



## Student Guide – Session 2

### Issue 2: Were Jesus and Mary Magdalene a Couple?

#### A. Consider some claims from *The Da Vinci Code*:

1. “Not only was Jesus Christ married, but He was a father.” (p. 249)
2. “The legend of the Holy Grail is a legend about royal blood. When Grail legend speaks of ‘the chalice that held the blood of Christ’ . . . it speaks, in fact, of Mary Magdalene—the female womb that carried Jesus’ royal bloodline.” (p. 249)
3. “The Church . . . perpetuated her [i.e. *Mary’s*] image as a whore and buried evidence of Christ’s marriage to her.” (p. 254)
4. “*The Last Supper* practically shouts at the viewer that Jesus and Magdalene were a pair.” (p. 244)

#### B. The Biblical Portrayal of Mary Magdalene

1. After Jesus cast seven demons out of her, she helped support His ministry (Luke 8:1-3).
2. She witnessed Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, and was the first to see the risen Christ (Matt. 27:55-61; John 20:11-18).
3. Nowhere does the Bible say that she was Jesus’ wife, the mother of His child, or a prostitute.
4. Mary is not tied to a male anywhere in Scripture. Also, Jesus showed no special concern for her on the cross (as He did for His mother).

#### C. The Gnostic Portrayal of Mary Magdalene

1. The *Gospel of Philip* declares, “And the companion of the [savior] Mary Magdalene [He loved] her more than [all] the disciples [and used to] kiss her [often] on her [mouth].”
  - a) The brackets indicate where key parts of the text are missing.
  - b) The term “companion” (Greek, *koinonos*) typically means “partner” – *not* wife!
  - c) The “kiss” is probably a symbol for the passing on of spiritual truths.
  - d) This text dates to the second half of the third century, over two hundred years after Jesus!
2. In the *Gospel of Mary* there is a section in which Levi stands up for Mary against Peter saying, “Surely the Savior knows her very well. That is why He loved her more than us.”
  - a) This text implies that Jesus had a special relationship with Mary.
  - b) However, the text dates to the second century (and so was *not* written by Mary).
  - c) Also, within the text, Mary doesn’t point to her marital relationship to Jesus in her defense.
  - d) Most scholars don’t consider Gnostic texts to be historical reliable accounts.

#### D. In summary, there is no text anywhere that clearly refers to Mary Magdalene as the wife of Jesus.

### My Notes on Issue 2 –

### Issue 3: Are the Gospels Historically Reliable?

#### A. Internal Evidence for Historical Reliability

1. The first three gospels record Jesus' prophecy concerning the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple (which happened in A.D. 70), but they don't record the fulfillment of this event. The best explanation for this is that the event had not yet happened when these gospels were written. This implies that these gospels must have been completed prior to A.D. 70.
2. In the book of Acts, Luke never records the death of his two chief characters, Peter and Paul. Most likely, this is because Acts was completed before these men were martyred in A.D. 64. Since the Gospel of Luke precedes Acts, it was likely completed around A.D. 60.
3. Finally, since Mark's gospel was likely written before Luke's, it must be dated before A.D. 60.

#### B. External Evidence for Historical Reliability

1. We have over 5,000 Greek manuscripts dating from the early second to tenth centuries A.D.
2. Some of the early church fathers from the first and second centuries A.D. (e.g. Papias, Polycarp, etc.) cited the gospels in their own writings.
3. The Importance of Early Dating for the Gospels
  - a) The closer in time a historical record is to the events it narrates, the more likely it is that the record will be accurate. The gospels were written during the lifetime of eyewitnesses.
  - b) The time gap between when the events took place (during Jesus' lifetime) and when the gospels were written (roughly A.D. 50 – 90) is too short for legendary development.
4. Early Non-Christian Sources Supporting the Historical Reliability of the Gospels
  - a) The first century Jewish historian Josephus mentions many of the same events and people recorded in the gospels (including Jesus).
  - b) In the early second century, the Roman historian Tacitus mentioned that Christ's death occurred during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of Pontius Pilate.
5. Numerous archaeological discoveries confirm key events, characters, and places that are mentioned in the New Testament gospels.
  - a) Archaeological discoveries have shown Luke to be an extremely accurate historian. He names thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine islands without error.
  - b) New Testament scholar F.F. Bruce wrote, "Luke's record entitles him to be regarded as a writer of habitual accuracy." Since the other gospels share much in common with Luke, they should likewise be regarded as historically accurate.
6. To sum up, the evidence indicates that the gospels are first century documents that accurately recorded the life and ministry of Jesus.

#### My Notes on Issue 3 –