

Spong, *The Fourth Gospel*, Chapters 27-29
Wesley Advocates 23 July 2017

Introducing John's Story of Easter

JSS contrasts the synoptic-gospel writers' with the Johannine writer's understanding of resurrection. In what most obvious way do they differ?

According to JSS, Paul never intended to suggest a physical resuscitation. Instead, what does Paul describe?

What does Colossians tell us about resurrection? What does Romans tell us?

On p. 268, beginning in the second paragraph, Spong outlines significant changes amongst the Easter narratives. What are those big changes? How can we account for them? Distinguish amongst Mark's, Matthew's, and Luke's descriptions. Who introduces the corporeal resurrected Jesus? Please read and consider the footnote at bottom of p. 269.

In John, the Easter story appears in chapter 20. What is chapter 21?

John reports four resurrection stories. What have these to do with an octave?

Magdalene: Do Not Cling to What Is; Journey into What Can Be

What do we know about Mary Magdalene from the synoptic gospels? What does the term *magdalene* mean? How does that meaning inform Spong's reading of John's Easter story?

What is the confusion about Mary Magdalene and Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus?

What do we know about Mary Magdalene before this chapter in John?

Why is Mary Magdalene alone at the tomb? Why weeping? What does she report to Peter and the beloved disciple?

That she comes to the tomb to claim (or to remove) Jesus's body indicates what about the relationship between Mary Magdalene and Jesus? Why would church fathers seek to denigrate this woman?

Whom does Mary Magdalene identify as a gardener? What does she discover about this interlocutor?

See p. 282, paragraph 2: what are these *I do not's* Spong presents—and are we persuaded by them?

What does JSS conclude about the Johannine writer's intent with regard to Mary Magdalene's story?

Peter and the Beloved Disciple: Resurrection Dawn without a Body

How does Peter behave at the tomb? How does the beloved disciple behave? How are these portrayals consistent with what we know about both from earlier in this gospel? Why does the Johannine writer interrupt Mary Magdalene's story to tell this one?

According to the text, what precisely do they see in the tomb?

What does Spong mean when he says (p. 288), "Perhaps John is trying to say to us that the resurrection we seek is not so much that of Jesus as it is of ourselves"?