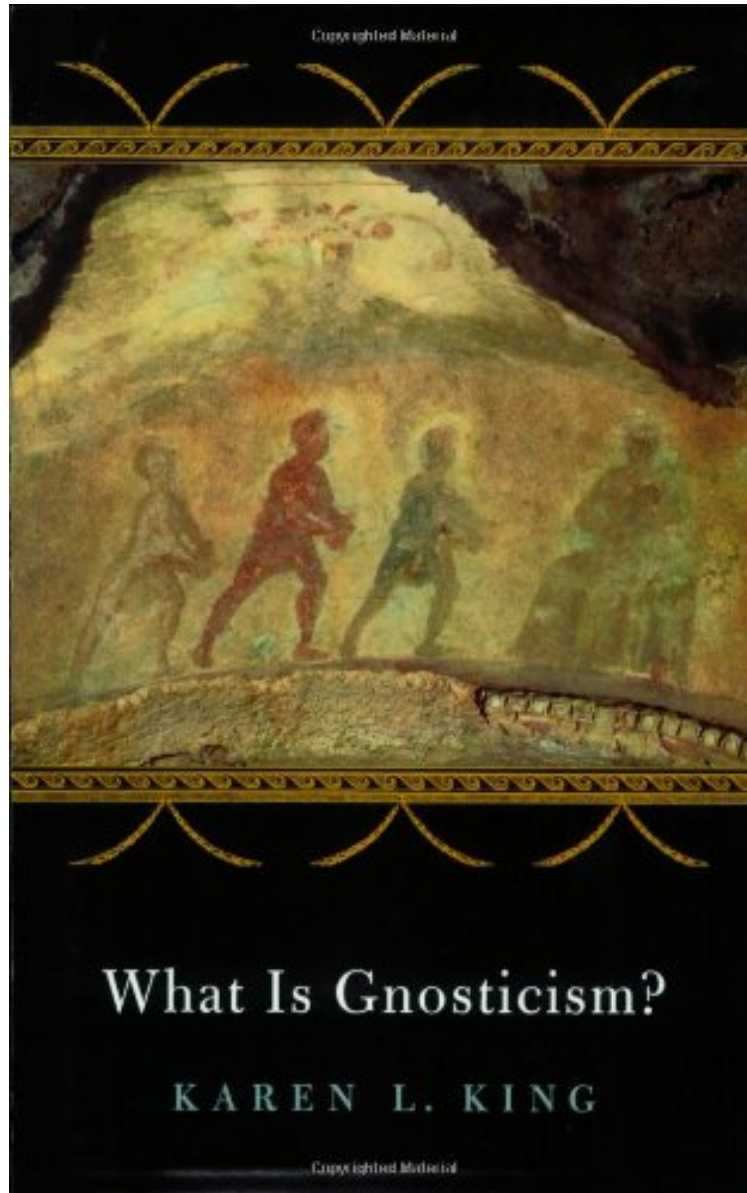


(Free and download) What Is Gnosticism?

## What Is Gnosticism?

*Karen L. King*

*audiobook / \*ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#609075 in Books Belknap Press 2005-04-30 2005-04-04 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x .88 x 6.131, .90 #File Name: 0674017625368 pages | File size: 18.Mb

**Karen L. King : What Is Gnosticism?** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What Is Gnosticism?:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy NaomiRead this for my Theories and Methods class at Harvard. This book is revolutionary.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Four StarsBy DaveHwriterThis

author always delivers a digestible message.<sup>2</sup> of 3 people found the following review helpful. Lifting the imposed veil on the early Christian Church  
By Rev. David Price  
Almost 2000 years ago the Christian church was in its founding stage. The people had experienced Jesus. After his execution by the Romans, people experienced Him in a variety of ways. The church formed from a variety of roots including the Jewish community and its sub-groups including; actual followers of Jesus (the Way), the Essenes (dead sea scrolls), temple gentiles (non-Jews but followers), Jews displaced by the Temple destruction, Hellenistic Spiritualists, followers of John the Baptist and Roman citizens. They mainly came from poor, dispossessed people with poor education. However there were also highly educated people who were able to write and carry on the experiences as the original observers died due to age and some persecution by the state supported Caesar worship. There were those whose different experiences with Jesus and their understanding collided with others. Some of this early salad of belief wanted to have a literal interpretation of their memory while others, influenced by the mythology tradition of religion, from a variety of sources preferred a more spiritual interpretation from myth. Hellenistic spiritual followers tended to be better educated and abstract in their thinking and embraced an equality of women and men in leadership while others with less education often craved and followed a literal interpretation of the memory. There was an almost 300 year struggle between these two basic streams of interpretation. The male centered, literalist group won out due to the support of Constantine, this group became the state church, the Roman Catholic Church. Quickly, the writings of the other group were destroyed, their members scattered and in some cases murdered. The dominant group had already branded the mythos group as heretic and labelled them Gnostic. Their beliefs and understanding was then defined only by those who mocked them until 1945 when a cache of their early writings were found in Egypt. This library was translated from Coptic into English and published in English in 1977. Dr. King lifts the veil in this work and takes us on a journey of deeper understanding allowing the Gnostics to speak for themselves. If you are interested in spirituality, myth and co-equal female-male spiritual leadership as well as history, this book is for you. It will shine a light on a broader foundation of Christian understanding and practice. It is worth the read and then a critical reflection. We now live in an age of Spirit. "What is Gnosticism" will speak greatly into this new world that has moved beyond correct belief to one of post-modern spiritual understanding.

A distinctive Christian heresy? A competitor of burgeoning Christianity? A pre-Christian folk religion traceable to "Oriental syncretism"? How do we account for the disparate ideas, writings, and practices that have been placed under the Gnostic rubric? To do so, Karen King says, we must first disentangle modern historiography from the Christian discourse of orthodoxy and heresy that has pervaded--and distorted--the story. Exciting discoveries of previously unknown ancient writings--especially the forty-six texts found at Nag Hammadi in 1945--are challenging historians of religion to rethink not only what we mean by Gnosticism but also the standard account of Christian origins. The Gospel of Mary and The Secret Book of John, for example, illustrate the variety of early Christianities and are witness to the struggle of Christians to craft an identity in the midst of the culturally pluralistic Roman Empire. King shows how historians have been misled by ancient Christian polemicists who attacked Gnostic beliefs as a "dark double" against which the new faith could define itself. Having identified past distortions, she is able to offer a new and clarifying definition of Gnosticism. Her book is thus both a thorough and innovative introduction to the twentieth-century study of Gnosticism and a revealing exploration of the concept of heresy as a tool in forming religious identity.

What is Gnosticism? offers an original and persuasive account of how we have come to speak of "gnosticism," and what various people have meant by that. Karen King's important new book transforms our understanding of the origins of Christianity. (Elaine Pagels, Princeton University) [King's] is the pithiest and fairest overview to date of the subject. (Robert A. Segal Times Literary Supplement 2003-11-21) Essential reading for serious students of Christian origins. (Deirdre Good Anglican Theological ) King's exposure of the confessional prejudices which have shaped the accounts of Gnosticism in Harnack and his successors is a valuable supplement to previous studies which have shown how our modern nomenclature fails to match the ancient sources. Where others have shown how scholarship has gone astray, she sets out to tell us why. (Mark J. Edwards Journal of Theological Studies 2005-04-01) [King's] volume offers a carefully considered, well-researched reflection on the state of Gnostic scholarship and a clear call for new approaches. (Edward Moore Classical Bulletin 2006-01-01) What is Gnosticism? offers an original and persuasive account of how we have come to speak of "gnosticism," and what various people have meant by that. Karen King's important new book transforms our understanding of the origins of Christianity. (Elaine Pagels, Princeton University) About the Author Karen L. King is Hollis Professor of Divinity at the Divinity School, Harvard University.