

“What Must I Do To Be Saved?”

Acts 16:30

Learn The Gospel

John 6:45; Romans 10:17; James 1:22-25

Believe On GOD In CHRIST

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16; James 2:14-26

Confess CHRIST

Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 10:32-33; 7:21

Repent Of Sin

Acts 3:19; Matthew 3:8

Be Baptized Into CHRIST

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6; 1st Peter 3:21

“Let The Word... Dwell In You Richly”

Colossians 3:16

The current memory assignment is: *“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 5:10).

Commit this to memory by reading it, writing it, listening to it, and reciting it.

“Sound Doctrine”

Titus 2:1

MARY MAGDALENE MUCH MALIGNED

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Relying on the scriptures exclusively, one can correctly conclude that Mary Magdalene was an upstanding and outstanding woman of faith. Seven demons were cast out of her, and she became a benefactress of the Lord during His ministry, contributing to His livelihood from her personal means while accompanying Him and His entourage during His preaching tours (Luke 8:1-3; Mark 15:40-41). After others had forsaken Him (Mark 14:50-52), Mary was among the few who *“stood by the cross of Jesus”* (John 19:25; Mark 15:40-41). Then, when Jesus’ tortured corpse was laid in another man’s tomb, it was Mary, joined by other women, who chose to dignify Him in death by purchasing spices to anoint His body (Mark 16:1), and thus it was *“when He rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene”* (Mark 16:9). On that occasion, Jesus appointed her to inform the disciples of His resurrection and impending ascension (John 20:11-18).

Despite the honorable report of her in God’s word, Mary Magdalene suffers tremendous disrespect to this day. Consistent with the third century commentator Hippolytus, Roman Catholic Pope Gregory I marred the reputation of Mary Magdalene in 591 when he declared, *“She whom Luke calls the sinful woman, whom John calls Mary [of Bethany], we believe to be the Mary from whom seven devils were ejected according to Mark”*. Gregory also equated the sinful woman with the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-12),

-- Continued on page 3 --

Volume 11 Issue xxii

January 4th, 2009

“The Assembling Of Ourselves Together”

Hebrews 10:24-25

Sunday

10:15 am.....Worship

Las Vegas Library

833 Las Vegas Boulevard North

Wednesday

7:00 pm.....Various Studies

Jerry & Beverly Dockens residence

Friday

7:00 pm.....Ladies’ Study

Rachel Dockens residence

“Give Attention To Reading”

1st Timothy 4:13

Sunday...Proverbs 2; Genesis 8:6-10:31; Matthew 4

Monday...Psalm 3; Genesis 10:32-13:13; Matthew 5:1-5:26

Tuesday...Psalm 4; Genesis 13:14-16:14; Matthew 5:27-6:1

Wednesday...Proverbs 3; Genesis 16:15-18:33; Matthew 6:2-6:18

Thursday...Psalm 5; Genesis 19:1-20:18; Matthew 6:19-7:5

Friday...Psalm 6; Genesis 21:1-22:24; Matthew 7:6-7:29

Saturday...Proverbs 4; Genesis 23:1-24:27; Matthew 8:1-8:22

Vegas Valley Church Of CHRIST

Romans 16:16

(702) 374-9799

www.vvcoc.info

P.O. Box 750152, Las Vegas, Nevada 89136-0152

WHOSE TRADITION?

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Without explanation or clarification, a woman once asked, "Are you a traditional church of Christ?" to which I could only respond, "Whose tradition?"

The traditions of men we reject. The traditions of men cannot bring about salvation: *"knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ"* (1st Peter 1:18-19). In fact, human tradition is fraudulent: *"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ"* (Colossians 2:8). It is fraudulent because it detracts from God's commands, as Jesus said, *"For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men... All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition"* (Mark 7:8-9).

The traditions of the apostles we affirm. The apostle Paul commanded, *"Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle"* (2nd Thessalonians 2:15). So important are these traditions that those who neglect or reject them must be shunned: *"But we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us"* (2nd Thessalonians 3:6). Paul also said, *"Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ"* (1st Corinthians 11:1). Apostolic tradition is worthy of emulation because of the authority of Christ, who said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me"* (John 13:20). Jesus Himself sent the apostles into the world as His witnesses, having given them their power (Acts 1:8).

So, the answer is yes and no. We have no pretension of following the traditions established by men who were not inspired simply because they were in the church before us. Our goal is, however, to imitate the apostles inasmuch as they imitated Christ, to observe the traditions recorded in scripture.

-- Continued from page 1 --

which eventually gave rise to the notion that Mary was a prostitute. The entire assertion is total conjecture, altogether lacking in scriptural substantiation.

Numerous women named Mary appear on the pages of holy writ, yet inexplicably, Mary Magdalene was linked to Mary of Bethany. This connection is senseless considering that a Magdalene was almost certainly a person from Magdala (Matthew 15:39), just as a Nazarene was a person from Nazareth (Matthew 2:23). If she was from Magdala, she was not from Bethany, so the two women were not the same.

Furthermore, Mary of Bethany is defamed by the connection to the sinful woman in Luke's account. The sinful woman is unnamed in scripture, but she shares one thing in common with Mary of Bethany: the sinful woman anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair (Luke 7:36-50) and so did Mary of Bethany (John 11:1-2). Luke's record of a foot washing incident diverges sufficiently from three matching accounts (Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9; John 12:1-8) as to suggest two entirely distinct occurrences. Not even Mary of Bethany, much less Mary Magdalene, appears to have been that sinful woman.

The specific transgression of that anonymous sinful woman whom Jesus forgave after anointing His feet (Luke 7:36-50) is not even recorded. No one living today can know whether she was an adulteress or a thief, neither, or both. There is certainly no legitimate way of connecting her to the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-12).

Even the woman caught in adultery (John 8:3-12) was not necessarily a harlot. It is entirely possible to defile the marriage bed (Hebrews 13:4) without doing so for monetary gain.

Not one of Gregory's connections between these women is provable; most are unlikely; some are demonstrably wrong. He has presumed to know what is beyond knowing (Deuteronomy 29:29), thereby adding to God's word (Revelation 22:18), for which he will suffer the consequences.

The assertion that Mary Magdalene was a prostitute is slander (2nd Timothy 3:3) and ought not to be repeated (Proverbs 10:18).