

Celestial Grace Temple

What Are The Lost Gospels ?

Continuing archeological discoveries this century are revealing a greater understanding into the most important and mysterious period in human history; the true words and messages from the man, Jesus Christ the Nazarene.

Given the recent discoveries of the "Dead Sea Scrolls", the "Gnostic Gospels" of Nag Hammadi, and now, the long-sought "Gospel of the Nazirenes", far more has been discovered about the earliest days of Christianity in this century than in all the years prior.

Truly, what is becoming abundantly clear from these discoveries is that the original message of Christ differs sharply from that of the official doctrines later adopted and enforced by the church.

The discovery of Christ's original teachings.

In 1870, an Aramaic manuscript entitled "The Gospel of the Nazirenes" was discovered, translated and published. This ancient scripture, hidden away for centuries in a Tibetan monastery, seems in virtually every respect identical to the work by the same title that was known and widely quoted in the first century by the church.

Many of the most revered early church fathers, as well as a surprising number of scholars today, have boldly declared that the legendary Gospel of the Nazirenes, later to be known as "The Gospel of the Holy Twelve," is nothing less than the long-lost original Gospel which, legend holds, was collectively written by the actual 12 apostles in the period immediately following Christ's death, and upon which all of the Biblical synoptic Gospels are based.

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For nearly 2,000 years, all we objectively knew about Jesus Christ primarily came from the Biblical Gospels.

And yet, for all this time, a great and enduring enigma has loomed over these lofty works.

In the fourth century, the ruling authorities of Rome decided which of the countless texts, based on Christ's teachings in circulation at that time, would make up the present-day Bible and deciding once and for all, in effect, which works were to be judged as authoritative and which were not.

This decision, unfortunately, carried the undeniable taint of political compromise, and the Bishops making these decisions were doing so at the direct command of the Roman Emperor, and their future financial and social well-being was, and everyone agrees, entirely under his control.

It has been whispered ever since the fourth century that much of the true message of Jesus was edited out at that time, due to the oppressive and theologically obtuse influence of Constantine.

The Christian scriptures that failed to be admitted into the Bible were then outlawed, collected, and destroyed.

Prior to 325 AD, however, many of the early Church fathers had included in their writings mention of an earlier Gospel, upon which they claimed in near-perfect unison, the synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke had all been based.

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Mentioned or quoted from by such well-known church fathers as Papias, Hegesippus, Iranaeas, Clement, Origen, Basil, Epiphanius, Eusebius, and St. Jerome, this document had gone variously by the title "Gospel of the Nazirenes".

(The word "Nazirene" comes from the "Nazirite-Essene" sect, or a Nazirite sect of the Essene branch of Judaism), "Gospel of the Hebrews", "Gospel of the Ebionites", and "The Aramaic Gospel of Matthew".

For nearly 2,000 years, historians considered this work to have been irrevocably lost, but in 1870 a forgotten copy was discovered, hidden away in a Tibetan monastery, and was quickly translated from the original Aramaic, published this time as "The Gospel of the Holy Twelve".

This work was translated into the old-style King James English by Rev. G.J.R. Ouseley. The work was quickly rejected however, and considered blasphemous by the Church.

This text certainly appears to be the very same gospel referred to by so many ancient commentators. Although this original scripture had indeed thought been lost, a number of its passages are well known, having been preserved by various church fathers who quoted them in their writings.

Virtually all of the quoted passages can be found in this original Gospel and in their entirety. (As are also virtually the entire contents of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke).

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Numerous historical references thus seem to confirm the authenticity of the 1870 manuscript, and many modern scholars since 1870 have concluded as well that this work is, in all likelihood, the original source of much of the material that eventually found its way into the Biblical Gospels. If so, the Biblical Gospels would then be mere edited versions of this earlier and therefore more authoritative work, just as many have argued over the centuries.

The Stamp of Authenticity.

Far more than that of the Biblical Gospels, this work has the feel of having been written by actual witnesses to the events it describes. The detail is often both natural and more explicit, and a great many theological, social, and political issues come out making a great deal more sense.

Often during the reading of this work, one feels that you are simply reading the Bible, for many passages are, indeed, virtually identical to that found in the canon.

The familiar old stories are told again, and either the wording is identical, or, when expanded upon or alternate wording is used, the stories come out making rather more sense than before, clearing up many questions left hanging in the "authorized" version.

Never does it seem that the material is out-of-place, or as if it had been pasted-in by editors after the fact. Rather, in virtually every instance the fresh material seems an integral component of the narrative as one reflects anew upon the familiar wording of the "authorized" Bible.

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Enriching details run throughout this text, giving the compelling impression that this is indeed an original eyewitness narrative, not a bland, confused, or glossed-over retelling of a dusty tradition repeatedly handed down orally for 30 years or more before finally being committed to writing.

Traditional scriptural teachings maintain that the mighty works recorded in the New Testament went unwritten for some 30 years or more before being put down in writing, but this seems unlikely.

At least some of the apostles were, reportedly, quite literate and learned men, and it seems, even prior to encountering a text such as this, that an already close-knit group of 12 accomplished apostles of Christ would have quickly pooled and compared their memories in an effort to compose a definitive version of their recollections of the man, his teachings, and the works of Jesus, before anything of importance could be lost or forgotten.

This sacred text, now here available for all to read, constitutes evidence that such a collective testimony not only was composed (just as reason suggests it would have been), but has successfully survived the centuries after all, even in spite of whatever political forces that might at one time have been aligned against it.

It seems as if the authorized Gospels in the present day Bible are all various edited versions of the "Gospel of the Holy Twelve".

Some material originating in this text has even found its way into the biblical books of Acts and Revelations.

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In many ways, while reading it, the familiar age-old message of the Bible comes through as always; but then one is suddenly jolted upright, reading startling passages that directly defend the very non-Western traditions of reincarnation, the female aspect of creation, and compassion for all creatures along with the equally unfamiliar tales of Jesus' studying various mysteries and wisdom traditions in India, Persia and Egypt.

In many places, then, what is written in this text contrasts sharply with the familiar story and message in the "authorized" Bible.

It teaches strict and uncompromising vegetarianism, describing how Jesus' anger at the Temple was not merely directed at the financial business going on there, but was specifically over the selling and slaughtering of sacrificial animals in the Temple, which was supposed to be a House of Prayer, but had been changed, he cried, "into a slaughterhouse."

The idea that Jesus might have felt outrage at seeing the cruel carnage of innocent creatures in the Holy Temple seems fully consistent with his character as we have collectively come to imagine Him, and this interesting variation of the "moneychangers" event comes across as a more plausible occurrence.

The Gospel of the Holy Twelve claims that one of the primary reasons Jesus was so adamantly condemned by the religious authorities of Israel was because he advocated an end to blood sacrifices at the Temple.

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To bring an end to these sacrifices, of course, would have completely undermined the financial livelihood of much of the Temple priesthood, and they would have seen Jesus as embodying a personal threat of great consequence.

In effect, he disrupted their financial and spiritual foundation; an act more certain to elicit intense opposition from the Judaic priesthood than could scarcely be imagined.

The text also claims, not that Jesus was the "Only Begotten Son", but, phrasing it quite differently, that he was the "First Begotten Son" of God.

The small change in terminology entirely undermines the traditional church's position that Jesus was a unique Divine being who simply chose to become human; instead, this text now suggests, he was also, in some respects, a human who, through persistent effort and faithfulness to "The Law" (perhaps over many lifetimes), had become a Divine being, suggesting the very gnostic notion that anyone can also attain the same accomplishment.

In a more modern perspective, the text also directly advocates euthanasia, but only in cases of extreme suffering. Always and everywhere throughout the text, the image of Jesus is one utterly dedicated to gentleness and loving care for all beings.

Many scenes involved Jesus rebuking someone for cruelly or inflicting pain on others beings, whether people or animals.

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The Gospel of the Holy Twelve declares that in order to achieve eternal life, "The Law" must be fully obeyed. In this respect this text shows us a very "Essene" Jesus indeed, with his unequivocal focus on "The Law" that must be obeyed.

But "The Law", to this Jesus, was not altogether the same Law written in the Hebrew Old Testament, but rather a universal Law pre-written into the inner being of Man.

The Law given by Moses, this Jesus claimed, had been altered, betrayed and adulterated by the priests of Persia during the Jewish people's captivity there.

The true Law given by Moses was, this scripture maintains, the same ancient Law that is pre-written in the hearts of all men - the "Law of Love and the unity of all life in the One-Family of the All-Parent".

This work teaches that living in accordance to the inner Law is the key to salvation, Eternal Life, and the Kingdom of Heaven. It teaches that if one experiences the death of the soul, it is not because one was condemned by God or anyone else, but by being self-condemned.

Whatever the evil doers suffer after death would be that which they themselves created in their own unconscious souls prior to their deaths by betraying the Law, the sense of right and wrong that is pre-written into our inner being.

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Making the Two into One

The gnostic "Gospel of Thomas", "Gospel of Philip", and "Gospel of Truth" found at Nag Hammadi, reconciling and integrating the dual nature of all being is a main focus of this text.

God is repeatedly called not "Father", but the Father-Mother, or the All-Parent. His attributes are repeatedly described with equal-but-opposite word pairings such as "Love and Wisdom", "head and heart", "soul and spirit", "within and without", "right and left", and "male and female", or the "Oneness" of the divine pair.

But by whatever name, is constantly being mentioned, advocated, and described and declares that salvation comes through the reconciliation and integration of these two primordial elements of being.

The Complete Text.

This ancient manuscript claims in no uncertain terms to be the same work composed by the 12 apostles, and, in fact, it makes an intriguing and compelling case for being just that. Its antiquity seems beyond question, as this 19th century text contains words, phrases, and concepts identical to those found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Gnostic Gospels of Nag Hammadi, which were only unearthed in the 1940's.

The text therefore cannot, as these connections prove, be anything but authentic.

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The Nazarene Way of Essenic Studies contains the full 19th century translation of The Gospel of the Holy Twelve, also known as the Gospel of the Nazirenes, the Gospel of the Hebrews, the Original Gospel, the Gospel of the Ebionites, and the Aramaic Matthew.

The very Gospel that was repeatedly mentioned and described by many commentators in the early Church as the original teachings of the Nazarene called Christ.

For those who have discernment let them discern in wisdom, and those who have perception let them perceive with acuity.

May the grace of God be with you always --- Amen.

Pastor Andy Anderson

Celestial Grace Ministry