

## **Just Thinking Apologetics**

Does Gnosticism represent the true teachings of Jesus as some claim? There has been great interest lately in many of the Gnostic texts. Some of the Gnostic texts make wild assertions, such as “The Gospel of Philip” which insinuates that Jesus and Mary Magdalene had a relationship and were perhaps married. Another interesting story from the “Gospel of Peter” has a large talking cross coming out of the tomb of Jesus telling about how Jesus overcame the world. The recently translated “Gospel of Judas” has Judas as the favorite disciple of Jesus, because he was able to free the spirit of Jesus. Consider this passage from “Judas”, “But you will exceed all of them. For you will sacrifice the man that clothes me.” Other Gnostic books of interest include: “The Gospel of Thomas”, “The Gospel of Mary”, “The Secret book of John”, and “The Gospel of Truth.”

Why are these books not considered legitimate teachings of Jesus? First and foremost, these books were all written in the mid second century or later. The New Testament, on the other hand, was written in the first century by eyewitnesses of Jesus (Luke 1:2, 2 Peter 1:16, I John 1:1-3), or close associates of those who knew Jesus. Secondly, the Gnostic views were diametrically opposite of the eyewitness reports of Jesus. The Apostle John (see his three epistles) and the early Church fathers Irenaeus and Tertullian strongly condemned Gnosticism’s false teachings early on.

Clearly, Gnosticism cannot claim to represent the Jesus of history. This, however, does not stop individuals from taking a liberal view of history. The Jesus Seminar, liberal scholars, and the New Age movement still try to promote Gnosticism, even though it does not represent the real Jesus of history.