

BANNED

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE



LOST CHRISTIANITIES

& Banned Biblical Books

Housekeeping

- Add to **email** list?
- **Other?**

Covenant

- Use **“I” statements**: *Speak from your own experience.*
- **Ask permission before sharing** other participants’ stories outside the group.
- **Step-up, step-back**: be conscious of the level of participation that you bring to the conversation. Allow everyone a chance to speak before you speak again.
- You always have **permission to “pass.”**





Introduction: “Recouping our Losses”

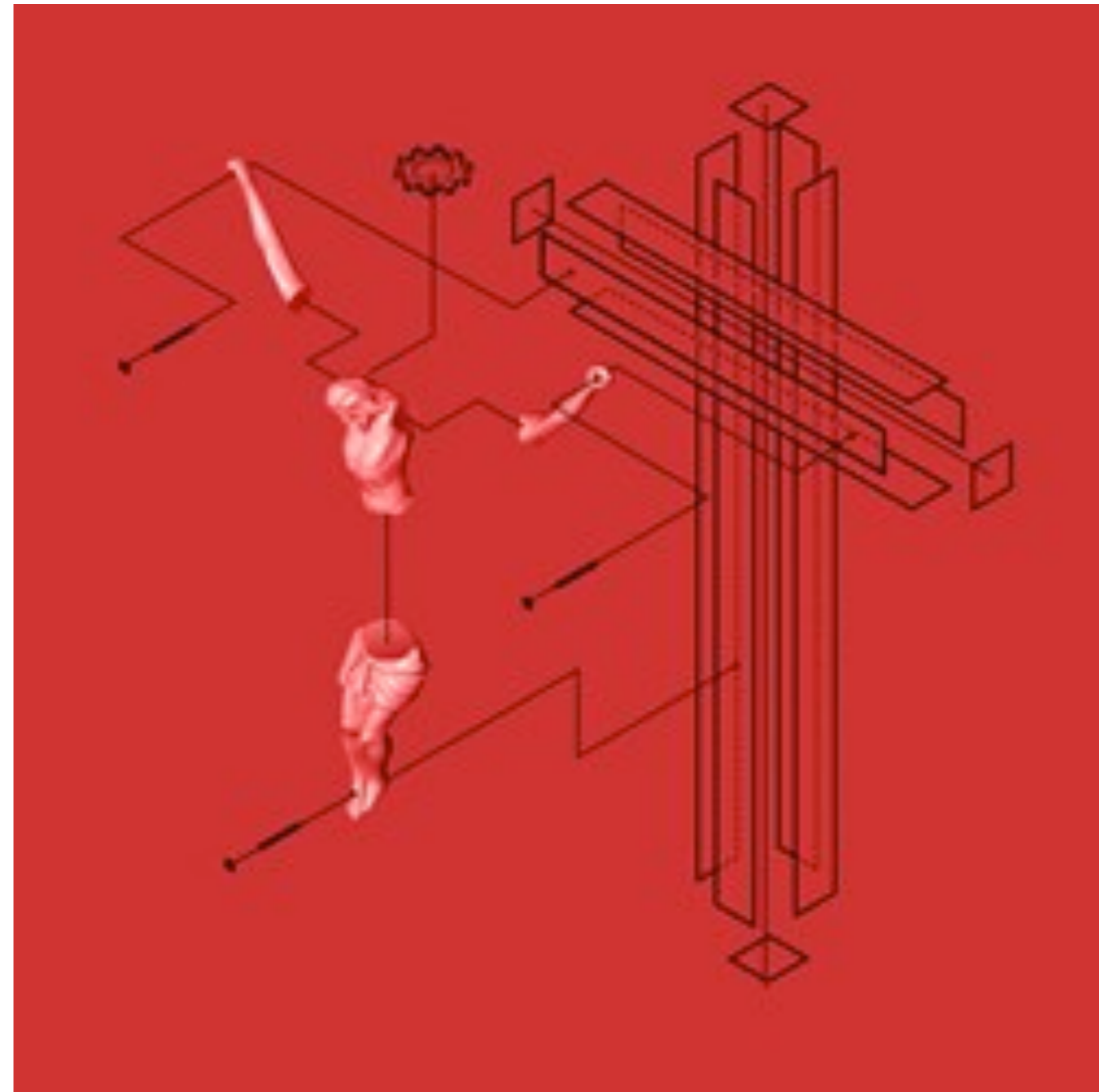
Chapter 1, “Ancient Discovery of a Forgery: Serapion & the Gospel of Peter”

✱ **Chapter 2, “Ancient Forgery of a Discovery:
The Acts of Paul and Thecla”**

✱ **Chapter 4, “Forgery of an Ancient Discovery:
Morton Smith & the Secret Gospel of Mark”**

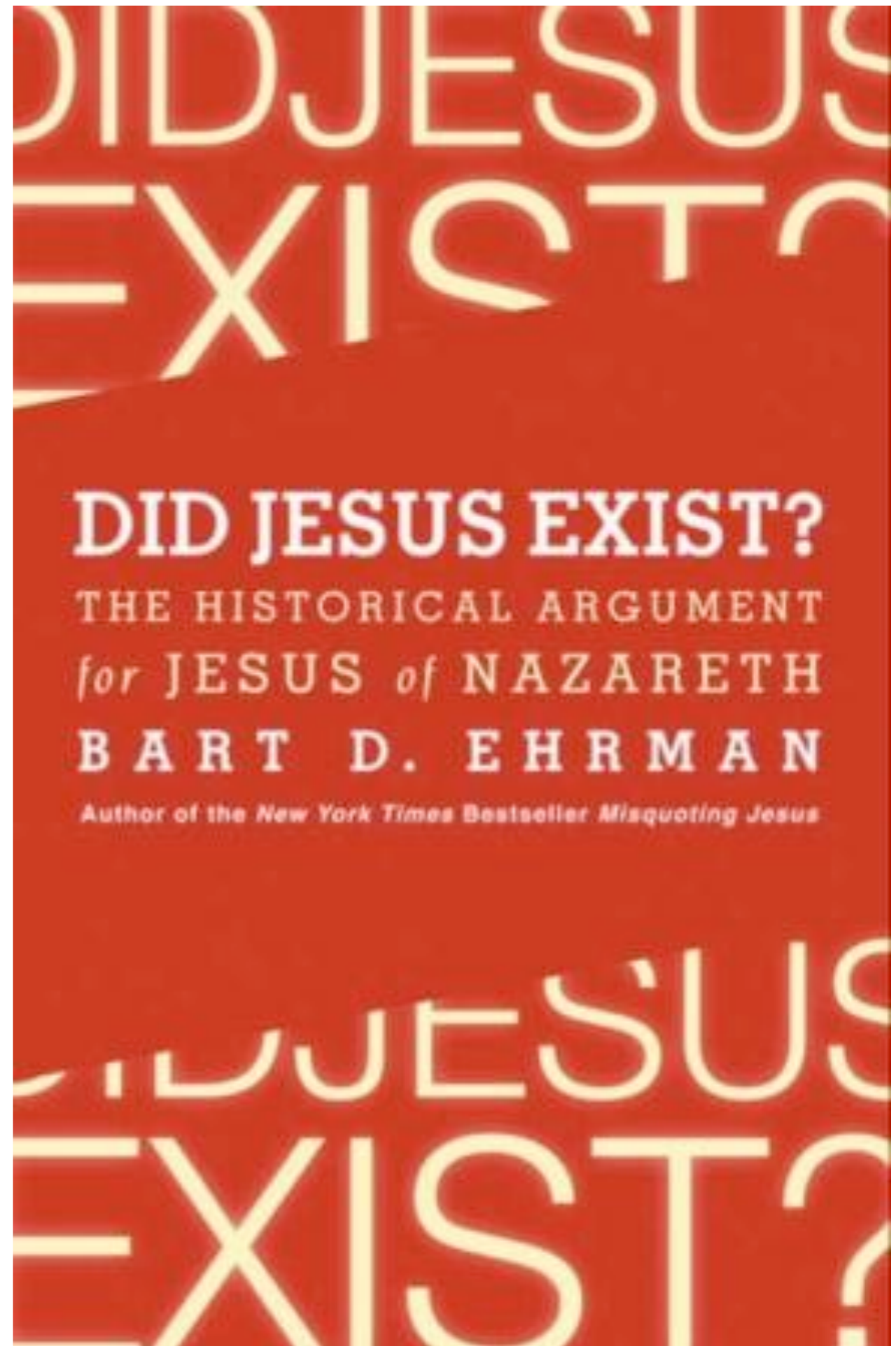
Current Events

- **Ancient Confession Found: 'We Invented Jesus Christ'**
- Biblical scholars will be appearing at the 'Covert Messiah' Conference at Conway Hall in London on the 19th of October to present this controversial discovery to the British public. *[Joseph Atwill]*
- <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2013/10/prweb11201273.htm>



Current Events

- **False Equivalency**
- Self/Indie Publishing vs. Curating
- Information ≠ knowledge or wisdom



“More Conspiracy Nonsense” — Bart Ehrman

- ❖ Poor Hercules, trying to fight the Hydra. Once he lops off *one* head....
- ❖ “American Biblical scholar” Joseph Atwill (*whom — I have to admit — I have never even heard of, to my recollection*)
- ❖ Mr. (so far as I can tell, from his blog, he is not a “Dr.”; in what sense is he a “scholar”? [vs. AAR])

- ✿ “prove” that “the New Testament was written by first-century Roman aristocrats and that they fabricated the entire story of Jesus Christ.” In other words – brace yourself – Jesus is in fact a myth. Has anyone heard this before? [Zombie Thesis — c.f. Resa Aslan’s *Zealot*]
- ✿ “Atwill asserts that Christianity did not really begin as a religion, but a sophisticated government project, a kind of propaganda exercise used to pacify the subjects of the Roman Empire.
- ✿ **Qualifications or credentials?** According to his blog <http://caesarsmessiah.com/blog/about/> he went to high school and then in college studied computer science. [vs. required for Ph.D.] (If someone wanted to make an important announcement in London that the moon was made out of green cheese, would you want to know whether he had ever taken a single course in astronomy?)

- ❖ “**first time in London**” could easily be misread to mean that he will be making his astounding discoveries public for the first time. But, in means that this will be the first time he’s spoken about it “in London” (!). And alas, a quick internet search [*LMGTFY!*] shows that he published a book arguing the same theme some years ago. Maybe he’s changed his tune? Or maybe he’s upset that no one in the fields of classics, Roman history, second-temple Judaism, New Testament, or early Christianity thinks that his views are anything but a bad joke, and in order to get more attention he has decided that he better make a public announcement at a major press conference in London called for the purpose on October 19.
- ❖ People like this seem to have boundless energy (and masses of time to waste). Why don’t they spend it on something useful – like learning about ancient history?
(<http://ehrmanblog.org/conspiracy-nonsense/>)

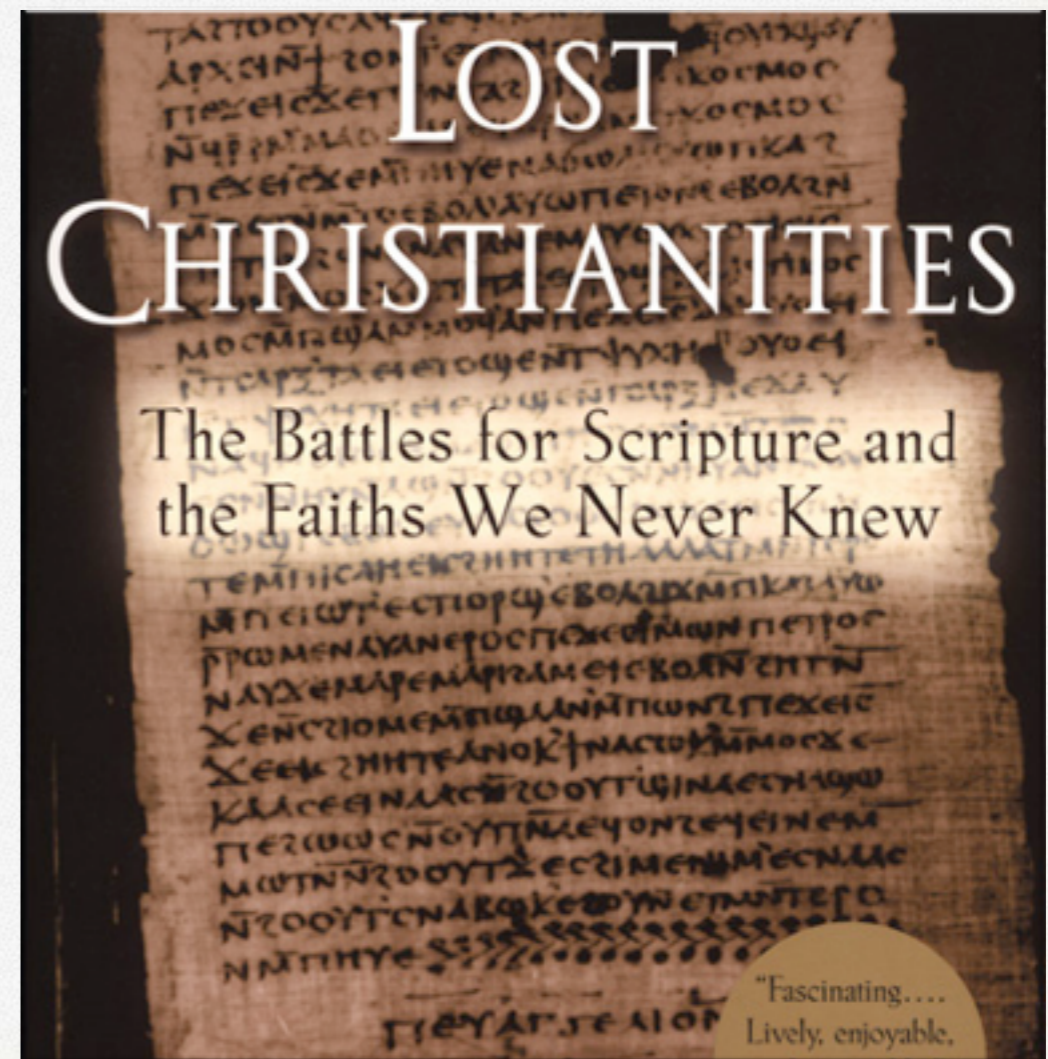
CHAPTER 2

✿ **“Ancient Forgery of a Discovery: The Acts of Paul and Thecla”**

✿ Chapter 4, “Forgery of an Ancient Discovery: Morton Smith & the Secret Gospel of Mark”

ANCIENT FORGERY OF A DISCOVERY: ACTS OF PAUL & THECLA

“Most texts revered as sacred by ancient Christians have been lost. Some of these have been discovered in modern times, but the majority are still relegated to oblivion, known only by name and, when we are fortunate, by a general sense of what they must have been like. Several, however, have been long available, even if almost entirely forgotten” (29).



THECLA

- ❖ Female disciple of Paul
- ❖ Contemporary scholars of ancient Christianity know this document well.
- ❖ Not known well today in general public. *[canon]*
- ❖ But in ancient Christianity, Thecla was immensely popular. *[more regional/local]*



*5/6th century C.E. Painting in the Grotto of Saint Paul,
Paul and Mother of Thecla (Ephesus, Turkey)*

THECLA

Parallels from last week

- ✿ Gospel of Peter arguably at least as popular as the canonical Mark (*3 times as many surviving mss*)
- ✿ GoP has continuing popularity even after Bishop Serapion condemned it.



*5/6th century C.E. Painting in the Grotto of Saint Paul,
Paul and Mother of Thecla (Ephesus, Turkey)*

THECLA

- ❖ Household name in Christian households
- ❖ Pilgrimages to her shrines, devotees to her adoration, revered as a model martyr, worshipped as a saint
- ❖ In some places competed with Mary as the most important person outside the Trinity. *[Co-Redemptrix]*



*5/6th century C.E. Painting in the Grotto of Saint Paul,
Paul and Mother of Thecla (Ephesus, Turkey)*

Ancient Forgery of a Discovery...*Discovered*

- ❖ Christians appeals to Thecla as a woman who was authorized to teach men and to baptize
- ❖ Tertullian exposes the text as a forgery. The accused man confessed to forging the document, “for the love of Paul.”***



*5/6th century C.E. Painting in the Grotto of Saint Paul,
Paul and Mother of Thecla (Ephesus, Turkey)*

✿ Act 1: Eavesdropping

- ✿ Paul preaches at the home of the Christian Onesiphorus.
- ✿ Thecla, Onesiphorus's next-door neighbor eavesdrops, and is enraptured by his words.
- ✿ Her mother is worried about her and called her fiancé Thamyras. *[LS:114]*



*5/6th century C.E. Painting in the Grotto of Saint Paul,
Paul and Mother of Thecla (Ephesus, Turkey)*

Act 2: Persecution

- ❖ Thamyras is angry his fiancée is now into sexual renunciation and enlists the support of other married men in town;
- ❖ Paul arrested. Thecla bribes her way into his cell to “[kiss] his bonds] *[LS:117]*



*5/6th century C.E. Painting in the Grotto of Saint Paul,
Paul and Mother of Thecla (Ephesus, Turkey)*

✿ Act 3: Divine Intervention

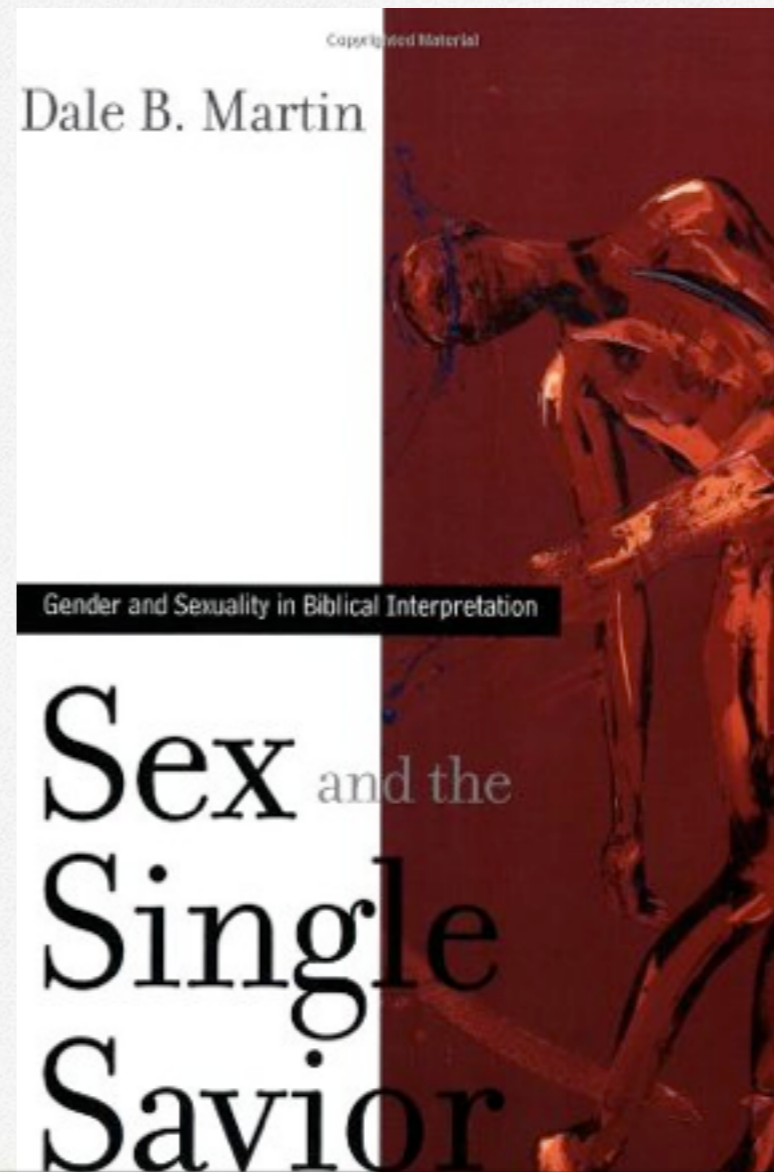
- ✿ Try to burn her at the stake, but the fire doesn't touch her body and God send a thunderstorm to extinguish the blaze.
- ✿ Other miraculous saves happens as well***



*5/6th century C.E. Painting in the Grotto of Saint Paul,
Paul and Mother of Thecla (Ephesus, Turkey)*

Ascetic Ideal

- ✿ Grounded in eschatology
- ✿ Celibacy over “Family Values”; historical Jesus *not* a family man.
- ✿ Now in third millennium

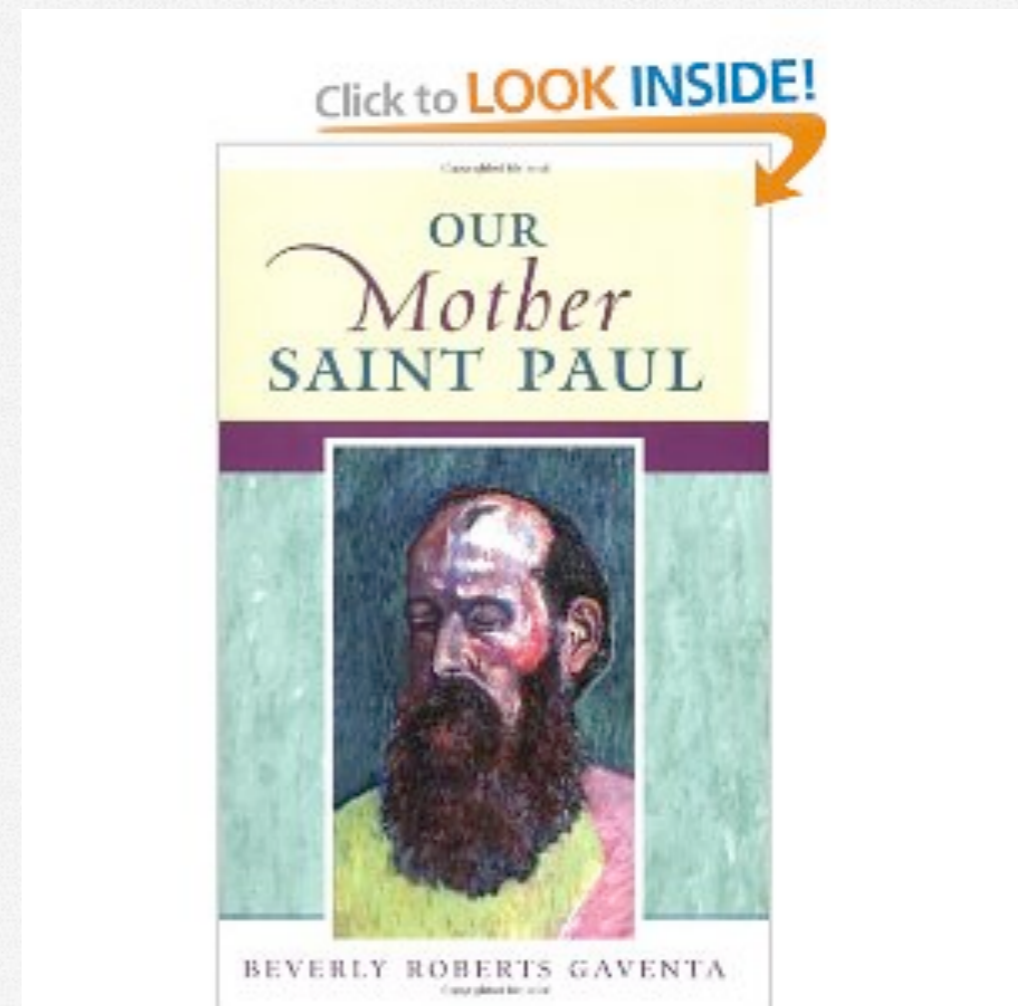


✿ Paul: Misogynist or Mystic?

✿ Much uproar has been made of the two passages that tell women to be silent, but what is the rest of the story?

✿ 1 Corinthians 14:34

✿ 1 Timothy 2:11-12



✿ Paul: Misogynist or Mystic?

- ✿ **Acts 16** records that Paul left **Lydia**, a rich woman who sold purple cloth, as the **leader** of the house-church in Philippi. (Acts 16:14, 40.)
- ✿ Two chapters later, **Priscilla**, another woman, “took Apollos [a man] aside and explained the Way of God *to him* more accurately.” (Acts 18:2, 18, 26). In Romans, Paul mentions Priscilla again as someone who risked her neck for him. (16:3.)
- ✿ In **Philippians**, Paul writes from prison to request help for **Euodia** and **Syntychē**, two women, who “have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel.” (Philippians 4:2-3.)

✿ Paul: Misogynist or Mystic?

- ✿ At the end of the Letter to the **Romans**, Paul sends greetings to a number of women: Mary (Romans 16:6), Julia, Nereus' sister (Rom 16:15).
- ✿ In particular, he calls the woman Junia, “prominent among the apostles.” (16:7.) He entrusts Phoebe, mentioned specifically as **female deacon**, to deliver Romans, the greatest of his letters, to the church in Rome. He “commend[s]” her to the Roman church, and asks that she be “welcome[d] in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and helpe[d]...in whatever she may require...for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well.” (16:1-2.)

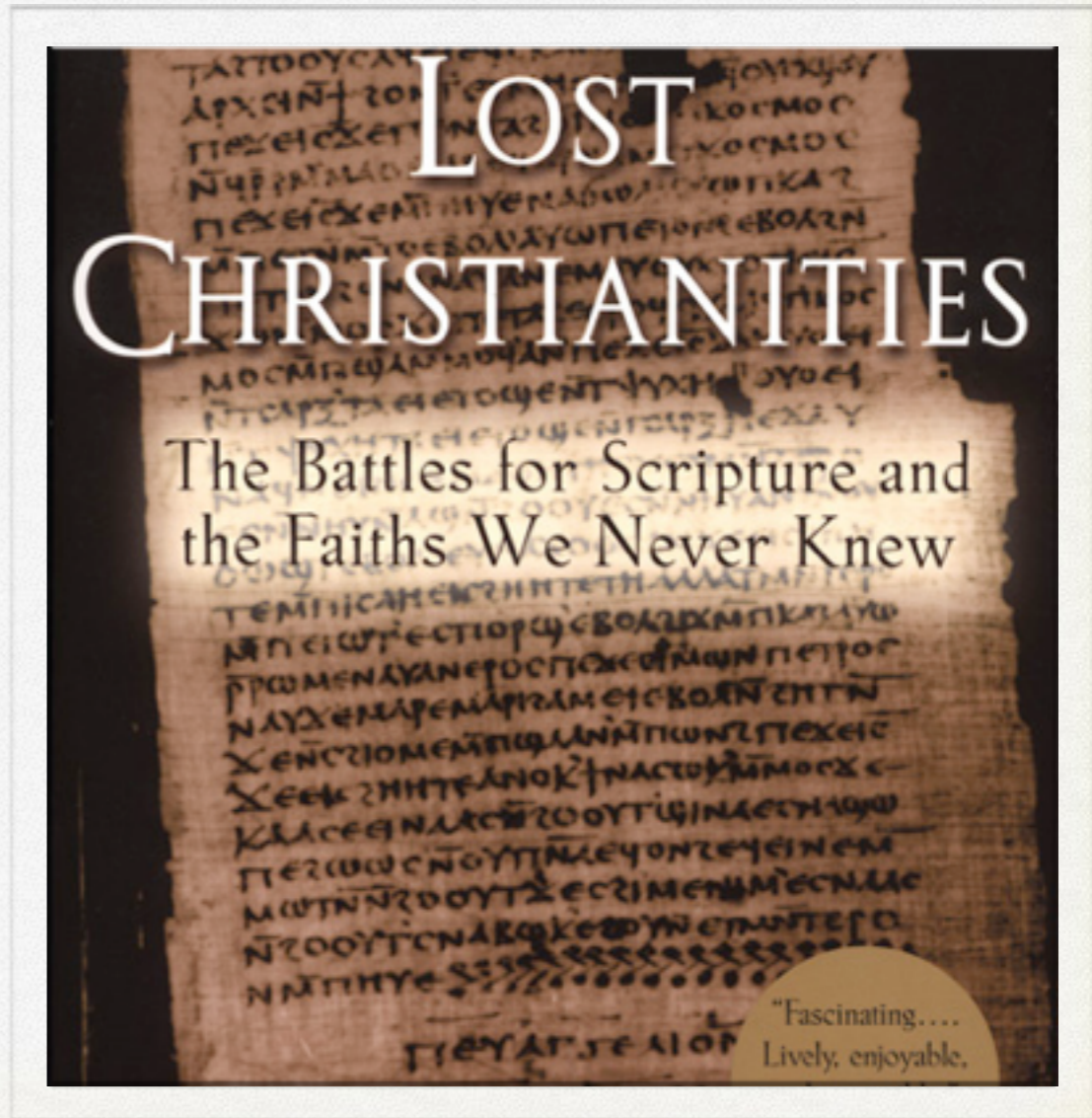


CHAPTER 4

**Forgery of an Ancient Discovery:
Morton Smith
& the Secret Gospel of Mark**

MORTON SMITH & THE SECRET GOSPEL OF MARK

“Whether forged or authentic, Morton Smith’s letter of Clement provides us with one of the most interesting documents relating to early Christianity to be discovered in the 20th century” (89)



CASE STUDY #1 (OF 3): HITLER DIARIES

- Allegedly Adolf Hitler's *handwritten* diaries (June 1932 – end of his life, 30 April 1945).
- Supposedly pulled from a downed German plane trying to escape Berlin in 1945 and remained in East Germany until smuggled out by his brother, an officer in the East German army.



"Hitler's diaries discovered" 22 April 1983

CASE STUDY: HITLER DIARIES

- Best known forgery of recent memory
 - art of forgery alive and well
 - forgers will sometimes go to extraordinary lengths to perpetuate a fraud
 - experts can be fooled
 - [*Uniformitarianism*]



"Hitler's diaries discovered" 22 April 1983

CASE STUDY: HITLER DIARIES

- Headline news in April 1983 (before and after exposure as fabrications)
- **Konrad Kujau**, West German, was paid \$4.8 million for the sixty volumes



CASE STUDY: HITLER DIARIES

- Sold to German magazine *Stern* for serial publication.
- English rights sold to *Sunday Times* and *Newsweek* magazine
- Verified as authentic by famous British historian **Hugh Trevor-Roper**, who wrote *The Last Days of Hitler*.



CASE STUDY: HITLER DIARIES

- Day before publication Trevor-Roper had second thoughts.
- He'd seen them only briefly, under tight security, and late in the day.
- Other experts called in and showed they were forged.



"Hitler's diaries discovered" 22 April 1983

FORGERY TECHNIQUE

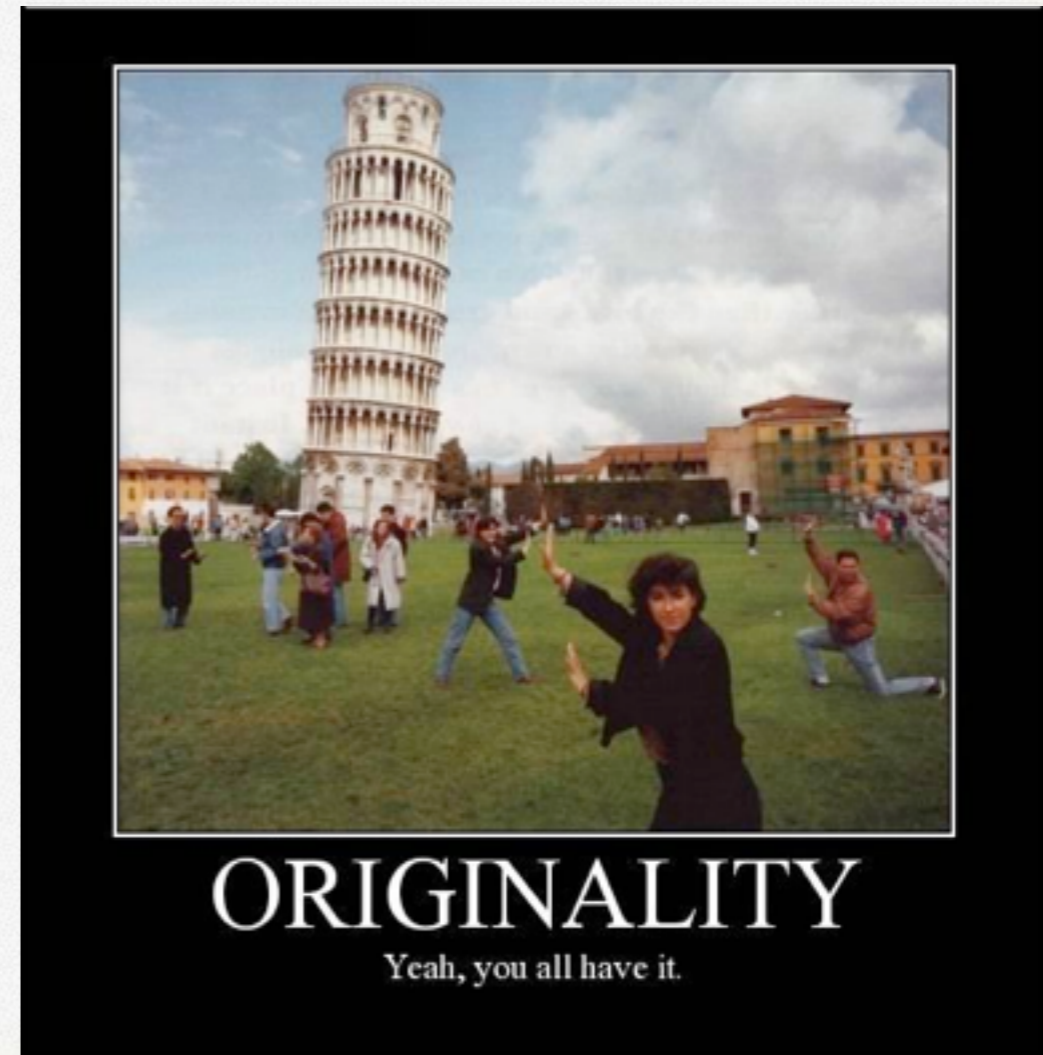
- Poured tea on the pages and struck on his table to make them look old and worn.
- Used a Gothic style script
- Borrowed heavily from published biographies for the details of Hitler's daily life.
- No agenda (like humanizing Hitler). Just wanted the money.



"Hitler's diaries discovered" 22 April 1983

THE REST OF THE STORY

- Imprisoned for fraud,
- Once out, broke, but made a substantial living producing “genuine forgeries” of great masterpieces (Monet, Rembrandt and van Gogh).
- Counterfeit submarket of Kujau imitators selling fakes of his forged paintings.
- In 1998, *The Originality of Forgery* published in his name — he claimed, evidently truthfully, not to have written a word of it.



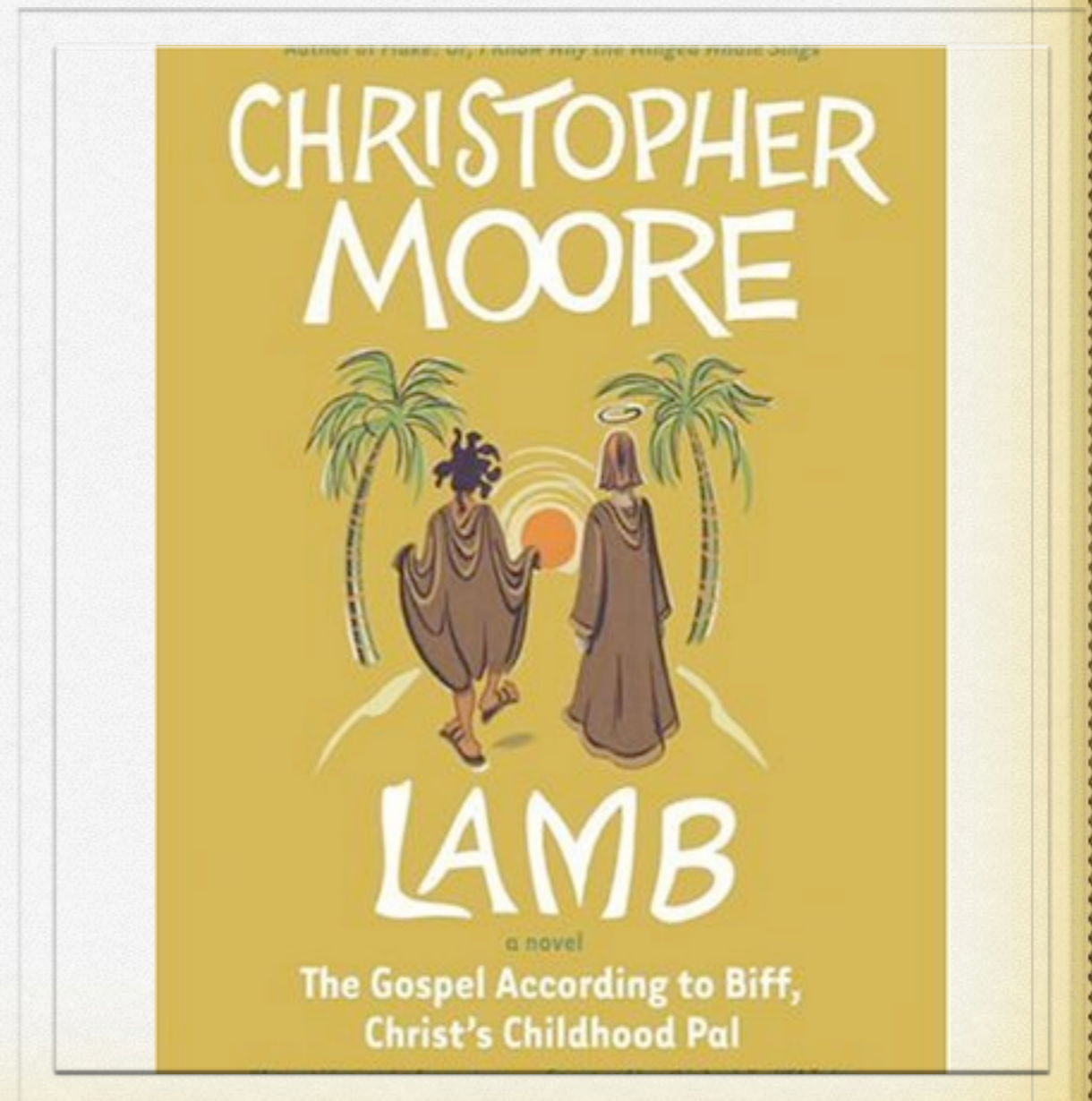
CASE STUDY #2 (OF 3): ‘JESUS DIARIES’???

- Strange Gospels appear regularly (clearly frauds...but people do buy tabloids)
- Edgar J. Goodspeed, Strange New Gospels (1977, out of print)
- The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ
- The Aquarian Gospel
- The Crucifixion of Jesus
- Per Beskow, Strange tales about Jesus: A survey of unfamiliar gospels (1983, out of print)



FROM HITLER DIARIES TO ‘JESUS DIARIES’???

- Often about the “Lost years of Jesus”
- Trips to India to visit the Brahmins (how he got so wise)
- Joining a sect of Jewish monks



CASE STUDY #3: “AN AMUSING AGRAPHON”

(*CATHOLIC BIBLICAL QUARTERLY*, 1950)
— *RESPECTED JOURNAL*

- *Agraphon* – “literally unwritten” – technical term for saying of Jesus in an ancient source other than the canonical Gospels
- e.g., Acts 20:35, “In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' ”) —[*not in canonical Gospels*]
- Matthew 24:51, where Jesus warns that “[the master of that slave] will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” [LC69]
- **Adds:** “But Rabbi, how can this happen for those who have no teeth?” whereupon Jesus is said to have replied: “Oh you of little faith! Do not be troubled. If some have no teeth, then teeth will be provided.”

CASE STUDY #3: “AN AMUSING AGRAPHON” (*CATHOLIC BIBLICAL QUARTERLY*, 1950) — *RESPECTED JOURNAL*

- **Bruce Metzger** claims to have been in his class in the 1930s (before the war) and heard Coleman-Norton joke that “dentures would be provided in the afterlife for those who were toothless.”
- Everyone seems to agree that Coleman-Norton simply made the story up and published it with an scholarly analysis.
- Was it just a good joke to see if he could get away with it?

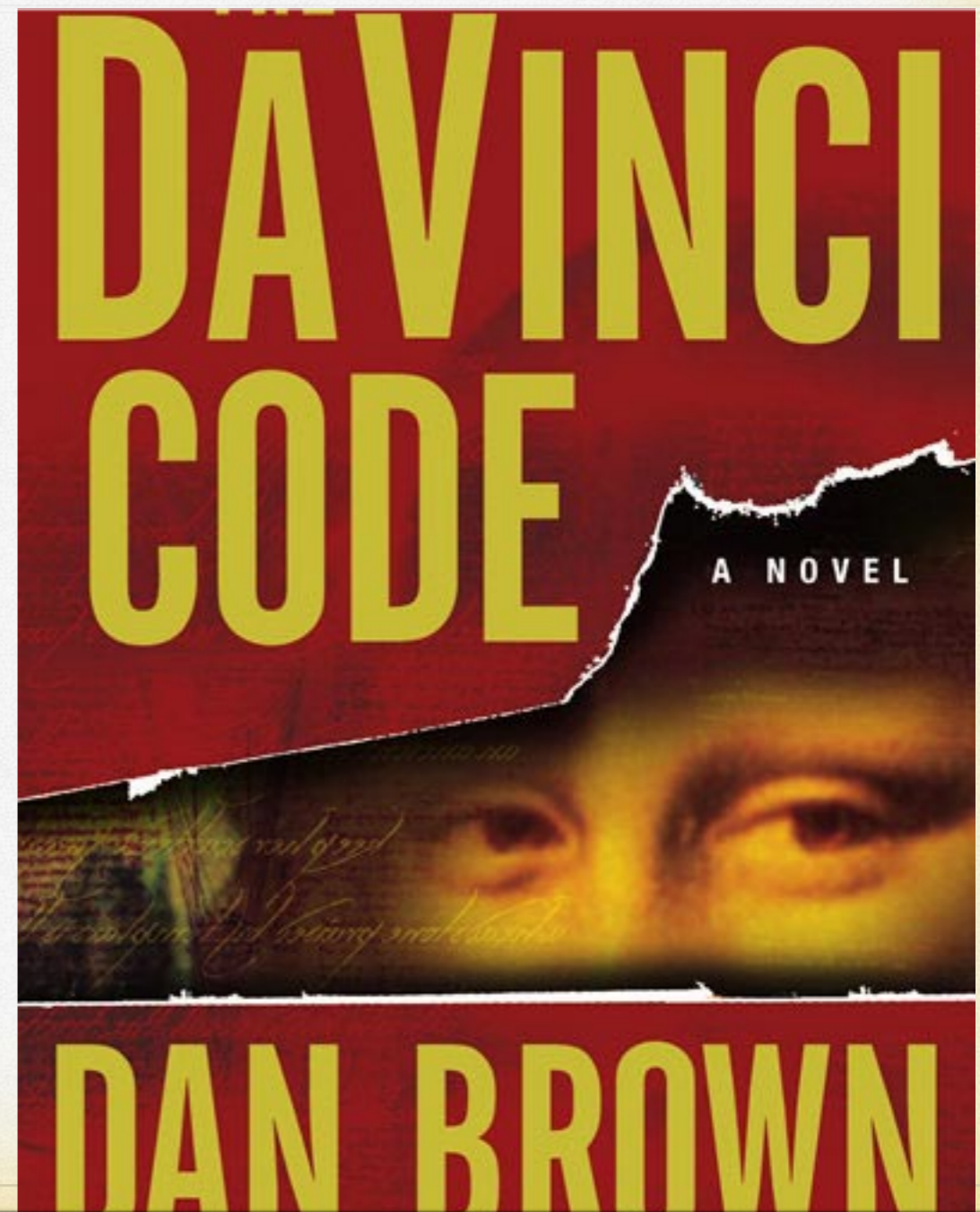


CASE STUDIES AS CONTEXT *FOR* MORTON SMITH AND THE SECRET GOSPEL OF MARK

- Hitler Diaries,
- Strange New Gospels,
- Agraphon
- Freakonomics: “Cremation of Stevie the Cat”

“THE DA VINCI CODE” BEFORE DAN BROWN

- In 1941, Morton Smith was 26, and a graduate student in the Holy Land on a traveling fellowship from Harvard Divinity School.
- Stuck in Jerusalem because of the war, he visited the still-active Orthodox monastery at Mar Saba (12 miles SE of Jerusalem, established in the 5th century CE.)
- Smith wrote his dissertation in modern Hebrew, extremely impressive work.



“THE DA VINCI CODE” BEFORE DAN BROWN

- In 1958, after second Ph.D. on ancient Palestine, he returned to Mar Saba, now an established scholar (before had been a student). Chose to spend his sabbatical cataloguing their library which was in disorder—hoping to find something.
- 1945 – *Nag Hammadi*
- 1947 – *Dead Sea Scrolls*



“THE DA VINCI CODE” BEFORE DAN BROWN

- Not everyone could do this. Books in Greek and Latin, missing title and covers, etc. But Smith is brilliant and gifted in languages.
- **Found:** Fragments of 15th c. manuscript of otherwise lost work of ancient Greek playwright Sophocles (fragments used to strengthen the binding of an 18th c. prayer book)... paper hard to come by (15th c. CE copy of a 5th c. BCE play was seen as no other value than as binding paper).
- **Found:** Early Edition of writings of Ignatius of Antioch (second-century, proto-orthodox bishop). No cover or title page. Handwritten copy of letter on black pages at end. Greek script. 18th c. style of writing.
- **Response:** Photographed the three pages (three sets of photos). Held off on translating because hoped to find more in limited time

“THE DA VINCI CODE” BEFORE DAN BROWN

- **Found:** Letter from Clement. To: (otherwise unknown) Theodore. Responding to his questions about the Carpocratians, an early Christian sect named after their founder Carpocrates. Vilified by proto-orthodox writers because they supposedly had sexual orgies under the guise of Christianity.
- Clement congratulated Theodore for “silencing the unspeakable teachings of the Carpocratians.” Clement then says that Mark wrote about Jesus based on Mark’s acquaintance with Peter, but didn’t write about the secret teachings.
- After Peter was martyred, Mark wrote a second, “more spiritual” gospel.
- Apparently, Carpocrates had a copy of the Secret Gospel which is modified to fit his teachings.

“THE DA VINCI CODE” BEFORE DAN BROWN

- Therefore, this letter from Clement that Morton Smith has discovered indicated three copies of Mark Original:
 1. Canonical Mark
 2. Secret Mark for spiritually elite (“2nd Edition”)
 3. Carpocratian Mark (“3rd Edition”)
- Clement quotes two passages from Secret Mark (version 2) —[LS 88]
- Clement quotes them to say that Theodores questions about the phrase “Naked man with naked man” is from a version that is a Carpocratian corruption.”
- Why is (perhaps) not coincidental that we are talking a naked man in *Mark*?
 - Mark 14:51-52, “A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, 52 but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

IS THE LETTER AUTHENTIC?

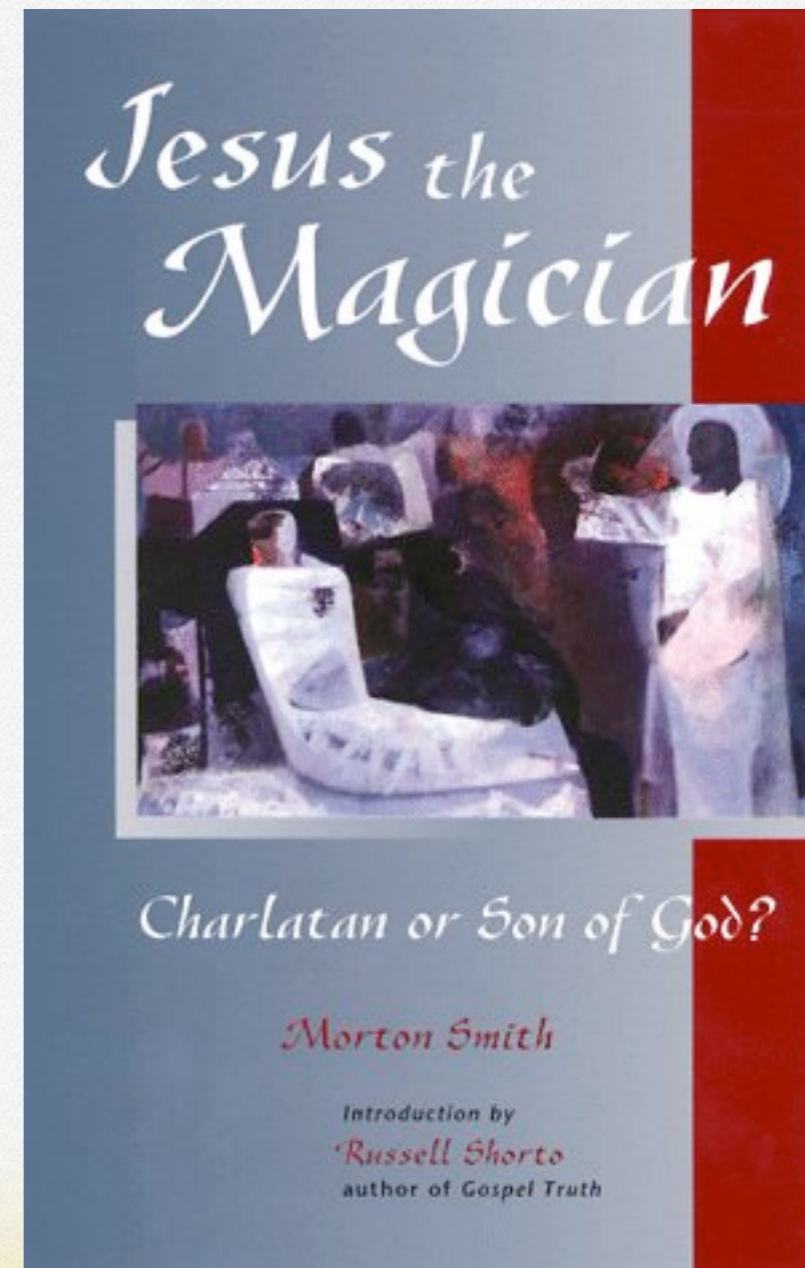
- Smith's dedication: spent the next 15 years studying his find.
- In 1973, published *The Secret Gospel: The Discovery and Interpretation of the Secret Gospel According to Mark*
- 3rd edition published in 2005 with foreword by Elaine Pagels, the author of next week's *Beyond Belief* about the Gospel of Thomas. Popular account for general audiences, full of anecdotes and worth reading.
- *Clement of Alexandria and a secret Gospel of Mark* – dense scholarly work filled with Greek and Latin.

QUESTIONS

- QUESTION 1: 18th c. scribe? (or mid-20th c.)
 - **Consensus**: Greek handwriting style c. 1750 (+/- 50 years). Produced hurriedly.
- QUESTION 2: Genuine Letter from Clement that was copied? (or forgery, Clementine in style?)
 - **Consensus**: looked like Clement's work (slow, difficult work pre-computers)
- **Smith's argument**: what Clement thought was a Carpocratian, 2nd edition of the Secret Gospel was actually part of the original Gospel of Mark and had been removed by scribes.

MORE CONTEXT

- Published *Jesus the Magician* (1981) - Jesus was a magician who had sex with the men that he baptized
- Most scholars: unconvincing at best; many outraged. Smith appeared to love the controversy.
- Some reviews thought he found in the text what he brought to the text (visions, heavenly journeys, law-free morality), and Jesus as magician had been interests of his for years previous to discovery



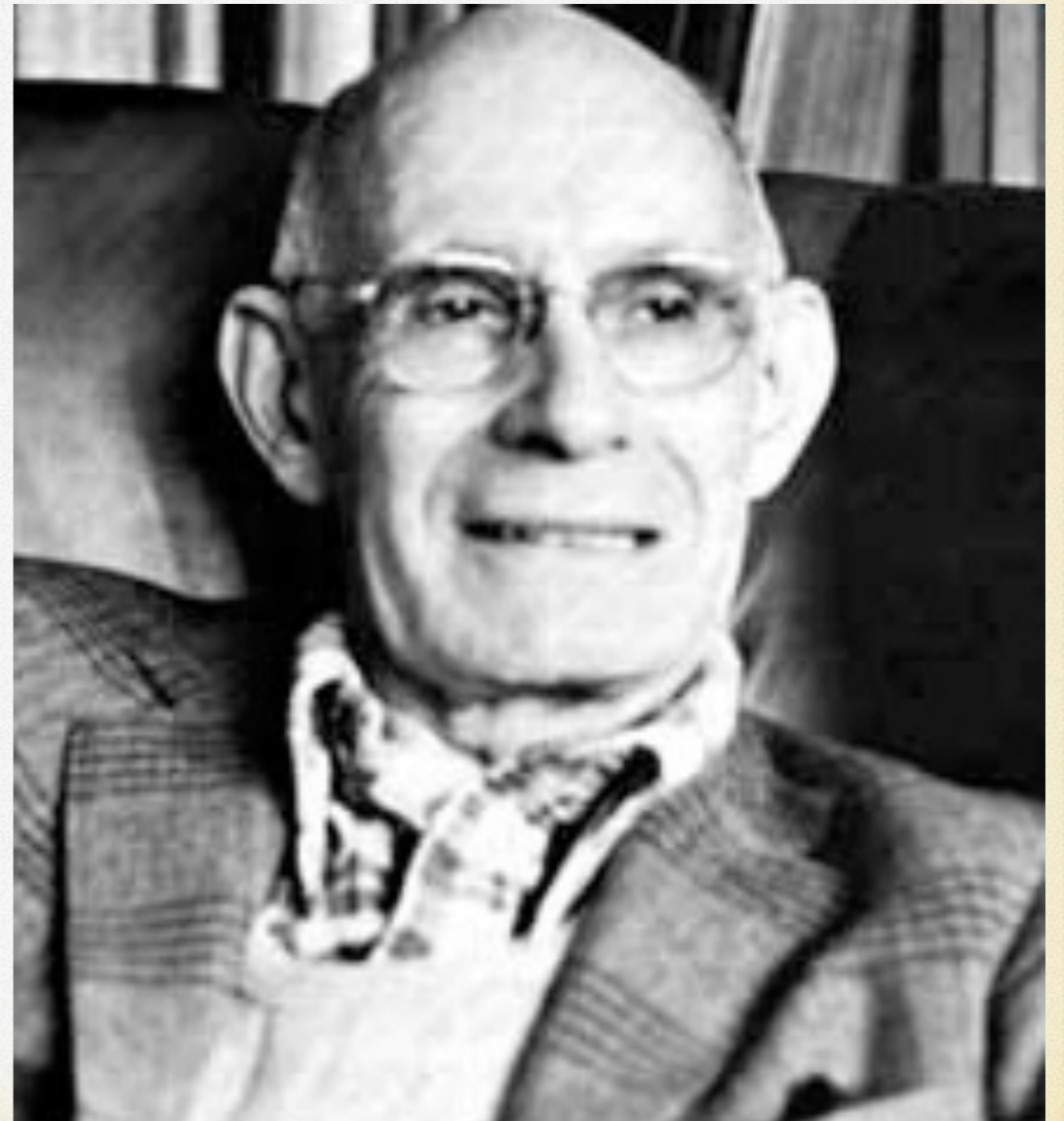
SO...WAS THE LETTER FORGED???

It's possible — see:

- Hitler Diaries,
- Strange New Gospels,
- Agraphon

DURING SMITH'S LIFETIME: WAS THE LETTER AUTHENTIC?

- No Consensus
- Majority: authentic
- Smaller majority: Secret Mark derived from a version of canonical Mark
- Some: forged (in antiquity, Middle Ages, or modernity)



DURING SMITH'S LIFETIME: WAS THE LETTER AUTHENTIC?

- Arthur Darby Nock (Smith's own teacher at Harvard, one of the few smarter than him in some of Smith's own fields) – early doubter, instincts told him it was not genuine Clementine (Nock was famous for instincts).
- But Nock didn't think it was a modern forgery, much less Smith's doing.



AFTER SMITH'S DEATH: WAS THE LETTER AUTHENTIC? (NO LONGER AROUND TO DEFEND HIMSELF)

- Increasing number of skeptics alleging that Secret Mark was forged
- **Jacob Neusner** (Smith's own student with whom he had another famous falling out) called it "the forgery of the century"
- The historian Harman Akenson: "nice ironic gay joke at the expense of all the self-important scholars who not only miss the irony, but believe that this alleged piece of gospel comes to us in the first-known letter of the great Clement of Alexandria."



**AFTER SMITH'S DEATH:
WAS THE LETTER AUTHENTIC?
(NO LONGER AROUND TO DEFEND HIMSELF)**

Pro-Smith (*it's authentic*)

- Photographs of the pages exist
- Letter is written in 18th c. style Greek handwriting
- Writing style is like Clement's
- Quotations from Secret Mark are like canonical Mark

Anti-Smith (*it's forged*)

- No one else has ever had a careful, controlled examination of the book (only have photos)
- Can't do chemical analysis of ink (easiest and more authoritative test) — late 1750s or late 1950s?

**AFTER SMITH'S DEATH:
WAS THE LETTER AUTHENTIC?
(NO LONGER AROUND TO DEFEND HIMSELF)**

If forgery...*impressive*

- Imitate 18th c. Greek style of handwriting
- Write a document so much like Clement that it fools Clementine experts (who have spent their lives studying Clement)
- Quote a passage inside this same letter that is so much like Mark that it fools Markan experts
- Ehrman: “If this is forged, it is one of the greatest works of scholarship in the 20th century, by someone who put an uncanny amount of work into it. But it would not be impossible.”
- Ehrman's Synchronicity***

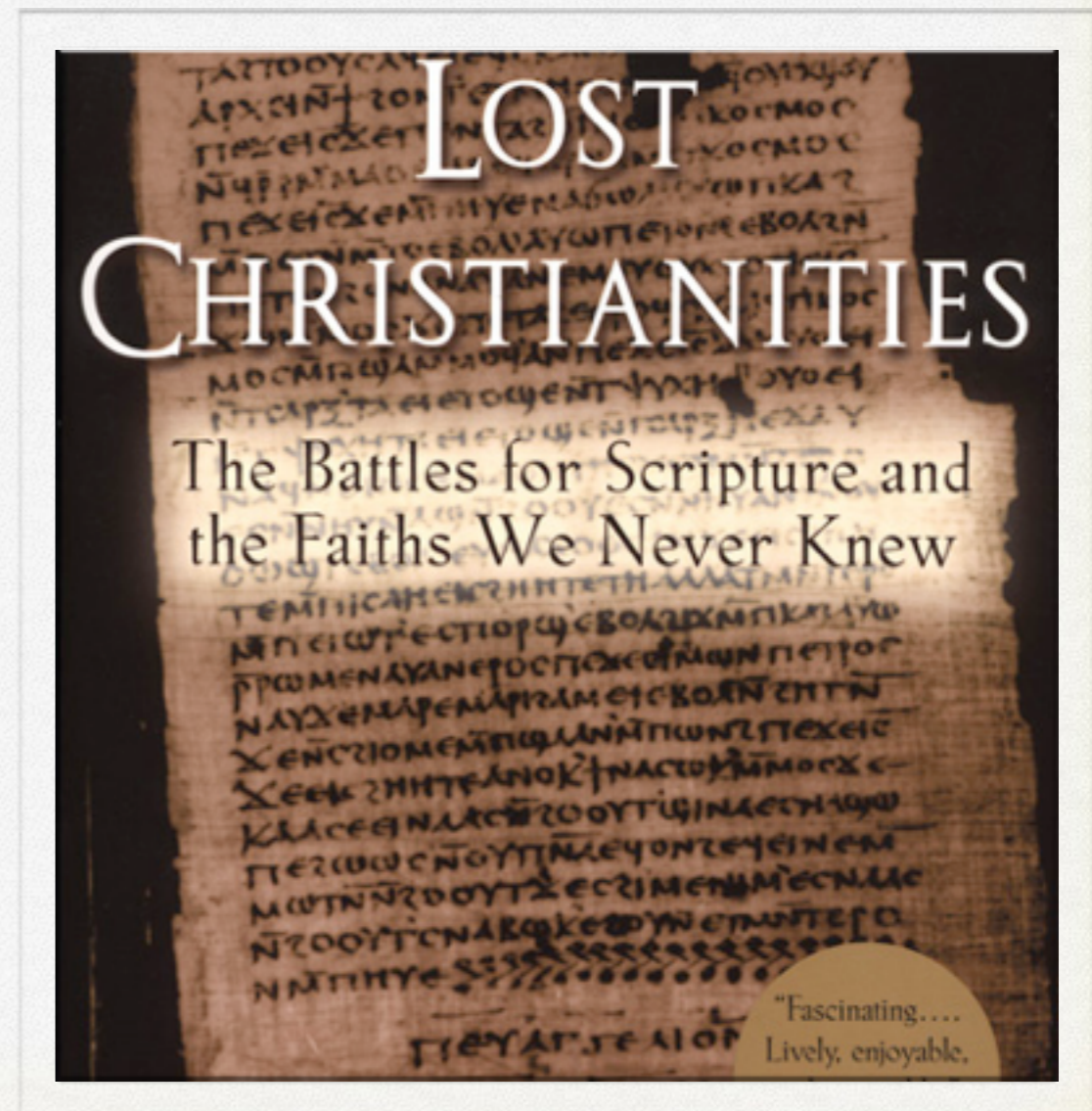
(IN)CONCLUSION

- Why did **Smith** never go back to get the text (even though admittedly it was the monastery's book)? Why spend so many years on a text and not make sure it is above criticism of forgery?
- Clement never mentions the letter in his other writings. Too much like Clement (“awesome” too many times for such a short letter; using rare words more frequently than Clement does)
- Letter had *no* major copying mistakes (original instead of a copy?)
- Ironic that the letter appears in this particular book***
 - Edition of Ignatius' letter that *removed* interpolations by scribes contains a letter that describes forged documents and interpolations *made into* Mark's text by scribes
 - On the *facing page*, Voss (the editor of the edition of Ignatius) talks about falsifications of manuscripts of the Epistle of Barnabus.

MORTON SMITH & THE SECRET GOSPEL OF MARK

“Maybe Smith forged it....
Maybe a genuine letter by
Clement, and there really were
different versions of the Gospel
of Mark in ancient
Alexandria.”***

Potential Lost Christianity:
Capocratians, who modified a
previously expanded version of
Mark to justify their practices.



STEPHEN CARLSON

THE GOSPEL HOAX (2005)

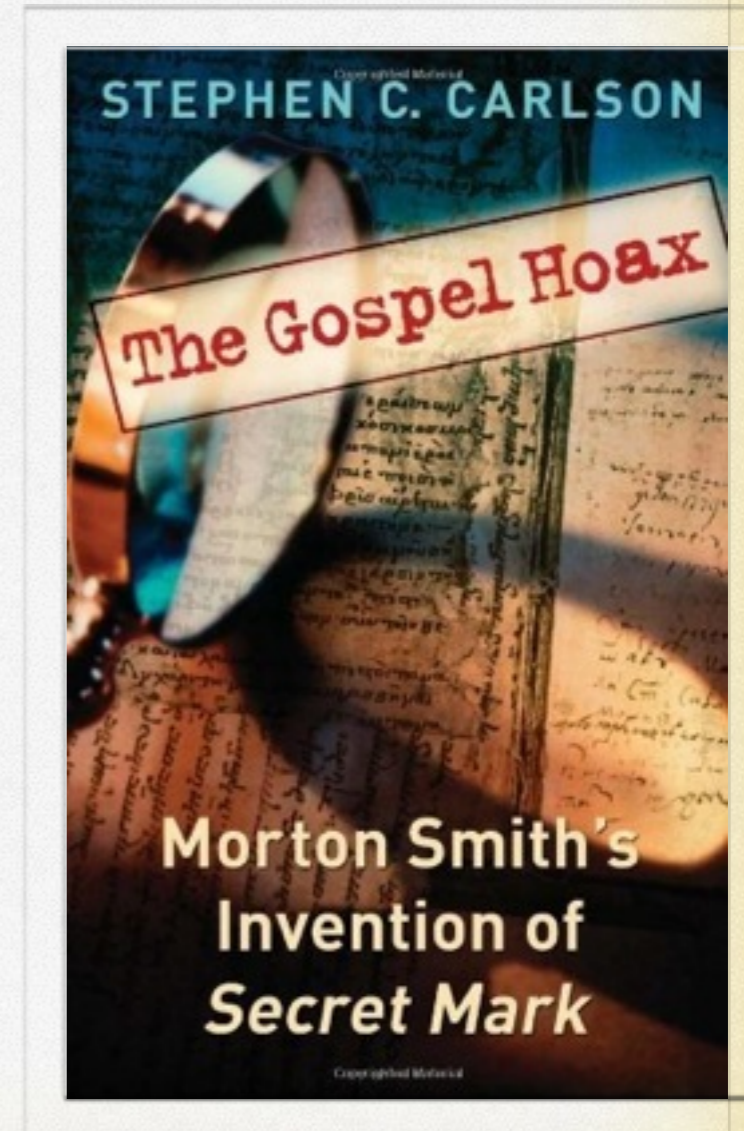
✿ “Appears now to be an elaborate professional ruse.

✿ I am persuaded by Carlson's argument and do not believe that we can continue using Secret Mark to discuss early Christianity.

✿ Oddly, however, Smith's homoerotic hoax fits in almost seamlessly with other, more convincing works of scholarship on the canonical texts.

✿ What, for example, are we to do with that Marcan naked fleeing youth in the garden during Jesus's arrest? Or with Jesus's male Beloved in John?”

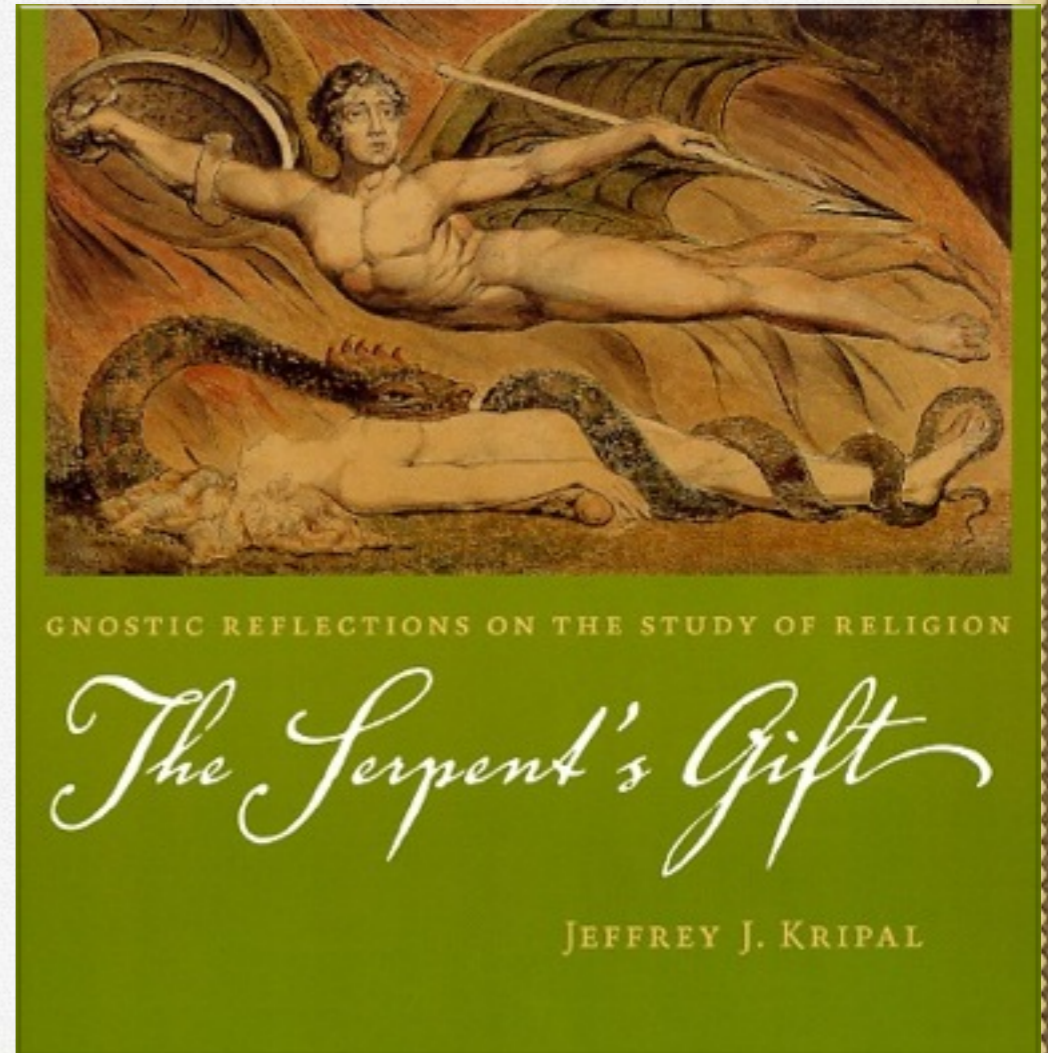
✿ — Jeffrey Kripal



STEPHEN CARLSON
THE GOSPEL HOAX (2005)

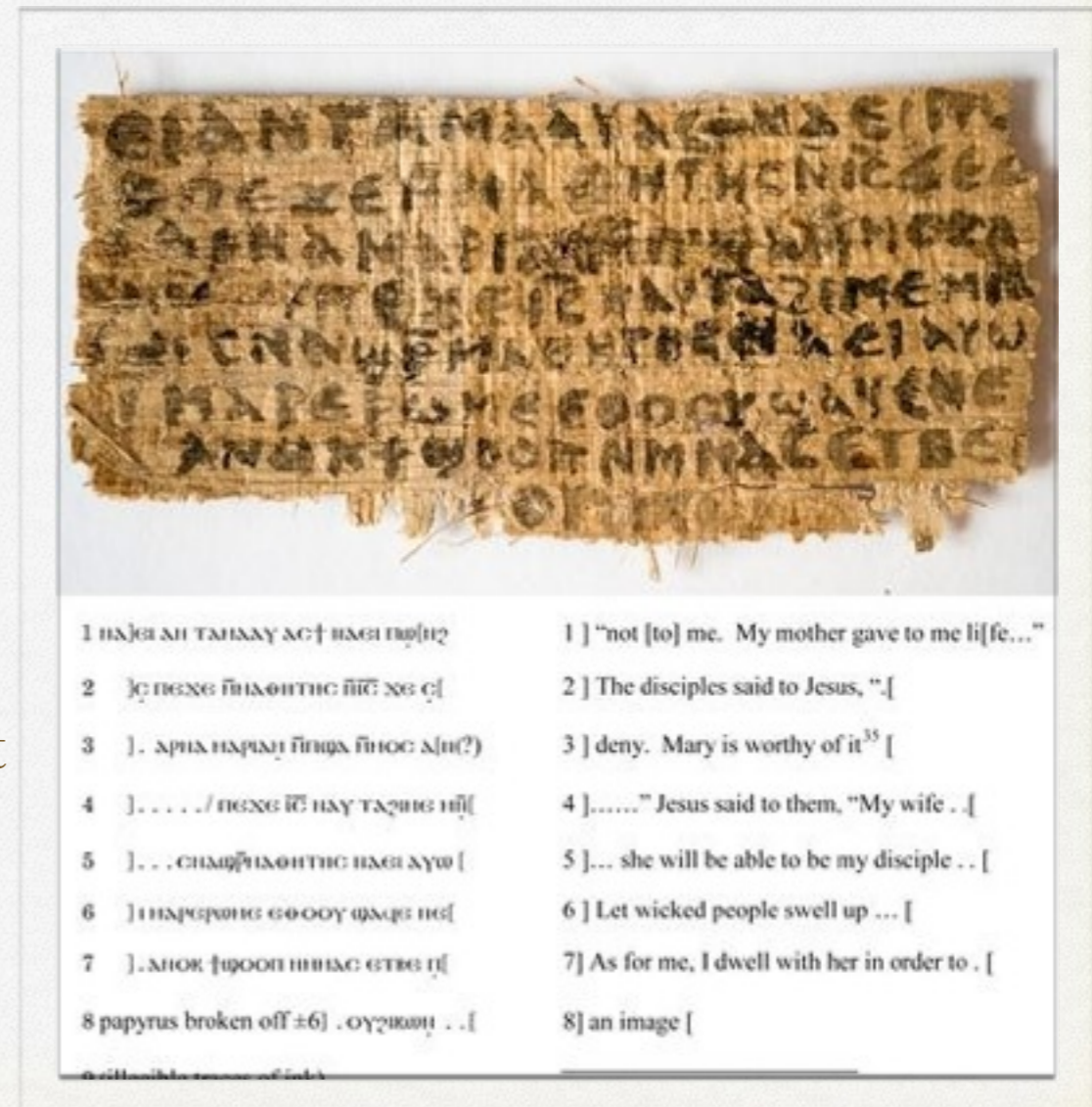
✿ “More radically still, have two hundred years of historical criticism not shown us that the gospels themselves are essentially ancient hoaxes, that is, that they represent the views and agendas of the communities that produced them put in the mouth of a Jesus who probably said very little of this?”

✿ How is what Smith did, then *really* that different from say, what the authors of John or Matthew did?” — Kripal



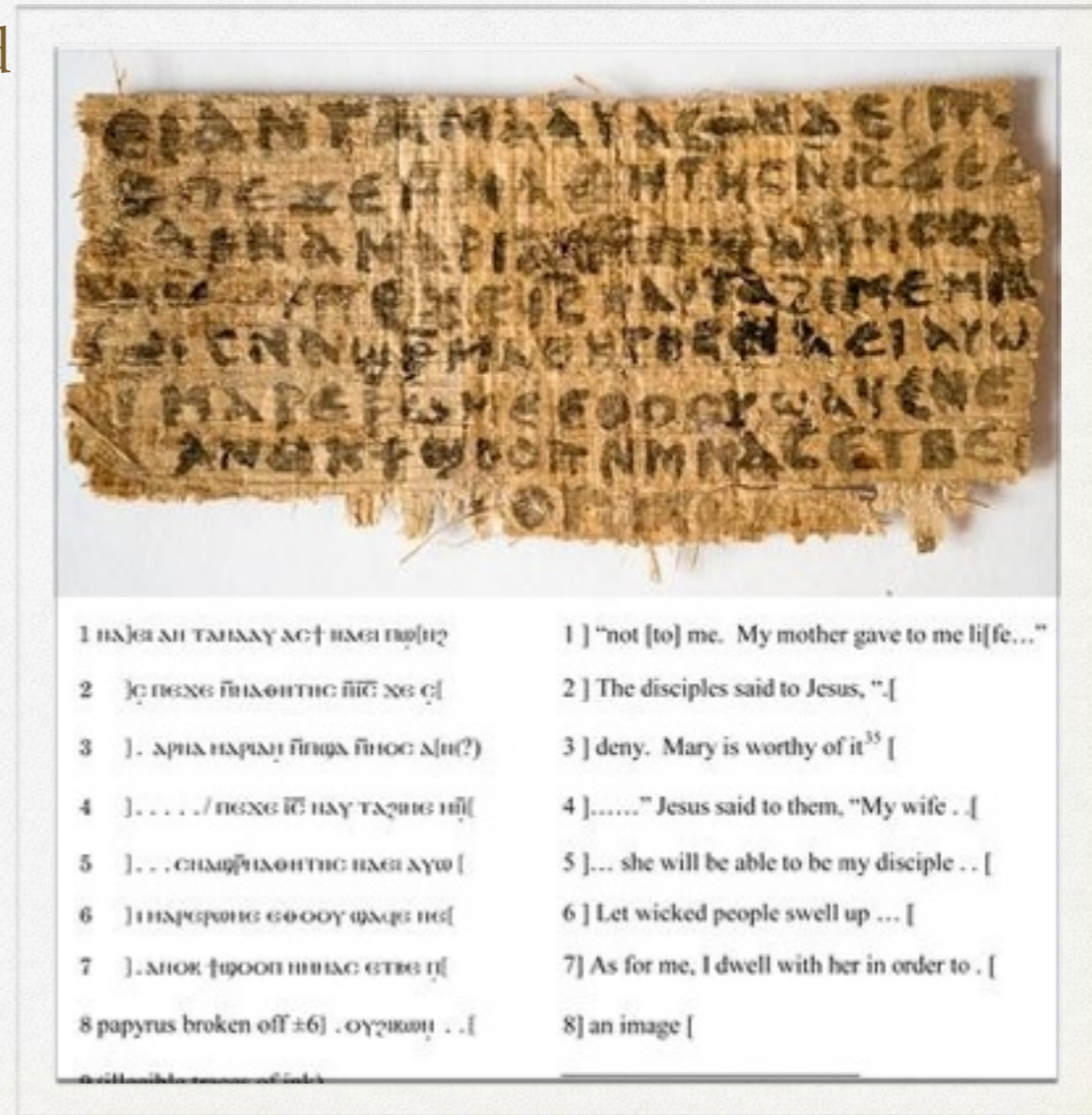
GOSPEL OF JESUS' WIFE

- ✦ Karen King's analysis of the fragment published in January 2013 issue of *Harvard Theological Review*
- ✦ Collector provided King with a letter from the early 1980s indicating that Professor Gerhard Fecht from the faculty of Egyptology at the Free University in Berlin believed it to be evidence for a possible marriage of Jesus.
- ✦ When the owner first contacted her about the papyrus, in 2010, "didn't believe it was authentic and told him I wasn't interested."
- ✦ Owner persistent. In December 2011, King invited him to bring it to Harvard.



GOSPEL OF JESUS' WIFE

- ❖ In March 2012, King carried the fragment to New York to be authenticated (ink had penetrated and interacted with the papyrus — likely authenticity).
- ❖ Little is known about the discovery of the fragment. Believed to have come from Egypt because it is written in Coptic, “fragment this damaged probably came from an ancient garbage heap like all of the earliest scraps of the New Testament.”
- ❖ Since there is writing on both sides of the fragment, it clearly belongs to an ancient book, or codex, not a scroll.

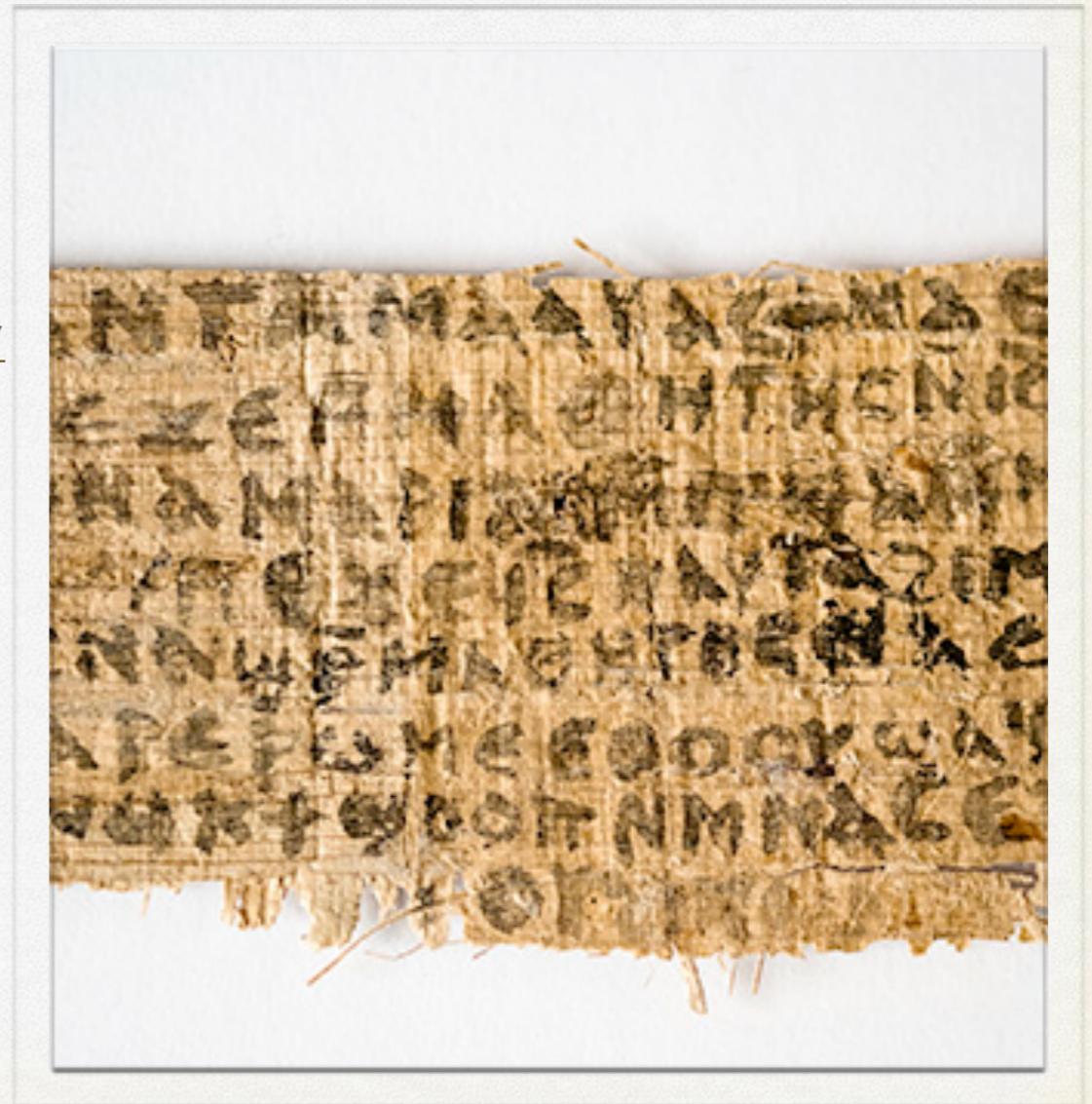


THE GOSPEL OF JESUS' WIFE

<http://www.hds.harvard.edu/faculty-research/research-projects/the-gospel-of-jesus-wife>

VIDEO

FAQ



GOSPEL OF JESUS' WIFE: LARRY HURTADO'S QUESTIONS

- ❖ **November 14, 2013:** Emeritus Biblical scholar **Larry Hurtado** (University of Edinburgh, Scotland): asked for an update about the so-called “Jesus’ wife” fragment announced to the world in late summer 2012. As of a month later, despite direct inquiry to Prof. King (the email address listed for her no longer valid) and asking several scholars who were in various ways directly involved in the analysis of the item last year, it has proven impossible to get anything further than the last notice about it given in early 2013, that it was undergoing further “tests”.
- ❖ We do know that the article on the fragment by Prof. King on the fragment announced as forthcoming in Harvard Theological Review was put on hold, and, so far as one can tell, seems now likely permanently so (i.e., it isn’t going to appear). It also seems that the TV program in preparation last year has been cancelled.
- ❖ No one has accused Prof. King of having any involvement in the production of the item, so let that be emphasized. If it is a fake, she was taken in, not guilty of anything else. These things can happen, and have happened before. Just think of the notorious case of the “Hitler Diaries” and poor Hugh Trevor-Roper! In the case of the “Hitler Diaries,” Der Spiegel and Trevor-Roper acknowledged that they’d been taken in, and got it initially wrong.

NEXT CLASS

- ❖ **Chapter 5, “At Polar Ends of the Spectrum: Early Christian Ebionites and Marcionites”**
- ❖ **Chapter 6, “Christians ‘In the Know’: The Worlds of Early Christian Gnosticism”**