



May 7, 2006

The Gospel Of Judas

The May issue of National Geographic magazine, tells the story of the lost gospel of Judas and how it came to be translated from Coptic fragments into English. There are biblical scholars and Gnostics alike who believe that the attention that is being drawn to the fragmented manuscript is nothing more than a lot of hype. The fact remains that once more a document has surfaced that, to some, sheds much doubt on the authenticity of the Gospel. This is not the first time that this has happened. Gnostic texts have been surfacing periodically for some time. Other ancient documents have also caused quite a stir among the scholarly world. Foremost of these was the discovery and eventual release of the translation of the Dead Sea scrolls. Regardless of the fact that at Qumran, where the Dead Sea scrolls were found, we have the Isaiah scroll, which, when translated, demonstrated that the text was identical to what we have in our Bibles, and the recent translation of the inscription of two silver amulets from the Essene community at Qumran, which matches a passage from the book of Numbers exactly, there are still those who are still looking for evidence that will demonstrate some point that never really seems to get made. To be very direct about it, after all that I have read, the point seems to be that there is an almost universal consensus that there is no divine inspiration, that we have no way of knowing what is true or false when it comes to religion and that belief is simply our contemporary expression of superstition as we humans fail to admit the reality that we are subject to the forces of nature, evolution and the universe. To that end, each time there is some translation that is released, there is almost an inaudible, "I told you so !" that is stated. The bottom line is that the scholarly, academic and scientific world would have us believe that to accept the idea of one God, of his Son and the truth of the book we know of as the Bible is a developmental flaw that speaks more of our ignorance and a failure to accept "reality". What the world really wants is to find "proof" that it really is all right to accept and do anything that pleases us. The oppressive idea of a "judgmental" God is archaic according to them and even a good number of Bible believers have either been influenced by this viewpoint, or, have rejected the idea of the Bible and what it states about God, man and salvation. Over the next few weeks we will take a look at Gnosticism, since the Judas gospel is one of the Gnostic writings that have survived the ages. In this examination we will find that there are many similarities in the thinking of the Gnostics and of people today. To begin the discussion we can turn our attention to the New Testament itself as a reliable source of information. In the scriptures we find numerous statements concerning the fact that the gospel was being altered in the first century. Notably Paul wrote to the Galatians, rebuking them for turning away from the gospel (**Gal 1.6-7**) and refers to this later in the same letter as being "bewitched" so that they should not obey the truth (**Gal 3.1**). We need to note that there are several things here that are plainly stated in the New Testament as problems for the early church and which still exist as problems for us today. This has to do with the failure to understand the nature of the law that Christ gave, an inability to understand that God, as revealed in the Old Testament, is indeed the same Father of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, and that they are the same as is the Holy Spirit who inspired the writers of the scriptures, both old and new testaments, to record the things that they have. If it was difficult for those who saw God's plagues, wonders and miracles, and if it was confusing for those who witnessed the miracles of Christ and later the work of the apostles and those in the first century who taught, prophesied and performed miracles, will it be any easier for us? No, but it does not have to be so confusing for us as some would want it to be. When it comes down to serving the Lord we will all have to make some decisions about what we are going to believe and how we will put that into practice. Paul warned about the nature of the Devil and how he works, influencing the world to disbelieve (**2 Cor 4.3-4**) and the nature of Satan and his servants who will even appear as "angels of light" (**2 Cor 11.14-15**). The world around us is a willing participant in the wiles and ways of deception. Unfortunately we allow ourselves to be drawn away with these tricks and if we are not careful will find ourselves believing in things that will eventually cost us our soul (**2 Thess 2.11-12**). closer to Christ or will we do harm to innocent blood by setting these things aside and following our own path ? *TLC*