

I have mentioned in passing that there were some early Christians who thought that one of Jesus' brothers, Jude (or Judas: both are translations of the same Greek word), was actually a twin. Not just of anyone, but of Jesus himself. Some readers have expressed surprise in the most succinct way possible, by asking: "Huh??"

I talk about the matter in a couple of my previous publications, especially when speaking about early Christian apocryphal texts that deal with the missionary exploits of the apostles after Jesus' death. We have several of these, including an Acts of Thomas. Like the other apocryphal Acts (such as the more famous Acts of Thecla - an account of the adventures of the apostle's Paul most famous legendary convert, an upper-class woman named, obviously, Thecla), this one celebrates the virtue of celibacy and sexual renunciation, and it actually uses the idea that Jesus' had an *identical* twin to advance its views. I'll explain how it does that in the next post. In this one I'll deal directly with the background issue, of how Jesus could have an identical twin brother.

Most of this is taken from my book [Lost Christianities](#)

The view of sexual renunciation found in the Acts of Thecla recurs in other Apocryphal Acts as well. One of the most intriguing is the Acts of Thomas, an account of the exploits of the apostle Thomas, probably written in Syria some time in the third century. It is a famous account, in that it is the first to present the well-known legend that the apostle Thomas became a missionary to India. One of the most striking features of the text is that it assumes that this apostle Thomas was Jesus' brother. The name Thomas, in fact, is an Aramaic equivalent of the Greek word Didymus, which means "twin." Thomas was allegedly Jesus' identical twin, otherwise known as Jude (Mark 6:3), or Didymus Judas Thomas.

One might wonder how some early Christians could have thought that Jesus had a twin brother. If, after all ...

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