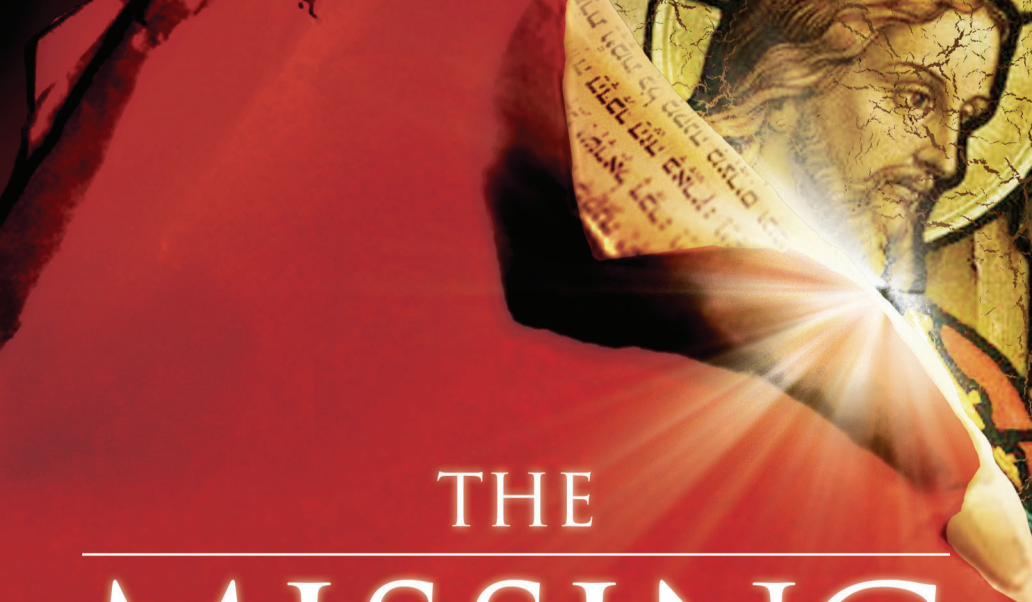




THE MISSING GOSPELS

UNEARTHING THE TRUTH
BEHIND ALTERNATIVE
CHRISTIANITIES

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A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

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• ONE •

MAKING A SCORECARD:
THE PERIODS AND PLAYERS
OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY

AD 30–100

Apostolic Period

Jesus (Judea, Galilee)	Matthew	Simon Magus (Samaria)	Clement of Rome
Peter (Jerusalem, Galilee, Antioch, Galatia, Rome)	Mark	Hymenaeus (Ephesus)	Docetists
John (Asia Minor, Ephesus)	Luke	Alexander (Ephesus)	Gnostics?
Paul (Antioch, Asia Minor, Greece, Rome)	Hebrews	Philetus (Ephesus)	Encratites?
James (Jerusalem)	1 Peter	<i>Gospel of Thomas?</i> (i.e., date uncertain)	
Q (shared church source of Jesus' teaching; Matthew and Luke likely used)	1 John	<i>1 Clement</i>	

AD 100–150

Period of the Apostolic Fathers and the Rise of Alternative Works

Clement of Rome (a bridge between the periods)	<i>Gospel of Thomas</i> (period of date held by most scholars)	<i>Gospel of the Egyptians</i>
2 <i>Clement</i>	Carpocrates (Alexandria in Egypt)	<i>Gospel of the Nazareans</i>
Ignatius (Antioch)	Saturninus (Antioch in Syria)	<i>Infancy Gospel of Thomas</i>
Polycarp (Smyrna in Asia Minor)	Basilides (Alexandria in Egypt)	<i>Gospel of Mary Magdalene?</i>
<i>Didache</i>	Marcion (Sinope in Pontus of Asia Minor, Rome)	<i>Papyrus Egerton 2</i>
(<i>Pseudo</i>) <i>Barnabas</i>	Valentinus (Alexandria of Egypt, Rome)	Gnostics
<i>Shepherd of Hermas</i>	<i>Gospel of Peter</i>	Encratites
<i>Diognetus</i>	<i>Gospel of the Hebrews</i>	
<i>Papias</i>	<i>Gospel of the Ebionites</i>	

AD 150–400

Period of the Apologists and More Alternatives

Justin Martyr (100–165; Samaria, Asia Minor, Rome)	Eusebius (260–340; Caesarea)	<i>Tripartite Tractate</i>	<i>Apocryphon of James</i>	<i>Teachings of Silvanus</i>
Irenaeus (130–200; Lyon)	Epiphanius (315–403; Palestine, Egypt, Salamis)	<i>Pistis Sophia</i>	<i>Interpretation of Knowledge</i>	Gnostics
Hippolytus (170–235; Rome)	<i>Gospel of Philip</i>	<i>Sophia of Jesus Christ</i>	<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i>	Theodotus
Tertullian (155–220; Carthage)	<i>Gospel of Mary Magdalene</i>	<i>Gospel of Truth</i>	<i>Dialogue of the Savior</i>	Ebionites
Clement (150–215; Alexandria)	<i>Gospel of the Savior</i>	<i>Gospel of Bartholomew</i>	<i>Hypostasis of the Archons</i>	Encratites
Origen (185–254; Alexandria, Caesarea)	<i>Letter to Rheginos</i> (= <i>Treatise on the Resurrection</i>)	<i>Apocryphon of John</i>	<i>Second Treatise of the Great Seth</i>	Montanists

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *What does the new school argue?*
- 2) *What role does Irenaeus play according to the new school, and why concentrate on texts before Irenaeus to study this historical issue?*
- 3) *What role did Israel's promise play in the development of Christianity?*
- 4) *What are the three periods of early Christian history, and what allows them to be distinguished from each other?*
- 5) *What claims of the new school have merit, and what ancient factors turn the discussion into a debate?*

• TWO •

DISCUSSION OF A KEY
ALTERNATIVE VIEW: ABOUT
GNOSTICISM AND ITS DEFINITION

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *What three factors make defining Gnosticism difficult?*
- 2) *What five traits are often associated with Gnosticism?*
- 3) *What is it in Harnack's observation about Gnosticism that is often ignored, and why is its perspective important?*

• THREE •

DATING THE ORIGIN
OF GNOSTICISM

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *Why speak of Gnostic codes?*
- 2) *Name three major alternative views of the second century.*
- 3) *What are the four views of the origin of Gnosticism, and which of them is the most likely?*

• FOUR •

EARLY CHRISTIANITY'S DIVERSITY AND HISTORICAL JUDGMENTS

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *What major differences existed in the dynamics of early traditional and alternative Gnostic communities?*
- 2) *What four different issues must be distinguished in working with historical sources?*
- 3) *Do Thomas and Q teach that Jesus is only a teacher of wisdom?*
- 4) *In dealing with sources, what are the key points from our examples?*

• FIVE •

THE CLAIMS OF WALTER BAUER
AND THE ROOTS
OF THE NEW SCHOOL

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *What were Bauer's two contributions to the study of the early church?*
- 2) *What were the two elements of Bauer's thesis?*
- 3) *How is his thesis to be assessed?*

• SIX •

THE NATURE OF GOD
AND CREATION, PART 1

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *Why is the Gospel of Thomas an important text, and what is at stake in determining its date for this discussion?*
- 2) *Who creates, and what is the fundamental character of the creation, according to these texts?*
- 3) *What role does Sophia play in some of these texts, and is it pro-female?*

• SEVEN •

THE NATURE OF GOD
AND CREATION, PART 2

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *As a matter of historical record, why are these texts so important?*
- 2) *What are the key affirmations of these texts about God and Creation?*
- 3) *What key differences exist between alternative and traditional texts, and why is that important?*

• EIGHT •

JESUS: DIVINE AND/OR HUMAN?
PART 1

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *What four options exist for how Jesus' person is seen, and to which period (ancient or modern) does each view belong?*
- 2) *Do these texts as a group affirm a human Jesus? Why or why not?*
- 3) *What range of views about the person of Jesus do these texts show? Name one example for each view (Note: some may not have an example).*

• NINE •

JESUS: DIVINE AND/OR HUMAN?
PART 2

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *How do traditional texts see Jesus in terms of divinity and humanity?*
- 2) *How consistent is this view in this material?*
- 3) *What differences exist between alternative and traditional materials when it comes to Jesus' person?*
- 4) *Are these significant differences?*

THE NATURE OF HUMANITY'S
REDEMPTION: SPIRITUAL OR ALSO
PHYSICAL? PART 1

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *What is the central feature of salvation in these texts?*
- 2) *Is there a range of views about salvation in these texts?*
- 3) *According to many of these texts, what happens to the material creation (that is, physical matter)?*

• ELEVEN •

THE NATURE OF HUMANITY'S
REDEMPTION: SPIRITUAL OR ALSO
PHYSICAL? PART 2

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *In the traditional texts, what does salvation cover, and how extensive is it (i.e., does it cover the physical world)?*
- 2) *How commonly is this idea expressed across these traditional texts?*
- 3) *Why is the resurrection an important part of the discussion in traditional texts?*
- 4) *What differences exist between many of the alternative texts and traditional texts, and are the differences significant?*

• TWELVE •

JESUS' DEATH: KNOWLEDGE, SIN, AND SALVATION, PART 1

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *What major theme do the alternative materials teach about Jesus' work?*
- 2) *Which key elements are raised in association with Jesus' work?*
- 3) *What unusual feature about Jesus' death appears in some of the texts? Reflecting on the Gnostic emphases, what is it about Gnostic teaching that makes this unusual feature not so surprising?*

• THIRTEEN •

JESUS' DEATH: KNOWLEDGE, SIN,
AND SALVATION, PART 2

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *On this theme, what ideas overlap between alternative and traditional texts?*
- 2) *What core difference exists between these materials, and what kind of traditional material teaches this difference?*
- 3) *How pervasive is this teaching in the traditional material?*
- 4) *How far back does such teaching go in the tradition?*

• FOURTEEN •

CONCLUSION: THE NEW SCHOOL, THE MISSING GOSPELS, ALTERNATIVE CHRISTIANITIES, AND ORTHODOXY

STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1) *Name the contributions of the new school.*
- 2) *What three problems exist for the new school?*
- 3) *What “linage advantage” do the traditional sources have that the alternative sources lack?*
- 4) *What did “orthodoxy” affirm in the first two centuries, and what did those early Christians not believe?*
- 5) *Is there a spectrum of views in the first two centuries, and which materials reflect a place on the borders between traditional and alternative views?*
- 6) *Why were these “borderline” texts eventually rejected by traditionalists?*
- 7) *Considered as a historical question, should the history of early Christianity be revised, and why is that question important?*

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