

# [PDF] Reading Judas: The Gospel Of Judas And The Shaping Of Christianity

Elaine Pagels, Karen L. King - pdf download free book

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## Books Details:

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## Description:

**From Publishers Weekly** This accessible, engaging book has Princeton religion professor Pagels (The Gnostic Gospels; Beyond Belief) in a dream team pairing with King (The Gospel of Mary of Magdala), who teaches ecclesiastical history at Harvard Divinity School. Together they take on the controversial Gospel of Judas, published in April 2006 after some years of languishing in a safety deposit box after its initial discovery in the 1970s. In their hundred-page introductory essay, Pagels and King date the gospel to the middle of the second century and situate it amidst the deadly persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. Such persecution, they say, drove the author of the Gospel of Judas, who "could not reconcile his belief in a deeply loving, good God with a particular idea other Christians held at the time: that God desired the bloody sacrificial death of Jesus and his followers." The key to understanding this gospel, they argue, is its relentless unmasking of the

triumphant rhetoric of martyrdom. Though the gospel text appears angry and polarizing, Pagels and King have come to realize that they "cannot easily dismiss this author as either a madman or a lunatic." Instead, they delve deeply into his theological view that a pure, spiritual realm exists beyond the physical world that we see—a Gnostic chestnut that recurs in other second-century texts. Alive to irony and historical nuance, this remarkably concise primer opens readers to a plausible and often persuasive interpretation of the disquieting Gospel of Judas. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**From** \*Starred Review\* In fall 2006, the National Geographic Society made quite a splash, bringing to light the discovery of a new gospel in the Gnostic tradition told from Judas' point of view. There have already been several books on the subject, including one by Bart Ehrman, *The Lost Gospel of Judas Iscariot* (2006), which provided an overview and placed the book in its historical and religious contexts. Now come two premier names in the field of religious writing to take a more intimate look at the gospel. Pagels, author of the classic *Gnostic Gospels* (2004), teams with translator extraordinaire King for a compact reader's guide into the heart of the new gospel. The Gospel of Judas can be a convoluted, even bizarre, reading experience, but the combination of King's translation, which appears at the end of the book, and Pagels' text will help general readers get past the difficulties and into the fascinating message, which emphasizes spiritual rather than physical resurrection for both Jesus and his followers. Pagels also shows why this message was so noxious to church leaders and explains how the gospel fits into the body of noncanonical literature. By showing how Judas' vision of life after death should be understood, this elegantly written book makes clear the relevance of a centuries-old text for a contemporary audience. *Ilene Cooper*  
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