

BANNED
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE



LOST CHRISTIANITIES

& Banned Biblical Books

Next Class Topic? (Spring 2014)

(1) What would *you* be most likely to take/attend?

(2) Mondays or Tuesdays?

-
- **"Banned Questions of the Bible"** - Explore the questions mainstream scholars ask about the Bible that aren't always asked in religious communities. Feel more equipped to read the Bible for yourself:
 - basic biblical background and history,
 - diverse methods of biblical interpretation,
 - major content and themes.
 - Compare modern readings with those of the Bible's earliest interpreters.
 - **"World Religions"**
 1. Religious Responses / Indigenous Sacred Ways Class
 2. "Hinduism / Jainism / Buddhism"
 3. Daoism and Confucianism / Shinto / Sikhism
 4. Part 1, "Judaism / Christianity / Islam"
 5. Part 2, "Judaism / Christianity / Islam"
 6. New Religious Movements / Religion in the Twenty-First Century
 - **Other?**

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS' WIFE

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

VIDEO

FAQ



Housekeeping

- Slides: frederickuu.org/about/Lost_Christianities
- **Attendance** for FCC
- Add to **email** list? **[CORRECT BOUNCES]**
- **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.”**



MONDAYS, 11AM-12:25PM

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*"

✱ **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"**

✱ **October 28:** Chapter 3, "Discovery of an Ancient Forgery: The Coptic Gospel of Thomas"; Chapter 7, "On the Road to Nicea: The Broad Swath of Proto-orthodox Christianity"; Chapter 8, "The Quest for Orthodoxy"

✱ **November 4:** Chapter 9, "The Arsenal of the Conflicts: Polemical Treatises and Personal Slurs"; Chapter 10, "Additional Weapons in the Polemical Arsenal: Forgeries and Falsifications"

✱ **November 11:** Chapter 11, "The Invention of Scripture: The Formation of the Proto-orthodox

CHAPTER 5***

At Polar Ends of the Spectrum: Ebionites & Marcionites

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JESUS WAS JEWISH***

PAUL,
the LAW,
and the
JEWISH
PEOPLE

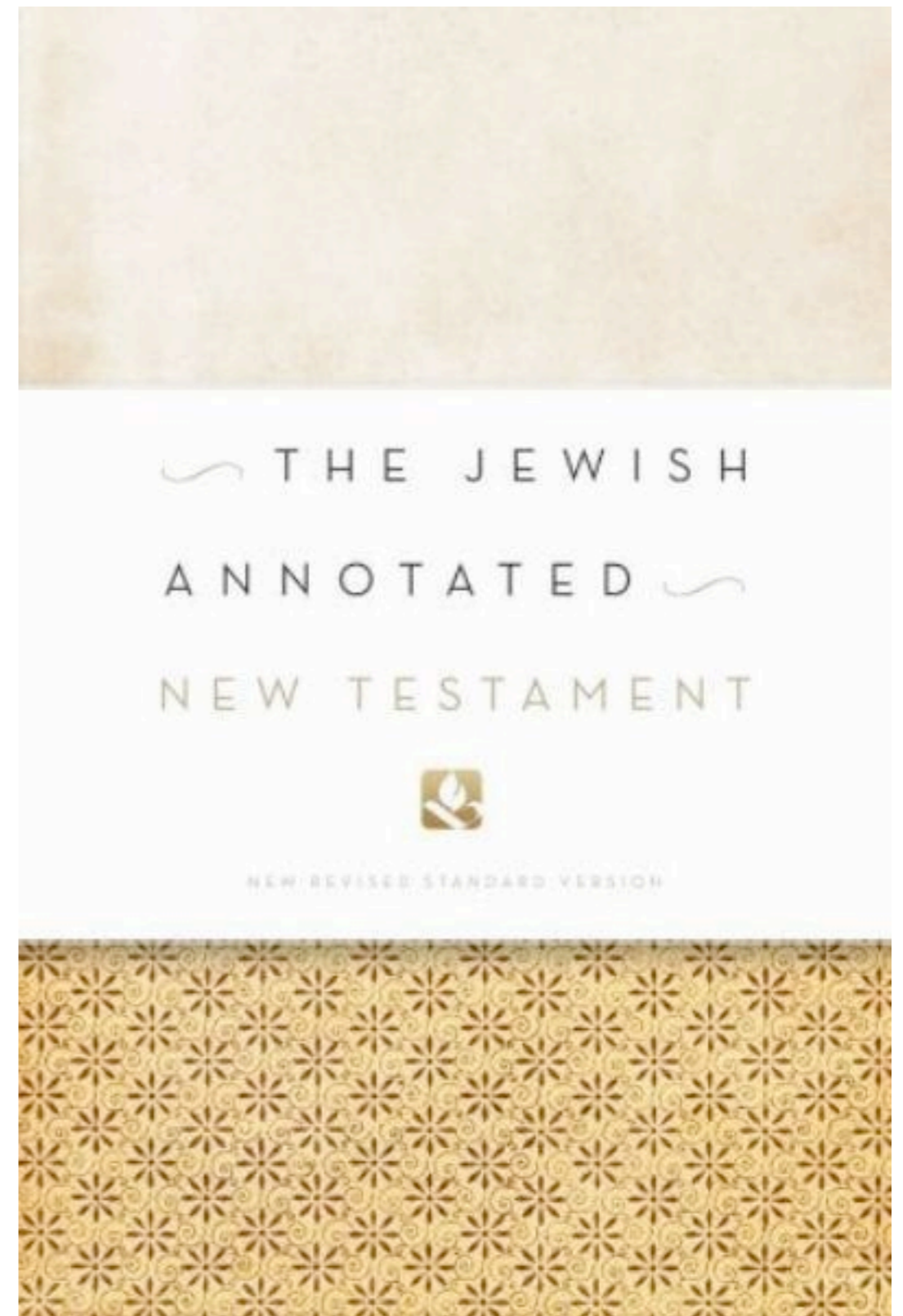
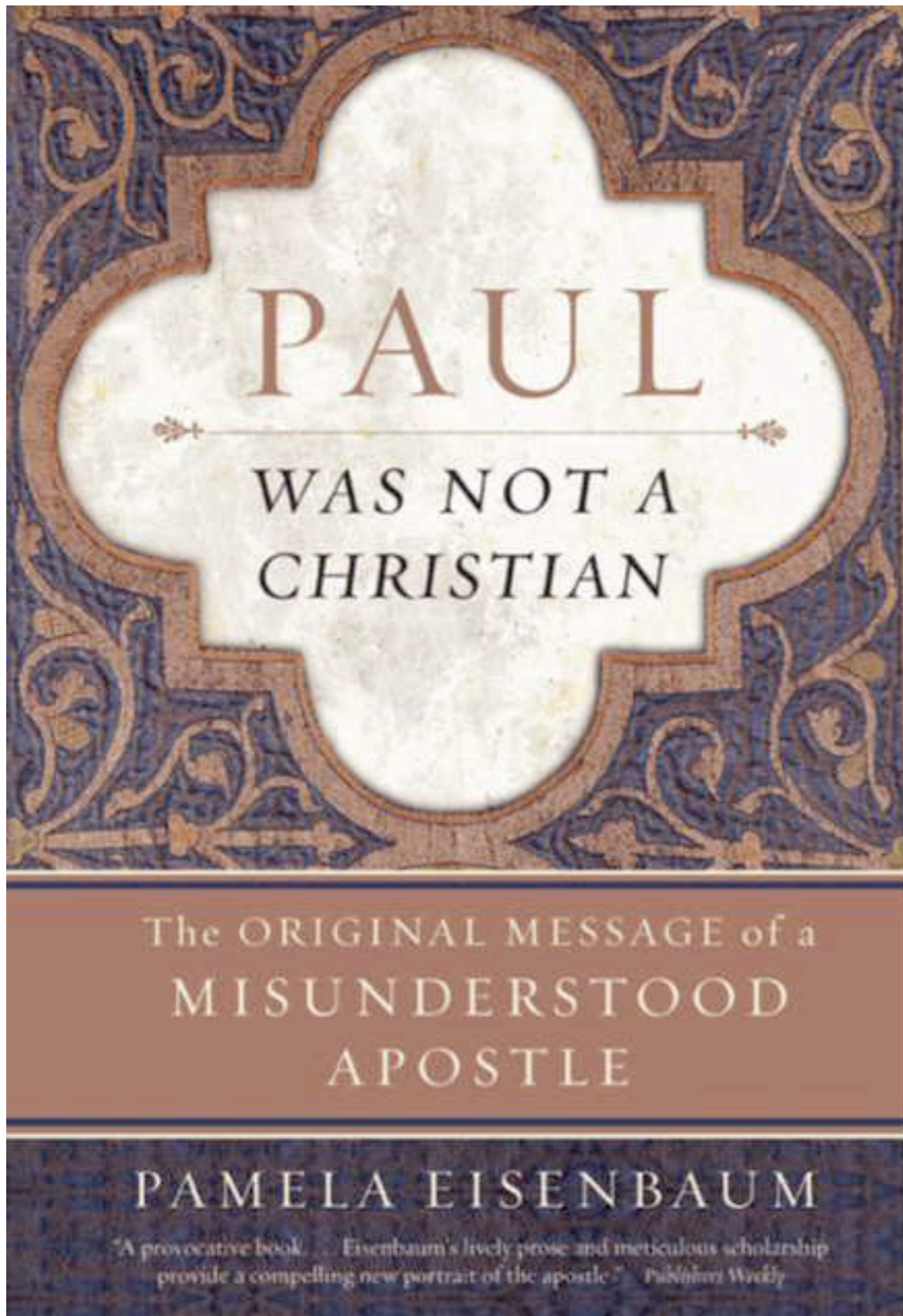
1977

E.P. SANDERS

JESUS
and
Judaism

WINNER OF THE 1990
LOUISVILLE GRAWEMEYER

1985



Amy-Jill Levine

GALATIANS 2:11-14

11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; 12 for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. 13 And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

EBIONITES:

CHRISTIANS WHO WOULD BE JEWS

- * Tertullian: founder was “Ebion” [*probably legend*]... widely used by proto-orthodox as if one group, but quite possibly many groups with different views/theologies/practices, etc.
- * Origen: from Hebrew *ebyon* (“poor”) [*more likely*: b/c accepted the early Christian policy of giving away their possessions for others and so took on lives of voluntary poverty.]
- * Self-understanding: Jewish followers of Jesus
- * Apostolic tradition: through Peter and James
- * Canon: kept OT, rejected Paul, loved Matthew

THE (3?) “JEWISH-CHRISTIAN” GOSPELS

- ✱ **No extant manuscripts** (even small fragments)
- ✱ **Instead: quotations** by church fathers [*relate/attack...not always accurately*]
- ✱ Origen,
- ✱ Didymus the Blind,
- ✱ Jerome,
- ✱ Epiphanius

THE (3?) “JEWISH-CHRISTIAN” GOSPELS

Ancient View

- ✿ All (3?) only **one** book
*(called something like
“Gospel according to the Hebrews”)*
- ✿ originally Aramaic (or Hebrew) altered version of Matthew

Modern View

- ✿ 2-3 Gospels:
 - (1) Gospel of the Nazareans,
 - (2) Gospel of the Ebionites,
 - (3) Gospel according to the Hebrews.
[Hot debate: GoN & GoH the same?!]
- ✿ GoN: Original Composition in Aramaic, based on oral tradition?
- ✿ GoH: Written in Greek

CASE STUDY

Background: In each Synoptic Gospel, the heavenly voice at Jesus' baptism says *different* things.

- ✱ Matthew: “This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased”;
- ✱ Mark: “You are my beloved son, with you I am well pleased”
- ✱ Luke: “You are my son, today I have begotten you.”
- ✱ So...both early (and modern) Christians wondered: what did the voice really say? Which version is right?

GOSPEL OF THE EBIONITES

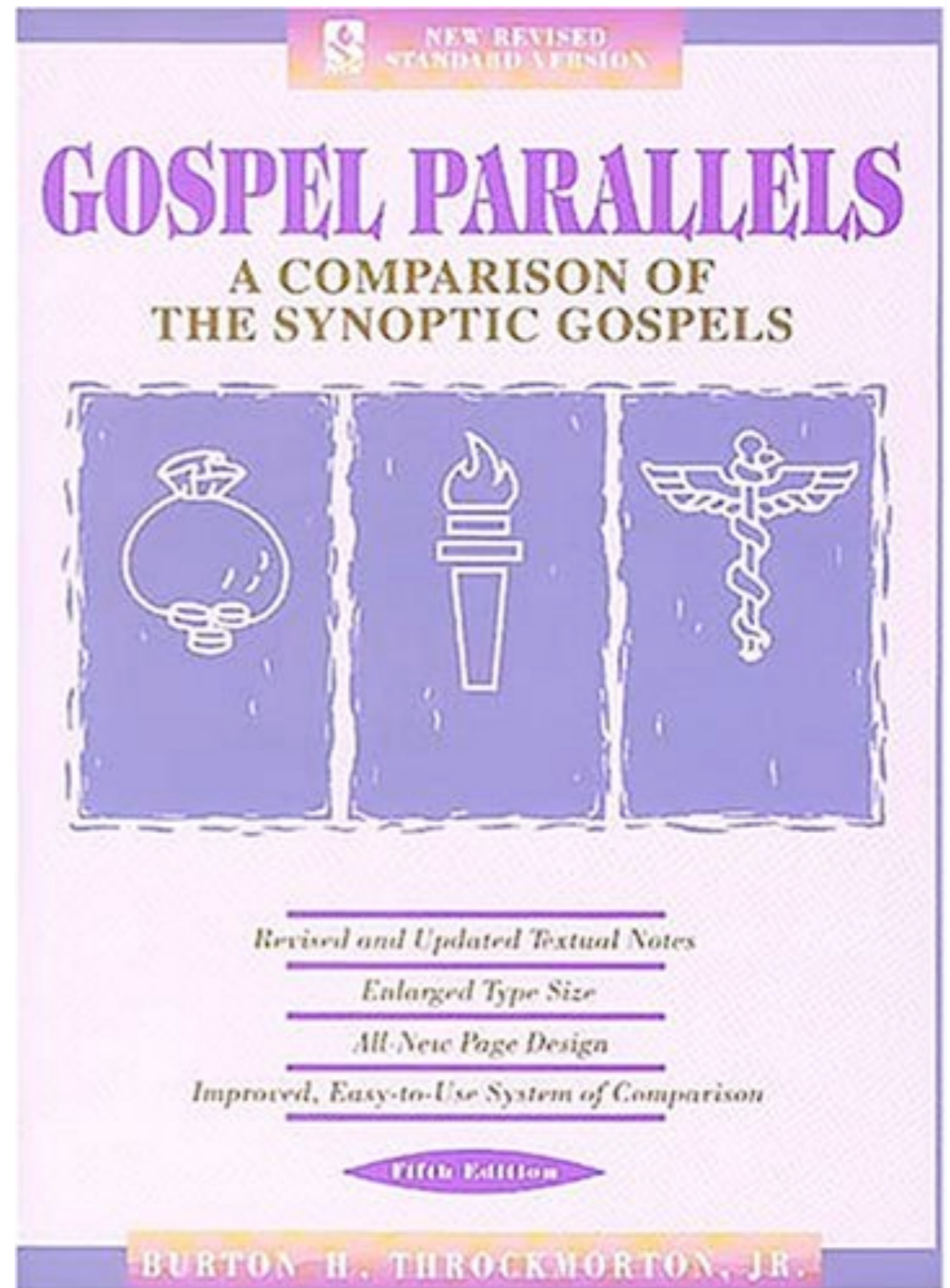
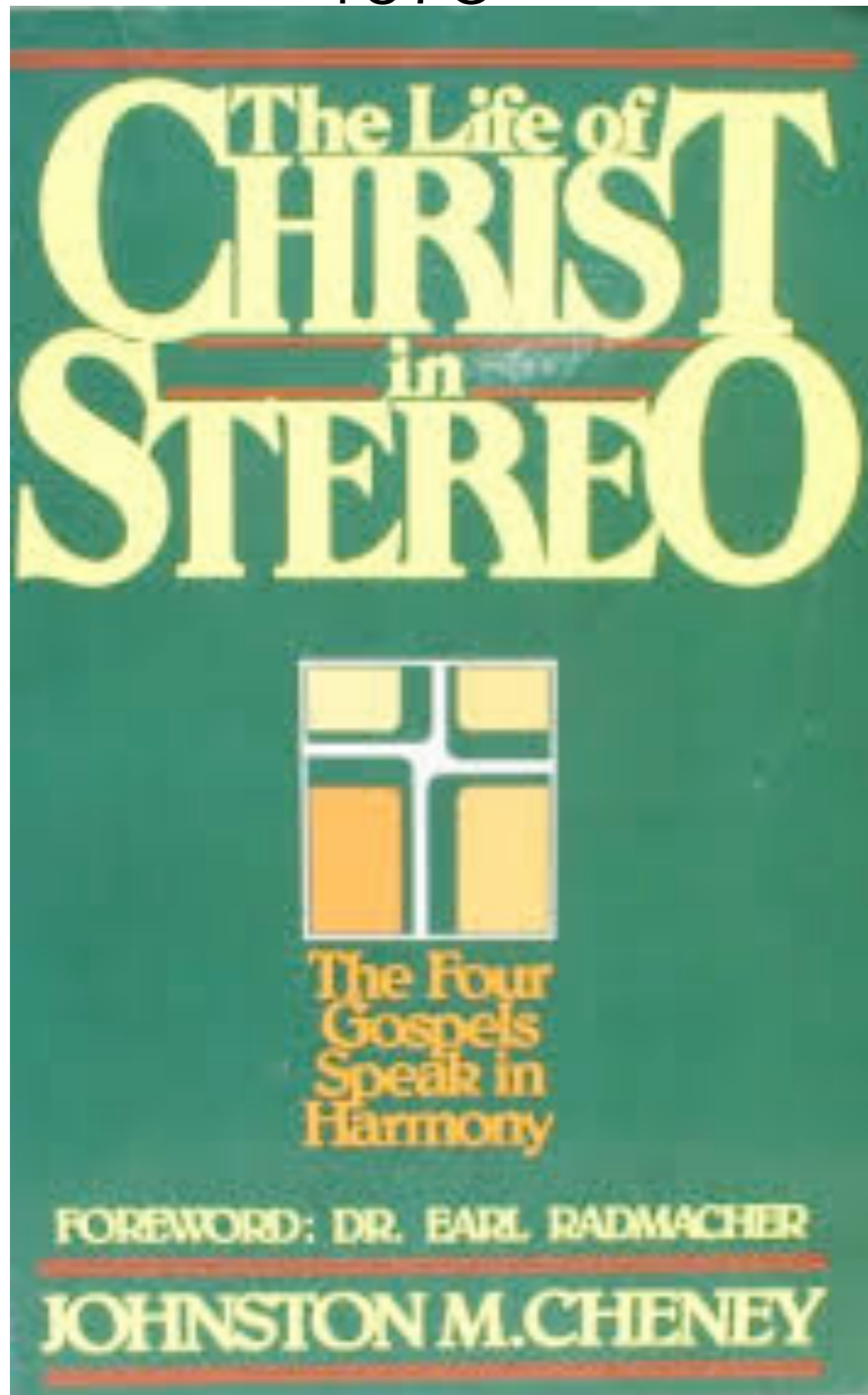
- ✿ 7-8 quotations total.
- ✿ Found *only* in Epiphanius (late 4th-century church father)
- ✿ Epiphanius known for his 80-book refutation of every heresy of which he was aware. Called the *Panarion* (“medicine chest”) because he provides the antidote for the bites of the serpents of heresy)
- ✿ heresiologist (“heresy-hunter”).
- ✿ Lost Christianity: How long was the GoE? What else did it say? What was its theological slant? Etc, etc., etc.

“HARMONY”?

ALL 3 QUOTES RIGHT???

And after a good deal more, [The Gospel of the Ebionites] says: “When the people were baptized, Jesus also came and was baptized by John. When he came up out of the water, the heavens opened and he saw the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, descending and entering him. And a voice came from heaven, **‘You are my beloved Son, in you I am well pleased.’** Then it said, **‘Today I have given you birth.’** Immediately a great light enlightened the place. When John saw this,” it says, “he said to him, Who are you Lord?” Yet again a voice came from heaven to him, **‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’** And then,” it says, “John fell before him and said, ‘I beg you, Lord — you baptize me!’ But Jesus restrained him by saying, ‘Let it be, for it is fitting that all things be fulfilled in this way.’” (*Epiphanius, Panarion, 30, 13, 3-4*)

1973



- Harmonies...ancient *and* modern
- Diatessaron* (c 160–175) by Tatian
- Respect integrity of the biblical authors? And of ancient canon? (Or imposing *own* need for harmony?)

MORE *FROM* EPIPHANIUS *QUOTING* THE GOSPEL OF THE EBIONITES

“And so John was baptizing, and Pharisees came out to him and were baptized, as was all of Jerusalem. John wore a garment of camel hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was wild honey that tasted like manna, like a cake cooked in olive oil.” (*Epiphanius, Panarion, 30, 13, 4-5*)

- ✿ *Not “locusts and honey” . . .but “pancake”?!*
- ✿ Greek: locusts = **AKRIDES**; pancake = **EGKRIDES**
[Locusts were both kosher and eaten in antiquity]

MOTIVATION:
OMNIVORE TO VEGETARIAN???

Epiphanius: “They have changed the saying by abandoning its true sequence, as is clear to everyone who considers the combination of the words. For they had the disciples say, ‘Where do you want us make preparations for you to eat the Passover lamb?’: And they made him respond, ‘I have no desire to eat the meat of this Passover lamb with you.’” (*Epiphanius, Panarion, 30, 22, 4*).

- ✿ Anti-Jewish OR *Anti-meat?* (Projecting later views onto Jesus and John) [c.f. Jesus in Mark 7: “All foods clean” vs. Peter’s vision and later debates]
- ✿ Some ancient Jews were *vegetarians* to ensure kosher (*vs. accidentally eating unkosher meat*)

ONE MORE QUOTE OF EPIPHANIUS FROM THE GOSPEL OF THE EBIONITES

“And, as found in their Gospel, they say that when he came he taught, ‘I have come to destroy the sacrifices. And if you do not stop making sacrifice, God’s wrath will not stop afflicting you.’” (*Epiphanius, Panarion, 30, 16, 4-5*).

- ✱ Why would Jewish Christians intent on keeping the Jewish law *insist* that Jewish sacrifices be stopped?
- ✱ Book of Hebrews: Jesus was the perfect, final sacrifice (*no more needed*) . . . but this would be *Jesus himself* saying it.
- ✱ Thus, was 70CE destruction of Temple part of God’s plan?
- ✱ Circumcision/Sabbath/kosher foods, etc., BUT against others who didn’t recognizing the alterations in the religion that (*they believed*) the Jewish messiah, Jesus, had brought???

*ONE MORE QUOTE OF EPIPHANIUS FROM
THE GOSPEL OF THE EBIONITES*

- ✿ Answer?
- ✿ We can only speculated based on these 7-8 quotes
- ✿ Lost Christianities!

MARCIONITES: REJECT ALL THINGS JEWISH***

- * Contemporaries of Ebionites (less “disincentives”)
- * Docetic (Jesus only “seemed” human)
- * Loved Paul (Romans 8:3, “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh.”)

AT POLAR ENDS OF THE SPECTRUM

Ebionites

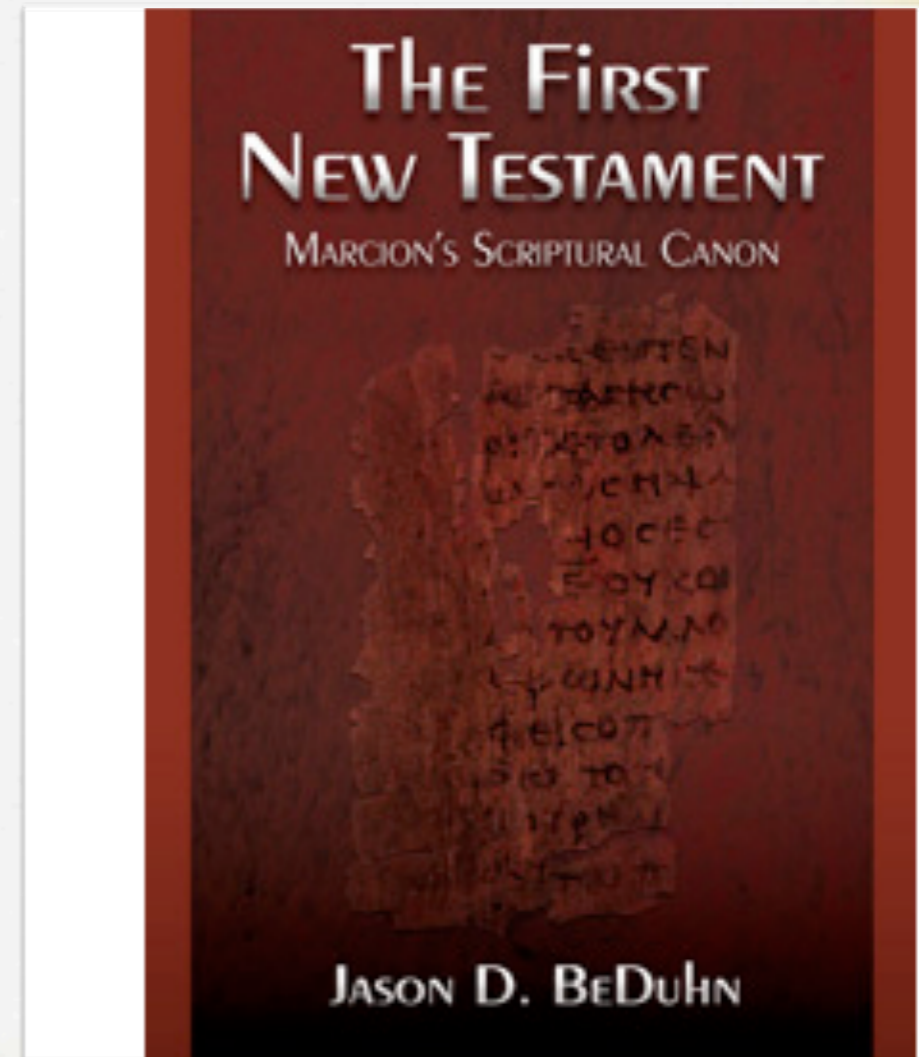
- * Jewish
- * One God
- * Followed the OT Law
- * Jesus all human
- * Paul as heretic (*Christ apart from Law*)

Marcionites

- * Don't need to be Jewish
- * Two Gods
- * Rejected OT
- * Jesus all divine
- * Loved Paul

THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT: MARCION'S SCRIPTURAL CANON

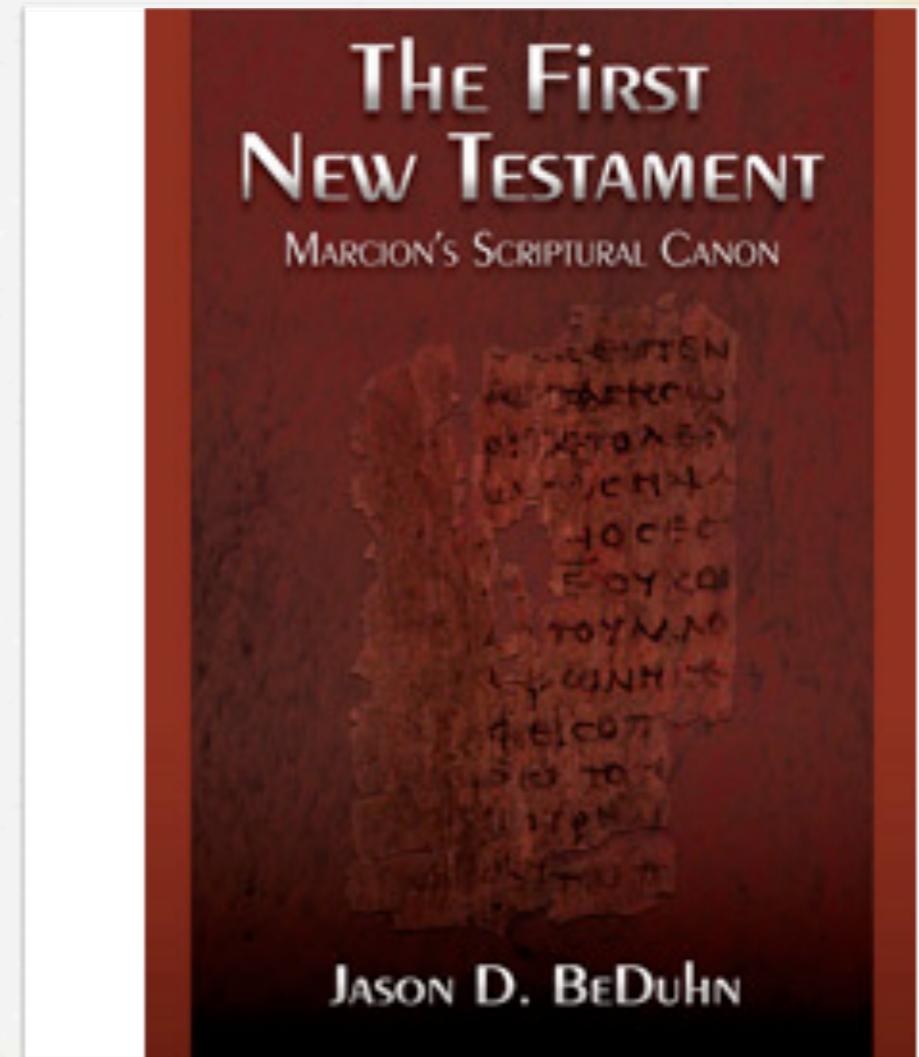
- * Earliest version of the New Testament, now in English for the first time.
- * History preserves the name of the person responsible for the first New Testament, the circumstances surrounding his work, and even the date he decided to build a textual foundation for his fledgling Christian community.
- * Marcion, like his father before him, was a bishop. He came from Sinope in Asia Minor and was active in Rome from about 125-150.



2013

THE FIRST NEW TESTAMENT: MARCION'S SCRIPTURAL CANON

- ✦ Marcion proposed a theology that contrasted a God of love with the Hebrew God of judgment.
- ✦ Rejecting the old Jewish testament, he constructed a canon of Christian writings that consisted of a single gospel and an edited version of the letters of Paul.
- ✦ For his understanding of God and rejection of the Hebrew scriptures, Marcion was eventually expelled from Rome and returned to Asia Minor.
- ✦ But his church survived and thrived for several centuries.

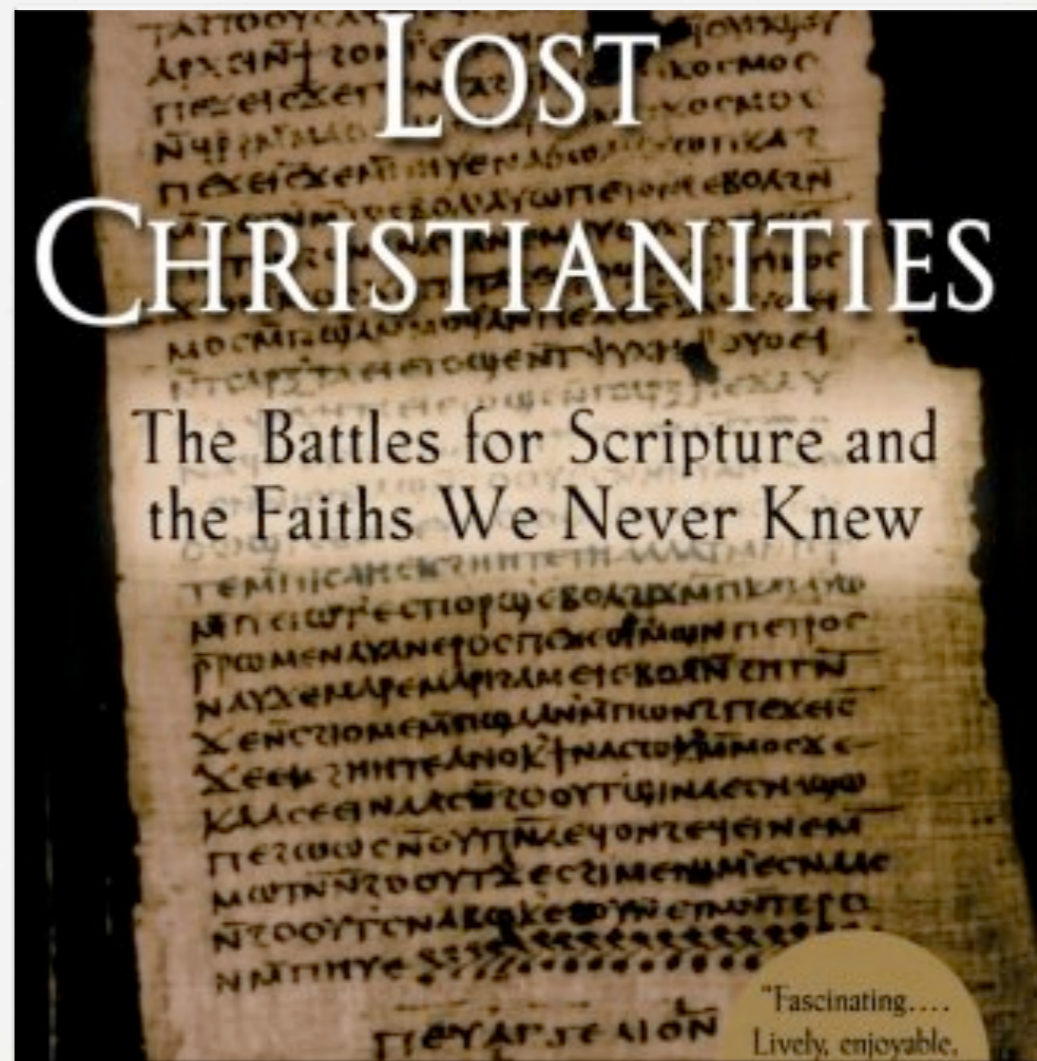


CHAPTER 6

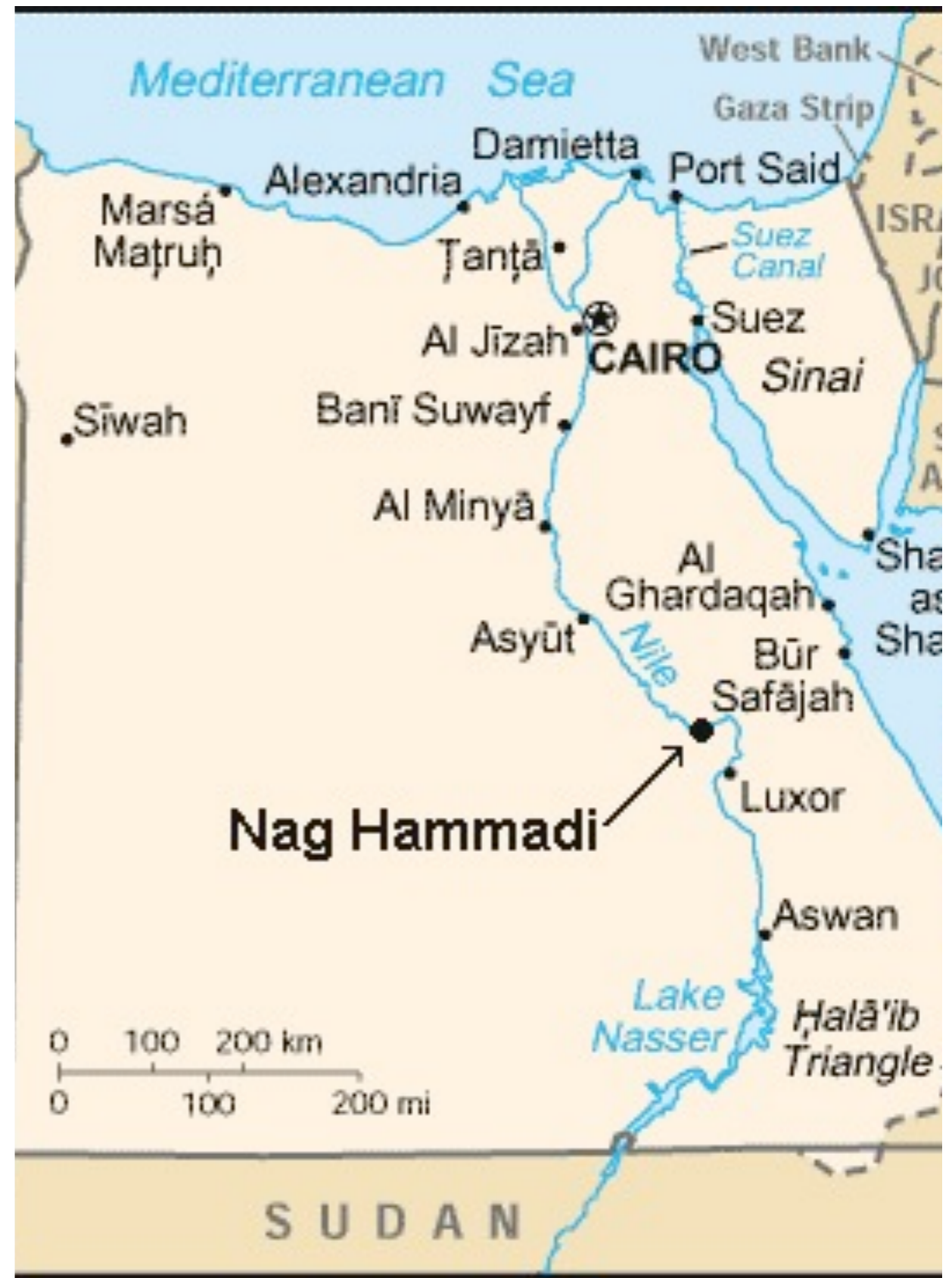
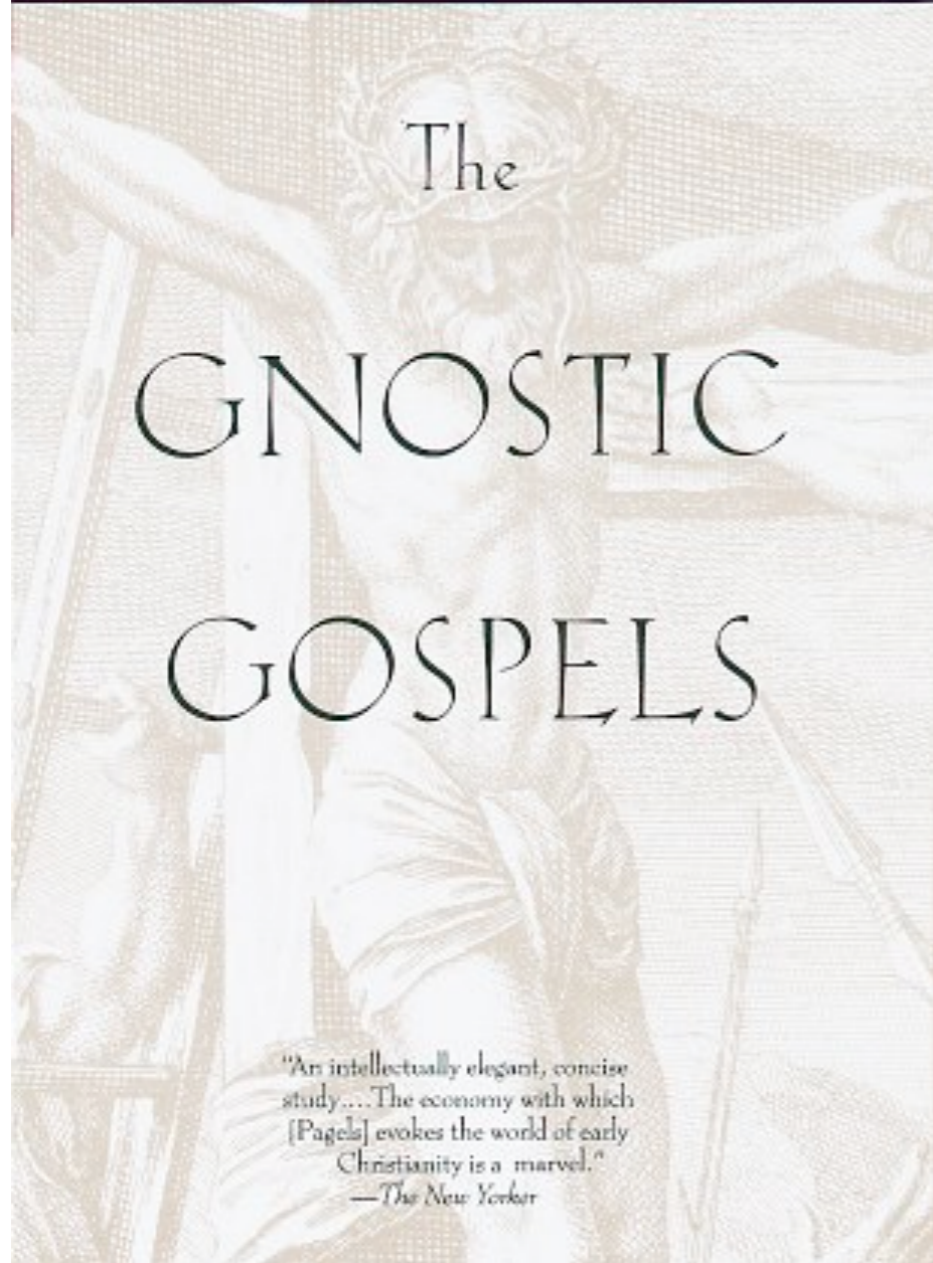
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No form of lost Christianity has so intrigued modern readers and befuddled modern scholars as early Christian Gnosticism.... There was no Jesus of the stained glass window here, nor a Jesus of the creeds—not even a Jesus of the New Testament. (113)



ELAINE PAGELS



1945



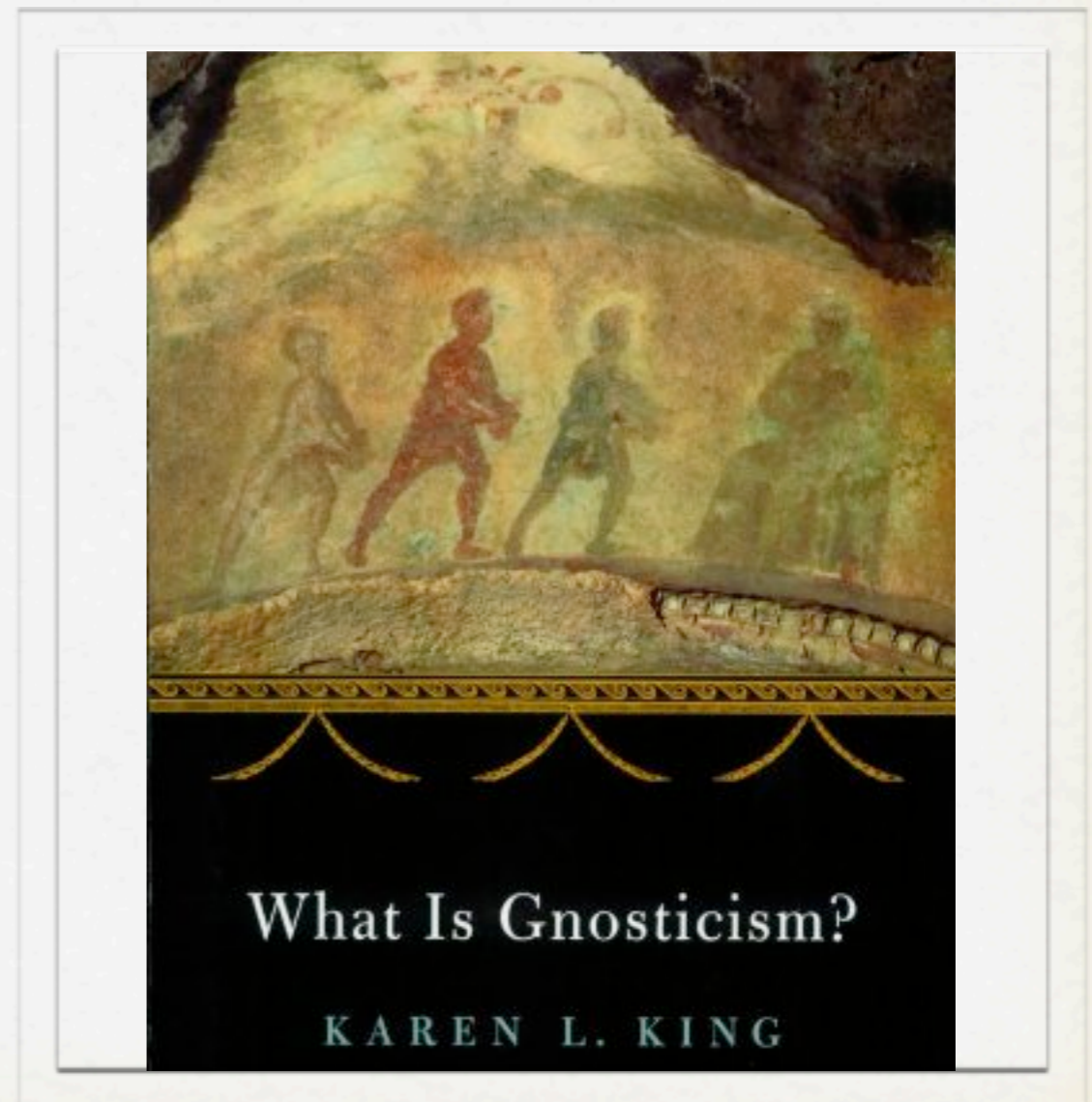
The Nag Hammadi Codices



1945

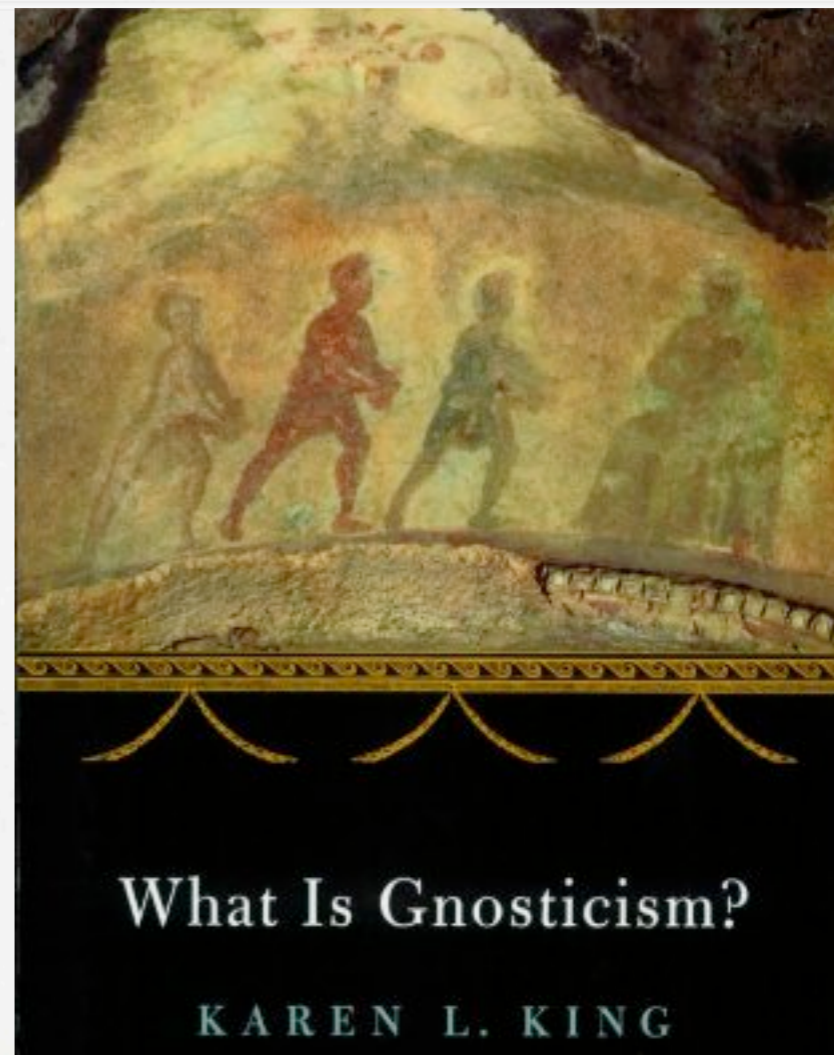
GNOSTICISM

- ✿ Gnosis - “knowledge”
- ✿ Monolithic?
- ✿ Irenaeus: *Against Heresies* (c. 180 CE)
- ✿ Tertullian (20 years later)
- ✿ Hippolytus: *Refutation of All Heresies*
- ✿ “Insidious” (“enemy within”)



GNOSTIC BELIEFS

- ✱ **Dualistic** - anti-material world (“Demiurge”)
- ✱ **Secret Gnosis**
- ✱ **Spiritualized** many Christian tenets



✿ Slides: *[upload new ones]*

frederickuu.org/about/Lost_Christianities

✿ Q&R

NEXT CLASS

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