

THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH
ANSWERS THE HERESY of
‘THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS’

Study & Compilation
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INTRODUCTION

Again, in the non-ceasing endeavor of Satan in attacking our Christian belief, he tries to bring back to our world today, an old heresy, which was refuted in the early centuries by the doctors of the holy church.

Satan cannot withstand the mission of salvation brought forth by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Satan fights by persecuting believers, and more effectively by stabbing from within by using heretics to bring forth heresies and wrong teachings.

According to the National Geographic Magazine, an Egyptian farmer near the Nile River in 1978, in the deserts of Minya Province in Upper Egypt, was searching and seeking gold or jewelry or anything of value, instead he discovers a stone box, inside an unexpected find 'the codex', a mysterious find . He had no idea that he found an old heresy some 1800 years ago!

Later on the discovery was found written on thirteen (13) pieces of papyrus. It is not a modern forgery, as experts and researchers said, it is real. Carbon dating also proved that the discovery is real papyrus from old times. Five tiny samples and pieces were tested in Arizona to prove that it is real and not forged.

In 2006 in Switzerland, the gospel of Judas was put together 85% complete, only 15% was lost.

Scholars confirm that the papyrus mysterious finding had the title in Coptic reveals '*Judas' Gospel*'. This matches the text which Bishop of Lyon, St. Irenaeus in 180 AD, who denounced it some 18 centuries ago.

The Coptic translation is a borrowed one from the Greek original, in the first or second century AD.

The gospel of Judas tells us more about Gnosticism in the second century. It does not have authentic information about **our historic Jesus Christ**.

All the authentic four Gospel of; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were completed and put together between 60 – 100 AD, but the gospel of Judas was put in 180 AD!

This false gospel of Judas is puzzling, for it doesn't have the same function as the authentic Four Gospels.

Not every finding or discovery is true. Researcher can find papyrus discoveries or findings, but it doesn't match our historical Christ. Christianity preaches about; The Son of God who appeared in flesh, He performed many and numerous miracles, He was crucified, buried and rose from the dead on the third day, and that history and documents assure and confirm these facts. [see our booklet, Proof of Resurrection]

The holy church has refused and rejected many apocryphal books such as; The gospel of Christ's childhood, The gospel of Gamaliel, The gospel of The Hebrews, The gospel of The Egyptians, The gospel of Saint Peter, The gospel of Saint Philip, The gospel of Saint Thomas, The gospel of Saint Bartholomew, The gospel of The Twelve Apostles, The gospel of Andrew, The gospel of The Acts of Andrew, The gospel of Eve, and The gospel of Judas Iscariot. All these and more were rejected and refuted by the early fathers of the holy church, and were labeled 'heretical books'.

The false gospel of Judas Iscariot states that 'the body is prison', 'salvation is not achieved till we escape from this materialistic existence', 'Judas allowed Jesus to get rid of this materialistic existence to achieve salvation, by killing the body!', 'Christianity is filled with politics for they wanted to please the Romans by showing their hatred to the Jews', 'you pray to the wrong God .. everyone of you can be

Christ!’, ‘God of the Old Testament and Adam ruined the world’, ‘the serpent which is a connotation for Christ and Eve, tried to repair and mend matters!’, ‘Judas is innocent of killing Jesus’, ‘Jesus appeared as very serious sometimes, other times as mature or young’. This is not history. **Isn’t this the exact teachings of the Gnostics?! It has also been proven that that discovery of the false gospel of Judas was written by Gnostics and was rejected by church leaders.**

Those who engulfed themselves in studying the contents of this false document, show their ignorance in theology, and do not know much about Judaism and Christianity, simultaneously, and definitely lack knowledge of history.

Apparently, it shows that those who are trying to equal this false gospel of Judas to the four authentic ones which were approved and believed by all Christians around the world, do not understand or comprehend the true meaning of ‘The Divine Inspiration’ of The Holy Scriptures.

May God help us to keep our love for Him unto eternity, enjoy the treasures of Christianity, and keep the foundation of faith in tact, and be worthy to see Him in heaven, there ..

Through the prayers and supplications of our beloved Mother of God, holy Theotokos St. Mary, and the prayers of our beloved Evangelist St. Mark the Apostle and Martyr, and the prayers of our beloved father of fathers His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, and his partner in the apostolic service His Grace Bishop Serapion. Amen.

Fr. Markos R. Hanna
June – 11th – 2006
Pentecost Sunda

BIBLICAL INFORMATION ABOUT JUDAS ISCARIOT:

What do we know about Judas from the four Gospels and history?

+ Who is Judas Isacriot?

Judas Iscariot: Greek form, '*Ioudas*', of Hebrew *Judas*, *Juda*, meaning *praised*.

We learn nothing of Judas previous to his call (Matt. 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16), and yet the appearance of his name in the lists of the apostles would seem to indicate that he had previously declared himself a disciple.

He was the son of Simon, also called Iscariot (***John 12:4; 13:2***), was one of Jesus' 12 disciples and betrayed Him to His enemies. The meaning of the epithet Iscariot is uncertain. It may have been a Hellenized form for "man of Kerioth," to indicate his origin. Other suggested interpretations are "from Kartan," a town in Galilee (Josh 21:32); or a nickname derived from Hebrew (a leather bag, since he carried a bag for money); or from Hebrew (strangling) by way of allusion to his death (see Origen, Matthew XXXV); or possibly from Greek, a Sem. tr. of the Latin '*sicarius*', a radical Zealot who carried a dagger. Probably the first-named option is the best.

Nothing is known for certain of the early life of Judas. If he came from Kerioth he may have been the only Judean among the disciples. He is first mentioned in the choosing of the Twelve (***Matt 10:4; Mark 3:19; Luke 6:16***), at which point all the Synoptics add the clause, "***which also betrayed him.***" His relation to Jesus is not mentioned until the episode at Bethany when Mary anointed Jesus with a vial of expensive ointment. John notes that Judas initiated the protest of the gift as a waste, and adds the footnote that Judas' interest was prompted by his avarice. Had the ointment been sold, the cash proceeds would have become

available to Judas, who was the treasurer of the Twelve (***Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-10; John 12:1-8***). The synoptic Gospels leave the impression that Jesus' rebuke evoked Judas' displeasure, and that he immediately went to the chief priests to bargain for the betrayal (see also ***Luke 22:3***). ***John 13:26-30*** states that Judas withdrew from the meal in the Upper Room in order to complete his arrangement. The two accounts are not irreconcilable. He may have begun negotiations early, and have later informed the priests of the proper occasion for arrest. John implies this definitely by saying that Judas had already been motivated to betray Jesus (***13:2***), but that the decisive act came during the Last Supper (***13:26-30***).

The motive for Judas' treachery is not stated categorically in the Gospels. We do not know the exact motivation behind Judas' betrayal, but what is clear is that Judas allowed his desires to place him in apposition where Satan could manipulate him. Probably he joined Jesus' company because, like the rest of the disciples (cf. ***Matt 16:16; John 1:41, 45, 49; 11:27***), he believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and that he would recover the independence of Israel from Gentile domination (***Matt 19:27; 20:20-23; Luke 24:21; Acts 1:6***). Jesus' consistent refusal to make His mission political, and His open declaration at the feast of Bethany that His death was imminent, may have spurred Judas to action. If he could not be assured of a prominent place in the coming Messianic kingdom, he could at least profit by disposing of Jesus to His enemies. Disillusionment, the frustration of his expectations, and greed as John indicates, plus a definite Satanic influence (***John 13:2, 27***) prompted his treachery.

Not only did he arrange for the capture of Jesus, but he also identified Him in the garden of Gethsemane where the arrest took place (***Matt 26:47; Mark 14:43; Luke 22:47:1 18:3-5***). In betraying Jesus, Judas Iscariot made the greatest mistake in history. But the fact that Jesus knew Judas would betray Him doesn't mean that Judas was a

puppet of God's will. Judas made the choice. God knew what that choice would be and confirmed it. Judas did not lose his relationship with Jesus, rather he never found Jesus in the first place, he is called 'the one headed for destruction' (John 17:12) because he was never saved.

When Jesus was officially condemned to death, Judas was overwhelmed with remorse and attempted to undo his evil deed by returning the money, only to be contemptuously, 'rejected' (**Matt 27:3-5**). Matthew states that Judas hanged himself; Luke adds a footnote it to the effect that he was killed by a fall (1:18, 19). The money was used by the Jewish priests to buy the potter's field, later called "The of Blood" (**Matt 27:6-8**), as a burial for strangers. [**The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia, vol. III, p. 732**].

What Is GNOSTICISM?

A term derived from Greek meaning 'knowledge', and variously applied to movements which called themselves Christians or borrowed heavily from Christian sources, but which was rejected by the main stream of Christian tradition-represented in such fathers as; Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Epiphanius and Athanasius of Alexandria, Egypt..

[**The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, vol. II, p.736**]

Gnosticism is a very complex ancient heresy that was manifested in many different forms and beliefs. The Gnostics taught that Christ had imparted secret knowledge, 'gnosis', to a select few, who in turn transmitted hidden truths to an elite. Central to Gnosticism is the denial of the goodness of matter, leading to a denial of the reality of the Incarnation of the Son of God and of His bodily Resurrection. Several schools of Gnosticism taught that salvation consisted of liberation from the physical body and of growth to a higher, non-physical, spiritual level of existence. Orthodoxy has

always rejected Gnosticism, teaching that the world and man were created good and will be redeemed by Christ and transformed at the end of this age (*Genesis 1:1-31; Romans 8:19-22; I Corinthians 15:35-55; Revelation 21:1*). [*The Orthodox Study Bible, p. 799*].

Anyone who reads through the books of Irenaeus or Hippolytus against heresies will be struck by the wide variety of these movements. [*The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of The Bible, vol. II, p.736*].

Gnostics can be presented to appear as rebels with the following beliefs:

1-Objectionable was their view that salvation is attained through receipt of a secret knowledge; knowledge of how to extricate the trans mundane spirit in humans from material envelopment, both corporeal and cosmic. Both body and cosmos are regarded with suspicion.

2-Also troublesome was their belief that humanity is divided into three types.

+ First, there are the ‘*pneumatikoi*’ or ‘spirituals’ (who have awakened to their real nature through gnosis).

+ Second, the ‘*psychikoi*’: psychics, whose soul-nature may be guided by faith, but who yet still stand in need of exceptional moral effort and spiritual enlightenment.

+ Third, the ‘*hylikoi*’ hylics-that is, the ‘materials’; those who are aware only of matter and who, in belonging to matter alone, have no chance of salvation. They are, from the spiritual point of view, already ‘dead’.

3-Also on Irenaeus’ list was these groups’ belief that the cosmos is a calamity and birth a catastrophe. The absolute God had no intention of producing a material universe. It came about due to a Fall within the original divine being. The original divine being (called the Pleroma, or Fullness) consisted of a coterie of conceptual emanations: the archetypes, or ‘aeons’, who derived their origin from an unknowable depth or profundity (Greek: *bythos*), also called

the Father. The emanated archetypes were presented both as Platonic ideas and as spiritual beings, among whom the most significant were Anthropos (humanity) and Sophia (wisdom).

4-The great secret of radical Gnostics consists in knowing and understanding the pre-cosmic fall myth (in one of many variant forms) and in being given the keys to liberate the exiled ‘*pneuma*’ from the grip of the archons.

5-These groups refer to the holder of the keys to liberation as Jesus: an emanated energy of the Father, sent out of the Father’s love to benighted (overtaken by night) earth in order to awaken the dormant Gnostics to their true identity, Jesus is thus the Gnostic par excellence; he is not a man in the ordinary sense of the word.

The crucifixion itself is a fraud, a trick effected to outwit the Demiurge. The archons got a death from the body, but the spiritual being could not be destroyed. Some Gnostics denied Jesus’ participation in the crucifixion altogether, claiming that another (sometimes Simon of Cyrene) was crucified in his place.

[Gnostic Philosophy, Tobias Churton, 2005, p.89].

ALLEGED AND FALSE FACTS ABOUT JUDAS ISCARIOT IN JUDAS’ GOSPEL:

*The ‘Gospel of Judas’ is one of many ‘Gnostic non Christian Gospels’.

*It is one of many found in Upper Egypt in a cave in the provincial city of Nag-Hammadi.

*The Coptic Orthodox Church is a main stream Christian Church and totally rejects these non-Christians writings.

*The use of the Coptic language in a document does not make it necessarily one of our documents. The Coptic language was the native language of all Egyptians; Christians and pagans. Paganism co-existed with Christianity in Egypt till the 5th century.

Judas was asked to betray Jesus Christ against his will! Can he be a friend?!

In the alleged document, it claims that Christ took Judas-the betrayer-aside and told him that He will reveal to him the secrets of the kingdom but not to the other disciples, as had a special relation with Jesus Christ more than the Twelve! (Our question here is WHY?)

More yet, that this secret is Judas will hand over Christ to the Jews to crucify Him, thus, Judas helped Christ to free Himself from this body!? **(This is a heretic thought of NESTORIOS the heretic of Constantinople)**

Christ told Judas-according to the alleged document-that He will put Judas above all the apostles and will exceed all .. and that all generations will declare Judas as betrayer, but he-Judas-was fulfilling an agreement for the salvation of mankind, by handing over Christ to the Jews !!!

Our ANSWER to the Alleged ‘Agreement’ above:

FIRST-LOGIC:

- a) How can we believe that the Lord Jesus chooses only one of the twelve to explain and reveal to him the secrets of the kingdom, and the rest of the disciples remain in blindness and ignorance?!
- b) How can the Lord Jesus leave humanity and the church in doubts that Judas betrayed Him, while it was an agreement with Judas to hand Him over?!
- c) Why did Judas strangle himself after handing over the Lord Jesus, if there was an agreement with the Christ, according to the alleged document?! On the contrary, he-Judas-should have rejoiced as he fulfilled the agreement with Christ, and should have

awaited his reward from Christ that ‘he should be above them all and exceed them’!!

SECOND-NEW TESTAMENT:

It is clear from the words of the Lord Jesus about Judas that he was to betray Him, and hand Him over as an act of being a traitor, that is why the Lord warned several times even at the time of betrayal, and that he will be condemned eternally because of his betrayal .. here are some of these verses:

- 1) *“He that is washed needs not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and you are clean, but not all. For He knew who should betray Him, therefore said He, You are not all clean” (John 13:10,11).*
- 2) *“And when He dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That you do, (meaning the act of betrayal which started on Wednesday) do quickly” (John 13:26,27).*
- 3) *“And supper-being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray Him” (John 13:2).*
- 4) *“And Judas also, which betrayed Him, knew the place (the garden of Gethsemane): for Jesus often times resorted there with His disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, ‘Whom do you seek?’ They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, ‘I am He’. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them” (John 18:2-5).*
- 5) *“Jesus answered them, ‘Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (John 6:70).*

- 6) *“then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, ‘What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?’ And they enchanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him” (Matthew 26:14-16).*
- 7) The Lord Jesus said to His disciples; *“Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto Him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dips his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of man goes as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born” [referring to the eternal condemnation of Judas Iscariot] Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master is it I? He said unto him, You have said” (Matthew 26:21-25).*

From all the above verses, the betrayal of Judas Iscariot becomes very clear, and his eternal damnation. The Lord Jesus Christ did not agree with Judas to hand Him over as the alleged document claim.

Judas was the only one of the Twelve who stood before Jesus when He challenged them saying ‘the perfect man step forward’!

This alleged statement was never uttered by our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ to His disciples.

The biblical fact concerning True Greatness in Serving according to the Lord Jesus; *“But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’”* **(Mark 10:42-45)**

+ Another biblical fact concerning True Greatness: *“Jesus asked the disciples, ‘What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?’ But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest. And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, ‘If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all. Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, ‘Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.’”* **(Mark 9:33-37)**

From the above facts the Lord Jesus never challenged His disciples saying ‘the perfect man step forward’, on the contrary Jesus called for serving and being last in order to be great in heaven not on earth.

Judas is innocent and portrayed as a ‘hero’ of the blood of Jesus?!

Judas Iscariot has his distinct place within the prophecies of the Old Testament as being the ‘betrayer’. **The following prophecies prove this fact:**

+ Psalm 41:9; *‘Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me’.*

+ Zechariah 11:12, 13; *‘I told them, “If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it”. So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.*

+ Zechariah 11:13; *And the Lord said to me, “Throw it to the potter” the handsome price at which they priced me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter.’*

+ Psalm 109:7, 8; *“When he is tried, let him be found guilty, and may his prayers condemn him. May his days be few; may another take his place of leadership”.*

Judas' dream that his fellow Apostles are stoning him?

GOSPEL FACTS:

+ Matthew 27:1-5: *“When the morning came [Friday, The Sanhedrin delivers Jesus to Pilate], all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, **His betrayer**, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying; ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. And they said, ‘What is that to us? You see it! Then they threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, **and went and hanged himself.**”*

+ Acts 1:15: *“And in those days [days 40-49, Preparation for Pentecost] Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said. Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry. Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; **and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out.** And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem, so that field is called in their own language, ‘Akel Dama’, that is: Field of Blood. For it is written in the Book of Psalms: ‘Let his dwelling place be desolate, and let no one live in it, (Ps.69:25), ‘Let another take his office, (Ps. 109:8).”*

So, these biblical facts, Judas betrayed Jesus, went and hanged himself, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out.

So, when did Judas dream that the Apostles were stoning him!

JESUS CHRIST IN JUDAS' GOSPEL:

- + Jesus Christ appeared to the Twelve as a child!
- + He appeared to some and everyone as they recognized Him!
- + In Judea, He was seated in piety, sacred meeting and offering thanksgiving.
- + He laughed a lot!
- + The gospel of Judas claims falsely that Jesus said 'God who created earth, doesn't need to be worshipped'!
- + Jesus in that false gospel was told that He challenged His disciples saying 'who is **the** perfect man of them to step forward'!
- + This false gospel does not contain the crucifixion scene, it ends abruptly by the betrayal of Judas!
- + No account of His death or resurrection, His body dies, but the spirit lives on!

ST. IRENAEUS of THE SECOND CENTURY REFUTING THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS:

St. Irenaeus [AD 120-202] was bishop of Lyons, in France, during the latter quarter of the second century, who succeeded the venerable Pothinus probably about AD 177, who closed his holy career by a martyr's death.

The intolerable absurdities of Gnosticism gained so many disciples, and proved itself an adversary to be grappled with and not despised, throws light on the condition of the human mind under heathenism, even when it professed 'knowledge' and 'philosophy'.

The task of St. Irenaeus was twofold:

- (1) to render it impossible for any one to confound Gnosticism with Christianity, and
- (2) to make it impossible for such a monstrous system to survive, or ever rise again. St. Irenaeus demonstrated that Gnosticism had essential unity with the old mythology, and with heathen systems of philosophy.

In chapter XI, article number 8, Irenaeus wrote in his book ‘Against Heresies’ to prove ‘The Gospels are FOUR in number, neither more nor less, and Mystic reasons for this *[The Ante-Nicean Fathers, vol.I, p.426]*

‘It is not possible

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