

The Gospel of Judas

What We Believe — Scripture

A popular way to study the New Testament Gospels is to refer to a "Harmony of the Gospels" that shows the common scriptures in parallel to emphasize the harmony, the agreement, between them. Looking at the four gospels together helps complete the story of Jesus as God's Son and as the sinless sacrifice for our sins. If you try to place the Gnostic gospels into the same parallel format with Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John, few fit, and only a few verses in Thomas appear to match the New Testament format and story. They simply do not fit as part of God's revelation. The gospel of Thomas, for example, not only doesn't fit in with the harmony of the other Gospels, but it also disagrees with virtually every aspect of the New Testament. The quotes reproduced here are from the Judas text as it appears in "The Gnostic Bible," Kindle Edition.

Part of the introduction to The Gospel of Judas - "When Jesus appeared on earth, he performed miracles and great wonders for the salvation of humanity. And since some [walked] in the way of righteousness while others walked in their transgressions, the twelve disciples were called. He began to speak with them about the mysteries beyond the world and what would take place at the end. Often, he did not appear to his disciples as himself, but he was found among them as a child."

Later in the text, Judas is quoted as saying "I know who you are and where you have come from. You are from the immortal realm of Barbelo. And I am not worthy to utter the name of the one who has sent you." Barbelō (Greek: Βαρβηλώ) refers to the first emanation of God in several forms of Gnostic cosmogony. Barbelō is often depicted as a supreme female principle, the single passive antecedent of creation in its manifoldness. The name refers to the wife of God in several forms of Gnostic origin of the universe, especially the solar system. In this belief system, God did not create Barbelo, but instead, she comes from him by some indirect means. For example, in some Gnostic texts, God's inexhaustible wealth of thought overflows, and a new being, Barbelo, emerges from that intellectual flood. Elsewhere, it's said that Barbelo arose when God stared down into the primal waters and saw his luminous reflection, which then became a new being. [Lewis, Nicola Denzey. 2013. *"Introduction to Gnosticism:" Ancient Voices, Christian Worlds*. Oxford University Press. p. 154-156.]

For the question of including the Judas document in the canon of scripture, we could stop here since it denies the Godhead and basic concepts of creation. However, the emphasis given to the small fragments of the Judas text by a program of National Geographic Society and Public Broadcasting System centers on Judas understanding and fulfillment of Jesus' mission on Earth. They claim that "A newly authenticated and newly translated ancient document known as the "Gospel of Judas" tells the story of Judas, not as Jesus's betrayer, but as his favored disciple." In the document, Judas complains that the Twelve hate him but Jesus comforts him with a promise.

Reading from the Judas text we find this. "Judas said, "Master, could it be that my seed is under the control of the rulers?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Come, that I [—two lines missing—], but that you will grieve much when you see the kingdom and all its generation." When he heard this, Judas said to him, "What good is it that I have received it? For you have set me apart for that generation." Jesus answered and said, "You will become the thirteenth, and you will be cursed by the other generations—and you will come to rule over them. In the last days they will curse your ascent to the holy [generation]." The Gospel of Judas states that Jesus told Judas "You shall be cursed for generations" and then added, "You will come to rule over them" and "You will exceed all of them, for

you will sacrifice the man that clothes me." Those that accept this document say this is the authorization from Jesus to Judas to deliver Him up to the Jews and Romans. They also say that the context clearly implies that Judas only did what Jesus earlier had instructed him to do. Therefore his actions cannot be described as a betrayal.

When Jesus was arrested, (Matthew 26:47) identifies Judas as "*one of the twelve*." The Gnostic text has Judas identified as the "thirteenth" and the "twelve" being the chosen disciples that do not understand the role that Jesus must fulfill. In that text, Jesus calls Judas the thirteenth who will gain the superior position and blessing when the Holy City is opened. Mysterious, symbolic, without regard for New Testament history, and known only to one man, this document seems to have no value as history or doctrine.

These examples make it obvious that The Gospel of Judas should not even be considered as inspired scripture! Remember, "You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him" (Deuteronomy 10:1-5). God's Word is found in the understandable text of The Bible, not in confusing symbolism.