

The Keavy Encourager

WELCOME TO THE KEAVY CHURCH OF CHRIST!

(March 15 2026)

- Visitors: Please fill out a visitor card and grab a Visitor Welcome Kit!
- Communion is available in the front of the building on the table.
- Our website is: www.keavychurchofchrist.com, and our email address is keavychurchofchrist@outlook.com Please share this information with your family, friends, and social media pages! Services are available online at our website and on our YouTube page.
- If you would like to be subscribed to brother Mark Tabata's email list (for weekday devotionals and other Bible and Bible related studies), please let him know!

March Prayer List

Kurt And Joanne Martin, Sanders Family, Eddie Craft (Cancer), Jimmy Brooks (Tammy's cousin, cancer), Kathy Mingus (Cancer), Anne Baker (Cancer), Sandi Tabata, Bill and Mary Ruth Browning, David and Ivy Mosley, Margie Turner (Hospice), Jake Robbins (Cancer), Coy Gilliam (Cancer), Roger and Sandra Frazier & Family, Carman Carroll, Edward Young Sr., Ed Young, Harmony Mullins, Claude Humphrey (Cancer), Felicity Lanham (Cancer), Piere Daigel, People In Ukraine, Barbourville Work, Rod Hill (Cancer friend of brother Paul), Charlene Reef (Cancer), Jimmy Turner (Cancer), Danny Day, Mary Martin, Chad Couch, Kathy McFall (Brother Gary Lewis' Cousin, Cancer), Lisa Hurt, Martha Moberly, Terry & Rita Wooton And Family, Keith Bowling Family, Gary Fleming, Bessie Young Family (Lost Loved Ones), Tiffany Cox And Family, Barry Mitchell (Surgery), Don Stidham (Surgery), Gary Fleming, Keith And Kathy Bowling, Quintin Nelton, Kenny Irvin, Sherri Engle Family, James Williams, Shirley Lawson, Ronnie Gregory, Tammy Sapienza, Aileen Smith, Couch Family (Lost Loved Ones), Sandra Frazier Family (Lost Loved Ones)

Were Jesus And Mary Magdalene Married?

Part Five: The New Testament Versus Gnostic Scripture

(More Bible Studies Available @ www.marktabata.com)

2 Peter 3:14-16-Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; **15** and consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, **16** as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.

The issue of Jesus and Mary Magdalene goes back to the question of Scripture. The Gnostics arose near the end of the first century A.D., and they quickly began to write their own holy writings. A library of their sacred books was discovered in Nag Hammadi, Egypt, beginning in 1945. Some of these Gnostic scriptures suggest a marital relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

Ken Johnson notes:

“Gnostics called Mary Magdalene “the apostle of apostles” and “the thirteenth apostle.” They believed she was the true heir to Jesus’ ministry. Peter could never quite understand and achieve true gnosis and neither did Rome. However, Mary Magdalene led the Gnostics into freedom (or salvation), not by Jesus’ death on the cross, but by following His teaching. The Gnostics believed that Jesus taught that mediation or contemplative prayer was the path to God and ultimately salvation. Some Gnostics also believed Mary Magdalene was the wife of Jesus. Some also thought there was a royal blood line down through the ages that began with the child of Mary and Jesus. Dan Brown’s bestselling novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, was based on this Gnostic teaching.” (Ken Johnson, *Demonic Gospels*, 54 (Kindle Edition): CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform)

We are told that these Gnostic scriptures are superior to the Books in our New Testament. This article will briefly contrast the New Testament Scriptures and the Gnostic scriptures, with special emphasis in regard to the time of their writing. Clearly, the Books written closest to the time of Jesus will have a much stronger case for presenting historical and factual evidence regarding the Son of God.

There is a great deal of evidence which demonstrates that the New Testament Scriptures began to be written very early in the Christian era, within a few years of Jesus' resurrection (perhaps earlier). One example of this evidence comes from the famous Magdalen Papyrus, which is a fragment of a copy of the Gospel of Matthew. The amazing thing about this fragment is that it dates back to within a few years of Jesus' resurrection!

“Our attention is drawn to the work of Dr Carsten Thiede, and his book, *The Jesus Papyrus* (see Bibliography). Suffice it here to say that a thorough and scientific analysis undertaken by Dr Thiede of the Gospel fragments known to scholars as the Magdalen Papyrus (named after Magdalen College Oxford, where it is kept), dates this particular copy of Matthew's Gospel to times so close to the Resurrection, that it could easily have been copied or read by an eyewitness of our Lord's entire ministry. To be brief, the Magdalen Papyrus was copied out between the mid-40s and AD 50. But we must also bear in mind that this particular papyrus was itself but a copy of an even earlier original, though by how many removes we cannot know.” (Bill Cooper, *Old Light On The Roman Church: A Consideration In Four Parts Of Certain Neglected Areas Of Church History*, 599-605 (Kindle Edition): The Covenant Pub)

There have also been fragments of several New Testament Books discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls. These include sections of 1 Timothy (7Q4), Mark (7Q5; 7Q6, 1; 7Q7; 7Q15), James (7Q8), Acts (7Q6), Romans (7Q9), and 2 Peter (7Q10). What is equally astonishing is that other books found in these particular areas dated no later than A.D. 50, showing again that these New Testament Books had been written much earlier than that date. It is also worth noting that several of these fragments had postal evidence of being shipped to Qumran from the outer regions of the Roman Empire, showing that the New Testament was very well known and had spread far and wide very quickly (compare this with Colossians 1:6, 23).

Since Jesus died in A.D. 33, this means that the Gospels began to be written very quickly, while there were still plenty of eyewitnesses around. This argues strongly against the claims of the Da Vinci Code. If Jesus had been married to Mary Magdalene and the Apostles had tried to hide that fact in their writings, then they would have quickly been called down as deceivers

by the many thousands of eyewitness, and Christianity would have died in its' infancy. So, the early dating of the New Testament Scriptures is a strong argument for their historical accuracy.

Now, contrast this with the Gnostic scriptures. The evidence is clear that the Gnostic books were written decades after Jesus' resurrection, maybe over a hundred years later!

“The Nag Hammadi Scriptures is a collection of thirteen papyrus codices—bound books, not scrolls—that were buried near the city of Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt most likely in the second half of the fourth century CE. They had been brought together earlier in that century and then buried in a jar for safekeeping at the foot of the Jabal al-Tarif, a cliff close to the hamlet Hamra Dum. In all, there are some fifty-two tractates in the collection of Nag Hammadi codices, and since six are duplicates, there are forty-six different texts. Of these, forty-one are texts that were not previously extant, but ten are very fragmentary, so that one may say that the discovery has added about thirty-one new texts to our knowledge of religion and philosophy in antiquity. This is indeed a dramatic escalation of source material on early Christian, Neoplatonic, Hermetic, Sethian, and Valentinian thought. The precise dates of the composition of these texts are uncertain, but most are from the second and third centuries CE. All were originally written in Greek and translated into Coptic.” (Marvin W. Meyer & James M. Robinson, *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The Revised and Updated Translation of Sacred Gnostic Texts Complete in One Volume*, 164-170 (Kindle Edition); HarperOne)

Don't miss the point about the dating of the Gnostic “scriptures!” These books were written over a hundred years later than the New Testament!

"The earliest likely date for the Nag Hammadi scrolls is around A.D. 150 and later, when Gnosticism as a system began to flourish. This date is accepted for the Gospels of Philip and Mary." (James L. Garlow and Peter Jones, *Cracking DaVinci's Code: You've Read The Fiction, Now Read The Facts*, 691-695 (Kindle Edition); Colorado Springs, CO; David C. Cook Distribution)

We should also note that the New Testament Scriptures were written and/or based upon the eyewitness testimony of the companions of Jesus Who loved

Him and willingly laid down their lives for Him, but that the Gnostic books were written by men and women who had never met Jesus personally.

Finally, one last thing to notice here: the Gnostic scriptures actually relied heavily on the New Testament Scriptures! This shows that the New Testament predated the Gnostic books and were considered authoritative. One researcher examined one of the oldest Gnostic works, called the gospel of Thomas. (It was not written by the Apostle Thomas, and it dates to the middle of the second century A.D.).

He notes:

“Although some readers may find aspects of this discussion technical and complicated, it is important to understand why the Gospel of Thomas really should not be considered an ancient source for the historical Jesus. 1. Thomas knows many New Testament writings. Quoting or alluding to more than half of the writings of the New Testament (that is, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, Hebrews, 1 John, Revelation),” Thomas seems to be a collage of New Testament and apocryphal materials that have been interpreted, often allegorically, in such a way as to advance late-second-century Gnostic ideas....“Yet Thomas parallels the later traditions often, as we see in the following lists...If the Gospel of Thomas really does represent an early, independent collection of material, as its advocates argue, then how do we explain the presence of so much M, L and Johannine material? The presence of this material suggests that Thomas has been influenced by the New Testament Gospels, not early Jesus tradition that is earlier than the New Testament Gospels.” (Craig A. Evans, *Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*, 69-70 (Kindle Edition): Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Books)

And the gospel of Thomas isn't alone in being a Gnostic book that references the authoritative New Testament. There are hundreds of references in the Nag Hammadi books to the New Testament Scriptures, which tells us that the New Testament Scriptures predated the Gnostic books, that the New Testament was well-known and considered authoritative in the ancient world.

So, we have to ask: who would be in a better position to accurately report the details of Jesus' life (including if He was married to Mary Magdalene)...

Those Books written within a few years of Jesus' life and death by those who personally knew Him, loved Him, and laid down their lives for Him?

Or, books written over a hundred years later by people who never knew Jesus and who had been greatly influenced by pagan religion and philosophy?

To ask is to answer.

What to take away from all of this?

First, let this knowledge strengthen your faith in the historical accuracy of the New Testament. Drink deeply from the pure waters of the apostolic writings, and find therein He Who is the Water of Life that alone can quench your thirst. Second, recognize the flimsy quicksand foundation of the Gnostic books written long after Jesus by those who did not know Him but were instead focused on pagan religion borrowed from fallen angels and demonic spirits. (More on that in a future lesson!). Third, have pity on those who have been deceived by the foolishness of the Da Vinci Code and the conspiracy theories that it has generated. Lovingly and patiently try to teach them the truth as you pray for their souls.

Announcements

- Sister Mary Ruth let us know this week that doctors have found some cancer in brother Bill. He will soon be receiving treatment options. At this time, they ask for no personal visits. Please remember them in your prayers.
- Regularly Scheduled Events; Sunday Bible Class All Ages (Every Sunday @ 10:00); Sunday Worship (Every Sunday @ 11:00 AM And 5:00 PM); Wednesday Evening Bible Class All Ages (Every Wednesday @ 5:00); Keavy Ladies And Supportive Saints (K.L.A.S.S. Every First Sunday Of The Month After Evening Service); Keavy Support Group And Youth Group Meeting (Every Tuesday @ 6:00); Adult Night (Every Second And Fourth Friday @ 6:00); Keavy Fellowship Meal (Every Last Sunday of The Month After Morning Service)

Bible Class And Sermon Notes

A.M. Sermon: The Magog War Of Ezekiel 38-39 (Reading: Revelation 20:7-9)

P.M. Sermon: Did The Second Coming Occur In The First Century? Matthew
24-25 (Reading: Revelation 1:7)