

The Gospel of Thomas is almost certainly the most important Gospel from outside the New Testament. Here I talk about what it's overarching message is, and how it relates to the Gospels that did make it into the Christian Scripture. Again, this is taken from my textbook on the NT.

The Overarching Message of the Book. The meanings of many of Thomas's sayings are in no way obvious. If they were, they would not be called secret! Even though the book contains nothing like the Sethian or Valentian myths, some of the sayings do seem to reflect roughly analogous understandings of the world and the human's place in it (see earlier posts on Gnosticism). Within the hearer is an element of the divine—a soul—that had a heavenly origin (it originated "in the place where the light came into being"). This world we live in is inferior at best, and is more appropriately thought of as a cesspool of suffering, "a corpse." A person's inner being (the "light" within) has tragically fallen into this material world, where it has become entrapped in a body (sunk into "poverty"), and in that condition it has become forgetful of its origin (or "drunk"). It needs to be reawakened by learning the truth about this material world and the impoverished material body that it inhabits. Jesus is the one who conveys this truth; once the soul learns the meaning of his words, it will be able to strip off this body of death, symbolized sometimes as garments of clothing, and escape this material world. It will then have salvation, life eternal; it will rejoin the divine realm and rule over all. There may be no need to call this Gospel "Gnostic," but one can certainly see why many of its teachings would resonate with a Gnostic.

There is not a word in the *Gospel of Thomas* about Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Indeed, for this author none of Jesus' earthly activities appear to matter; there is also no word here of

To see the rest of this post, you will need to be an insider to the secret knowledge of the Ehrman Blog. That requires joining. It's easier than becoming a Gnostic. And every penny you pay goes to charity. So for the sake of your well-being and the well-being of the universe, join!

You need to be logged in to see this part of the content. Please [Login](#) to access.



[Thomas, the Synoptic Gospels, and Q](#)
[The Gospel of Thomas: An Overview](#)