

the Judas Gospel

Lost for nearly 1,700 years, a crumbling papyrus manuscript appears to show that the most hated man in history was not the betrayer but the cursed.

“pe-di-ah-kawn-aus ente plah-nay.”

These strange words from the papyrus were in Coptic, the language spoken in Egypt at the dawn of Christianity.

They had not been seen since the early church had forbidden Christians to read this testament.

All copies were destroyed, or so they thought. This one somehow survived.

Hidden for hundreds of years in the Egyptian desert, it was finally uncovered late in the 20th century. Then it vanished again.

Eventually it found its way to Rodolphe Kasser a 78 year old Coptic expert.

The papyrus, a form of paper made of dried water plants, had decayed into fragments, its message nearly lost forever.

Coptic is a form of Egyptian written in Greek characters and the opening passage read by Mr Kasser told of...“The secret account of the revelation that Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot...”

The story of Judas approved by the early Christian Church tells of him being Jesus Christ’s close friend.

Judas was one of the 12 Apostles, and the person who sold him out for 30 pieces of silver, identifying him with a kiss.

Later, crazed with guilt, Judas hanged himself.

He is the ultimate symbol of treachery.

As Christianity grew apart from its origins as a Jewish sect, Christian thinkers began to blame the Jews as a people for the arrest and execution of Christ, and to cast Judas as the archetypal Jew.

The four Christian Gospels show Roman governor Pontius Pilate as a “goodie” while Judas and the Jewish high priests are the “baddies”.

This newly discovered text shows a very different Judas. In this version, he is a hero.

He alone of all the disciples truly understands Christ’s message.

Jesus wanted Judas to hand him over to the authorities, but warned Judas: “You will be cursed.”



The new Judas “gospel” reflects the differences long ago between the official church and other Christians. Right at the beginning of it Jesus laughs at the disciples for praying to “your God.”

He compares the disciples to a priest in the temple who he calls “a minister of error” planting “trees without fruit, in my name, in a shameful manner.”

He challenges the disciples to look at him and understand what he really is, but they turn away.

The key passage in this new text comes when Jesus tells Judas: “You will sacrifice the man that clothes me.”

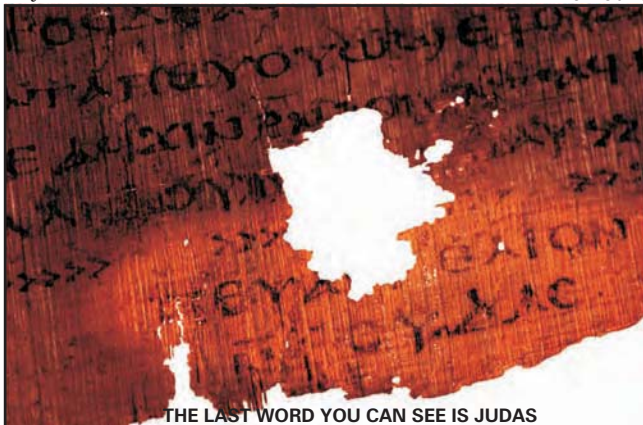
Meaning Judas is going to kill Jesus, and so do Jesus a favor.

“That really isn’t Jesus at all,” says Meyer. “He will at last get rid of his material, physical flesh, thereby liberating the real Christ, the divine being inside.”

That Judas is entrusted with this task is a sign of his special status.

He alone of all the disciples truly understands Christ’s message.

“Lift up your eyes and look at the cloud and the light within it and the stars surrounding it,” Jesus tells him encouragingly. “The star that leads the way is your star.”



THE LAST WORD YOU CAN SEE IS JUDAS

Ultimately, Judas has a revelation in which he enters a “luminous cloud.” People on the ground hear a voice from the cloud, though what it says may be forever unknown due to a tear in the papyrus.

The gospel ends abruptly with a brief note reporting that Judas “received some money” and handed Jesus over to the arresting party.

Some scholars think...“There is nothing in the Gospel of Judas that tells us anything we could consider historically reliable.”

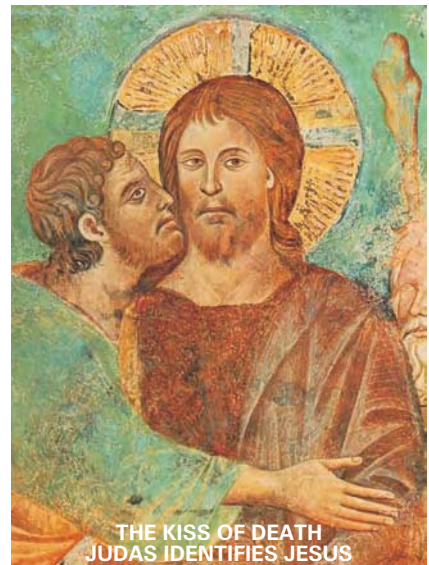
But other scholars believe...“This changes the history of early Christianity.”

We don’t know how many books were lost as the Bible took shape, but we do know that some were hidden away.

Dead Sea Scrolls

In 1945 Egyptian peasants found a set of long-lost Gnostic texts buried in a heavy earthenware jar near the town of Nag Hammadi.

Among them



**THE KISS OF DEATH
JUDAS IDENTIFIES JESUS**

were over a dozen entirely new versions of Christ’s teachings, including Gospels of Thomas and Philip and a Gospel of Truth.

In early Christian times, some of these alternative versions may have circulated more widely than the familiar four Gospels.

“Most of the manuscripts, or at least fragments, from the second century that we have found are copies of other Christian books,” says Bart Ehrman, professor of religious studies at the University of North Carolina. “A long-buried side of early Christianity is re-emerging.”

Now we have the Gospel of Judas.

But the Judas gospel was bound together with three other Gnostic texts. Easily hidden.

And today as the scrolls are painstakingly pieced together... Judas is about to face the world, for once playing the good guy.

THAT CODE AGAIN!

In 1959, when the newly discovered Gospel of Thomas was first published in English, many Christians were shocked to learn that any gospels existed other than Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

It also introduced the little known Gnostics, the Christian communities which flourished between 100AD and 300AD whose scriptures and spiritual beliefs were very different to what is now thought of as traditional Christianity.

Gnosticism has become better known, largely thanks to the novel “The Da Vinci Code,” and many more Gnostic Gospels have been translated and distributed... Mary Magdalene, Philip, Thomas and others

The Gospel of Judas is the latest evidence to come to light in the hot sands of Egypt.

The Gnostics...The Knowers

Gnosticism as a philosophy are teachings that stress the acquisition of “gnosis,” or inner knowledge.

Not intellectual, but mystical; not simply knowledge of or about something, but an inner mystical knowledge of ultimate reality.

Put simply it seeks that source of divinity inside us, thought to be hidden by ignorance, convention, and traditional religion... More page 22

THE DOCUMENT DETECTIVES AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS IS THIS TRANSLATION A FAKE? SO FAR IT HAS PASSED ALL TESTS.



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The National Geographic Society commissioned a top carbon-dating analysis on the papyrus and the leather binding which date it to sometime between A.D. 220 and 340.

The ink follows an ancient recipe, a mix of iron gall and soot inks.

And Coptic scholars confirm that phrases in the gospel show that it was translated from Greek, the language in which most Christian texts were originally written.

History also points to it being genuine. About A.D. 180, Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon in what was then Roman Gaul, wrote a massive work called *Against Heresies*.

The book was a fierce denunciation of all those whose views about Jesus and his message differed from those of the mainstream church.

Among those he attacked was a group who saw Judas, "the traitor" as a hero of Christianity, and had produced a "fictitious history," which "they style the Gospel of Judas." So well before this translation was written, the Church apparently knew of the original Greek text.

THE USE OF POPYRI BY THE JEWS OF JUDEA IN FIRST CENTURY

The ancient Greeks made their rolls of writing parchment, cutting the pith of the Egyptian water plant papyrus into narrow strips.

These were then glued together into strips and these were then glued into sheets, which could be made into rolls of any length.

The Greeks had found that twenty-five to thirty feet was the length most convenient for ordinary use.

Such a papyrus roll they called a *biblion*, from *biblos*, "papyrus."

So one sheet of papyrus was a *biblion*. If the whole New Testament was being referred to it would have been plural, *biblia*.

Biblia passed into Latin and came to mean the Bible, or the papyrus rolls.

Over 6,000 years ago, the Egyptians gave birth to paper by using the papyrus plant as the source.

The "paper plant" is native to central Africa and the Nile River Valley and was in abundant supply in ancient Egypt.

The use of this form of Paper quickly spread throughout the ancient world, including to the Jews of Judea.

The Hebrew Bible the Old Testament as Jesus knew it, consisted of from twelve to twenty such scrolls of different sizes.

They were never united into what we would call one "book" until about the fourth century.

The sacred scriptures preserved in the arks of Jewish synagogues today are still scrolls, not the leaf-books of today.

So a "Bible" as we know it, even a Hebrew Bible, containing the Old Testament by itself, was unknown among the Jews of ancient times.

The books that belonged to it were not physically united as they are with us; they existed in separate rolls or scrolls, one containing the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament; another, Isaiah (Luke 4. 17); another, the Minor Prophets (mentioned in Acts 7. 42); another, Ezekiel; another, the Psalms (referred to in Luke 20. 42, and in Acts 1. 20), and so on.

From the Dead Sea Scrolls we can learn many things, such as the extensive use of this Papyri by the Jews of Judea in the first century.

Among the many Papyri scrolls found were Historic Texts and legal documents such as Deeds to land .

From the examples found in the Qumran caves we know that papyri was also used for the transition of religious texts as well, such as Daily prayers, Benedictions (invocations of blessings), Religious, the Marriage ritual and the Ritual of Purification.

The Dead Sea scrolls comprise nearly 900 documents, including texts from the Hebrew Bible.

They were discovered between 1947 and 1956 in eleven caves in and around the Wadi Qumran on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea.

The texts are of great religious and historical significance, as they are practically the only known surviving Biblical documents written before AD 100.

One theory suggests that the documents were written and hidden by a community of Essenes who lived in the Qumran area.

The Jews revolted against the Romans in AD 66, and before they were massacred by Roman troops the Essenes hid their scriptures in caves, not to be discovered until 1947.

For previous articles in *Mediterranean Living* on this subject visit:
<http://www.med-liv.com>

SOUND FAMILIAR???

- * You and your teeth don't sleep together.
- * You try to straighten out the wrinkles in your socks and discover you aren't wearing any.
- * At the breakfast table you hear snap, crackle, pop and you're not eating cereal.
- * Your back goes out but you stay home.
- * When you wake up looking like your driver's license picture.
- * It takes two tries to get up from the couch.
- * When your idea of a night out is sitting on the terrace.
- * When happy hour is a nap.
- * When you're on holiday and your energy runs out before your money does.
- * When you say something to your kids that your mother said to you and you always hated it.
- * When all you want for your birthday

is to not be reminded of your age.

- * Your idea of weight lifting is standing up.
- * Your memory is shorter and your complaining lasts longer.
- * Your address book has mostly names that start with Dr.
- * You sit in a rocking chair and can't get it going.
- * The pharmacist has become your new best friend.
- * Getting "lucky" means you found your car in the parking lot.
- * The twinkle in your eye is merely a reflection from the sun on your bifocals.
- * It takes twice as long - to look half as good.
- * Everything hurts, and what doesn't hurt - doesn't work.
- * You look for your glasses for half an hour and they were on your head the whole time.
- * You sink your teeth into a steak - and they stay there.

- * You give up all your bad habits and still don't feel good.
- * You have more patience, but it is actually that you just don't care anymore.
- * You finally get your head together and your body starts falling apart.
- * You wonder how you could be over the hill when you don't even remember being on top of it.
- At 8 - You take her to bed and tell her a story.
- At 18 - You tell her a story and take her to bed.
- At 28 - You don't need to tell her a story to take her to bed.
- At 38 - She tells you a story and takes you to bed.
- At 48 - She tells you a story to avoid going to bed.
- At 58 - You stay in bed to avoid her story.
- At 68 -- If you take her to bed, that'll be a story!
- At 78 - What story??? What bed??? Who the hell are you???