



Widely considered the most amazing event of all Biblical history is the "Empty Tomb". The "Empty Tomb" manifests to the world the power of the Glorious Resurrection and the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ having been resurrected from death.

"And Jesus came and spoke to them [the eleven disciples] saying... 'All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth.'" (Matthew 28:18).

This scene, momentous in time and never to be duplicated again, where a Resurrected Lord leaves His grave and grave clothes would be given all authority in Heaven and on earth. St. Athanasius called the Glorious Resurrection...

"The living monument of Christianity."

For such an inspirational event "who" would our Lord Jesus Christ chose to be the first to console and exonerate from the sadness of His Holy Crucifixion? It would be a woman; a woman who silently accompanied, served, and followed Him and His teachings from Galilee to Jerusalem. A woman our Lord would heal of seven demons...

"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" (Luke 8:2-3).

Our Lord did not tell Mary Magdalene to return to her city following her miraculous transformation nor did He tell her to specifically return to her home. It is often read where our Lord healed those with instructions to return to their cities and to their homes to proclaim and teach the great things that our Lord had done. We do not read such regarding Mary Magdalene, rather she became His disciple and she provided for our Lord's welfare with her possessions, most probably she was a lady of wealth.

The initial reason our risen Lord Jesus Christ may have desired to appear first to Mary Magdalene was due to the fact that she loved our Lord, with all that she possessed. Mary Magdalene did not only give of her means, but she gave all of her means most likely without reserve for herself. Since the Holy Gospels do not document that she was requested to give of her means or give her all, it can be surmised that she did so as a cheerful giver, from the depths of her heart.

The second reason our Resurrected Lord Jesus Christ may have appeared first to Mary Magdalene was due to her strength of character. Mary Magdalene's love for our Lord never failed. Her love was as courageous as it was strong. She had felt the power of our Lord Jesus Christ having been freed from seven devils and this power must have sustained her, not only sustained her but grew within her.

The death of our Lord Jesus Christ was more than the eleven of the disciples could bear. One committed suicide, ten either ran away or denied our Lord, or both. The courage, faith and love of our Lord Jesus Christ were openly shown in Mary Magdalene of Magdala most explicitly at the foot of our Lord's Holy Cross.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene" (John 19:25).

Innate goodness follows purity, follows love, and does not fail nor demonstrate fear. It is not written in Holy Scripture that Mary Magdalene denies our Lord, runs from His captors, or ever questions His holy teachings. It is not documented that she needs to touch His Holy side or see the nail driven holes embedded in His flesh, which held Him to His Holy

Cross. Could this heart full of selfless, unwavering strength have led Mary Magdalene to be present at our Lord's Holy Crucifixion, His burial for three days, and His Glorious Resurrection?

The third reason our Lord Jesus Christ most probably appeared in risen form first to Mary Magdalene was that she demonstrated an unselfish love. None of the three Holy Gospel writers St. Mark, St. Luke or St. John writes that our Lord Jesus Christ acknowledges Mary Magdalene at the foot of His Holy Cross. Rather He addresses St. John and St. Mary Mother of God and He will address the thief on His right hanging from yet another cross. Mary Magdalene highly likely to have been grief stricken and in shock of the horrors surrounding a crucifixion was not addressed by our Lord in even the smallest manner. We do not read that she felt excluded, that she had a need for recognition, or that she asked "What about my care?" Surely she would have cherished a single word from Her beloved Teacher, but if she thought so, she remained silent.

The last reason why our Lord Jesus Christ may have appeared to Mary Magdalene was due to her obedient character. It seems our Lord understood that He would not have to question her obedience. When she was told must not touch Him until He ascended to the Father she did not. When she was

told to deliver a message to the apostles related to our Lord's Holy Ascension she did so without question. Perhaps it was through her understood obedience Mary Magdalene would come to stand outside the tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ weeping and behold two angels and then our Lord.

"Jesus said to her, 'Woman why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?' She, supposing Him to be the gardener said to Him, 'Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him, and I will take Him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to Him, 'Rabboni!' Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'" (John 20:15-17).

Mary Magdalene would become the first to see the Risen Lord Jesus Christ. Not only the first to see our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, but our Lord would present Himself to her prior to ascending into the Heaven perhaps to bring happiness to her grief stricken countenance. Her honor would not only be the first to see our Risen Lord; it included seeing Him prior to His ascending into the Heaven but she would also become known as "the Apostle to the Apostles". It is not hard to understand that her

courage, her demeanor, and her monetary gifts certainly gave way to this affectionately given title related to her character, the fruits of her spiritual nature and her love for our Lord.

As the Glorious Feast of the Resurrection comes upon us all, let us reflect upon the meaning of true love for our Lord Jesus Christ and all that it may call us to not only encompass but to openly demonstrate. The life of this one woman teaches us what our Lord calls us to do. By our Lord's miraculous healing of her demons, Mary Magdalene honored Him in everything and anything she did putting her Beloved Teacher above all others. Our Lord Jesus Christ rewarded this supremely and she had not yet inherited the eternal life.

It seems that love is rewarded above all. God's love brought our Lord into this world, His love for us enabled Him to endure Crucifixion and the one to whom He appeared first following his Resurrection had only to hear Him say her name to recognize Him fully. Such was the love He instilled in others as the Father instilled in Him.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Just as Mary Magdalene recognized the voice of the Teacher she loved, let us attend to the hour that is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the Resurrection of Life (Lazarus Saturday, funeral service).

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