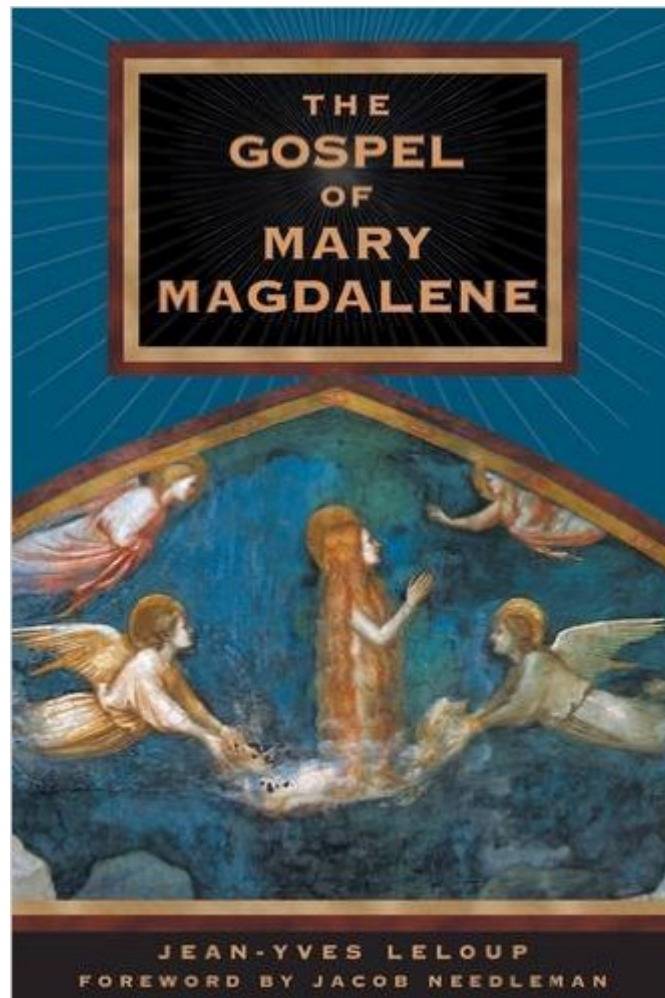


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The Gospel Of Mary Magdalene



Synopsis

Restores to the forefront of the Christian tradition the importance of the divine feminine • The first complete English-language translation of the original Coptic Gospel of Mary, with line-by-line commentary • Reveals the eminence of the divine feminine in Christian thought • Offers a new perspective on the life of one of the most controversial figures in the Western spiritual tradition Perhaps no figure in biblical scholarship has been the subject of more controversy and debate than Mary Magdalene. Also known as Miriam of Magdala, Mary Magdalene was considered by the apostle John to be the founder of Christianity because she was the first witness to the Resurrection. In most theological studies she has been depicted as a reformed prostitute, the redeemed sinner who exemplifies Christ's mercy. Today's reader can ponder her role in the gospels of Philip, Thomas, Peter, and Bartholomew--the collection of what have come to be known as the Gnostic gospels rejected by the early Christian church. Mary's own gospel is among these, but until now it has remained unknown to the public at large. Orthodox theologian Jean-Yves Leloup's translation of the Gospel of Mary from the Coptic and his thorough and profound commentary on this text are presented here for the first time in English. The gospel text and the spiritual exegesis of Leloup together reveal unique teachings that emphasize the eminence of the divine feminine and an abiding love of nature over the dualistic and ascetic interpretations of Christianity presented elsewhere. What emerges from this important source text and commentary is a renewal of the sacred feminine in the Western spiritual tradition and a new vision for Christian thought and faith throughout the world.

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Customer Reviews

This is one of the scrolls found in the Nag Hammadi desert, in Egypt, in 1945, and is of more importance, from a religious standpoint, than the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls, which dealt more with legal and more mundane affairs and gave an insight into living conditions in the early centuries before the present era. There is much information about the Nag Hammadi find in Professor Elaine Pagel's book, *The Gnostic Gospels*. I met her briefly several years ago, in New York. Only fragments of *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene* were found, of the total 19 pages. Pages 1-6 are missing, as are 11-14. However, the pages that were found and translated from the Coptic are of great interest since they primarily purport to be quotations of Yeshua (better known by his Greek name, Jesus) and conversations between his disciples. A tension between Mary Magdalene, who is described as being closer to Yeshua than the others, and Peter, is evident: "How is it possible that the Teacher talked in this manner with a woman about secrets with which we ourselves are ignorant? Must we change our customs and listen to this woman? Did he really choose her, and prefer her to us?" Then Mary wept and answered him: "My brother Peter, what can you be thinking? Do you believe that this is just my own imagination, that I invented this vision? Or do you believe that I would lie about our Teacher?" Is his reaction only male chauvinism, or pure jealousy? The scrolls found in the Nag Hammadi are important because the Gnostics were opposed by the dominant Constantinians, who tried to stamp them and their writings out, and refused to allow them into the canon of the New Testament.

Nearly all knowledgeable Biblical scholars realize there have been a wide range of writings attributed to Jesus and his Apostles..... and that some of these were selected for compilation into the book that became known as the Bible.....and that some books have been removed from some versions of the Bible and others have been re-discovered in modern times. The attention focused on Gnosticism by Dan Brown's *DaVinci Code* may be debatable, but the fact is that increased attention on academics tends to be predominately positive, so I welcome those with first-time or renewed interest. At least first-timers to Gnosticism are not pursuing the oh-so-popular legends of the Holy Grail, Bloodline of Christ, and Mary Magdalene. This is great.....I seldom quote other reviewers, but there is one reviewer of Pagel's books who confided that he had been a Jesuit candidate and had been required to study a wide range of texts but was never told about the Nag Hammadi texts. He said: "Now I know why. *The Gospel of Thomas* lays waste to the notion that Jesus was 'the only

begotten Son of God' and obviates the need for a formalized church when he says, 'When your leaders tell you that God is in heaven, say rather, God is within you, and without you.' No wonder they suppressed this stuff! The Roman Catholic Church hasn't maintained itself as the oldest institution in the world by allowing individuals to have a clear channel to see the divinity within all of us: they need to put God in a bottle, label the bottle, put that bottle on an altar, build a church around that altar, put a sign over the door, and create rubrics and rituals to keep out the dis-believing riff-raff. Real 'Us' versus 'them' stuff, the polar opposite from 'God is within You.

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