



Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way

Philip Jenkins

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Was Jesus really a subversive mystic whose true teachings were suppressed by an authoritarian church? Has the real nature of Christianity been deliberately obscured for centuries? Do recently discovered texts such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary, and even the Dead Sea Scrolls undermine the historical validity of the New Testament?

In this incisive critique, Philip Jenkins thoroughly and convincingly debunks such claims. Jenkins places the recent controversies surrounding the hidden gospels in a broad historical context and argues that, far from being revolutionary, such attempts to find an alternative Christianity date back at least to the Enlightenment. And by employing the appropriate scholarly and historical methodologies, he demonstrates that the texts purported to represent pristine Christianity were in fact composed long after the canonical gospels found in the Bible. Produced by obscure heretical movements, these texts offer no reliable new information about Jesus or the early church. They have attracted so much media attention chiefly because they seem to support radical, feminist, and post-modern positions in the modern church. Indeed, Jenkins shows how best-selling books on the "hidden gospels" have been taken up by an uncritical, scandal-hungry media as the basis for a social movement that could have dramatic effects on the faith and practice of contemporary Christianity. Brilliantly researched and sharply argued, *Hidden Gospels* unearths both the complex agendas and flawed methods of scholars who have created a whole new mythology about Jesus and the early church.

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