

PART IV:

Mary and James:
the Elevated and the Just

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JESUS' RIGHT HAND AND HIS LEFT

The missing ingredient in many gospel studies is due consideration of those who created the gospel accounts. Surely the gospels did not come about in a vacuum but each one arose in select communities under the guidance of key personalities. Let us turn our attention then to two of the Nazarene movement's leading personalities: Mary and James, the Elevated and the Just and here at the outset, let us note: from its inception the Nazarene movement was no monolith but demonstrated a tolerant maturity, making room, as it were, under one roof for a wonderful variety of characters, each with his own concerns, ministry, or emphasis. Because of Jesus' transforming influence, there was a blossoming of individuality and scope for bold, new approaches to spirituality. Never was there only one "normative" way to be Christian but the mountain of faith is approachable from many directions.

By the word the will of God is made known and through the living word, Jesus, the will of God is made known. In just that way, with head and heart working in tandem, James excelled in his handling of Scripture while Mary excelled in her devotion to the Man. No one knows a brother like a brother; that was James. No one knew her beloved as did the beloved one; that was the Magdalene. As a high tower, she was of all women most elevated; he of all men, most just. This one most passionate, that one most mild. Having qualities which balance and complement, this one most vulnerable, that one most venerable; the one deeply caring, the other thoughtfully wise. Very different personalities, each one carved out their own separate identity, each one shaped his or her own unique sphere of influence.

Before appearing to the Twelve, early on the first day of the week, Jesus appeared first to the Magdalene, then, as the *Gospel of the Hebrews* reports, later that morning to James "the brother of the Lord." Priority of appearance after his resurrection was a signal honor for them but for us a sign. The Twelve vied amongst themselves for the honor of sitting on Jesus' right hand and his left in the Kingdom to come but all for naught, for it was not theirs to ask any more than it was his to grant. Nor were they necessarily given first place in the messianic community. One of the Twelve, Judas Iscariot, ended up in last place. Honor given to whom honor is due; so, also, dishonor. In pointing this out, it is not to make light of the institution of the Twelve, for its members' contributions were great and they are with Jesus always. Rather, the purpose is to restore to memory the role played by James and Mary. In so doing, we redress an ancient wrong committed by those Church Fathers who with their stubby pens, as much as they dared, expurgated them both from the *New Testament* and from history. Nevertheless, in the Spirit, these two stood on Jesus' right hand and on his left.

Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks. (*Psalms* 48:9,13)

MARY AND JAMES IN PROPHECY

As one might expect, the bulk of messianic prophecies apply directly to the Messiah but a few also apply to members of his immediate entourage, as well to the larger messianic movement. For instance: "A virgin shall conceive" – would that not be a prophetic reference to Jesus' mother, *Isaiah 7:14*? "A voice crying in the wilderness:" is that not the Forerunner, John, *Isaiah 40:3*? "The son of perdition" – would that not be Judas Iscariot, *Psalms 109:8*? And so it goes from Jesus on down, there was a prophetic delineation of various key players in the messianic movement. Among this select number stands James the Just, otherwise known as "the Bulwark of the People;" and Mary Magdalene whose epithet "Magdalene" means "high tower" or "elevated."

In the Bible, a name change often signified a change of status. Abram became Abraham; Sari, Sarah; Jacob, Israel. Likewise with the granting of titles: Simon became *Petros*, i.e., "a small stone," indicating as it were that he was a chip off of "The Rock." As the 4th century's most renowned biblical scholar, Jerome, (c. 340-420 AD) wrote regarding the Magdalene:

Mary of Magdala received the epitaph "fortified with towers" because of her earnestness and strength of faith, and was privileged to see the rising of Christ first before even the apostles.

And of James, the historian Eusebius (c. 260-340 AD) wrote:

Because of his superlative righteousness, he was called the Righteous [or Just] One [*Dikaïos*] and Oblias, which from the Greek translates as "Bulwark of the People."
... as the Prophets declare of him.

JAMES, THE BROTHER OF JESUS

In the aftermath of the Messiah's life, death, and resurrection, Jesus' band of followers, numbering about 120, established themselves in Jerusalem as a society of friends in intentional community with James the Just, the brother of our Lord, as their leader. Yet, in the *Acts of the Apostles*, few particulars relating to this are provided. Curiously missing from this account until chapter 12 is any mention of James. And even when he is introduced into the story line, it's done most peculiarly, simply: "tell James ..." (*Acts 12:17*). Somehow the reader is supposed to divine which of two Jameses was intended or why it might be important to tell him anything at all. To that point, the only Jameses mentioned in *Acts* was James, a son of Zebedee, reported as killed in *Acts 12:2*, and James a son of Alpheus. That James, the Lord's brother, over thirty years the Nazarene community's leader in Jerusalem, not to be recognized is most curious. Folks, this is not the normal way to tell a story! The only way I know to make sense of it is to assume that something fell out of the text. In all probability it didn't just "fall" out. Though conjectural and not proven, almost certainly a sizable portion

of text was removed in a mid- 2nd century, Church-sponsored edit. As if it were a big shark, the Church came along and chomped off an essential piece of the story not suitable to its purposes. Not only missing are James' deeds but, also, much of the real story of the Jerusalem community is missing. Still discernable, however, is the gaping hole left behind.

So long as there existed a thriving Nazarene movement, the emerging, proto-Catholic Church felt its own authority at risk which could explain why James was viewed with such jaundiced eye that even his *Epistle*, which comes closest of any in the *New Testament* in atmosphere and perspective to *Matthew's Gospel*, was not granted unqualified canonical status but was placed in the disputed category where it remained in limbo for many centuries. Only after the Nazarene movement was toast, was James heartily embraced.

Whereas the tendency has been to view the Magdalene absent any reference to her Jewishness, as if perhaps she was divorced from her roots, James often is seen as being too Jewish. That was Luther's assessment. In his edition of the *New Testament*, he bumped James' epistle, which he deprecated as "a strawy epistle," from its accustomed location, relegating it to an appendix at the rear. His expressed intention: to do away with it altogether:

The Epistle of James is written by a Jew who so far as Christianity is concerned has indeed heard the bell ring, but does not know where the clapper is. Here in Wittenberg we have cast James out of theology; indeed we have almost thrown him out of the Bible. (Martin Luther, 1542)

Unlike Luther, Catholicism and Orthodoxy have long wanted to identify James with their respective institutions, albeit on their terms. Recasting James as a proto-Catholic, they credit him with authoring the Divine Liturgy of St James, an ancient, still widely-practiced Church rite. However, neither this rite's well-developed Trinitarian theology nor its high-church ceremonialism, could James or anyone else from the 1st century have conceived. Initially, so far from being popular with the Church, James was roundly ignored. For instance, no reference to him is found amongst the sub-apostolic Church Fathers. Nor is his epistle listed in the Roman Catholic Muratorian canon of c. 200 AD. Only in the 3rd century, once the Nazarene movement that James had led had been put to flight and declared a heresy, do we find record of a Church father, namely, Origen, looking favorably upon him. In the 4th century, Augustine embraced him and the church historian, Eusebius, extolled him, making reference to his "episcopal throne." (This very throne, having survived into modern times, on scientific examination, proved, alas, to be a 4th century artifact derived from the same material as the church structure from the same time period associated with it.)

By the way, what a fine piece of nonsense: James "enthroned," ruling from a raised platform as if he were a potentate, when his only authority was moral authority which he exercised mostly from on his knees. The Church's perceived need to connect itself to James by

the use of hopelessly anachronistic claims is symptomatic of its inherent insecurity about its origins, all of which reflects adversely on the presumed efficacy of its rituals, which depends on unbroken, physical, apostolic succession.

Though neither the Jewish leadership then or the Church now care to acknowledge this, James, of all Jews, was most observant. He never abandoned tallit or phylacteries, yet, at the same time, he was most Christ-like, thereby demonstrating the compatibility of Moses and Jesus. At the same time that the Jewish leadership found his message to be too universal, the Church was finding it to be too Jewish or, as Edward Gibbon put it:

The Nazarenes were Jews who were converted to Christ, who, because they kept the law of Moses together with the gospel, were cast out of the Church.

(The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire)

In light of all we know about the Magdalene, it would be to blunder to portray James as having been a narrow-minded legalist when we know that the movement to which both belonged was at heart humane. We should know better than to think that James took pride in his religion or his ethnicity instead of his humanity. Instead of parochialism or exclusivist tendencies, by the evidence of his epistle, we can say that he was wonderfully open and generous. He said it all when he wrote:

. . . mercy rejoiceth against judgment. (*James 2:12*)

J A M E S T H E T S A D I K

In *Genesis*, for his kinsman Lot's sake, and for his kinsman's family's sake, Abraham negotiated with God to save Sodom. He asked of God:

"Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?" (*Genesis 18:24*)

Eventually Abraham bargained God down to ten, whether that for the sake of ten righteous men (the word for righteous in Hebrew being *Tsadik*, or *Zaddik*), God would spare the city. From this incident was developed a generalized application, that humanity's continued existence is predicated on the presence of God's righteous ones among us. James the Just, that is, James the Righteous One, *Ya'akov Ha Tsadik*, was widely considered to be such a one. Thus we read in *Thomas*:

The disciple said to Jesus, "We know that you are going to leave us. Who will be our leader? Jesus said to them, "No matter where you are you are to repair to James the Just, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being. (Logion 12)

James' reputation for righteousness stems from a variety of causes:

And once during a drought, he [James] lifted his hands to Heaven and prayed, and at once Heaven sent rain . . . Thus they no longer called him by his name, but his name was, rather, "the Just One." (Epiphanius)

1st century Jewish historian, Josephus, speaking of James' "great holiness," "his preeminent righteousness," attributed this to his devotion to prayer. For this reason also was conferred on him the appellation, "camel knees." As James wrote:

. . . the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. (*James 5:16*)

Personal piety in his view was not an end in itself but a means to a greater end and without charity piety is a detriment. As for James' regard for the poor, it was not based on sympathy alone but on respect:

Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? (*James 2:5*)

ESCHATOLOGICAL HIGH PRIEST

As Aaron served as his brother's spokesman and was appointed to be the high priest, so was James Jesus' spokesman and high priest after his death and resurrection. Confirming this are accounts from antiquity of his entering the Temple's inner sanctum as opposition high priest:

But we find that he [James] also exercised the Priesthood according to the ancient Priesthood. . . . To James alone was it permitted to enter the Holy of Holies once a year, because he was a Nazarite and connected to the priesthood. . . . Many before me have reported this of him - Eusebius, Clement and others. He was also allowed to wear the [priestly] mitre on his head as the aforementioned trustworthy persons have testified in the same historical writings. (Epiphanius)

For 32 years the Sadducees bided their time, never forgetting Jesus' chastisement of them when he cleansed the temple in 30 AD or whose brother it was who continued to challenge their legitimacy, for all this while James had been a bone in their throat. His mere presence reminded them of their guilt. His modest lifestyle was a daily reproach to their extravagance. Because they were held in contempt by the people, the Sadducees were not anxious to move precipitously against him. Eventually they felt compelled to act, particularly when arose a new controversy regarding their designs on the Temple's treasury. According to Josephus (*Ant. 20: 205-7*), the Sadducees, led by Ananus II, in 58 AD illegally seized that portion of the tithe due the rural priests. Upholding the Temple's integrity, James appears to have championed the rural priests' cause. Dangerous. The Establishment is always greedy.

It was just then that Jerusalem found itself between Roman-appointed governors, that is,

the interregnum between Festus and Albinus. Now, finally, the temple leadership must have thought, whatever the risk, the time was ripe to make their move. Eager to have done with James once and for all, the Sadducees chose as the opportune moment the Passover in 62 AD to query James: "What is meant by 'the door of Jesus'?" A transparent ploy intended to mousetrap him, James responded, as they knew he must:

"Why do you ask me concerning the Son of Man? He is sitting in heaven on the right hand of the great Power and will come in the clouds of heaven."

By identifying Jesus as the Savior, James gave the Temple leadership the pretext they needed to charge him with "having transgressed the law." Thus on such grounds as these did they engineer his demise.

In rounding out our understanding of James' sacerdotal ministry, we should remember that beyond supplication, as we shall see below, other Temple functions existed which also needed to be fulfilled, for the Temple experience was as different again from a Pentecostal shout and praise meeting as that is from a high Episcopal Church service. As C. S. Lewis invites us to do in his book: *Reflections on the Psalms*, picture if you can the festive pageantry of the high holy days, the singers and the minstrels, trumpets blowing and damsels with timbrels and tambourines in hand, following whom was a great throng, as the folk ascended the Temple steps in grand procession. Glorious the shouts of hosanna! James was not just an observer but a participant, and more than that, he presided over this joyful throng. To James, no less than to the Psalmist before him, nothing could be finer than to:

... dwell in the house of God ... to behold the fair beauty of YHWH and to enquire in his temple. ... I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept the holy day. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. (Psalm 27:4, 42:4, 84:10)

T H E B U R I A L S H R O U D

In the *Gospel to the Hebrews*, James and Jesus break bread together, after which Jesus hands to the "servant of the high priest" the grave clothing. Who would that have been? Surely not the servant of the high priest, Caiphas, the same as helped bring about his execution? That makes no sense, for James, not Caiphas, was the eschatological high priest. By handing over to James' servant, and not to James himself, the grave clothes, Jesus preserved James' ability to remain ritually clean in accordance with applicable Mosaic provision. Possibly one of the items Jesus presented James at that time is known to us today as the Shroud of Turin. Certainly possession of such an object would've lent credence to the disciples' eyewitness accounts of the resurrection, as well, help explain the positive response they received.

*I am a priest of the Lord,
and to Him I do priestly service:
and to Him I offer the sacrifice of my thought.
For His thought is not like the thought of the world
nor the thought of the flesh,
nor like them that work carnally.
The sacrifice of the Lord is righteousness,
and purity of heart and lips.
Present your reins before Him blamelessly:
and let not thy heart do violence to heart,
nor thy soul to soul.
Thou shalt not acquire a stranger
by the price of thy silver,
neither shalt thou deprive him of the covering
of his nakedness:
But put on the grace of the Lord without stint;
and come into His Paradise
and make thee a garland from its tree,
and put it on thy head and be glad;
and recline on His rest,
and glory shall go before thee,
and thou shalt receive of His kindness
and of His grace;
and thou shalt be flourishing in truth in the praise
of His holiness.
Praise and honor be to His name. Hallelujah.*

(Ode 20)

LIVING IN COMMUNITY

Just as a coal taken from the hearth burns less brightly in isolation so also do our lights often burn less brightly in isolation. We have God above and within, for he is both transcendent and immanent, yet we are also social beings in need of one another. Whereas walking in the light is a move toward personal transcendence; holy friendship is a move toward mutual transcendence; while the linking of voluntary, face-to-face home-based communities is a move toward societal transcendence.

And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods and parted them to every man had need. And they continuing daily of one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. (Acts 2:44-47)

A lover of equality, James would have seen in this the opportunity to put into practice the egalitarian principles he advocates so eloquently in his epistle. Perhaps the bartering of services within the community helped offset the lack of money while the tightening of bonds that goes with communal living helped stave off the demoralizing effect of having individuals picked off one-by-one by the authorities.

Unity is the goal of *community*. But this is not to be taken as automatic for we must be aware of intentional community where there are too many intentions, especially of the wrong kind. Either there is transparency with the intentions being clearly articulated or not; either a God dynamic or a group dynamic exists; either coercion or autonomy; either we are liberated or else controlled. That is the choice. The closer people draw to one another, the more the boundaries between them need to be respected. Intentional community is not meant for those with an exaggerated regard for human authority: "I am of Cephas, I am of Paul." Nor should it foster dependency. Purposeful living requires personal initiative. Unity is not uniformity.

As James interpreted it, faith is an active principle, not the substance of things hoped for, but the *substantiating* of things hoped for:

Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. . . . For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also. (James 2:17-18, 26)

Taking Abraham for his example, James related deeds, faith, and friendship:

Was not Abraham our forefather justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do ye see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was

fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. (James 2:21-23)

A friend of God is one who shows himself friendly to the things valued by God. Thus James says it ought not to be that we bless God but curse men which are made after the similitude of God. Friendship with God fits us to be members of a society of friends, holy friendship – not doctrinal formulations or hierarchy – providing the organizing principle.

In living lightly, James was keeping to a way of life which, if broadly practiced, would obviate the need for war. Wars arise from two causes: greed and need. Greed needs to be harnessed, even as needs need to be met. There's room for all under the sun on God's green earth, if we will but accommodate one another.

From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask not and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts. (James 4:1-3)

Another take on James' voluntary simplicity and vegetarian lifestyle:

The abstinence of St. James was not exclusively directed to the mortification of the flesh . . . He who abstains from meat altogether would not be called upon to eat the Paschal Lamb; he who had no land or possessions was not concerned with the laws of Tithe . . . Like Jesus the Temple was for him a House of Prayer: he was Righteous, he kept the Law, so far as it applied to him, but sacrifices were a matter of flesh-eaters and tithes for the rich. (F. C. Burkitt, *Christian Beginnings*)

For the better part of 2000 years, with few exceptions, Christendom has avoided facing the challenge James presents to believers to disengage from the world system and exit from the circle of war. Surely we do not need to be fronting for rapacious corporations, war profiteers or grasping politicians, anymore than we need to involve ourselves in capitalistic or nationalistic conflicts. Much less do we need to be involved in the murderous, One World Global Zionist dictatorship or the Zionized churches promoting it. By contrast, living lightly is an appeal to the conscience, saying by our example that we march to a different drummer and need not live by the law of conspicuous consumption or trying to keep up with the Jones.

An alternative to Judeo-Christian belligerency exists - namely Nazarene faith and practice. Not a sect, organization, or school of thought, it is an attitude toward life that has been there all along, just overlooked or ignored (that is, when not actively being persecuted.) Whereas Zionized Christians are seemingly transfixed by a "my God is bigger than your

god” mentality, priding themselves on their "chosen"-ness, those who are really chosen never try to get a leg up on anyone, much less bomb their neighbors into "democracy," or rip off their art and museum pieces or sow the land with radiation.

The self-perception of a Nazarene is that of inquirer, seeking Life's source, nature, and purpose, with a commitment to ethical standards. Written off as "purists" or as "idealists," then marginalized, they often live and die in profound obscurity. Or, as has been the case with such leading Nazarene luminaries such as Mary Magdalene and James the Just, they have been maligned, misrepresented, and/or martyred.

MARTYRDOM IN JERUSALEM

Unable to endure any longer the testimony of the man, who through a lifetime of ascetic observance and piety was deemed by all men to be the most righteous, they [the priests] slew him [James], using anarchy as an opportunity for power, since at that time Festus [Procurator 60-62] had died in Judea, leaving the province without governor or procurator. . . . (Clement, quoted by Eusebius)

While thus they were stoning him, one of the Priests of the sons of Rechab, the son of Rechabites, spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet, cried out, saying, "Stop what you are doing, the Just One is praying for you." And one among them, who was a fuller, took the club with which he beat out clothes and struck the Just One on the head. . . . Thus, he suffered martyrdom, and they buried him on the spot by the temple, and his monument is still there by the temple. (Hegesippus)

From 30 AD, before Pentecost, to 62 AD, at Passover, when he was martyred, James oversaw the messianic community in Jerusalem. As a light on a hill, even holy Mt. Zion, he was most conspicuously placed. Jerusalem, the focus of three world religions, is the navel of the world, where trade routes from three continents meet; where Abraham would have sacrificed Isaac; where the temple in which Jesus was dedicated stood; where prophets prophesied; where David reigned; where pilgrims gather; where armies clashed, where the Messiah suffered passion and died and rose again, to which he will return to reign with the saints in glory. It had to have been a very tough posting, though not without its rewards. For more than three decades, for thirty-two years, James stood in the gap, forestalling judgment, this despite the ire of the religious authorities. Except that they feared the people who held James in awe, the Temple's rulers would have gladly done him in at any time. Eventually they created an opportunity.

PURE RELIGION

Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. (James 1:27)

By the definition James provides us above, pure religion is one of good deeds performed, not a belief system or an organization to instill such a belief system, much less is it all the trappings and extraneous paraphernalia that undergird religion. As even a cursory study of history will show that over time religious organizations lose their integrity and fractionate and new ones arise to take their place, and why not? None of them has an innate claim to sanction. Underwriting much of this religious activity are folk afraid to stand on their two feet, afraid of unstructured freedom. Claiming God, they follow man; they want the comfort of knowing what to do, without personally having to figure it out. More than the freedom that is ours in Jesus Christ, what they want is security, even the everlasting arms of the Church. Whereas pure religion is the Golden Rule of compassionate living, impure religion is a crutch leading to closed minds, ritualistic behavior, and blind compulsions. Orthopraxy - *i.e.*, right deeds, not orthodoxy - *i.e.*, right creeds, is a truer indicator of the Nazarene Way.

Beyond good deeds performed, James saw humanity's potential to walk with God, to be blessed by God, and ultimately to:

. . . receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them which love him. (James 1.12)

M A R Y M A G D A L E N E

Picking our way through the welter of opposing claims about the Magdalene is no small task: in Catholic tradition, there is the fallen Mary, ever submissive to her "betters," ever repenting (thus "maudlin" a word deriving from her name, meaning effusively sentimental); also there is the feminist Mary, a usurper of male prerogatives, jealous for her gender; also, there is Scorsese's tattooed Mary, a lascivious temptress. Then, too, there's the enlightened, Gnostic Mary, "the one who knew the All." (The Egyptian goddess Isis was so termed.) According to this interpretation, when Jesus cast from Mary seven demons, she descended through the seven gates of the underworld before being reborn the initiatrix of sacramental ecstasy. Then, as an avatar of the divine feminine, as the crescent moon rising from the sea to the stars, Mary, through a Gnostic bridal chamber rite presumably carries souls aloft to the apotheosis of divine self-realization. Showered with extravagant praise, the Magdalene has been titled "the gate of heaven," "refuge of sinners," "ark of the Covenant," "second Eve," "the Holy Grail."

But terms meant to demean are also hurled at her, such as "plaiter of hair," euphemistically, a prostitute. It is enough to cause one to exclaim: "will the real Mary Magdalene please stand up?"

This we know, making Mary Magdalene out to be some sort of goddess is to miss the point entirely, that at every turn the imagery regarding her is not pagan but fits comfortably

within the monotheistic tradition. She was worshipful, not worshiped. This we can assert for now, that Mary Magdalene symbolizes the human search for the Divine, even as Jesus symbolizes the Divine search for humanity, and it would seem that the both found in each other what they were looking for.

Along with James, the Magdalene, though she was one of the Nazarene movement's key personalities, yet she is missing *in toto* from *Acts*. As for the canonical accounts, why is it like extracting teeth to pull from them a coherent story about her? Whether by inadvertent omission or by design, the story line is so scrambled that her relationship with Jesus is effectively obscured. Only by conflating the canonicals can we restore to any degree the true state of affairs, yet the composite picture formed thereby remains problematical. For instance, trying to account for anointing scenes which differ in time, place, and circumstance, yet curiously overlapping in coincidental detail. Thus *John's* anointing scene, chapter 12, involved Mary of Bethany in her brother Lazarus' home six days before Jesus' crucifixion, whereas in *Mark*, chapter 14, and *Matthew*, chapter 26, it is an unidentified woman who anoints Jesus in "the house of Simon the Leper" two days before. *Luke*, chapter 7, has an unidentified penitent anointing Jesus, but this happened much earlier in his career, this time, however, "in the house of Simon the Pharisee." In *Matthew* and *Mark*, it was Jesus' feet which were anointed, whereas in *Luke* and *John*, it was his head. Though agreeing in no other particular, *Luke* and *Mark* agree word-for-word that an "alabaster jar of ointment" was used. In none of the canonicals is the woman doing the anointing identified as "the Magdalene." True, *Luke* refers to her by that name in chapter 8, but in another context, as one "out of whom went seven demons." So which, if any, of these was one of the three who stood at the foot of Jesus' cross? Were we to conclude that they were all one-and-the-same individual, how then do we resolve apparent contradictions baffling even to scholars who refer to this as "the muddle of the Marys?" Why all the convoluted reticence?

Was there something to hide? Having only the *New Testament* to go by, one supposition is as defensible or as indefensible as another. The Greek Orthodox Fathers distinguished three persons: the penitent of *Luke* 7:36-50; Martha's sister, *Luke* 10:38-42 and *John* 11; and Mary Magdalene. Protestants, however, generally accede to there having been only two distinct persons, Mary of Bethany and the penitent of *Luke* chapter 7. As for the Latin Fathers of the Catholic Church, they are on record as declaring the three one. Such was the position of Pope Gregory I in 591 AD. There matters rested for many, long centuries, that is, until quite recently when *MS Pepys 2498* confirmed the traditional Catholic position in this matter that Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany are one and the same person.

FROM WHENCE COMETH THE TITTLE "MAGDALENE"?

What does this word "Magdalene" mean? Over this question, a three-way split of opinion exists. Some theologians associate this title with a fishing village southwest of the Sea of Tiberias on the flank of Mt. Arbel called Magdala, (*Matthew 15:39*), a transliteration from the Greek, the Hebrew of which is Migdal meaning tower as in *Joshua 19:8: Migdal-el*, "the tower of God." It could stand for any raised platform as in *Jeremiah 8:4*, where it is translated as "pulpit" but more commonly it was applied to various fortified cities within Israel. As one theory goes, in Migdal Nunaiya "the Tower of Fish" (the name being derived from a fish drying operation), there was a woman, named Mary, who met Jesus on the one occasion we know of that he journeyed there, and subsequently followed him to Jerusalem. Thus, as one from Magdala, she became known ever afterward as "Magdalene," which is to say, she was "of Magdala." One little problem with this explanation: were she the same Mary as was the sister of Martha, whose brother was Lazarus, then it would appear that she was from Bethany in Judea, not from Magdala in Galilee. Another consideration: if she were the same woman as anointed Jesus in *Luke*, chapter 7, then she must have known him well before he went to Magdala, inasmuch as this anointing took place before he went north.

Moving on then to a second explanation: certain other scholars have said that Mary was called "Magdalene" because of the seductive arranging of her hair:

Dr. Lightfoot, finding in some of the Talmudists' writings that Mary Magdalene signified Mary the plaiter of hair, thinks it applicable to her, she having been noted, in the days of her iniquity and infamy, for that plaiting of hair which is opposed to modest apparel. (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*)

Astonishing, really, that anyone would paste a woman with a term of opprobrium, a euphemism for an adulteress, passing this off as an acceptable explanation for her title and resorting to Jesus' and the Nazarenes' sworn enemy, the Talmud, for support of this position! Though a distinguished scholar, Lightfoot is playing fast and loose with the language. On linguistic grounds alone, his suggestion is most dubious in that the underlying Aramaic expression, *magadla nshaya*, a woman's hairdresser, is not even a near fit. He is simply grasping at straws. In dealing condescendingly with the Magdalene, Lightfoot was hardly alone. Over a thousand years before, in a famous address (or infamous, depending on one's point of view), Pope Gregory the Great (540-604 AD), drew a strong connection between demonic oppression and the Magdalene's surmised sinfulness. In his Easter homily of 591 AD, he stated:

She whom Luke calls the sinful woman, whom John calls Mary, we believe to be the Mary from whom seven devils were ejected according to Mark. And what did these seven devils signify, if not all the vices? . . . It is clear, brothers, that the woman previously used the unguent to perfume her flesh in forbidden acts.

Notice how Gregory says "it is clear, brothers" at the very point his argument is least clear. So ingrained is this assumption that few Church communicants are aware that no scriptural basis exists for saying that the Magdalene had been a prostitute. In 1969 the Second Vatican Council, in an attempt to make amends, removed from her title "penitent," also removed from the liturgical calendar for her feast day the traditional reading, *Luke*, chapter 7. Yet old stereotypes die hard. Going where no reputable scholar would go, movie producer, Mel Gibson, in his "Passion" identified the woman taken in adultery in *John 8* as being the Magdalene and the late Pope, having been granted an advance screening, is alleged to have said, "it is as it was." No, it isn't "as it was." Not at all. It is as the Church's misanthropic, hierarchical leadership has long misrepresented it as being. Had the Magdalene indeed been an adulteress, as charged, it would not matter, God's grace suffices. What is happening here, however, is a concerted effort to reduce her stature by dredging up an invented past. On this basis, theologians, various ones through the centuries, such as Augustine of Hippo, have laid upon the Magdalene the claim that she had to subject herself to the apostles so as to help her overcome her sinful nature. Or they would say that Jesus let Thomas touch him, whereas he forbade the Magdalene to do so because she was abjectly sinful in a way that Thomas was not. But this "touch me not" verse is entirely absent in *MS Pepys 2498*. But here is the clincher: in *MS Pepys 2498*, the Magdalene is converted in chapter 31, while the incident involving the anonymous woman taken in adultery doesn't take place until chapter 58. Were the adulterous lady really the Magdalene, then she must have done some serious backsliding after her conversion, only to be restored to everyone's good graces just in time for the Passion. Nonsense.

Moving on, let us seek a third explanation, for if Mary hailed from Bethany, then she was not from Magadan, an obscure fishing village north of Galilee. Rather than a place name, "Magdalene" is the title Jesus conferred upon her, its Hebrew meaning being "elevated" – for when everyone else was putting her down, Jesus was lifting her up, setting her on the King's royal highway. The elevated position of the Magdalene in the *Nazarene Narrative Gospel* should be a wake-up call, hopefully, to reconsider the role Jesus envisioned for feminine leadership as the following quote from *Micah* suggests: "Magdalene" does not mean "from Magdala," a Galilean fishing village, but its Hebrew meaning is "elevated," a suitable title for one whom Jesus elevated to be the apostles' apostle. This epitaph for the Magdalene derives not from a place name taken from an obscure fishing village, nor was it a scarlet badge of shame; rather, as the following quote from *Micah* suggests, it was a title of profound and prophetic significance:

In that day, saith YHVH will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her

that I have afflicted; and I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation: and YHVH shall reign over them in mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou O tower of the flock (*Magdal-eder*), the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion; the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem. (*Micah 4:6-8*)

What set the Magdalene apart from all others is that she loved Jesus with all her heart and wasn't afraid to show it. Whereas some had scoffed at her for "wasting" expensive ointment on Jesus, Jesus made a point of saying that her deed should be remembered in perpetuity. No idle gesture was this for the Magdalene stood by Jesus after all the rest had fled. Truly, she is deserving of the sobriquet, "O tower of the flock." No wonder she was the first person he chose to reveal himself to on rising from death to life. No wonder his commissioning her to tell his apostles that he had risen, for in this he made her *de facto* apostle to the apostles. No wonder Jesus upbraided his disciples for their unbelief, for they dismissed her report to them out-of-hand. Even then the apostles never could quite accept that Jesus would have elevated a mere woman above themselves. That may explain why the beloved disciple's gospel was not utilized early on, for evidently neither Peter or most of the other apostles were ready to see patrilineal Judaism set on its ear.

Among the last to leave the cross and the earliest to the grave site, the Magdalene gave good evidence as to who was her all. Though she conversed with angels in the garden of Gethsemene, this was not a matter of consequence to her; all she wanted was to know what had been the disposition of the body of her Lord. As she stood without the empty sepulcher weeping, a voice said to her, "Mary." It is this same voice which each will hear who is called to the heavenly marriage feast. By reason of her single-minded devotion, Mary has come to epitomize in idealized form more than just her gender but the entire community of faith which says "Come, Lord Jesus, Come!"

From whence came the term "Magdalene" if not from Jesus, for who else would have been so bold or so insightful as to take a poor, afflicted woman out of whom came seven demons, and apply to her such an honorific title? Jesus wanted this woman to exemplify the transformative power of God's redeeming grace and if it takes 2000 years for his followers to follow him in this, then so be, his judgment stands. Jesus said that the Magdalene's devotion to him would be spoken of wherever the Gospel went in all the world. So shall it ever be.

D A U G H T E R O F Z I O N

Hailing from Bethany, a town but a mile from Jerusalem, Mary was probably witness to Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Representationally speaking, she was the Daughter of Zion. Consequentially, the appropriateness of applying *Zechariah 9:9* to her:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion;
Shout O daughter of Jerusalem:
behold thy king cometh unto thee:
he is just, and having salvation;
lowly, and riding upon an ass,
and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.

BRIDE OF CHRIST

Like the arm of the bridegroom over the bride, so is my yoke over those who know me. (Odes of Solomon 42:8)

Just as James represented Jesus' family, the house of David, the *Desposyni*, so Mary representationally was God's archetypal Bride. The day when Bride and Bridegroom will consummate their marriage approaches:

Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. . . . Blessed are they who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. *(Revelation 19:7-8, 9)*

Mary's destiny was bound up with Jesus'. Thus, paraphrasing Paul, when Jesus was crucified, the Magdalene, who was standing at the foot of his cross, through identification, was crucified with him. When Jesus was buried, she, a "bearer of myrrh," through identification, was buried with him, having been baptized into his death. When Jesus arose from death to life, she, through identification, arose with him in newness of life. Thereafter the life she lived was not her own but his in her for she, through perfect identification, had presented herself a holy sacrifice, acceptable unto God. Through this fellowship of sufferings, she found consolation. No longer conformed to the world, but transformed by the renewing of her mind, she knew in a living way what was the good and acceptable will of God.

THE CRY OF THE PENITENT

*My heart was cloven and its flower appeared;
and grace sprang up in it:
and it brought forth fruit to the Lord,
for the Most High clave my heart by His Holy Spirit
and searched my affection towards Him:
and filled me with His love.*

*And His opening of me became my Salvation;
and I ran in His way in His peace,
even in the way of truth:
from the beginning and even to the end
I acquired His knowledge:
and I was established upon the rock of truth,
where He had set me up:
and speaking waters touched my lips
from the fountain of the Lord without grudging:
and I drank and was inebriated with the living water that doth not die;
and my inebriation was not one without knowledge,
but I forsook vanity and turned to the Most High my God,
and I was enriched by His bounty,
and I forsook the folly which is diffused over the earth;
and I stripped it off and cast it from me:
and the Lord renewed me in His raiment,
and possessed me by His light,
and from above He gave me rest in incorruption;
and I became like the land which blossoms
and rejoices in its fruits:
and the Lord was like the Sun
shining on the face of the land;
He lightened my eyes,
and my face received the dew;
and my nostrils enjoyed
the pleasant odour of the Lord;
and He carried me to His Paradise;
ere is the abundance of the pleasure of the Lord;
and I worshipped the Lord on account of his glory;
and I said, Blessed, O Lord,
are they who are planted in thy land!
and those who have a place in thy Paradise;
and they grow by the fruits of thy trees.*

*And they have changed from darkness to light.
Behold! all thy servants are fair,
who do good works, and turn away from wickedness
to the pleasantness that is thine:
and they have turned back the bitterness
of the trees from them, when they were planted in thy land!
and those who have a place in thy Paradise;
and they grow by the fruits of thy trees.
And they have changed from darkness to light.
Behold! all thy servants are fair, who do good works,
and turn away from wickedness to the pleasantness that is thine:
and they have turned back the bitterness of the trees from them,
when they were planted in thy land;
and everything became like a relic of thyself,
and a memorial for ever of thy faithful works.
For there is abundant room in thy Paradise,
and nothing is useless therein:
I am altogether filled with fruit;
glory be to thee, O God,
the delight of Paradise for ever. Halleluiah.*

(Odes of Solomon, 11)

DID THE MAGDALENE PRODUCE A GOSPEL ACCOUNT?

As does no other gospel text, the *Nazarene Gospel Narrative* makes explicit who Mary Magdalene was. No incidental figure was she; rather, Mary was the penitent who had washed Jesus' feet with her tears; she was the one from whom Jesus had cast out seven demons, who, once freed from her affliction, joined Jesus' entourage; also, she was the one who anointed Jesus beforehand for burial. Also made explicit is that Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany were one and the same person. In other words, Martha was her sister and Lazarus, her brother. The Magdalene was the one of the three Marys keeping vigil at the cross. She helped prepare Jesus' body for burial and later was the first to discover the empty tomb. She was the one in the garden to whom our resurrected Lord first appeared. Moreover, and most relevant to the current inquiry, Mary Magdalene was the Beloved Disciple. It is not that the other disciples were not loved, or less loved. It is just that this was her title, and, most

relevant to this study, I am asserting that she was either the original author or, one of the original authors of what we call “the Fourth Gospel,” otherwise called the *Gospel of John*.

A FAMILY ACCOUNT

A peculiar fact needing to be accounted for is the total lack of references to the Fourth Gospel by Church Fathers before 180 AD. Some scholars say that this is evidence that it didn't exist until then. But left unexplained is who could have written so long after the fact so poignant, so unique a composition, so filled with telling details, could have come to be. Yet "Orthodox" or Catholic" Christianity was unaccountably slow to accept it. The first use of *John's Gospel* that we know of was by the Gnostic, Heracleon, (d. 180 AD). There is a mystery here to be solved.

Decidedly more intimate than the synoptic gospels, this gospel is in some respects more a *private* memoir than a public accounting of Jesus' ministry, featuring as it does one-on-one meetings such as with Nicodemus or with the Samaritan woman by the well. Its detailed recollection of Jesus' passion is more personal, more poignant. Not only does it hone in on Jesus' Judean, not his Galilean, ministry, but it also hones in on a particular family – that consisting of three siblings: Martha, Mary and Lazarus. Plausibly it is the family witness of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary as recorded by the apostle John. Or perhaps it is the Magdalene's personal witness. Whose voice is to be heard? On grammatical grounds alone, we can say that it's not the voice of the John who wrote the *Apocalypse*. He was noted for his incorrect Greek whereas this is beautifully correct. Nor is it the voice of the author of the *Epistles of John* which contain vague resemblances to *John's* prologue but that prologue is not part of proto-John. Had Lazarus been its author, he would have been credited, just as *Luke* and *Mark* were credited, even though they were not apostles.

Perhaps in part out of gratitude for restoring her brother Lazarus to life six days before the Passover, the Magdalene anointed Jesus with oil worth 300 denarii. In doing this, unintentionally she raised the stakes even higher because this so angered Judas Iscariot that it led to his betraying Jesus' location to the authorities in return for 30 denarii – that being the tithe on 300 denarii. Was this just a curious coincidence? The question hinges on what had angered him. Only *John's Gospel*, (the *Magdalene's Gospel*, if you will) informs us that Judas Iscariot's was a thief who had been filching from the money-bag. Framing the crime scene:

1. Judas kept the money box.
2. Judas was pilfering from the money box.
3. The betrayal was conceived after a dispute involving 300 denarii.
4. Judas negotiated for thirty denarii (pieces of silver) to perform the betrayal.
5. Judas threw the money obtained from the betrayal into the temple.

The flask of perfume worth 300 denarii was part of the monetary holdings of the group. Note that Judas knew the exact amount the perfume was worth when Mary poured it on Jesus. The loss of the flask of perfume resulted in a 300 denarii loss to the group. However the tithes due on the flask would've been 30 denarii. The moneychanging fee for converting the flask contents into money was ten percent or 30 denarii. Judas in anticipation of obtaining the 30 denarii moneychanging fee for himself advanced himself 30 denarii by pilfering from the money box that contained the tithes to the temple.

With the flask of perfume consumed, Judas was going to be 30 denarii short on the temple tithes that were due at Passover. Thus Mary Magdalene's action which prepared Jesus for burial was also the initial event leading to the betrayal. Somehow, Judas had to obtain 30 denarii before Passover and deliver it to the temple. Otherwise, as the keeper of the money box the temple authorities would've discovered that Judas had embezzled the 30 denarii from the tithes. (Jerry Clontz)

Though this is a subjective judgment – let us call it “informed speculation” – once some of the later, churchly overlayment is stripped away from canonical *John*, in its delicacy, in its sensibility, one can hear the voice of a woman, perhaps even that of the cultured Magdalene who, as one who hailed from a wealthy, distinguished family, would have had the resources to produce a written memoir as well as a translation for Gentiles. But most important of all, she was an eyewitness. It is only this, her Memoir, if that is what it is, which allows us to identify the proximate cause of Jesus' crucifixion. *John 10:40* records what no other gospel records, that Jesus took refuge across the Jordan River where John the Forerunner first baptized. It further records, to his disciples' chagrin, his leaving that haven in what is currently modern-day Jordan so as to return to Bethany which was only a mile from Jerusalem, where his sworn enemies were plotting his demise. This Jesus did that he might raise the Magdalene's brother, Lazarus, from death to life. It was this act that led Caiaphas, the high priest, in a fit of jealous rage to prophesy that one man should die for the nation.

Perhaps out of gratitude for restoring her brother Lazarus to life six days before the Passover, the Magdalene anointed Jesus with oil worth 300 denarii, no small fortune. In doing this, however, unintentionally she raised the stakes even higher because this so angered Judas Iscariot that it led him to betray Jesus' location to the authorities in return for 30 denarii – an amount exactly equal to a tithe for the 300 denarii which the Magdalene had expended on Jesus. Was this just a curious coincidence or was there a reason?

While in a larger sense, Jesus came to die for the sins of the world, the record is clear: he placed his life on the line for the Magdalene and for her family and that this crucially influenced the timing of his sacrifice.

Most relevant for the current study is the near-complete absence of the expression "the disciple whom Jesus loved" from the Magdalene sections of *MS 2498*. In its stead is the name "John." Is it possible that John, the son of Zebedee, was not the beloved disciple? Neither at the Last Supper (*John* chapter 12), nor in the courtyard of the high priest (*John*, chapter 18), nor at the empty tomb (*John* ch. 20), nor with the risen Christ on the seashore (*John* chapter 21) is he so described in *MS 2498*. Only at the Cross *John* chapter 19, where exists a real possibility of confusion in transmission or translation, is he so identified.

The question arises, why would anyone add this title if it weren't there originally? It's not as if John were unworthy of it. After all, he is portrayed as having been at Jesus' right hand at the Last Supper and, in the community of believers, is often named with Peter and James in a leadership position. Certainly he is worthy of the honor. But what if it was a later addition? What would motivated such an addition? If less than conclusive, there is persuasive evidence indicating that it was the Magdalene's title, which the Church assigned to him to keep from her. It is true to fact to say that the Magdalene, and women like her, played an active role in ministry. It is true to fact that such women later became an embarrassment to an organization which defined leadership – and not just the administrative variety, but real spiritual leadership – as being exclusively male. Not just a male prerogative but a male characteristic. This attitude is the basis for cover-up, literally. For instance, in the apocryphal *Acts of Philip* (which is of a Gnostic character), Jesus advises Mary:

“As for you Mary, change your clothing and outward appearance: reject everything which from the outside suggests a woman.”

Given the prejudices of her times, it has been suggested that for Mary to have acted in any capacity outside the usual domestic one, she needed a male "covering." To that end, some have claimed she turned to the apostle John to be her "head covering," her veil of anonymity. Did the Magdalene internalize this attitude, accepting second-class citizenship as proper and as the norm, or did she merely accede to it as a necessary evil? Then again, maybe neither one nor the other but it was imposed after the fact by the Church. (At least, those are the reasonable alternatives that I am aware of.)

The idea of the Magdalene as being the author who stands behind John's gospel is recent, the first person to publicly posit this being Jusino who, in 1998, in an article posted to the internet and titled "Mary Magdalene: Author of the Fourth Gospel?" He takes as his starting point the scholarship of Raymond F. Brown who is generally recognized as America's foremost Catholic biblical scholar. As have other scholars, Brown's thinking on the question of authorship has evolved. Backing off from his initial assessment in 1966 that the author of canonical *John* was the apostle John, in 1979 he adopted, instead, the stance that

there was little evidence of Johannine authorship. Positing a three stage development, he saw the first as being the contribution of an anonymous Beloved Disciple who was personally known to Jesus, as well as an eyewitness to the events recounted; the second stage he attributed to an unidentified evangelist; and the third stage to a redactor.

Of this final stage, Jusino wrote:

. . . an important assertion of mine is that the redactor carefully concealed the identity of Mary Magdalene as the Beloved Disciple, by referring to her only as an anonymous disciple. As the redactor reworked the seven passages cited above [John 1:35-40; 13:23-26; 18:15-16; 19:25-27; 20:1-11; 21:7; 21:21-24] which refer to the Beloved Disciple, he simply changed any reference to Mary Magdalene by substituting it with an anonymous reference to the Beloved Disciple or to "another disciple." For most of the document this was fairly easy to do and the resulting text appeared to be congruous. Instead of seeing the Magdalene's name, the reader is simply presented with an anonymous male disciple.

Removing references to Mary Magdalene from most of the story was easy. However, in the course of his work, the redactor was confronted with a problem. The tradition placing Mary Magdalene at the foot of the Cross and at the Empty Tomb Sunday morning was too strong to deny. The Magdalene's presence at both these events was common knowledge among most early Christian communities. (This is evidenced by the fact that all three of the other New Testament Gospels report her presence at these events.) The redactor could not simply omit any reference to the Magdalene at the Crucifixion or any reference to her as a primary witness to the Resurrection. However, the redactor still wanted to establish the Beloved Disciple as the founder of his community and as an eyewitness to these major events in the work of salvation. The way he could still maintain that the founder of his community was an eyewitness to the events in the Gospel even though he inexplicably fails to reveal his identity (John 21:24).

At this point the redactor probably asked himself a question very similar to this one: How can I suppress the knowledge of Mary Magdalene having been the founder of our community without being so obvious as to remove her from the Crucifixion/Resurrection accounts, with which most Christians are already familiar?

The redactor's solution to this problem was quite simple. In those two events where he could not deny the presence of the Beloved Disciple, he would rework the text so as to make it appear as if Mary Magdalene and the Beloved Disciple were two different people appearing simultaneously in the same place, at the same time. Consequently, Mary Magdalene and the male Beloved Disciple appear together in the Fourth Gospel in only two passages - 19:25-27 (at the foot of the Cross) and 20: 1-11 (at the Empty Tomb on Sunday morning).

Isn't that interesting? And it is precisely at these two points that we find some major structural inconsistencies within the text of the Fourth Gospel. Brown discusses the inconsistencies in both of these passages. (That

shows that I'm not just reading inconsistencies into passages that have none.) Notably, Brown finds no such structural defects in any of the other passages which contain references to the Beloved Disciple.

Let us consider one of Brown's "structural inconsistencies." *John 19:25* begins with three Marys listed as standing by the Cross but not the apostle John. Thus Jesus turned and addressed his mother, about "the disciple whom he loved standing nearby." One might on first blush assume he meant the Magdalene, that is, until reading further along to learn that John was also there. Why was he not listed in the first place?

If Jusino is right in his supposition that the Magdalene was originally the one being addressed, not John, then there are important implications. For one, if the Magdalene was "family," then what Jesus said to his mother was, in essence, this: here is your daughter-in-law and to the Magdalene: here is your mother-in-law. Preparing Jesus' body for burial was a family responsibility and so, for that matter, so was caring for Jesus' mother. Also, as the Magdalene was a woman of financial means, it is more plausible that Jesus would advise his mother to move into the Magdalene's home which was just a mile or so away, rather than into John's home, which, if he had one, would probably have been back in Galilee. As the text reads: "From that time on, this disciple took her into his home." Or was it originally "her home"? Since we know that mother Mary was present at Pentecost in Jerusalem 50 days later, it's likely that she had been staying all the while near at hand to Jerusalem with the Magdalene rather than spending days trudging back and forth to and from Galilee.

In the Fourth Gospel, there is a curious juxtaposing of the apostles John and Peter and when this occurs, of the two, John always comes off on top. When they have a foot race to the Empty Tomb, John wins. When they both see the grave clothes, John understands the implications first and believes. When they both espy Jesus from afar in the fishing boat, John is the first to recognize who it is. Earlier, when they both go to the high priest's home, John is the one who gains them entrance. At the Last Supper, John is closest to Jesus and Peter has to go through John to get a question to Jesus answered. What if the Magdalene is substituted for John? In that case, rather than there being two competing personalities, which in itself is a matter of no real significance, there are two opposing policies: Peter's upholding male dominance; and the Magdalene's upholding Jesus' empowerment of women.

In light of all else we know about the Church, it is plausible enough that the Church Fathers were aware of this gospel but, because they knew it had been written by or authorized by a woman, they assiduously avoided it until the mid-2nd century when they rewrote it, attributing their newly-minted creation to the apostle John. If this supposition is correct, it would go along way toward explaining what the great cover-up with respect to the Magdalene was all about – a woman so forward as to write Scripture! I can imagine that purloining the Mag-

dalene's literary heritage probably would have made Church authorities a bit queasy, especially if they were caught in the act. How would they or civil authorities ever justify keeping women in subjection, or for that matter, husbands their wives, if it were widely known that Mary Magdalene wrote scripture? Why the precedent of it! Were notions of female competency to become common knowledge, it could spark a revolution!

Yes, the Magdalene was the beloved disciple. It's not as if the apostle John or the other apostles were unbeloved. It's simply that this was her title.

In the canonical version of this gospel, chapter 11, verse 3, is found the Greek expression *hon phileis*, meaning "the one whom you love," which was said with reference to Lazarus. Then in chapter 12, a meal is hosted by Lazarus in his home; then in chapter 13, verse 23, there's a second reference to a beloved disciple (not named) and another meal. Anyone not acquainted with the synoptic gospels, might reasonably assume on reaching this point in the text that this was another reference to Lazarus but the canonical text later identifies it as the apostle John. Was this how this gospel originally read or has tampering occurred?

Let us consider on the one hand that Lazarus was a high status person residing near Jerusalem known to the High Priest Caiphas, whereas John the son of Zebedee was a youthful Galilean fisherman. Which one would likely have had access to the courtyard of the High Priest? Also, who was best in a position to have taken Jesus' mother into his home? Lazarus, a man of means whose home was about a mile away, or John whose home, if he owned one at all, would likely have been in Galilee? Yet the Gospel account reads: "From that time on, this disciple took her into his home." Since we know from Acts that Mother Mary was present at Pentecost fifty days later, it is more likely that she was staying in or near Jerusalem rather than making the arduous trek back and forth to Galilee.

Most telling that the Beloved Disciple who wrote the Fourth Gospel was not John, the son of Zebedee, is that nothing to which John was a primary eyewitness is included. As one of the three apostle of Jesus' inner circle, John accompanied Jesus up the Mount of Transfiguration. He was with him when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemene, and he was present when Jesus resurrected Jarius's daughter but none of this made it into the Fourth Gospel. Meanwhile many scenes to which John was not privy are included, particularly those having to do with Mary Magdalene, Lazarus's sister. Yet the Fourth Gospel's postscript, presumably appended after his demise, claims this Gospel to be the Beloved Disciple's "testimony." Further, the postscript (21:23) mentions the saying went abroad that the Beloved Disciple "should not die." From whence arose such an expectation? I would suggest it came from Lazarus's having died and been raised to life, after which some supposed that he would live to see Jesus' return. I would further suggest that it was his experience of

being restored to life which gave Lazarus the insight to see Jesus as “the Resurrection and the Life,” one of this gospel’s key theological insights.

The only scene from north of Galilee included in the Fourth Gospel is the feast in Cana. If Mary and Lazarus had taken Mother Mary into their home, then she was probably their source. But why was Lazarus not part of Jesus’ traveling entourage? This may have had to do with a family affliction. As one biblical scholar, Ben Witherington, has discerned:

Scholars of course have often noted how the account of the anointing of Jesus in Bethany as recorded in Mk. 14.3-11 differs from the account in Jn. 12.1-11, while still likely being the same story or tradition. Perhaps the most salient difference is that Mark tells us that the event happens in the home of Simon the Leper in Bethany, while Jn. 12 indicates it happens in the house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany. Suppose for a moment however that Simon the Leper was in fact the father of these three siblings. Suppose that Lazarus himself, like his father, had also contracted the dread disease and succumbed to it (and by the way we now know for sure that the deadly form of Hanson’s disease did exist in the first century A.D.). Now this might well explain why it is that none of these three siblings seem to be married. Few have remarked about the oddness of this trio of adults not having families of their own, but rather still living together, but it is not at all odd if the family was plagued by a dread disease that made them unclean on an ongoing or regular basis. It also explains why these folks never travel with Jesus’ other disciples and they never get near this family until that fateful day recorded in Jn. 11 when Jesus raised and healed Lazarus. Jesus of course was not put off by the disease and so had visited the home previously alone (Lk. 10.38-42). But other early Jews would certainly not have engaged in betrothal contracts with this family if it was known to be a carrier of leprosy. (“Was Lazarus the Beloved Disciple?”)

Luke chapter 7 tells of an anonymous “women in the city, which was a sinner” who washed Jesus’ feet with her tears. And Jesus is depicted as saying that “her sins which are many are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.”

Compare this then with the same incident as related in *MS Pepys 2498* which explicitly identifies this women as afflicted with “seven fiends,” and giving her name as Mary Magdalene. It goes on to depict Jesus as saying: “I tell you many sins have been forgiven her. And therefore I love her much by reason that the one to whom most is forgiven is most loved.” The emphasis here is no longer on her feelings but on his. Is it possible that the Magdalene was the Beloved Disciple and that the canonical account was rewritten to disguise this fact?

Preparing Jesus’ body for burial was a family responsibility. That the Magdalene was allowed to participate in this sacred duty shows that in some sense she was family. But how did she get to be family? I cannot answer that. Were they married or betrothed? I do not think so. But were they in modern parlance, an item? Maybe. This I do know, the Church

while forward in asserting that Jesus was the Son of God, recoils in horror as if scandalized from the corollary that he was also every inch a man. While giving lip service to Jesus' humanity, the idea of Jesus' having formed a special relationship with Mary, even if entirely on a spiritual plane, was wholly unacceptable.

Is it possible that John, the son of Zebedee, was not the beloved disciple but that Lazarus and Mary were? Neither at the Last Supper (*John* chapter 12), nor in the courtyard of the high priest (*John*, chapter 18), nor at the empty tomb (*John* ch. 20), nor with the risen Christ on the seashore (*John* chapter 21) is John so described in *MS Pepys 2498*. Only at the Cross, *John chapter 19*, where exists a real possibility of confusion in transmission or translation, is he so identified.

DEEDS OF JAMES THE JUST

His family

Then there was James, who was called the Lord's brother, for he too was named Joseph's son. (Eusebius)

Is this [Jesus] not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James? (Mark 6:3)

And Jude, whose letter it is true is of but a few lines, yet filled with encouraging words of heavenly grace, said, "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James." (Origen, *Jude 1*)

John's Baptism

Behold, the mother of the Lord and his brothers said to him [Jesus], "John the Baptist baptizes for the remission of sins; let us go and be baptized by him." (*Gospel of the Hebrews*)

The Nazarite lifestyle

He [James] has been universally called the Just from the time of our Savior down to the present day [c. 170 AD]. For many have borne the name of James; but this one was consecrated from his mother's womb. He drank neither wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat meat. No razor came near his head, nor did he anoint himself with oil, and he did not go to the [Roman] baths a place of debauchery]. (Hegesippus, quoted by Eusebius)

James wore no second tunic, but used only a linen cloak,... For it was John and James and James, these three, who walked in this [the Nazarite] way of life: the two sons of Zebedee and James the son of Joseph and brother of the Lord. (Eusebius)

He [James] alone enjoyed the privilege of entering the holy of holies, since, indeed, he did not wear woolen, but only linen clothes, and went into the Temple alone and prayed on behalf of the People, so that his knees were reputed to have acquired the callousness of a camel's knees. (Jerome)

But we find that he [James] also exercised the Priesthood according to the ancient Priesthood. . . . To James alone was it permitted to enter the Holy of Holies once a year, because he was a Nazarite and connected to the priest-hood. Many before me have reported this of him -- Eusebius, Clement and others. He was also allowed to wear the [priestly] mitre on his head as the aforementioned trustworthy persons have testified in the same historical writings. (Epiphanius)

Integrity

Because of his exceedingly great Justice, he was called the Just [*Dikaios*] and *Oblias*, which signifies in Greek, "Bulwark of the People" and "Righteous" [*Dikaiosune*], in accordance with what the prophets declare concerning him. (Hegesippus / Eusebius)

And once during a drought, he lifted his hands to Heaven and prayed, and at once Heaven sent rain . . . Thus they no longer called him by his name, but his name was rather, "the Just One." (Epiphanius)

The disciples said to Jesus, "We know that you will leave us. Who then will become our leader?" Jesus said unto them, "Whithersoever you are come, repair to James the righteous [for unto the righteous] were heaven and earth created." (*Gospel of Thomas*, Logion 12)

Jesus' post-resurrection appearances to James

He [Christ] was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that over five hundred brethren at once, ... After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. (*I Corinthians 15:5, 6, 7*)

Now the Lord, after he had given his linen clothes to the Servant of the Priest, went to James and appeared to him. For James had sworn that he would not eat bread from that hour in which he drank the Cup of the Lord until he should see him risen again from the dead. The Lord said, "Bring a table and bread." He took the bread, blessed it, and breaking it, gave it to James the Just, saying to him, "My brother, eat your bread, for the Son of Man is risen from among those that sleep." (*The Gospel of the Hebrews* as quoted by Jerome; *Of Illustrious men 2*)

To James the Just, to John, and Peter, did the Lord after his resurrection impart knowledge. These delivered it to the rest of the Apostles, and they to the Seventy, of whom Barnabas was one. (Clement / Eusebius)

Living in community in Jerusalem

This James, therefore, whom the ancients, on account of the excellence of his virtue, surnamed the Just, was the first that received the oversight of the summoned-out community at Jerusalem. But Clement, in the sixth book of his Institutions, represents it thus: "Peter, and James [son of Zebedee], and John after the ascension of our Savior, though they had been preferred by our Lord, did not contend for the honor, but chose James the Just as overseer in Jerusalem." (Eusebius)

Neither was there any among them who lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made to every man according to his need. (*Acts 4:35*)

Of Peter's miraculous release from prison

[Peter:] Go show these things [regarding the circumstances of his release] to James and the brethren. (Acts 12:17)

James and Paul

Then after three years I [Paul] went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain. And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

(Galatians 1:18-19; 2:9-10)

James' counsel regarding obliging Gentile believers to Mosaic observance

And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, "Except you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question. So, being sent on their way by the summoned-out community, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, reporting the conversation of the Gentiles; and they brought great joy to all the brethren. And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the summoned-out assembly and the apostles and the elders; and they rehearsed all that God had done with them. But some of the party of the Pharisees who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to charge them to keep the law of Moses." And the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter and when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: "Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of good tidings and believe. So God who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our forefathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they." Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had worked through them among the Gentiles. And after they had become silent, James answered, saying, "Men and brethren, listen to me: Simon has declared

how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. And to this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written: 'After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down: I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up: so that the rest of mankind may seek the LORD. Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,' So says the LORD who made these things known from the beginning of the world. Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole assembly, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas who was also named Barsabas and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

(Acts 15:1-22)

James advises Paul concerning a false rumor

And when we [Luke, Paul, and others] had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. On the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. When he had greeted them, he rehearsed one by one those things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry. And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all zealous for the law; but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs. What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may shave their heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but that you yourself also walk orderly and keep the Law. But as touching the Gentiles who believe, we have written and decided that you should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality." Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, entered the Temple to announce the expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.

(Acts 21: 17-26)

The circumstances surrounding James' martyrdom

The younger Ananus, who as we have said, had been appointed the High Priest, was of a rash temper and highly insolent. He was also of the party of the Sadducees, who were of all Jews most uncompromising, as we have observed, in executing judgment. Possessed with such a character,

Ananus thought that he had a favorable opportunity because Festus was dead and Albinus [the replacement procurator] was on the way. And so he convened the judges of the Sanhedrin and brought before them a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ.

(Josephus / Eusebius)

Josephus also in the 20th book of his Antiquities and Clement in the 7th of his Outlines mention that on the death of Festus who reigned on over Judaea, Albinus was sent by Nero as his successor. Before he had reached the province, Ananus the high priest, the youthful son of Ananus of the priestly class, taking advantage of the state of anarchy assembled a council and publicly tried to force James to deny that Christ is the Son of God. When he refused, Ananus ordered him to be stoned. Cast down from the pinnacle of the temple, his legs broken, but still half alive, and raising his hands to heaven, he said, "Lord, forgive them for they know not what they do." Then struck on the head by the club of a laundryman, such a club as laundrymen are accustomed to beat out clothes with, he died. James was buried near the temple from which he had been cast down. His tombstone with its inscription was well known until the siege of Titus and the end of Hadrian's reign. Some of our writers think he was buried on the Mount of Olives, but they are mistaken.

(Jerome)

So when many even of the ruling class believed [that Jesus was the Messiah], there was a commotion among the Jews, and scribes, and Pharisees, who said: "A little more and we shall have all the people looking for Jesus as the Messiah." They came, therefore, in a body to James, and said: "We beseech you, restrain the people: for they are gone astray in their opinions about Jesus as if he were the Christ. We entreat you to persuade all who have come hither for the day of the Passover, concerning Jesus. For we all accept what you say, as do all the people; since we, as well as all the people, bear you testimony that you are just, and show partiality to none. Therefore persuade the people not to entertain erroneous opinions concerning Jesus: for all the people, and we also accept what you say. Therefore take your stand upon the pinnacle of the Temple that you may be clearly visible on high and your words readily audible to the entire gathering, for because of the Passover all the tribes have gathered together and numbers of Gentiles too." So the aforesaid Scribes and the Pharisees made James stand on the Temple parapet and shouting to him, cried out, "O Just One, whose word we all ought to obey, since the people are led astray after Jesus, who was crucified, tell us what is meant by 'the door of Jesus?'" And he answered shouting out loudly, "Why do you ask me concerning the Son of Man? He is now sitting in Heaven at the right hand of the Great Power and he will come on the clouds of Heaven?" Many were convinced by these words and gloried in James' testimony, and cried forth, "Hosanna to the Son of David." Then again the Pharisees and scribes said to each other, "We erred in providing Jesus with such

testimony, but let us go up and cast him down, so they -- the people -- will be frightened and not believe in him." And they cried out saying "Oh! Oh! Even the Just One has gone astray!" -- fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah: " 'Let us remove the Just One, for he is unprofitable to us.' Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their works." So they went out and cast down the Just One, saying to one another, "Let us stone James the Just," and they began to stone him, since he had survived the fall. But he turned and fell to his knees, saying, "I beseech You, O Lord God and Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." While thus they were stoning him, one of the Priests of the sons of Rechab, the son of Rechabites, spoken of by Jeremiah the prophet, cried out, saying, "Stop what you are doing, the Just One is praying for you." And one among them, who was a fuller, took the club with which he beat out clothes and struck the Just One on the head. Thus, he suffered martyrdom, and they buried him on the spot by the temple, and his monument is still there by the temple. (Hegesippus/Eusebius)

Thus, even Simeon bar Cleophas, his cousin, who was standing not far away, said, "Stop, why are you stoning the Just One? Behold, he is praying the most wonderful prayers for you." (Jerome)

Afterwards James, the Lord's brother, whom of old the people of Jerusalem called "the Just" for his extraordinary virtue, being asked by the chief priests, and teachers of the Jews what he thought about Christ, and answering that He was the Son of God, was also stoned by them. (Eusebius)

Unable to endure any longer the testimony of the man, who through a lifetime of ascetic observance and piety was deemed by all men to be the most righteous, they slew him, using anarchy as an opportunity for power, since at that time Festus [Procurator 60-62] had died in Judea, leaving the province without governor or procurator. (Clement, quoted by Eusebius)

After James' martyrdom, the circumstances leading to the siege and fall of Jerusalem Vespasian, who gained distinction in the campaigns against the Jews, was proclaimed sovereign in Judea and received the title of Emperor from the armies there. Setting out immediately, therefore, for Rome, he entrusted the conduct of the war against the Jews to his son Titus. But the people of the community in Jerusalem had been commanded by a revelation vouchsafed to approved men there before the war, to leave the city and to dwell in a certain town of Perea [Transjordan] called Pella. (Eusebius)

And so great a reputation for Righteousness did this James have, that Flavius Josephus, who wrote the Antiquities of the Jews in twenty volumes, when wishing to exhibit the cause why the people suffered so great misfortunes that even the Temple was razed to the ground, said that these things happened to them in accordance with God's wrath for that which they did against

James the brother of Jesus who is called the Messiah. And the wonderful thing is, that, though he did not accept Jesus as Messiah, yet he gave testimony that the righteousness of James was so great; and he says that the people thought that they had suffered these things because of James. He ought to have said that the plot against Jesus was the reason why these catastrophes came upon the people, because they had killed the prophesied Messiah; however, though unconscious of it, he is not far from the truth when he says that these disasters befell the Jews to avenge James the Just for having put him to death, although he was a man of preeminent righteousness.

(Origen)

This same Josephus records the tradition that James was of such great Holiness and reputation among the people that the fall of Jerusalem was attributed to his death.

(Jerome)

So admirable a man, indeed, was James, and so celebrated among all for his Righteousness, that even the wiser part of the Jews were of the opinion that this was the cause of the immediate siege of Jerusalem, which happened to them for no other reason than the crimes against him.

(Eusebius)

James' successor, Symeon

After the martyrdom of James the Just on the same charge as the Lord, his paternal uncle's child Symeon the son of Clopas is next made overseer, who was put forward by all as the second in succession, being the Lord's cousin."

(Hegesippus)

It is said that those of the apostles and disciples of the Lord that were still living came together from all direction with those that were related to the Lord according to the flesh (for the majority of them were still alive) to take council as to who was worthy to succeed James. They all with one consent pronounced Symeon.

(Eusebius)

It might be safely reasonably assumed that Symeon was one of those who saw and heard the Lord, judging from the length of his life, and from the fact that the Gospel makes mention of Mary, the wife of Clopas, who was the father of Symeon. Under the emperor whose times we are now recording [Trajan], a persecution was stirred up against us in certain cities in consequence of a popular uprising. Certain of these heretics brought accusation against Symeon, the son of Clopas, on the ground that he was a son of David and a Christian; and thus he suffered martyrdom at the age of one hundred and twenty years, while Trajan was emperor and Atticus governor. He was tortured in various ways for many days, and astonished even the judge himself and his attendants in the highest degree, and finally he suffered a death similar to that of our Lord.

(Eusebius)

Symeon's successor, Justus

But when Symeon also had died in the manner described, a certain Jew by the name of Justus

succeeded to the seat of oversight in Jerusalem [98 AD?]. He was one of many thousands of the circumcision who at that time believed in Christ. (Eusebius)

Continuity of witness

But when this same Domitian had commanded that the descendants of David should be slain, an ancient tradition says that some of the heretics brought accusation against the descendants of Jude (said to have been a brother of the Saviour according to the flesh), on the ground that they were of the lineage of David and were related to Christ himself. Hegesippus relates these facts in the following words. "Of the family of the Lord there were still living the grandchildren of Jude, who is said to have been the Lord's brother according to the flesh. Information was given that they belonged to the family of David, and they were brought to the Emperor Domitian by the Evocatus. For Domitian feared the coming of Christ as Herod had also feared it. And he asked them if they were descendants of David, and they confessed that they were. Then he asked them how much property they had, or how much money they owned. And both of them answered that they had only nine thousand denarii, half of which belonged to each of them; and this property did not consist of silver, but of a piece of land which contained only thirty-nine acres, and from which they raised their taxes and supported themselves by their own labor." Then they showed their hands, exhibiting the hardness of their bodies and the callousness produced upon their hands by continuous toil as evidence of their own labor. And when they were asked concerning Christ and his kingdom, of what sort it was and where and when it was to appear, they answered that it was not a temporal nor an earthly kingdom, but a heavenly and angelic one, which would appear at the end of the world, when he should come in glory to judge the quick and the dead, and to give unto every one according to his works. Upon hearing this, Domitian did not pass judgment against them, but, despising them as of no account, he let them go, and by a decree put a stop to the persecution of the summoned-out community. But when they were released they led the communities, because they were witnesses and were also relatives of the Lord. And peace being established, they lived until the time of Trajan. . . . until the siege of the Jews, which took place under Adrian [132-135 AD], there were fifteen overseers ... , all of whom were said to be of Hebrew descent, and to have received the knowledge of Christ in purity, so that they were approved by those who were able to judge of such matters, and were deemed worthy of oversight. For their whole community consisted then of believing Hebrews who continued from the days of the apostles until the siege which took place at that time; in which siege the Jews, having again rebelled against the Romans, were conquered after severe battles. But since the oversight of the circumcision ceased at this time, it is proper to give here a list of their names from the beginning. The first then, was James, the so-called brother of the Lord; the second Symeon; the third, Justus; the fourth Zacchaeus; the fifth,

Tobias; the sixth, Benjamin; the seventh, John; the eighth, Matthias; the ninth, Philip; the tenth, Seneca; the eleventh Justus; the twelfth, Levi; the thirteenth, Ephres; the fourteenth, Joseph; and finally, the fifteenth, Judas. These are the overseers of Jerusalem that lived between the age of the apostles and the time referred to, all of them belonging to the circumcision.* (Eusebius)

*[These were not as Eusebius seems to suppose, successive monarchical bishops but elders of a deliberative, community body.]

The final struggle

For in the late Jewish war Bar Kochba, [his name signifying 'son of a Star'] the leader of the Jewish rebellion, commanded that Christians alone should be visited with terrible punishments unless they would deny and blaspheme Jesus Christ. (Eusebius / Hegesippus)

As the rebellion of the Jews at this time grew much more serious, Rufus, governor of Judea, after an auxiliary force had been sent him by the emperor, using their madness as a pretext, proceeded against them without mercy, and destroyed indiscriminately thousands of men and women and children. The war raged most fiercely in the eighteenth year of Adrian, at the city of Bithara, which was a very secure fortress, situated not far from Jerusalem. When the siege had lasted a long time, and the rebels had been driven to the last extremity by hunger and thirst, and the instigator of the rebellion had suffered his just punishment, the whole nation was prohibited from this time on by a decree, and by the commands of Adrian, from ever going up to the country about Jerusalem. For the emperor gave orders that they should not even see from a distance the land of their fathers. Such is the account of Aristo of Pella. And thus, when the city had been emptied of the Jewish nation and had suffered the total destruction of its ancient inhabitants, it was colonized by a different race, and the Roman city which subsequently arose changed its name and was called Aelia, in honor of the emperor Aelius Adrian. And the church there was now composed of Gentiles, the first one to assume the government of it after the oversight of the circumcision was Marcus. (Eusebius)

Until then, the community remained as a virgin, pure and uncorrupt . . . but when the sacred band of Apostles and the generation of those who with their own ears had been privileged to hear the Divine wisdom, in diverse ways had passed from the scene, then impious error arose through the folly of false teachers who, seeing that none of the apostles were left alive, shamefacedly proclaimed, in opposition to the preaching of the truth, "knowledge which is falsely so-called.

(Eusebius / Hegesippus)

