

**BANNED**

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE



# LOST CHRISTIANITIES & BANNED BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The Rev. Dr. Carl Gregg



# Next Class Topic? (Spring 2014)

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- **"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.

# Housekeeping

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- Slides: [frederickuu.org/about/Lost\\_Christianities](http://frederickuu.org/about/Lost_Christianities)
- **Attendance** for FCC
- Add to **email** list? **[CORRECT BOUNCES]**
- **Other?**

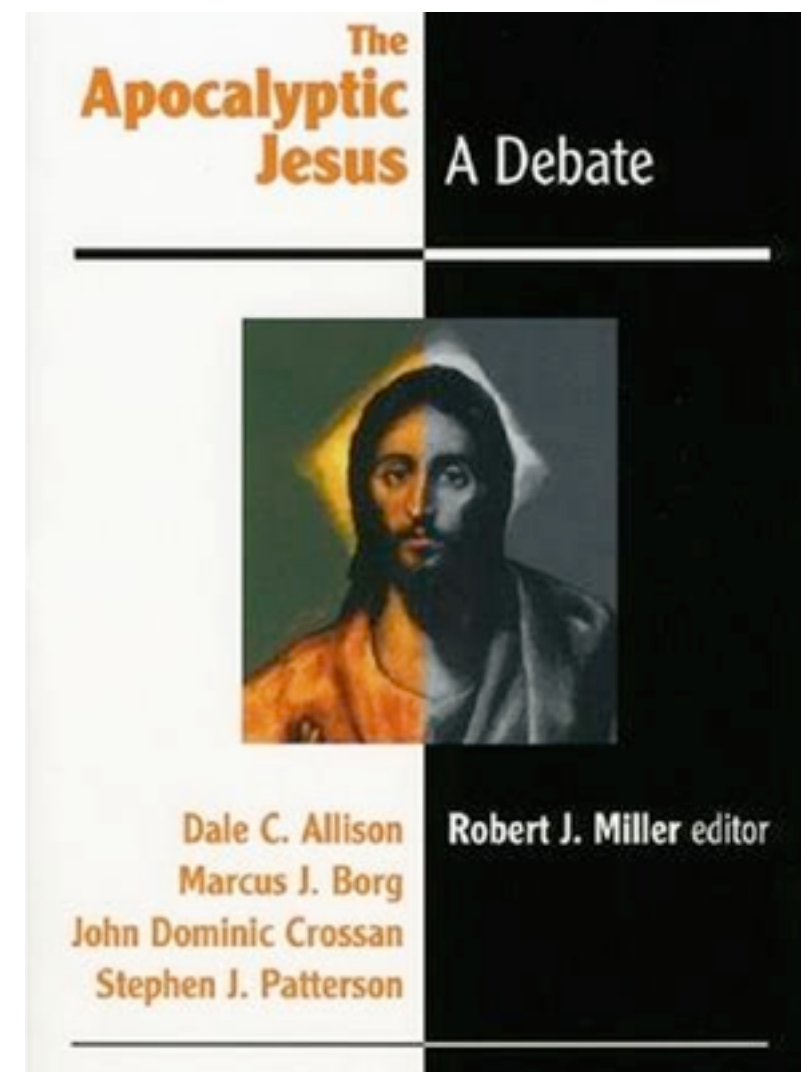
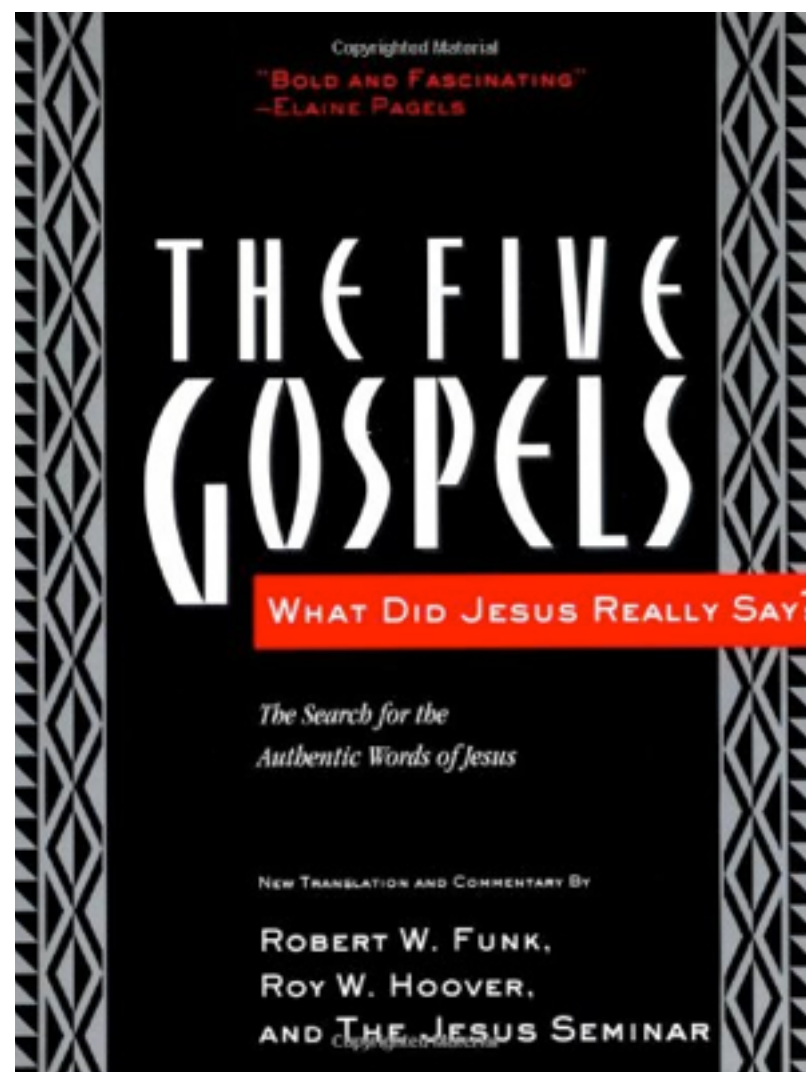
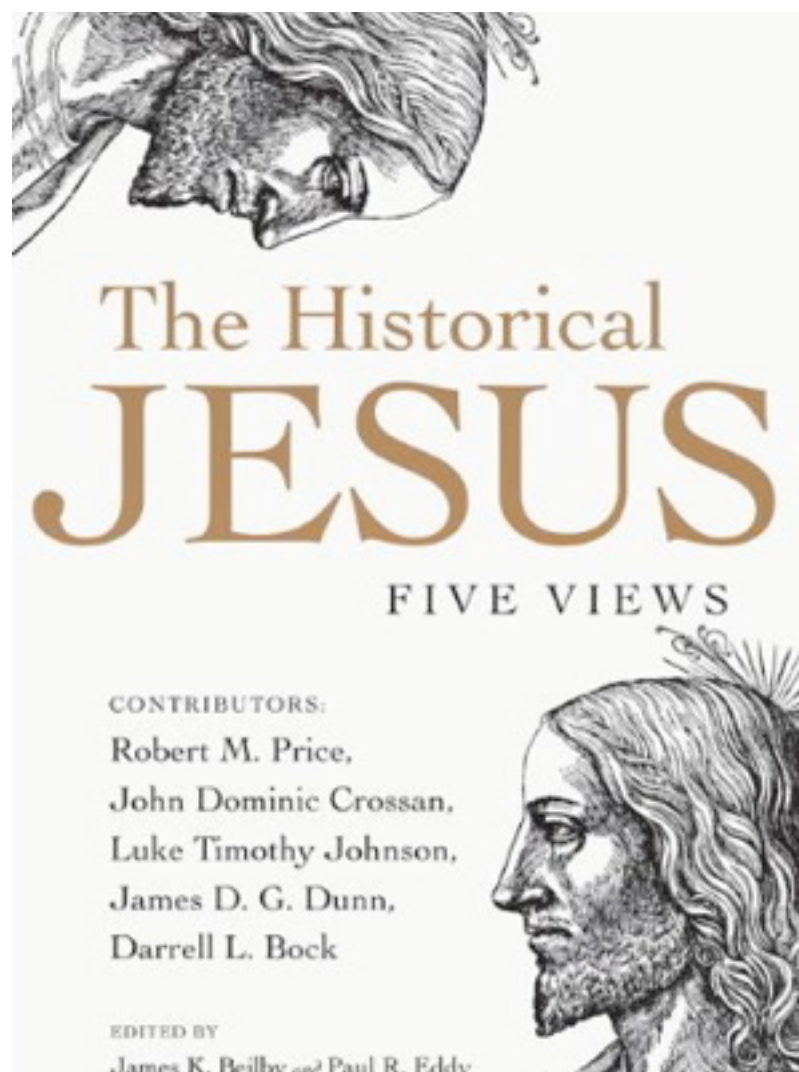
# Covenant

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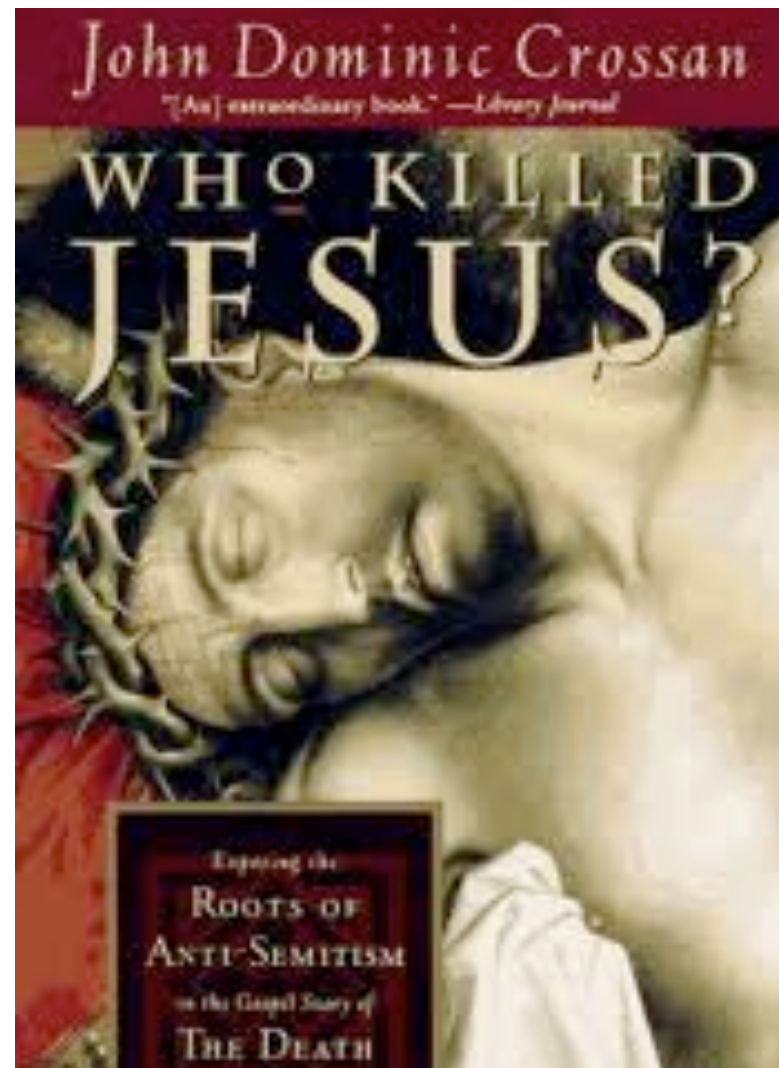
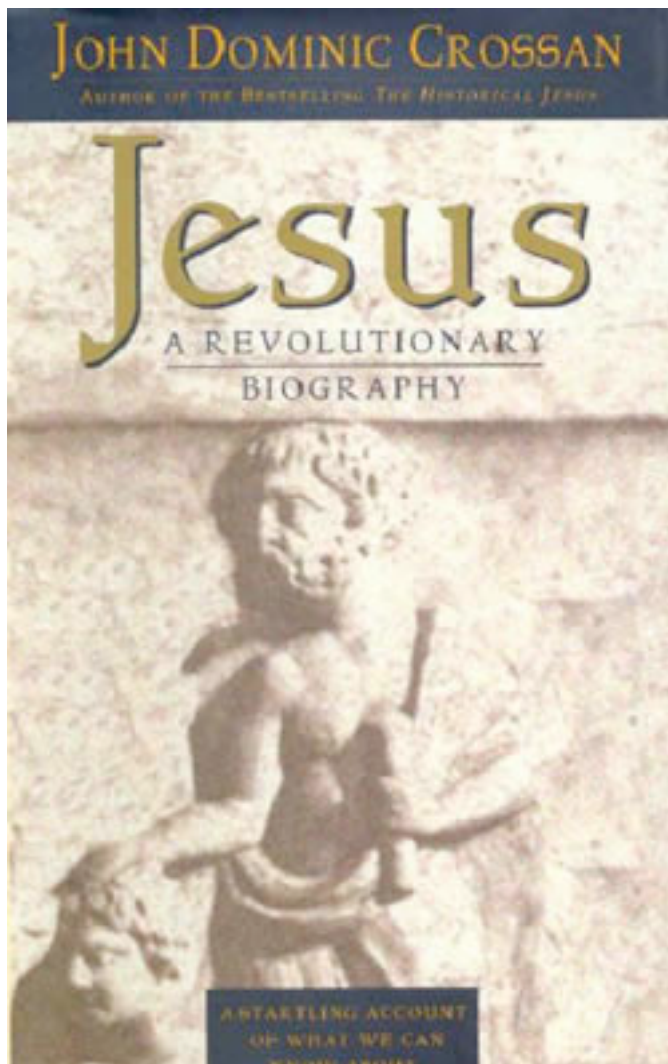
- Use **“I” statements**: *Speak from your own experience.*
- **Ask permission before sharing** other participants’ stories outside the group.
- **Step-up, step-back**: be conscious of the level of participation that you bring to the conversation. Allow everyone a chance to speak before you speak again.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







- John P. Meier vs. J.D. Crossan (Prophecy Historicized vs. History Remembered)



RITA NAKASHIMA BROCK  
and REBECCA ANN PARKER  
**P R O V E R B S  
O F A S H E S**  
VIOLENCE, REDEMPTIVE SUFFERING,  
and THE SEARCH FOR WHAT SAVES US

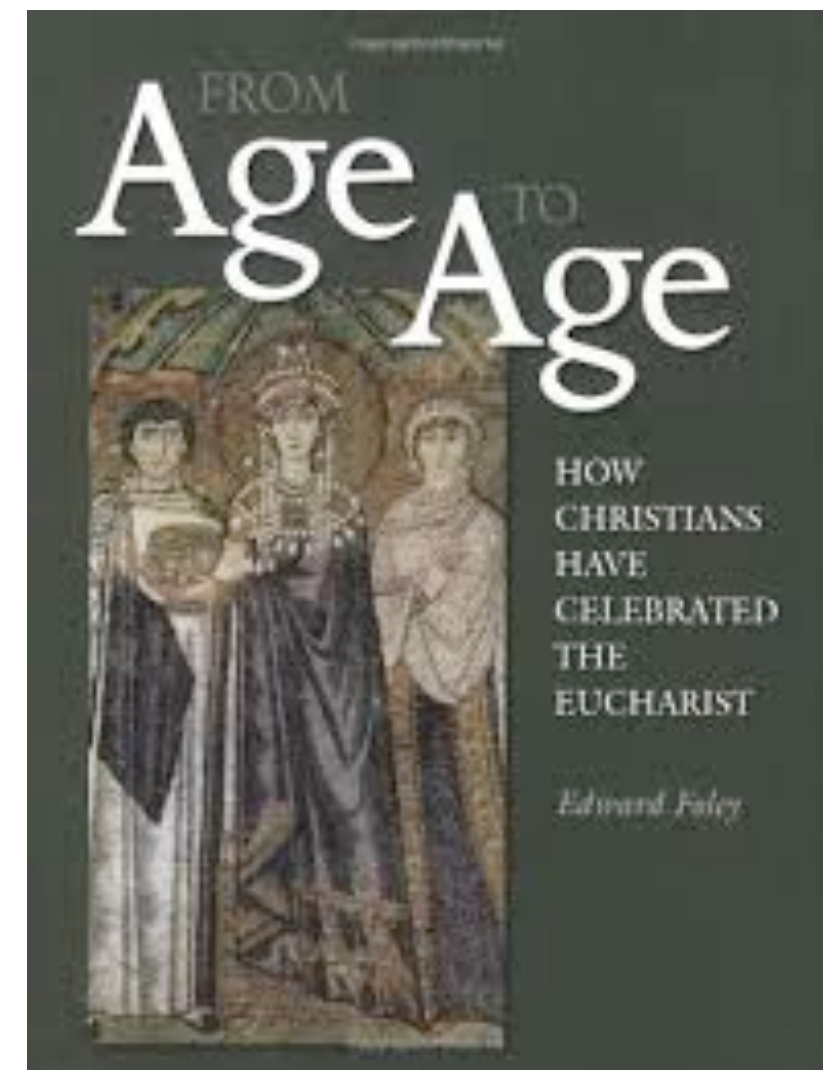
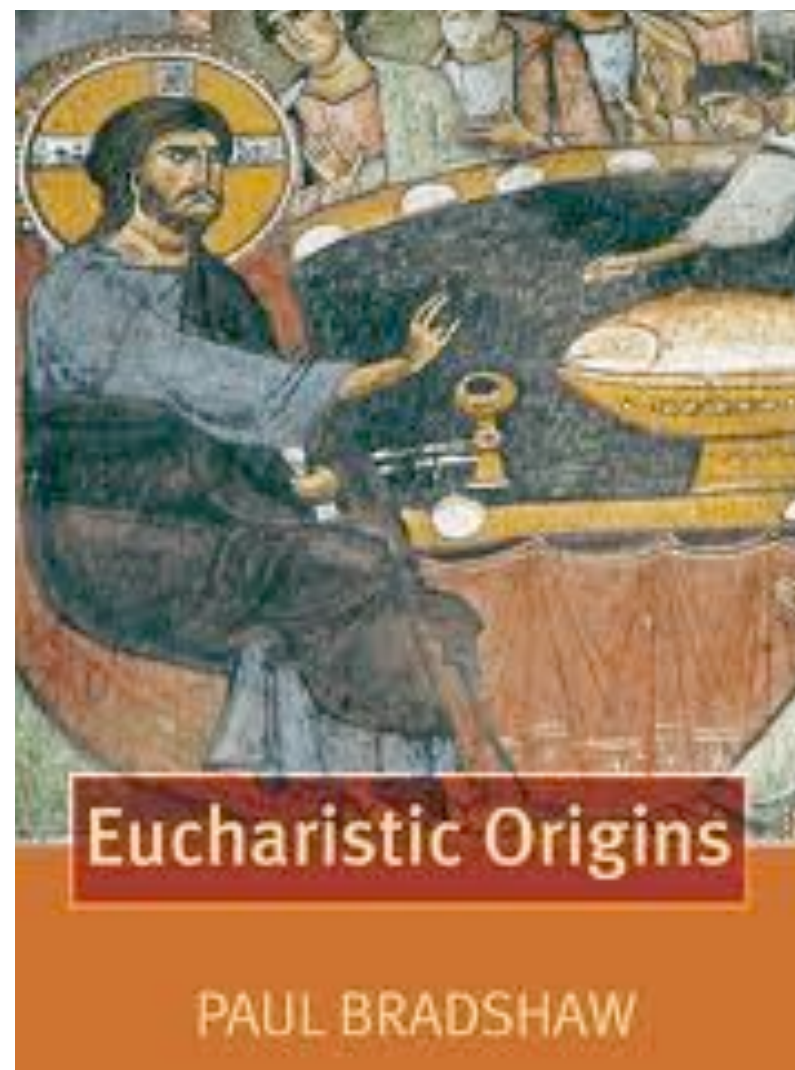
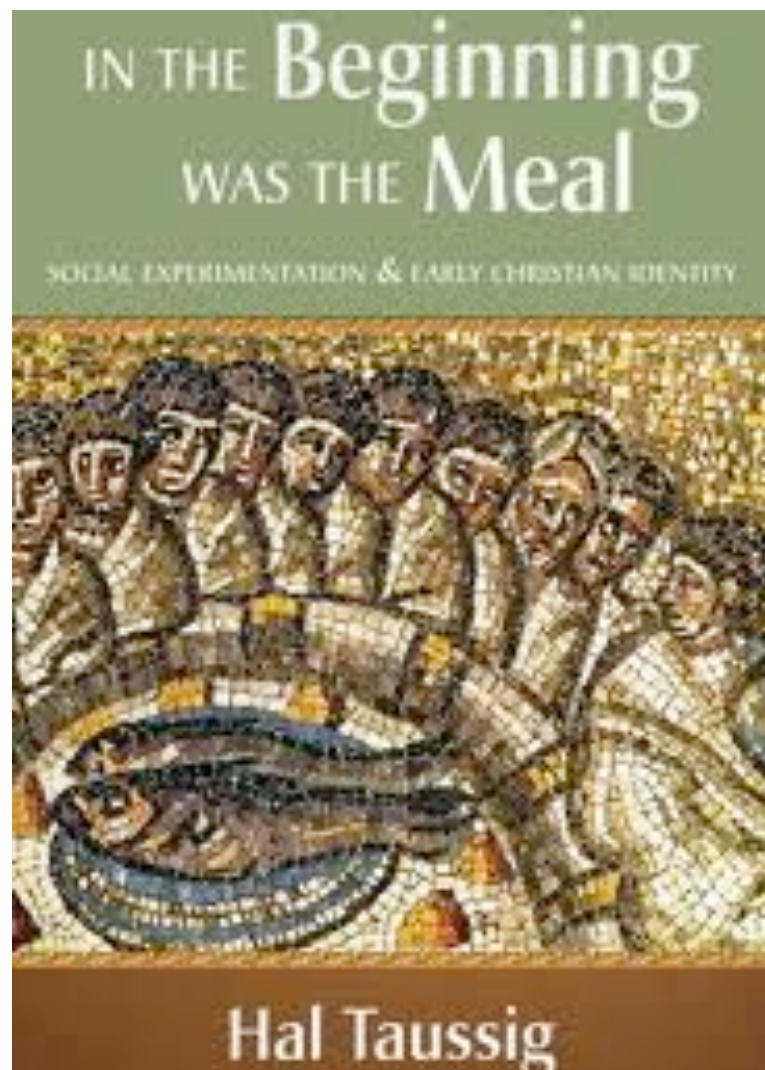


'Poignant and provocative. . . Brock and Parker have written a book of both sorrow and hope, and a blueprint for deeper thinking about the things that matter most.'

ROSEMARY BRAY MCNATT  
Author of *Unfaithful of the Dark*

- *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire* by Rebecca Ann Parker and Rita Nakashima Brock
- *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus, Volume 4: Law and Love* (The Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library) by John P. Meier



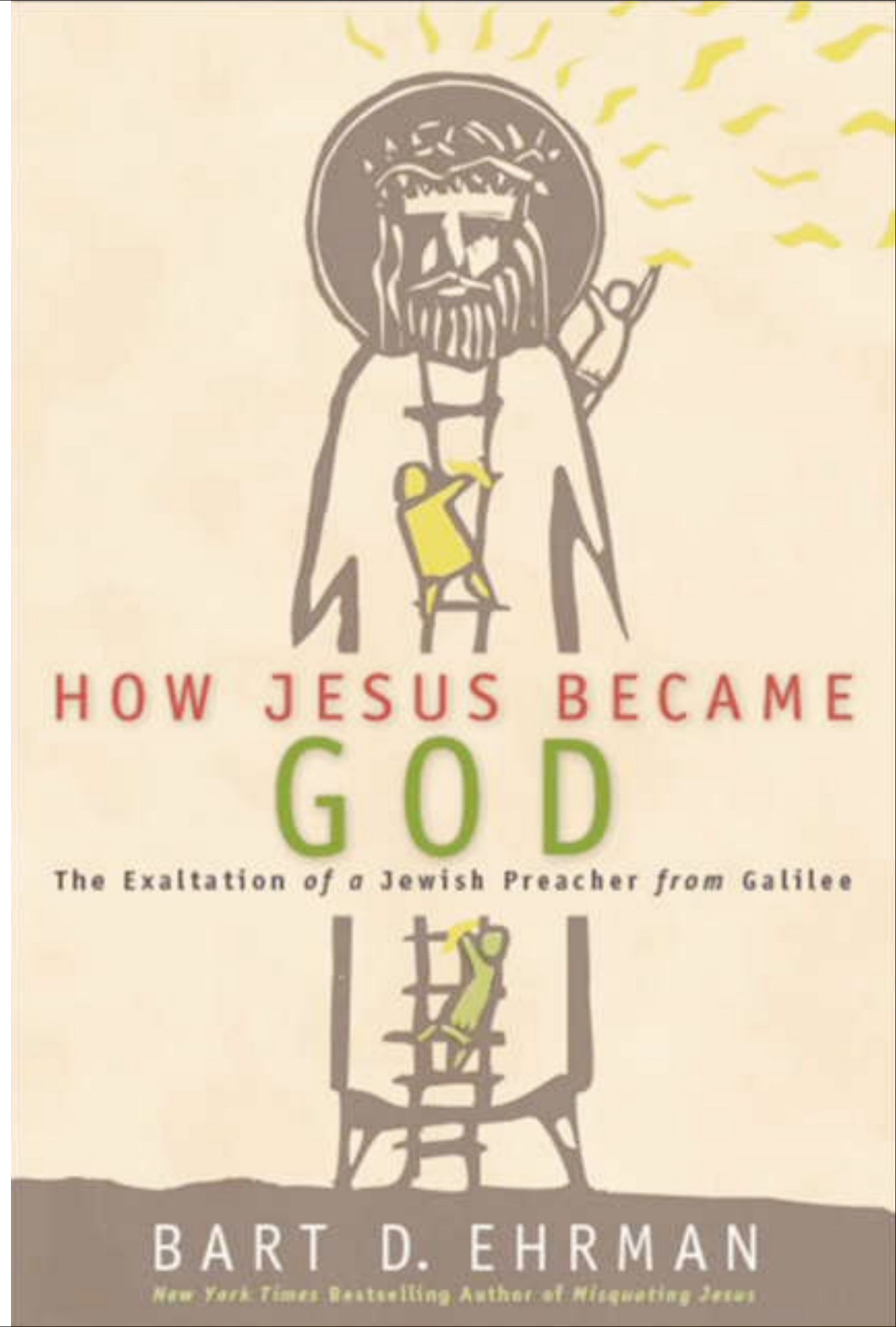


improvised words, full meal...to ritualized words/meal

*The Search for the Origins of Christian Worship: Sources and Methods for the Study of Early Liturgy* by Paul F. Bradshaw

March 25, 2014

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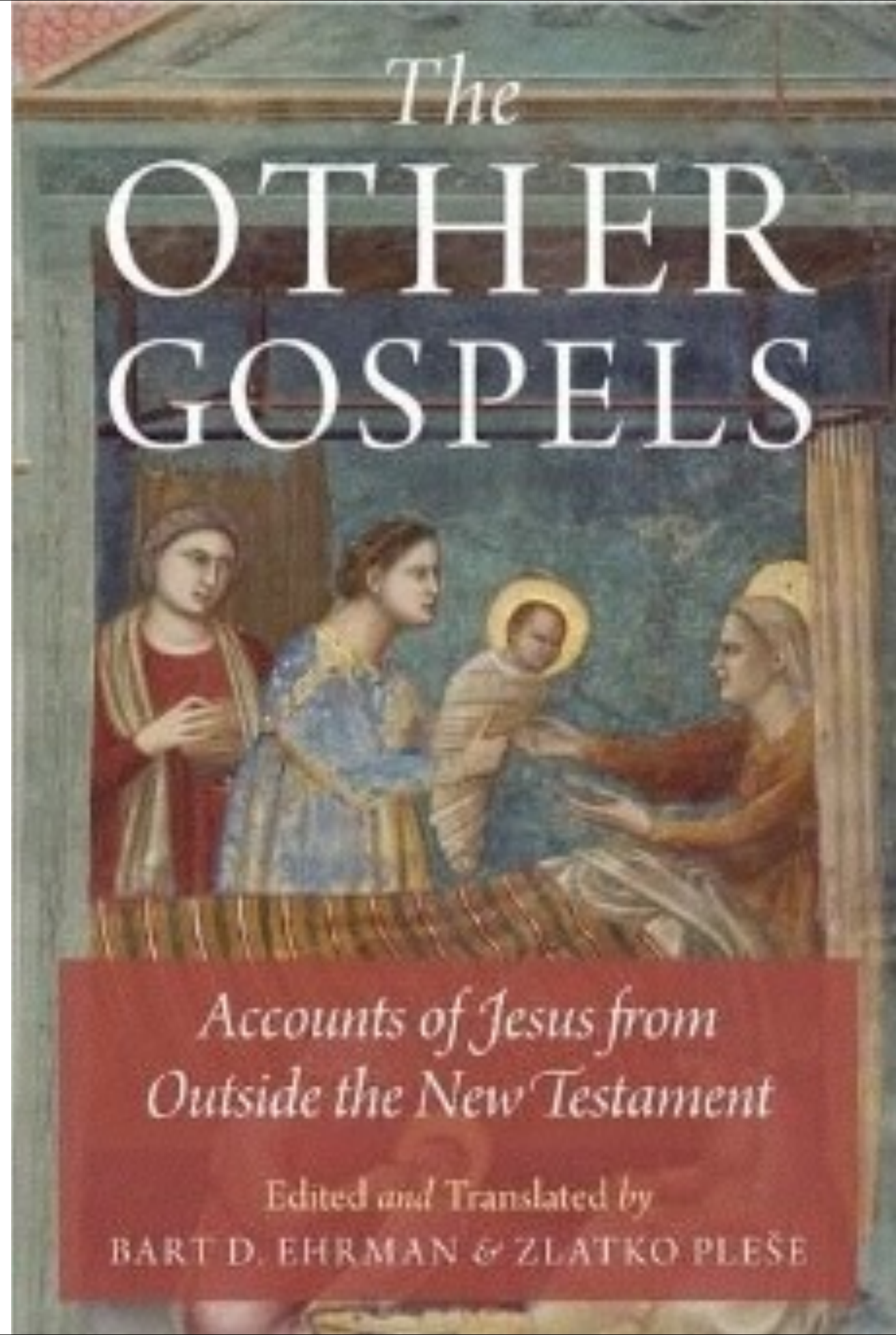


December 7, 2013  
9:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.

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All-day Seminar

[http://smithsonianassociates.org/  
ticketing//tickets/reserve.aspx?  
performanceNumber=227258](http://smithsonianassociates.org/ticketing//tickets/reserve.aspx?performanceNumber=227258)





✿ **9:30 to 10:45 a.m. The Proto-Gospel of James and the Infancy Gospel of Thomas**

The Proto-Gospel addresses who Jesus' mother was and why she was chosen to bear the son of God, stressing her unique character and emphasizing her virginity. The Infancy Gospel of Thomas attempts to fill in the gaps of our knowledge about Jesus as a young boy, and asks a driving question: If Jesus was a miracle-working son of God as an adult, what was he like as a child?

✿ **11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. The Gospel of Thomas**

Uncovered in Egypt in 1945, this gospel contains 114 sayings of Jesus. Nearly half of these are similar to teachings in the New Testament, but others strike modern readers as strange, mysterious, and mystical. What is the meaning of this gospel, and could any of its unusual teachings actually go back to the historical Jesus?



✿ **12:15 to 1:30 p.m. Lunch** (participants provide their own lunch)

✿ **1:30 to 2:45 p.m. The Gospel of Peter**

Though the New Testament narrates the death of Jesus, his resurrection is not covered. This early 2nd-century gospel provides an alternative, though fragmentary, account of Jesus' trial, death, and resurrection.

✿ **3 to 4:15 p.m. The Pilate Gospels**

In some Christian circles, the much-maligned Roman governor Pontius Pilate was looked on as innocent in the death of Jesus. Several gospels from outside the New Testament intensify Pilate's innocence and assign responsibility for Jesus' death to his enemies, the Jews. Remarkably, in some later traditions, Pilate came to be portrayed as a Christian convert and even a saint.



# 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"

❖ **Chapter 3, "Discovery of an Ancient Forgery: The Coptic Gospel of Thomas"**  
**Chapter 7, "On the Road to Nicea: 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 New Testament"; Chapter 12, "Winners, Losers, and the Question of Tolerance"



# 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”
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- “As with political and broad cultural conflicts, the winners in battles for religious supremacy rarely publicize their opponent’s true views. What if they were found to be persuasive? It is far better to put a spin on things oneself, to show how absurd the opposition’s ideas are, how problematic, how dangerous. All is fair in love and war, and religious domination is nothing if not love and war. And so, in early Christianity, as we have seen, most of the writings of the losing sides in the battles for dominance were destroyed, forgotten, or simply not reproduced for posterity—in one way or another lost. So much lost, so many texts.” (47)

# LOST CHRISTIANITIES

The Battles for Scripture and  
the Faiths We Never Knew

“Fascinating...  
Lively, enjoyable,  
and accessible.”  
—Elaine Pagels

BART D. EHRMAN



# Nevertheless...some spectacular discoveries

- Significant discoveries of some of these lost texts began to be made back in the 17th century.
- Finds increased as monastic libraries were searched and archaeological digs were successful.

# LOST CHRISTIANITIES

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# Example 1: The Dead Sea Scrolls\*\*\*

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- 1947
- Cave west of the Dead Sea— 13 miles east of Jerusalem.
- Shepherd boy was looking for a lost goat
- Essenes at Qumran
- Copies of the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) a 1000 years older than what we had previously.
- Previous complete copy of HB was Leningrad Codex (1009 CE)
- Masoretic Text: (Hebrew for “transmitters”) – rabbis in 9th c. CE Palestine, who sought to preserve the traditional text of the Bible attempted to achieve uniformity





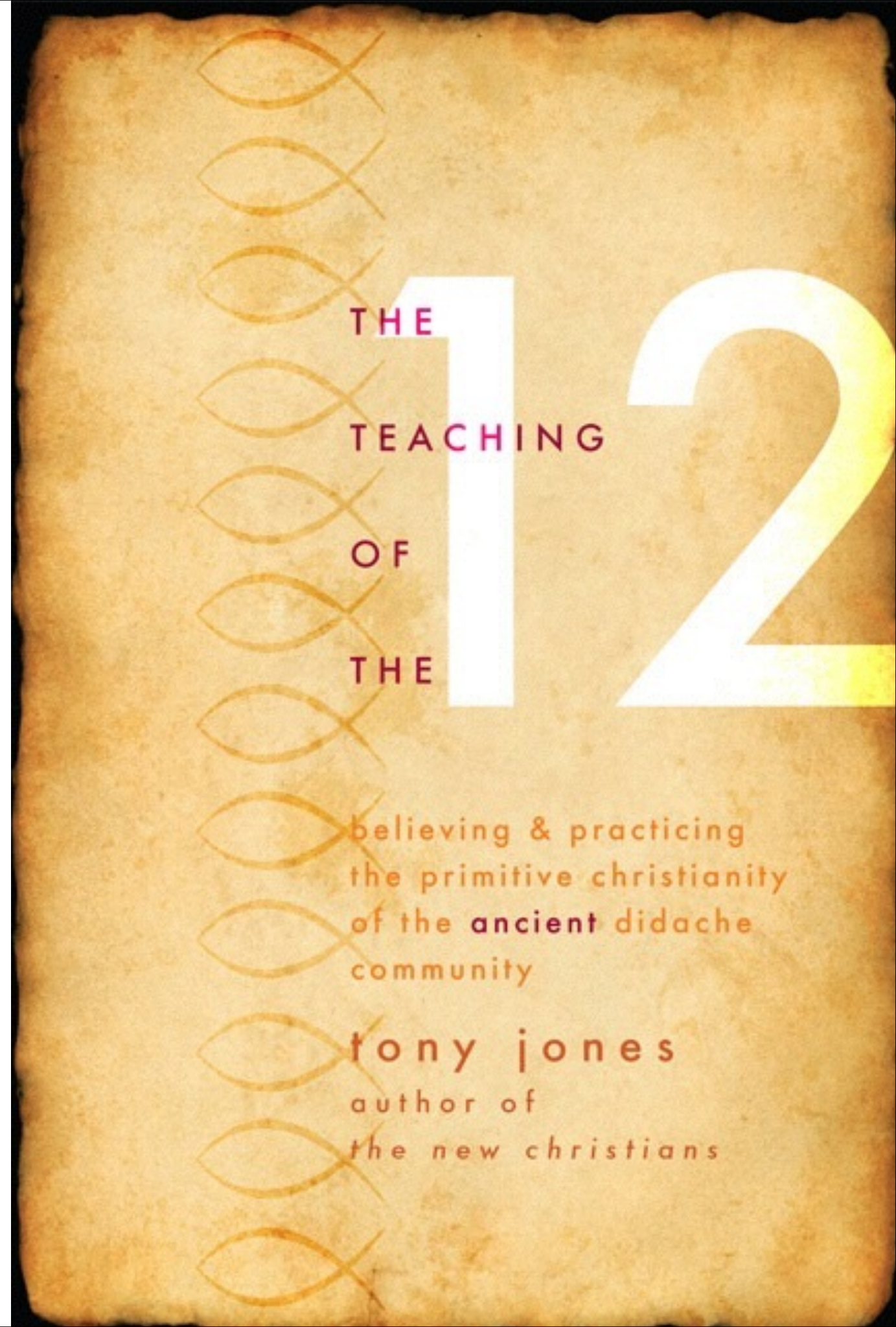




# Example 2: The Didache\*\*\*

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- Greek for “teaching”
- Full title: “The Teaching of the 12 Apostles to the Nations”
- Found: Patriarchal Library of Constantinople in 1873.

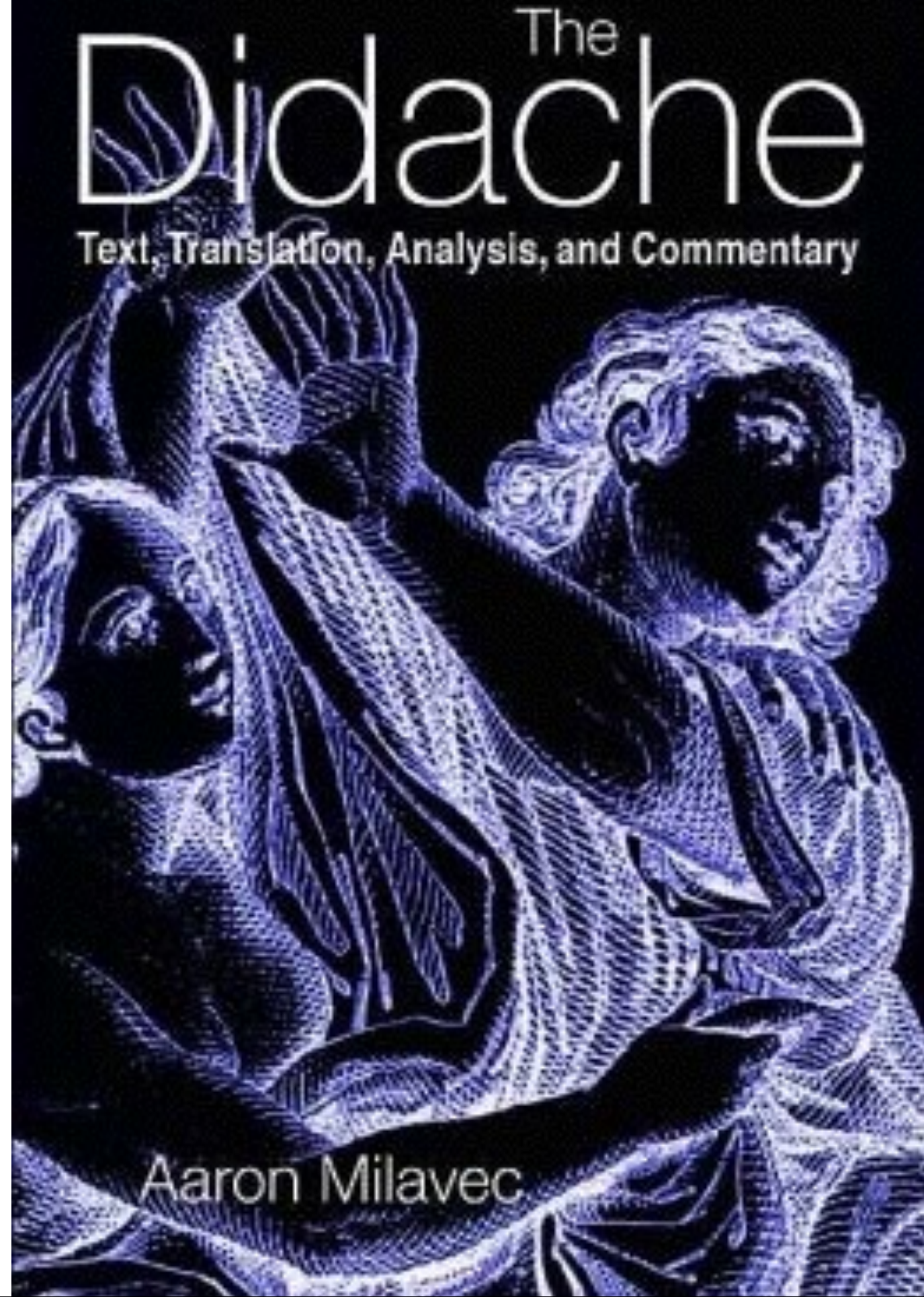




## Example 2: The Didache\*\*\*

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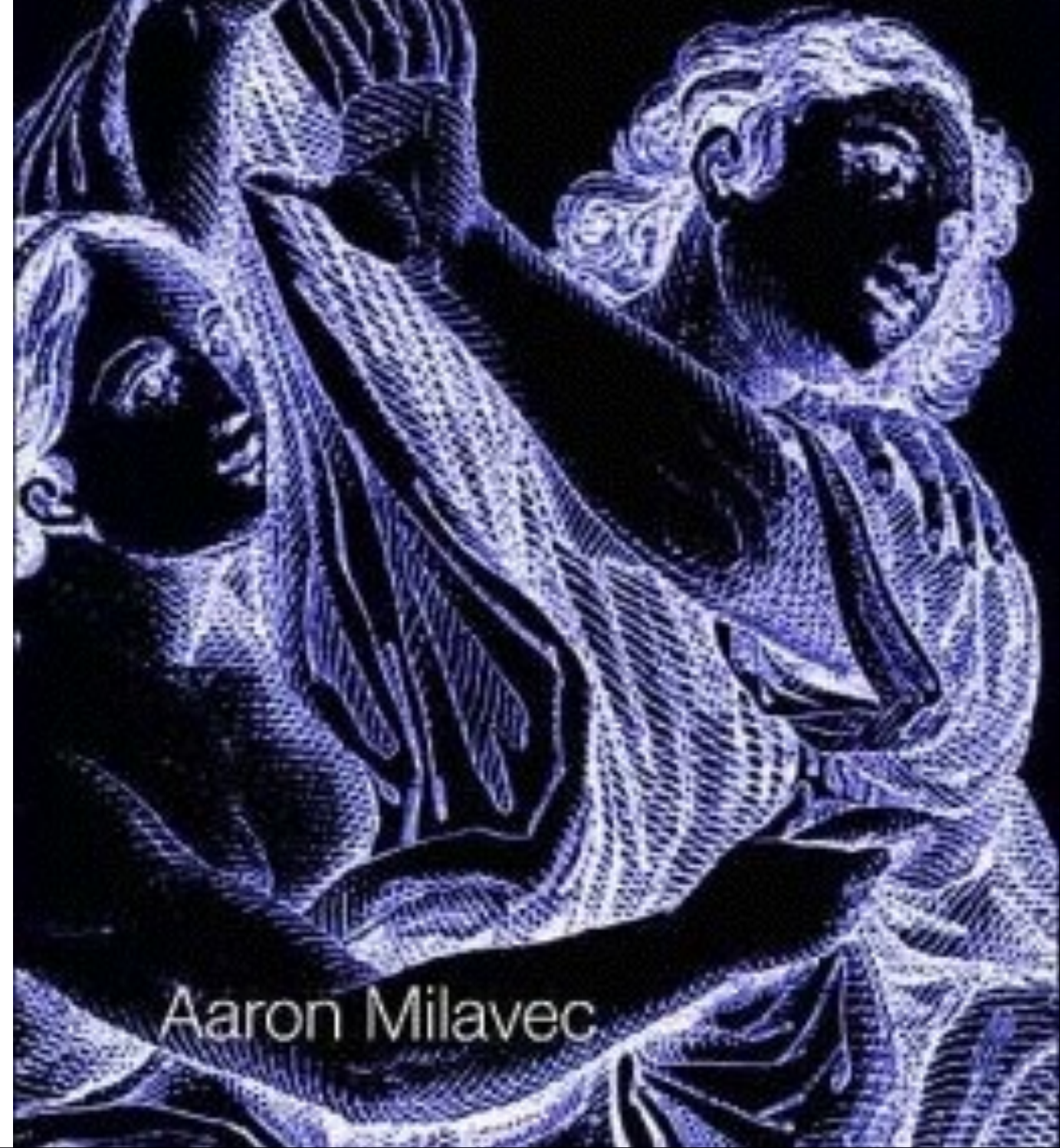
- liturgical instructions (around 100 CE):
  - *baptize* (outdoors in cold running water, if possible)
  - *Fast* (Wednesday and Friday, not Mondays and Thursday, to differentiate from the Jews)
  - *Pray* (Lord's Prayer, three times daily)
  - *Eucharist* (sample prayers over cup, then bread—reverse of today)
  - What to do about itinerant apostles, teachers and prophets





# The Didache

Text, Translation, Analysis, and Commentary



Aaron Milavec

- 
- The Didache is addressed *not* to radical itinerant peasant like Jesus and his original followers
  - To the *householders* as a manual for how “to adapt the way of Jesus to the exigencies of family, of occupation, of home — the very things that Jesus and his wandering apostles had left behind.”



✿ **Didache as “Plan B”**...the other side of the coin

✿ **Plan A: Luke 10:1-11**, After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go.... Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. Carry **no purse, no bag, no sandals**; and greet no one on the road. Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, **eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid**. Do not move about from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’



✿ **Hospitality**

✿ ...but also **discernment** of true/false prophet/teacher

✿ **Didache:11:5** “But he must not remain more than one day, or two, if there’s a need. **If he stays three days, he is a false prophet.**

11:6 And when the apostle goes away, let him take nothing but bread to last him until his next night of lodging. If he asks for money, he is a false prophet.



- ✿ Jesus' message gets **compromised/accommodated**.
- ✿ **Matthew 10**, “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but division. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 and one's foes will be members of one's own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me....”
- ✿ Didache 4:3, “Do not initiate divisions, but rather bring peace to those who contend against one another.”



- ✿ **Pragmatic** way of incorporating newcomers into the Jesus way.
- ✿ Didache 6:2: “For if you are able to bear the entire yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect; but if you are not able, then **at least do what you can.**”
- ✿ **Rich Young Ruler:** “If you wish to be **perfect**, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me” (**Matthew 19:21**)



- ✿ **Didache 7:1** Concerning baptism, you should baptize this way: After first explaining all things, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in flowing water.
- ✿ 2 But *if you have no running water*, baptize in other water;
- ✿ and *if you cannot do so in cold water*, then in warm.
- ✿ 3 *If you have very little*, pour water three times on the head in the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit.
- ✿ 4 Before the baptism, both the baptizer and the candidate for baptism, plus any others who can, should fast. The candidate should fast for one or two days beforehand.



- ❖ **“Great Commission” in Matthew 28:19**, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” [Scholarly consensus: reflects the practice of some parts of the early church more than it does the words of the historical Jesus.]
- ❖ **John 3:22**, “Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent some time there with them and baptized.” [Scholarly consensus: this segment, which continues into John 4 likely reflects later, early church anxieties about Jesus being baptized by John (which could make John appear superior to Jesus)].
- ❖ For example: does **John 4:1 protest too much?** “Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, “Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John.”



- ❖ **Didache 9:1** Concerning the **Eucharist**, give thanks this way.
- ❖ **2 First, concerning the cup:** We thank you, God, for the holy vine of David your servant, which you made known to us through Jesus your servant. To you be the glory forever.
- ❖ **Next, concerning the broken bread:** We thank you, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you made known to us through Jesus your servant. To you be the glory forever. 9:4  
Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let your church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom. To you is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever.”



- ✱ Isn't the breaking of the bread supposed to come first at Communion? Not according to the Didache.
- ✱ **Luke 22:17ff:** cup, bread, cup
- ✱ **17 Then he took a cup**, and after giving thanks he said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; 18 for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."
- ✱ **19 Then he took a loaf of bread**, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
- ✱ **20 And he did the same with the cup *after supper***, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. 21 But see, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table.



✿ **1 Corinthians 11:** the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” 25 In the same manner He also took the cup **after supper**, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.” For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.



✿ **1 Corinthians 11:20** When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper. 21 For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk. 22 What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you!



# Example 3:

## Ancient NT Mss.\*\*\*

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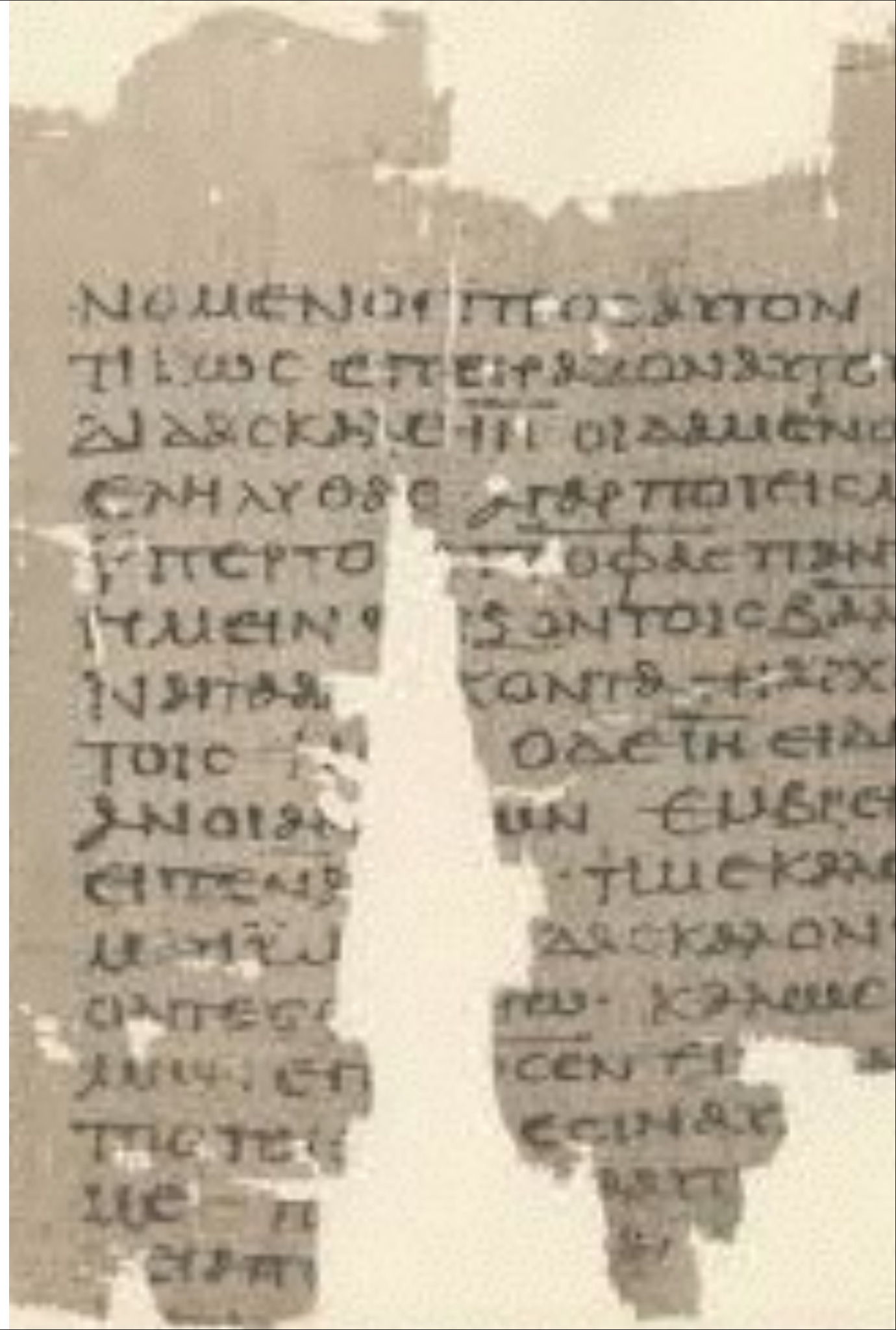
- Hundreds of years older than what the KJV committee had in 1611
- End of the 19th century: earliest complete NT texts (4th century, 300 years after the originals)
- Current earliest: fragment P52 (125-150 CE)





## Example 4: Non-canonical Discoveries.\*\*\*

- **Acts of John** (*2nd half of 2nd century*)
- **Gospel of the Savior** (*2nd century*)  
originally in Greek  
discovered in Egypt,  
acquired in 1967 for Berlin Museum  
unnoticed until American scholar studied  
it in 1991
- **Unknown Gospel** ("*Papyrus Egerton 2*")  
1st half of the 2nd century  
Completely unknown until 1935  
fragments from papyri collection  
purchased by British Museum





## \* **Unknown Gospel = Papyrus Egerton 2**

- \* 4 small pieces of papyrus manuscript, written on front and back (from a codex, not a scroll)
- \* Contains 4 different stories:
  - \* (1) an exhortation by Jesus for his Jewish opponents to “search the Scriptures” (*cf. John 5:39-47; 10:31-39*)
  - \* (2) a foiled attempt to stone and then arrest Jesus (*cf. John 10:31f*) and then his healing of the leper cited above (*cf. Mark 1:40-44*);
  - \* (3) the question of whether it is right to pay tribute to the ruling authorities (*cf. Mark 12:13-17*)
  - \* (4) a highly fragmentary account – too many holes in it – that appears to be about some kind of amazing miracle Jesus did by sowing seed on the Jordan River (*no canonical parallels*)



- ✿ when published in 1935, made a huge stir.
- ✿ Editors, H. Bell and T. C. Skeat – renowned experts in ancient papyrus manuscripts – indicated that the manuscript dated to around the year 150 CE.
- ✿ At the time, that made it *the* earliest Christian manuscript of any kind that we had, much earlier than any manuscripts of the NT. (*Could there have been apocryphal Gospels that pre-dated the NT Gospels???*)
- ✿ Then P52 published



- ✿ In 21st-century, our natural tendency is to think that there were basically four Gospels floating around in early Christianity (*proto-orthodox victory*)
- ✿ When we discover a new Gospel, we ask “Which of the other four did it know?”
- ✿ But that presumes that everyone accepted the authority of what we know today as the four canonical Gospels



- ❖ **Alternative view:** lots of Gospels floating around, numerous narratives of Jesus' words and deeds (*a lot messier and murkier than is often assumed*)
- ❖ **Luke 1:1-4**, “1 Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, 3 I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.”



# NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY\*\*\*

- ✿ 1945 in remote Upper Egypt
- ✿ “most significant collection of lost Christian writings to turn up in modern times.”
- ✿ Several Gospels know to have existed in antiquity, but lost for nearly 1500 years)
- ✿ 12 leather-bound volumes, pages from a 13th volume.
- ✿ 46 documents Written in ancient Coptic, probably originally composed in Greek.
- ✿ probably bound in the 2nd half of the 4th century.



The Nag Hammadi Codices



# NAG HAMMADI LIBRARY\*\*\*

- ✿ Prompted by Athanasius's (bishop of Alexandria) letter to the churches throughout Egypt in 367 CE setting out a canon list?

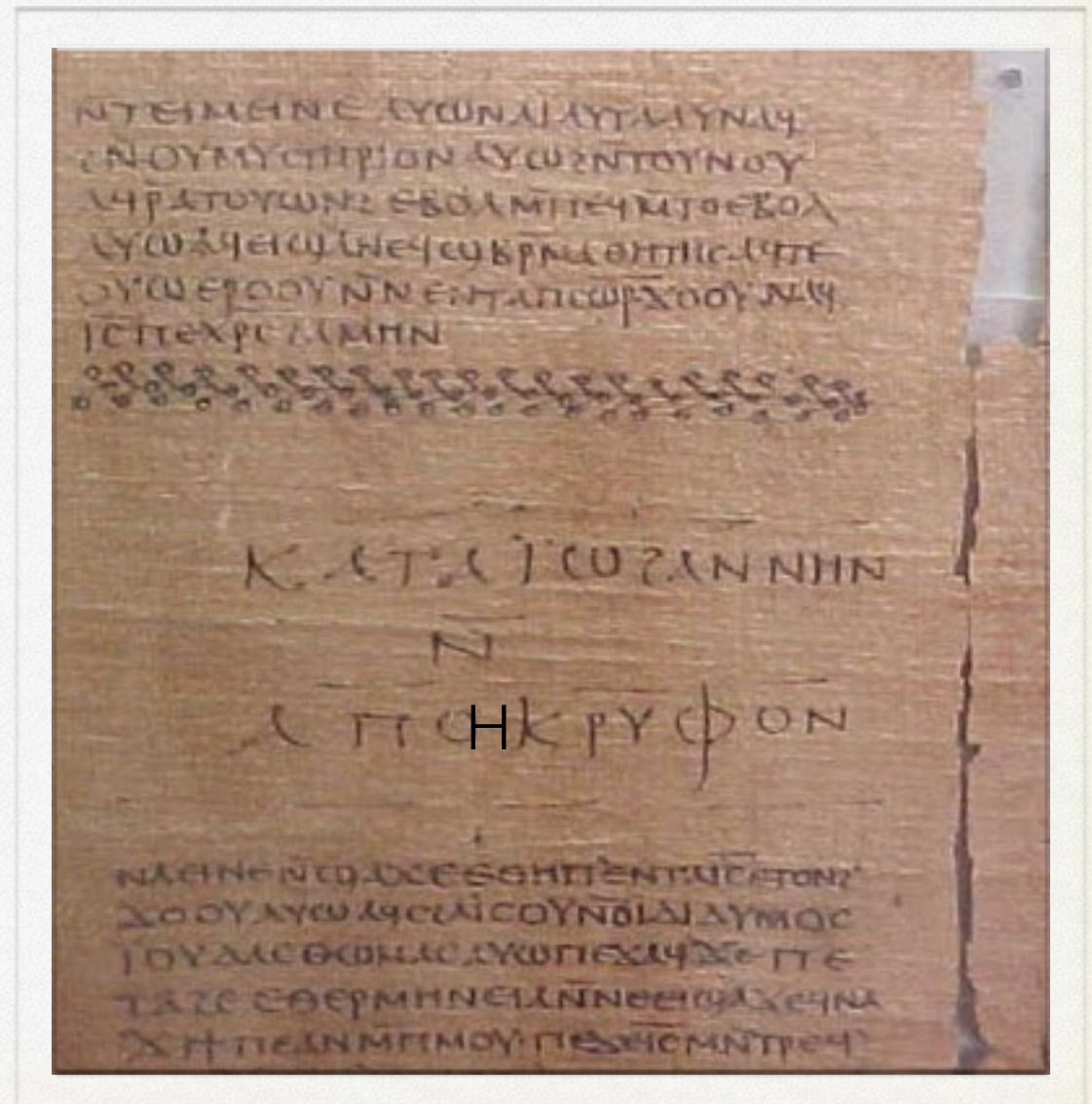


Pachomian monastery near Nag Hammadi



# GOSPEL OF THOMAS

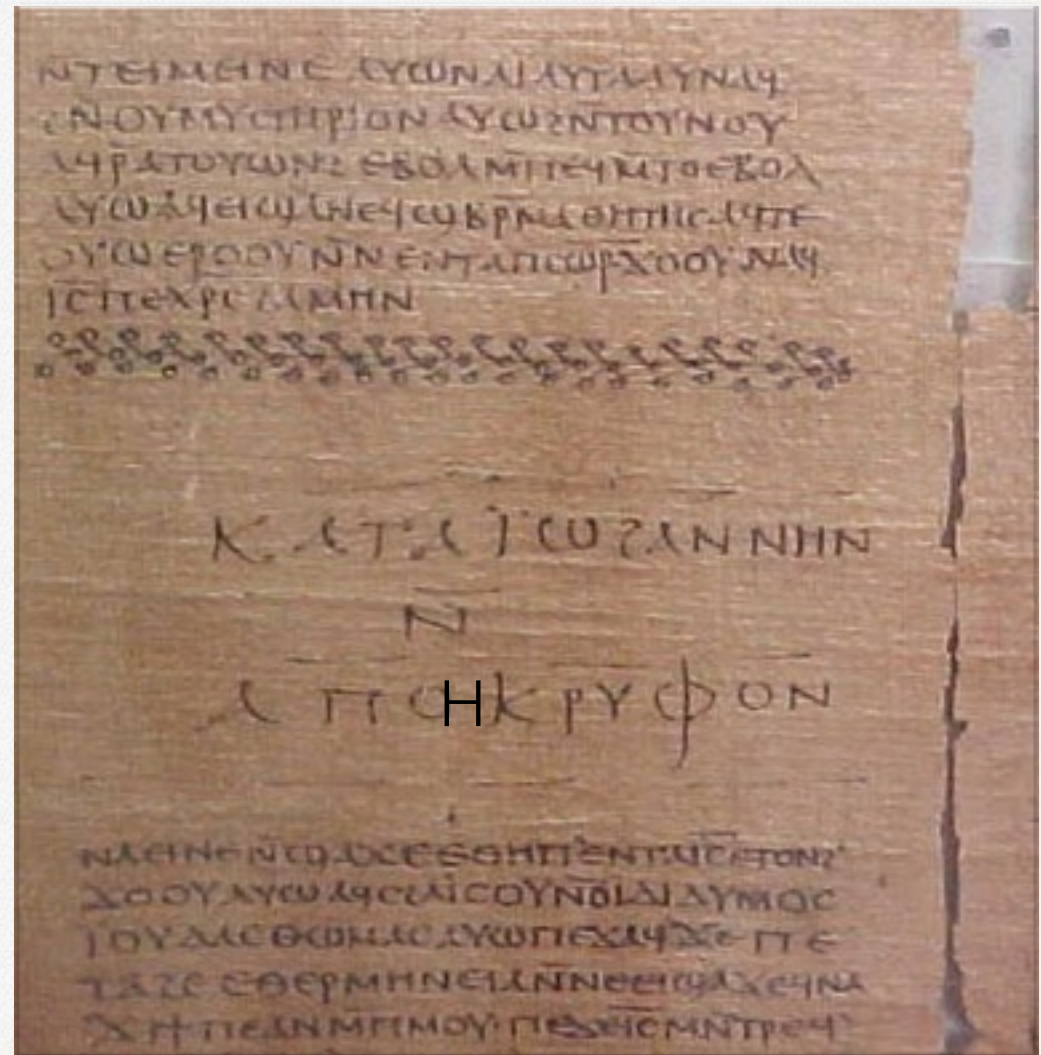
- ✿ Complete extant text
- ✿ 114 sayings of Jesus
- ✿ approximately 79/114 (~70%) similar to canonical
- ✿ [www.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis](http://www.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis)





# GOSPEL OF MARK

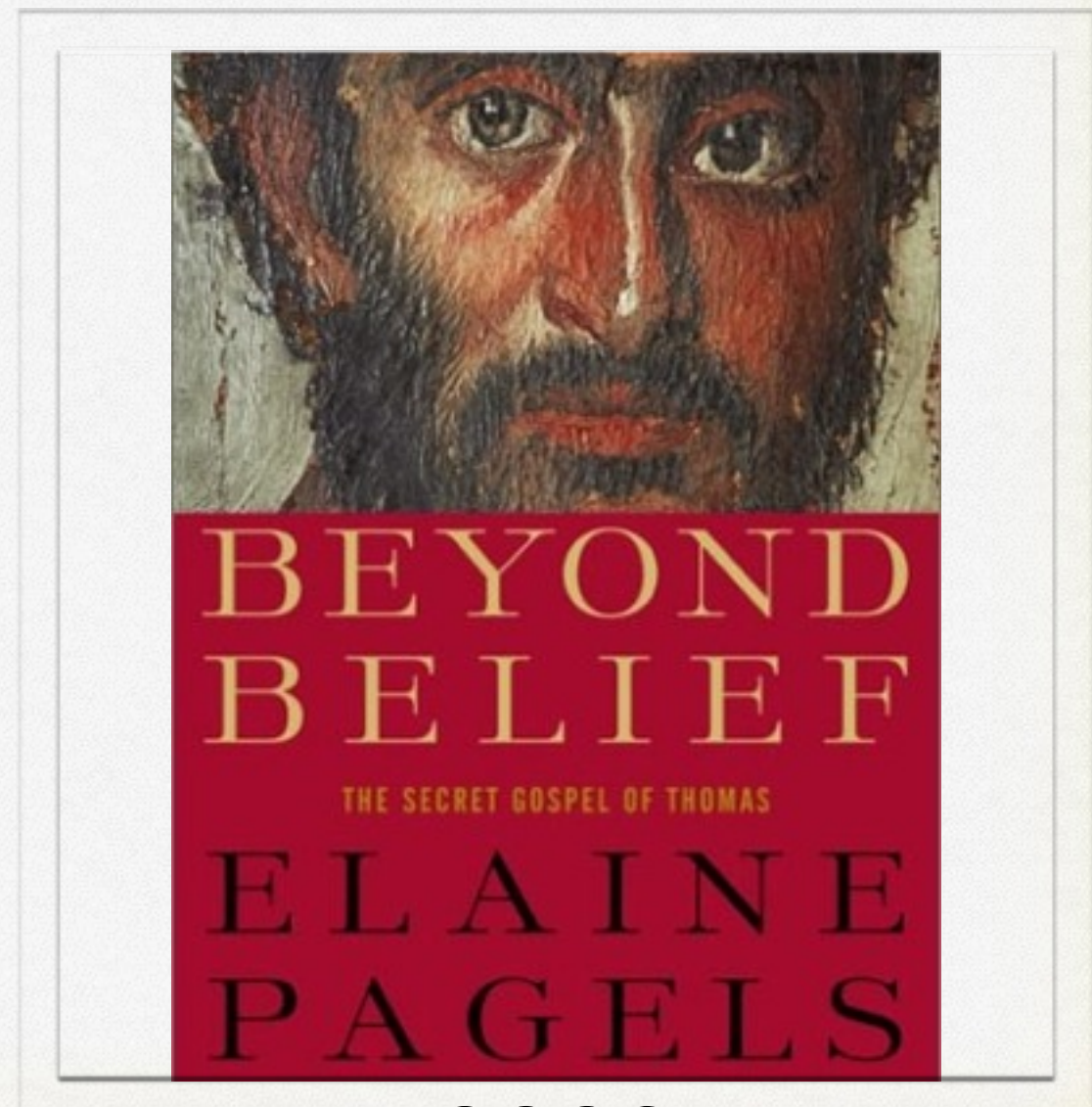
- ✿ “Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” (**Mark 1:14-15**)





# GOSPEL OF THOMAS

✿ “Many Christian today who read the Gospel of Thomas assume at first that it is simply wrong, and deservedly called heretical. Yet what Christians have disparagingly called gnostic and heretical sometimes turns out to be forms of Christian teaching that are merely unfamiliar to us—unfamiliar precisely because of the active and successful opposition of Christians such as John” (75).



2003



# ELAINE PAGELS (1943 -)

✿ Harrington Spear Paine  
Professor of Religion at  
Princeton University





## ✱ Gospel of John

- ✱ Assurance of belonging to the right group, the true “flock”
- ✱ Most spiritual of the four gospels
- ✱ Origen (c. 240 CE): “while the other gospel describe Jesus as human, “none of them clearly spoke of his divinity, as John does.”
- ✱ Read synoptics through the lens of John.
- ✱ anyone who “does not believe is condemned already.”



✱ **Gospel of John**

✱ Not written in vacuum: defend certain views, oppose others.

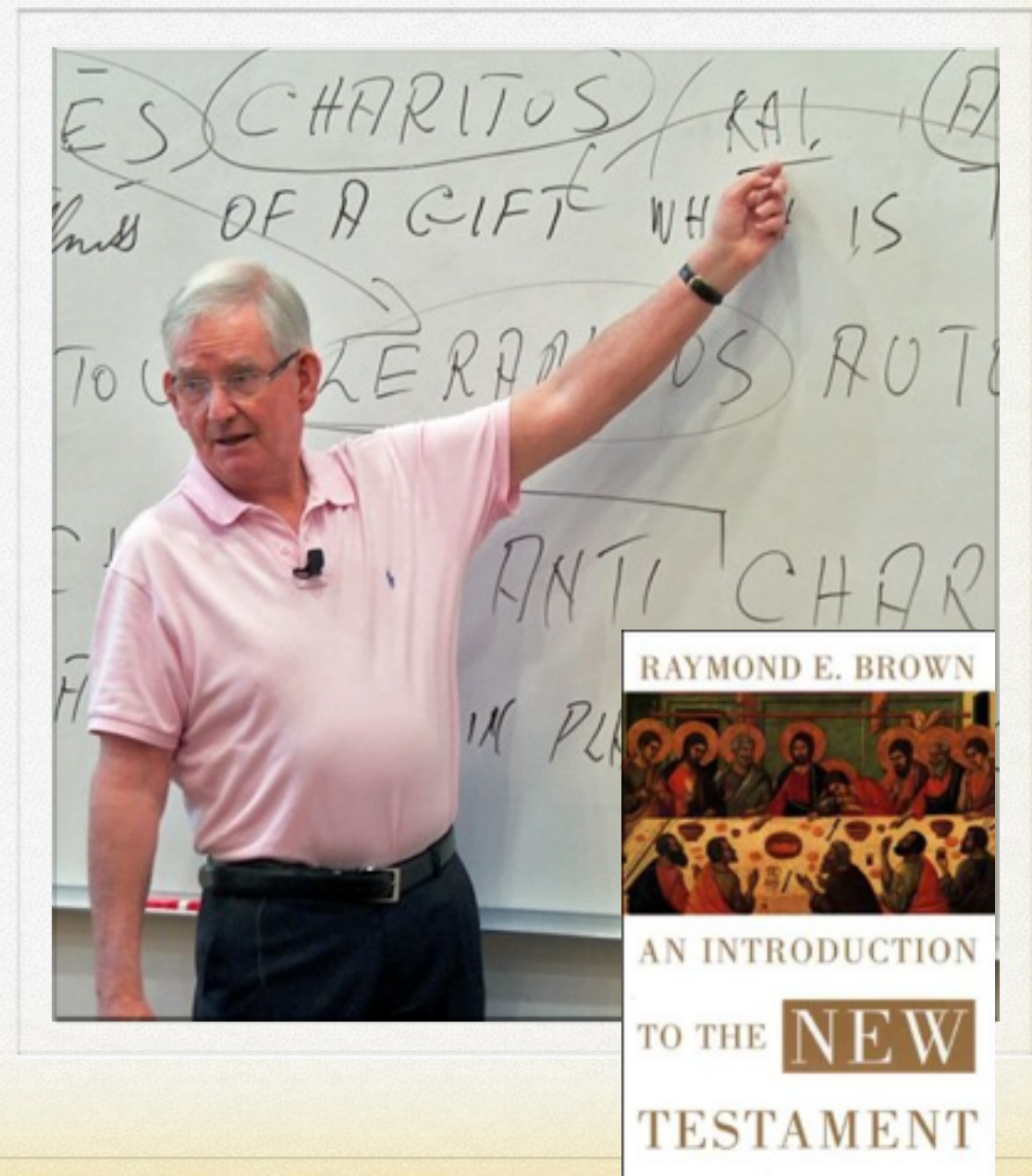
✱ John = foundation for a unified church;  
Thomas = each person's search

✱ Hope: purer, simpler "early Christianity."  
Found: a diverse and complicated world.



# FR. RAYMOND BROWN (1928-1998)

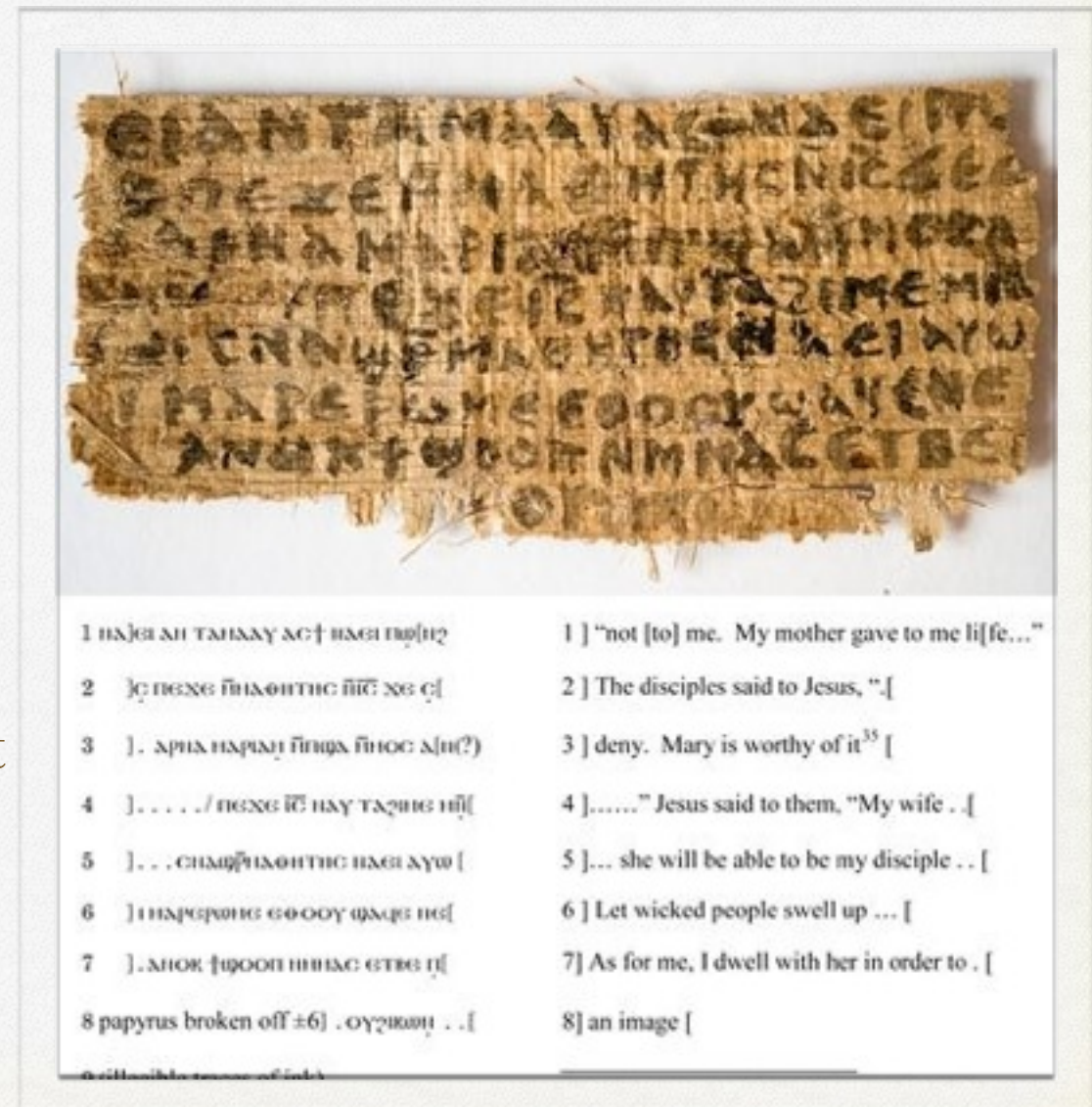
- ✿ “the rubbish of the second century [and] it is still rubbish.”
- ✿ review of Pagel’s 1979 *The Gnostic Gospels*





# GOSPEL OF JESUS' WIFE

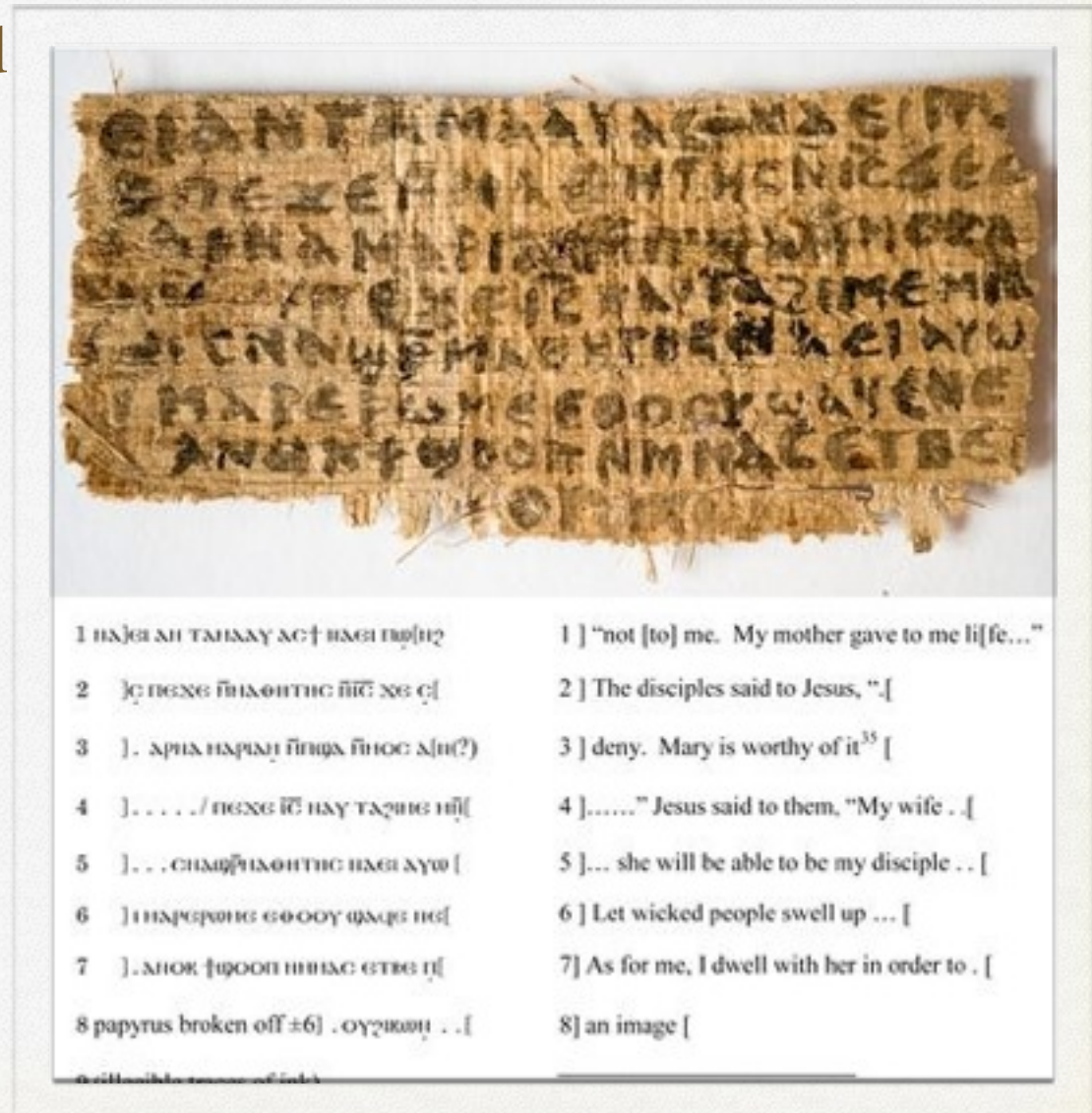
- \* Karen King's analysis of the fragment published in January 2013 issue of *Harvard Theological Review*
- \* Collector provided King with a letter from the early 1980s indicating that Professor Gerhard Fecht from the faculty of Egyptology at the Free University in Berlin believed it to be evidence 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.





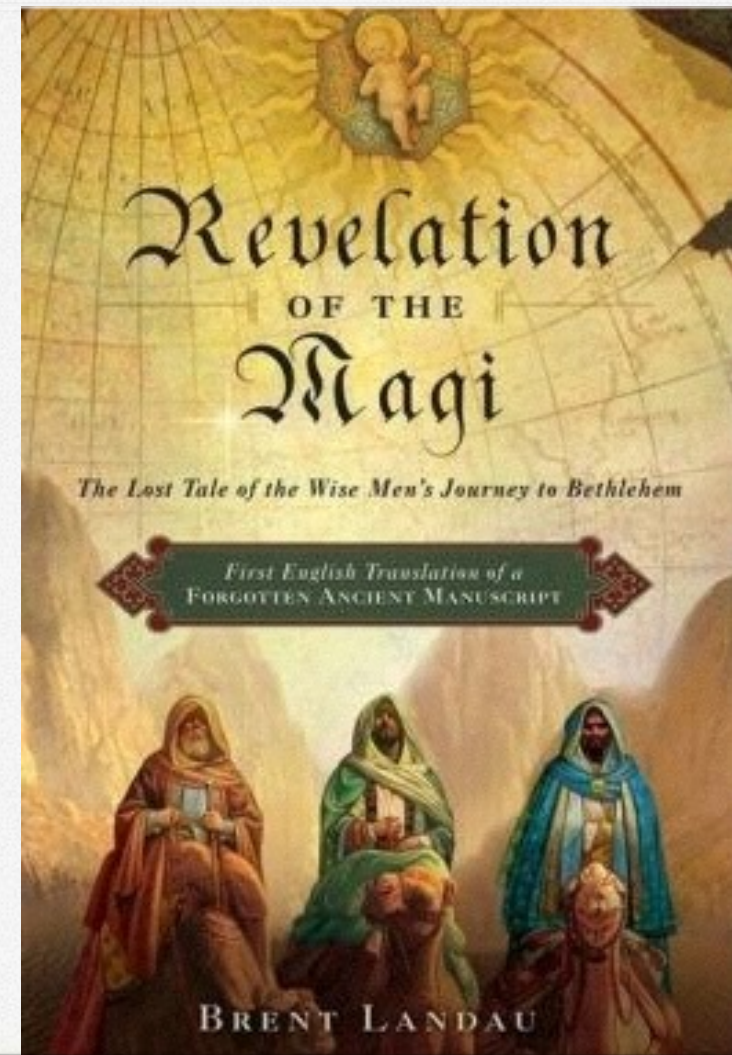
# GOSPEL OF JESUS' WIFE

- ✦ 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.





- ❁ 8th-c. copy stored in Egyptian monastery.
- ❁ Transferred in 1700s to the Vatican Library.
- ❁ Some scholars had written about it previously, but 1st English translation (Syriac)
- ❁ Late 2nd or early 3rd century

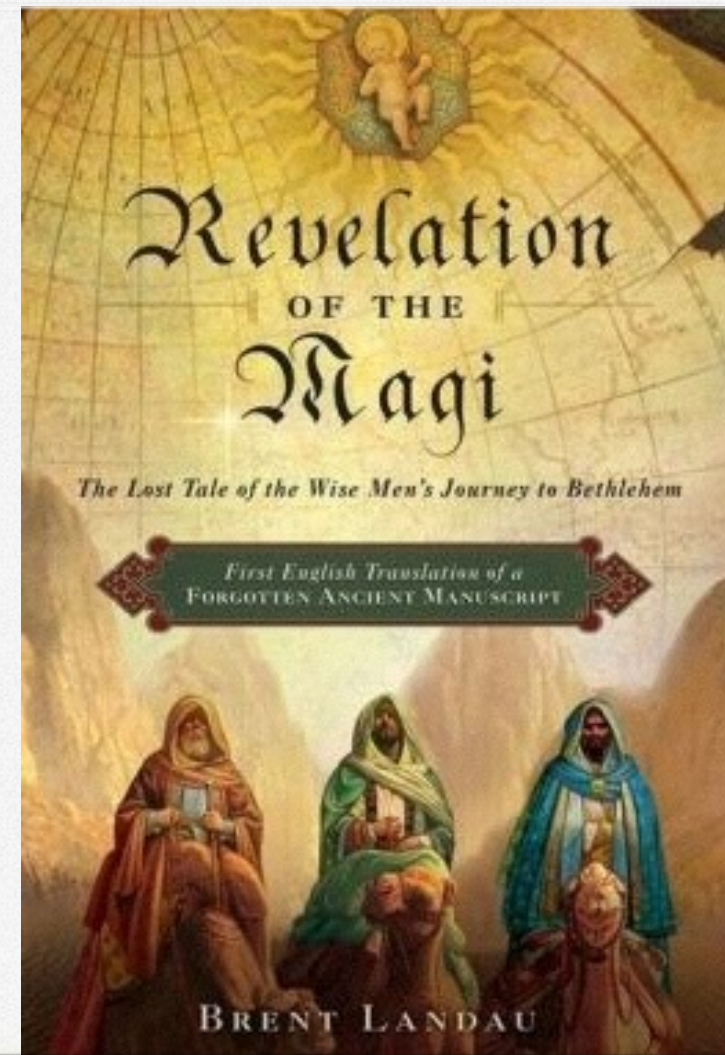


2010



# CHRIST SPEAKS THROUGH STAR IN EPIPHANY TO MAGI

✿ “And I am everywhere, because I am a ray of light whose light has shone in this world from the majesty of [God], who has sent me to fulfill everything that was spoken about me in the entire world and in every land by unspeakable mysteries, and to accomplish the commandment of [God], who by the prophets preached about me to the contentious house, in the same way as for you, as befits your faith, it was revealed to you about me.”



2010



✿ Slides: *[upload new ones]*

[frederickuu.org/about/Lost\\_Christianities](http://frederickuu.org/about/Lost_Christianities)

✿ Q&R



# NEXT CLASS

✿ November 4:

✿ **Chapter 8**, “The Quest for Orthodoxy”

✿ Chapter 9, “The Arsenal of the Conflicts: Polemical Treatises and Personal Slurs”

✿ Chapter 10, “Additional Weapons in the Polemical Arsenal: Forgeries and Falsifications”

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