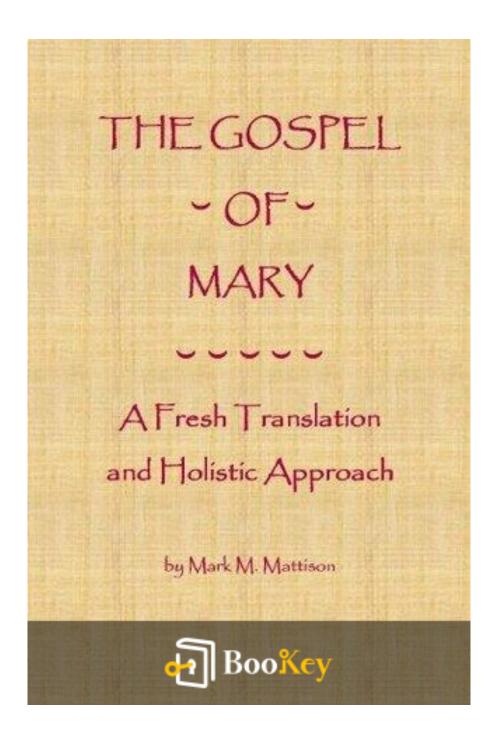
The Gospel Of Mary PDF (Limited Copy)

Mark M. Mattison







The Gospel Of Mary Summary

"Discovering Lost Insights of Mary Magdalene's Teachings"

Written by Books1





About the book

Nestled in the tapestry of early Christian writings often overshadowed by the canonical gospels, "The Gospel of Mary" by Mark M. Mattison offers a bold exploration into the forgotten manuscript that unveils a compelling narrative of female discipleship and wisdom. This intriguing work not only presents a fragmentary yet profound picture of Mary Magdalene's role as a beloved disciple but also raises profound questions about leadership, authority, and the balance between inner skepticism and faith. As Mattison guides readers through the historical and theological implications of this extraordinary gospel, he skillfully interlaces scholastic insight with a narrative that invites readers to ponder and re-evaluate the traditional boundaries of early Christianity. Delve into this thought-provoking book and join a journey where the once-muted whispers of a powerful woman's voice echo across millennia, inviting all to rediscover faith with fresh perspective and renewed w o n d e r . $\emptyset < \beta \emptyset = \ddot{\cup} \ddot{\cup}$





About the author

Mark M. Mattison is a renowned scholar and author with a profound interest in early Christian literature and non-canonical texts. Passionate about exploring historical narratives that have often been overlooked or partially understood, Mattison dedicates his expertise to unraveling the complexities of early Christian thought and its development over centuries. His works, including "The Gospel of Mary," reflect a deep commitment to bringing these ancient texts to a contemporary audience, enhancing our understanding of their historical context and significance. Through meticulous scholarship and engaging storytelling, Mattison succeeds in bridging the gap between academic and public discourse, making significant contributions to the field of biblical studies. As a voice for the often-marginalized perspectives within Christian history, his contributions continue to inspire critical reflection and a deeper appreciation for the diversity of early Christian traditions.







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Chapter 1 Summary: 1: Who Was Mary Magdalene?

Chapter 1 of this book delves into the enigmatic figure of Mary Magdalene, a prominent though somewhat mysterious companion of Jesus Christ. Historically, Mary Magdalene's presence is scarcely noted outside the Gospel narratives in the New Testament, making her role seem both fleeting and profoundly significant.

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John consistently depict Mary Magdalene as steadfastly loyal to Jesus during his final days, a role unequaled by other disciples. When Jesus was crucified, she was present; she watched over his tomb after his burial, discovered the empty grave, and was the first to witness and announce his resurrection. Her unwavering devotion starkly contrasts with the faltering faith of other disciples such as Thomas, who doubted, Judas, who betrayed, and Peter, who denied Jesus.

Mary's background is largely implied rather than explicitly stated. Luke's Gospel provides a glimpse, indicating she was from Magdala, a prosperous fishing town along the Sea of Galilee, suggesting she was likely unmarried or widowed, self-sufficient, and free of familial obligations binding her to a husband or children. Additionally, she is described as having been freed from "seven demons," a fact briefly mentioned in Mark's Gospel and explored more deeply in later theological traditions.



In John's Gospel, Mary's encounter with the risen Jesus is recounted vividly. Here, she mistakenly assumes Jesus is a gardener before recognizing him when he calls her by name. Jesus gently instructs her not to hold onto him, which scholars like Michael McGehee suggest means her role was to share the news of his resurrection rather than to remain with him physically.

Despite Mary's crucial role in these resurrection accounts, she vanishes from the New Testament narrative thereafter. Paul's letters, which reference Jesus' appearances post-resurrection to various apostles, conspicuously omit Mary's encounter. This exclusion rendered her contributions somewhat obscured over time, and later church traditions further mischaracterized her, notably when Pope Gregory the Great conflated her with a sinful woman from another Gospel story, reducing her in popular memory to a penitent figure needing redemption.

Remarkably, early Christians seem to have recognized Mary as an apostle, consistent with the criteria in the New Testament. Apocryphal texts like the Gospel of Peter and Philip offer different perspectives, portraying her as a "disciple" and "companion" of Jesus, respectively, with Philip's Gospel even alluding to an intimate and loving friendship.

This multifaceted portrayal of Mary Magdalene sets up the exploration of her role in the Gospel of Mary, where she emerges not only as a witness to the resurrection but also as a central figure encouraging the other disciples,





laying foundational insights into the dynamics of the early Christian community and the special regard Jesus held for her.





Chapter 2 Summary: 2: Mary's Gospel

The text presented is from the Gospel of Mary, specifically a translation based on the Berlin Codex 8502, which is a Coptic manuscript of the fifth century translating an earlier Greek text. This Gospel is considered apocryphal, outside the canonical New Testament, and is believed to have been originally written in the second century, probably in Egypt or Syria. The text begins with a fragmentary dialogue where existential questions about the destruction of matter and the nature of sin are discussed between the Savior—implicitly Jesus—and his disciples.

The dialogue highlights the interdependence of all natures and forms, which eventually return to their original state, emphasizing a concept of cyclical nature and spiritual truth. Sin is attributed not to a fundamental presence but to actions aligned with adultery, metaphorically speaking of human moral failings. The Savior reiterates the importance of inner authenticity, noting that the Authentic Person exists within individuals, urging followers to internalize spiritual teachings rather than seek external signs.

After another bout of teaching, the Savior departs, leading his followers into grief and doubt about spreading his message to non-Jews (Gentiles). During this time of despair, Mary—often understood to be Mary Magdalene, a devoted follower of Jesus depicted in various texts as having a close relationship with him—encourages the disciples. She reassures them of the





Savior's protection and recounts a vision she had. In this vision, the Savior acknowledges her unwavering faith and emphasizes that true vision lies in the mind, not solely in the soul or spirit.

The narrative continues with missing sections, but the extant portions describe Mary discussing spiritual challenges and the soul's journey through obstacles represented as powers such as Ignorance and Desire. Each challenge is overcome by recognizing and transcending earthly and fleshly limitations, leading to a state of spiritual liberation and eternal silence.

Controversy arises among the disciples, with Andrew doubting Mary's account and teachings as divergent from traditional instruction. Peter, while acknowledging her special relationship with Jesus, questions whether teachings passed to her privately should hold authority. Levi defends Mary, pointing to Peter's anger and asserting that the Savior found her worthy, endorsing her insights and emphasizing a return to the true spirit of Christ's teachings without additional constraints of doctrine. Ultimately, Levi prompts the disciples to fulfill their mission of spreading the gospel authentically.

The Gospel of Mary, as a whole, offers a mystic and introspective narrative about spiritual perception, communal belief, and authority within the early Christian community. It presents themes of inner awakening and challenges readers to consider the legitimacy and source of divine wisdom outside





institutional structures. This adds depth to the understanding of early
Christian diversity and provides insight into the roles of women and
alternate theological perspectives during the formative years of Christianity.





Critical Thinking

Key Point: Authenticity comes from within

Critical Interpretation: Embrace the profound truth that the authentic person lies within you, not defined by the external or constrained by societal norms. The teachings from this chapter of the Gospel of Mary advocate for introspection, urging you to explore your inner world with sincerity and courage. By internalizing spiritual wisdom, you can transcend earthly limitations, navigating life's challenges with a resilient spirit grounded in faith and clarity. Mary Magdalene's account echoes that true vision and spiritual enlightenment stem from the mind—encouraging you to listen to your inner voice, fostering genuine authenticity and self-realization in your life's journey.





Chapter 3 Summary: 3: An Eternal Perspective (Mary 7:1-8:11)

In the Gospel of Mary, specifically chapters 7:1-8:11, we delve into a profound spiritual perspective that contrasts the transient nature of the physical world with the permanence of the spiritual realm. Although this ancient text is incomplete, the existing sections start with a philosophical inquiry into the nature of matter and its true state of existence. The narrative suggests that spiritual reality holds greater authenticity compared to the physical world, a theme echoed across many spiritual traditions, including the teachings of the apostle Paul, who urged for a wake-up from the dream-like state of earthly existence to the dawning of a new, spiritual day.

The gospel fragment begins with a question on the fate of matter. Jesus responds cryptically, indicating that all beings and forms are interdependent and will eventually return to their original state, as the nature of matter is to dissolve back into what it once was. This idea resonates with contemporary philosophical debates on whether matter is eternal or created and thus destructible. The passage invites those with understanding to recognize the fundamental but elusive truth of the transient physical realm versus the permanent spiritual one.

Mary's Gospel cautions against the deceptive allure of worldly attachments, asserting that such attachments give rise to passions that are contrary to

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spiritual nature. This notion aligns with Greek philosophy, particularly the teachings of Plato and the Stoics, who viewed true ideals as reflections in the physical world and identified misplaced passions as sources of evil. The text advises seeking contentment not externally but within one's heart, a spiritual center defined as the organ of divine perception. This aligns with ancient wisdom traditions that regard the heart as capable of perceiving beyond physical senses.

Furthermore, the gospel suggests finding spiritual harmony through divine images or manifestations, which can be understood as engaging with elements that reflect divine nature. This could involve communion with wise figures or experiencing sacred spaces that embody spiritual truths. The passage underscores this with an invitation to truly hear and internalize these teachings.

The overarching message is to attain a state of harmony by embracing the eternal spiritual reality while residing in a temporal world, thus achieving enlightenment through the 'eyes of the heart.' This perspective encourages living in a way that is aligned with divine and eternal truths, serving as a guide for spiritual liberation and fulfillment.





Critical Thinking

Key Point: The transient nature of the physical vs. the eternal reality of the spiritual.

Critical Interpretation: Imagine feeling the gentle pull of life's everyday concerns subtly fade as you choose to nod towards a truth quietly held within. This chapter in the Gospel of Mary whispers an invitation, encouraging you to shake off the illusions draped over the material world. In its essence is a call to recognize that true reality is interwoven with the spiritual, not the temporal. Through this, you begin to see that genuine contentment springs not from external pursuits or fleeting possessions but rather from cultivating the profound stillness and depth of understanding nestled in the heart. It's here, in this sacred internal space, that your spirit aligns with timeless truths and you learn to dance gracefully to the eternal rhythms of existence. This transformative perspective allows you to find meaning and peace, navigating earthly life with the awareness of something greater awaiting just beyond the horizon of what is seen.





Chapter 4: 4: Becoming Authentic (Mary 8:12-9:20)

In the segment of Mary Magdalene's Gospel spanning from 8:12 to 9:20, significant parallels with the New Testament narratives are presented, illustrating thematic continuities including Jesus' call for peace, caution against false prophets, and teachings about the pursuit of truth. The central focus of this chapter, however, revolves around the profound concept of "the Authentic Person," a notion intricately tied to the essence of true humanity and spiritual integrity.

This section of the Gospel of Mary reveals crucial teachings that assert: "the Authentic Person exists within you. Follow that person! Those who seek will find" (Mary 8:18-21). This idea is echoed in passages that encourage praise for this inherent greatness and emphasize the need to embrace this authentic self, which has been divinely prepared (Mary 9:18-20). It also calls for introspection, urging believers to clothe themselves with this authenticity (Mary 18:15-18).

At the core of this discussion is the term often translated as "Son of Humanity," which many scholars interpret as "Son of Man," a phrase loaded with historical and scriptural significance. In various passages of the Bible, "Son of Humanity" refers not only to human beings but also to prophetic figures and, in apocalyptic literature, to a heavenly figure entrusted with divine authority, as seen in Daniel 7:13. This multifaceted term appears in

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both Hebrew and Aramaic languages, where it can mean simply "human," suggesting universality that includes figures like Mary Magdalene and male disciples such as Andrew and Peter.

Jesus frequently referred to himself using this term, denoting his mission and

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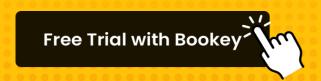
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Chapter 5 Summary: 5: Mary and Jesus (Mary 9:12-10:23)

In Chapters 9:12-10:23 of the Gospel of Mary, the narrative focuses on the reaction of Jesus' disciples to his departure and the subsequent guidance offered by Mary Magdalene. Initially, the disciples are overcome with grief and fear at the prospect of facing the same fate as Jesus, who was crucified. Their despair renders them unable to take action or find solace in Jesus' parting words.

In this moment of paralysis, Mary Magdalene steps in to fulfill the role of a spiritual guide, akin to the "Paraclete" or Holy Spirit promised by Jesus in John's Gospel (John 14:25-30). Jesus had reassured his followers that although he was leaving, the Holy Spirit would come to instruct and remind them of all he had taught, offering them peace beyond worldly understanding.

Mary takes on this role by encouraging the disciples not to let their hearts be torn apart by fear. She reminds them of Jesus' enduring grace, which would protect and guide them. Like the Holy Spirit, she instructs them on Jesus' teachings, turning their despair into a discussion about the meaning of Jesus' words. Although the hearts of the disciples begin to shift toward goodness, they still do not find a consensus, which leads Peter to seek further wisdom from Mary.



In response, Mary shares a vision she had of the risen Jesus, echoing the encounters described in John 20:11-18. Through this vision, Jesus reveals important insights about the nature of perception and spiritual understanding. He praises Mary for not wavering upon seeing him, highlighting that true spiritual perception comes from the mind, which is considered the repository of one's treasure. This statement draws from the biblical idea that where one's treasure lies, so too does one's heart or mind.

Mary's ensuing interaction with Jesus delves into the challenging topic of how visions are experienced. Jesus explains that visions are perceived not through the soul or spirit but through the mind, an entity positioned between the two. This idea aligns with certain philosophical traditions that separate perception from the senses and emphasize a higher spiritual or mental consciousness. Mary's vision represents a profound spiritual experience perceived by her higher spiritual consciousness—a testament to her advanced spiritual insight.

Ultimately, Mary is acknowledged by Jesus as blessed for her unwavering faith and understanding, which exemplifies the spiritual journey toward enlightenment and the essential role of the mind as a vessel of divine perception. This narrative underscores Mary's significance as both a spiritual leader and a beacon of wisdom for the disciples in the wake of Jesus' departure.

Section	Summary
Initial Reaction	Disciples are distraught and fearful after Jesus' departure, feeling paralysed by grief and despair.
Role of Mary Magdalene	Mary steps in as a spiritual guide, similar to the "Paraclete" or Holy Spirit, encouraging disciples to remember Jesus' grace and teachings.
Encouragement and Instruction	Mary reminds disciples not to remain in fear, transforming their sorrow into a renewed discussion of Jesus' teachings.
Peter's Question	Peter seeks further guidance from Mary, leading to a significant vision shared by her.
Mary's Vision	Mary recounts a vision of the risen Jesus, emphasizing spiritual perception through the mind.
Insight on Spiritual Perception	The vision highlights the importance of the mind as a vessel for divine understanding beyond senses, showcasing Mary's spiritual maturity.
Recognition and Conclusion	Jesus praises Mary's unwavering faith, acknowledging her advanced spiritual insight and leadership role among the disciples.





Critical Thinking

Key Point: True Spiritual Perception Through the Mind
Critical Interpretation: In Chapter 5 of 'The Gospel of Mary,' you're
encouraged to explore the transformative power of the mind as a
vessel for divine perception. Mary Magdalene's encounter with the
risen Jesus unveils a profound truth: true spiritual understanding arises
from the mind's realm, where it bridges the gap between soul and
spirit. When life's challenges cloud your vision, remember that just as
Mary demonstrated unwavering faith and mental clarity, you too can
cultivate your mind as a sanctum of insight and peace. By embracing
this perspective, you can transcend worldly fears and align your
thoughts with a higher spiritual consciousness, discovering
enlightened pathways beyond your apparent constraints. This
revelation serves as a beacon, steering you toward a journey of inner
wisdom and deeper spiritual understanding.





Chapter 6 Summary: 6: Overcoming the Powers (Mary 15:1-17:9)

In the chapters "Overcoming the Powers" (Mary 15:1-17:9) from the Gospel of Mary, we encounter a fragmented narrative that resumes in the midst of a story about a soul ascending towards its ultimate rest. This soul, whose identity is ambiguous due to missing manuscript pages, faces numerous malevolent powers attempting to block its path with accusations. Readers might initially interpret this journey as the soul's progression to heaven after death, with the "powers of Wrath" possibly representing astrological forces determining fate. This suggests an allegory of the human soul's transcendence over internal and external spiritual gatekeepers on its path to the divine.

The narrative's incomplete nature leaves room for varied interpretations: it could depict the soul of Jesus post-resurrection, Mary experiencing a unitive consciousness, or the universal soul's ascent. Regardless, the concept of spiritual trials in the present resonates clearly. The seven evil powers confronting the soul echo the seven demons expelled from Mary in Luke 8:2, drawing a connection between ancient spiritual struggle and modern internal battles like addiction and anger. Scholar Cynthia Bourgeault argues that rather than viewing this ascent as a post-mortem liberation, it should be understood as an allegory for overcoming the false self to reach inner spiritual unity—a task crucial in the present moment.



Similarly, Karen King suggests this ascent serves as a guide for spiritual growth, moving from fear and instability, as seen in the disciples post-Jesus' departure, to the steadfast faith exemplified by Mary. Her vision ends with the soul achieving "eternal silence," a manifestation of spiritual attainment that mirrors Mary's own silence and enlightenment. In this context, reaching heaven transcends physical space; it becomes a state accessible in this life through desire and spiritual practice, aligning with the teachings found in "The Cloud of Unknowing."

The text advocates contemplative spirituality for achieving divine presence, with practices like "lectio divina" and centering prayer enabling transformation by aligning our consciousness with the divine. This transformation suggests a broader conflict, extending to societal structures. The Gospel of Mary challenges real-world power dynamics marked by ignorance and domination, urging resistance through the Savior's teachings.

Prominent figures like Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., similarly emphasized the vital link between inner spiritual work and effective social action. The Gospel of Mary exemplifies this, as after Mary narrates the soul's triumph over spiritual powers, she is directly challenged by her peers, echoing the soul's confrontation. This provides a real-world context, demonstrating how Jesus and Mary respond to the cycles of fear and oppression in their time, ultimately advocating for breaking these cycles in





the world.





Chapter 7 Summary: 7: Conflict Over Authority (Mary 10:1-6; 17:10-19:2)

In the chapter titled "Conflict Over Authority," the narrative explores a significant debate arising from Mary's profound vision, contextualizing it within modern discussions about women's roles in church leadership. This debate is initiated by Andrew, who voices skepticism towards Mary's teachings, describing them as unfamiliar ideas. However, he refrains from attacking Mary's character, unlike his brother Peter, whose response is laden with sarcasm and personal critique.

Peter's antagonism towards Mary is not unique to this gospel; other ancient texts like the Pistis Sophia and the Gospel of Thomas also depict Peter as dismissive and critical of Mary. In these texts, Peter expresses frustration over Mary's presence and voices a belief that women are unworthy of spiritual life, a stance that reflects significant gender biases prevalent in early Christian communities.

Within the Gospel of Mary, Peter's indignation centers on the notion that Jesus might have favored Mary with private teachings, a privilege he questions due to her gender. Initially, Peter had acknowledged Jesus' affection for Mary, suggesting she held a unique position among women. This shift in Peter's attitude from inquiring to accusatory underscores a broader theme of insecurity and competition among the disciples.

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Mary's response to Peter's critique is a focal point of interpretation. While some may see her reaction as contradicting her earlier confidence and steadfastness, others view it as a portrayal of authentic emotion—a reflection of disappointment rather than weakness. Her tears signify dismay over the discord among her peers, contrasting with the disciples' self-centered fears. Mary's approach, characterized by honesty and restraint, encourages followers to embody her example of authenticity without resorting to defensiveness or anger.

Levi's role in defending Mary highlights another layer of the conflict. His intervention points out Peter's angry demeanor, drawing parallels to Mary's vision where the adversarial powers challenge the soul. Levi's defense is not meant to showcase a lack of confidence on Mary's part, but rather to prevent the debate from devolving into personal animosity.

The chapter closes with Levi reiterating Jesus' teachings, questioning whether the disciples, including Peter and Andrew, aligned with Mary and Levi to promote the teachings of Jesus or whether they pursued a more separatist path. This unresolved tension invites readers to contemplate and interpret the teachings of Mary in today's context, challenging contemporary individuals to examine their responses to authority and spiritual leadership.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Embrace Authentic Emotion and Restraint
Critical Interpretation: Mary's reaction to the conflict over her
authority, characterized by an authentic display of emotion without
resorting to defensiveness, serves as a poignant lesson for today. Her
tears, reflecting disappointment rather than weakness, underscore the
importance of staying true to oneself amidst adversity. In a world
often driven by competition and criticism, embracing authenticity with
restraint can inspire you to confront challenges with grace and
integrity. By embodying Mary's example, you learn to navigate
conflicts not by escalating them but by staying grounded in your truth,
leading with honesty and emotional intelligence. This approach not
only transforms interpersonal dynamics but fosters a community built

on understanding, compassion, and respect.





Chapter 8: 8: Beginning the Journey

Chapter Eight, titled "Beginning the Journey," delves into contemplative spiritual practices within the Christian tradition that are designed to foster spiritual enlightenment. Different from the emotionally charged experiences of charismatic worship, these practices emphasize a quiet and steady inner transformation facilitated by the Holy Spirit. Two such practices, Lectio Divina and centering prayer, are highlighted as essential approaches to spiritual growth.

Lectio Divina, or "divine reading," offers a way to engage intimately with the Scriptures beyond just reading or studying. It is an ancient practice consisting of four steps: lectio (reading), meditatio (reflection), oratio (response), and contemplatio (rest). The process begins with calming the mind and a prayer of focus, followed by reading a short scripture passage multiple times. Each reading ushers in deeper reflection, guiding practitioners to listen to and meditate on highlighted words or phrases. This ultimately leads to a resting phase where one absorbs the divine word's essence, closing with a prayer of gratitude.

Centering prayer, in contrast, is a more passive form of contemplation, akin to the final step in Lectio Divina but exercised independently. It involves setting aside twenty minutes of quietude, where one sits comfortably, closes their eyes, and clears their mind. A sacred word serves as an anchor to





refocus when distracted by thoughts. Such a word, like "God" or "love," doesn't demand attention but helps steer back towards an emptying of self for spiritual receptivity. This practice, ideally done twice daily, may not create overt spiritual experiences but contributes quietly to inner peace and transformation, grounding the soul amidst life's chaos.

The chapter further enriches understanding by suggesting resources for expanding one's comprehension and practice of these contemplative methods. Works by Thomas Keating, Cynthia Bourgeault, and J. David Muyskens offer guidance and deepen engagement with these transformative spiritual paths. Emphasizing consistency and openness, the chapter encourages embracing these practices as a way to spiritually rest and reflect, echoing the serenity found in Mary's soul in the scriptures.

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