon thrones to the left and right of Jesus. Jesus responds that this is not a request that he can grant but that God the Father will have to determine who will sit to his right and left of Jesus. Obviously, the other disciples were not enthusiastic when they heard about this selfish request and Jesus uses it as an opportunity to teach all of his disciples that following Christ is not so much about reigning and ruling as it is about serving.

Despite the selfishness of the request and the fact that Mary was trying to manipulate Jesus to honor her sons, Jesus was respectful to Mary and used it as an opportunity to teach about the kingdom instead of using it as an opportunity to chastise Mary and James and John for their request.

Again, Jesus deals with a woman with an open and obvious manner and without penalizing her for her gender. In fact Jesus assures Mary and James and John that the two Zebedee boys will indeed “drink His Cup and be baptized with His baptism”. (Matt. 20:23).

Daughter of Abraham Luke 13:9-17

In this passage Jesus is teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath and he notices a woman who has been bent over by a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years and is unable to straighten up. Synagogues at the time of Jesus allowed women to be participants and they were not required to sit in separate sections. Jesus calls out to the woman and tells her that she is loosed from her infirmity and lays hands upon her. The woman immediately is made straight. (Lk. 13:12-13).

The ruler of the synagogue is outraged that Jesus would heal on the Sabbath since that was considered to be work and therefore states that there are six days during the week in which work could be done and therefore Jesus should heal on a work day instead of on the Sabbath. (Lk. 13:14).

Jesus calls the ruler of the synagogue “a hypocrite” and points out that Scriptures allow a Jew to take an ox or donkey from a stall and take it to water. Jesus points out that this woman is “a Daughter of Abraham” and deserves better treatment than an ox or donkey and she is to be freed from the bondage of Satan that she has endured for eighteen years.

There are a number of things of note in this passage. First, it is important to note that the woman does not ask to be healed. Jesus notices the condition of the woman and call out to her. Second, the woman is addressed as a Daughter of Abraham. Jesus does not despise her or shy away from her because of her affliction. Jesus sees her as a “Daughter of Abraham.” Jesus points out that if people are to show compassion on the Sabbath to their animals, it is even more important to show compassion to this woman or any other person. (There are a number of instances when Jesus healed people of both sexes on the Sabbath including a man with a withered hand). (Matt. 12:9-13); Mark 3:16. Luke 6:6-11). In the case of healing the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath, Jesus reminded the people in the

Matthew passage that people would pull a sheep out of a pit if it fell into it on the Sabbath and that men were more important than sheep.

Jesus made no distinction between healing an injured man and an injured woman on the Sabbath. Our legalistic views end up relegating both men and women to a position lower than animals. Jesus was not timid in “calling people out” for this type of callous attitude. Instead, we all need to be tender to those who are hurt and sick and pray for their healing and deliverance.

Woman with the Issue of Blood—(Matt. 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56)

These scriptures deal with the case where a woman had a serious issue of bleeding (“haimorrhoeo”). We suspect that the issue may have been related to menstrual bleeding causing her to be unclean according to Leviticus 15:25-27. At any rate, the woman had dealt with this health problem for over twelve years and had spent a great deal of money with doctors and other healers and had received no relief. She approaches Jesus as he passes through a crowd and thinks, that if she can only touch his outer garment she will be healed. As soon as she touches the garment she is indeed immediately healed. Jesus stops and says who has touched me because he felt power (dunamis) go out of him. The apostles are amazed because Jesus is surrounded closely with people and so many are touching him. The woman comes from behind Jesus and falls down at his feet and confesses that she is the one that touched Jesus. Jesus responds to her kindly and says “Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.” (Luke 8:48).

There are some things to note. First Jesus and his disciples are in a hurry. They are traveling to get to a home of Jairus to save his daughter who is deathly ill. Second, the woman has approached Jesus with a heart of faith hoping that she will be healed just by touching his garment. She has moved timidly because she is afflicted and indeed may be even considered to be ritually unclean. When caught by Jesus who realizes that someone has touched him with faith, he pauses even in the rush to get to the house of Jairus. Instead of berating the woman for interfering with his mission, he addresses her kindly and calls her “daughter.” This is a tender form of address and puts the woman at ease and comfort even though her affliction could be a matter of embarrassment to her.

Jesus in no manner blames, chides or embarrasses the woman but deals with her issue as being important even though it occurs while he is dealing with the even more serious ailment of a younger woman (a girl) who was dying.

Jesus and the Cyro-Phoenician Woman—Matt. 15:26-27; Mark 7:27-28

The account of the Cyro-Phoenician woman is difficult for us today to understand. Part of the problem in dealing with this passage is that we like to see Jesus as a superman who always easily overcomes all difficulties. In addition, we are uncomfortable in dealing with those aspects of Jesus which are physical and natural. In Hebrews 4:15 it says, “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” When we encounter the weaknesses of Christ, we put on our superman spectacles and look away. If we see him in weakness, then he is close and we can too easily identify him as being like us. If he is like us, then we are

concerned because we may be expected to look for help from our Father in heaven to overcome our weaknesses just as Jesus did.

Weaknesses are not the equivalent of sin. We find it a little easier to deal with Jesus' physical weaknesses than we do in dealing with emotional weaknesses. For instance we know that Jesus got hungry. After Jesus has fasted for 40 days, he is physically hungry and Satan tempts him to turn stones into bread (Matt. 4:2). Jesus refuses the temptation and quotes Scripture (Matt. 4:4). Jesus got thirsty. We know that he was thirsty when he asked the woman at the well for water (Jn. 4:7). We know that at the cross he said "I thirst" (Jn. 19:28). We know that Jesus ate because the disciples went into Sychar to get food. We know that Jesus got tired from his journeys. He sat down by the well and rested (Jn. 4:6). So when it comes to physical needs of Jesus we are accepting of Jesus' physical weaknesses.

It is more difficult for us to understand weaknesses which plague all of us that are more mental and emotional in nature and even weariness which depletes our spiritual resources. Jesus found himself often having to replenish his spiritual resources by going to the Father in prayer. He was limited by flesh to some extent and like all of us, he needed prayer. Also like us, Jesus appreciated friendship and support, and he had an inner group of apostles, Peter and James and John. Jesus had close friends like Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Jesus felt emotions such as grief at the death of Lazarus and he wept (Jn.11:35).

We think of anger as a sin. However, there are times when anger is not a sin. Most of us agree that when Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers in the temple because of his zeal for God's House, that this was an instance of justifiable anger (Matt. 21:12-13; Mk. 11:15-18). At the same time, it is this same Jesus which warned us that when we say "Raca" meaning "Thou Fool!" we are not too far from the fires of hell (Matt. 5:22).

In addition, Jesus knew his mission and was not going to be easily deterred from what God told him to do. When Peter tells Jesus that he should not go to the cross, Jesus replies "Get Thee behind me, Satan." (Matt. 16:23) Jesus did not answer in the meek and mild way that we demand but in a way that was bold, direct and brooked no challenge (Lk. 20:40).

As we bring our preconceived notions to this passage involving the Cyro-Phoenecian woman we are disturbed because the Jesus which we meet in this account is not the meek and mild Jesus who at the same time is a spiritual superman unlike you and me. Instead we meet someone remarkably like us and we find this to be profoundly disturbing.

Now we will turn to the passage in Matthew 15. Jesus and his apostles had just completed a hectic time of ministry and had retreated to the area of Tyre and Sidon. We suspect, but cannot be sure, that the trip was an opportunity to rest and recuperate before returning to the ministry. It is while that they are in the area that Jesus and the apostles are accosted by a Canaanite woman who asks him to help her with her demon-possessed daughter. (Matt. 15:22).

Jesus is quiet and does not respond to the woman. (Matt. 15:23).

She continues pleading with the apostles and the apostles encourage Jesus to send her away. (Matt. 15:23). Jesus responded : "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Jesus had a clear perception of his mission. His mission was to Israel. Sometimes, we end up sacrificing our mission and what God has directed us to do by getting involved in subsidiary matters. We end up sacrificing the

best for what is good. Good leadership never forgets the goal. Jesus' goal was to go to Israel. He could have made it his mission to go to the Gentiles or to try and convert Rome but that is not what he was called by the Father to do. Jesus here is stating a fact that his ministry was not directed at the Gentiles. The ministry of Jesus would eventually go to the Gentiles but that would be in the timing of God. At this point, Jesus' goal was to proclaim the Kingdom of God and the release from the bondage of sin to the Jews.

The Canaanite woman even though she is not within the parameters of Jesus' ministry is persistent. She comes to the feet of Jesus and worships him and pleads with Jesus to help her. (Matt. 15:25).

Again, Jesus does not accede to her request. Instead he says "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little "dogs." (Matt. 15:26) The Greek word for "dogs" as used by Jesus is "kunarion" meaning little dogs or puppies. In short, Jesus' continues to insist that his ministry is to the Jews not to those on the fringes of the Jewish religion and experience.

The woman responds back to Jesus: "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." (Matt. 25:27)

Jesus then responds: "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be as you desire." Scripture reports that the daughter was healed from that very hour. (Matt. 25:28).

We suspect that Jesus had retired to the area to rest up and did not intend to minister. In fact since he was in a non-Jewish area it would give him and his apostles time to rest, relax and recuperate before returning to the ministry to the Jews. I suspect that this is analogous to a minister who takes a vacation to rest and recuperate from their ministry and then all of a sudden they are called upon to deal with difficult spiritual situations. Further those situations do not appear to have anything to do with the ministers calling or mission.

We are uncomfortable when we see Jesus needing to rest from the demands of his ministry. But in all his weaknesses, he did not sin.

Jesus taught us to keep on knocking (Matt. 7:7-8; Lk. 11:9). He taught his to be like the woman who made demands for justice upon the judge who feared neither God nor man (Lk. 18:2-8). He rewards perseverance. Here the woman persevered.

Jesus rewards faith. Here the woman showed faith. Jesus responds to faith even when he was tired and spiritually depleted.

This account is only one of several where Jesus would work outside what was considered his mission to the Jews. Here he works with a pagan Canaanite woman. Another time, Jesus would do a miracle for a centurion who a "God-fearer" and who had funded the Jewish synagogue at Capernaum (Matt. 8:5-13; Lk. 17:1-10). Another time he would deal with a Samaritan woman at the well.

Sometimes God uses people to stretch our understanding of His plan. I believe that God the Father used this woman to help enlarge Jesus view of faith and the reach of his ministry. Although Jesus began with a view narrowly focused upon the children of Abraham the reach of the gospel would soon go beyond the mountains of Samaria and Jerusalem (Woman at the well) to Matt. 28:19 where Jesus would command his disciples to "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations..."

Part of being alive, is learning to grow. I believe that Jesus had the ability to grow and to become fore focused upon his mission. Sometimes, Jesus learned from people. The faith of a person could amaze Jesus. In Luke 7:1-10, Jesus was amazed at the faith of a centurion. Although, the word “amazed” is not used in the account of the Cyro-Phoenecian woman, I believe that Jesus was amazed at her faith.

Finally, I am particularly appreciative of this passage because it teaches me so much about prayer. There are times when we make our requests to God and we, like this woman, hear only silence. There are other times in which we are told “no” and there are good reasons for that answer. Notwithstanding all of this, this woman teaches us that we are to be persistent and to assail heaven with our prayer requests and with faith. God is drawn to the heart which is full of faith and to the person who is persistent and makes their requests boldly even in the face of great odds. In addition, we can change the mind of God through our prayer and our requests. And in that there is great hope.

Jesus and the Woman Caught in Adultery—John 8:1-11

Jesus went out early in the morning to teach at the Temple in Jerusalem. It was the day after the conclusion of the Feast of the Tabernacles where Jesus had proclaimed himself as “ the living waters”. (Jn. 7:37-39).

Apparently while Jesus is teaching, the Scribes and Pharisees bring before him a woman who is caught in the very act of adultery and they sit her down in the middle of where Jesus is teaching. Her accusers tell Jesus that under the law of Moses, this woman should be stoned and demanded what he had to say about that. (Jn . 8:4-5)

The author of John comments that this question was directed to Jesus so that they would have some reason to accuse Jesus. (Jn. 8:6). This was a trick question is somewhat analogous as to the instance where a similar group demanded that Jesus say whether taxes should be paid to Caesar. (Matt. 22:15-22).

If Jesus responds that the law of Moses should be followed, that would condemn the poor woman to stoning at a time in which the Sanhedrin had in practice discontinued stoning people for adultery. The provision requiring stoning was most likely Deuteronomy 22:22-24 which required that both the man and the woman caught in the act be stoned. Moreover, acts requiring a death sentence had to be approved by Rome. This put Jesus in a position where he would have in essence had to say that they should ignore Mosaic law or carry out an act which was not really enforced and which would have harm the woman and transgress Roman law. It was an evil choice which the Scribes and Pharisees tried to impose upon Jesus.

Instead of answering, Jesus bends down and begins write on the ground with his finger. He ignores their question altogether. (Jn. 8:6).

So when Jesus does not respond, the accusers again demand an answer. Jesus stops writing, stands up and says, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” (Jn. 8:7). In essence, Jesus throws the ball back into their court. He does not answer their question. If they throw the first stone, they proclaim that they are sinless and further it is they who would end up violating the current

practice of ignoring the Mosaic law and violating the Roman law. All of a sudden the accusers are placed in the same position in which they were trying to place Jesus .

After Jesus says this to them he stoops back down to write in the sand again. (Jn. 8:8). Jesus' actions in my opinion, showing an utter disdain and contempt for their question. It is hardly important enough to interrupt him from writing in the sand.

Jesus does not even look at them but instead looks at the ground at what he is doing as though this was a minor and unimportant interruption.

It is of interest to me that Scripture says that when they heard the response they were "convicted by their conscience" and "went out one by one, beginning with the oldest and even to the last." They left not because of what Jesus was writing or drawing on the ground (this will be discussed later) but they left because their hearts were convicted by the words of Jesus. (Jn. 8:9). It is noteworthy that the older men drifted away first. There are probably a couple of reasons for this. First it is hoped that the elderly had more wisdom and realized that this was an unwinnable situation. Second, with age you have more opportunity to sin and more opportunity to realize that you are a sinner. The younger accusers have the pride of youth and the confidence that they are morally superior and right despite the actions of their own hearts. In short, the young are impetuous and more likely to be "true believers" especially when it comes to their own morality and integrity. The old knew better and so they were the first to leave.

As the accusing men slink off, finally Jesus is left alone with the woman and he rises up and sees that they are all gone, he addresses the woman and says "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" (Jn. 8:10). Under Mosaic law there were generally supposed to be two accusers when an action mandated a death penalty. (Nu. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 1 Kings 21:10) (Interestingly, when Jesus was condemned to die later on, they would seek two accusers to say that Jesus said that he would pull down the temple and rebuild it in three days (Matt. 26:59-61). Here no accusers are left.

Jesus then tells the woman: "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more." (John 8:11). The passage regarding the woman taken in adultery engenders numerous questions. Although there is no proof, I believe that the entire situation may have been a set-up to trap Jesus. There are some "elephants in the room" which are not addressed. For instance, where is the man who committed the adultery. He is suspiciously absent. It is somewhat like a sting operation where a prostitute is caught in the act and the "John" is let go. In fact the man, may have been part of a plot to catch and apprehend the prostitute. Jewish law required that both individuals involved in adultery be punished. (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). How is it that the woman was caught in the very act? If an aggrieved husband or betrothed is part of the situation where are they? How is it that the woman is caught near the internal part of the Jewish Temple and the time is in the early morning when Jesus went there to teach? In short there are numerous obvious questions, which make it appear at least to me to be a complete set-up with the woman as the victim.

Further, Jesus seems to treat the entire situation with suspicion and with a degree of disdain. He refuses to even answer the question. Instead he writes or sketches on the ground. After the accusers demand for a second time that he answer, he gives his answer and returns to writing on the ground not even looking at them as though this matter was a trifle or unimportant. He does not even look up until the accusers have scuffled away in shame. Jesus who is the great lawgiver like Moses, has handled this case without blinking an eye and as though it were nothing. In short, the trumped-up case has been

thrown out of court. Instead of being two or more witnesses, there are none. The accusers came in court to condemn and now they have left condemned by their own hearts. Mercy and equity have triumphed over judgment. The accusers came in to make Jesus make a choice where either course would be wrong and instead Jesus did not take either course demanded by the accusers. Instead he has non-suited the case and thrown the whole situation out of the window due to the lack of witnesses. It was not a result expected by the accusers but it was instead much like the situation where the accusers had tried to trap him into claiming that taxes should not be paid to Caesar.

Much attention by commentators has been given to exactly what Jesus was writing in the sand. I suspect that Jesus may have been just playing in the sand to evidence his disdain for this shameless charade and as a way of saying that playing or doodling in the sand is more important than dealing with legal questions designed to hurt people by trapping them legally and injuring individuals especially individuals not just caught, but intentionally entrapped. I believe that I probably follow the view of John Calvin in his Commentary on John 8:1-11 when he said "By this attitude he intended to show that he despised them."

Due to the fact that Jesus returned to writing on the ground twice, many have concluded that what he was writing was very important and who knows, they may be correct.

Some early authorities such as Jerome believe that Jesus wrote in the sand the name of the accusers. Others believe that Jesus wrote in the sand the names of the sins committed by the accusers.

Some have suggested that a priest when he received a charge of adultery would write the name of the accused in the sand and the provision of the law which had been broken.

Theologians such as Augustine believe that Jesus was deliberately contrasting where God had written the Ten Commandments with his finger in stone, including the law against adultery. In contrast, Jesus was writing in sand because under grace our sins can be washed away.

Another view which I find attractive is that Christ was tying his actions to Jeremiah 17. The day before all of this happened had been the Last Day of the Feast of Tabernacles where Jesus had stood up and proclaimed "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." (John 7:37-39). The feast that had been completed was the Feast of Tabernacles celebrating the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and their migration through the wilderness. During this migration they had received the law on Mt. Sinai and they had been supplied with streams from the living rock which had sustained them.

In Jeremiah 17:1 it is written:

The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron
 With the point of a diamond it is engraved
 On the tablet of their heart
 And on the horns of your altars,....

Continuing to Jeremiah 17:13 it says:

O Lord, the hope of Israel,
 All who forsake You shall be ashamed

Those who depart from Me
 Shall be written in the earth,
 Because they have forsaken the Lord
 The fountain of living waters.

In short, Jesus may have been carrying out the words of Jeremiah 17 where Jesus was writing in the sand the names of those who had departed from God.

Finally, it is important to focus on how Jesus dealt with the woman in question. He dealt with her in an honorable and kind fashion. Rather than contribute to her embarrassment, he focuses his actions on her accusers and seems to treat her with courtesy and more as a victim than a perpetrator. None the less Jesus is quite aware that the woman bears some degree of guilt but really issues her more of a “warning ticket” than a severe and life-threatening punishment. Jesus is more understanding of the sins of the flesh than he is of sins of the spirit such as hatred and pride. He warns the woman “to go and sin no more.” This is not only a warning to the woman but it is a warning to us all. None of us know when our hour is or even some times what sins we will be held accountable for. We should live our lives like Jesus full of mercy and grace and being much more willing to forgive than we are to judge and condemn.

Jesus on the Cross

Standing at the foot of the cross are a small group of people. Those people were Mary the Mother of Jesus, Mary’s sister named Mary wife of Clopas, Mary Magdalene and one apostle the beloved John. Certain people are not there including the other apostles and the brothers and sisters of Jesus.(Jn 19:25-26).

While Jesus was on the cross in agony, He thinks about his mother and makes provision for her. The account of this is at John 19:26-27 which reads as follows:

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own.

There are a number of interesting things about this passage. First Jesus does not refer to his mother by the term “mother.” Instead, he uses the same term that he had used for Mary that he had used when He did the miracle at Cana. He referred to her a Gunai, meaning “woman.” It is fascinating to me that Jesus would be concerned about with whom Mary lived since Mary had other relatives or children as the case may be. He did not entrust her to James who would someday become an elder at the church in Jerusalem. At the time that Jesus was crucified, apparently his brothers and sisters still did not believe in him. They became believers only after the crucifixion and resurrection at which time Jesus appeared to one or more of them. In addition his brothers and sisters were evidently not present at the time that Jesus was crucified just as all of the apostles were not there except John

Although Jesus is in agony and is dying, his concern is for his mother and he makes provision for her. John was young. Evidently John also had well placed relatives in the Jerusalem area as well as in the Capernaum area. We know this because John had entrance into the home of the former High Priest of Israel when Jesus was taken there.

From a historical point of view, it is believed that Mary did remain with John and when John in later life relocated to the Ephesus area, it is believed that Mary went with his family to that area.

Mary and Martha

Jesus Teaching at the Home of Mary and Martha

In Luke 10:38-42 Jesus comes to the home of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. Martha is doing all of the work and preparing for the guests. Mary sits at the feet of Jesus listening to the teaching of Jesus. Martha complains to Jesus and asks Jesus to tell Mary to come help her in the preparation. Jesus responds by pointing out that Martha is busy about many things, but that Mary has chosen what is better which is listening to Jesus teach and that Jesus will not cause Mary to give up listening to him to go help her sister.

In John 11:5, it says that “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Apparently, Martha and her sister were very different people. Martha was always doing and helping whereas Mary was less inclined in that area but was more devotional and emotive. Both women had a sincere love for Jesus and Jesus loved both of these women despite their profound differences in personality and history. Both women welcomed Jesus into their home.

Jesus at the Death of Lazarus

In John 11:1-45 the account of the death and resurrection of Lazarus is given. Again, it is interesting to see the differences and similarities between Martha and Mary. Interestingly, it is Martha who goes to meet Jesus when Jesus came to Bethany, but Mary stayed back with the guests at their home in Bethany. (Jn. 11:20). It is Martha who makes the declaration: “Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God who is to come into the world.” This declaration is comparable to the one made by Peter, when he said “Thou are the Christ.” (Matt. 16:16-18)

It is Martha who returns after meeting Jesus and goes to Mary and tells her “The Teacher has come and is calling for you.” (Jn. 11:28). When Mary hears this she leaves her home immediately and goes to meet Jesus. She falls at the feet of Jesus and says “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” (Jn. 11:32).

In verse 33 of John 11, Jesus saw Mary weeping. We find that weeping is often a characteristic of Mary and that she is often shedding tears because of her emotions. In contrast, when Jesus goes to the grave of Lazarus and tells them to remove the stone, it is the ever practical Martha who is quick to point out that Lazarus has been dead for four days and that if they remove the stone there will be an unpleasant odor. (Jn. 11:39).

In summation, Jesus had a close and cordial relationship with this family of three. Despite the fact that Mary and Marth were worlds apart in personality and history, Jesus treated each with kindness and affection.

Jesus and Mary

In John 12:1-8, we have the account where Jesus is the guest of honor at a feast where Martha is serving and Lazarus and some of the disciples are also present. Mary takes a jar of spikenard oil and breaks it and anoints the feet of Jesus and washes his feet with her hair.

Other similar accounts are found in Luke 7:38-44; Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9. Scholars have long debated the slight differences in these accounts. The Western Church has long equated Mary, Sister of Martha with Mary Magdalene. The Orthodox Church believes that Mary, Sister of Martha, and Mary Magdalene are not the same person but are two different people. Others believe that there are three people involved not one or two with the three being: Mary, Sister of Martha; Mary Magdalene and a third unidentified lady.

After a prolonged study, I have come to agree with the Western Church conclusion that Mary sister of Martha, is the same person as Mary Magdalene; however for purposes of this particular study I will be treating them as two different individuals so that the reader can chose whether they agree with the Western Catholic position or the Orthodox view that there are two distinct individuals rather than one person.

It is absolutely clear that in the John passage that the woman is Mary, sister of Martha. The dinner is held in Bethany at the home of Simon. Martha is serving.

The dinner is completely disrupted by Mary. She is crying. She is bathing Jesus feet with her tears. She anoints Jesus' feet with the ointment, which evidently was very expensive and very pungent. She is wiping Jesus feet with her hair which you can rest assured was not a proper or a common thing to do.

Rather than rebuke Mary, Jesus simply accepts this extravagant worship and honor. When Judas and perhaps some other apostles object , Jesus squelches their objections.

In the Luke passage, the host, a Pharisee named Simon, thinks to himself : "This Man (Jesus), if he were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." (Lk. 7:39). Jesus rebukes Simon and points out to him that when he came to the feast, no one washed his feet, but this woman washed his feet with tears; no one gave him the kiss of greeting, but this woman kissed his feet; no one anointed his head with oil but this woman anointed his head and feet with oil. (Lk. 7:44-46).

It is my belief that the devotion of Mary is to be emulated by the end-time church. We are to have lavish devotion and love for Jesus. Mary could appreciate, that Jesus was the Resurrection and the Life. She had seen that her brother Lazarus had been raised from the dead. Mary had a love for Jesus. She was at the feet of Jesus and she was expressing her devotion in tears and through sacrifice. In deed she sets the path for the end-time church. We are to love and adore Jesus who is our bridegroom. We are

to give him the sacrifice of praise and devotion. We are at his feet in repentance and in adoration. We do not give just a little devotion. Instead we break the alabaster jar.

Jesus and a Company of Women

There are a company of women who followed and supported Jesus. We do not have all of their names but we know some of them. Of course, one of them is Mary, the Mother of Jesus who have previously dealt with and another is Mary Magdalene who we will deal with in the next section. However besides them were other women, some of whom are named and others who are not.

While the Apostles generally fled and went into hiding at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus, there was a group of women who were present at his execution. Certain ones attending are listed at Mark 15:40-41 which states:

There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

Perhaps the women were not as concerned about being arrested as were the men, but there were a group of women who followed Jesus who were present at the crucifixion. Jesus' mother Mary was also present, along with Apostle John, however, they were not "looking on from a far." Instead they were very close to the spot where Jesus was crucified because Jesus would address directly both John and Mary.

This company of women are also mentioned in Luke 8 as accompanying Jesus in his ministry. Moreover, not only did the women accompany Jesus as he went through village preaching, they were part of the financial backbone of the ministry of Jesus. Luke 8:1-3 describes this :

Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna and many others who provided for Him from their substance.

It was the group of women who had come from Galilee who had watched him being crucified. (Lk. 23:49). As Jesus was taken down from the cross by Joseph of and prepared for burial, it was the women from Galilee who followed after the body and observed where Jesus' tomb was located. (Lk. 23:55). After learning where the tomb was the women prepared spices and fragrant oils for his entombment but were forced to rest on the Sabbath. (Lk. 23:56). After the Sabbath, it was a group of women who went to the tomb with the spices which they prepared. Luke 23:1-2 says, "...they and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared." It was

this group of women who found the stone rolled away, went in and saw the two angels who proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus.

It is of great interest to me that it is the women surrounding Jesus who were present there during his death. Further, it was the women who first went to the tomb and to whom the pronouncement of Jesus resurrection was first made. It would be a woman who would first see Jesus and it was women who first believed that he was resurrected whereas the apostles and men who followed Jesus at first had their doubts. This is all conveyed at Luke 24: 10-11 which says:

It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women with them who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales and they did not believe them.

It would take Peter and John seeing the empty tomb and Jesus appearing to the early apostles to convince them of His resurrection. (Lk. 24:36-43).

It is of interest and concern to me that the role of women in the ministry of Jesus, in his death and in his resurrection has for various reasons been downplayed over the years. The role of women is deeper than just Mary at the Nativity and Mary Magdalene at the tomb.

Jesus had a great ministry to women. Further women were drawn to Jesus and women were the most faithful in the times of testing and death.

The church which is the bride of Christ needs to find the strength, the supply, the faithfulness and the devotion of the women who followed Jesus. Further the leaders of the church need to realize and appreciate the role that women have played in the ministry of Christ both in the time of Christ and throughout history.

We need to be sharing events among our girls and women regarding women during the time of Christ and in Christian history to serve as role models to half of the population of earth. We have done a great disservice in this regard. I believe most girls and women could not give a list of 10 women who had served Christ after his resurrection. We can and must do better.

Mary Magdalene

As indicated previously, it is my belief that Mary Magdalene may be the same person as Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus. However, this conclusion is not shared by my brothers and sisters in the Orthodox Church. For purposes of this study I have treated Mary Magdalene in a separate section from Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha. One of several reasons for my conclusion is that I do not find a separate listing of Mary the sister of Martha as being one of the people at the cross. It seems unlikely to me that Mary who loved Jesus so much would not be present at the cross especially since Bethany was just a couple of miles from Jerusalem.

Mary Magdalene is often pictured in history as a prostitute or a woman with sins of the flesh. Part of this belief may be attributed to the passage in Luke 7:38-44 where Simon the Pharisee thought to himself "This Man (Jesus), if He were a prophet would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him for she is a sinner." (Lk. 7:39). Similarly Luke 8:32 describes Mary Magdalene "out of whom had come seven demons." The number seven probably meant a complete group of demons.

Other facts which indicate a physicality was that Mary Magdalene let down her hair and bathed Jesus feet with her tears and with oil and wiped them with her hair.

Based upon this information, medieval painters and others often pictured Mary Magdalene as a prostitute who had been redeemed from her sins and delivered from the demons within her. As a point of fact, Scripture neither describes the type of demons who possessed Mary or anything regarding her past.

We do know that her devotion to Jesus was intense. She was one of the women who often accompanied Jesus in his ministry.

Mary Magdalene really means Mary of Magdala. In this sense, she may have come from Magdala which is most likely an ancient city adjoining the Sea of Galilee. Indeed this conclusion might lend credence to the Orthodox view that Mary Madalene (Mary of Magdala) was a different person than Mary, sister of Martha who resided in Bethany. However it is not necessary that the area where one came from is where you are residing later in life.

At any rate, Matthew 27:55-56 includes Mary Magdalene with the women from Galilee including Mary the mother of James and Joses and the mother of Zebedee's sons. (See also Mark 15:40-41).

John 19:25 has three women standing beside the cross when he was crucified. The women were Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. (John 19:25).

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary followed Joseph of Arimathea to the tomb and watched them place Jesus in the tomb (Matt. 27:61; Mark 15:47).

On the first day of the week after the Sabbath, it was Mary Magdalene and the other Mary who came to the tomb and was told by the angels that Jesus had risen. (Matt. 28:1; 28:6; Mark 16:41 which also includes Salome; Mark 16:9 which mentions only Mary Magdalene as does John 20:1-18). According to Matt. 28:9-10, Jesus met the two Marys and the two women held him and worshipped him. In Luke 24:10 it is Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary other of James and other women who returned to the apostles and told them that Jesus was risen.

John gives a more detailed account of Mary's encounter with Christ in John 20. First it is Mary who goes to the tomb and finds the tomb empty and runs to tell Peter and John who run to the tomb to investigate themselves. Notwithstanding the fact that Mary alone is mentioned, Mary says, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him." (Mark 20:2). Note that Mary says "We" do not know where to find him evidencing that she was not alone.

John also gives an account of Jesus appearing to Mary at John 20:11-18). Mary is standing outside of the tomb weeping. She looks inside the tomb and sees two angels who ask why she is weeping and she responds because the body of Jesus had been taken. It is at that point that Mary addresses someone she presumes is the gardener and then recognizes that it is Jesus. (Jn. 20:13-16). When Jesus addresses Mary by name she clings to him and Jesus says that she is not to cling to him because he has not ascended to His father and her father and to His God and her God. (Jn. 20:16-18).

The appearance of Jesus to Mary and the other women is notable. It was the women who were around the cross. Jesus appeared to the women, and in particular, to Mary Magdalene first before he appeared

to the apostles. It was the women who showed the most devotion to Jesus and it was the women who first believed that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead.

Jesus' treatment of women was never condescending. Jesus dealt with women with a straight forwardness and with an honesty and truthfulness just as he dealt with men. Jesus also dealt with women openly, honesty and with courtesy. He did not address women with a spirit of judgment. Women have those characteristics of God showing care, affection, mercy and kindness and they related to Jesus sensing that he also exhibited and appreciated many of the same characteristics.