

How many Marys are in the Bible?

Mary was a common female name in Israel during the time of Christ. The New Testament mentions six different women with the name Mary. The Hebrew form of the name is Miriam (or Miryam), given to the sister of Moses.

The best-known Mary in the Bible is Mary the mother of Jesus. She was the virgin chosen by God to bear His Son, the Savior of the world. Mary lived in Nazareth, a city of Galilee, when the angel Gabriel made the announcement to her of the virgin birth (Luke 1:26, 56). She married Joseph, a carpenter, but remained a virgin until after Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Matthew 1:25). Scripture reveals Mary as a humble, godly, and blessed woman. Mary was also present at Jesus' crucifixion. After Jesus' death, she was cared for by the apostle John (John 19:25-27).

A second Mary in the Bible is Mary Magdalene. This Mary was called "Magdalene" to help distinguish her from some of the other women named Mary in the Gospels. Magdala was a city on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee. This Mary was a follower of Christ, and Luke 8:2 says Jesus had cast seven demons from her. No doubt this deliverance increased her dedication to and love for the Lord. When Jesus arose from the dead, Mary Magdalene brought the news of the empty tomb to Peter and John, and she has the distinction of being the first person to see the risen Christ (John 20:1, 18).

A third Mary in the Bible is Mary of Bethany. This Mary was the sister of Lazarus and Martha. They lived in Bethany, a town near Jerusalem. Jesus and the disciples were frequent visitors in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Mary of Bethany was the one sitting at Jesus' feet listening to His words while Martha set up for dinner (Luke 10:38-42). Before Jesus' arrest, Mary of Bethany anointed Jesus' head with costly oil.

Jesus told those gathered in the room that Mary had done so in preparation for His burial (Matthew 26:6-13).

A fourth Mary in the Bible is identified as Mary the mother of James the younger and Joseph and the wife of Clopas (also called Alphaeus in Luke 6:15). She is mentioned in Mark 15:40, Matthew 27:56, and John 19:25 as watching the crucifixion of Christ. She is mentioned again in Mark 15:47 as seeing the place where Jesus was buried. And this Mary appears again in Mark 16:1 and Matthew 28:1 (where she is called “the other Mary”) in connection with the empty tomb, as she was one of the women who brought spices for Jesus’ body and met an angel instead.

A fifth Mary in the Bible is Mary the mother of John Mark. She is mentioned in Acts 12:12. She had opened up her home for believers to meet for prayer, and it was during one of their prayer meetings that Peter was miraculously released from prison. This Mary’s son is the author of the Gospel of Mark.

A sixth Mary in the Bible is mentioned as a member of the church at Rome. Paul includes her as one of the many people to greet at the end of his letter and describes her as one “who worked very hard” on behalf of the church (Romans 16:6).