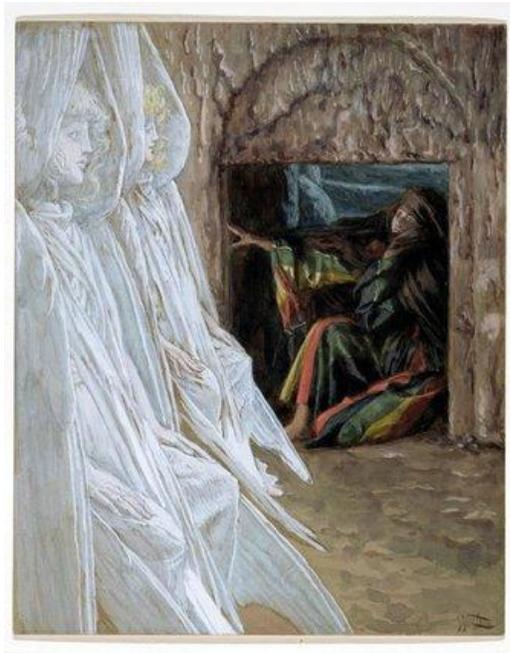


**Mary Magdalene as Witness to the First Easter with Fourth  
Gospel Exegesis and Hermeneutic Commentary**

by

**Gary Heartsill**



**Mary Magdalene Questions the Angels in the Tomb - Tissot, James Jacques Joseph<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The painting shows two angels with Mary Magdalene and probably was painted from the text in the Fourth Gospel. For a comparison see the painting in Appendix A as it was probably painted using the text in the Gospel of Mark.

## Mary Magdalene as Witness to the First Easter with Fourth Gospel Exegesis and Hermeneutic Commentary

But Mary was standing outside the tomb weeping; and so, as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. And they said to her “Woman, why are you weeping?” She said to them “Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him.” When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her **“Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?”** Supposing Him to be the gardener, she 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 in Hebrew “Rabboni!” (which means, Teacher).

Jesus said to her **“Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brethren and say to them ‘I ascend to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.’”** Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples **“I have seen the Lord!”** and that He had said these things to her.

John xx.11-18 (Font/emphasis mine) New American Standard Bible

### Introduction

This study of the Fourth Gospel is a *prima facie* (first look) at vs. 11-18 but probably not the last - this trek was, to say the least, exhilarating. The first part reviews the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene after His resurrection while the second part is exegetically, existentially, and hermeneutically (in part) discussed by selected commentaries.

The inspiration to research this Scripture is from a small Bible study group while the motivation is from Sandra Schneiders’ splendid book (from a recent Perkins Theological School for the Laity), and the satisfaction is getting back into the Word. The punch line ending was not a surprise - I knew what the radical call was but the epiphany was a re-awarding, re-enlightening, re-revelation.

## Mary Magdalene as Witness to the First Easter – Exegesis and Commentary

This paper opens with a faith statement declaring our study of Scripture and appreciation of the Word (logos) - especially about the resurrection – is a faith statement. We read and study the Word knowing our faith is what guides our beliefs, understanding, and appreciation. In protestant scholastic theology this is called implicit faith (*fides implicita*) and is a self-conscious assent to a truth and is an object of “God’s graciousness” from terms as “encounter,” “disclosure,” and “existential truth” (Harvey, 1964, p. 98).<sup>2</sup>

As Christians we believe in the resurrection as written in the Four Gospels. This study is by the Fourth Evangelist in the Gospel of John (xx. 11-18), which recounts the appearance of the glorified Jesus to Mary. Using Schneiders’ convention (p. 214) of dividing the episode into three sections:

- |     |           |  |
|-----|-----------|--|
| I   | vv. 11-15 | weeping ( <i>klaiousa</i> – blinding spiritual sadness/hopelessness) |
| II  | v. 16     | turning ( <i>strapheisa</i> )  |
| III | vv. 17-18 | announcing ( <i>angelousa</i> )                                      |

I “This is a highly symbolic scene. It is still dark...Only the Fourth Evangelist places the tomb of Jesus in a garden and describes Mary’s ironic mistaking of Jesus for the gardener...In this garden of new creation and new covenant, Jesus, who is both the promised liberator of the new creation and the spouse of the new Israel, encounters the woman, who is, symbolically, the Johannine community, the church, the new people of God...Mary is seeking Jesus, a quintessentially positive enterprise in John’s Gospel, but her grief has spiritually blinded her...She does not recognize him...the evangelist dramatically prepares the reader to accept a new mode of Jesus’ presence. To do this one must surrender the obsessional fixation on the physical presence of the earthly Jesus and prepare to cross the threshold from the economy of history into that of the resurrection” (Schneiders, pp. 216-217).

II “Section two of the pericope is made up of a single verse, one of the most moving in the New Testament. The utter simplicity and symmetry of v. 16 makes the point with lapidary eloquence...’And saying this she turned back (*estraphe eis ta opiso*) and saw Jesus standing.’ Two things are to be noted. First, the phrase...means literally toward the things that lie behind...Second, as she turns away from the angels, she faces Jesus and speaks with him...the turning away and turning back...the apostasy and conversion” (Schneiders p. 218).

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<sup>2</sup> Some definitions and terms used in this study are taken from Van Harvey and is a good starting point for more in-depth commentary on “systematic and philosophical terms” as he calls his book a “Wordbook and not a dictionary” (p. 6). Harvey, V. A. (1964). *A handbook of theological terms*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company.

III This third section “contains the notoriously difficult v. 17, which begins with Jesus’ prohibition, *me mou haptou*, which is translated most often as ‘Do not hold me’” (Schneiders, p. 219). Schneiders exegesis suggests, “we should read, ‘Do not continue to touch me but Go tell my brothers and sisters...What Mary is told not to do is try to continue to touch Jesus, that is, to encounter him as if he were the earthly Jesus resuscitated. The time for that kind of relationship is over” (p. 219). Schneiders adds, almost hermeneutically, “I would suggest that what Jesus is really doing is redirecting Mary’s desire for union with himself from his physical or earthy body (which in any case no longer exists because it is the glorified Lord who stands before her in an appearance which is temporary) to the new locus of his presence in the world, that is, this community of his brothers and sisters, the disciples” (p. 220).

“Jesus continues by commissioning Mary Magdalene to announce to the disciples what is clearly the Johannine version of the Easter *kerygma* (proclamation). The message is not, ‘I have risen’ or ‘I go before you into Galilee.’ The message is that all has been accomplished. The work of the Word made flesh is complete, and its fruits are available to his disciples. In the Prologue the reader was told that the Word became flesh to give the power to become children of God to those who believed in him (see 1:12-14). Now that the work of Jesus is completed by this glorification, those who believe in him have become children of God. They are Jesus’ brothers and sisters; his Father to whom he ascends is now their Father” (Schneiders p. 221).

In v. 18 Mary is given her full name again and “goes to fulfill her apostolic mission” (p. 222). Schneiders continues with “There is an evident redactional seam visible in this verse which the evangelist could scarcely not have noticed and must have left for a reason. The verse says literally, ‘Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’ and he said these things to her.’ In other words, the sentence goes from first person direct discourse to third person indirect discourse without transition or explanation. Apparently the source verse with which the evangelist was working was ‘Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples that he had said these things to her.’ The evangelist has opened up the sentence and inserted, in direct address, ‘I have seen the Lord.’

So, Mary Magdalene “is by all accounts an official apostolic witness of the resurrection. She is the one who, in the Johannine community, takes Peter’s role of confirming the brothers and sisters once she herself has been converted...She is the only person in this Gospel to receive an individual Easter appearance and a personal and individual commission from Jesus” (Schneiders, pp. 222-223).

**Conclusion:** “The answer to the question, ‘Where is the Lord?’ is that Jesus is with God, face unveiled, in the glory that he had with God before the world was made, and he is intimately present within and among his own of the first and all later generations to whom he has returned as he promised to fill them with a joy no one can take from them. By the time the first Easter ends in the Fourth Gospel, the promise made in the last discourse(s) by the departing Jesus has been fulfilled: *‘I will not leave you*

*orphaned: I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me: because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you* (Jn. xiv 18-20). And this saving revelation comes to us, as it did to the first disciples, through the word of a woman bearing witness” (Schneiders, p. 223).

Brown concludes, “The christophany to Magdalene ends with her going off to Jesus’ new brothers (the disciples) and announcing, ‘I have seen the Lord.’ Many interpreters have proposed that here John has in mind a verse from the greatest of the ‘Passion psalms’ (Ps xxii 23[22]): ‘I will proclaim your name to *my brothers*: in front of the congregation I will praise you.’ The possibility becomes more interesting when we reflect that ‘Lord’ (*kyrios*) is truly the name of the risen Jesus, and that in LXX *kyrios* renders the tetragrammaton, YHWH, which is the proper name of God.

‘The hour’ announced in xiii 1 for Jesus to pass from this work to the Father is now complete: Jesus’ prayer in xvii 5 for glory with the Father is now answered; all that remains is for him to return to share his glory with his disciples. The first half of what he said in xiv 28, ‘I am going away,’ is fulfilled...(Brown, p. 1017).

### **Background Comments: An Excursus (digression)**

The paper is theologically moving from the fundamental right to a more liberal left starting with biblical criticism and working towards maybe some form criticism. Let the record reflect I am sensitive to the area between the extremes of the right and the left and have chosen, the best I can, to avoid any cognitive dissonance with trust, belief, and faith.

The story of Mary Magdalene in the Fourth Gospel (the spiritual gospel) reads more clearly than any of the Synoptic Gospels and, again, the inspiration comes from Schneiders’ book and her comments about the eight verses in Jn. xx 11-18. The term “reads more clearly” means I had a choice of four Gospels (as we all do). Charles Allen states, “Actually it takes all four of the Gospels to complete the story...Each tells the same story. Yet as I read one of the Gospels, I realize that I am missing certain things which one or more of the other Gospel writers included...Read one of the four Gospels ten times. Read it thoughtfully and prayerfully each time, and it will have a deep and abiding influence upon your life (The Life of Christ, 1962, p. 7).<sup>3</sup>

As to the different readings in the Gospels, Dunn<sup>4</sup> reports, “The differences introduced by the Evangelists, whether as oral diversity or as literary editing, are

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix B for Allen’s translation of Jn. xx 18-20 – and his note on the King James Version.

<sup>4</sup> Dunn’s quote first came from a footnote in the Eddy and Boyd book. For a more in depth academic and scholastic study of the Synoptic Gospels as pertaining to historiographical harmonization see especially Chapter 10 of their splendid research book.

*I should like to thank Bob Anderlitch for his interest and helpfulness in the preparation of this paper.*

consistently in character of abbreviation and omission, clarification and explanation, elaboration and extension of motif. The developments often reflect the deeper faith and insight of Easter; that is true. But they do not appear to constitute any radical change in the substance or character or thrust of the story told” (p. 224).

An analogy of reading the choice of the four gospels is like making a decision on different paintings of a scene – like, for example, the two tomb scenes shown on the title page and in Appendix A. Wright suggests “Yes, [the gospel accounts] show signs of the theological interests of the different evangelists...but this is like what you get when different artists paint portraits of the same person...The touch of the individual artist is unmistakable. And yet the sitter is fully recognizable” (Surprised by Hope, p. 57).

Further on the differences of the Synoptic Gospels<sup>5</sup> can be found in a review of Gospel Parallels<sup>6</sup> showing the Scripture from each book printed in parallel columns for comparison. For this paper the three empty tomb stories were compared with the eight verses from the Book of John, noting some similarity, as 90% of John is not in the Synoptic Gospels; however, when lined up in columns the resurrection story “is fully recognizable” even with the differences in the actions and words of Mary Magdalene (Throckmorton, pp. 186-188).

For the discussion of *exact words* (or the very words) used in this report, say from Mary as she addressed the Lord, was it “Rabboni!” “Robbouni” “Master” “My Master!” “Teacher!” or what? For sure it would help to report this word (along with many more) in Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, or maybe German but then we would be past (again) the scope of this work and be into The Alexandrian text, Byzantine text, Syriac text, or Codex Sinaiticus...(Throckmorton, pp. vi-v). Going back to Eddy and Boyd and their issue of harmonization they say “...such texts – as in the oral traditions from which they emerge and into which they feed – the focus of memory is generally on *things*, not *words* (i.e., on illocutions, not locutions)...this suggests that scholars who strive to recover Jesus’s [sic] *ipissima verba* instead of his *ipissima vox* are, in most cases pursuing the wrong quarry. While we can expect to find the essential *voice* of Jesus in the early church’s tradition, we cannot, apart from certain cases (e.g., mnemonically driven aphorisms, sayings anchored in sacred ritualistic settings, etc.), suppose early Christians would have been invested in preserving the *exact words* of Jesus. It also suggests that we are missing the mark if we suppose there to be any genuine conflict between the sometimes remarkably (from our perspective)

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Eddy, P. R., & Boyd, G. A. (2007). *The Jesus legend: A case for the historical reliability of the synoptic Jesus tradition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

<sup>5</sup> Of course the differences in the Synoptic Gospels is The Synoptic Problem and is beyond the scope of this paper – other than a mention. For a statement on the problem see: Hoskyns, E. C., & Davey, N. (1931). *The riddle of The New Testament*. New York, NY: Harcourt and Brace.

<sup>6</sup> Throckmorton, G. H., Jr. (Ed.). (1949). *Gospel parallels: A synopsis of the first three gospels*. Toronto, Canada: Thomas Nelson & Sons.

different ways the Gospels record Jesus's [sic] teachings or the events of his life" (Eddy & Boyd, p. 429).

J. B. Phillips<sup>7</sup> also addresses the use of exact words: "...although most people, however great their reverence for the New Testament maybe, do not hold a word-for-word theory of inspiration, yet when they approach the four Gospels, and what may be the *ipissima verba* of Christ, they unconsciously seek this kind of translation. (Such reverence for the actual words of Holy Writ was shown in those older editions of the Bible which printed in italics words which were necessary for the sense, but which were not actually present in the Greek and Hebrew!) But in reading a modern work translated from a foreign language into English, we are not in the least concerned with a word-for-word version: all we want is to know accurately the thought of the author and, if possible, to recapture something of the style of the original work. We do not care if a sentence be inverted or expanded or re-arranged, so long as we are confident that a conscientious translator is faithfully conveying the meaning of his author to our minds and hearts" (pp. v-vi).

### **Exegesis to Existential Comments:**<sup>8</sup>

The discussion moves from exegesis to existential with Bultmann saying:

"The question, 'Why are you weeping?' gives her a chance to bewail her perplexity" (v. 13)...when she still thinks the gardener is asking "Her foolishness is analogous to the foolish misunderstanding of 7.5; 8.22...especially of the ignorance of Peter in 13.7 and the disciples in 16.18. It is possible for Jesus to be present, and yet for a man not to recognize him until this word goes home to him..."

"Now however Jesus calls Mary by her own name (v. 16), and the spell is ended: she recognizes him and says to him, 'My Master!'" What it was that made her recognize him is not to be asked in this supernatural happening. We can only ask what deeper meaning the narrative has; and there can hardly be any doubt: the shepherd knows his sheep and he 'calls them by name' (10.3), and when they hear his voice they recognize him. Perhaps we may also add: the naming of the name tells a man

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<sup>7</sup> His translation of Mary, by the way, is "At this she turned right around and said to Him, in Aramaic, 'Oh! Master!'" See: Phillips, J. B. (1956). *The Gospels*. New York, NY: The Macmillan Company.

<sup>8</sup> Sometimes the quotes will not show upper case where they should be for Him or He and I have chosen the convention not to change or use [sic] to display the error.

<sup>9</sup> Hoskyns writes: "With a solemn confession of faith – *Rabboni, my master* – she throws herself before Him, and clasps his feet. The narrative presupposes some such action (cf. Matt. xxviii. 9, 10), since the Lord bids her cease from touching Him...The command that Mary should cease touching Him refers to the interim period between the Resurrection and the Ascension – and to this period only (pp. 542-543). Hoskyns, E. C., & Davey, F. N. (Ed.). (1947). *The Fourth Gospel* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). London: Faber and Faber.

what he is; and to be known in such a way leads a man to the encounter with the Revealer (Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, pp. 685-686).<sup>10</sup>

“Mary’s address to Jesus, which in a characteristic manner is distinguished from that of Thomas in v. 28, show meanwhile that she does not yet fully know him, i.e. she does not grasp who he is as the Risen One. She still misunderstands him, insofar as she thinks that he has simply ‘come back’ from the dead, and that he is again the man she knew as ‘Teacher’; that is to say, she thinks that the old relationship has been renewed, and in her joy she wants to embrace him – as a friend would do to a friend who has come back again. Jesus has to speak the word, ‘Do not touch me!’ in order to restrain her...Jesus has not *yet* ascended to the Father!...she cannot yet enter into fellowship with him until she has recognized him as the Lord who is with the Father, and so removed from earthly conditions...As Mary’s words show, the one whom she sees is by no means yet the Exalted Lord who promised his disciples that he would ‘come’ and hold fellowship with them (Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, pp. 686-688).

“The Risen Jesus gives no charge to Mary to tell the disciples that he has risen and will appear to them also; rather she has to inform them: ‘*I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.*’ Thus basically she has to tell them simply what Jesus himself had already told his followers. The real Easter faith therefore is that which believes this; it consists in understanding the offence of the cross; it is not faith in a palpable demonstration of the Risen Lord within the mundane sphere (p. 688).

Further, “...the sonship of God that believers have is mediated through Jesus, so that we must understand: ‘to my Father, who (through me) is also yours.’ If it is further stated, ‘to my God and to your God,’ it is not new thought that is thereby added, but the declaration gains a great pathos: the Father of Jesus is God! And through him God has become the Father of those who belong to Jesus!

It is completely comprehensible that no further description follows on this saying, whether it be of an answer from Mary or the cessation of the miraculous appearance. A simple terse statement is made (v. 18) that Mary carried out the commission laid upon her. She declares, ‘I have seen the Lord!’ and she makes known what he said to her” (Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, p. 689).

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<sup>10</sup> “Jesus shows himself to be the Revealer because he knows the people who meet him; he knows his ‘own’ (10.14) and in his word reveals to them what they are and what they will be; in this way he compels them to confess and follow him (cp. 4.16-19, 29). Thus faith in him is grounded in the fact that in the encounter with him the believer’s own existence is uncovered” (p. 107). Bultmann, R. (1971). *The Gospel of John: A commentary* (trans. Basil Blackwell). Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press.

## The Revelation of the Glory<sup>11</sup> – Existential and Eschatological Interpretation<sup>12</sup>

Finally, the “hermeneutic landmark” and the hill to die on! (First heard used by Tommy Nelson).

“Parallel to the Easter-promises (‘but I will see you again,’ 16:22...within the whole passage 16:16-24) is another, 14:18; *‘I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you.’* This is the promise of his ‘coming,’ i.e. his parousia. But when it continues: *‘Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also,’* the promise of the parousia is merging into the Easter-promise. What this means is that Jesus’ resurrection and parousia are identical to John. Not only that, but parallel to these parallel promises stands a third, the promise of the Spirit (the Paraclete 14:15; 16:33), i.e. the promise of Pentecost. **Hence, for John, Easter, Pentecost, and the parousia are not three separate events, but one and the same** [emphasis mine]. Consequently, the terminology appropriate to Easter again and again mingles with that appropriate to the parousia – reunion with him is mentioned in 14:19, 16:16, 19, 20: the fact that he lives, 14:9; his appearing to the disciples, 14:21f. But out of the traditional parousia-expectation these themes occur: his coming, 14:3, 18, 23, 28; and the phrases characteristic of eschatology, *‘in that day’* 14:20; 16:23, 26 and *‘the hour is coming,’* 16:25. And into the midst of these the promise of the Spirit is thrust: 14:15-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 13-15. But the one event that is meant by all these is not an external occurrence, but an inner one: the victory which Jesus wins when faith arises in man by the overcoming of the offense that Jesus is to him. The victory over the ‘ruler of the world’ which Jesus has won, is the fact that now there exists a faith which recognizes in Jesus the Revelation of God. The declaration, *‘I have overcome the world’* (16:33), has its parallel in the believer’s confession: *‘this is the victory that overcomes the world: our faith...’the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you’* (14:17).

“If, as John maintains, Jesus’ original coming is already the ‘judgment,’ then it is evident that for him the parousia is not an impending cosmic drama (Bultmann, *Theology II*, pp. 57-58).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Bultmann, R. (1955). *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. Kendrick Grobel, Vols. I & II). New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons.

<sup>12</sup> If you have read this paper this far I thank you – in spite of the lengthy pertinent quotes – for I would have stood on my head and spit wooden nickels to get you to the last section as it combines the theme(s) of the paper: faith, vs. 14:18, and **I have seen the Lord!** [*Ich habe den Herrn gesehen!* or *¡He visto al Señor!*]

“As we have seen, the ‘facts of salvation’ in the traditional sense play no important role in John. The entire salvation-drama – incarnation, death, resurrection, Pentecost, the parousia is concentrated into a single event: the Revelation of God’s ‘reality’ in the earthly activity of the man Jesus combined with overcoming of the ‘offense’ in it by man’s accepting it in faith” (Bultmann, *Theology II*, p.58).

### **Epilogue**

Easter...[*now!*]...will never be the same.

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<sup>13</sup> Realized eschatology.

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## Definition of Terms

**Biblical Criticism** is a name commonly but loosely applied to a type of historical inquiry that seeks answers to an extraordinary number of different kinds of questions: What are the most reliable and trustworthy texts of the O.T. and N.T.? What are the relationships between the various books? What and by whom were the texts written and for what purpose?...What are the crucial ideas in the document? (Harvey, p. 42).

**Biblicism** is that view which accepts as true all that is to be found in the Bible in its literal meaning and which will accept no truth as Christian that cannot find explicit warrant in it. Sometimes called bibliolatry (Harvey, p. 45).

**Cognitive dissonance** is the condition in which there is a clash between an experience and a conviction (idea/symbol) or between two contradictory ideas (Johnson, p. 481).

**Eschatology** literally means “discourse about the last things” and refers to that part of Christian doctrine concerned with the final end of man. Traditionally, it has encompassed such matters as the second coming of Christ (parousia), the resurrection of the dead, the immortality of the soul, the final judgment, and heaven and hell...[Jesus] seems to have stressed the present sovereignty of God, God’s demand for repentance, God’s graciousness, and the love commandment. Furthermore, Jesus rejected any speculation concerning the last days...The continued delay of the parousia constituted a crisis of belief for the early church, and it was resolved only by the creative insights of Paul and the author of the Fourth Gospel who, with differing emphases, shifted the locus of faith from a future hope to present communion with the Holy Spirit and life in the Body of Christ (Harvey, pp. 80-81).

**Exegesis** refers to the process of interpreting a text. It is to be distinguished from translation, on the one hand, and from inquiry into the principles of interpretation (hermeneutics), on the other, although they are all closely related. Since Christian theology is based on the conviction that the Bible contains the revelation of God, E. has always been of special theological importance. Theologians have sought to clarify obscurities and apparent contradictions in the text so that the meaning of it might become clear (Harvey, p. 90).

**Existentialism** is a movement, a “sensibility,” not a set of doctrines. It is not, as it is too often said, a necessarily “gloomy” philosophy. It is, rather, invigorating and positive. Nor is it necessarily atheistic, a form of ‘secular humanism.’ Soren Kierkegaard, the “first existentialist, was profoundly religious. In a world pervaded by victim psychology, existentialism offers a refreshing sense of empowerment (Solomon, p.6).

The message of existentialism...is that every one of us, as an individual, is responsible, ultimately, for the way the world is. It is, in very short phrase, the philosophy of “no excuses!” Life may be difficult; circumstances may be impossible.

There may be obstacles, not least of which are our own personalities, characters, emotions, and limited means or intelligence. But, nevertheless, we are responsible. We cannot shift that burden onto God, or nature, or the ways of the world. If there is a God, we choose to believe. If nature made us one way, it up to us to decide what we are to do with what nature gives us – whether to go along or fight back, to modify or transcend nature. As the delightfully priggish Kate Hepburn says to a wonderfully vulgar Humphrey Bogart in the movie *The African Queen*, “Nature is what we are put on this earth to rise above.” That is what existentialism is all about. We are responsible for ourselves” (p. 1).

**Existentialism: Existential (Neo-reformed) theologians** – to name a few: Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, Friedrich Gogarten, Paul Tillich, and Reinhold Niebuhr are defined by Harvey: “Although these theologians have quite diverse position, they share in common the existentialist attack on the language of substance and soul as a way of talking about man and, hence, are able to interpret faith in different terms. The self, they argue, is a unity of radical freedom and limitedness, and faith is the acceptance of this paradoxical unity. But faith is not the possession of a creed or a doctrine, nor is it belief; it is rather, the decision to be oneself as *this* person in *this* situation, a decision that must be made again and again. This decision is made possible by the gracious and unconditioned acceptance of man by God which enables man to have the courage to be himself. This faith is made possible through the proclamation and acceptance of the Gospel in which God himself confronts man with his word of acceptance. Existential theologians try to interpret the Scripture in this manner, to show that in and under the mythological concepts and ideas is an understanding of human life that is a viable possibility for modern man” (Harvey, pp. 93-94).

**Form Criticism** (*Formgeschichte*) is a special method of analysis and interpretation of preliterary or oral traditions. It is based on the conviction that ancient writers frequently collected, arranged, and edited materials (stories, legends, wise sayings, miracle stories, etc.) already circulating in the culture in which the writer lived...By noting how these forms persisted or were slightly changed in transmission, the form critics believe they can established certain patterns of development...scholars especially associated with F.C. are Karl Schmidt, Rudolf Bultmann, and Martin Dibelius (Harvey, p. 101).

**Hermeneutics** is the inquiry concerned with the presuppositions and rules of the interpretation of some form of human expression, usually a written text, although it could also be an artistic expression of some kind. The presuppositions of H. have been the subject of lively philosophical debate...Does Scripture, for example, require a special method of interpretation or does it simply demand the methods common to the interpretation of any text? Are there Christian principles of interpretations? (Harvey, p.117).

**Redactor** - an example is taken from Schneiders: “After the death of the Beloved Disciple the text seems to have undergone some ‘redaction’ or revision, probably to

smooth out some of the more glaring theological and pastoral discrepancies between the Fourth Gospel and the teaching and practice of the 'Great Church,' that is, the emerging and increasingly organized early Christian community, in which the primacy of the Twelve and especially Peter had begun to emerge. Many scholars see the evidence of this 'ecclesiastical redaction' in John 21, which seems to be an addition or epilogue after the conclusion in 20:30-31 (p. 40).

## Appendix A



**The Holy Women at Christ's Tomb, c.1597-8 - Carracci, Annibale<sup>14</sup>**

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<sup>14</sup> Both paintings in this paper from the URL:  
<http://www.bridgemanartondemand.com/image/865322/annibale-carracci-the-holy-women-at-christs-tomb-c-1597-8>

### Appendix B<sup>15</sup>

The disciples went back home; but Mary remained outside the tomb, weeping. As she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher. She saw two angels clothed in white sitting there, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. They said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" She, supposing him to be the gardener, said to him, "Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned to him and said, "Rabboni!" which means "Master." Jesus said to her, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and what he had said to her.

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<sup>15</sup> Charles Allen says "I have left Jesus' words in the language of the King James Version. Though I appreciate the many scholarly translations which we now have, still I find greatest inspiration in the lofty language of the version which I first read and came to love" (p. 8).

## Appendix C

Using yellow high lighting on most expanded verses listed in Bultman's Victory paragraph, and adding an outline title to each section, the expanded Easter-Promise is more visible.

### **The Revelation of the Glory<sup>16</sup> – Existential and Eschatological Interpretation<sup>17</sup>**

Finally, the “hermeneutical landmark” and the hill to die on! (A term heard by Tommy Nelson).

“Parallel to the Easter-promises (‘but I will see you again,’ 16:22...within the whole passage 16:16-24) is another, 14:18; ‘*I will not leave you desolate; I will come to you.*’ This is the promise of his ‘coming,’ i.e. his parousia. But when it continues: ‘*Yet a little while, and the world will see me no more, but you will see me; because I live, you will live also,*’ the promise of the parousia is merging into the Easter-promise. What this means is that Jesus’ resurrection and parousia are identical to John. Not only that, but parallel to these parallel promises stands a third, the promise of the Spirit (the Paraclete 14:15; 16:33), i.e. the promise of Pentecost. **Hence, for John, Easter, Pentecost, and the parousia are not three separate events, but one and the same** [emphasis mine].

14:15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

16:33 “I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!”

Consequently, the terminology appropriate to Easter again and again mingles with that appropriate to the parousia – reunion with him is mentioned in 14:19, 16:16, 19, 20:

### **Promise**

14:19 “In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.”

16:16 “A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me.”

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<sup>16</sup> Bultmann, R. (1955). *Theology of the New Testament* (trans. Kendrick Grobel, Vols. I & II). New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons.

<sup>17</sup> If you have read this paper this far I thank you – in spite of the lengthy pertinent quotes – for I would have stood on my head and spit wooden nickels to get you to the last section as it combines the theme(s) of the paper: faith, vs. 14:18, and **I have seen the Lord!** [*Ich habe den Herrn gesehen!* or *¡He visto al Señor!*]

16:19 Jesus knew that they wanted to ask him, so he said to them, “Are you discussing among yourselves what I meant when I said, ‘A little while, and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me’? 20 Very truly, I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy.

### **He Lives**

the fact that he lives, 14:9; his appearing to the disciples, 14:21f.

14:9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’”

14:21f They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.

But out of the traditional parousia-expectation these themes occur: his coming, 14:3, 18, 23, 28;

### **His Coming**

14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

18 “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.”

23 Jesus answered him, “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”

28 “You heard me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I am coming to you.’ If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I.”

and the phrases characteristic of eschatology, ‘*in that day*’ 14:20; 16:23, 26 and ‘*the hour is coming*,’ 16:25

### **Eschatology**

14:20 “On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.”

16:23 “On that day you will ask nothing of me. Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you.”

26 “On that day you will ask in my name. I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf;”

25 “I have said these things to you in figures of speech. The hour is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figures, but will tell you plainly of the Father.”

And into the midst of these the promise of the Spirit is thrust: 14:15-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-11, 13-15.

### Promise of the Spirit

14:15-17 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.”

26 “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you every thing, and remind you of all that I have said to you.”

15:26 “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.”

16:7-11 “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 and when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 about sin, because they do not believe in me: 10 about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer. 11 about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.”

16:13-15<sup>18</sup> “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14 He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

### Victory

But the one event that is meant by all these is not an external occurrence, but an inner one: the victory, which Jesus wins when faith arises in man by the overcoming of the offense that Jesus is to him. The victory over the ‘ruler of the world’, which Jesus has won, is the fact that now there exists a faith which recognizes in Jesus the Revelation of God. The declaration, ‘*I have overcome the world*’ (16:33), has its parallel in the believer’s confession: ‘*this is the victory that overcomes the world: our faith...*’<sup>the</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. (1989). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

*spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; you know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you' (14:17).*

What was so special about Mary Magdalene, that Jesus chose her to walk out such an extravagant story? Who was she, and what happened to her after the resurrection of Christ? What must it have been like for Mary to witness an empty grave? Kelly Minter puts it beautifully in her article "Follow the Women at the Tomb:" "Mary sat with her tears long enough to peer into the tomb and see something the men hadn't seen. Angels. They asked her why she was crying." Mary was the first to tell the full gospel story. When the angels told her to "go" in Mark 16:7, she became the first to feel the call and pull of Christ on her life to tell of His resurrection. Women were not called to testify in that age, and their word didn't lend credibility to any historically recorded event. The Gospels present Mary Magdalene as a disciple of Jesus, an eyewitness of His death on the cross, and the first witness of His resurrection. In the four Gospels, she is mentioned 12 times, eleven of which are directly related to Jesus' Passion and Resurrection. Only Luke (8:2-3) includes the detail that "Mary, called Magdalene" was a woman whom Jesus had freed from seven demons. We don't know anything more nor can we say that she was a prostitute, as is commonly believed. Having had the privilege of being the first to contemplate the Risen Lord, she was sent by Jesus Himself to proclaim the