

Lost Books 4

- The *Gospel of Thomas* totally ignores Jesus' divinity as well as His mission on earth as Savior of the world. Its sole focus is Jesus' mysterious teachings—that so-called secret, hidden knowledge which only the enlightened can understand, giving them an escape from this evil physical world and access to the spirit world.
- This quest for wisdom sounds strikingly similar to the serpent's words to Eve in the Garden of Eden, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4b-5). Eve sought this secret wisdom God had supposedly withheld. Not content to remain in the honored place God had appointed them, Adam and Eve grasped for equality with God, as they reached out to eat the forbidden fruit.

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- Why does the search for hidden wisdom hold such an appeal to humans even today?
- What aspects of the Christian faith seem ridiculous to those who consider themselves wise or educated?
- How would you answer a friend who is using the *Gospel of Thomas* to undercut the authority of the four Gospels in the New Testament?

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- It's hard to imagine a group of Christians who believed Judas was a *hero*. But according to the church father Irenaeus of Lyon, the group that published the *Gospel of Judas* went even further—they named themselves after the first murderer, Cain. They were also fond of two other groups that defied Yahweh—the builders of the tower of Babel and the people of Sodom.
- Why would the gnostics consider those who defied Yahweh in the Old Testament as heroes?
- For what reasons do some people view God as an enemy today?

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- It is unknown who wrote the Gospel of Judas. Our biggest clue comes from Irenaeus. In about 180 AD, he wrote:
- “They declare that Judas the traitor was thoroughly acquainted with these things, and that he alone, knowing the truth as no others did, accomplished the mystery of the betrayal; by him all things, both earthly and heavenly, were thus thrown into confusion. They produce a fictitious history of this kind, which they style the Gospel of Judas.” (Adversus Haereses I.31.1; Roberts-Donaldson translation.)

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- Let's take a look at a few passages out of the Gospel of Judas.
- Also look at what Dr. Maier's article has to say about the document. It appears that many scholars (not just Maier) claim that the National Geographic translation of the text is not accurate.
- Why is it crucial to remember the Scriptures are not simply human writings, but are the inspired Word of the Holy Spirit?

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- What possible appeal could you see the *Gospel of Judas* holding for a Christian today?
- How can we expose its clear falsehood?
- In his second letter, Peter warned Christians of those who would write such texts as these so-called lost books let's read 2 Peter 1:13-2:3.
- Peter and all the apostles knew false teachers would arise in the Christian church; they were already battling them when they wrote their letters.
- Why does Peter emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit who “carried along” those who wrote the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament?

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- Why did these false teachers try to disguise their writings as genuine works of the apostles rather than come out in the open and challenge the apostolic writings directly?
- How might you respond to friends who question the Bible's authority because of these lost books?