

Who was Joanna in the Bible?

Joanna was one of several women in the Bible healed of “evil spirits and diseases” by Jesus Christ (Luke 8:2). After being healed, Joanna accompanied Jesus and the twelve disciples on their travels from town to town and helped support the Lord’s ministry. As the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod Antipas’ household estate, Joanna was a woman of means and influence. Along with Mary Magdalene, Susanna, and others, Joanna helped provide food and supplies for the missionary troupe from her own wealth (Luke 8:1-3).

Whether Joanna had been set free from a demon or healed of some mental or physical disability, we are not told. But we do know that Joanna remained wholly devoted to Jesus until the end. She traveled with Him on His final journey from Galilee to Jerusalem. She was present at Jesus’ crucifixion and burial. Later, Joanna returned with other women who had prepared spices and burial ointments to anoint Jesus’ body (Luke 23:55-56). Upon discovering the empty tomb, Joanna and the others ran to report the news to the apostles (Luke 24:10).

Joanna is mentioned in the Bible only in the Gospel of Luke. The Herod that Joanna’s husband was steward for was the tetrarch of Galilee, so Joanna herself must have lived in Tiberias, the capital of Galilee. Scholars believe Joanna may have been a key source of much of the detailed information Luke included in his writings about the life of Jesus.

By welcoming women like Joanna into His inner circle, Jesus broke with Jewish tradition and the strict social divisions of His day. And Joanna, no doubt, stepped down from her aristocratic social position when she chose to follow Jesus and associate with His disciples. After her conversion, Joanna traveled with Jesus, served Him, learned from

Him, and financially supported His ministry. In first-century Judaism, such conduct was considered scandalous for women, and especially a married woman. Joanna's life is an example of how the gospel demolishes class barriers and social prejudices. The fact that she was the wife of a man in Herod's employ is ironic, given the general Herodian hatred for Jesus.

Although little is written about Joanna in the Bible, we can glean from just a few lines that the Lord was precious to her. She had the privilege of being one of the first people to share the good news of Christ's resurrection. Joanna was a loyal and generous follower of Christ. She proves that the kingdom of heaven is accessible to all who are willing to give their lives in humble service to Jesus and others.