

1 **The Real Secret of the Da Vinci Code**

- The real secret in the Da Vinci Code is the fact that Dan Brown has an agenda! True, he wants to sell books, but he has also issued, in this book, a call to reassess what we know about orthodox Christianity!
- In **Darrell Bock's** book, "Breaking the Da Vinci Code," he says it this way [on page 95]:
- "... the real secret of the Da Vinci Code ... is nothing less than a conscious effort to obscure the uniqueness and vitality of the Christian faith and message."

2

- **Ancient Christian Gospels: Their History and Development**, by Helmut Koester
- **Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas**, by Elaine Pagels
- **Lost Christianity**, by Jacob Needleman
- **Lost Christianities: the Battles For Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew**, by Bart D. Ehrman

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- **Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why**, by Bart D. Ehrman
- **The Gospel of Judas**, by Bart D. Ehrman
- **The Gospel of Judas: The Story of The Misunderstood Disciple and His Lost Gospel** by James Robinson

4

***"History is written by the winners!"* As a result, we get a skewed [prejudiced] view of history!**

5 **Elaine Pagels, author of *Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas***

- "We need to change the way we see Christianity."
- "The concerns of the gnostic Christians survived only as a suppressed current, like a river driven underground ... All the old questions - the original questions, sharply debated at the beginning of Christianity - are being reopened : How is one to understand the resurrection? What about women's participation in priestly and episcopal office? Who was Christ, and how does he relate to the believer? What are the similarities between Christianity and other world religions?"

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Elaine Pagels reveals the real underlying bias which really motivates her conclusions. - On page 29 of *Beyond Belief*, she writes:


“This research helped clarify what I cannot love: the tendency to identify Christianity with a single, authorized set of beliefs however these may actually vary from church to church - coupled with the conviction that Christian belief alone offers access to God. ...”

7 

- A statement in the Da Vinci Code (p. 231) by **Professor Teabing [a fictional scholar]**, which Dr. Darrell Bock says “... may be the most misleading statement of fact in the entire novel.”
- **“More than eighty gospels were considered for the New Testament, and yet only a relatively few were chosen for inclusion - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John among them.”**

8 

- **Who are the “Gnostics”?**
- **What did they teach?**
- **Why were they not included in the New Testament?**

9  **Who are the “Gnostics”?**

- In **I Tim. 6:20**, there is a reference to what seems to refer to a whole system of so-called knowledge, which, from the Apostle Paul’s viewpoint, needs to be avoided:
- *“Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposition of what is falsely called **knowledge**.”* [“gnosis”]

10 

- **Jack Finegan**, says: **“Most of the information that was previously available concerning gnosticism came from its opponents, especially the Christian writers ...”**
- One of these early Christian writers was **Irenaeus [A.D. 130-200]**. His main work was titled **“Refutation and Overthrow of the Falsely So-Called Gnosis.”** He also dealt with the teaching of early Gnosticism in his work titled **“Against Heresies.”**
- **Plotinus**, another early writer, wrote a work titled: **“Against the Gnostics; or Against Those That Affirm the Creator of the Cosmos and the Cosmos Itself to Be Evil.”**

11 

. The major modern discovery is that of the so-called
Nag Hammadi texts

12 

- **Jack Finegan's position is that Gnosticism probably began about the same time as Christianity and that Simon the Sorcerer [of Acts, chapter 8] and others who followed him were probably the source of this teaching.**
- * P. 221 of *Myth and Mystery*, speaking of Simon in Acts 8, Finegan says: "**Thus it was from Simon and the Simonians that 'what is falsely called knowledge' (I Tim. 6:20) took its beginning.**"

13 

- "**Justin Martyr** (c. 100-165; Apology 1:26 places Simon in Rome in the time of Claudius (A.D. 41-54), where he was associated with a former prostitute, named Helena, of whom it was said that she was 'the first thought [ennoia] generated by him.'" - **Finegan**

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- "**Irenaeus** (Adversus Haereses 1:23.1-4) goes on to say that Simon claimed to have appeared among the Jews as the Son, to have descended in Samaria as the Father, and to have come to other nations in the character of the Holy Spirit. Helena descended to the lower regions of space and generated angels and powers by whom the world was formed, and then she became a captive of the lower powers (the lost sheep, Matt. 18:12; Luke 15:4). Simon, as the Great Power, appeared among men as a man in order to free Helena and others from the rule of those who made the world."

Finegan

15 

- Finegan also cites Epiphanius of Salamis (Panarion 1.2.21) - who, Finegan says: "claims that Simon considered unnatural sexual relations a matter of moral indifference, and used materials from such in his 'mysteries.'" Describing Simon's system, Epiphanius writes:
- Simon also offers certain names of principalities and authorities, and he speaks of various heavens, describes powers to correspond with each firmament and heaven, and gives outlandish names for these. He says that there is no way to be saved but by learning this mystical doctrine, and offering sacrifices of this kind to the Father of all, through these principalities and authorities, he says. But he teaches that there is a death and destruction of flesh, and a purification of souls only - and (only) if these are initiated through his erroneous knowledge."

16 

What did they teach?

- A text from the gnostic writing titled the “**Apocalypse of Peter**” (82:17-83:15) as an example of the gnostic belief system:
- And he [the Savior] said to me [Peter], ‘Be strong, for you are the one to whom these mysteries have been given. To know them through revelation, that he whom they crucified is first-born, and the home of the demons, and the stoney vessel (?) in which they dwell of Elohim, of the cross which is under the Law. But he who stands near him is the living Saviour, the first in him, whom they seized and released, who stands joyfully looking at those who did him violence, while they were divided among themselves. Therefore he laughs at their lack of perception, knowing that they are born blind. So then the one susceptible to suffering shall come, since the body is the substitute. But what they released was my incorporeal body. I am the intellectual spirit filled with radiant light. He whom you saw coming to me is our intellectual Pleroma, which unites perfect light with my Holy Spirit.’

17 ☐

- **The “Pleroma”** is “the pure, heavenly, immaterial fullness that is truly and completely divine. This is the supreme God in these texts.”
- Gnostic views held to a **dualism**, which taught that the world of ideas [a spiritual world] was a pure world, while the physical world was corrupt.
- This entire teaching is a mystery; it is unique revelation received from Jesus. The teachings of Gnosticism are filled with mysteries now revealed, and only to insiders who have access to and can appreciate these mysteries, i.e. this “gnosis”!
- The only way of salvation is through the knowledge of these mysteries - salvation through knowledge and information!

18 ☐ **Why were they not included in the New Testament?**

Four factors drove the desire to identify and name the central books of the faith:

1. Apostolic roots
2. Widespread usage
3. The pressure of alternative expressions [heresies]
4. Persecution

19 ☐ **Apostolic roots:**

1. **The Muratorian Canon** - goes back to the second century [perhaps 150 years before the Nicene Council]
 - Names only the four Gospels we have in the New testament
 - States: “The fourth of the gospels is that of John, one of the disciples.”
 - Specifically names two gnostics [Valentinus and Marcion] whose works are to be excluded from the church

20 ☐

- **2. Irenaeus**, a second century church father, in his work “Against Heresies,” asserts that the four gospels

reflect the core testimony which is to be trusted about Jesus.

- Defended them as the “**four pillars**” of orthodoxy.
- Coined an expression which summarized the prevailing view of the church in his time. He said “the gospel is **quadriform**” [i.e. the gospel truth is expressed in four gospels!]
- Believed Matthew and John wrote the gospels by their name and said the apostles “had perfect knowledge.”

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- 3. **Justin Martyr**, who wrote even earlier in the second century than Irenaeus, referred to the 4 gospels in this way: “**the memoirs which I say were drawn up by His apostles and those who followed them.**”

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4. **Tatian**, a second-century student of Justin Martyr, combined the four gospels into one account around **A.D. 172**. It was called the ***Diatessaron***, which is Greek for *through the four*.

23 

- 5. **Origen (185-254)** “I know a certain gospel which is called ‘The Gospel according to Thomas’ and a ‘Gospel according to Matthias,’ and many others have we read - lest we should in any way be considered ignorant because of those who imagine they possess some knowledge if they are acquainted with these. Nevertheless, among all these we have approved solely what the church has recognized, which is that only the four gospels should be accepted.”

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