

Amor Omnia Vincit

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The religious
power
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Jesus' light
with deceit
and greed

MerKaBa

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Foreword

After years of intense struggle, surrounded by the debris of failed attempts and lost loves, I found myself trapped in a pervasive, deep grief. It was as if I was sinking further and further into a dark mist of thoughts that darkened my mind like heavy, gloomy clouds. Every morning it seemed as if I woke up with a heart that was broken with disappointment, and a sadness that seemed inexhaustible. The world lost color, luster and meaning. Every step felt like an exercise in perseverance, every breath like a confrontation with a question that tortured my soul: Why do I have to suffer like this?

In that period in which my soul had nestled itself in the shadow of doubt and despair, a burning question grew in me: Is there really a God, or am I lonely in an empty universe? The loneliness seemed endless, and my call for understanding echoed without an answer. One day, when I felt that I had lost the last remnant of hope, I turned to the universe in a desperate train of thought: Does anyone up there hate me? And if there is indeed a God who listens, why don't you save me? Why do you let me suffer, when my life seems to bear no joy? Give this life to someone who truly deserves the chance, like a child battling an incurable disease.

In that moment, in which I expressed my deepest despair, something changed. As if my soul dived deeper into itself, I discovered an unexpected silence that was hiding somewhere deep in my being. Then, on an early Monday morning, Easter Monday 1987, nine minutes to six, just as I was finishing my thirty-third year of life, a miraculous clarity took place. As I slowly woke up from my sleep, something caught my attention. In the upper left corner of my bedroom a stunning image appeared, a vision that stopped my breathing. There, as if from another dimension, appeared the image of what I can only describe as an 'angel'.

But this was not an angel as you know it from paintings or sacred statues. No wings, no halo, no heavenly robe. Instead, I saw a young man, dressed simply, without frills, but with a beauty that was unearthly and incomparable. He radiated peace, immeasurable love and an energy that seemed to go through everything. He was there, calm, timeless, and I felt how his presence enveloped me with a serenity that I had never experienced before. This experience felt alive, real, more than a dream. How could I dream about something I couldn't imagine?

What also struck me was a strange, mysterious grid of black dots that seemed to hang between us, like a kind of latticework separating us. It made me feel like I was looking at another dimension, as if I was glimpsing a world that was close by, but unreachable.

For years, this experience continued to haunt my mind like a shadow. It was a riddle that I couldn't solve. Why had I seen this? Why on that specific day? Why did that presence seem to know me, without speaking a single word? For about thirty years I struggled with these questions, doubting and inquisitive, until in 2015 I made the inner promise: I am going to write a book. It was a promise to myself and perhaps also to that strength that I had felt on that day in 1987.

While writing, I slowly began to go through a remarkable transformation, a growth on a spiritual level. The feelings of deep disappointment and sadness began to give way to understanding, acceptance, and a growing sense of love for myself, while I also began to discover my self-worth. Word by word, page by page, I felt how writing helped me to chase away my inner demons and deal with my capricious past. I began to make peace with my childhood, learned to see my parents from a new perspective, and saw that they, like me, were just human beings struggling within the limitations and pains of their own life. They were not guilty, but just players in a world where fear, worry, pain and sadness were considered normal.

Over time, these insights opened up a whole new world for me; a world of forgiveness, understanding and acceptance. And when I reached that point, a deep desire grew in me to see my deceased mother again. Maybe I wanted to see her in that peace that she had rarely experienced in her life. A few days after that desire, my mother did indeed

appear before me. There she sat, in a comfortable armchair, wrapped in a radiant white robe, surrounded by a peace and tranquility that seemed almost palpable. This moment lasted only a short time, a few seconds perhaps, but it was enough to fill me with an indescribable sense of connection and happiness.

The sight of her image felt like a blessing, a sign that it was okay, that she had found peace.

All the pieces of the puzzle of my life seemed to fall into place, as if I finally saw the hidden patterns that had always been present. But despite all the insights, one question still gnawed at me: Why me? Why did I have this vision on that particular day? Why was my soul touched by these apparitions? The memory of that 'angel' on my birthday and the appearance of my mother do not seem to be a coincidence. Perhaps they are signs, gentle indications that there is always hope, even in the darkest moments of life.

The world seems full of chaos and suffering, but when we seek the silence within ourselves, we discover that the world is actually a mirror of our inner journey. In the words of Jesus: 'he who knows himself, knows God', we can find the invitation not to look outside ourselves, but to learn to understand that the answers lie within ourselves. Instead of fighting the world, we can focus on changing ourselves and finding peace in our hearts, and in that peace, perhaps, enlighten the world a little more.

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Contents

Foreword	7
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Part 1

Astonishment about texts in the Bible	15
The Bible	16
Justice and Noah's Ark	22
Evil	25
The Messiah	30
Woman in the Bible	32
Murder, suicide and rape	36
Sexuality	37
Polygamy	40
Abuse of women and children	42
Satan in the Old Testament	44
Satan in the New Testament	46
David	49
Fate	53
Lies even from patriarch Abraham and Isaac	55
Paul	57
Writing letters	59
Elisa	61
Isaac, Jacob and Esau Lies and deceit	63
Moses	65
Moses and the Exodus	66
Atrocities at the behest of God	68
Ambiguities in New Testament documents	70
The end	71
Illness	79
Abortion	81
Homosexuality	84
Marriage and divorce	85
Contradictions	86

Modifying and exploiting the theft of a religion	88
Baptism and John	95
Traitor	96
Love Your Enemies	97
Marcus, Johannes, Lukas and Matthew	98
Maria Magdalena	100
Story from Egyptian mythology	101
Threats of Jesus	102

Part 2

The Nag Hammadi Scriptures	105
Gnosticism	107
The Gospel of Philip	109
The Gospel of Truth	110
The Gospel of Thomas	111

The Gospel of Thomas	113
-----------------------------	------------

Part 3

Final remarks	317
Telling stories	318
Constantine the Great	321
From pope to criminal and murderer	322
The Reformation	325
Counter-Reformation	327
The Bible and the People	328
The Catholic Church in the last century	330
The State of Israel	331
Celibacy and sexual abuse	333
The Vatican and the Mafia	335
Bankers of God	337
Espresso with fatal outcome	339

Abduction	341
Cardinal Francis Spellman Foundation	342
The Vatican: the world's largest real estate owner	346
Pope Francis	349
Wealth and Religion	352
Physical and sexual abuse	353
Sexual abuse	355
Epilogue	356
Sources	357

Part 1

Astonishment about texts in the Bible

The Bible

In order to gain a good insight into who God and Jesus are according to the writers of the Bible, I, the author of this book, start an investigation.

Ever since the beginning of creation, which can be read in the book of Genesis, I have been falling from one surprise to another. The Bible is the infallible word of God, but it is full of all kinds of negative things such as robbery, genocide, discrimination, infanticide, rape and slavery, all activities that are used to help God's chosen people, the Israelites, move forward in the world.

Let's be clear right away. The God mentioned in the Old Testament is the God of the Jews, and that God therefore has nothing to do with Jesus.

In the New Testament, to be more specific in John 10:33, the Jews wanted to stone Jesus. They called him, because of his statements, a blasphemer. They felt that Jesus made himself God. Jesus is therefore not the Messiah for the Jews, despite the many 'miracles' he is said to have performed. These miracles often have to do with 'healing'. Healing here does not literally mean making someone better or helping someone get rid of an illness, but according to the gnostic writings about healing someone 'figuratively', just as 'death' should not be taken literally in the 114 statements that Jesus made and that are included in this book. My surprise about all this is already great, but I only really decide to write this book when I find out that the Roman Catholic Church is the largest sect in the world, and that Christians are brainwashed through the Bible.

Let's start at the beginning. The Bible is divided into two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is composed of a total of 66 writings, also called 'books': the Old Testament contains 39 books, the New Testament consists of 27 books. They are generally written by about forty different authors. These authors, both men and women, all lived in different times and cultures. So... there is a good chance that these writers did not know each other.

The writings in the Bible contain various literary genres, including history, poetry, prophecy and letters, but you read about lies, murder, rape, slavery, incest, oppression of women and horrific child and baby murders all the time; all this with the approval of, and sometimes even by order of, 'Our Lord'. And that's not all.

Already in the creation story you immediately find some contradictions. Genesis 1:4 says, "And God saw the light, that it was good" and "God separated the light from the darkness" and, "God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. Then there was evening, and there was morning; the first day." From this we can see that there was already a distinction between light and darkness before the sun was created.

According to the traditional biblical account in the book of Genesis, Adam and Eve were, according to Judeo-Christian tradition, the first humans created by God. There is no mention of other people who were already on earth before these two "came into the world" and took their first breath. After a few pages, a murder takes place and there is jealousy, feelings of revenge and lies. While Cain, a farmer, and Abel, a shepherd, brothers of each other, make a sacrifice to God together, God accepts Abel's lamb, but Cain's fruit does not catch fire. Cain is offended. He takes his unsuspecting brother into the field and kills him. Cain and Abel are, according to the Judeo-Christian tradition, the sons of Adam and Eve. Cain is the older of the two brothers. So... before the murder of Abel, there were four people on earth.

When God asks Cain where his brother is at a certain moment, the first lie of a human being is born. God confronts Cain about his deed and curses him. Cain is condemned by God to a life of wandering and restlessness, and the soil would no longer be fertile for his crops. Despite the curse, God still protects Cain from vengeance by others. This prevents those others from killing Cain in retaliation for his crime. Others? Which others? Where did those other people(?) suddenly come from?

The specific biblical verse that mentions Cain meeting his wife is Genesis 4:17: "And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and gave birth to Enoch." It is noteworthy that the Bible does not explicitly state where Cain got his wife from. Adam and Eve, the first humans on earth, had two sons, and no daughters. So where did Cain's wife come from?

Did God perhaps create more people, and did the author of the story perhaps not think that was important enough to mention? According to theologians and scientists, we should not take this story about Cain and Abel too literally.

All things considered, GOD, the ALMIGHTY, the ALL-CAPABLE and ALL-KNOWING must have realized that the creation of man has completely failed from the beginning. It could only lead to even more misery. But God prefers to wait until the world is more densely populated and only then let all mankind drown during the flood, after He had expressed His disappointment and shouted that “all the people on earth where evil” and that “everyone lived a pernicious life.” The Flood was a great flood caused by God as a punishment for man’s corruption. The human being that He, the Almighty, had created Himself.

After this, at least for me, quite shocking intro, I come across more stories like this while reading the bible. I soon find that I understand little or nothing about this God and his decisions.

Before reading the Bible, I had imagined God. In my experience, God was a sweet, peaceful, understanding, and above all understandable God. Soon after I started reading, I was shocked at the way God is presented. Actually, it comes down to the fact that the God in the Bible does not appeal to my imagination at all.

Who is this God in the Bible?

According to historical data, both the aspects of God, as a God of war and a God of peace, are highlighted. On the one hand, God is described in some texts as a warrior who fights and teaches for battle. These texts show an association between God and war, where He is seen as fighting for His people and helping in military conflicts. On the other hand – in other texts – God is presented as a God of peace.

In Romans 15:33 we find the following text: “And the God of peace be with you all. Amen.”

1 Corinthians 14:33 also emphasizes that God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. These texts emphasize the peace-loving nature of God, seeing Him as a source of peace and harmony.

In 1 Samuel 15:29 it is also emphasized that God does not lie and that He does not repent. Yet, there are some passages in the Bible in

which it seems that God repents or regrets certain situations.

For example, Genesis 6:7 states that God repented that He had made man, and that He would destroy mankind.

And in 1 Samuel 15:11 it says that God repented that He had made Saul king because of his disobedience.

Some of God's utterances raise moral questions, such as His dealings with people with disabilities, lepers, and menstruating women. God also seems to deliberately create people with limitations, while at the same time forbidding these people to dishonor His sanctuary. Exodus declares that God himself would be responsible for certain conditions that people suffer from. Deuteronomy stipulates that illegitimate children and their descendants up to the tenth generation are not allowed to participate in meetings of the Lord.

This raises questions about the treatment of the people who are considered 'bastards', now that they are excluded from religious gatherings up to the tenth generation.

The Bible also describes aspects of God's character that sometimes raise questions about His righteousness. There are stories in which entire nations are exterminated, and where innocent women, children and the elderly are punished for the sins of others. God seems to approve of slavery and sometimes even incite human sacrifice. There are passages in which God states that children are punished for the sins of their parents. Isaiah even suggests that children should bear the consequences of the actions of their ancestors in order to prevent them from inheriting the earth.

Is becoming justified 1 a matter of faith, works, or a combination of both?

Romans 3:28 concludes that man's justification is by faith, apart from the works of the law. In other words, faith alone is sufficient for justification, without works playing a role in it.

On the other hand, James 2:24 suggests that a person is justified by works, and not just by faith. This, in turn, raises the question of whether works are a necessary part of being justified, in addition to faith.

Romans 3:28 focuses on the grace of God and emphasizes that "salvation" is based purely on faith, without any human achievements.

On the other hand, James 2:24 emphasizes the need for works as evidence of man's faith. This is not about works that deserve the justification of man, but about works that come from the faith of man. To

resolve this apparent contradiction, we can say that faith and works are two sides of the same coin. Faith is the foundation of justification, while works are the visible evidence of man's faith. It is not that work in itself justifies man, but that works testify to the sincerity of man's faith. It is a complex issue to judge whether someone is righteous¹. And then: on the one hand, Romans 3:10 proclaims that no one is righteous is, as it is written. This refers to the general human nature and our tendency to error and sin. On the other hand, there are biblical references to individuals who are considered righteous.

For example, Genesis 7:1 states that Noah was righteous in the eyes of God, indicating his devotion to God's commandments and his obedience to God's instructions to build the ark. However, the story of Noah also raises questions and criticisms regarding the alleged destruction of the entire then living world population by the flood. It looks like a complex and controversial action of an all-knowing God, especially with regard to the fate of babies and small children who had no sense of right and wrong. Some argue that a God with omniscience and omnipotence should be able to correct or punish his creation in some other way or at least try to advance people's faith.

In Ezekiel 3:21, 33:15 it is then said that the righteous can survive if they are warned about sin and live righteously. At the same time, a righteous person can die if he were to commit injustice (Ezekiel 33:13). Thus, these texts show different views on the fate of the righteous and the wicked.

Biblical verses reflect historical beliefs, such as in Job 21:7, why the wicked sometimes appear prosperous. On the other hand, Proverbs 10:27 states that fearing the Lord prolongs the days, while Psalm 55:24 suggests that the wicked will meet an untimely end.

Deuteronomy 24:16 and Ezekiel 18:20 emphasize that parents will not be punished for their children and vice versa, although there are exceptions where the children are punished for parental sins.

In ancient Israel, the principle of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" applied to justice and retribution (Deuteronomy 19:21). In the New Testament, Jesus changes this perspective and advocates forgiveness and reconciliation, encouraging His followers not to be vindictive,

¹ *to justify* is the same as 'to declare someone righteous or innocent'; a justified person is acquitted by God.

but to be merciful and loving. With this, the idea of strict retribution is replaced by the principle of justice and proportionality in relations with others.

In the Gospel of John 9:1-3 the story is told of a man who was born blind. Jesus answers his question whether the man himself, or perhaps his parents, have sinned as a reason for his blindness. This suggests that God sometimes allows certain circumstances to show His own glory and wonders. It is apparently a complex issue for the authors of the Bible to judge whether someone is righteous or not. I mentioned earlier that in Ezekiel it is said that the righteous can survive if they are warned about sins and live righteously (Ezekiel 3:21, 33:15). At the same time, a righteous person can die if he commits injustice (Ezekiel 33:13). These texts show various views on the fate of the righteous and the wicked.

For example, Romans 3:10 declares that no one is righteous. This refers to the general human nature and man's tendency to make mistakes and fall into sin. On the other hand, there are also biblical references to individuals who are considered righteous.

Justice and Noah's Ark

This is a good time to take a look at Noah and that ark, and then I start with Genesis 8:14. There it is stated: "Earth is dry, second month, 27th day." If we may assume that Noah and his people left the ark immediately after seeing the dry earth – of course only after being ordered by God, on that 27th day of the second month – 2 then the company stayed in the ark for a total of one year and ten days, bobbing on the water.

The ark had room for eight people: Noah, his wife and their three adult sons with their wives. There was undoubtedly a large food supply on board, and of course there were the necessary animals; two of every species that existed on earth at that time: a male and a female.

If my calculations are correct and we assume all living animal species on earth that are currently known that number is – also according to scientists – more than 2 million species. More than half of them are insects. So if we don't count them because they take up little space, we can assume about 800,000 animal species times two, then we are at 1.6 million animals that have stayed in or on that ark. The ark was a boat of biblical dimensions, 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high, and all those animals were fed and cared for by eight people during the 370 or 371 days on board. Logistically an impossible thing. Let's look at this scenario in detail.

The story of Noah building an ark raises interesting questions about the practical implementation of such a gigantic project. If we assume that Noah did the job together with his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth, we can think about the amount of labor that went into came into play. In Genesis 6, God instructs Noah to build the ark in preparation for the flood.

2 Noah spent more than a year in the ark, and it is not agreed whether it was 370 days or 371 days. Noah remained in the ark for 57 days after the flood before God commanded him to leave.

The Bible does not give an exact length of time for the construction, but according to Genesis 6:22, “Noah did all things as God commanded him.” Noah was responsible for the project, but the Bible does not explicitly state whether there were other people besides his three sons who helped him, such as his wife or his daughters-in-law. It remains unknown whether the women actively participated in the construction or perhaps fulfilled supporting roles, such as taking care of the household and preparing food.

If we assume four men building the ark and take into account the size of the ark as described in Genesis 6:15 and mentioned above, then the required labor time and the tools used would be important factors. Optimistic estimate: Even with constant, uninterrupted labor and no setbacks, building a ship of this size, with primitive tools, would take a lot of time. If Noah and his sons worked about 10 to 12 hours a day, this project would likely take at least 30 years, even under ideal conditions. Realistic estimate: Given the primitive construction methods, limited manpower, and complexity of the project (including gathering the necessary materials), construction could take as long as 40 to 50 years or more. This would be a plausible length of time for such a large project, given all the manual work and the limitations of time.

There is no evidence that there were any other people besides Noah's immediate family who helped build the ark. Since the text focuses mainly on Noah and his sons, it remains guesswork to what extent others were involved. In Noah's time, tools and technologies would have been very primitive, especially compared to modern standards. Hand tools such as axes, saws, hammers and chisels were probably the main tools. Material and woodworking, such as cutting down trees, transporting wood and working it until it would have the desired dimensions and shapes, undoubtedly required a lot of time and labour.

Specific types of wood such as cedar or gopher wood (mentioned in the bible) would have to be selected, felled, transported, dried and processed, which is a time-consuming process. Building the structure of the ark, including the frame, walls, and floors, is a detailed and precise process. Waterproofing the ark, as described in the Bible ‘with pitch’, is also very labor-intensive. When estimating the time, it would take four men to build such a ship, we can make some comparisons with historic shipbuilding projects and make assumptions based on their

labor intensity. In the Middle Ages, the construction of a large wooden ship such as a caravel or a galley often took several years, even with a large team of experienced shipbuilders and workers. A team of thirty to fifty people needed several years to build a ship of a few tens of meters.

Specific figures, problem definition and practical challenges:

- » Number of animals: 1.6 million (pairs of 800,000 species).
- » Dimensions of the ark in meters: 150 meters long, 25 meters wide, and 15 meters high.
- » Duration at sea: 370 or 371 days.
- » Number of people: 8.
- » Volume of the ark: $150\text{m} \times 25\text{m} \times 15\text{m} = 56,250 \text{ m}^3$. Three floors (as is often assumed in the interpretations of the ark) each gives an area of $150\text{m} \times 25\text{m} = 3,750 \text{ m}^2$.
- » Space per animal: With 1.6 million animals and a total area of 11,250 m^2 (3 floors), each square meter should provide space for about 142 animals, not taking into account food storage, water, and the space for people to move and work.
- » Care by 8 people: 1.6 million animals divided into 8 people means that each person would be responsible for about 200,000 animals. Feeding and keeping such a large number of animals clean is physically and logistically very challenging.
- » Food and water: A considerable amount of space would be required for the storage of food and water for the animals and the people, for a period of 370 or 371 days. Distributing enough food and water for 1.6 million animals is also a huge logistical challenge.
- » Waste management: Managing the feces of 1.6 million animals in an enclosed space would cause huge sanitation problems, which would be absolutely unmanageable for eight people.
- » Animal welfare: the welfare of the animals would be seriously compromised given the limited space and the lack of exercise and fresh air.
- » Manpower and time: Eight people would not be physically able to perform all of these tasks effectively within a realistic time frame. Feeding, changing and caring for such a large number of animals would be an impossible task for just four men and four women.

Conclusion: This too should be dismissed as another story that should not be taken seriously. We will leave the ark for what it is.

Evil

In the bible we come across several verses that at first glance suggest that evil comes from God. These verses raise questions about God's involvement in evil and the role He plays in such situations.

In Job 42:11, Job's brothers, sisters, and acquaintances gather to comfort him and to see how much harm the Lord has done to Job. In order to win a bet with Satan, God causes a terrible incident to take place in which Job's children are killed because a house collapses. The young people are killed one by one. The passage in the Bible illustrates the tragic event in which children of Job fall victim to what is a devastating 'natural disaster'.

While Proverbs 12:22 sometimes makes it seem that God is inciting others to speak falsehoods, Isaiah 45:7 mentions that God has the ability to produce both peace and evil. Lamentations 3:38 states that both good and evil come from the mouth of the "Dearest Lord."

Amos 3:6 suggests that when there is calamity in the city, it is because the Lord allows or applies it, due to certain circumstances.

In Samuel 16:14, God sends an evil spirit to Saul.

In Judges 9:23, we read that God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the citizens of Shechem, which led to unfaithfulness and conflict between them.

Micah 1:12 reads, "The inhabitants of Maroth wait in vain for anything good, but evil from the Lord descends to the gates of Jerusalem." So once again it is shown that God has evil in him.

In certain passages in the Bible, there is even talk of very shocking situations in which people are forced into cannibalism, as a form of punishment from God. These scriptures dramatically illustrate the terrible consequences of disobeying God and leaving His way. They warn of the possible punishments that the people will have to suffer if they turn away from God's commandments and fall into sin.

In Deuteronomy 28:53 it is said that in such an exceptional situa-

tion, people may even come to the point where they will eat the flesh of their own children, as an expression of extreme hunger and want. This passage illustrates the deep misery and horrific circumstances that can occur as a result of destruction and scarcity.

A similar picture is painted in Deuteronomy 28:57, where it is described that a mother could secretly eat the afterbirth and her own children due to a lack of food and resources.

Deuteronomy 2:30 records that God hardened the mind of King Sihon and hardened his heart so that Israel could gain victory over him. The Bible also describes how God deliberately leads people astray or hardens them. This means that He allows them to deviate from His ways, or that He hardens their hearts, resulting in the consequences of their choices. This was a divine act, and as a result, Egypt was thrown into confusion and nearing its own demise.

Finally, we have the story of Joseph in Egypt (Genesis 47:13-26). Due to all kinds of circumstances, Joseph is given an important position as manager of Egypt's food supplies. However, he abuses his position by extorting the Egyptians in favor of his boss, the Pharaoh. As a result of the famine, the Egyptians have to sell their cattle and later even their land to the Pharaoh as payment for the food. In addition, they are forced to hand over one fifth of their harvest to the Pharaoh, effectively enslaving them.

It is clear that slavery was widespread in early society, even among important biblical figures such as Abraham and Jacob. It is striking that even God sells people, orders people to be enslaved or uses slavery as a punishment.

Genesis 17:23 describes how Abraham circumcised his son Ishmael, all the inhabitants of his household, and everyone he bought with his money, as God had instructed him. This text emphasizes that slaves were considered part of Abraham's property.

Genesis 30:43 mentions that Jacob had cattle, handmaids, servants, camels, and donkeys in large numbers. It is striking that slaves are placed in the same category as livestock, i.e. as property. This passage shows that owning slaves was considered a normal part of people's prosperity and property.

In Joel 3:8 it is described that God will sell the sons and daughters of a certain nation to the children of Judah, who in turn will sell them on to a distant nation. This is announced as a direct statement from the Lord.

Deuteronomy 20:10 gives instructions in case the people approach a city to wage war with. If the city offers peace and opens its gates, all the inhabitants of the city become tributaries and become slaves.

2 Chronicles 12:8 mentions that certain people will become ministers, so that they can learn about God's service and the service of other kingdoms.

In Deuteronomy 28:68 it is said that the Lord will send the people back to Egypt by a road they will never see again. There, in Egypt, they will want to sell themselves as slaves to their enemies, but there will be no buyer. These verses show that the Bible describes situations in which God is involved in the sale and use of humans as slaves.

The Bible also contains guidelines to regulate the practice of slavery. Leviticus 25:44 states that slavery is acceptable as long as the slaves come from other nations. This implies that acquiring slaves from other communities is not a problem. Leviticus 25:46 states that slaves and their descendants are the hereditary property of their master and must serve his family forever.

Exodus 21:7 mentions that daughters can be sold as slaves. According to Exodus 21:4, children born of a slave woman belong to the master's property. Exodus 21:20-21 states that it is permissible to beat slaves, as long as they do not die as a result of the beating. According to Exodus 21:2-5, male

Hebrew slaves the right to be freed after seven years of service.

However, they are then faced with a difficult choice between their family and their freedom.

Exodus 21:6 and Deuteronomy 15:17 describe a horrific practice in which a slave who chooses to stay with his family is nailed to the doorpost with his ear as a sign of absolute submission to his master.

If a slave is killed, Exodus 21:32 stipulates that the master must receive compensation for the loss. These texts in the Bible provide specific guidelines and rules regarding slavery, recognizing and regulating the practice within the framework of the time. This passage, in which God condemns a specific population group to slavery, was later used by 'Christian' slave traders and slave owners to justify owning and trading people.

The idea of selling a daughter as a slave, as described in Exodus 21:7, stands in stark contrast to our modern moral values and ethical standards. We now recognize that all people have intrinsic rights and that no one should be treated as property. Slavery is widely condemned as a serious violation of human rights.

King Solomon subjects the surviving inhabitants of Canaan, as well as their descendants, to slavery as a permanent situation. In 1 Kings 9:20 it says that Solomon enslaved all the people, as well as their descendants who had remained in the land after them and who had not been driven out by the Israelites. These people are described as 'scum'. It is important to note that Solomon did not enslave Israelites, indicating that slavery was primarily applied to non-Israelite peoples. Understandably, the Bible, a book that is regarded by Christians as a moral guide, is expected to contain a clear rejection of slavery. Especially since the people of Israel themselves suffered from 'slavery in Egypt' (but there is no evidence of this). Surely, it would have been appropriate for the Bible to take a firm stand against these practices. It is therefore not surprising that in the past, proponents of slavery were enabled to justify and defend their practices on religious grounds. The position of the Bible states that people may be bought and sold.

Genesis 17:12 states that every male baby must be circumcised on the eighth day, including those born in the household and those who have been bought with money from foreigners and do not belong to their own people. Slaves, in other words... Fortunately, modern society has developed, and we have come to realize that slavery is inhumane and immoral. We strive for equality and respect for all individuals, regardless of origin or social status.

Exodus 20:17, the Tenth Commandment, forbids coveting another's house, wife, male and female servants, oxen, donkeys, or anything neighbours. Mentioning servants and handmaids in the same category as possessions of the neighbor indicates that slaves were considered property within the context of the time. The Ten Commandments also mention that God freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

In Exodus 20:2, God declares that He is the Lord their God, who delivered them from Egypt, from the house of bondage. This mention of liberation from slavery emphasizes the special relationship between God and the Israelites, but it does not lead to an explicit prohibition of slavery in general. The fact that slaves are listed as part of the household and property of one's neighbor again indicates that slavery was considered an accepted practice in the society in which the Ten Commandments were given at the time.

Even Jesus and the writers of the New Testament do not rebel against the injustice of slavery but rather work to maintain the existing hier-

archies and authority relationships, however unjust they may be.

In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus presents us with a worldview in which the master has absolute power over his subordinates and can act as he sees fit. Jesus also does not object to corporal punishment, as shown at Luke 12:47-48. In Luke 17:7-9, Jesus says that slaves are supposed to do what they are commanded to do, without the master owing them a debt of gratitude. According to 1 Timothy 6:1, slaves, in the name of God and doctrine, are to be obedient to their masters.

Translators have tried over the years to soften the stories of slavery in the Bible. In translating the original Bible into the Dutch Bible of 1637 (also known as: Dutch States Bible), the translators have made an effort to cover up the fraught past of biblical slavery. They have replaced the word 'slave' with 'servant', suggesting that it is about employment relationships between employers and employees. In the Old Testament, the word 'servant' occurs more than 600 times, while the word 'slave' is only used 15 times. In the original Hebrew text, the same Hebrew word 'abd' is used in all these cases. Only when there was no other option, for example in the case of sale, hereditary property or to emphasize the drama of a story, did the translators use the word 'slave'.

In the New Testament, which is written in Greek, the word "slave" is not used at all in the *King James Version*. Instead, the Greek word "doulos" meaning slave is consistently translated as "servant." This happens even in places where a clear distinction is made between free people and these "servants" (see original Greek text of the New Testament).

The Messiah

The question of whether Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah foretold in the Old Testament is an important theological debate. According to John 4:25, a woman spoke to Jesus. She said that she knew that the Messiah – also called Christ – would come and proclaim everything. However, there are different views about the nature of the Messiah in the Old Testament. According to some interpretations, the Messiahs in the Old Testament were worldly leaders who would liberate the people of Israel from their enemies. This view suggests that the Messiah has nothing to do with a divine Son who comes to save the whole world from eternal darkness.

The texts of Zechariah and Daniel speak of the Messiah's reign over the whole world. Zechariah 9:9-10 says that the King will be righteous and will come on a donkey, a symbol of humility. The text speaks of the extermination of war equipment and the proclamation of peace to the Gentiles. It suggests that the Messiah's rule will extend from the sea to the sea and from the river to the ends of the earth.

Daniel 7:13-14 describes a vision of one coming with the clouds of heaven, in the form of a Son of man. This figure went to the 'old of days' after which He was given dominion, honor and royal power. After that, all peoples, nations, and languages served and honored Him. His reign will be eternal and will not perish.

Although some interpret the texts as prophecies that have yet to be fulfilled, in the New Testament the first sentence of Zechariah 9:9 is cited as a prophecy that was already fulfilled at the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Thus, there are different interpretations and views about the role and nature of the Messiah in the Old and New Testaments.

In Matthew 15:21-28 we find a remarkable Bible story in which Jesus becomes involved in an encounter with a Canaanite woman. The story begins when Jesus enters a borderland, the area of Tyre and Sidon, which is known as the land of the Canaanites.

Here a Canaanite woman comes to Him and begs Him for help. Her daughter is tormented by a demon, and she desperately longs for

healing for her beloved child. What is striking is Jesus' first reaction to the woman's plea. He ignores her and gives no immediate response. Jesus, who is known for his compassion and willingness to help those in need, seems to be ignoring her request here and even rejecting it. However, the woman is not discouraged. She continues to insist and begs Jesus to help her. The disciples ask Jesus to send her away because she keeps calling. Finally, Jesus addresses the woman and says: "It is not good to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs." All non-Jews were called 'dogs' at that time. It is painful to read how the non-Jewish woman was compared to a dog by Jesus.

Woman in the Bible

It is even painful in general to call the portrayal of women in the Bible. We also recognize this attitude in our time, because in some religions, such as Islam, for example, women are still considered inferior. In contemporary translations of the Bible, women are gradually coming into their own, which is logical given the position of women in our contemporary society. In fact, Bible writings have been adapted many times over the centuries to the norms and values of a certain time, depending on the thinking of the various authors and translators. After the invention of printing, biblical writings were translated into Latin and widely reproduced, although at first only priests and highly educated people read the books. In many civilizations, the ability to read and write was reserved for the elite, such as priests, the nobility and the higher officials. Ordinary people, especially farmers and workers, were often illiterate. The people had to make do with the Sunday warnings of hell and damnation by the priests.

Back to the woman: Genesis 3:16 emphasizes that there is a certain hierarchical relationship between men and women, where men are considered authoritative, and women are submissive to those men. Furthermore, it is emphasized that the woman was created for the man, and not the other way around. In certain passages of the Bible, the relationship between man and woman is described as a hierarchical structure, in which the man is seen as superior to the woman. It is suggested that this is a form of punishment for the sin that the first woman on earth, Eve, is said to have committed. Even in the creation story there is already a difference between the man and the woman. What is striking in many biblical stories is that the woman is not even called by her name and is often dismissed as a concubine or concubine.

According to Ecclesiastes 7:26-28, it is rare to find a sincere wife. The author describes 'the woman' as deceitful and indicates that he is looking for that one sincere copy, but states that he has not found her. However, he has found a sincere man in his search.

In several verses in the book of Proverbs, women are described as seductive and deceitful, and described as predators who spread deception and encourage infidelity among people. In Deuteronomy 21:11-14 it says that if you see a woman among the captives and feel your desire for her, you may take her as your wife. You will take her to your house, where she will shave her head and trim her nails. She will take off the clothes she wore as a prisoner and sit in your house. For a month, she will mourn her father and mother. After that, you can get intimate with her, and she will be your 'wife'. But if you're not happy with her in the end, then you have to let her go.

In several passages of the Bible, the role of women – and also children – is seen as 'property' that men can dispose of as they see fit.

In Judges 19, we find a similar, albeit even more absurd, and gruesome, story. Here, the men of a city demand the extradition of a male visitor for the purpose of having sexual intercourse with him. In Judges 19:22 we read that, while the men of the city were making merry, a small group of men known as the "children of Belial"³ surrounded the house and knocked on the door. They asked the master of the house to bring out the man who had come into his house so that they could abuse him. Of course, the host refused, but he suggested that he should hand over his virgin daughter and his concubine instead. In Judges 19:23-24 it says: "No, my brothers, do not do such a bad deed. After all, this man has come into my house, do not be foolish. Behold, here is my daughter, who is still a virgin, and my concubine. Let me bring them out now, and you can do with them as you please, but please do no harm to my guest." The men sputtered against it, and then the man grabbed his concubine and brought her out, where she was abused by the group of men and abused until morning. When the master of the house saw his concubine lying dead at the door in the morning, he took her body and cut it into twelve pieces, according to Judges 19:29. He then sent the documents to all parts of Israel to show how pernicious the act that had taken place was. In this idiotic story, hospitality is more important than a woman's life.

Ephesians 5:22-23 advises women to be submissive to their own husbands, as to the Lord. Here it is again repeated that the man is 'the head' of the church and the protector of the body. From a biblical point of view, it is therefore inconceivable that women would play any

3 *Belial is a Hebrew word meaning "worthless" or "worthless"*

significant role in a congregation or church.

In the text at 1 Corinthians 11:7 it is described even more specifically: the man is the reflection of the glory of God, and the woman is the glory of the man. This suggests that the man holds a special position when it comes to representing divine glory. It also emphasizes that the man does not have to cover his head, because he is the image and glory of God. In other words, the man symbolizes God's glory in a special way. In contrast, the woman is said to be the glory of the man, suggesting that her role is connected to fulfilling the needs and desires of the man.

According to the text in 1 Corinthians 14:34, it is indicated that women in the congregations should keep quiet and submit. It is stated that women are not allowed to speak, but that they should be submissive instead. In fact, it is recommended that if women want to learn something, they should ask their own husbands instead of speaking in the congregation. These words indicate that in the context of the church, there is no active role for women when it comes to expressing their voices or sharing their insights. Women are urged to play a supporting role and to be obedient to the male authority within the congregation. It is important to note that this text reflects the conviction that prevailed in society and the church at the time.

The text at 1 Timothy 2:12-14 indicates that women are not allowed to teach or rule over men. It is desired that women remain silent. The reason given is that Adam was created first, and only then Eve. It is also mentioned that Adam was not deceived, but that the woman, after being deceived, went into transgression. This indicates that in this specific context, a limitation is placed on the role of women when it comes to teaching and authority.

The following Bible verses contain several passages that are misogynistic.

For example, Exodus 22:18 mentions that witches are to be put to death.

Leviticus 12:1-14 describes a woman in childbirth with a son as being considered unclean for seven days, while a woman giving birth with a daughter is considered unclean for fourteen days.

Leviticus 15:19-23 states that menstruating women are considered unclean.

Numbers 5:13-31 deals with the issue of adulterous women and describes a trial that they must undergo.

Numbers 31:9 and Deuteronomy 20:14 mention that women and children are taken as spoils of war.

Deuteronomy 22:13-29 contains several rules regarding virginity and punishments for sexual transgressions.

Job 14:4 asks a rhetorical question about purity.

Isaiah 3:16-17 refers to mangy skulls and exposed genitals as a form of humiliation.

Isaiah 3:16 mentions rape as a punishment.

Colossians 3:18 advises women to be submissive, and 1 Timothy 2:9 speaks of modest dress for women.

Tamar seduces her father-in-law Judah in Genesis 38:13 to provide offspring after her husband has died.

In Genesis 39:7, Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph, but he resists her advances.

In Job 2:9, Job's wife tries to get her husband to deny God during his trials.

Several women in the books of Judges and Kings are associated with deception and betrayal. Samson's wife reveals the answer to her husband's riddle in Judges 14:16, while Delilah reveals the secret of Samson's power in Judges 16:6.

In 1 Kings 11:4, King Solomon's wives are held responsible for his apostasy. Isebel plays a negative role in 1 Kings 21:25, inciting King Ahab to do evil deeds.

In the story Esther 2:17, Esther is described as a woman who saves her people by seducing the King and thus influences decision-making.

In Ruth 3:3, Ruth, on the advice of her mother-in-law, seduces Boaz to get his attention in order to improve the situation of the two women.

Finally, in Matthew 14:8, the daughter of Herodias, on the advice of her mother, asks for the head of John the Baptist on a platter as a reward for a dance. And these are by no means all tragic and horrific events.

Murder, suicide and rape

In the Bible, the God of the Israelites is sometimes involved in bloody events, especially when revenge or territorial expansion is involved. A remarkable story that illustrates this is that of the massacre in Shechem, found in Genesis 34. Jacob, the patriarch of the Israelites, settled with his family and possessions near the city of Shechem. He bought a piece of land there to settle down. His daughter Dinah visited the city one day, where she was raped by Shechem, the son of Hamor, the ruler of that city. Despite this act of violence, Shechem fell in love with Dinah and wanted to marry her. He sent his father Hamor to Jacob and his sons so that he could ask for Dinah's hand in marriage for him. Although the request seemed – improbably – granted, Dinah's brothers had a cunning condition. They agreed to the marriage between Shechem and their sister, but stated: the men of Shechem all had to be circumcised in order to qualify for a covenant with their family. Shechem and his father agreed, and after some persuasion, so did the other men of Shechem. They saw an advantage in it, as an alliance with Jacob's family would bring economic and social benefits. Three days after the circumcision, when the men of Shechem were vulnerable and weak because of the procedure, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, brothers of Dinah, took revenge. They overran the unsuspecting city and murdered all the male inhabitants, including Shechem and Hamor. They robbed the city, captured women and children, and appropriated the city's possessions. Jacob's other sons later joined the sack and made the city completely unsafe.

Sexuality

What does the Bible actually teach us about sexual morality? We will find out that polygamy is permissible according to the Bible. In the book of Genesis 6:2-4, it is told that the “sons of God” had sexual relations with women on earth, as a result of which demigods were born on earth. “Then the Lord said, My Spirit will never contend with man, because he is also flesh; but his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.”

By the way: the longest living person in the world whose birth and death dates are officially fixed was the French Jeanne Calment, who died in 1997 at the age of 122. Calment is therefore still the only person ever to become verifiably older than 120 years.

We pick up the story again: the sons of God had sexual relations with women on earth. But doesn't it also say in the Bible: God sent his only son? Who are the other sons in the story of God who sent his sons to earth? This is an intriguing and mysterious part of the Bible that you can read in Genesis 6:1-4.

But there is more. In Genesis 35:22, Reuben, the son of Jacob, has sex with Bilhah, a concubine of his father.

In Judges 21 we see that the tribe of Benjamin, who do not have enough wives, robs 400 virgins from the city of Jabez. And as if that were not enough, they also kidnap a group of women who dance in the vineyards during the feast of the Lord.

Another remarkable incident is found in Ruth 3:4-8, touched upon earlier in this book. On the advice of her mother-in-law, Ruth crawls into a corn shove with the drunken and satisfied Boaz to put him in a position where he cannot refuse her.

According to 1 Kings 11:3, King Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines.

The book of Esther tells the story of Queen Vashti, who refuses to dance at a party of her husband, King Ahasuerus. He is so offended by her refusal that he rejects her and starts looking for a new wife. Virgins from all over the country are collected and tried out one by one by

the king. The Jewish Esther comes forward as a candidate but hides her origins. In the end, the king chooses her over all other women and makes her queen. Later, Esther prevents the king, instigated by Haman, from having all the Jews killed. Thanks to Esther's marriage, the Jews escape their fate in the nick of time and in turn kill about 75,000 of their enemies. Female heroism, sex, intrigue and murder are typical ingredients of a biblical story with questionable morals.

Proverbs 7:21-23 describes how a woman seduces a man with her flattery and drags him along. He follows her like an ox to the slaughter and like a fool to his punishment. In the end, he is destroyed by his own desires, just like a bird that unwittingly plunges into a trap, in other words: men are helpless in the grip of biblical women.

Genesis 38 describes that when one of Judah's sons died without having fathered children with his wife Tamar, Judah instructed his other son Onan to impregnate Tamar. So, her brother-in-law Onan had sex with Tamar with the intention of fathering a child with her, but he withdrew during the act before ejaculating (coitus interruptus). Determined to continue the family tree, Tamar disguised herself as a prostitute and seduced the ignorant Judah (her father-in-law) to then become pregnant with twins.

In Deuteronomy 25:11 it says that if men fight with each other and the wife of one of them intervenes to save her husband by taking the hand of the one who hits him and touching his genitals, her hand should be cut off and not spared her.

Isaiah 3:17 says that the Lord will make the head of the daughters of Zion scabby and reveal their shame. This is described as a punishment that God uses and in which the genitals are exposed.

Ezekiel 23:19 describes how the women remembered how they fornicated in the land of Egypt during their youth. They fell even more in love with their lovers than with their husbands. You can read how their lovers touched their breasts and how the women picked up the shameful deeds of their youth.

In Hosea 9:14, God asks to punish women by giving them a misbehaving womb and parched breasts. It is presented as a supplication in which fertility is affected as a form of punishment.

There are some passages in the Hebrew original text of the Bible in which the man is referred to as 'he who urinates against the wall'.

Nowadays this is usually translated as 'all that is male', but the King James Version of 1637 still translated it literally.

In order to promote the reproduction of the people of Israel, God gives permission to the people to spare the women and girls of the defeated hostile nations and to take them as their wives. With the exception of perhaps a single woman who is willing to sleep with the murderers of her parents, brothers and other relatives, these women are in fact degraded to sex slaves who can be raped and impregnated at will.

Deuteronomy 20:13-14 (NIV) states that, "The Lord your God will deliver the city to you, and you must kill with the sword everyone who is male. But you may take the women, children, cattle and all other possessions. You may take your share of the spoil of your enemies, and of what the Lord your God gives you."

In Judges 21:12 we read: they found four hundred young virgins among the inhabitants of Jabez in Gilead who had never slept with a man, and brought them to the camp in Shiloh, which was in the land of Canaan.

We draw a conclusion. It is God who judges the moral conduct of mankind, and in the case of the heroes of the Old Testament, He seems to have no problem with their reprehensible methods, and in many cases even cooperates or orders them.

Polygamy

There is also a lot to read about polygamy in the Bible. It is noteworthy that prominent characters were repeatedly involved in polygamy, in which men had multiple wives as wives. Intriguingly, this practice is nowhere explicitly condemned, not even in the New Testament.

A striking example of this is found in Genesis 4:19, where Lamech is mentioned as having two wives, Ada and Zilla.

A similar case occurs in Genesis 28:9, where Esau takes Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebayoth, in addition to his other wives.

The pattern of polygamy continues in Genesis 30:3, where Rachel gives her handmaid Bilhah to Jacob to have children with. Remarkably, Leah follows the same example and offers her handmaid Zilpah to Jacob as a wife, resulting in a few children.

A further illustration of polygamy is found in Genesis 36:2 where Esau chose his wives from among the daughters of Canaan, including Ada and Aholibama.

The story of Moses adds an interesting twist: although he agreed to live with the Midianite priest Jethro (Genesis 25:2), and he subsequently married Jethro's daughter Zipporah and had two sons, Gershom and Eliezer (Exodus 2:21), his (second?) marriage to a Cushite (non-Israelite) woman was criticized by his sister and brother Miriam and Aaron (Numbers 12:1).

In Judges 8:30, it is mentioned that Gideon fathered seventy sons by different women, indicating that polygamy was widespread.

In 1 Samuel 1:2, Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah, with Peninnah having children and Hannah not.

David, a key figure in the Bible, added Ahinoam of Jezreel to his list of wives, as described in 1 Samuel 25:43, in addition to the others he already had. In 2 Samuel 3:7, the figure of Rizpah appears as a concubine of King Saul. Later, in 2 Samuel 5:13, David enlarges his family by adding more concubines and women from Jerusalem after leaving Hebron. This results in a significant number of sons and daughters for David.

Upon his return to Jerusalem, as described in 2 Samuel 20:3, David takes his ten concubines that he had left behind to guard his house, and places them in a kind of guarded facility.

In 1 Kings 11:3, King Solomon is mentioned as having an impressive number of partners: 700 queens and 300 concubines. However, the story suggests that this multitude of relationships ultimately diverted his attention and devotion to God.

When Jehoiachin, his mother, and his courtiers were captured and taken to Babylon (2 Kings 14:15), it illustrates the complexity and challenges of royal courts.

In 1 Chronicles 2:46, we get a glimpse of Caleb, who had a concubine named Ephah. This concubine bore him Haran, Moza and Gazez as descendants.

King Rehoboam, as described in 2 Chronicles 11:21, had a remarkably large number of wives —eighteen wives and sixty concubines. Among his many children, his affection was particularly directed toward Maacha, the daughter of Absalom, resulting in an extensive offspring of twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.

In 2 Chronicles 13:21, we see King Abijah with fourteen wives, resulting in a large family of twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters.

Priest Jehoiada, as indicated in 2 Chronicles 24:2, took two wives and had both sons and daughters with them. The book of Esther, specifically Esther 2:14, describes the young women who were brought to the king's palace. These women were supervised by the chamberlain Saasgaz, responsible for the king's concubines. Their access to the king was strictly regulated and only possible if he specifically summoned them. Probably for a 'cozy' get-together.

Abuse of women and children

In the bible there is a touching scene where Jesus says, "Let the children come to me," but this passage does not represent the general attitude toward children in the bible. Although the Bible does speak of honoring father and mother, it is nowhere mentioned that parents are obligated to treat their children well. Children are more likely to be regarded as property and are at the mercy of their parents, just as humans are at the mercy of God. Once God begins to punish, children cannot count on His grace either. In several Bible verses, it is described how God orders the extermination of entire nations, even including children and infants.

In 1 Samuel 15:3, God commands that everything from Amalek be destroyed, including men, women, children, infants, oxen, sheep, camels, and donkeys.

Isaiah 13:16 speaks of crushing children in front of their parents, looting homes, and raping women.

Jeremiah 13:14 says that God will mercilessly destroy both fathers and children.

Ezekiel 9:5-6 describes how God commands to kill the elderly, the young, the virgins, children and women without mercy.

Numbers 31:17 commands to kill all male children, as well as all women who have had sexual intercourse with a man. However, the girls of the female sex who have not had sexual intercourse are allowed to survive and be assigned to the Israelites. This order raises questions about the morality and justice of taking lives, particularly of innocent children, and about the idea of ownership and treatment of women in this context. This passage suggests that crushing children can even be considered a positive act.

In Deuteronomy 20:16-17 it is commanded that no living creature should live in the cities of other nations.

Joshua 7:24 tells how Joshua and the people of Israel stoned, burned, and threw stones over Achan and his family as punishment for his actions.

Exodus 12:29 describes how God struck all the firstborn in Egypt; from the firstborn of Pharaoh to the firstborn of the captives, including the firstborn cattle.

These Bible verses show that children are not always treated with care and grace.

It is apparently important for loving parents to discipline their children with physical correction at an early age.

In the book of Proverbs 13:24, it is written that the one who withholds his rod hates his son. Those who love their son seek early discipline for them.

Later in Proverbs 23:13-14, it is said that parents should not avoid their child's discipline. If they hit the child with a rod, it will not die. On the contrary, through the physical correction, the child's soul will be saved from hell.

Proverbs 29:15 states that the rod and correction bring wisdom to the children. A child who is left to himself brings shame on his mother.

These verses emphasize the importance of physical discipline as a form of education, with the goal of correcting, teaching, and ultimately teaching wisdom to the child.

Satan in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, Satan has a limited role and does not even appear at all in the first nine books of the Bible. This also applies to the story of the fall, in which there is only a talking serpent and there are no indications that Satan is involved.

In Genesis 3 verse 15 the serpent is introduced as an animal created by God (which many people have a kind of natural general aversion to). The story with the serpent is at the basis of the understanding of the Fall, in which Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command. It also serves as a symbolic story that explains the origin of evil and the struggle between the human race and the forces of seduction and deception. So... there is no question of a Satan or devil, nor of a Son of God who should defeat Satan or devil. In fact, the Old Testament does not even mention a Son of God who must be sacrificed to forgive the sins of mankind.

Satan is often seen as an adversary of God, someone who is out with his army of demons to lead mankind to eternal damnation. In the Old Testament, the term Satan is nowhere used to describe an independent entity that opposes God, with only one exception in the book of Zechariah. Instead, Satan or devil is seen in the Old Testament as acting at the behest of God or with His permission. There is no question of reproof or condemnation of Satan by God (except as stated in the aforementioned verse in Zechariah).

What or who is this Satan then? The word Satan is derived from the Hebrew word "Shtn," which is used in the Old Testament to refer to a challenger, adversary, or enemy. So, it is not a name of a specific person. This challenger, opponent or enemy can be both a human and an angel.

The word "Shtn" appears in 24 verses of the Old Testament, 11 of which are found in the book of Job.

In that book, Satan appears during a heavenly meeting, where the

children of God come together. God speaks to Satan and asks where he comes from. Satan replies that he was wandering around on earth. God then points to Job, a righteous and God-fearing man, and praises his sincerity and aversion to evil. Satan challenges God and states that Job only fears God because he has received wealth and blessings. He suggests that if God would take everything away from Job, Job would no longer bless Him.

God then gives Satan permission to take everything away from Job, except Job himself. Satan then leaves the face of the Lord. On another day, when the children of God gather before the Lord again, Satan appears again. God again points to the sincerity and godliness of Job, noting that Job is still faithful, despite all that Satan has taken from Job. Satan goes a step further and proposes that Job should also lose his health and only save his life. God again allows Satan to test Job but commands him not to kill Job. Then Satan leaves the face of the Lord and strikes Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to his skull.

These passages in the book of Job illustrate Satan's role as a challenger, one who brings doubt and adversity into the lives of righteous people. However, Satan always acts with God's permission and also experiences limitations of his power through God, as we see in his limited influence on Job's health and life.

Satan is also mentioned in other books of the Old Testament.

In 1 Chronicles 21:1 it says that Satan "rose up against Israel and set David to number the people."

Psalms 109:6 speaks of appointing a wicked person over someone, while Satan is at his right hand.

Zechariah 3:1-2 describes how the high priest Joshua stands before the angel of the Lord, while Satan stands at his right hand to thwart (resist) him. But the Lord rebukes Satan and tells him to keep his mouth shut.

Here, God is the sovereign authority that governs Satan.

Satan in the New Testament

In the New Testament, Satan is also referred to as 'the devil'. In the Greek original text the terms 'satana' and 'diabolos' are used respectively. The word 'diabolos' literally means slanderer or suspect and refers to someone who sows confusion and deception.

Here are some passages in which Satan and the devil refer to the same person.

In Matthew 4:8-11, Satan takes Jesus to a high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world. He promises to give Jesus these kingdoms if He would worship him. Jesus rejects Satan and says that one should worship only the Lord God. Then Satan leaves Him, after which angels come to Him and serve Him.

Also in Luke 4:5-8, Satan takes Jesus to a high mountain and shows Him all the kingdoms of the world in an instant. Satan claims that he possesses the power and glory of these kingdoms and states that he can give them to Jesus if Jesus worships him. Jesus rejects Satan and says that only the Lord God should be worshipped and served.

Mark 1:12-13 records that the Spirit immediately drove Jesus into the wilderness, where He was tempted by Satan for forty days. He stayed with the wild beasts, while the angels served Him.

In Luke 22:3-4, Satan sails into Judas, who is also called Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples. Judas leaves and discusses with the chief priests and leaders how he can hand Jesus over to them. In John 13:2-27, after the Lord's Supper, Satan Judas, who is also called Iscariot, the son of Simon, has inspired him in his heart to betray Jesus. Jesus reveals this to the disciples and says: "I give the bite to Judas", after which Satan sails into Judas. Jesus then tells Judas to do what he intends to do quickly.

James 4:7 calls you to resist Satan so that he will flee from you.

In Revelation 2:10 it is said that believers should not be afraid of the things they will suffer. Satan will throw some of them into prison to try them, which will take ten days, but they must remain faithful until death. They receive the crown of life as a reward.

In various translations, the word Satan is used in places where it should have said 'evil spirit'. In the Greek original text, the word 'daimonion' or one of the declensions is used for this, which refers to a possession by a demon in these persons.

In the following texts, 'the devil' does NOT refer to the same person as Satan. According to the Old Testament, Satan is also not the one who tempts Adam and Eve in paradise. (2x) The role of Satan in the Old Testament is limited and he is subordinate to God. And, as said before: nowhere in the Old Testament is there any mention of a Son of God who would have to defeat Satan.

Matthew 4:24: "His rumor was in all Syria; and they brought the people with various diseases and pains, and possessed of the devil, with the sick of the moon, and came to him, and he healed them."

Matthew 8:16 says, "And when it was late, they brought many to him, possessed by the devil. He cast out the evil spirits and He healed all."

Matthew 8:28: "And when he came to the other side in the land of the Gergeses, two came out of the graves possessed by the devil. They were very cruel, no one could go that way anymore."

Matthew 9:32-33: "They brought to him a man who was dumb and possessed of the devil. And when the devil was cast out, the dumb man spoke."

Matthew 12:22: "Then was brought to him one possessed by the devil, who was blind and dumb; and He healed him, so that he saw and spoke."

Mark 1:32: "When the sun went down, they brought to Him all those who were evil and possessed of the devil."

Luke 9:38-42: "A man of the crowd cried out, 'Master, I pray you, do look at my son; for he is an only begotten to me. And behold, a spirit takes him. He calls and he tears him, so that he foams. Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and gave him back his father.'"

Matthew 8:3: "And the devils prayed him, saying, 'If you cast us out, suffer us to sail into that herd of swine.'"

Mark 1:34: "He healed many who were afflicted with sickness; and cast out many devils."

Mark 6:13: "They cast out many devils, anointed many sick people with oil, and made them well."

Luke 8:2: "And some women who were healed of evil spirits and diseases, even Mary named Magdalene, from whom seven devils went out."

Luke 8:30: “And Jesus asks him, ‘What is your name?’ And he said: ‘Legio’. For many devils had entered into him.”

Luke 9:1: “He called his twelve disciples together and gave them strength and power over all the devils, and to heal diseases.”

James 2:19: “You believe that God is one God; you do well. The devils believe it too, and they tremble.”

Conclusion

- » According to the Old Testament, Satan is NOT the one
- » who tempts Adam and Eve in paradise.
- » Satan’s role in the Old Testament is very limited and he
- » is subordinate to God.
- » Nowhere in the Old Testament is there any mention of a son
- » of God who is supposed to defeat Satan.

David

David has the dubious honor of being the biggest bastard in the Bible. In 2 Samuel 12:11 it says that God will bring calamity upon a man as a punishment, taking his wives and raping them in front of his eyes. A specific example of God's punishment emerges in the story in which David takes a census. As a result, God punishes the entire nation with the plague, which kills as many as 70,000 men. After David realizes what he has done, he feels deep regret and acknowledges his great sin. These events inevitably raise the question of how righteous God really is. It is only understandable that the texts raise doubts in some people's minds about God's actions and His moral character.

In 2 Samuel 12:29-30 it says: Then David gathered all his troops and went to Rabbah. He besieged the city and captured it. He took the golden crown set with precious stones of their king from his head and put it on his own head and plundered the city.

Another Bible story describes how God became angry with Israel, which led to His instruction to David to take a census.

According to the biblical text in 2 Samuel 24:1, it is mentioned that the Lord's wrath was kindled against Israel and that He stirred David up against them, so that he wanted to number the people of Israel.

In 1 Chronicles 21:1, the same event is described, and it is stated that Satan rose against Israel and prompted David to take a census of the people.

This may seem contradictory, because it seems as if God is urging David to perform an action after which He would punish the people.

In 2 Samuel 24:1 it is mentioned that the wrath of the Lord continued to grow against Israel.

It is difficult to understand that God's motives and intentions are complex and often difficult to fathom.

In this particular case, we can assume that God used the census as a way to test David's obedience and trust. By counting the people, God may have wanted to show David whether he trusted in his own power and numbers, rather than in the Lord. However, it is critical to recognize

that David's act of conducting the census was ultimately considered a sin, as it stemmed from pride and reliance on human strength rather than God. As a result, there was a punishment for the people.

Of course, there are many more stories about David. For example, he sees a woman bathing on the roof of a house. He finds her very attractive and inquires, about her identity. He learns that she is Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, a Hittite."

In 2 Samuel 11:14-15, David "the bastard" writes a letter to Joab, the commander, instructing him to put Uriah at the front of the battle and then to retreat so that Uriah is killed. In 2 Samuel 11:26-27 we hear that Bathsheba mourns the death of her husband Uriah. As soon as her mourning period is over, David sends his messengers to bring Bathsheba to his house. David 'the sneaky' comforts Bathsheba and after he has slept with her, she becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son. She calls him Solomon.

In 2 Samuel 12:14, the prophet Nathan is described speaking to King David. Nathan predicts that the child born of David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba will die as a result of David's actions. The child does indeed get sick and dies later.

In this verse, God speaks of the consequences of David's actions. He proclaims that He will bring evil from David's own house. As a form of righteous punishment, God says that David's wives will be taken away by his immediate family. "You did everything in secret, but I will do this to you openly, in the sight of all Israel."

The prophet Nathan was sent by the Lord to David with a story that appealed to the imagination. He told David: "In a city there lived two men. One man was extremely rich and owned large herds of cattle and sheep. The other man, on the other hand, was very poor and had only been able to buy one lamb. This lamb grew up with him and his children. It shared in their meals and drank from the same cup as the poor man. The lamb even slept on the poor man's lap and was cherished like a little daughter. One day, the rich man was visited by a traveler. Instead of slaughtering a lamb or ox from his own flock to feed the guest, the rich man decided to take the poor man's lamb, roast it, and offer it to his guest." When David, the hypocrite, heard this, he became furious. He reacted fiercely, saying, "I swear by the living God that anyone who does such a thing should be put to death! Moreover, he must pay the poor man back four lambs for the lamb he stole, simply because he

has shown no mercy.” At that moment, Nathan turned to David and said, “You are that rich man!”

God orders the prophet Samuel to anoint Saul as king, making him the first king of the Israelites. In the book of 1 Samuel the life of King Saul is described, and it soon becomes clear that he is not a good king. Saul often wages war against the enemies of the Israelites, but he does not do what God tells him to do. He has to kill all the Amalekites, but he leaves their king alive (1 Samuel 15:23).

There is another story about King Saul, in which it is told that he was seriously injured during a battle with the Philistines. He asks his armor-bearer, an Amalekite, to put him out of his misery so that the enemy does not take him wounded and already captured. In 1 Samuel 31:1-10 it says that Saul committed suicide, but we will continue this story: his armor-bearer kills Saul and then brings the news to David. In response, David calls one of his men and orders him to beat the armor-bearer. The weapon bearer is then beaten so hard that he dies. Saul is succeeded by his son Ishbosheth, except in the tribe of Judah, where David is proclaimed king, he is the second king of Israel. A battle between Saul's family and David follows for years, which is won by David.

We have just seen an aspect of David's behavior that can be seen as controversial and problematic. Just before his own death, David takes steps to ensure that a person does not go unpunished for his actions.

In 1 Kings 2:6, David instructs his son Solomon and tells him to act according to his own wisdom to ensure that one does not meet a peaceful end and does not enjoy impunity. In 1 Kings 15:5 it is mentioned that David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and that he did not turn away from what God commanded him to do, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite. This passage acknowledges that David acted contrary to God's will in this particular matter.

In Acts 13:22, David is described as a man after God's own heart, one who was able to fulfill the will of God.

Which makes everything even more unclear. In the bible, Goliath is described as being killed by David, who hurled a stone and struck him in the forehead, causing him to fall and die. This story is found in 1 Samuel 17.

However, there is a passage in 2 Samuel 21:19 that mentions that Elhanan, the son of Jaare-oregim, defeated Beth-halachmi, who was with

Goliath, the Gethite. This passage seems to indicate that another killed Goliath. You would think that there must have been some discussion about this contradiction among the translators of the Bible.

However, more recent translations, such as the New Bible Translation, describe the event in a more direct way. They simply mention that Elhanan killed Goliath.

So... the conniving David, as we have read, robbed, tortured and murdered and he does not even spare women and children. That makes you think, because David is an important person in Judaism. According to the Christian gospels Matthew and Luke (New Testament), he was even, through Joseph, an ancestor of Jesus. In Islam, by the way, he is called Dawud and is considered a prophet and the king of a nation. A hero to some because of his religious and political role, but his acts of violence and immorality cannot be ignored.

Fate

In Genesis, chapters 18 and 19, it says that Abraham receives three angels who appear at his tent in the form of men. These angels tell Abraham that his wife Sarah will become pregnant in old age and give birth to a son. After the visit to Abraham, two of the angels continue to Sodom, while the third stays with Abraham.

Lot, Abraham's nephew, was living in Sodom at the time. At the city gate, Lot sees the two angels and recognizes them as special guests. He invites them to stay in his house. Meanwhile, men from the city knock on Lot's door and demand that he brings his two guests outside so that they can be abused. Lot tries to calm down his fellow townspeople and even offers his daughters instead of the two angels. But the angels protect Lot and tell him great news. God is planning to destroy Sodom because of the sins, and they beg Lot to warn his family and leave.

Meanwhile, Abraham is still negotiating with God about whether or not to destroy the city of Sodom. They agree on this: if God finds forty-five heterosexuals in the city, He will not destroy Sodom. Abraham negotiates further and they arrive at ten. But there are no such things either. In the middle of the night, Lot, his wife and his two daughters are led out of the city by the angels. They are warned not to look back while Sodom is being destroyed. Lot's wife, however, cannot contain her curiosity and looks back. She turns into a pillar of salt. Lot and his daughters flee to a small town called Zoar. Afraid of not being safe there, they move on and settle in a cave in the mountains. Lot's daughters think that there are no more men to marry them and devise a plan to get their father drunk and sleep with him, in order to have offspring.

The fact that the Bible does not condemn this behavior is illustrated by the following text (2 Peter 2:7-8) in which Lot is described as a righteous man. This act certainly raises questions about the norms and values presented in this story.

God's ways are unfathomable, but you can expect some logic. In this story, the writer decides that God would consider homosexuality a

mortal sin. The writer never knew what he had done with this story in the centuries after his writing. This is certainly also true of the authors of the Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf (7:80-84) and Surah Hud (11:77-83).

Lies even from patriarch Abraham and Isaac

Christianity, Islam and the Jewish faith all state that Abraham is their patriarch. When Canaan was struck by a severe famine, Abraham decided to go to Egypt. He planned to stay there as long as the famine in Canaan continued. As he approached the border of Egypt, Abraham said to his wife Sarai: "You are an exceedingly beautiful woman. If the Egyptians see you, they will want to kill me so that they can marry you. Therefore, please say that you are my sister, so that they treat me with respect and let me live." When Abraham entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw how beautiful Sarai was, and they told Pharaoh about it. As a result, the Pharaoh had Sarai taken to his palace. The Pharaoh treated Abraham well because of his desire to marry Sarai. He even gave Abraham sheep, cows, donkeys, slaves, slave girls, donkeys, and camels as a sign of his favor. However, that's where the Lord came in, and He punished the Pharaoh, and everyone present in his palace with various illnesses. Then Pharaoh called Abraham to him – after having had a dream – and said: "Why did you do this to me? Why didn't you tell me she's your wife? Why did you claim she's your sister? I was almost married to her! Here is your wife, take her and disappear!" Pharaoh ordered his men to expel Abraham, along with his wife and all his possessions, from the country.

In Genesis 20, Abraham repeats the same trick with Abimelech, the king of Gerar. Here too, God helps the impostors by making a dream appear in which He explains what is really going on. Once again, Abraham and Sarah are showered with gifts. To top it all off, Abraham heals Abimelech's barren wives so that they can have children again.

Isaac, the son of Abraham, follows his father's example in Genesis 26. During a famine, he pretends that his wife Rebecca is his sister. This time, however, the deception is not so flawless. One day, King Abimelech catches Isaac being intimate with Rebecca, after which Isaac is forced to confess the truth. Despite the outrage over the deception, Abimelech decides to put Isaac under his protection, perhaps because of the awe he has for Isaac's father Abraham.

God also seems to be pleased with Isaac, given the blessings of prosperous harvests, cattle and many children that Isaac receives. Eventually, Isaac becomes so powerful and big that Abimelech has to ask him to leave.

The book of Genesis 22:2 describes how God tells Abraham to take his only son, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah to offer him as a burnt offering, on a mountain that God will point out to him. Abraham obeys this terrible command and when the moment comes, he reaches for the knife to kill his son.

God now promises Abraham a land that is already inhabited by other nations and says: "I give this land to your descendants, from the river of Egypt to that great river, the river Frath." Thus, despite his own commandment "Thou shalt not steal," God promises all the possessions of the inhabitants of the promised land to the descendants of Abraham. "You will receive from me great and good cities that you did not build yourselves. You will move into houses that are full of all the good things that you have not filled, and you will drink from wells that you have not carved yourselves. You will also enjoy vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant, but from which you will eat and be filled." You would think that it would be within God's possibilities to give Abraham a large piece of uninhabited desert, and to make it miraculously fertile so that another people would not be the victims. He also did not have to let the people walk around in the Sinai for forty years, by simply leading the people to a less populated area.

God's choice has caused constant unrest in the area promised to Abraham by Our Lord, leading to many armed conflicts.

Historically, the book of Genesis is considered a part of the Hebrew Bible; It relates to the early history of the Jewish people. Genesis is attributed to various authors and contains stories and traditions dating back to a period before the creation of ancient Israel. The verse mentioned in Genesis 15:13 refers to a prophecy given to Abraham, in which God foretells the future circumstances of his descendants. The specific aspect of four hundred years of slavery in Egypt is mentioned here. This prophecy is later fulfilled in the Bible in the book of Exodus, where the story is told of the Israelites who became slaves in Egypt.

Paul

Thirteen letters mention the apostle Paul, ‘the inventor of Christianity’, as the sender. In addition to the letters attributed to him, Paul is also considered the author of the book of Acts in the New Testament. This book describes the spread of Christianity after the resurrection of Jesus and Paul’s role as a “great apostle” and missionary.

Paul was born around the year 5 AD as Saul, in the city of Tarsus in present-day Turkey. He was of Jewish descent and grew up in a strictly religious environment. In his younger years, Saul had been a fierce persecutor of the early Christian community. He believed that Christianity was a threat to Judaism and actively worked to arrest Christians and bring them to justice. Saul was even present at the execution of the Christian martyr Stephen. According to the New Testament, however, a dramatic change took place in Saul’s life. On his way to Damascus, where he planned to capture Christians, he was suddenly surrounded by a bright light from heaven. He fell to the ground and heard a voice asking, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” Saul asked who was speaking, and the voice answered, “I am Jesus, whom you persecute.”

Saul’s fellow travelers also experienced an observation. According to Acts 9:7, they were surprised because they heard a voice but saw no one. This indicates that they heard the words that were spoken, but that they could not perceive the source of the voice. On the other hand, Acts, 22:9 mentions that Paul’s companions did see the light and became very fearful because of it, but they did not hear the voice of the one who spoke to Paul. This suggests that they perceived the visual manifestation but were unable to hear the words that were spoken. Thus, these two accounts describe a situation in which Paul’s fellow travelers had different sensory experiences. That encounter with Jesus completely changed Saul’s life.

He became temporarily blind and was led to Damascus, where he fasted and prayed for three days. Then he healed. A disciple named Ananias baptized him, and he received the Holy Ghost.

From that moment on, Saul, now called the Apostle Paul, began

to dedicate his life to spreading Christianity. He played a significant role in the early development of Christianity and indeed influenced and changed the faith in a variety of ways. Paul was known for his commitment to making Christianity accessible to non-Jews, which was a remarkable shift at the time. He emphasized that faith in Jesus Christ was more important than observing Jewish laws. This opened the way for non-Jews to become Christians without having to convert to Judaism. He has also developed important theological concepts and doctrines. His letters in the New Testament deal with themes such as justification by faith, grace, redemption, and the role of the Holy Spirit. These concepts have profoundly influenced the understanding of the Christian faith.

Missionary work and church planting: Paul's travels through the Roman Empire resulted in the establishment of numerous Christian communities. He sent letters to these communities to provide theological education, provide ethical guidelines, and address practical issues.

Writing letters

Much of the New Testament consists of letters from Paul to various communities and individuals. These letters contain his theological insights, practical advice, and encouragement.

Although Paul and the other apostles sometimes disagreed, together they shaped early Christianity. The Council of Jerusalem, described in Acts 15, was an important moment when the apostles came together to decide important theological and practical questions.

Overall, Paul's work and his epistles expanded and shaped Christianity as we know it today. In the book of Acts, chapter 26, verse 23, it is mentioned that Jesus was the first to rise from the dead. Here we see the apostle Paul giving a speech to King Agrippa and testifying to the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Paul, "the villain," explains that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and be the first to rise from the dead to bring light to the Jewish people as well as to the Gentiles. With these words, Paul emphasizes the unique position of Jesus, who has opened the way to eternal life for all who believe in Him.

1 Corinthians 6:10: In this passage, the apostle Paul speaks to the Corinthians and mentions various sinful behaviors, including fornication. He says: "Do not be mistaken! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, scoundrels, men having intercourse with men, thieves, greedy, drunkards, slanderers and robbers shall have no part in the kingdom of God." Here Paul seems to point to the need for a holy and righteous life in accordance with God's will.

Apostle Paul also gives a speech to King Agrippa in which he testifies of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Paul explains that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and be the first to rise from the dead to bring light to both the Jewish people and the Gentiles. With these words, Paul emphasizes the unique position of Jesus, who has opened the way to eternal life for all who believe in Him. There are, however, some differences between Jesus' emphasis on baptism in Matthew 28:19 and Paul's mention in 1 Corinthians 1:17.

Matthew 28:19 describes Jesus' command to His disciples to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This can be seen as an important aspect of spreading the gospel and having disciples.

On the other hand, 1 Corinthians 1:17 emphasizes that Paul focused not so much on baptizing but more on preaching the gospel, in order to prevent the crucifixion of Christ from losing its power. A Christian today is a follower of Paul, not of Jesus. Jesus also instructed his followers to do and obey all the teachings of the Pharisees. He proclaimed the lawless one and rebuked hypocrisy (Matthew 5:17; 7:23).

In today's society, a Christian is often seen primarily as a follower of Paul rather than Jesus. Although Jesus gave his followers clear instructions to uphold and follow the teachings of the Pharisees, the emphasis often seems to be on Paul's teachings.

Christianity today has little to do with the real teachings of Jesus. Rather, it is the product of the faith of more recent non-Jewish converts of disciples of Jesus and the preaching of Paul of Tarsus. Although this view is not originally Jewish, it became fashionable among Jews, partly because the Jew Jesus is exonerated from many statements and actions that are described in the New Testament and would be 'sins' according to Judaism.

Elisa

This story (Bible book 2 Kings 2:19-22) is about the prophet Elisha, who visits the city of Jericho. The people in Jericho complain to Elisha that the water from the well is bad and that it makes the soil barren. Then Elisha asks them to fill a clean bowl with salt. He throws the salt into the well and tells the people that this will make the well healthy again. Then a miracle happens: the water becomes pure and drinkable again. He leaves Jericho and sets off for Bethel. Coming close to the city, a group of little boys suddenly appears. These guys are naughty and start teasing the guy. They shout: "Baldhead, go away! Baldhead, go away!" Elisha hears the insults and, clearly stepping on his toes, looks back. He feels pain and anger rising deep in his heart. In his anger, he pronounces a curse on the boys and calls on the name of the Lord. At that moment, something unexpected and shocking happens. Two bears emerge from the nearby forest. They attack the group of boys and tear apart no less than 42 of them. And, as if nothing had happened, Elisha, an accomplice to murder, goes from there to Mount Carmel and then continues his journey to Samaria.

In 2 Kings 2:14 we find one of the most famous miracles of "the illusionist": his ability to split the Jordan River. One day, after the prophet Elijah ascended to heaven, Elisha took his cloak and struck the water with it. This caused the river to separate, allowing Elisha to cross dry-footed.

2 Kings 5:1-14 tells the story of the healing of Naaman by 'doctor' Elisha. Naaman, an important Syrian army commander, suffered from leprosy. On the advice of an Israeli maid, he sought help from Elisha. She instructed him to immerse himself seven times in the Jordan, and Naaman was indeed completely cured of his leprosy.

2 Kings 4:42-44 also states that Elisha was able to multiply food. In a miraculous story, a man collects only twenty barley loaves to give to a hundred men. Elisha blessed the food, and it multiplied, so that there was enough for everyone.

Reading the next story, my hair stood on end. It concerns a passage in 2 Kings 4:32-37 that is about raising a dead boy. A widow begged Elisha for help after her son died suddenly. When Elisha entered the house, he saw that the boy was dead and lying on his bed. He closed the door behind him and prayed to the Lord. Then he climbed on top of the child, lay down with his mouth on the child's mouth, his eyes on the child's eyes, and his hands on the child's hands. And the child's body became warm. Then Elisha walked around the house, climbed on the child again and spread herself over the body. It makes you think... But at that moment, the child sneezed seven times and opened its eyes.

And we continue with special stories.

In 2 Kings 4:38-41 King Jehoash of Israel was in power, Elisha was already a very old prophet at that time. Elisha was ill, and on his deathbed, but he wanted to deliver one last message to the king. Elisha told Jehoash to take a bow and some arrows and point them to the east. Then Elisha told Jehoash to strike the arrows five times on the ground.

Jehoash did this, but he only hit the arrows three times on the ground. Elisha, 'the grumpy one', became angry with Jehoash and said that he should have hit the arrows five or six times on the ground. Elisha explained that this act symbolized Israel's victory over Syria. After Elisha has done his last trick, he dies and is buried. When someone else later dies and is also buried, something miraculous happens. The body of the deceased ends up in Elisha's tomb. As soon as the cold body comes into contact with Elisha's bones, the dead man becomes alive again. What a miracle... And so believable too!

Isaac, Jacob and Esau Lies and deceit

In the world of the Bible, a firstborn had special privileges and rights. It was invaluable to be recognized as the oldest of the line of children, especially since that meant that you would also receive a double share of the inheritance.

In this story, a deceptive event takes place in which Jacob ‘the heel swindler’ deceives his older brother Esau in a devious way.

When Esau comes home from the hunt and is exhausted, he is hungry, and Jacob sees this as an opportunity to manipulate his brother. Jacob offers Esau a bowl of soup in exchange for his birthright. Esau, who at that time is mainly concerned with his immediate needs, agrees to this exchange. In doing so, he renounces the future privileges and responsibilities that come with his birthright.

Later, with the complicity of their mother Rebekah, Jacob also sets in motion a plan to obtain the blessing of his father Isaac, which actually belongs to Esau. Jacob dresses in Esau’s clothes and places the skin of a kid on his arms so that his skin looks more like that of his brother Esau. When Jacob then goes to his now old and blind father, he deliberately lies and claims to be Esau. Isaac is deceived by his youngest son and blesses Jacob, thinking he is Esau. Here we see another act of deception and deception, this time at the expense of the father.

The verse suggests that this choice is part of God’s sovereign will and is not based on any merit or action of the individuals. It emphasizes the idea that God’s election is not dependent on human works but rather comes from His own decision.

After Esau discovers that he has been deceived, he becomes furious, and Mother Rebekah advises Jacob to flee to escape Esau’s vengeance. Rebekah lies to her husband Isaac about the reason for Jacob’s departure. She claims that she does not want Jacob to marry a woman from the local population, as Esau has done. This is another act of deception, this time to disguise the real reasons for Jacob’s departure.

Jacob travels to Haran and finds shelter with Laban. He falls in love with Laban’s daughter Rachel and works for Laban for seven

years to marry her. However, Laban secretly swaps his daughters and gives Jacob Leah as his wife. This is a cruel act of deception and a punishment for Jacob, because he himself has previously deceived others. Jacob is forced to work for another seven years in order to eventually marry Rachel.

It is important to note that at that time, polygamy, having multiple wives, was allowed by God.

Despite all the deception and challenges Jacob has had to endure, God makes sure that he is well. God blesses Jacob and provides for his needs so that he lacks nothing. This blessing can be seen as an affirmation of Jacob's role in the fulfillment of God's promises to his forefathers. In the end, Jacob decides to return to his brother Esau. When he hears that Esau is coming at him with an army of four hundred men, Jacob is filled with fear. He divides his people, sheep, cattle and camels, into two groups, thinking that if Esau attacks one group, the other group can escape. Jacob sends gifts to Esau to appease him and even lies to his servants about the nature of the gifts he sends.

At one point, Jacob decides to stay alone, after which he struggles with a man who is later identified as an angel or God himself. The struggle lasts until dawn, and Jacob shows great determination by not giving up. Eventually, God touches and twists Jacob's hip. Despite the pain and injury, Jacob holds on to God and refuses to let go until he is blessed. Jacob's struggle with God is probably a metaphor for the spiritual struggle that many are experiencing.

Moses

Moses receives a call from God at the burning thorn bush. God instructs him to return to Egypt and plead for the release of the people of Israel. With the help of his brother Aaron, Moses goes to Pharaoh and asks for the freedom of his people. However, Pharaoh refuses again and again, and every time he refuses, God brings a plague upon Egypt. These include pests of blood, frogs, lice, gadflies, cattle deaths, ulcers, hail, locusts and darkness. In the end, God even announces that all the firstborn in Egypt will die, but that the Israelites will be spared if they would smear the blood of a lamb on their doorposts. This is the last plague, and Pharaoh finally gives in and lets the people of Israel go. The Israelites travel through the wilderness under the leadership of Moses. However, when Pharaoh regrets his decision, he sends his army after the Israelites to bring them back. The Israelites reach the Red Sea, but they seem to be hemmed in by the sea on one side and the Egyptian army on the other. According to the story, God miraculously splits the Red Sea, allowing the Israelites to cross safely. Then, when the Egyptian troops cross the sea, God allows the water to return, drowning Pharaoh's army.

Moses and the Exodus

In ancient Egypt, the Bible tells us, a remarkable event takes place: the exodus of a large crowd of Israelites who walk from slavery to freedom. According to tradition, there are as many as six hundred thousand people who join the Exodus. The journey begins in Egypt and takes the people to the Sinai desert, an unforgiving and inhospitable environment. You wonder how such a large crowd can survive in such an inhospitable area. The first great riddle, however, is how this crowd, with all their beasts of burden and possessions, can move on a daily basis. Imagine ten people walking side by side, each with their pack animals to carry their tents and belongings. Even with this formation, navigating the hills, rocks, and potholes of the Sinai is not possible.

In order for the crowd to set up tents in the evening, they must keep some distance from each other, perhaps only ten meters. This soon means that there are sixty thousand rows in a row that move over an enormous distance of six hundred kilometers. The story of the Exodus raises questions about the logistical challenges and practicalities of such a mass migration through a demanding environment. It also raises questions about the nature of religious beliefs and how these stories are interpreted by people around the world.

For some, the Exodus remains a powerful symbol of hope and liberation, while others see it as a story that can be questioned from a practical point of view. The story raises further questions about the logistical challenges of the Exodus and the possible distances that must be traveled by the large crowd of six hundred thousand people. To get going at all, people have to start in rows, with each queue taking ten seconds to start. This means that the last row can only start moving after more than 166 hours, or more than seven days. This means that most of the crowd has only covered a few meters after weeks. As time passes, the rows behind the first row must move successively to stay together.

The story points out that even with these modifications, the crowd would not have been able to cover the distances claimed in the biblical

story in forty years. In addition, the text emphasizes that no archaeological or historical evidence has been found for the Exodus, despite the fact that six hundred thousand people would have spent forty years in the Sinai desert. It argues that such a crowd would have left significant marks, but to date, no evidence has been found. Moreover, there is nothing to be found in the Egyptian annals. And that will not be found, because the Exodus never happened.

After a period of seventy years of intensive archaeological research, most Israeli archaeologists have come to remarkable conclusions: there is no concrete evidence that the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, they did not cross the desert, nor did they conquer the land of Israel. Moreover, there does not seem to have been a powerful empire led by kings David and Solomon. Also, the discovery of the one God by the Jews did not happen at Mount Sinai, but only later in history.

These findings, although accepted within the field of archaeologists, are met with resistance in the political and social context of Israel. The archaeological conclusions dovetail, however, with the views of critical biblical scholars, who suggest that David and Solomon ruled over small tribal areas, with the former operating in Hebron and the latter in Jerusalem. At the same time, a separate empire seems to have arisen in the hills of Samaria, as described in the stories about King Saul.

Atrocities at the behest of God

The claim in John 1:45 that Moses wrote about Jesus lacks any evidence. There is no evidence that Moses ever specifically referred to Jesus in his writings. The claim seems to stem from theological interpretations rather than from an accurate representation of Moses' texts. This issue highlights the complexity of dealing with ancient writings and raises questions about the credibility of such claims, in which theological considerations play a role. It also illustrates the challenges of interpretation in different historical and theological contexts.

In the books of Numbers 13:1-2, we read of a divine commission spoken directly to Moses. The instruction was clear: send men out to explore the promising land of Canaan. For this responsible task, Moses had to select a leader from each tribe, each charged with the role of 'superior'. It seems like a clear divine guideline to explore the country and explore the various possibilities.

However, in Deuteronomy 1:20-23 we get a different perspective on this event. Moses addressed the people and announced that they were approaching the mountainous region of the Amorites, a region that the Lord their God would give to them.

Another example is found in Numbers 21:34-35, where the Lord commands Moses to defeat the king of the Amorites, along with his people and country. This order results in killing every Amorite so that no one remains, and taking possession of the land.

In Numbers 25:17, Moses is instructed to act with hostility against the Midianites and to defeat them.

Numbers 31:7 mentions that the Israelites, in accordance with Moses' command from the Lord, fought against the Midianites and killed all male individuals.

Joshua 8:24 describes how the Israelites, after defeating and pursuing the inhabitants of Ai, killed everyone with the sharp sword until there was no one left. These passages raise questions about ethics and divine justification in the context of instructions of force.

Joshua 10:40 describes how Joshua conquered the entire land, including the mountains, the south, the plains, and the springs of water, along with all their kings. No one was spared; everything that breathed was banished, just as the Lord, the God of Israel, had commanded.

In Exodus 23:23, it is announced that God's angel will go ahead and lead the people to the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites, and Jebusites, for the purpose of destroying them.

Joshua 10:11 describes how, when the enemies fled from the people of Israel at Beth-horon, the Lord threw great hailstones out of heaven and killed the enemies as far as Azekah. Remarkably, more victims were caused by the hailstones than by the sword of the Israelites.

Joshua 11:14 records that the Israelites took all the spoils of these cities and all the cattle for themselves, but at the same time killed all the people with the sharp sword, until there was no one left breathing.

The deity in the Bible does not shy away from lending a hand in committing murders himself.

Ambiguities in New Testament documents

Acts attributes to Jesus this statement: "Blessed is it to give than to receive," but this statement is nowhere to be found in the New Testament. Luke claims that Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, but these details are also nowhere to be found in the Old Testament.

John also says that Jesus had to rise from the dead, but this information is also not found in the Old Testament. According to the Old Testament, there is no need for the Son of God to be hung on a cross in order to obtain forgiveness of sins. When a sinner repents and makes a guilt offering as a sign of it, God simply forgives his sins. Even the most serious sinners can be forgiven by God without special sacrifices, provided there is sincere repentance. This teaching, as stated in Christianity, applies to both men and women. "A priest will atone for the sinner's sin, and it will be forgiven."

Ezekiel 18 explicitly emphasizes that sins cannot be taken over or atoned for by another person. Everyone lives or dies on the basis of their own righteousness or sins.

It therefore seems that the righteous can live well without having to sacrifice a Son of God.

The phrase "the forgiveness of sins" (Latin: *remissionem peccatorum*) refers to one of the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed. This is an ancient Christian creed that dates back to the early Christian church. However, the exact author and the time of compilation are not fully known. This document of faith is one of the oldest Christian creeds and is often used in various Christian traditions. That makes you think: such an important document, and not an author?

In the Old Testament there is one place where you would expect Jesus to be mentioned as the savior of sinful man: Ezekiel 18. But remarkably enough, it remains quiet there.

God makes it very clear that sinners who repent will live, and it seems that there is no middleman or savior involved. In Isaiah, too, God emphasizes that sins are forgiven after a sincere conversion, and here too there is no mention of a martyrdom on a cross.

The end

In 1 Peter 4:7, we are told that the end of all things is near, while 1 John 2:18 speaks of the dawning of the last hour. The imagery at Luke 3:7 illustrates the seriousness of the situation: like an axe already at the roots of the trees, ready to cut down any fruitless tree and throw it into the fire.

In Revelation 1:1, we learn that God gave the revelation of Jesus Christ to show His servants what will soon happen.

This message was revealed to John by His angel.

Jesus emphasizes the urgent nature of this revelation in Revelation 3:11, saying, “Behold, I am coming quickly. Hold on to what you have, so that no one can take away your crown.”

Revelation 22:6 reaffirms the truthfulness and reliability of these words that were sent by the Lord, the God of the holy prophets, through His angel to inform His servants of impending events. Jesus told them a comparison: “Look at the fig tree and all the other trees. As soon as you see them sprouting, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see these things happening, you should know that the kingdom of God is near

I assure you: this generation will certainly not disappear until everything has happened.”

These words of Jesus also indicate that He would return during the lifetime of some of those present.

In Matthew 4:17, Jesus preaches, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

In Mark 1:15 the announcement sounded: “The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn near; repent and believe in the Gospel.” These words reveal Jesus’ belief that He would return even before His disciples had reached every city in Israel.

Matthew 10:23 confirms this with the words, “When they persecute you in one city, flee to the next, for I say to you, you will not finish visiting the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes.”

These texts testify to Jesus’ belief that His return would take place

within the generation of His contemporaries. Jesus repeats: "Behold, I am coming quickly. Happy is he who keeps the prophecies in this book." Peter sensed the urgency of these words and hoped to witness their fulfillment during his lifetime.

Revelation 22:12 reiterates that Jesus will come soon, with rewards for each according to his deeds.

Thessalonians 4:17 promises that those who are still alive, along with others, will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, to be with Him forever. Despite the apparent haste in Jesus' statements, we have not yet been able to witness His return, which invites us to reflect on the interpretation of His words. It is clear that Jesus is not referring to a period of about 2000 years, although some 'scribes' do everything they can to make us believe that.

The killing of children and pregnant women also appears in biblical stories. Numbers 31:17 commands the extermination of all male children and women who have had sexual intercourse with men, an order that testifies to ruthless cruelty.

Psalms even speak of a strange bliss for the one who grabs babies and crushes them against rocks. A shocking picture of barbarism.

Isaiah 13:18 foretells merciless attacks on young men with arrows, without compassion for pregnant women and unborn children, outlining a terrifying vision.

Kings 15:16 describes King Menahem mercilessly slaughtering Tifsah and its inhabitants for not opening the city to him, with even pregnant women finding no mercy and being chopped to pieces.

These biblical passages raise questions about the moral complexity of the texts and their impact on ethical considerations. These examples highlight that the Bible not only contains a message of love and tolerance but is also a source of stories and verses imbued with atrocities and gory violence.

2 Kings 8:12 depicts the heartbreaking scene in which the prophet Elisha weeps because he is aware of the calamity that Hazael, the future King, will do. Elisha prophesies that Hazael will destroy the cities of Israel, ruthlessly kill young men with the sword, crush young children mercilessly, and viciously cut open pregnant women.

Isaiah 13:16 foretells a grim future in which children will be crushed in front of their parents, homes will be looted, and women will be victims

of rape. Jeremiah 13:15 declares that the Lord will show no mercy or spare in destroying people, from fathers to children, and will mercilessly smash them to pieces. Ezekiel 9:6 calls for the killing of the elderly, the young, virgins, children and women, with the aim of total destruction.

These shocking passages reveal violent stories in the Bible that explicitly mention the killing of children and pregnant women. The New Testament also brings moments of threat of eternal torture, even by Jesus himself.

Luke 19:27 speaks of the enemies of Jesus who did not want him to be King over them. He gives the order to bring them here and kill them in front of his eyes.

Matthew 3:10 uses pictorial language about the axe that is already at the root of the trees, cutting down any tree that does not bear good fruit and throwing it into the fire. The one with the *wan*⁴ in his hand will clean the threshing floor and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire. These passages raise questions about the theological interpretation and ethical considerations regarding violence and threats in the Bible.

In Matthew 13:30, the gathering of weeds and wheat is compared to the process of harvesting. The instruction is to first gather and bundle the weeds for burning, then bring the wheat safely to the barn.

Matthew 13:42 speaks of throwing people into a fiery furnace, where wailing and gnashing of teeth will take place.

Jesus tells a parable in Matthew 22:13 in which the king instructs his servants to bind a man, take him away and throw him into utter darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Revelation 2:18 introduces the Son of God, whose eyes are fiery flames and whose feet are shining brass. He announces that He will kill the woman's children and that all the churches will know that He is the one who searches hearts and kidneys. Every person will be rewarded according to his deeds.

These passages in the New Testament contain repeated threats of violent punishment and eternal torture, even from the mouth of Jesus himself. Despite God's original satisfaction with mankind, which was created in His image, later events show that He chose to drown the entire human population, with the exception of Noah's family.

⁴ The *wan* refers to an agricultural tool that was used to separate the chaff from the grain.

Genesis 7:23 records that all life on earth, including humans, animals, livestock, creeping creatures, and birds, was destroyed. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark were spared.

It seems that, despite the new start with Noah, the desired positive effects did not materialize, because it was eventually necessary to destroy two entire cities, including women, children and babies.

Genesis 19:24-25 describes how the Lord rained down brimstone and fire from heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah, completely destroying these cities and the surrounding area, including all the inhabitants and crops.

In addition, Deuteronomy 20:14 states that Israelites may take all the spoiled property of their enemies, except women, children, and animals in the city. They may feast on the spoil that the Lord their God has given them.

In addition to the greed of the Israelites, the biblical God also seems to stir up sexual desires with His promises.

In Deuteronomy 21:10-11 it is described that when the Israelites go to war against their enemies and the Lord their God has given these enemies into their hands, they may take captives.

Strikingly, in order to fulfill His extraordinary promises, the divine Father chooses to use planned genocide. This seems to contradict His own commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," since He simply orders the extermination of entire cities and peoples. This is not about war crimes committed by a derailed people, but about direct instructions from the Supreme Being himself for carrying out a holocaust.

In Deuteronomy 20:16-17 it is written that when the Lord your God gives you the land of these nations, you must not spare any living being. The commandment is to exterminate them completely, including the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, just as the Lord your God has commanded.

Furthermore, it is written in Deuteronomy 20:13 that the Lord your God will give the city into your hands, and you must put to death all the men in the city with the sharp sword.

In Deuteronomy 13:15 it is indicated that you must completely kill the inhabitants of the city with the sharp sword, including all the livestock, and destroy the city.

In Deuteronomy 7:16 you are commanded to destroy all the nations that the Lord your God will give you. No mercy is to be shown, and

serving their gods is strictly forbidden, as that could be a snare for you.

Further, Deuteronomy 7:22-23 declares that the Lord will gradually drive out these nations for you. It is not the intention to exterminate them quickly, to prevent the game in the field from turning against you. The Lord will deliver them to you and strike them with great terror, until they are completely destroyed.

During the period of witch persecutions, which mainly took place between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Roman Catholic Church in Europe was closely involved in the persecution of persons accused of witchcraft. The ecclesiastical authorities and theologians of the time considered witchcraft a serious sin and saw it as a threat to faith and society. The ecclesiastical courts, including the Inquisition, were tasked with investigating and trying alleged witches. Clergy and theologians actively participated in the witch hunts, which led to the torture and execution of many innocent people accused of witchcraft.

During the era of colonization, a complex dynamic manifested itself in which the church actively participated in forcing conversion among indigenous peoples in the New World, especially noticeable in Latin America. These interactions often took place in close collaboration with the colonial powers of Spain and Portugal, resulting in a worrying spiral of cultural oppression and violence towards indigenous communities.

Within the context of this religiously inspired compulsion, certain practices in the Bible, such as witchcraft, sorcery, divination, clairvoyance, and communicating with the dead, were not dismissed as mere superstition. On the contrary, these phenomena were taken seriously and loaded with severe punishments, often up to death.

The Bible imposes strict regulations regarding such activities, emphasizing the need for punishment to purify so-called sins.

These religious precepts served as justification for the forced conversion of indigenous peoples, with the missionaries often acting as the instruments of these rigorous interpretations. The fusion of church doctrine with the power structures of the colonial governments resulted not only in a profound cultural impact, but also in a tragic dismantling of indigenous societies, with violence and oppression being used as means to enforce conformity. This history sheds a sharp light on the complex and often disruptive interactions between religion, colonialism, and the indigenous people of the New World.

In the biblical Exodus 22:18, it is clearly stated that women who

engage in magical practices should not expect mercy. The explicit statement implies that sorcery is considered an extremely serious offense, punishable by death.

Leviticus 20:27 adds to this, stating that both men and women who claim to have prophetic gifts or are engaged in the Satanical arts are to be put to death by stoning. This specific mention underscores the seriousness of divination and satanic practices, for which the death penalty is the ultimate sanction.

Deuteronomy 18:11 lists various practices, including consulting fortune tellers, casting spells, engaging with practitioners of Satanical rituals, and communicating with the dead. The execution of these acts is considered abhorrent in the eyes of the Lord, leading to the expulsion of those guilty of them from the land. This explicit disapproval underscores the religious gravity with which these practices were regarded.

The book of 1 Samuel 28:7 provides an intriguing example, where King Saul summons a fortune teller for the purpose of resurrecting the spirit of the deceased prophet Samuel. This incident illustrates a concrete case of talking to the dead, an act that is clearly labeled as pernicious and sinful in the context of the aforementioned biblical texts. The fact that even a king turns to such practices underscores the complexity of the moral dilemmas and religious beliefs explored in these biblical passages.

2 Kings 19:35 describes a dramatic event in which the angel of the Lord kills 185 thousand Assyrian soldiers in one night. At dawn the next morning, all these warriors lay lifeless on the ground, indicating a powerful and abrupt intervention from spiritual spheres. This event illustrates the biblical theme of divine intervention on behalf of His people, in which Heavenly powers are used to neutralize a threat to the faithful.

Exodus 12:29 presents another chilling scene, with the Lord striking down all the firstborn in Egypt at midnight. This divine punishment affects not only the firstborn of Pharaoh, who was to sit on his throne, but also the firstborn of the prisoners in their cells, as well as the first-born of the cattle. It serves as a powerful reminder of God's supreme power and His ability to execute His will in a profound and unyielding manner.

Not limited to historical events, the Bible shows that even after the conquest of the promised land, God repeatedly orders the ruthless

extermination of entire cities and populations. These instructions, as stated in passages, including in 1 Samuel 15:18 and Jeremiah 50:21, testify to an inexorable divine will, calling entire societies to destruction in accordance with what the Lord has commanded.

In 1 Samuel 15:3, the wrath reaches a climax with detailed instructions to attack the Amalek and completely destroy everything they possess without any form of mercy. Men, women, children, infants, cattle, camels and donkeys are mentioned as targets of this radical and ruthless extermination. These passages reflect the biblical traditions in which God expresses His divine will through drastic measures, calling specific peoples to destruction as a form of divine judgment.

1 Samuel 5:9 describes a harrowing scene in which the Lord punishes a city with considerable torment. This divine retribution affects all inhabitants, from the smallest to the greatest, and reflects an intense form of divine justice. The text contains the message that no age group or social status escapes the wrath of the Lord.

Jeremiah 13:14 adds an even more intense dimension to this picture by proclaiming that God, without any regret or mercy, will smash the inhabitants to pieces. This announcement of total annihilation includes both fathers and children, highlighting the ruthlessness of God's punishment. There seems to be no room for mercy here; the threat of total annihilation raises moral and theological questions about the nature of God's justice.

In Ezekiel 9:5-6, others are given the ominous command to go through the city without sparing anyone. This commission, which extends the scope of divine vengeance to the elderly, the young, virgins, children and women, paints a grim picture of an unyielding execution of divine will. The goal seems to be to achieve complete annihilation, without distinction of age, gender or innocence.

In summary, in these passages, the biblical God appears to be acting ruthlessly, destroying entire nations, including innocent children, simply because they are in His path or accused of alleged "atrocities" (see Deuteronomy 20:18). This conception of divine justice raises questions not only about moral complexity, but also about the consistency within the biblical narratives and the theological implications of a God taking such drastic measures. It seems to create a paradox between the supposed divine compassion and the inexorable execution of punishment.

Deuteronomy 20:13 paints a detailed picture of the consequences of war, in which the Lord their God will give the city into the hands of the people. The instructions are unrelenting: men who are within the city limits must face the sword and be killed. On the other hand, women, children and even the animals, as well as all other valuable booty in the city, are about to be captured by the victorious people. The justification for this lies in the belief that this victory is a divine gift from the Lord their God. This empowers the people to take the spoils of their defeated enemies and profit from them.

Numbers 31:17 introduces an even grimmer command. The instructions are clear: all male children must be killed, as well as all women who have had intimate contact with a man. It is therefore striking that an exception is made for girls who have not had intercourse with a man; they may be spared.

These verses show that during war conditions, according to the rigid precepts of Deuteronomy and Numbers, women and children were considered booty to be claimed. Men were ruthlessly eliminated, while women and children were spared, albeit under strict conditions. Not only was it permissible to take the possessions of defeated enemies as booty, but it was even encouraged and considered a divine reward for the victorious party. These passages emphasize the brutal and violent nature of warfare at the time, with looting and sparing certain groups being considered legitimate practices, all within the framework of divine justice.

Illness

Matthew 4:24 says that people who suffered from various illnesses, pains, and demon possession were brought to Jesus, and He healed them.

Matthew 8:16 also tells of many who were possessed by demons and brought to Jesus. He drove away the evil spirits with his word and healed all who suffered. When Jesus came across the lake, in the land of the Gergesians, two possessed men met Him. They came out of the graves and were very violent, so that no one could pass along that road (Matthew 8:28).

In Matthew 9:32-33, they brought a dumb man, who was possessed by a demon, to Jesus. After the demon was cast out, the dumb man could speak. The crowd was amazed and said that nothing like it had ever been seen before.

Matthew 12:22 says: a man was brought to Jesus who was blind and dumb because of the demon who possessed him. Jesus healed the man so that he could speak and see.

Mark 1:32: When the sun went down, they brought to Jesus the people who suffered from various diseases and were possessed by demons.

In Luke 9:38-42, a man from the crowd begged Jesus to help his son because he was possessed by a spirit. This spirit caused unintentional electrical discharges in the brain and caused the boy to foam at the mouth (this looks like a seizure or an epileptic seizure). Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and returned him to his father.

Several Bible verses describe how people possessed by demons or suffering from various ailments, including deaf-muteness, blindness, and seizures, were brought to Jesus. After the exorcism of the demons, the sick were healed and regained their speech, eyesight, and overall health.

The understanding of diseases and their causes has evolved throughout history. In the time of the Bible, people lacked scientific knowledge about neurological disorders and the functioning of the human body. Healing

from an epileptic seizure therefore seemed no more than a miracle, while probably the seizure had just ended. Diseases were more often attributed to supernatural causes, such as demons and Satan. It was only in later centuries, with the advancement of medical science, that doctors and researchers learned to understand the physical causes of disease. Anatomical research, symptom observation, and experiments revealed that conditions such as deaf-mute and epilepsy are due to physiological or neurological factors, not demonic influences.

Abortion

Within the context of the Bible, there is no direct and explicit ban on abortion, which contradicts the firm claims of today's opponents of abortion. Interestingly, however, a passage in Numbers 5 describes precisely how a priest can cause an abortion in a woman accused of adultery. In concrete terms, this means that the priest takes holy water from an earthen vessel and adds dust from the tabernacle floor. Then the woman must drink this water. If she is found guilty of adultery, the water, laden with a curse, will enter bitterly into her. Her belly will swell and her 'hip' will shrivel up.

The debate over abortion is often fueled by the argument that the Bible promotes respect for life. However, it is of great importance to note that the biblical stories also describe situations in which, according to these texts, God has permitted or even commanded the taking of lives, both of innocent women and of children. Some examples of God's punishment for the killing of children and fetuses illustrate this point.

In Exodus 12:29, as I wrote earlier, it tells how the firstborn were killed in Egypt, ranging from Pharaoh's firstborn to the firstborn of the captives and even the firstborn animals. This tragic event highlights a divine punishment that also affects innocent children as part of a larger divine act. This situation raises questions about the consistency of the argument that the Bible provides unwavering support for respecting every individual life, including that of unborn children. It weaves a complex ethical thread through the fabric of religious writings, subjecting the interpretation of divine will and justice to intense debates and reflections.

Isaiah 13:16 contains a prophecy that paints a bleak picture of future events. This prediction describes shocking scenes, including the crushing of children in front of their parents, the looting of homes, and the injustice that will be done to women. These words cast a shadow of fear and tragedy over the future, in which violence and cruelty seem to reign supreme.

Hosea 14:1 proclaims judgment on the city of Samaria. The prophetic vision foresees a destruction of the city, in which the inhabitants will fall by the sword. The most appalling aspect of the prophecy, however, is the mention that children will be crushed, and pregnant women will suffer as their bellies are cut open. These horrific images reinforce the severity of the predicted punishment, which is attributed to Samaria's rebellion against their God. The unjust fate of the inhabitants, including the violent end of children and the indescribable suffering of pregnant women, arouses deep moral reflections.

Ezekiel 9:5-6 presents a terrifying vision in which God commands executioners to go mercilessly through a city. Their task is not selective; They must kill the elderly, the young, virgins, children and women. This image of unlimited destruction raises questions about the nature of divine justice and the role of human executors in fulfilling these commands.

Hosea 9:14, on the other hand, presents a supplication hoping for the barrenness and dryness of the enemies of the people of God, in order to prevent any more children from being born. This petition illustrates another side of the theological spectrum, where the wish is expressed that the enemies of God's people be afflicted by a lack of new life.

Jeremiah 13:14 outlines a prophecy that foresees the total destruction of a nation, without any mercy for even the fathers and children. Upon the arrival of the people of Israel in the promised land, they received the Divine command to exterminate all inhabitants, including (pregnant) women, children and the elderly.

In 1 Samuel 15:3, King Saul receives a direct command from God to attack the Amalekites, showing no mercy of any kind. The instructions are unequivocal: every man, woman, child, infant, and even livestock, including oxen, sheep, camels, and donkeys, must be killed.

Deuteronomy 20:16-17 stipulates that in fighting against cities of other nations that God has given as an inheritance, no living soul should be spared. Everything that breathes must be eradicated.

Psalms 137:9 speaks of crushing children on a rock, where this action seems to have a positive connotation. This passage seems to suggest that the killing of children would be justified in certain situations and could even be considered a source of good luck. This raises questions about the concept of 'respect for life'. The idea that the torture and killing of children is considered something commendable is extremely disturbing and is in stark contrast to our prevailing values and norms

regarding the protection and well-being of children. This forces us to reflect on the interpretation of such texts and how they relate to contemporary moral considerations, taking into account the complexities of theological interpretation and ethical reflection.

In the Bible there are several passages that refer to acts in which unborn children, children and pregnant women become victims of violence and termination of life. In Numbers 31:17, we find the instruction to kill all male children, which indicates a radical measure that does not spare even the youngest members of society.

Deuteronomy 2:34, in turn, describes a merciless destruction, in which entire cities, men, women, and children are wiped out, a tragic episode of collective termination of lives.

Deuteronomy 28:53 paints a harrowing scene of extreme circumstances, in which people are forced to eat their own offspring, the flesh of their sons and daughters, as a horrible result of difficult times. This image testifies to the profound hardships faced by those involved.

2 Kings 8:12 refers to the crushing of young children and the cutting open of pregnant women, where pregnancy does not serve as a protection against violence, but rather seems to accomplish the opposite.

2 Kings 15:16 presents a chilling situation in which “impregnated women” are dismembered, an act that casts a deep shadow on the human suffering experienced in such contexts.

Isaiah 13:16 tragically describes the crushing of children in front of their parents, highlighting the intensity of the suffering and cruelty of such acts.

Isaiah 13:18 emphasizes that even the fruit in the womb will not find mercy, and that children will not be spared, accentuating the mercilessness of the foretold events.

Lamentations 2:20 paints a poignant picture of women who, symbolically speaking, eat their own offspring. This imagery seems to refer to an extreme form of hardship and suffering that these women face. It indicates a situation of extreme need and despair, where even basic human needs cannot be met.

Homosexuality

In the bible, there are two stories that are considered grim, where men try to force other men into sexual acts. Certain Bible texts refer to men involved in the practice of temple prostitution, in which sexual services are offered as part of religious rituals.

Deuteronomy 23:17 specifically emphasizes that there should be no prostitutes among the daughters of Israel and no prostitutes among the sons of Israel.

In response, King Asa took rigorous measures in 1 Kings 15:12 by removing the prostitutes from the land and even destroying the idols that his ancestors had created. Further, in 2 Kings 23:7, we see that King Josiah took action to destroy the houses of prostitutes at the house of the Lord. These steps were taken as a form of purification to deal with the undesirable practices that took place within religious spaces.

Job 36:14 adds that those who engage in such practices, mostly young men, would die prematurely and “their lives would be among male prostitutes.” This can be interpreted as a moral warning against involvement in temple prostitution.

“Thus, these passages in the Old Testament point to the disapproval of temple prostitution, which involved both male and female sex workers. They show that such practices were not tolerated within Israelite society and that kings took active steps to eradicate them, as a sign of moral cleansing and religious purity.

Leviticus 18:22 (KJV) reads: ‘You must not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is an abomination.’ This passage presents a clear position and rejects homosexual acts, using the term ‘abomination’ to emphasize rejection. The text from Leviticus 20:13 (KJV) goes even further, stating: ‘When a man also lies with a man, as one lies with a woman, they have both done an abomination. They must surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.’ Here, not only is the conviction repeated, but also a punitive measure is proposed, mentioning the death penalty as retribution for these acts.

Marriage and divorce

In accordance with the instructions in Deuteronomy 24:5, it is written that when two brothers live together and one of them dies without having sons, a specific obligation arises for the surviving brother. This brother is encouraged to marry the widow of his deceased brother and to produce a son with her. The exact passage reads as follows: “When brothers live together and one of them dies without having a son, then the wife of the deceased may not marry a strange man. Her brother-in-law will marry her, take her as his wife, and assume the responsibilities of a husband, as the brother of the deceased would.” This arrangement imposes a marriage obligation on the surviving brother. By marrying the widow and having a son, the intention is to continue the inheritance and the name of the deceased brother. Marriage to the widow is considered a way to maintain solidarity within the family and to ensure that the deceased’s estate is not lost.

According to Deuteronomy 24:1, it is stipulated that if a husband discovers something unpleasant in his wife, he can divorce her by giving her a special “certificate of divorce.” The striking thing about this is that this text seems to suggest that a man has the right to disown his wife if he notices dissatisfaction in her.

Interestingly, in this context, the idea of a woman divorcing her husband due to dissatisfaction does not seem to be considered. However, Jesus criticizes this practice of using letters of divorce all too easily. In his teaching, he emphasizes the sanctity of marriage and allows divorce only in the case of adultery by the wife. In addition, Jesus condemns the marriage of divorced women. In Matthew 19:6, Jesus exposes the deep connection in marriage by saying, “So they are no longer two, but one. What God has joined together, a man may not separate.”

Contradictions

Contradictions in the biblical accounts, particularly in the context of Peter's prediction and denial, raise some questions about the consistency of the stories. A specific example of this can be found in the various renderings of Jesus' prophecy about Peter's denial. In Matthew 26:34, Jesus seems to connect Peter's denial with the crowing of the rooster, where He says that Peter will deny Him three times before the rooster crows.

In contrast, Luke 22:34 offers an alternative version of the prophecy, in which Jesus says: "I say to you, Peter, the cock will not crow today until you have denied three times that you know me." Here the rooster seems to crow after Peter has denied

Him three times.

The Gospel of John adds an extra dimension to the question. In John 13:38, Jesus suggests that the rooster will not crow "until you have denied Me three times." This seems to imply that the rooster will crow after the third denial.

The story takes a fascinating turn in Mark 14:68, where it says that the rooster crows after Peter has denied Jesus for the first time. This direct correlation between the first denial and the crowing of the rooster seems to contradict the other accounts, in which the rooster is associated with the third denial.

In Matthew 15:24, Jesus makes it clear that his primary mission is to reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He declares: "My mission is exclusively for the lost sheep of the house of Israel." This shows that his initial focus was on the Jewish people. This statement is underlined by Matthew 10:5-6, where Jesus sends out his twelve disciples and instructs them not to go to the Gentiles or enter any city of the Samaritans. He instructs them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, nor enter into the city of the Samaritans. Rather, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Here Jesus again emphasizes the priority of initially focusing only on the Jewish people.

However, after Jesus' resurrection, we find a change in his instructions in Matthew 28:19. He commissions His disciples to teach all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Jesus says: "Go, therefore, teach all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey all that I have commanded you."

Here, Jesus seems to present a more universal mission, urging his followers to proclaim the gospel worldwide. The Gospel of Mark 13:10 also mentions that the gospel must first be spread to all nations. This suggests that the message of the gospel is ultimately intended for all people. The passage reads: "The gospel must first be preached among all nations." These different passages can be considered an evolution in the mission of both Jesus and his disciples. Initially, the emphasis seems to be on reaching the Jewish people, but after the resurrection of Jesus, the message is extended to all nations.

Modifying and exploiting the theft of a religion

On the other hand, we hear Jesus in John 3:13 speaking from his own perspective as the Son of Man who came down from heaven. In doing so, he emphasizes his divine origin and states that no one else shares the same experience as him. This is a powerful claim regarding his divine identity and origin.

In this light, however, there seems to be an apparent contradiction when we look at Jesus' command to love your enemies. There are texts in which Jesus rebukes and condemns others, which highlights the difficulty of the practical implementation of this commandment. This tension between the proclaimed commandment and its actual implementation, by Jesus himself, raises questions about the complexity of moral dilemmas and human interactions.

In Luke 6:37, Jesus emphasizes the importance of restraint in judging and condemning others. He warns his followers that their own attitude toward others also has consequences for how they themselves will be judged. Nevertheless, there are situations, as we see in Matthew 12:34, where Jesus uses sharp words and addresses his audience as a "brood of vipers."

In Matthew 23:15, Jesus reprimands the scribes and Pharisees, not only labeling them as hypocrites but also accusing them of making proselytes. The word "proselytes" refers to people who convert to a particular faith or religion.

In the context of the Bible, and specifically in Matthew 23:15, Jesus criticizes the scribes and Pharisees for making proselytes. By this he means that they incite others to convert to the Jewish faith. The idea is that they pose as spirit guides, but instead they lead others on a path that is not in line with the true values of the faith. In reality, they corrupt the souls of others. Jesus' words clearly reveal his aversion to the hypocritical practices and the harmful influence on others and emphasize the need for a sincere practice of faith.

Jesus' criticism of the scribes and Pharisees escalates in Matthew 23:17, where he refers to them as 'fools' and 'blind'. In doing so, he

criticizes their spiritual blindness and lack of understanding, despite their self-proclaimed wisdom.

When Jesus declares in Matthew 28:18 that all authority has been given to him in both heaven and earth, it highlights the divine sovereignty and authority that Jesus possesses. He is above everything and has authority over the entire universe. However, in Matthew 20:23 it is emphasized that Jesus does not have the autonomy to determine who will sit on his left or right hand in the divine kingdom.

Jesus' insight into Matthew 20:23 testifies to his humility and submission to the divine will. He recognizes that these positions of honor are established by his Father and are intended for those for whom they are prepared. This shows that Jesus is not only the Lord Almighty but also demonstrates obedience and submission to the divine order.

Acts 26:23 presents Jesus as the first to rise from the dead, a unique event in the New Testament. Yet there are also instances in the Old Testament, as described in 1 Kings 17:17-22, in which God resurrected a child through the intercession of Elijah.

Jesus' statements in Luke 14:26 about "hating" family members seem superficially contradictory to the command to honor one's father and mother, as stated in Exodus 20:12. The commandment to honor parents emphasizes respect and appreciation for family ties, which is often considered a fundamental principle of ethics and social cohesion. Nevertheless, Jesus emphasizes the radical commitment expected of his disciples, whereby even the closest family ties should not compete with the commitment to him.

In Matthew 19:29, Jesus emphasizes the radical commitment expected of his followers. He encourages them to be willing to give up everything, even homes, family, and possessions, for the sake of his name. In return, Jesus promises an abundant reward, a hundredfold, and eternal life. This call to sacrifice illustrates the profound changes that Jesus envisions in the lives of his followers.

At the same time, Matthew 10:35 sheds light on a paradoxical dynamic that can arise from Jesus' coming. Jesus recognizes that his message can be divisive between family members, indicating the potential for conflict within families as a result of choosing to follow Jesus.

The apparent contradiction between peace and the sword is evident in John 14:27, where Jesus proclaims peace and imparts his peace to his disciples. This testifies to Jesus' desire for inner peace and harmony.

However, Matthew 10:34-36 brings up another aspect, where Jesus

speaks of bringing the sword instead of peace. Here he warns that his message can cause division, even within families, which can lead to conflict situations. This apparent paradox highlights the transformative and sometimes controversial impact of Jesus' message on individuals and communities.

In Luke 22:36, it is striking that Jesus instructs his disciples to buy swords, which can be symbolic in nature and evokes different interpretations. This instruction seems to point to the importance of self-defense and protection, especially since the disciples might face opposition. It raises questions about the versatility of Jesus' teachings and his recognition of the reality of challenges and difficulties that his followers may encounter in their following of him.

A crucial issue is whether the testimony of Jesus is to be considered true.

In John 8:14, Jesus claims that his testimony is true, even when he bears witness to himself. In doing so, he emphasizes his credibility and assures that his words are reliable. However, in John 5:31, Jesus acknowledges that if he were to bear witness only to himself, his testimony would not be considered true. This statement implies that Jesus sees the value of external testimony or evidence to confirm his credibility.

In Matthew 5:22, Jesus warns that the one who angers his brother unjustly will be subject to punishment in court. This warning is reinforced by the statement that a person who calls his brother 'raka'⁵ must answer to the great council. However, the most severe punishment awaits the one who calls his brother a fool, because then he will be punishable for the infernal fire.

In Matthew 21:31, Jesus points to a striking and encouraging aspect of his teaching: tax collectors and harlots, traditionally considered sinful and immoral, will advance people in the kingdom of God. This statement emphasizes the radical message of grace and forgiveness that Jesus proclaims. The idea that even those with a sinful past are eligible to participate in the kingdom of God, provided they repent and repent, is central to Jesus' message.

On the other hand, 1 Corinthians 6:10 lists sinful behaviors that the text says would disfellowship a person from the kingdom of God. The list mentions fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, fornicators, men who

5 Empty-headed, worthless guy or fool, but also: godless.

have sexual relations with men, thieves, covetousness, drunkards, slanderers and robbers.

This apparent contradiction may highlight the need for sincere repentance and a change of way of life. While Jesus offers hope to sinners, the later passage emphasizes avoiding continued sinful practices in order to partake of the kingdom of God.

In the historical context of the society in which Jesus lived, prostitution was considered a morally reprehensible and sinful practice. The biblical texts place a strong emphasis on avoiding immoral behavior and adhering to moral principles as a condition for participation in the kingdom of God. In Luke 6:37, Jesus instructs his followers not to judge, lest they themselves be judged. He emphasizes the importance of avoiding condemnation and encourages the release of prejudice, promising that such an attitude will result in similar treatment.

On the other hand, in John 7:24, Jesus teaches his followers not to judge on the basis of outward appearances, but to pass righteous judgment. Here, emphasis is placed on avoiding superficial judgments and making fair and just considerations when judging others.

In John 12:47, Jesus proclaims a message of salvation and grace, with His coming not aimed at pronouncing judgment on the world, but rather at saving it. He affirms that whoever hears His words but does not believe will not be subject to the will be thrown at His judgment. The redemptive mission of Jesus is central here, with the emphasis on saving believers. However, in John 9:39, Jesus seems to be speaking of a function of judgment, where His coming is intended to give light to those who are spiritually blind, while those who claim to see are confronted with their spiritual blindness.

John 5:22 emphasizes the authority Jesus received from the Father to judge. Here it is emphasized that God the Father has entrusted all judgment to the Son, which gives Jesus the authority to judge in accordance with the divine will. In Matthew 7:7-8, Jesus speaks of actively seeking, asking, and knocking as a means of obtaining divine blessings.

To add historical context, let's take a look at the life of Jesus and the events of the New Testament. Jesus made his statements in the midst of a period of religious and political turmoil in the Jewish land, where the people yearned for a savior who would free them from Roman rule.

"In light of this turmoil, the statement in John 7:34 can be understood as referring to the challenge people face in fully understanding

Jesus and following Him in His mission, because their expectations did not align with His true intentions. In essence, the phrase ‘he that seeks, finds’ in Matthew 7:7-8 emphasizes the importance of active seeking and effort in order to achieve results. This means that divine answers and blessings are available to those who are sincere and active seekers. It is not only about physical quests but also about the search for spiritual truths and wisdom. Jesus encourages His followers to be active participants in their relationship with God, with the reward being commensurate with their efforts.

In addition, Jesus sent His disciples into the world instructed them to teach all nations, to baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and to teach them to observe all that He has commanded them, as described in Matthew 28:19. Baptism was considered an essential ritual for someone to officially belong to Christianity. Missionaries were sent to the Low Countries to spread the faith and baptize people, with baptism being considered a symbolic transition to Christianity.

According to the book of Mark, Jesus deliberately chose to keep his teachings in secret, so that only a few would understand it and be saved.

In Mark 4:11-12, Jesus reveals to his disciples that they can understand the deeper meaning of the kingdom of God, while those outside his inner circle, those who are not part of his close followers, can only witness his teachings in the form of parables. This approach serves to make them see without fully understanding and hear without truly comprehending, with the aim that they would not repent, and their sins would not be forgiven. Mark 4:34 describes Jesus choosing to share his message in parables with the general public but explaining everything in detail to his closest followers. From this, we can deduce that Jesus deliberately adopted a difference in approach, explicitly sharing his deeper teachings with those closest to him, while using symbolic language for the masses.

Jesus faced challenges in convincing his immediate surroundings, with many who knew him closely not fully convinced of his supernatural gifts and divine nature. In Mark 6:4, Jesus notes that nowhere does a prophet receive so little honor as in his own homeland, among his family, and in his own home. This passage suggests that Jesus was able to exert limited influence on his immediate environment, and despite performing some healings by the laying on of hands, he was otherwise

unable to perform impressive miracles there.

In addition, Mark 3:21 mentions that those close to Jesus, including his family, went out to hold him. They didn't believe in him and thought he had lost his mind. This shows that even the people in his immediate circle, including his own family, had difficulty understanding the true nature of Jesus' mission and accepting his divine calling. It seems that Jesus was not able to completely distance himself from the more combative aspects attributed to his Father. In Matthew 5:43, people are told, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." Despite this, Jesus breaks through this conventional thought and instructs his followers to love their enemies. He encourages blessing those who curse, doing good to those who show hatred, and praying for those who violate and persecute.

However, in Luke 19:27, Jesus seems to strike a different note, saying, "Bring here my enemies who did not want me to be king over them, and kill them for me." This statement seems to show a sharper side and contrasts with the message of love and forgiveness that we find elsewhere in his teaching. In addition, passages from the book of Revelation, such as Revelation 2:18 and Revelation 19:15, shed a different light on Jesus' character. Here Jesus is described as bringing out a sharp sword to strike the Gentiles, shepherding them with an iron rod, and using the winepress of God's wrath and wrath. These passages seem to show an apparent contradiction between the message of love and forgiveness that Jesus preached during his life on earth and the images of violence and revenge that emerge in some other writings.

In Mark 16:17, Jesus promises that his followers will have extraordinary powers, which will enable them to heal the sick, be immune to venom and snake bites, cast out evil spirits, and speak in new languages. They will even be able to pick up snakes, and if they drink something deadly, it will not harm them. Moreover, they will lay hands on the sick, so that they will be healed. This passage emphasizes the manifestation of divine powers and the ability of believers to perform miracles.

In Luke 10:19, Jesus emphasizes the divine authority that He grants to His followers, enabling them to tread on serpents and scorpions and rule over all the power of the enemy, without any evil befalling them. However, this statement raises questions about why Jesus himself did not demonstrate that faith can make people invulnerable to snakes, scorpions, and venom. This promise goes beyond just casting out demons and evil spirits. It is understandable that based on these promises,

gullible people take risks, in some cases even with the possibility of fatal consequences. This calls for reflection on the interpretation and application of such spiritual principles, and how they are understood and applied in daily life.

Baptism and John

The relationship between John the Baptist and the prophet Elijah is discussed in the writings, especially in light of Jesus' statements. According to Jesus, as mentioned in Matthew 11:13, John the Baptist is the fulfillment of prophecy, and his coming is associated with the coming of Elijah. Jesus emphasizes that, if one is willing to accept this, John the Baptist fulfills the same spiritual role as Elijah. In Matthew 17:11, Jesus speaks of the coming of Elijah and his restorative mission. However, he explains that Elijah has already appeared in the person of John the Baptist, although the people have not recognized him. This has led to speculation and discussion about the idea of reincarnation.

Interestingly, John the Baptist himself, in John 1:21, denies identification with Elijah. When asked if he is Elijah, he answers in the negative. Even when asked if he is the prophet, he gives a negative answer. These verses create an intriguing dynamic in which Jesus identifies John the Baptist as the fulfillment of the prophecies pertaining to Elijah, while John himself denies this identification.

Traitor

The Gospel according to Matthew (26:47-49) describes Judas appearing with the crowd and greeting Jesus with the words “Hail, Rabbi!” and then kissing Him. This gesture acted as a clear sign by which Jesus was identified as the person sought.

The Gospel according to John (18:3-8) provides detailed insight into the identification process. Judas arrived with a group of armed men, servants of the High Priests and Pharisees, who were equipped with lanterns, torches and weapons. Jesus, knowing of the approaching events, went to meet them and asked whom they were looking for. When they replied that they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus confirmed his identity by saying, “It is I.” At that moment the men were driven back and they fell to the ground. Jesus reiterated his identity when they asked him again and asked them to leave the others alone and let him go.

Judas, the person involved in the betrayal of Jesus, met a tragic end, according to various accounts. According to Matthew 27:5, Judas allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself after throwing the silver pennies into the temple. This reflects a fateful decision Judas made after his treacherous act. On the other hand, Acts: 1:18 gives an alternate version of Judas’ death. According to this verse, Judas obtained a piece of land with the unjust reward he received for his betrayal. At one point he fell forward, bursting his body open and all his intestines came out. The two biblical stories show some discrepancies, leaving it unclear which account is the most accurate. One suggests a self-chosen end by hanging, while the other describes a gruesome and sudden physical decay.

Love Your Enemies

The call to show love to our fellow human beings and our neighbors is a central theme in historical religious texts. In 1 John 4:20-21 it is strongly emphasized that a claim of love for God is invalid if one simultaneously harbors hatred for one's brother. This emphasizes the crucial importance of loving our fellow human beings as an integral part of the love of God himself. The commandment to love both God and our neighbor is considered fundamental within this context.

On the other hand, Luke 14:26 contains a remarkable statement by Jesus stating that a person cannot be a disciple of Jesus if he does not "hate" his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and even his own life.

Marcus, Johannes, Lukas and Matthew

The stories of Jesus, as recorded by the evangelists Mark, John, Luke, and Matthew, show remarkable differences, which could be attributed to the diverse backgrounds of these writers. Marcus, with a Roman background, approaches his account in a way that mirrors how Roman readers would understand it. On the other hand, John and Matthew share a Jewish context, which influences their perspective and focus. Luke, with Greek roots, brings his own cultural influences too his description of the events with Jesus.

It is striking that these four evangelists are the main sources of our knowledge about Jesus. It is known that Luke and Matthew were among the disciples of Jesus, suggesting that they may have been eyewitnesses to the events they recorded. Despite this, doubts remain about the authenticity of the writings since they are not signed, which raises discussions about the actual authorship of these gospels. The various accounts of the crucifixion of Jesus by Mark, John, Luke, and Matthew show remarkable variations, similar to coverage of a football match by four different sports journalists. After reading their stories, you might wonder if they have watched the same match.

Luke 23:46 records that Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit." These words show Jesus' surrender to God, placing his life in the hands of his Father. On the other hand, John 19:30 mentions that after Jesus took the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" This statement seems to indicate the completion of Jesus' mission on earth, in which He brought about redemption and reconciliation through His suffering and death. It is remarkable how these variations in the accounts can offer a deeper understanding of the different aspects and meanings of the pivotal moment of Jesus' crucifixion. According to various accounts, varying numbers of women went to Jesus' tomb. Luke 24:10 mentions four women: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary (the mother of James) and another woman who was with them. They shared this information with the apostles.

In Mark 16:1-2 three women are mentioned: Mary Magdalene, Mary (the

mother of James) and Salomé. They bought spices and went to the tomb very early on the first day of the week, right after the end of the Sabbath.

Matthew 28:1 mentions only two women: Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. They came to the tomb on the first day of the week, at daybreak.

Finally, John 20:1 mentions only one woman, Mary Magdalene. She went to the tomb early on the first day of the week, when it was still dark, and found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb. These different accounts show that several women went to the tomb, but the exact number differs depending on the Bible verse in question.

The period after Jesus' resurrection was characterized by various times when His touch was sought, and other times when this was not allowed.

Matthew 28:9 describes Jesus meeting the women after they had informed His disciples. Full of joy the women seized His feet and worshipped Him.

However, in John 20:17, Jesus instructed Mary Magdalene not to touch Him, as He had not yet ascended to His Father. He charged her with the message to go to His brethren and tell them that He would ascend to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God. These two stories sketch both a moment of physical touch and a moment when this was not allowed.

An interesting passage in the Gospel of Matthew sheds light on a similar theme. In Matthew 9:27-30, two blind men come to Jesus and ask him to heal them. Jesus heals the men but also gives them a curious instruction: "Make sure no one knows." This clue seems strange, especially since the healing of blindness would be a striking and testimony-worthy miracle. The question arises whether this event is really a physical healing, or whether there is a deeper spiritual symbol in it.

In the Gnostic tradition, blindness and the healing of blindness often have a different meaning than just the restoration of physical sight. Blindness is sometimes seen as a metaphor for spiritual ignorance or lack of insight. The healing of blindness could then symbolize the acquisition of spiritual insight and the awakening to one's own inner Christ-nature. The instruction to keep it secret can be interpreted in this light as a reference to the esoteric nature of this spiritual truth, which cannot simply be made public but requires deeper personal and spiritual experience.

Maria Magdalena

According to the Gospel of John, Mary Magdalene was the first person that Jesus met after His resurrection. She was a devoted follower of Jesus, and along with other women, including Joanna and Susanna, she followed Him from Galilee to Jerusalem. These women, most likely including Mary Magdalene, supported Jesus and the twelve apostles with their own resources, suggesting that they were financially well-off. Mary Magdalene was present at the crucifixion of Jesus, as described in Mark 15:40, Matthew 27:56, 61, and John 19:25.

Mark and Matthew also mention that she witnessed the burial of Jesus (Mark 15:47; Matthew 27:61).

Luke does not mention her explicitly, and John does not refer to women in this particular context.

In fact, in the Gospel of Philip, which is not included in the New Testament, it is suggested that Jesus often kissed Mary Magdalene. It is suggested that she may have been Jesus' wife and that she was pregnant, so she was not allowed to touch Jesus at the time. The idea of children is implied, although traditional Christian teaching does not support this.

In the Gospel of Luke 1:30 we read about the announcement to Mary by an angel. Mary, who became pregnant before the angel's appearance, was addressed with the reassuring message that she had found grace with God. The angel announced that she would conceive and give birth to a son, whom she was to name Jesus.

In addition, according to the Gospel of Matthew 1:18, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was already engaged to Joseph before they actually got together. The mention that she was found pregnant by the Holy Spirit indicates that the pregnancy took place after the engagement, but before the actual union of Mary and Joseph.

Story from Egyptian mythology

The concept of life after death and resurrection was already present in Egyptian mythology, with the god Osiris. The death and resurrection of Osiris reflect the eternal cycle of life, death, and rebirth in Egyptian lore. This idea was later adopted by the Greeks, with their god Dionysius figured, who according to tradition was born of an immaculate virgin by divine intervention. The stories of Dionysius' death and rebirth show parallels with other mythological traditions, in which gods or heroes die and then come back to life. For scholars, this is an indication that the story of Jesus may have been derived from myths from the ancient Greek and Egyptian cultures, suggesting that it does not rest entirely on historical facts. It is likely that copies of such stories were distributed and that names were changed when rewritten. Because there was no printing at the time, texts were frequently copied by hand, and most likely these copies were adapted to the ideas and beliefs of the various authors.

Threats of Jesus

Jesus repeatedly threatens serious consequences for those who do not believe in Him. He paints a picture of damnation, hellish fires and eternal torture. In His teaching, He speaks of the children of the kingdom who will be cast into outer darkness, where weeping and gnashing of teeth reign. The warnings to the scribes and Pharisees are powerful, with Jesus describing them as serpents and brood of vipers. In the Gospel of Mark, Jesus illustrates the seriousness of the situation by saying that it is better to go into life maimed than to be thrown into hell with two hands or feet. He emphasizes that it is better to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to be cast with two eyes into the fiery hell, where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. Clearly, Jesus' threats regarding hell, damnation, and burning are to be taken literally, as is evident from his own explanation of the parable of the sower. After Jesus left the crowd, He went home. His disciples came to Him and asked, "Explain to us the meaning of the parable of the tares in the field." He answered and said to them: "The One who sows the good seed is the Son of man. The field is the world, the good seed are the children of the kingdom, and the weeds are the children of the evil one. The enemy who sowed the weeds is Satan. The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels. As the tares are gathered and burned with fire, so it will be at the end of the world." He also says that those who do not believe in Him, such as the branches that are thrown away and burned, will be cast out. After Jesus left the crowd, He returned to His home. His disciples, curious about the deeper meaning of the parable of the weeds in the field, approached Him. He answered and said to them: "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of man." The field symbolizes the world, in which the good seed blossoms as children of the kingdom, while the weeds represent the children of evil. Satan is the evil sower, the enemy. The harvest marks the end of the world, with the angels acting as reapers. Just as weeds are gathered and burned, so will the end of time take place. The Son of Man will send His angels to remove all stumbling blocks and wrong-

doers from His kingdom. They will be thrown into the fiery furnace, where weeping and gnashing of teeth will resound. It is noteworthy that these threatening words of Jesus in the Bible do not match the loving words and messages of Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas. Surely this should raise questions about the diversity of Jesus' statements and their interpretation.

Part 2

The Nag Hammadi Scriptures

The Nag Hammadi writings are a remarkable collection of ancient texts discovered in 1945 near the Egyptian village of Nag Hammadi. These writings, consisting of thirteen books bound with gazelle leather, also called codices, were found in a 1.80 meters earthenware pot. It is suspected that they were buried as a protective measure against destruction in a period of religious turmoil. The texts are written in Coptic, the ancient Egyptian vernacular. They comprise a diverse collection of early Christian writings, including Gnostic gospels, revelations, and dialogues.

Some of the most well-known works within the Nag Hammadi writings are the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Philip. The discovery of these writings was invaluable for the understanding of the early Christian and Gnostic traditions. They offer insight into alternative perspectives on Christianity and sometimes contain divergent theological views that were not included in the canonical biblical writings. The fact that the writings were buried and hidden possibly suggests that they were protected from past religious cleansing or theological condemnation. Gnosticism, a religious-philosophical movement that emerged in the early Christian period, occupies a central place within the Nag Hammadi scriptures. Gnostics were adherents of a belief that believed in a hidden and deeper knowledge, known as gnosis, as the means of liberation from the material world.

The writings include Gnostic gospels, including the aforementioned gospels of Thomas and Philip, as well as the gospel of Truth and the gospel of the Egyptians. Poems and various other writings from early Christianity are also present, with various movements and philosophers trying to fathom the message. Gnostics viewed knowledge as the means of freeing oneself from the limitations of the physical world.

Although some themes share similarities with the canonical biblical writings, the Nag Hammadi writings were not included in the official canon of the New Testament. Nevertheless, they offer valuable insights into the diversity of early Christian thought and contribute to a deeper understanding of the theological developments of that period.

Gnosticism

Gnosticism is not considered a mere belief, but rather a path of life. The term “the people of the way” was used in the time of the Gnostics to describe their community. Although this approach is linked to a Jewish concept of the promised land, it deviates from the prevailing views. The traditional view within Judaism was that the promised land is on earth, where peace and justice would eventually reign. However, this ideal has never become reality and probably never will, unless God reveals himself in a special way, perhaps at the end of time or in the hereafter.

Jesus approached the kingdom in a unique way, not tied to a physical location or future time. He encouraged you to seek the kingdom within yourself, which implies a personal and inner experience. Finding the kingdom within yourself transforms your view of the world. Jesus suggested that when you realize this kingdom internally, you will also see it externally in the world. It's not that the world itself changes, but that you develop a different way of looking. Unlike traditional moral judgment, where God judges and rewards or punishes people's actions, Jesus teaches his followers to look with loving eyes. Loving eyes do not judge; They invite others to show themselves in their true nature, so that the hidden reappears. A judging gaze brings death, while love awakens life.

John exposes a remarkable difference in the nature of Jesus, by portraying Him as essentially different from humanity. This distinction is clearly shown in John 8:23, where Jesus says, “You are from below, I am from above; You belong to this world, I am not of this world.” This statement emphasizes the fundamental difference between the divine nature of Jesus, which is above the earthly sphere, and the human condition of others. Interestingly, John equates Jesus in this context with “the Lord” as described in Isaiah 45, where it is stated, “I am the Lord, and there is no other. Besides me there is no God.” This underscores a clear contrast between Jesus' claims and the Lord's exclusive status.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus represents the Light and salvation is

seen as coming from faith in Him. Belief in Jesus as the “lamb of God who took away the sin of the world” plays a central role in John’s theology, as stated in John 1:29. Jesus is seen as the sacrifice that takes away the sins of the world, with faith in Him being considered essential for salvation.

In contrast, the Gospel of Thomas does not seem to emphasize the idea of remission of sins through Jesus. Thomas does not emphasize the same concepts of salvation that are so central to John. These differences in theological emphases between John and Thomas illustrate the variety of interpretations within the early Christian tradition. John presents Jesus as a divine entity, separate from human nature and elevated above man. This view has influenced both Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions.

With the rediscovery of the complete Gospel of Thomas, which offers a different perspective on Jesus, John’s view of Jesus is under pressure. This makes John’s vision less indisputable than previously assumed.

The Gospel of Philip

The Gospel of Philip is an early Christian writing that belongs to the so-called 'apocryphal' writings, which means that it is not included in the canonical Bible. The manuscript, which was probably written in the second half of the third century, is part of the so-called Nag Hammadi writings.

The Gospel of Philip is a collection of sayings and conversations attributed to Jesus and his disciples, especially Philip. It emphasizes spiritual insights and mystical themes. Part of the text deals with the relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, in which it is said that Jesus often kissed her and that the other disciples were amazed by this. The writing also contains some gnostic elements, which refer to esoteric knowledge and the importance of inner enlightenment. Because the Gospel of Philip is not included in the canon of most Christian churches, it does not have the same authoritative status as the books in the Bible.

The Gospel of Truth

The Gospel of Truth is a Gnostic writing attributed to the early Christian gnostic Valentinus. The text is found in the Nag Hammadi scriptures and contains gnostic insights and ideas about the nature of God, creation, the human condition and redemption. It emphasizes the importance of knowing and understanding the truth inwardly in order to attain salvation.

The scripture proclaims that the world we live in is a broken and confusing place and that humanity suffers from a kind of spiritual amnesia, forgetting its true nature and connection to God. The author argues that salvation comes from receiving gnosis, a deep inner insight into the truth.

According to the Gospel of Truth, this insight can be gained through the revelation of the Spirit of Truth, who has been sent by God to help people restore their lost knowledge. By gaining this understanding, people can rediscover their true nature and spiritual connection to God and ultimately be freed from the material world.

The Gospel of Truth is an important text within the Gnostic tradition and offers insight into the views on humanity, the cosmos and the search for salvation. It emphasizes the importance of the inner spiritual path and restoring the lost awareness of divine truth.

The Gospel of Thomas

The Gospel of Thomas differs remarkably from the traditional gospels in the New Testament, especially in the way it describes the life of Jesus. A striking feature is that the Gospel of Thomas does not record the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. These crucial events have no theological significance for Thomas. Its absence is a fundamental difference from traditional Gospels, as Jesus' death on the cross plays a central role in traditional Christianity, and Jesus is seen as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of mankind. Thus, the Gospel of Thomas does not contain any reference to this theological teaching, which emphasizes the distinction between the two approaches to Christianity.

Of both the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospels in the New Testament, the oldest, complete manuscripts at our disposal date from the fourth century, demonstrating their similar historical reliability. Nevertheless, there is currently the view among scholars that the Gospel of Thomas is an independent text, and not a text that has been compiled retrospectively from the gospels of the New Testament. According to this view, the original version of the Gospel of Thomas was written about ten years after the death of Jesus. It is even suggested that Thomas may have known Jesus personally and was one of his direct followers. For example, the text differs greatly from the writers of the gospels in the New Testament, who all lived a generation later and did not know Jesus directly. Their writings are based on traditions and stories they have heard from others, leading them to write down their own interpretation of the life of Jesus.

The Gospel of Thomas, unlike the gospels from the Bible, the canonical gospels, also does not tell a story or, if you prefer, biography of Jesus, but contains a list of 114 sayings of Jesus. These statements are all reminiscent of a man who lived life in an almost Buddhist way, who did not perform miracles but did share wisdom that could give the individual a happier life. If we read those wisdoms now, they seem warm, wise and not strange, accustomed as we are to personal growth

and development

It is about the spiritual message of Jesus about finding true enlightenment or reaching a higher consciousness. The idea is that when people can let go of their ego and shame and accept themselves as they are, they will be able to see the truth and thereby be free from fear.

It may suggest that attaining a state of inner freedom and purity can bring man into contact with a state of bliss and harmony.

The Gospel of Thomas

The Gospel of Thomas. In the silence of centuries-old vaults and the whisper of ancient leaves, a story unfolded, preserved in time like a precious treasure.

"These are the secret words," whispered an ancient voice, carried through time, "that Jesus the Living spoke, and which Didymus Judas Thomas recorded."

A group of devoted disciples gathered in the shadow of ancient trees, curious about the mysterious teachings that had been passed down."

The old sage, Thomas, stood up and began to speak.

"These words were secret for two reasons," Thomas explained. His voice was like a soft melody. "First of all, they go against everything that is considered to be true. They shake the foundations of vested interests and sacred beliefs, and in doing so, they disturb the peace of the known. The second secret," he continued, "is that the disciples, shrouded in the veil of misunderstanding, thought there was something mysterious about the teachings of Jesus. A veil of secrecy enveloped the truth they were trying to understand." Those present listened attentively as Thomas unraveled the meaning. "When they called Jesus 'the Living One,' they symbolized his resurrection from the realm of the dead, his liberation from the shadow world. He was not only a teacher of the physical, but also a guide through the boundaries of the known to the mystery." Thomas' words were planted like seeds in the hearts of his listeners, and so they went out into the world, carried by the wind of understanding and searching souls who longed for the truth deep within. And so, the secret words of Jesus the Living continued to live on, as an eternal source of wisdom and insight.

Logion1

“Whoever will find the interpretation of these words will not taste death.”

Whoever will understand these words and live by them will wake up and attain enlightenment. It is not literal but figurative death, from which man must rise. He no longer lives in time, but in an everlasting now, without past and future. That is eternal life. One of the days he will eventually return to where he came from.

Logion 2

Jesus said: “Let him that seeks, seek without ceasing, until he finds. And if he finds, he will be confused. And when he is confused, he will marvel, and he will rule over the All, as ruler he will regain his peace.”

In the silence of self-reflection, he discovered the truth: in order to rise above the herd, he had to let go of what had been considered normal. The illusion of scholarship, driven by self-interest and selfishness, turned out to be a mistake. He undressed his character, realizing that learned behavior was merely a façade. In the nakedness of his true self, he found salvation, from despair to inner peace. The veil fell away, and suddenly he saw clearly. He embraced his humanity and discovered that around him people were acting, dressed in masks of character, profession and religion. In his understanding lay the paradox: knowing that he knew more than the greats of the earth, because he knew that there was nothing more to know. True knowledge was self-knowledge, in which the need for social knowledge and its exposure converged. The world appeared as a play of masks, in which he discovered himself as the player and the spectator.

Explanation: You will first have to detach yourself from the herd, from what you have always seen as normal, understand that everything you have learned in life only serves your own and group interests, that your life, driven by vanity and selfishness, has been a mistake so far and that you have not lived as you could have lived. You have to see through your character as learned behavior, until you have redeemed the last token and are completely naked. Then the last step is given to you, from despair to peace. Then the scales fall from your eyes and only then do you see clearly. Then you understand that you are only human. Then you see all around you how all the people are acting out, adorned with the masks of their character, profession, religion and other group masks, and you cannot imagine at first that they do not see it. It confuses you when you realize that you know more than all the greats of the earth, because you know that you don't need to know anything more.

Because if you know yourself, you know that knowledge is only necessary for a life in society and to refute that knowledge.

But you understand everything.

Logion 3

Jesus said: “If your leaders say, ‘Look, the kingdom is in heaven,’ then the birds of the field will go before you. If your leaders say: it is in the sea, then the fish will go before you. But the kingdom is in your heart and in your eye. If you will know yourself, then you will be known, and you will realize that you are the son of the living Father. If you don't know yourself, then you are in poverty, and you are that poverty yourself.”

In the whisper of the wind, he revealed a truth: distrust the words of the leaders. They promise heavenly rewards and hell fires after death, but the true hell lies dormant in the world of the unconscious, the sleeping here on earth. In the silence of self-knowledge a treasure blossoms, not that of earthly wealth, but of inner wealth. The sage whispered, “Be silent about the ineffable end; Just show the way. Because those who do not know themselves lead a miserable life. Seemingly rich for the world, but poor for the soul. The path to true prosperity lies in understanding the unknown within, in the whispers of self-insight and the richness of inner connectedness.

Explanation: Do not believe the words of your leaders. They say that heaven is the reward and hell the punishment after death. True hell is the world of the dead, the unconscious, the sleeping here on earth. Heaven is the state of the awakened. When you know yourself, you feel one with all creation and with all people. When Jesus talks about the kingdom and the Father, he tries to capture the ineffable in a metaphor. What you can't talk about, you have to keep quiet about. There is no point in talking about the unspeakable end goal, it is enough to show the way. If you don't know yourself, you lead a miserable life. Maybe rich for the world, but poor for yourself.

Logion 4

Jesus said: “The old man in his days will not hesitate to ask a little child of seven days old about the place of life, and he will live. For many of the first will become the last. And they will become one.”

In the realm of pristine days, where the sun casts its first rays on a newborn being, a seven-day-old child awakens. A spark of innocence, not yet wrapped in the cloak of culture, dances in his bright eyes. Not bothered by the baggage that adults carry with them, just a purity that embraces the soul. The child, a lively tableau of purity, plays no role in the play of pretense and deception. His laughter is unfiltered, his tears unhindered. No false needs disturb the simple harmony of his existence, for possession is a foreign language that has not yet been learned.

In the present the child walks, unencumbered by the yoke of the past or future. Yesterday's burden and tomorrow's worries are still uncharted territory. No fears oppress his heart, no problems cast shadows over his shining path. His being knows no gender in behavior, for the stamps of masculinity and femininity have not yet been imprinted on the virgin cloth of his soul. A harmonious interplay of humanity, undisturbed by the divisions that will later be sown.

Oh, how beautiful the child is, free from the split and inauthenticity that plagues the adults. Living proof that true life lies in the art of being, free from masks and shadows. If the adults really want to live, they have to learn from this little seven-day-old child. Let us then, in the silence of this truth, find the way to the unsullied source of our existence. They say that heaven is the reward and hell the punishment after death.

Explanation: The Old Testament says: “All your male children are to be circumcised when they are eight days old. Every uncircumcised man must be removed from his tribe.” (Genesis 17:12.) This circumcision is not only a physically drastic event, but also an initiation into a social order. After circumcision, the identity of the child no longer coincides with itself. It becomes a member of a tribe. The experience of the ‘self’ is replaced by belief in a social mask, a group identity. This also creates alienation from all other fellow human beings. People only see

others as part of their own group or as foreigners. That creates the judgmental look that makes you blind, not only to one's own true self, but also to the true self of all other people. But, if you could look like a child again, like a seven-day-old child who has not yet been circumcised, at yourself and at others, without that beam in your eye, then you will 'see-what-is'.

Logion 5

Jesus said: “Recognize what is before you, and what is hidden will become clear. For nothing is hidden that will not be revealed.”

In the dance of understanding and self-insight, life whispered: “Everything will become clear to you when you know yourself. Untangle the threads of your inner world, and the outer world will be revealed.” People often claim to know themselves with all their flaws. But if the mistakes are known, why do they repeat themselves? And why do they embrace shortcomings as an inevitable fate? Adapting to society sometimes seems like a betrayal of one’s own essence, a sin against the self. But listening to the inner voice can disrupt a harmony with the world around us. A paradox revealed in the choice between self-expression and social conformity.

In this delicate balance, it becomes clear that what is good for nature is often considered harmful to culture, and vice versa. A reflection of the constant struggle between maintaining inner truth and adapting to external expectations. And in that mirror of paradoxes the soul seeks its way, between nature and culture, between listening to itself and harmony with the world. But the question remains: how do you find that child in yourself? How can I learn to look at other people as a child? Be true to yourself, says the following logion.

Explanation: First become a child yourself, the previous logion said. That is the resurrection from one’s own spiritual death. Learn to look like a child, at everything around you, including your fellow man. Look through all the social labels we are used to attaching, and also try to see the child, the original human in the other. Then what was first hidden in your fellow man will also be visible in your neighbor again.

Logion 6

His disciples questioned him. They said to him, “Do you want us to fast? And how shall we pray? Shall we give alms? And what shall we observe as to food?” Jesus said: “Do not tell lies or do what you hate. For all things are clear to ‘Heaven’. For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing that is concealed that will not be revealed.”

In the shadows of fasting, prayer and almsgiving, the story of a searching soul unfolded. “Through these rituals, no man has ever become more human,” whispered the wind of wisdom.

In the looms of social life these actions found their place. Fasting, a self-imposed hardship, turned out to be a paradoxical act in which one sold oneself short in the hope of spiritual enrichment. Prayer, a call to an external god, revealed itself as a search for the inner divine that resides in one’s own soul. Almsgiving, given from property, was regarded as an act of generosity, but at the same time the idea arose that property itself was a form of theft, a deprivation of what should be common property.

In this paradoxical dance of rituals and reflections, the searching soul discovered the fragile balance between individual spiritual growth and the collective responsibility towards the community. And in that search, detached from dogmas and traditions, the soul sought to find her own path, where fasting was not just abstinence, prayer was not just a call to the external, and almsgiving was not just a gesture of possession, but where man could flourish in his full humanity.

Explanation: In logion 4 it was said that you could ask the child in you for the way to the kingdom. Life practice, it is made clear here, is the learning tool to keep the child in yourself awake. How do you do that? The child in you will fall asleep again when you start learning all kinds of new rules by heart and living your life according to those rules. And you certainly can’t learn to see your fellow man by imposing rules of life on others. What then? It is essential that you are true to yourself.

Logion 7

Jesus said: “Blessed is the lion that becomes man when it is eaten by man. And cursed is the man who is eaten by the lion, and the man will become a lion.”

In the silence of creation, a story unfolded about man, the crowned ruler of existence. “If man is the crown,” whispered the wisdom of the wind, “then the lion’s eating is an upgrade for the lion, an exalted place in the realm of beings.” The sharing of the flesh, a ceremony of transmission, where the lion dissolves into man and thus finds his place in the cosmic hierarchy. A dance of upgrading, where the power of the wild is intertwined with the human experience.

But figuratively, wisdom spoke with an ambiguous tone. ‘Man must swallow up culture and leave nothing of it,’ a call for total absorption. For in the symbiosis of man and culture lies a delicate balance. When culture swallows, man, harmony is disturbed, and man jeopardizes his own existence. Thus unfolds a truth in which man, as the crown of creation, recognizes his role—not only in his physical interactions with the life around him but also in the more subtle dance with the culture that shapes his being. An invitation to be aware of the interaction between man and the world, in which harmony is preserved, and man retains his exalted place.

Explanation: In logion 2 it was promised that you can become king over your own life. Logion 6 asked for being true to yourself. But isn't that nice and selfish, just thinking about yourself? He who has truly found the child in himself, will be able to see and love the human being in his neighbor as himself. Then selfish desire no longer plays a role.

Logion 8

And He said, “Man is like a wise fisherman who cast his net into the sea. He pulled it up from the sea, full of small fish. Among them the wise fisherman found a good big fish. He threw all the small fish back into the sea. Without hesitation, he chose the big fish. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

In the quiet chambers of the self, a story of value and detachment unfolded. “Of all that man possesses,” whispered the inner voice, “his true nature is the only precious jewel. The rest, just baggage, ballast that you have to shed to reveal your true self.”

The weight of possession, a cloak of illusions, surrounds the soul like a dense fog. But in the midst of that mist, the true self shines like an imperishable light. An invitation to shake off the burden of material possessions and to stand naked in front of the mirror of one's own essence. Because in the dance of detachment and self-development, the truth comes to the fore. Only when the ballast of worldly possessions is thrown off can man's true nature shine like an unpolished jewel. And in this metamorphosis of stripping and revealing, the soul discovers the preciousness of its own authentic being.

Explanation: Do you want to delve into a spiritual tradition? Follow the wise lessons with friendly and benevolent attention. But don't follow anyone but yourself. Follow your own moments of recognition and learn to trust them, because those are the signposts on your own path. Only in this way will you be able to penetrate to the mystical core of a tradition.

Logion 9

Jesus said: “Behold, the sower went out. He took a handful of seed and scattered it. Some seeds fell on the road, and the birds came and ate them. Other seeds fell on the rocky ground, where they did not take root or bear grain. Still others fell among the thorns, which choked the seeds, and the worms ate them. But others fell on good soil, and they yielded good fruit—some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some a hundredfold. “

In the silent gardens of wisdom, the master waved with gentle words: “Only when my teachings fall on a good breeding ground can they bear fruit, and not just a few, but abundantly.” An echo of insight that vibrated through the air like a promise. But the culture people, anchored in their stubbornness, had hidden themselves behind walls of entrenched beliefs. Deaf to the whispers of common sense, they had their inner voices smothered under layers of self-made laws and rules. In that self-imposed prison they were constantly in conflict with their own essence.

The master, a source of clarity, offered teachings as seeds. But just as seeds only thrive in fertile soil, so too did his words become fruitful only if they could land on a breeding ground of openness and receptivity. Only when the barriers of stubbornness are broken down can the seed of wisdom germinate and bear the fruits of understanding.

Explanation: You have found the mystical core of a teaching and now you want to tell others about it. But that is not easy. Some find it quite interesting but then leave it at that. Others call it nonsense and throw it far away; They think you're woolly, can't be taken seriously anymore. They are worried about you. There will also be those who accuse you of deception and deception. Still others will want to use your words to make a new doctrine out of it, to gain power and fame with it. But sometimes your words fall on fertile ground. Then your words are like seed that makes the other person rise, bearing fruit themselves, the fruits of recognition.

Logion 10

***And Jesus said: “I have cast the fire upon the earth.
And behold, I keep it until it flares up.”***

In the glowing heart of conviction, Jesus cherished the certainty that his message would eventually embrace the world like wildfire, paving a path of awakening. He saw culture and its falsehood go up in flames, and in that fervent expectation, he hoped for a massive choice for simplicity, truthfulness and justice. He understood that those in power would resist with force, but his vision extended beyond the fiery resistance. For him, the future was imbued with the hope that people would awaken, that the simple truth would unravel the complex fabric of deception.

Yet, as history testifies, power has often triumphed at the expense of love. The victors have filled the pages of time with their triumphs. But in the silence of this truth, Jesus emphasized that power never triumphs definitively through might itself. The eternal law, like a gentle melody, whispered that power ultimately bows to the power of love. In the shadow of history, hope awaits a day when love triumphs over power, where simple truth triumphs over deception. In that lofty vision, Jesus remains a reminder of the timeless truth that love triumphs supreme, and that history reveals its true power in the eternal dance between power and love.

Explanation: There are all kinds of stories about God, Jesus and resurrection. Some religious traditions require you to take those stories literally. Taking those stories literally is what they call a belief. And if you don't believe, then... Thomas is not about a religion. Thomas is about a knowing that is waiting deep in your consciousness to be shaken awake. You can sometimes experience that as a moment of recognition. You can't 'organize' those moments. But you can learn to be open to that.

Logion 11

Jesus said: "This heaven will pass away, and the heaven above will pass away. And the dead do not live, and the living will not die. In the days when you ate what is dead, you made it into something that is alive. When you come to the light, what will you do? When you where one, you became two. But when you are two, what will you do?"

In the whisper of eternity resounds the voice of a wise seer who proclaims that man always remains human, regardless of his thoughts and however strange his behavior may be. Man is destined for happiness even if he resists it, and his true essence can only be attained by returning to himself. The degenerate man, trapped in appearance, lives a life that is only a shadow of true existence. But once awakened, there is no turning back to the slumber of ignorance. Enlightenment sheds an inexorable light on the path of truth.

As a child, you where one with the intact essence of existence. But as society left its imprint on your soul, your life was torn apart by contradictions. Between character and nature, between the inside and the outside, between the mask and the true face. An existential crossroads reveals itself, and the question resounds like an echo through time: what do you choose?

The choice between appearance and being, between the fragmented parts of the self, is a call to self-reflection. In the mirrors of these dualities, the soul discovers its own path to unity. The story of man, as a quest for wholeness, continues to resonate in the silent chambers of existence. There may be new experiences, especially if you don't cling to the previous one. But take as a principle to stay true to yourself. If you and the All are no longer one, turn to your heart in listening, and wait patiently for it to speak to you again, for you now know the voice.

Explanation: One spiritual fantasy comes, another goes.

They are dreams of redemption, self-invented or parroted by others. It doesn't make you better, but it doesn't make you worse either. Everything remains the same. But once you have brought the texts of a tradition back to life, by calibrating them in your own experience, what do you do? Do you linger on that

one wonderful moment from long ago, when you brought dead letters back to life in your own experience? Then you stood in the light. Then you just coincided with all-that-is. Then you and the cosmos were one. But then? Then you turn two again. And that is inevitable.

That's just what happens after a mystical experience. There's nothing you can do about that. And maybe, to your bitter disappointment, everything remains exactly as it was before: the world around you is the same as before that experience. But you, you see it differently forever.

Logion 12

The disciples said to Jesus, “We know that you will depart from us. Who will be our master then? Jesus said to them, “Wherever you are, go to James the Just, for the sake of whom heaven and earth came into being.”

In the mysterious gardens of self-development, wisdom reverberated like a gentle melody: “Do not be bound to the master outside yourself. In the depths of every human being resides his inner master, the whisper of conscience. The true guidance comes from the master who urges you to listen to yourself. In that unconditional self-knowledge, a person rises as one’s own master.”

Every person carries within him the gift of wisdom, and in that inner journey to self-knowledge one becomes both the student and the teacher. For as the timeless truth speaks, it is everyone’s birthright to acquire wisdom. In this realm of knowing and not-knowing, there is no middle ground; A man is either wise or foolish. A deep analogy revealed itself in the sea of consciousness. Whether you float an el above the surface or 500 fathoms below it, both will drown if they are not in touch with their inner flow. But he who rises above that, who embraces his inner master, can walk on water, in harmony with the waves of experience and the depths of the soul. The story of man, a journey of self-development, continues to resonate as a timeless melody in the eternal symphony of existence.

Explanation: This logion is almost certainly an addition that was written after the death of Jesus, in the context of a struggle for power among his followers. This judgment is therefore about a situation that only arose after his death. This is an attempt to establish an absolute authority, as later the Roman pope claimed to be the successor of Peter. There was a mystical experience (the big fish, from logion 8), but it seems as if it fades over time. You're two again. This can evoke a poignant feeling of emptiness. You could try to fill that void by placing yourself under the authority of a spiritual master, who speaks a language that seems to be about your own experience. Don't do that. Make sure you remain your own master, even if you wander

through the desert and you have lost all direction. Resolve to stay true to the source within yourself, even if it is temporarily not flowing. Only those who remain faithful to the source within themselves, even if it is only a memory at a moment, will you be able to find that 'source of living water' as an experience again.

Logion 13

Jesus said to his disciples: “Compare me to someone and tell me who I am like.” Simon Peter said, “You seem like a righteous angel.” Matthew said, “You seem like a wise philosopher.” Thomas said, “Master, my mouth is utterly powerless to say who you resemble.” Jesus said: “I am not your master. Because you have drunk, you have intoxicated yourself by the bubbling spring, which I have weighed.”

In the silent shadows of everyday life, where the common people weigh their cares and carry their burdens, there walked a man, apparently simple and unobtrusive. His stature bore the traces of a distant past, scars carved like stories into the skin of a traveler who had walked many roads. The true man, hidden behind the veil of ordinariness, was an enigma to the world. He was like a master of life, an alchemist who had transformed the raw elements of his existence into the purest essence. His eyes, deep and penetrating, looked without fear at the world around him. Grief had left his heart, like a vague memory of a distant dream. In the theater of society, he danced to the rhythm of the everyday, an unobtrusive actor in the spectacle of human existence. He understood the rules of the game but didn't let himself be caught by them. His soul hovered above the banality of earthly worries, like a free bird flying high above the clouds.

No burden weighed on his shoulders no fear bound his mind. Tomorrow was only a promise, not a source of fear. Life was a river, and he floated on it like a skilled sailor, the course determined by the current, not by compulsive control. The true man, freed from the chains of sickness and misfortune, knew that his being was connected to something greater than the body he inhabited. A deep sense of security enveloped him like a warm blanket, and he smiled at the cosmos, a smile that was not tainted by earthly concerns. He silently shared his wisdom with those who had ears to hear and hearts to understand. “You are gods!” he whispered, like an echo from times long past. But many did not understand, for the truth was like a stone that weighed too heavy for the hands of the ignorant.

Only the disciples who walked the path of transformation would eventually understand the master's words. Only when they themselves had risen from the ashes of their limitations would they embrace the depth of his teachings. For in being like the master, in becoming like 'Jesus', lay the true revelation. But oh, the world was deaf to the language of the awakened soul. And so, the true man went on, a mystery in human form, walking among the stars while the world saw his true nature only as a shadow.

Explanation: Peter and Matthew think they know Jesus.

But what do they do? They just put a social label on Jesus: angel, philosopher, and they think he is. These are the conventional ideas that make you blind, that make you not really see your fellow man. They think they know Jesus, but their knowledge is not original. As a result, they do not know Jesus. Jesus taught Thomas to really see. Thomas understands that the Jesus he has seen cannot be captured in conventional ideas. Thomas sees the Christ in Jesus. His blindness has been lifted. Yet Thomas also makes a mistake here.

He thinks that only Jesus is a Christ, and he himself is not.

Jesus corrects that mistake. Thomas calls Jesus 'master'.

But Jesus answers: "I am not your master." What Thomas sees in Jesus, he can also experience in himself. If Thomas were to connect with the Christ in himself, he himself would be his own master, his own inner king, just like Jesus. Then Jesus took him and spoke three words to him. When Thomas returned, the others asked, "What did Jesus say?" Thomas said, "If I tell you one of these words, you will pick up stones and throw them at me. And fire will come out of the stones and burn you."

Logion 14

Jesus told them: “If you fast, you will give yourself cause for sin. And if you pray, you will be condemned. And if you give alms, you will harm your soul. And if you go to any country and go about in those parts, if they receive you, eat what they will set before you and heal the sick among them. For what enters your mouth will not defile you. But whatever comes out of the mouth will defile you.”

In the glow of the setting sun, where the air mixed with the last breaths of the day, a wise voice spoke words that floated through time like gentle breezes. “Fasting is against nature,” the voice whispered, like a melody unfolding the secret harmonies of the universe. “Prayer requires a personal god,” it sounded, like an echo reaching the depths of the inner self.

Under the canopy of the stars, where the darkness blended the contours of the world, words were woven like threads of a cosmic carpet. “Almsgiving is only possible when there is inequality between people,” it sounded like a mantra of justice in a world of unequal shadows. “Return among men,” the voice continued, like a guide through the maze of human experience. “Play their game again and don't worry about what you'll eat.” The words danced like free birds in the air, freed from the chains of dogmas and precepts. “What you can and can't eat, what is and isn't unhealthy, are just man-made regulations,” the voice proclaimed with a force that shook the foundations of convention. “If you're a whole person, you can eat anything.” The words were like raindrops feeding the thirsty earth, refreshing the mind with the truth of freedom.

“You do not get sick by wrong food,” said the voice with the authority of ancient wisdom, “but by what goes out of the mouth.” And in that silence between the sentences, in the breathing space of the universe, echoed the truth that thoughts are the source of both illness and healing.

“For what comes out of the mouth comes out of the mind,” whispered the voice as a reminder of the connection between spirit and manifestation. “Dishonesty, hatred, vexation, greed, selfishness, jealousy, desires, malice, injustice, cunning and deceit. That makes people sick.” Like a light piercing the darkness, the words pierced the hearts of those who listened. “If nothing that goes into the mouth makes you sick, nothing that goes into the mouth makes you better.” The voice brought a truth that blew

through the mind like a liberating wind. "Medicines, vitamins and healthy food is for the sleeping," the voice spoke with compassion. "It keeps them alive but doesn't let them live." In the silence of the night rested the words as a promise of awakening, an invitation to explore the depth of existence. "Heal the sick by showing them the way to wholeness and simplicity," it sounded like a call for change. "After all, diseases are only symptoms of man's split and should show him the way to himself." The night air held its breath, and in that pause resounded the truth that the living, do not get sick. "For there is no need of any more warnings," muttered the voice as a blessing, "to alert them that they have strayed from the right path."

"Do not heal the body, it is in vain," the voice ended with the softness of a last sigh. "But heal the soul, and the body will follow automatically. After all, a healthy mind lives in a healthy body. And so, the words intertwined with the night, like stars pointing the way to the eternal source of wholeness.

Explanation: Now that some important principles of the gnostic spiritual path have been clarified, a further elaboration of logion 6 follows. There it was already said that it is not about compliance with rules, but about truthfulness. Now it is added that the belief in rules that you make also creates the violation of them. By the rule that you should fast, you create gluttony. If you submit to an external god, you create your own separation from God. If you give alms to a beggar, you confirm your unequal relationship. If you believe in rules, you become the prisoner of those rules. But if you open yourself up to someone else, then you can recognize in that other something that is bound to no time, no country, a doctrinality. And if the other person is in spiritual need, do not take advantage of the weakness of the other person by trying to convert that other person to your own faith, but help the other person to discover the mystical core within himself. And do not hesitate to use the language of his own country, his own and familiar spiritual tradition. Initiation into a spiritual tradition consists in learning to speak the language of that tradition, of the secret words. But that's not what it's really about. It is essential that you also learn to understand with your heart.

Logion 15

Jesus said: “If you see someone who is not born of a woman, prostrate yourself on your face and worship him. He is your Father.”

In the dance of the universe, where stars shed their light on the swaying earth, the story of unity springs from the womb of a woman. She, the primeval mother, carries the ancient secrets of life. From her embrace come we, born from the same fabric that binds the stars together. But deep in the stillness of the heart, when the boundaries of the self are blurred, a truth is revealed.

When you feel one with everything, when the breath of the universe becomes your breath, then the “seeing” arises. Not with eyes of flesh, but with the inner eye of the soul. There, in the silence of that unity, the presence of what was once called ‘God’ with a capital letter unfolds. It is not a god exalted above the clouds, but a god that pulsates in the rhythm of every heartbeat, that whispers in the breeze of the wind. It is a divine awareness that what makes everything live, is also your own source of life.

In that moment of seeing, the world becomes a temple, and every being a living altar. For in the unity of the soul the old whispering resounds: “See, feel, be one with the divine, which lives in the essence of everything.” And so the story of life becomes a journey, in which every breath whispers a sacred phrase, and the origin of our existence unfolds in the embrace of universal love.

Explanation: This logion is a sequel to logion 11. If you adopt the attitude towards your fellow human beings as described there, then a spark can fly from the other person to you. In an open encounter with a true fellow human being, you can sometimes experience something special, something that transcends the temporality of life. There is an unmistakable parallel here with the traditional greeting from India: “I greet the light in you.” So, the same thing is said as in India, but with images from Jewish culture. And the message here is: what you see in the other person is also your own source, your own father. If you really would see the light in the other, then know that the light

in the other is also your own light. Do not make the mistake of thinking that the light you see in the other person is a unique characteristic of the other person, in which you yourself would not have a part. That is the pitfall of slavish worship of spiritual masters or of labeling yourself as a layman compared to priests who claim to be above you. A true teacher, like Jesus, will not accept that veneration, but will refer you back to your own light, as was already evident in logion 13, where He referred Thomas back to the mastery in himself.

Logion 16

Jesus said: “Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the world, and they do not know that I have come to throw discord upon the earth, fire, sword and war. For there will be five in one house; Three will be against two, the father against the son, and the son against the father. And they will stand there alone.”

Under the lee of ancient trees, Jesus stood, his eyes permeated with time. He understood that his message would unleash a separation of minds. “He who is not for me is against me,” was his prophecy.

In the fabrics of relationships, he saw power and influence as the foundation of societies. Doggedly, those in power would fight to maintain control if free spirits refused to play along.

Jesus knew that nonviolence would be the shield of the free. For power is not destroyed by power, but by the power of an unfettered conscience. In the smiles of the freemen, he saw the greatest threat to a culture. Happiness, independence, contentment, and freedom where the weapons of those who refused to be chained. His message was not a call for armed revolution, but an invitation to a revolution of the mind. And so, Jesus stood, like a beacon in the darkness, whispering his words as a promise of a new dawn to the free souls who spread their wings.

Explanation: There are many people who believe that there will only be peace on earth if we all have the same opinion, or if we all adhere to the same religion, or if we all agree with each other. However, striving for peace in this way always destroys itself because it cannot tolerate that there are dissenters. They must therefore be converted, expelled or even exterminated in the so-called interest of peace. What Jesus means is different. Peace on earth will only be achieved if we allow our fellow human beings to be different from ourselves, if we allow each other to develop our personal individuality, if we are willing to experience ourselves and our fellow human beings as unique loners and to see the beauty of it, if we do not keep each other small but encourage each other, if we allow each other everyone's own light. But the fundamentalist ideologies of the

idea of unity will not tolerate that. That will evoke fire, sword and war, burning at the stake and crusades, re-education institutions and terrorist attacks. But this logion is not only about our relationship with our fellow human beings. It's also about ourselves. Those who really want peace must first stop fighting against themselves and make peace with themselves. Only those who have made peace with themselves can grant their fellow men their own truth in peace. Those who are divided within themselves will unleash their inner struggle on the world.

Logion 17

Jesus said: “I will give you what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor hand touched, and which has not entered into the mind of any man.” usually Jesus is seen as the fulfillment of the Old Testament. But not in Gnosticism. There, on the contrary, Jesus means a radical break with the Old Testament. The God of Jesus is a God of love and cannot possibly be the same as the vengeful God who is from the Old Testament, many gnostic texts tell. But that is certainly not the only innovation that Jesus introduced. All kinds of words that had been given a traditional interpretation in the Jewish tradition are given a new meaning by Jesus. For example, the resurrection story from the book of Daniel is revised. The resurrection was understood; the resurrection from the physical death of men at the end of time. But the gnostic Jesus describes the resurrection as a spiritual process.

In the silent domain where time and eternity embrace each other, there was a human being who had taken the last step. His footsteps had transgressed the boundaries of the known, and he had awakened in the opulence of an unprecedented consciousness. There, in the midst of the mystery that the universe spun, he experienced a mesmerizing sense of unity. Not just seeing with the eyes, nor hearing with the ears, nor feeling with the hands. It was a sublime experience that defied the limits of the senses and opened the gates of the soul. The last step was not a journey of distance, but of dimensions. It was an awakening to a reality, deeply woven into the fabric of existence. The man who had taken the last step became one with the melodious symphony of creation, felt the pulsations of galaxies as heartbeats, and saw the dance of atoms as a cosmic choreography. His mind, freed from the shackles of limitation, wandered through time like a timeless traveler. Experiencing was a transformation from the everyday to the extraordinary, a metamorphosis from simplicity to infinity. He was not a spectator of life, but a participant in the cosmic dance. It was as if every cell of his being shared in the universal breath, every thought was an echo of eternal wisdom.

No words could capture the depths of his experience, for it was a language without sounds, an understanding without concepts. It was a state of being in which the soul was no longer separate from the universe but became one with the essence of all that is. And in that moment of unity, man tasted the nectar of eternity. He was no longer a pilgrim in search of answers, but a discoverer who embraced the secrets of existence. As the stars sang their eternal hymns and the wind whispered its gentle tales, the man who had taken the final step continued his journey through the boundless realms of awakening, guided by the inner melodies of creation.

Explanation: In the Jewish tradition, the term ‘the kingdom’ plays an important role. Jesus also gave a new interpretation to that word. That is why a warning is appropriate here, perhaps especially for the contemporary listeners of Jesus: Beware, this is different from what you may have already thought you knew. It is something you cannot perceive with your senses. You can't grasp it with thinking either. It's really different. This also requires a different way of understanding.

Logion 18

The disciples said to Jesus, “Tell us, what will our end be like?” Jesus said: “Have you discovered the beginning, then, that you are now seeking the end? Where the beginning is, there will be the end. Blessed is the one who places himself in the beginning. He will also know the end, and he will not taste death.”

Your true self is your origin, your beginning as a human being. But as a human being you can forget who you really are. Then you get lost in a strange reality. When you find yourself again, at the end of a spiritual recovery, then you are back to your own origin, to your own beginning and therefore back to reality. The traditional Old Testament story of the apocalypse, as told in the Bible book of Daniel, also includes the view that at the end of time all people will rise from their graves. They will then be judged, for some to destruction, for others for eternal salvation. But Jesus also gives this a different, new meaning.

You can already be dead during this life. And the resurrection does not take place at the end of time, but when you have discovered the beginning of life within yourself, when you have found the seven-day-old child again, as in logion 4. So, this is also an answer to the mysterious statement of the first logion “And he will not taste death.” Then you can also say with this logion: “Blessed is he who stands in the beginning.” The following logion further elaborates on that idea.

In the silent shadows of endless becoming and decay, a story unfolded that had its roots in the cycle of time. There, where the end was an echo of the beginning, and the old man in the dance of time became like the child he once was. It is a mysterious weaving of days and nights, where the present holds the key to understanding the inescapable end. “As you were, you will become,” whispered the ancient voices like a mantra embracing the essence of life. In the mirrors of the soul reflected the truth that revealing the present was the key to unlocking the secrets of the end. Because those who do not see through the present cannot unravel the fabric of time. Deep in the maze of memories, the realization awoke that self-knowledge was the journey to the origin. “If you know yourself, you know how you once were and how you became who you were,” whispered the wind of wisdom, like a breeze lifting the veil of forgetfulness.

It was called returning to the origin, a journey to the core of existence, to the original melodies of the soul. There, in the silence of self-insight, the ability to understand, embrace, and accept what was and what will be awakened. The endless cycle was like a dance of light and shadow, where the end and the beginning embraced each other like lost soul mates. And so, the story continued, like a melody that reverberated eternally, the old man and the child hand in hand, on the way to a timeless destination, returning to the origin, returning to himself.

Explanation: In the Jewish tradition, the apocalypse, the stories about a cosmic battle at the end of time, played an important role. In the time of Jesus, many Jews believed that the end times were near. The disciples of Jesus believe that Jesus may be a prophet, comparable to those from the Old Testament. Can he perhaps say something about that approaching end time? And that's why they ask the question: "The end, what will it be like?" But, as promised in the previous logion, Jesus gives a surprisingly new answer to a very ordinary question: "Where the beginning is, there will also be the end." Jesus does here again what he always does in the Gospel of Thomas. For the Jews of that time, the listeners of Jesus, 'the end' is a moment in history. It is a historic moment, still hidden in the womb of the future, but Jesus uses the words and images of that time-bound vision of the end times to describe a spiritual process.

Logion 19

Jesus said: “Blessed is he who is before he became. If you become my disciples and listen to my words, these stones will serve you. For there are five trees for you in Paradise that remain undisturbed in summer and winter, and whose leaves never fall off. He who will know them will not taste death.”

In the garden of the inner self, where the flowers of the soul bud, a happy soul walked. She was the one who had not lost herself, not fragmented by the inner divisions that so often embrace the world. Fortunately, like a child still dancing in the paradise of innocence, she had not been driven away by the hard blows of injustice. She was living proof that the purity of the heart did not need to be darkened by the shadows of the world. In her clear eyes the stars of understanding reverberate. She heard not only with ears, but with a deeper resonance of the soul. Her vision was not clouded by the haze of illusions, but clear as the blank slate of the now.

She smelled the blossoms of truth, tasted the sweetness of unsullied life, and felt the vibrations of the universe without distortion from the shadows of the past. She was like a lotus rising pristine from the muddy waters of experience. The happy soul had attained enlightenment, not as a far-away shining light, but as an inner glow that illuminated its path. It was like a breeze whispering softly in the ears of those who took the time to listen, a guide for those who were willing to see without the veil of prejudice.

In the garden of the inner self, where the timeless truths bloomed like fragrant flowers, the happy soul stood like a living poetry. Her story was not of loss and division, but of unity and awakening. And as the world continued its dance of chaos and change, it remained a source of peace and clarity, a living testament to the beauty of being who you really are.

Explanation: In the Old Testament tradition, God created the entire cosmos at a single point in time, specifically ‘in the beginning.’ Since that moment, the world has continued to exist independently. However, Gnosticism presents a different creation myth. According to this view, the world is perpetually

being created, continually emerging anew at every moment. Just as light radiates ceaselessly from the sun, reality flows from the primordial Source of being in an ongoing process of creation. This constant outpouring of reality from its source is known as emanation. The primordial Source of being is referred to in Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus, as the 'birth-giver,' a term signifying the origin of all things. The term is neuter, meaning it has no gender, much like our word 'older,' which denotes a characteristic without implying gender. which conveys a characteristic without gender.

In the Greek and Latin New Testaments there is often mention of 'the Father'. Jesus speaks there about 'My Father'. When gnostic texts speak of 'the Father', they do not mean 'the Father' as a God in heaven, at a considerable distance from the earth, but as the source from which all beings flow, the Aramaic birth-giver.

In the traditional Christian conception of God, there is an unbridgeable distance between man and God. Man and God are seen as essentially unequal. In contrast, Gnosticism offers a different perspective. As human beings, we are directly connected to the source. We come from it. Just as a ray of light is related to the sun, so too is man related to the source. We have "the features of the Father." We are "the Father's heirs."

There is a great affinity here with the Buddhist concept of 'buddha-nature'. Every human being, all beings and all things have buddha-nature. The spiritual path of Buddhism aims to unite the consciousness of the individual human being with his own Buddha-nature, which is at the same time the Buddha-nature of all reality. In Gnosticism, similarly, every human being possesses the nature of Christ. Gnosticism, as a spiritual tradition, seeks to connect the individual's personal consciousness with the superpersonal Christ consciousness. It is timeless. It was there before you did, even before Abraham was: "Truly I say to you," Jesus said: "before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58). According to the tradition of gnosticism, man therefore has two natures. The Christ-nature that participates in the timeless eternity and that is the source in every human being. That idea of presence is comparable to the Jewish concept of Shekina: the presence of God. In the Jewish tradition,

God is the omnipresent One. So he is also present in man. But every human being is also an individual with a temporary existence between birth and death. That is personal nature. Every human being is a twin. Thomas, the writer of the Gospel of Thomas, is therefore also a twin. In the prologue he calls himself Judas Thomas 'the twins'. He is both the personal Thomas and a participant in the superpersonal Christ. He has connected his time-bound consciousness of himself as a person with the timeless consciousness that transcends his individuality, the Christ within him. When it is said in the letter to the Colossians in the New Testament, "The secret is this: Christ dwells in you," then that is clearly understandable to a Gnostic. And that is the secret that the Gospel of Thomas is also about.

Logion 20

The disciples said to Jesus, “Tell us, what is the kingdom of heaven?” Jesus said: “It looks like a mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds. If it falls on tilled earth, it becomes a large plant and becomes a shelter for the birds of the air.”

In the silence of a single soul, where the echoes of justice rippled like gentle waves, a story of hope and change sprang up. A loner, wrapped in the garb of justice, stood as a beacon of light in the darkness of inequality. His message was like a seed that fell on fertile soil, a call to restore the original state, a desire for a just world where the scales of justice would be balanced. In the solitude of his principle, the loner whispered words of equality and compassion. But if humanity opened its ears to his message, there would be a revolution, like a fire that spreads quickly and illuminates everything in its path.

It was as if the spirit of justice sang a soft melody, first in the hearts of a few, but then as a crescendo that embraced all of humanity. A movement, like the wind whispering through the trees and unleashing a wave of change. The righteous world, born in the vision of a single heart, would spread like a wave. From soul to soul, from community to community, the movement would break the broken chains of inequality like an indomitable stream of justice. He was the loner not just an individual, but a catalyst for a collective awakening. His message was like a torch passed from hand to hand, illuminating the paths to a just world.

And as the movement unfolded, borders were torn down and walls of inequality torn down. The righteous world became no longer just a dream, but a living reality, born from the spark of one and spread by the power of many. So, the story continued, as a call for justice that resonated through time, an inspiration to those who dared to believe that the power of one heart could change the world.

Explanation: In every human being there is a spark of God, even a Christ, as explained in the previous logion. Some people can't believe that about themselves. But if someone is confirmed by a fellow human being, with a loving gesture, an encouraging word, or even just a listening ear, it can be an impetus for personal flourishing. Encouraging your fellow man costs nothing but can

be valuable to that fellow man. Such a loving confirmation from the other is like sowing a tiny mustard seed that can grow into a beautifully flowering plant, which in turn can scatter many mustard seeds. In Buddhism this is called 'elevating' your fellow man, an important part of the Buddhist spiritual path.

Logion 21

Mary said to Jesus, "What do your disciples resemble?" Jesus said: "They are like children who live on a land that does not belong to them. When the owners of the land come, they will say, 'Get away from our field.' The children went out in their subordinate sentences to give them the land back. And there fore I say, if the master of the house knows that the thief is coming, he will watch before he comes, and he will not let him come into his land to steal his possessions. So be on your guard against the world. Arm yourself with great strength, so that the robbers do not find a way to get to you. Because the difficulties you expect will come. Let a wise man live in your midst! When the grain was ripe, the thief came hastily, sickle in hand, and harvested it. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

In the silent shadows of timeless wisdom, a story unfolded, shrouded in truths. "As long as the disciples are not like the master, they have not understood the message," whispered the ancient voices, like an echo that found resonance through the ages. "Seek first the kingdom and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you in addition," spoke the universal teachings, as a call to discover the deepest essence of being. But silence was the door to understanding, because as long as the kingdom was not found, it remained better to wander in silence. And when the soul awoke, rose from the dead of ignorance, it felt like a stranger in society. A society that could not understand its strangeness, and so the world said: "You have no business here." And in that rejection, the awakened soul wiped the dust off her feet and let the world take its course. The establishment, feeling threatened by unarmed revolutions of truth and justice, armed itself against those who preached peaceful change. So, the old story warned: "Be on your guard, see through their arguments, don't be tempted to join in their deceitful game." The call was not for the socially successful, not for the successful for what they achieve and possess, not for those in power who embraced the status quo, but for the hungry for justice, for the oppressed, the abused and for the mourning, and those who are full of love. They were ripe for the message. In this narrative, truth danced like an invisible melody, and

those who recognized the notes of justice were called to listen. A call that resounds in the hearts of those who dare to dream of a world steeped in truth, where justice is the currency of the soul.

Explanation: The shedding of clothing represents the death of their 'old man' and the house represents the heart. Guard it well, otherwise the thief (Satan) will come and steal knowledge and understanding from you. When you learn something (ripe grain), make sure you harvest and guard it, otherwise someone will steal it (again Satan) and you will lose it. and vision of being human, which means that a person can free himself from the grip of fate, symbolically represented by leaving his clothes behind. Read, this is a text that describes how the human soul can be in spiritual slavery and how it can free itself from it.

Logion 22

Jesus saw children being suckled. He said to his disciples: “These suckling little ones are like those who enter into the kingdom.” The disciples said, “Shall we then enter the kingdom as children?” Jesus said: “If you have made the two one, and if you make the internal like the external, and the external like the interior, and the upper as the lower, and if you make the masculine and the feminine one, so that the masculine is not masculine, and the feminine is no longer feminine, and if you form eyes instead of one eye, a hand instead of a hand, a foot instead of a foot, a parable instead of a parable, then you will enter.”

In the fabric of time and inner discovery, a story of true liberation sprang up. “Become like the children,” Jesus whispered, as a cry to the unsullied purity that envelops the child’s soul.

In the dance of the daily play, where masks were worn as shadows of learned roles, the message was to discard the imposed behavior. It was a call to stop showing an act and take off the mask so that the true essence could shine. “As you are on the inside, so you must be on the outside,” resounded like a mantra in the silent chambers of self-reflection. The road to enlightenment was paved with the choice to free oneself from the learned burdens, from all inauthenticity and dishonesty. In the tension difference between inside and outside, where emotions bubble like untamed waves, lay the invitation to find harmony. And when inside and outside coincided, apathy arose, the serene peace of inner peace.

The feminine woman and the masculine man, once cast in the forms of cultural expectations, were dismantled as artificial constructs. Gender was the only distinction, while the rest was just learned frills and superficiality. The true man discovered that his true self was not a culturally formed mask, but a pure being. Seeing, feeling, walking... everything changed, imbued with a new authenticity. The outside now reflected the richness of the inner world. And so, the true man continued his journey through the apparent reality of the everyday, seemingly the same but profoundly changed. As a mirror of truth, as an embodiment of inner integrity, he walked in the world, reflecting the echo of his true self.

Explanation: Jesus says that you should become like children who are suckled. The students understand that comment literally and wonder how. But of course the image of a child at the mother's breast is a symbol. It clearly has to do with what follows: making the two one or breaking down dualities. People are inclined to divide reality into good and evil, friend and foe, men and women, heaven and earth, matter and spirit. Everything they experience is interpreted in those dualities. And almost always a value judgment is attached to it. One half of reality is good, the other is bad. But in doing so, you lose sight of the totality, of the unity of everything. It makes you blind because you start looking at reality through the glasses of your own value judgment. Your own judgment is the proverbial beam in your own eye. By despising one half of reality, and glorifying the other half, you lose sight of the wholeness of reality, including the wholeness of yourself. So, you not only become blind to the reality outside of you, but also to the reality inside you. Your value judgment about reality gives everything a veil behind which real reality is hidden. You see the interpretation, the judgment, not the real, whole reality. If you were to let go of the attachment to that value judgment about reality, that veil would fall away. As a result, you also restore yourself to your original unity.

Logion 23

Jesus said: "I'll choose you, one out of a thousand and two out of ten thousand. And they will stand there as a loner."

In the light of a hidden truth, a story unfolded in which the paradoxes of happiness were illuminated like dancing shadows. "Few will believe that you will not be happy until you give up everything," whispered the voice of the sage, like an echo echoing in the hollows of the human heart. For in the loss of social life, in the farewell to superficial appearances, true life would reveal itself as a budding flower. "The harlots and tax collectors, those who have little to lose, will go first," the story continued as an unwritten prophecy. Those who have fathomed the world in its raw reality, they will be the pioneers of discovering the treasure that lies in giving up.

In the silence of their courage, in defying societal norms, they would find what many have lost. Because he who gives up everything, would receive everything. A paradox that was written like a secret code on the door of inner abundance. The seekers, those who had made the effort to free themselves, would be the last. Not because they lost their way, but because they stopped to find. In their apparent remaining, the deepest discoveries unfolded. Thus, it was written that the former would be the last, not in the race of worldly achievements, but in the timeless quest for inner fulfillment. And as the world turned its spiral of striving, they, those who dared to give up everything, continued to dance in the light of their found happiness.

Explanation: Thinking in dualities, as discussed in the previous logion, allows you to judge people per group, per thousands. The workers, the capitalists, the Muslims, the pagans, the Dutch, the foreigners. But love only knows individuals. Love is always personal. Love turns a mass person into an individual, a loner, a whole person. Love, as a frameless acceptance of the other, sees that one in a thousand. Love also makes that twin in yourself experienceable, your Christ nature, and that, together with your personal nature, is the two out of ten thousand. See also logion 19.

Logion 24

His disciples said, "Show us the place where you are. Because we have to look for that." He said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear. There is light within the light-man, and he illuminates the entire world. If he does not illuminate, then darkness prevails.

In the silent shadows of inner reflection, a story unfolded, where the master acted as the embodiment of the whispering conscience. The master, a symphony of wisdom and experience, interpreted the voice of inner knowing. Truth resonated in his words, a truth that every human being already knew deep down, but which was often ignored, lost in the tumult of everyday life. He had not just become a master; He had perfected the art of listening to himself. In the silence of his own thoughts and feelings, He had unraveled the melodies of his soul and made them resonate in his words.

"As long as you need a master, you don't have to listen to yourself," said the master like a gentle breeze that stroked through the minds of his listeners. His words punctured illusions of laziness and confronted them with the reality that true growth and self-development require a personal journey. Laziness, like a slumbering fog, was dispelled by the powerful rays of his message. The master invited an inner search, a search for the depths of the self that could not be outsourced to others. And so, the story continued, an ode to those who dared to listen to the echoes of their own souls, to those who became the master in themselves. For in that discovery lay true freedom, the liberation from the easy chains that had bound them.

Explanation: The disciples want guidance they want Jesus to lead them. But that is not possible. The light within yourself, you can only go there yourself. No one else can take you there. If you think that someone else should lead you to what you desire, you are denying the light in yourself. By making yourself spiritually dependent on someone else, you place yourself in darkness. If you think you're not there yet, you're not there. The mind then creates a duality between the here and now and the goal to be achieved. And with that, the goal becomes unattainable, at least

that's how it seems, that's how you will experience it. "Let him who has ears, hear!" an expression that usually indicates that this is about transcending thinking. The restoration of unity takes place on a different level than thinking.

Logion 25

Jesus said: “Love your brother as your soul. Watch over him like the apple of your eye.”

In a world drenched in sunbeams and salty air, an endless beach stretched out. There, amidst the murmur of the waves, a story of love and understanding unfolded. “Love your fellow men as you love yourself,” said Jesus’ wise voice, carried by the breeze. In the shadow of an old lighthouse stood a group of people, gathered to listen to the words that washed over them like gentle waves. A young woman, with the sun as her crown, asked, “How can we love others unconditionally?” Jesus smiled and replied, “Unconditional love begins with knowing yourself. Seeing yourself as a perfect creature, with both light and shadow. Only then can you recognize and embrace that same light and shadow in others.” An old man, marked by life like a rock by the surf, asked: “How do we help those who do not yet see their own light?” The sage bowed his head and said: “See the blinded fellow human beings as deluded souls, not as strangers but as reflections of yourself. They are looking for the same light that shines in you, but they are not yet aware of it.” The group felt the truth of these words resonate deep within. The sage concluded with a simple command: “Watch over them as you watch over yourself. Smile at those who have not yet left the darkness, for your light can ignite theirs.” And so, the message of love and understanding spread like the waves of the sea, embracing and connecting, as the sun slowly set on the horizon.

Explanation: If the unity within yourself can only be restored by love and not by thought, how do you do that? How do you get to that other level in yourself? Jesus says here: love your neighbor. So don't look for the answer in the sublime, but in the simple, everyday practice. The practice of life is the way, not an esoteric school. A learning experience can never be more than a preparation, a pointer. And what a beautiful image that is: ‘guard him as the apple of your eye’. Your eye is perhaps your most vulnerable part of the body. So be sensitive to your neighbor as you are to yourself. If you are willing to let your soul be as sensitive as the apple of your eye, yes, then love will manifest in you. Then the light of love will be able to shine in you.

Logion 26

Jesus said: “You see the mote in your brother’s eye, but you do not see the beam in your own eye. If you take the beam out of your eye, you will be able to see clearly, to take the mote out of your brother’s eye.”

In the fabric of time and inner transformation, a story unfolded, in which the dance of judgment and liberation embraced each other as invisible partners. “With the measure with which you judge, you judge yourself,” whispered the voice of wisdom like a memory that sounded through the ages. Words like subtle brushstrokes painted the truth: what you say about someone else reveals more about yourself than about that other. Liberation, like a gentle sigh of the soul, did not begin with condemning others, but with freeing one’s own prejudices. An invitation to break the shackles of bias so that the bright light of understanding could shine. “Only when you no longer have prejudices can you see clearly, and then you no longer judge,” it sounded, like a mantra of enlightenment. The journey to clarity began with the purification of the inner compass, a cleansing of the lens through which the world was perceived. “Refute your own opinions first” it sounded, as a call for introspection. Before trying to refute the opinions of others, one’s own mind must be cleared of entrenched beliefs. A call to humility, to acknowledge the limitations of one’s own perspective.

“Do not condemn those who are still asleep,” murmured the wind of understanding. In that meaningful sense lay the memory that before waking up, everyone was asleep for themselves. An invitation to compassion, to see the shared journey of awareness. And so, the story continued, an ode to those who dared to look at the mirrors of self-reflection, those who transformed the dance of judgment into a harmonious symphony of understanding and compassion.

Explanation: Is it really that easy to love your neighbor? Should you just approve of everything someone else does to you, or someone else? Covering up all rottenness with the cloak of love? That is not easy. In the previous logion it was about loving your neighbor as your soul. So not as yourself, as the usual saying goes, but: as your soul. This way of loving will present itself if

you are willing to be touched by the fate of your fellow man as a human being with the people in your soul. 'Behold the man', it was said earlier. See the human being when you dare to open the windows of your soul. If you can look at it that way, your soul will be moved by what you see. Then your actions will not be an expression of mere duty, but an expression of true love.

Logion 27

“If you do not fast towards the world, you will not find the kingdom. If you do not keep the Sabbath as a Sabbath, you will not see the Father.”

In the twilight of self-reflection, a story unfolded, in which the shadows of injustice where unraveled and the light of inner truth began to shine. “As long as you play in an unjust world, you are unjust,” sounded like a gentle reminder of the connection between actions and the character of the soul. Every dance in the choreography of injustice left imprints on the heart. The story continued with a mirror held up: “As long as you have a pittance of injustice in you, you are unjust.” Even the smallest part of injustice colored the soul in shades of moral hesitation. And then it resounded like a clap of thunder: “As long as you exercise power over your fellow human beings, you get your hands dirty.” The price of domination, as stains on the soul, reflected the damage done in exercising control over others. “As long as you are not what you are, you don't know yourself,” resounded as a call for self-development. In the mirror of authenticity, stripped of masks, the true essence was deeply hidden. The story revealed a paradox: “That's why you should be in the world, but not of the world.” An invitation to transcend conventions and intentions, to act without selfish motives. “You must do without intentions, selflessly and honestly to yourself and not to conventions,” spoke as a guide to action without hidden agendas, a call for honesty that cut deeper than outward appearances. It is a clear insight: “Only when you stop doing that, the light dawns.” An invitation to stop self-deception and embrace responsibility, where the light of truth dispelled the darkness of injustice.

Explanation: The world, is it the earth, nature, your own body? The flowers and the bees? Everything that is matter? The body of your loved one that you caress touching? But that's not how it's meant here at all. Do you want to enter the kingdom get to know yourself, then you will have to fast in relation to the world of agreements, for sure. And what is it about fasting? As children, we are included in the world of agreements of our parents, teachers, priests, and rulers. We get to know the agreements that our educators have made with each other

around the world. So that's how the world works, we think like good children. And with that in mind, we step into the world of those agreements. In this way, full of dedication, we become part of the world of our educators. But if we believe that the learned description of reality is the same as reality itself, if the former meaning is frozen to absolute truth, then we are trapped in our own faith, and therefore we are not connected to our soul. Then we only know the agreements. Their hearts are ice cold and unloving. That is why, unfortunately, believers are capable of the most brutal cruelties, because they put their faith in the place of their hearts. If we free ourselves from our belief in the absolute truth of the descriptions in which we grew up, there is room to become co-creators of life on earth, from the connection with the source of love within ourselves. Then our hearts will also thaw and become sensitive to the kinship between all people at soul level. The beam that we need to remove from our eye is therefore our belief in the truth of descriptions. That faith makes us blind and deaf to the real reality and makes our hearts freeze. Only when we have removed that beam, can we see our neighbor as a human being, and we can – as a human being with people – love our neighbor as our own soul.

Logion 28

Jesus said: “I sat down in the midst of the world and appeared carnally. I thought they were all drunk. I found no one thirsty, and my soul grieved over the sons of men. For they are blind in their hearts, and they do not see. For empty they have come into the world, and also empty they seek to leave the world. But now they are drunk, if they give up their wine, they will repent.”

In the light of awakening, a story unfolded in which the enlightened soul found itself in the midst of fellow human beings shrouded in the shadows of their vices. In the midst of the crowd, where heads were intoxicated with stubbornness and clinging to apparent truths, stood the awakened man. He saw the pride of deeds, achievements, and vanity, shrouded in the haze of ignorance. “Without possessions, without opinions, and without convictions, they are born,” he whispered, like a mantra. A reminder that life began as a blank canvas, blank and free of ballast. And yet, during life, the searching souls accumulated baggage, as burdens that they eventually had to leave behind.” What a waste of effort is to collect all that ballast,” sounded like a soft sigh of wisdom. A call for simplicity, for letting go of unnecessary burdens before life breathes its last. The story continued with an urgent message: “Don't saddle your children with your own baggage.” A plea not to pass on the burdens to the next generations, but instead to free them from the shackles that were once collected. And so, the story danced on, like a journey to lightness, to the relief of the heart and mind. The enlightened soul, as a beacon of simplicity, invited others to let go of the ballast of superfluous worries and opinions and return to the essence of being.

Explanation: Drunkenness is another typical gnostic symbolic word. A fundamentalist is drunk. He has taken in too many thoughts and quenched his thirst for a fulfilled life with absolute truths. Therefore, his life will pass him by meaninglessly. He came into the world empty with the assignment to fulfill his life himself. But instead of being as he was meant to be, and making the most of his talents, he forgot about himself in his drunkenness. Therefore, he will leave the world empty, as if he

had not even lived. He who is so drunk with truths cannot see the light, cannot understand that a different attitude to life is possible, cannot understand everything that is said about it. Such a person is hearing deaf.

Logion 29

Jesus said: “If the body came into existence for the sake of the spirit, it is a miracle. But if the spirit came into existence for the body’s sake, it is a miracle of miracles. I am indeed amazed at how this great wealth has come to live in this poverty.”

In the whisper of time, a story unfolded in which the curious alliance between mind and body became a source of contemplation. “It is miraculous that the spirit has chosen the human body as its housing,” sounded like the opening notes of a mystical song. A dance of entities, where the eternal spirit wrapped itself in the temporary cloak of the body. The story continued with a look at the bizarre reversal of perception: “It’s bizarre to think that the body generates the mind as a product.” Here was a melody of wonder, a call to explore the deeper mysteries of existence. In the shadows of human beliefs, the upside-down world was illuminated: “They think that as long as the body is healthy, the mind will be too.” Like a mirror held up, the story pointed to the misconceptions that held the soul captive. A picture of shame and poverty was painted in the lives people led and the bodies they inhabited. “If you look around you in this world, it is shameful and poor what people do with their lives and bodies,” resonated as a call for self-reflection. And so, the story danced on, like a journey inward, to the sacred alliance between mind and body. A reminder that true well-being rests not only in the health of the body, but also in the nourishment of the mind, in the pursuit of beauty, love and wisdom. An invitation to embrace the delicate balance that animates the essential covenant between mind and body.

Explanation: How is it possible that the mind of man, so rich in qualities, can end up in such a poor state of self-denial? Jesus knows yes, He knows, what beautiful things people are capable of, what wealth dwells in people. But what did they make of it? What people can do to each other! And often in the name of God. In the gnostic conception of creation, everything that exists, including matter and the human body, flows from a source of Being. That source is purely spiritual in nature. The human bodies therefore originate from a spiritual source.

How wonderful that earthly material existence, yet originating from a source that is perfect love, could turn out so differently. But people, Jesus here considers, somewhat mockingly, put matter above the spirit. There is only matter, they believe. And everything that is spiritual comes from that.

Logion 30

Jesus said: “Where there are three gods, they are gods. Where there are two or one, I am with him.”

In the silent shadows of timeless wisdom, a story unfolded in which the words of Jesus resounded like melodies of insight. “Where there are three gods, they are gods. Where there are two or one, I am with him,” Jesus spoke as an echo of eternal truth. His words danced like butterflies in the air of mystical understanding, and those who listened felt the depth of his meaning. In the triple symphony of God, they found a sacred communion. Three entities, each a facet of divine power, interwoven in a dance of universal harmony. A trinity that reflected the infinite multiformity of the divine. And yet, in the loneliness of the individual or the intimate fusion of the two, Jesus spoke of his closeness. “Where there are two or one, I am with him.” Here the paradox of a personal connection with the divine was revealed, a promise of closeness in the quiet moments of solitude. The story continued as a journey through the realms of faith and understanding. In the threefold dance of gods and the intimate unity of the individual soul, the realization awoke that the divine presence always, in whatever form, stretched out its loving arms to those who sought. And so, the story danced on, an ode to the mysterious coherence of the divine, woven into the fabric of human existence. The words of Jesus, like stars in the sky of spiritual enlightenment, guided the seekers to the source of eternal love and connection.

Explanation: You can only connect with the Christ-nature in yourself as a loner. That is not possible as a group. The connection with the divine source within yourself, letting go of ‘the world’ around you, is a process that you have to go through as an individual, on your own. You could also suspect that ‘three’ refers to the holy trinity Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and then you could read that Jesus rejects that trinity. But that theological concept is of a later date. It is very unlikely that Jesus himself knew that he would later become part of this trinity.

Logion 31

Jesus said: “No prophet is accepted in his village. No doctor cures those who know him.”

We distinguish two levels of being. One consists of being completely absorbed in the description of the world as you are taught it as a child. The other level is your participation in life from the compassion of your heart. It is not wrong to learn as a child how the world of your educators is structured. And there is nothing wrong with going along with that first. Perhaps there is no other way. But it is important that as an adult you gather the courage to dare to let go of the self-evidence of the world of your educators. That does indeed take courage. At first it may seem as if you are entering a no man's land, but if you really dare to let go of your learned certainties, you can discover that there is a knowing in you that you can learn to trust more and more. Your environment will not always like that. They thought they knew you, and now you suddenly step out of all those agreements about the world they shared with you. There is a chance that you will get all kinds of comments, such as: who do you think you are, or: that's not for you anyway and: I don't know what to do with you anymore. But if you do take the plunge, then beyond the leap there appears to be no loneliness at all. In retrospect, you can see that it was not loneliness that held you back, but only your own fear of loneliness

In the twilight of self-development and the complexity of human relationships, a story unfolded, in which the doctor returned from the shadow world to the familiar, but sometimes uncomprehending reality of his family and friends. The doctor, once caught in the limitations of conventional ideas, had left the shadow world to discover what lay beyond the boundaries of the everyday. Clear insights and renewed perspectives had become his companions in the search for a deeper understanding of life. But on his return, laden with insights that reached far beyond the usual reality, he met resistance. His family and friends, rooted in the comfortable routine of their known world, warned him to act normally, to adapt to the prevailing norms, otherwise he would not fare well. Still, the doctor defied the warnings and the looks of incomprehension. He returned with ideas that were considered insane to others, like a visitor from a world too far beyond their limited reality. “They will say that

he has changed and that they no longer know him,” it echoed as a sad refrain. Those who were close, who knew his weaknesses, could not accept the transformation. They laughed at him, declared him crazy, and alienated him as a stranger in his own world.

And so, the paradox remained: in society there were two types of doctors. One, bound by rigid beliefs, stifled life, while the other, open to a broader vision, helped find peace in the transition to death. The story whispered as a gentle reminder, “Physician, heal yourself, before you try to heal others.” An invitation to self-reflection, a reminder that transformation begins within, and only when one overcomes one’s own weaknesses and prejudices, can one truly assist others on their path to healing.

Explanation: In logion 27 it was told how you as a child are included in the world of your educators.

Logion 32

Jesus said: “A city that is built on a high mountain and is strong cannot fall, neither can it be hidden”

In the silent dance of self-denial and detachment, a story unfolded, where the paradox of untouchability and inconspicuousness revealed itself as a subtle spectacle. Somewhere on the edge of the known, where status had been discarded like a superfluous garment, and opinions and interests had been left behind as ballast, a state of being emerged in which one had nothing left to lose. In this state of liberation, one became untouchable. The chains of worldly bonds were broken, and one danced freely in the space of inner emptiness.

However, the paradox manifested itself in a surprising way: “Yet you will stand out.” Just when people thought they were inconspicuous, the emptiness shone brighter than the most exuberant forms. The absence of status, opinions, and interests created an aura of mystery, an attraction that attracted attention without realizing it. In the seeming emptiness, others discovered a richness, an unprecedented freedom that had shaken off the heaviness of worldly concerns. The intangible became a source of fascination, while the inviolability came from the inner balance that had been found.

And so, the story danced on, as a celebration of liberation. A reminder that true strength lies not in worldly bonds, but in the courage to throw off the burdens of status and interests. The paradox of inviolability in simple freedom and yet striking in the radiant emptiness of being authentic.

Explanation: This logion again makes it clear that the order of the logia in the Gospel of Thomas is not arbitrary but has a careful structure. The previous logion was about gathering courage to go your own way through life from the connection with your inner compassion. It was about the fear of loneliness that can be a big barrier to going your own way. Once you have taken that leap, you discover that there is a knowing in you that you will dare to trust more and more. That lays a foundation for your actions in the world and that eventually becomes a rock-solid trust, like a high mountain. It can be felt inwardly as a presence. It almost literally makes you invulnerable. No matter

how sad life may sometimes be, no matter how betrayed you
may sometimes feel by your fellow man, there is a gentle but
invincible strength in you that even the heaviest pain of life can
no longer destroy.

Logion 33

Jesus said: “Proclaim from the housetops what you will hear with your ear. For no one lights a lamp and places it under a bushel, nor does he put it in a secret place; rather, he puts it on a candlestick, so that all who come in and go out may see its light.”

“When you have come to enlightenment, don’t keep it to yourself,” sounded like a whisper from the soul. A reminder that the spark of insight not only illuminates its wearer but is also meant to shine for others. “If you’re sensible, you don’t proclaim it from the rooftops,” resonated as subtle advice. In the delicacy of wisdom lay the art of modesty, an invitation not to shout but rather to whisper, knowing that sometimes the gentle breeze carries the most powerful message. “Be cunning as a serpent and guileless as a dove,” it sounded like a life lesson in balance. The world, permeated with resistance to change, required agility and innocent openness to transmit the message of enlightenment.

And then, as a profound truth expressed in the words: “People would rather fight to the death than give up their misfortune.” Here lay the awareness of human nature, the tendency to cling to familiar pain instead of embracing the unknown joy. The story danced on as an invitation to consciousness. A call to let the light of insight shine, not as a weapon, but as a guide for those who were willing to see. A reminder that wisdom lies not only in understanding, but also in sharing carefully, like a soft lamp on a candlestick, spreading its light in the darkness of ignorance.

Explanation: This logion takes a powerful stand in a debate about renunciation versus participation in the world. As a spiritual person, do you literally have to go into the desert? Should you withdraw from the world like a monk? Should you renounce everything that is physical, as the ‘clergy’ in the Roman Catholic Church are supposed to do by living a celibate life? That was a frequently heard point of view in Jesus’ time. It comes from the Greek philosopher Plato, and it has had a great influence on the formation of Christianity. But this logion disagrees. In Jesus’ time, Judaism was influenced by Greek philosophy, especially that of Plato. It is aimed at contempt

for the body and everything that is matter. The earth is a sad intermediate station in the attainment of eternal salvation in the hereafter. The earth is 'the sublunary valley of tears'. By living celibate during life now, and withdrawing from the world, one already takes an advance on the purely spiritual existence after death. Faith also begins to prevail over behavior at that time. Only by faith could one attain eternal salvation, not by conduct, as Paul teaches in his Letter to the Romans.

This logion strongly protests against this. In Gnosticism, faith does not play an important role. There is even a great suspicion against a faith, because the belief in an absolute truth obscures the contact with the inner gnosis. In Gnosticism, up to and including the Cathars in southern France in the twelfth century, the view prevails that one is a Christian by one's behavior, not by faith. Only the actions in the world determine whether or not you are a Christian. In the glow of spiritual insights and universal truths, a story unfolded, imbued with the wisdom of Jesus' encouragement to his followers.

Logion 34

Jesus said: “If a blind man leads a blind man, they both fall into a pit.”

In the maze of uncertainty and searching hearts, a story unfolded, woven with the threads of wisdom and warning. Somewhere on the edge of the known, where the horizon mingled with the fog of uncertainty, the story began to whisper. “If you let yourself be guided by people who don't know exactly either,” sounded like a soft sigh. A reminder of the vulnerability of following those who are still in the dark themselves. “By seekers who have not found,” continued as a melancholy refrain. In the shadows of shared doubt and unanswered questions, an image of shared wandering emerged, where those who sought held each other without a clear destination. “When you go on the road together and don't know where to go,” echoed like a mysterious melody. The paths of life, shrouded in the haze of uncertainty, led to a joint journey without a fixed destination.

“Will you continue to wander together and perish,” whispered as a solemn warning. In the darkness of shared ignorance and lack of clarity, the danger of collective ruin awaited, where the blind led the blind. And so, the story danced on, like a fabric of life lessons. An invitation to self-reflection, a reminder that life's journey must be guided by those who know the path, to rise together above the mists of uncertainty and strive for a clear destination.

Explanation: In the previous logion, it was said that it is not your faith, but your behavior that makes you a Christian. And if you wish to propagate something, do so through your actions. So don't try to force a belief on your fellow man. Because then you blind the other person to the gnosis in himself, and before you know it you also make yourself a believer in your proselytizing zeal. But it also anticipates the next theme in the Gospel of Thomas. Suppose you have managed to make the connection between your heart and the world, so that you behave from the inspiration of your heart. How do you avoid stepping into a spiritual prison again? You listen to someone, and you think, “That's it. You may be right about that, but you

may not be right. Maybe this is another false teacher who is only out to stroke his own ego. How do you avoid falling under the spell of such a person who tries to give the impression that he might lead you beyond any spiritual horizons, but whose esoteric vistas are entirely the result of his own imagination?

Logion 35

Jesus said: “No one can enter the house of a strong man and take it by force unless he binds his hands. Then he will clear out his house.”

In the silent garden of self-development, a story unfolded imbued with the essence of inner breakthrough and liberation. Somewhere between the shadows of self-defense, the story began to weave. “Only when you break through your own defenses,” sounded like a soft whisper from the soul. An invitation to courage, to break through the barriers we have erected around ourselves. “Will you be able to empty your mind,” it followed, like a melody of liberation. The stream of thoughts, like a rippling river, found space to calm down when the walls of defense were torn down. “And get rid of everything that is learned and therefore not your own,” it danced like a mantra of purification. In the emptiness that arose after the breakthrough of defenses, learned patterns and improper baggage no longer found a breeding ground. And so, the story unfolded further, as a journey to the core of being authentic. A reminder that true liberation begins when we allow ourselves to break through our own defenses, to let go of the ballast of learned conditionings and create the space for a clear, pure mind.

Explanation: In your inner world there is total freedom. If you attach yourself to something in the world, you do it yourself. Attached or detached, what to do and what not, is entirely up to you. That is your freedom, the freedom that is the hallmark of everyone's inner world. That is the starting point for understanding this logion. Because it's about attachment. And detach.

The symbolism of hands refers to your actions in the world. And tying your hands (or feet): putting your actions at the service of a truth outside yourself.

Logion 36

Jesus said: “Do not be anxious from morning to night and from evening to morning about what you will wear.”

In the rich tapestry of self-development sounded a story laced with the truth about clothing, self-image and the influence of culture. “Don't worry about your clothes,” sounded like a calm reminder. An invitation to look beyond superficial layers and to recognize that the true essence of an individual lies deeper than appearances. “As long as you think that's important,” it echoed as a question for self-insight. An invitation to investigate whether clothing serves as a shield against inner insecurities. “Don't you realize that you are only doing that to disguise your insecurity,” it whispered as a revelation. A confrontation with the possibility that clothing, rather than an expression of personality, can be a mask that hides deeper doubts. “You create an unnatural exterior with your clothes,” sounded like an observation. A reflection on how man sometimes overshadows natural splendor in an attempt at beauty. “To hide the natural beauty of your body,” it whispered as a sad memory. A contemplation about the transformation from baby to adult, loaded with the stamps of social norms. “And if you do that to camouflage your deformities,” it resonated as an invitation to compassion. An acknowledgment of the scars of life and an opportunity to accept the unique story that each body carries. “Then realize what life in a culture has done to your body,” sounded like a call for awareness. A dissection of the impact of culture on body image and an invitation to be authentic, beyond the appearance of ostentation.

Explanation: This logion is about a very special attitude to life. First there is non-judgmental seeing, without all kinds of fixed thoughts about good and evil. Then there is the willingness to be touched in your heart. From that emotion flows your actions in the world. If you have this attitude to life, a loving power will present itself in yourself. But above all, you will then ‘gain’ the experience, the feeling of living a fulfilled life. The meaning of existence is not a thought. Life has meaning for you when your actions in the world go hand in hand with the experience of

meaningfulness. Or, to put it succinctly: Life has meaning if you feel like it.

But suppose you acted today from the touch of your heart. You have given meaning to your life. Then there is the danger – and that is what this logion is about – that you think: now I know what the meaning of my life is, namely that I always..... (fill in the blank). And then tomorrow you will try to repeat today's meaningfulness by acting exactly the same way. But then your heart is no longer your inner compass, but your memory. And that is exactly the same soul movement as when you hand yourself over to an external authority, as discussed in the previous logion. Only then you surrender to yesterday's truth.

If you want to live in such a way that you are rewarded with the inner experience of meaningfulness, be willing to open the windows of your soul every day. If you live in this way, if that is your intended attitude to life, you will be able to experience that the power in you that we spoke of earlier, not only becomes more and more loving, but is also very creative. Then, if your actions in the world result from the touch of your heart, and thus from the connection with the source within yourself, you become co-creator of life on earth every day.

Logion 37

His disciples said, “On what day do you appear? And on what day shall we see you?” Jesus said: “If you undress without shame and if you put your clothes under your feet like little children and stand on them, then you will see the Son of the Living One. And you will not be afraid.”

In an enchanting town, surrounded by green hills and babbling rivers, lived a young soul who carried the burden of other people's expectations. This soul, let's call him John, wandered the streets looking for recognition. One day, John's path crossed that of an ancient wise figure known as the “Forest Seer.” With a smile, the Forest Seer asked, “When will you wake up?”

Surprised, Johannes returned home, imbued with the words of the Forest Seer. An inner search began, where he began to shed the layers of expectations and embrace his true self. On a serene hilltop, relieved of the burden of other people's judgment, John felt a deep inner peace. Between nakedness and paradise, he discovered a mysterious harmony. Pride and contentment where his companions, for he had taken the last step. And so, John henceforth lived in the rhythm of his own heartbeat, free from the shackles of external expectations. The town whispered his story as an echo of self-development and liberation, and the Forest Seer smiled, knowing that he had helped a soul find the path to authentic freedom.

Explanation: This logion is a marvel of brevity. The disciples ask: “When will you reveal yourself to us?”

They are convinced that Jesus is the Messiah who was promised to the Jewish people in the Old Testament. When is he finally going to take on that role openly, they want to know: “When will we see you in your true form as our savior?” But Jesus, who of course understands the question well, again gives a surprising answer, which is completely beyond the expectations of his disciples. They want a Messiah to come and redeem them, that is, Jesus. But Jesus does not want that role at all. His answer is surprisingly different: “Do you want to see me in my true form? Then you have to change yourself first.

You must become a “son of the living” yourself. The way back to the tree of life to become ‘a son of the living’ is something you have to travel as a loner. A Messiah cannot do that for you. To do this, you have to take off the clothes of animal skins that Yahweh had made for man, put them under your feet and trample them underfoot. But you have to do that as children would, not in anger and resentment, but in play, literally in innocence. Man had hidden himself out of shame. Jesus calls on his disciples here to remember themselves, to go back to the child in themselves, and to become naked again, but without shame.

Logion 38

Said Jesus: “Many times have you longed to hear these words which I speak to you. And you don't have anyone else to hear them from. There will come days when you will, search for me and not find me.”

At a time when many were looking for the ultimate goal, the desire for fulfillment became stronger and stronger. As it turned out, the solution was simple, but so surprisingly different from what everyone expected that it seemed almost unbelievable. After all, there was no point in searching if it did not lead to a meaningful end. People longed for teachers, guides who would show them the way through the maze of life. But what if the real wisdom didn't come from an external source, but from within? This was an obvious truth but often overlooked. The story revolved around the essence of self-reflection. It emphasized that while having a teacher could be helpful, it was ultimately up to the individual to look within and find the answers. It told of the paradox in which some, despite having a teacher, were not willing to listen to themselves. Self-development only began when one was open to the inner voice that was always present but often ignored.

Explanation: Jesus knows that they did not really understand his words. They have heard the words, they parrot them, and they believe that this is the fulfillment of their desire. Because of course there is a desire in the disciples of Jesus. It is the desire for the awareness of the deep inner knowing within oneself. But that desire cannot be misled. There will come a time when the students will realize, each for themselves, that the words are empty, meaning nothing as long as they remain only words, and that parroting words is not yet awareness. That insight will evoke an inevitable feeling of great emptiness.

That feeling of emptiness is the harbinger of nakedness.

But as long as they still experience that emptiness as a shortage, as a failure of their desire, they will not be able to experience the Christ in themselves. And then? Do they have the courage to enter that emptiness, and to keep looking there? Or do they look for yet other magic words to try to escape that emptiness in themselves? Maybe they will become scribes, as in the next logion.

Logion 39

Jesus said: “The Pharisees and the scribes have taken the keys of Knowledge and hid them. They themselves have not entered, nor have they admitted those who want to enter. But you, be clever as serpents and innocent as doves.”

In a society where spiritual leaders and theologians dominated the stage, a story of confusion and ambiguity emerged. These leaders, who considered themselves guides to truth, were exposed as will-o'-the-wisps on the path of faith. The story spoke of the overestimation of the self-esteem of these leaders, who held on to their own truth without understanding the deeper essence. They should have known, but their vanity drove them to the brink of deception. In this story sounded the warning for those who followed, those who were in danger of being dragged along by the confusing leadership of these false teachers. They did not really live, but kept others trapped in their own illusions. In the midst of this chaos, the call was made to be smarter, to play the game for the time being. The story emphasized the importance of inner wisdom and the ability to think critically. The protagonists were urged not to be completely subject to the words of those who claimed to possess the truth, but to find their own way in the midst of the sham.

Explanation: These words of Jesus express compassion for the Pharisees and scribes. How close they were to the source! But they didn't go in. They did not search within themselves to experience the meaning of the words they heard. Perhaps they have shied away from the feeling of emptiness that is the harbinger of the nakedness that was spoken of in the previous two logions; daring to let go of all outer false certainties. There is nothing at all wrong with the fact that we can think. Our mind is a great gift. On the spiritual path of gnosticism, and on every spiritual path, clear insight plays an important role for example, insight into the nature and functioning of the illusions in which we can become trapped. So, we must become as vigilant, or as cautious, as the serpents. But that is not enough. In order to bring all these insights to life in yourself, to activate the Source consciousness in yourself, you must be willing to always link

your thoughts to an inner test. Thoughts are beautiful, but they are also great seducers. They all too easily take on a life of their own and then take the place of your own direct experience of reality. Then you live in your thoughts, and you are cut off from the source within yourself. So be careful with your beautiful intellectual insights. Before you know it, you are also a scribe. And because they themselves are afraid of that emptiness of not knowing, they naturally do not dare to lead others there either. On the contrary, they will try to quench the thirst for the source with words, with their own learning.

Logion 40

Jesus said: “A vine was planted outside the Father, and powerless it will be uprooted root and all and perished.”

In the tangle of time, in which humanity lost the subtle melody of self-insight, a story of self-alienation unfolded. This story drew parallels with the ancient myth of Adam and Eve, where the fall was not outside of themselves, but deeply rooted within. The symbolism of the ‘tree of knowledge of good and evil’ served as a signpost to the moment when people thought they could control the dividing line between right and wrong, healthy and unhealthy. Like the mythical ancestors, they themselves thought they were the architects of their morality. However, in this story, the main characters were confronted with the temptation of avoiding responsibility. The finger was pointed at temptation, circumstances, or others, as an attempt to excuse one’s own actions, echoing the old myth in which the serpent was blamed. This story functioned as a mirror that reflected on the importance of personal responsibility and the need not to let the inner connection with nature and truth weaken. It inspired introspection and reminded us of the journey back to the inner paradise, where the original harmony between man and nature could be restored.

Explanation: The previous logion showed compassion for the scribes as human beings, because the scribes in their great zeal alienate themselves from the source within themselves. This logion is about scripture itself, and about the evil it can do. It is about thoughts, dogmas, and so on that have taken on a life of their own apart from reality and therefore have no root in reality. They are planted ‘outside the Father’. Thoughts about ‘the Father’ that have taken on a life of their own, i.e. have become detached from the original emotion, are the hallmark of fundamentalism. They have the foundation in themselves, and not in ‘the Father’. That kind of fundamentalism kills the heart, kills love, and therefore must be radically uprooted in order to reconnect life, action in the world, with the source of love, “the Father,” who is present within our selves. Who is ‘the Father’ here? In the Aramaic, the language Jesus spoke, the word literally means ‘birth-giver’. That word is neuter,

so not masculine or feminine. You can also translate it as the 'source of being'.

There is a source and from it flows everything that exists. Reality flows like a river from a spring. That is the image of creation that fits within Gnosticism.

Logion 41

Jesus said: “Whoever has something in his hand, to him more will be given. And whoever has nothing, he will also be deprived of what little he has.”

At a time when the call for inner change resounded, a story of hope and warning unfolded. It told of those who sincerely sought improvement and self-development, with the promise that they would be assisted.

In this story, the key to change was to take the initiative to get closer to the core of existence. The words ‘draw near to God, then He draws near to you’ where the guiding principle, in which the idea of self-development and the pursuit of truth were central. However, the warning resounded clearly. Those who held on to their present situation, anchored in stubbornness and stubbornness, succumbed to their own stagnation. The story was a call to action, a reminder that the journey to self-fulfillment begins with the courage to move forward. It was a story of transformation, where the promise of growth and welfare merged with the threat of stagnation and self-destruction.

Explanation: We know in Dutch the expression ‘He didn’t have it tonight’, or: ‘He had it all tonight’. It’s about a mysterious quality, with which you, for example, as a musician or as a speaker can captivate a room full of people. In classical antiquity this was called ‘enthusiasm’. The syllable ‘thous’ comes from theos, God. Enthusiasm originally means ‘being in god’. An enthusiastic person is ‘inspired’ by God, the spirit has become skilled over such a person. You then act ‘enthusiastically’, so driven by the spirit, from the connection with the source. In Thomas, the hand is always a symbol of action in the world. Whoever acts from a mysterious connection with the source rises beyond their own limitations. They give not only outwardly but inwardly receive more than they could ever offer. In that boundless connection, through pure enthusiasm and selfless energy, one can truly meet another, touching them on a level deeper than words, a connection of the soul. But those who only perform a technical trick on the stage of life, read a text tonelessly, play the notes perfectly, but

do not make music, isolate themselves from their fellow human beings. Perhaps at first there was the fire of sincere enthusiasm in this person, but by not expressing that fire in your life, by not showing it to your fellow man, you will eventually be left out in the cold, also with yourself.

Music is love, Mozart said. There's music in that, we say. Or: there is no music in it. Precise. Those who act out of love get much more back than they give, even if it is not about that. He who acts out of cold calculation may seem outwardly successful, but also the little that lived in love in him will be extinguished as a result.

Logion 42

Jesus said: “Become passers-by.”

In a world steeped in expectations and material burdens, a story of liberation unfolded. It spoke of a simple truth: to embrace true freedom, one must get rid of baggage and not attach oneself to worldly possessions.

The story painted the portrait of true freedom as a state of being that escapes the shackles of possessions, opinions, and desires. The call was to live as free people, a life that was not bound by external influences, but rather driven by inner connectedness and total dependence on nature.

The core of the story revealed that the only true freedom came when man restored the connection with nature, a bond that was often broken by human intervention. It was an invitation to erase traces of selfishness and intervention, both in nature and within man himself.

This story was an ode to the pure essence of freedom, where letting go of ballast and restoring the connection with nature led to a state of true liberation, both for man and for the world around him.

Explanation: If you don't want to become like a scribe, like in logion 39, if you don't want to get caught up in a spiritual fantasy, like in logion 40, if you want to be “enthusiastic” like in logion 41, learn to let go. Today's truth is tomorrow's spiritual prison.

You are the water that flows through the bed of the river of life. Do not try to build a dike of security to dam the river, for by doing so you will create a reservoir of sadness and anger. Sooner or later, that dam will break, with all the possible misery that entails. The river has its own way to the ocean. Trust that. Let yourself be carried away by life.

Logion 43

His disciples said to him, “Who are you to say these things to us?” Jesus said: “Do you not understand who I am by what I say to you? But you have become like the Jews, for they love the tree and hate the fruit, or love the fruit and hate the tree.”

In a world where the search for enlightenment sounded like a cry from the heart, a story full of paradoxes unfolded. The narrative began with the apparent arrogance of the enlightened man, whose words seemed to rival the great and learned of the world. But it was soon revealed that true wisdom lay in the awareness of ignorance. The enlightened man claimed not to know more, but proclaimed that all knowledge was human constructions, which only burdened life unnecessarily. The message was clear: in the gathering of knowledge lay a heavy burden, a burden that detracted from the simplicity of existence. The paradox continued with the proposition that he who increases knowledge, increases sorrow, and vice versa. The idea that the reduction of knowledge was the way to the reduction of sorrow brought a unique view of wisdom. No knowledge was presented as a state of freedom from sorrow.

The story took a reflective turn when the narrator noted that while people enjoyed wisdom literature, they often shied away from its absurd consequences in everyday life. It invited us to think about the balance between striving for knowledge and embracing the simplicity of existence.

Explanation: This logion is perhaps just as radical an innovation within the Jewish tradition as logion 4. There it was said that you have to go back to the child of seven days in yourself, so to the child from before the circumcision. So, it's not about whether you're a Jew or not. Are you human? See the man in the Jew and in the non-Jew. But the Jews traditionally place a strong emphasis on being Jews. For Jesus that is of no significance. It does not matter what religion you adhere to, that is, under which spiritual tree you take shelter. What counts are your deeds, the fruits of the love that lies within you, and waiting to be discovered. What is your faith? Nice of you to ask, but otherwise of no significance. What are your actions? Yes, they matter, that's all that matters. The fruits of love, that's what it's all about.

Logion 44

Jesus said: “Whoever blasphemes the Father, he will be forgiven. And whoever blasphemes the Son, he will be forgiven. But whoever blasphemes the Holy Spirit, he will not be forgiven either on earth or in heaven.”

In the shadow of error and repentance, a story unfolded steeped in grace and discernment. It spoke of the power of forgiveness, in which the past would be erased as one freed oneself from repeated sins. The story embraced compassion for those who acted out of ignorance. It emphasized that ignorance was a veil that created sin. For those who revised their ways and distanced themselves from the mistakes of ignorance, a path of forgiveness was promised. However, the tone changed when the focus shifted to those who had the spirit and were enlightened yet consciously misused their knowledge. For them, unforgiveness was pronounced, echoing the idea that true enlightenment goes hand in hand with moral responsibility. This story offered a twofold message: an invitation to forgiveness for those who acted in ignorance and a warning for those who deliberately acted against their better judgment. It called for reflection on the nature of mistakes and the responsibility that comes with possessing knowledge.

Explanation: It doesn't matter what illusion you are trapped in, what fantasy about reality you believe in. Do you think that 'the Father' is an elephant on the back of a turtle? Or a turtle on the back of an elephant? Excellent. Can't do any harm, at least no more harm than any other illusion. A pearl in the mud or a pearl in balsam oil remains just a pearl. It doesn't matter in which religion you wrap that pearl. But, if you are moved by any event in your heart and you do nothing with it, yes, that is different. If an inner protest arises in you against a proposed act and you, do it anyway, if mercy blossoms in you and you do nothing with it, then yes, you are harming your soul.

Your beautiful faith and all the grace on earth and in heaven that are promised to you there will not be able to save you. Then more is needed than just confession and ritual forgiveness to come to terms with the source again. Then there must be healing, healing.

Logion 45

Jesus said: “One does not pick grapes from thorns or gather figs from thistles. They do not produce fruit. A good man brings good goods out of his storehouse. A bad man brings out bad things out of his storehouse, his heart, and he speaks evil. For out of the abundance of his heart he draws forth wickedness.”

In a world permeated with riddles and truths, a story unfolded that explored the subtleties of the human being. It began with the simple statement: “By his deeds you know man.” An invitation to look beyond the superficial impressions and discover the core of someone’s character through their actions. But the story soon took a deeper dive into the complexities of human nature. “By his opinions you know his prejudices,” it whispered, thus revealing the shadows of bias hidden in the corners of thought. The storyline continued, “To his emotions are split,” exposing man’s inner struggle, often hidden behind a façade of apparent stability. By his outer you recognize his inner self,” was the next revelation, exploring the idea of an outer reflection of inner state. It told of the visible traces of experiences, joy, and pain that manifested on a person’s face.

Finally, the story embraced the impact of physical and emotional health on an individual’s authenticity. “By his illnesses you recognize his inauthenticity,” suggested that a person’s true state is often reflected in his well-being. The final chapters of the story revealed the interconnectedness between teacher and student, parents and children. They argue that the echo of a teaching is often audible in the actions of the students, and that children are the mirrors that carry the reflections of their parents. This story wove a fabric of human complexity, inviting profound contemplation about the true nature of those who cross our paths.

Explanation: With logion 39 a new chapter began, as it were. There it was said that the Pharisees had received the keys of knowledge, but they had hidden them, both from themselves and from others. And they didn't know where anymore. The following logions were about how to find those keys again.

Logion 40 was about naming. What matters is beyond all images. But nevertheless, you need images to arrive at the unnameable. The mistake that can be made, however, is that one starts to believe in the images, instead of looking for what the images refer to. The cookbook is not the meal. Logion 41 showed what happens to you when you look beyond the images: the belief in the images kills, beyond the images is life itself. What attitude do you have to adopt in order not to get stuck in the images? "Become passers-by," said logion 42. In your memory you make the past into an image. Don't look back, or you will freeze into a pillar of salt, like Lot's wife. The almost ineradicable tendency to chain everything in images, and to hold them to be true, applies even to the disciples when they listen to Jesus. They want to understand him, grasp him intellectually, by capturing him in an unchanging image, logion 43 said, and they even want Jesus to provide them with that image. Of course, Jesus refuses.

Logion 44 goes straight to the core of Gnosticism. What you look for beyond the images, you must first find within yourself and then you will be able to experience it around you. But that requires an almost radical fidelity to the inner movements of your mind. All spiritual is totally innocent. It doesn't help, but it can't hurt either. But unfaithfulness to the compassion of your heart, that is the source of all evil. This logion, 45, sums it all up again. It points to the deceptiveness of images. They seem so true, but they are just not true. The fruits of the acanthus look exactly like a grape. But whoever wants to pick these false grapes will hurt himself on the thorns. Moreover, these false grapes will not produce wine, wine as a symbol of the spirit. The fruits of a thistle bear some resemblance to a fig. And this false fig also has spines that hurt. You only have to look at the practice of all kinds of spiritual traditions what is meant here. Fundamentalism, the belief in unchanging images, always leads to struggle, for example against alleged apostates, or against so-called heretics who are thought to be burned at the stake. These are the thorns and thistles of the fundamentalist belief in images. But he who seeks the fruits of a doctrine – the real meaning of the images – in himself, will reap real grapes and pick real figs, the fruits of love.

Logion 46

Jesus said: “From Adam to John the Baptist, no one is higher than John the Baptist among the born of women, that his eyes may not break (there is no one to whom John the Baptist should look). But I have said, whoever becomes a child among you will acknowledge the kingdom and will become greater than John.”

In the midst of the endless search for truth and meaning, a story unfolded that spoke of those who walked long paths and found treasures, yet not everything. It began with the recognition of the many souls who were driven by curiosity and desire, but who always missed a piece of the puzzle. Then came the turning point, the revelation that there was a state of greatness for those who attained enlightenment. In their pursuit of understanding and inner clarity, they transcended those who had found much, but not everything. They were considered to be greater, not because of material achievements, but because of a deeper understanding of the essence of existence. This story challenged the seekers to go beyond finding fragments of truth and to aim for the exalted state of enlightenment. It was an invitation to strive for more than material treasures, to discover the deeper layers of consciousness that only those who attain enlightenment could reach. It was a journey that was not just about finding, but about fully understanding.

Explanation: There are reports in ancient writings of quarrels among contemporaries of Jesus about who is the most important, Jesus or John the Baptist. Jesus gives a very elegant, but also surprising answer to this question that is supposed here. He first gives John the Baptist all the glory by saying that there is no one higher than him. That is of course very nice. But even more beautiful is the following addition. He says: “The child in you is the most important thing.” There is a relationship here with logion 100, where Jesus similarly chooses the surprising third possibility that the questioner had not foreseen.

Logion 47

Jesus said: “A man cannot ride two horses at the same time or stretch two bows. A servant cannot serve two masters; or he will honor the one and reproach the other. Never does a man drink old wine and then immediately desire to drink new wine at the same time. New wine is not poured into old bottles, in case they burst. And old wine is not poured into a new bottle, lest it spoil. One does not sew old rags on new robes, because there will be a tear.”

In the shadow of dualities and inner struggles, a story of radical choices and fundamental truths unfolded. It started with the insistent statement that being true to yourself was incompatible with meeting the demands of society. The narrative painted a picture of a conflict between a ‘natural life’ and participating in ‘a culture that felt unnatural’. We cannot live a life of duplicity and compromise and then hope to get the kingdom of heaven. Each compromise was portrayed as a breach of integrity, a concession that attacked the core fabric of truthfulness. The story warned that justice was impossible in an unjust society and that preserving both extremes, the cabbage and the goat, was an impossible task. The narrative took the reader to a world of black and white, where nuance did not exist. Nature and culture were presented as incompatible forces, with the rise of one at the expense of the other. A utopia of 100 percent culture was considered unattainable, while 100 percent nature was imagined as the paradise that had once been lost.

The story ended with a sense of inevitability. Change was not sudden, but a gradual transformation. A new life could not coexist with the old one; It required complete surrender and a break with old mistakes. It was a story that challenged the reader to dig deep into the complexities of choices and understand the price of true change.

Explanation: The later Christian churches linked Jesus to the Old Testament, as the prophesied Messiah, only a little differently. The gospels from the New Testament make a lot of effort to make this continuity clear, up to and including fictitious family trees. In Gnosticism, however, Jesus was seen as a break with the Old Testament, especially with Yahweh’s image of God

as a jealous and vengeful tyrant. What this logion clearly says here: the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus are not compatible. So, it confirms the break.

Logion 48

Jesus said: “If two people in the same house are at peace with one another, then they will say to the mountain, ‘Go somewhere else,’ and he will move.”

In the calm silence of inner harmony, a story of peace and fulfillment unfolded. It started with the simple wisdom that if you live in peace with yourself, you have the power to take on the whole world. This peaceful self-acceptance was portrayed as the source of inner strength and resilience. The narration continued with a deeper truth: the ability to experience peace with others only arises when there is peace in your own heart. It painted the picture of a symbiotic relationship between inner peace and external peace, where one was not possible without the other. A new layer of insight emerged when the story proclaimed that contentment was the key. Satisfied people, it was said, need nothing and are able to move mountains. This contentment was not associated with material wealth, but rather with a deeper fulfillment that came from inner peace.

The story became a call to introspection, an invitation to cultivate one's own peace as a powerful source of resilience and compassion. It extended the reader's hand to discover the serene power of inner harmony and to face the world with an open heart.

Explanation: The house is the usual symbolic word in Gnosticism for the inner life of man. So, the elimination of the dualities within yourself offers quite an interesting perspective: moving mountains! How should we understand that? First you look at the mountain, and then you see your own image of the mountain, not the mountain itself. That self-created image seems to be the unchanging reality of the mountain itself. But that is a mistake, an error says Gnosticism. The image you have made of the mountain is not the mountain. When you free yourself from all images, when your soul has become virgin, and you have stripped the mountain of all meanings so that the mountain has become naked, only then do you see the mountain as a mountain, as it is. Then you have moved the mountain. And then you can freely give any meaning to the mountain you

want. That freedom is unlimited. In that freedom you can move everything, not only mountains, but even the whole world.

Logion 49

Jesus said: “Blessed are the solitary and the elect, for they will find the kingdom because they came out of it. They will return.”

In the shadow of inner conflict, a story of self-development and return to the essence unfolded. It began with the blessing for those who, once divided within, found the path to simplicity. This search for unity and simplicity was considered a path to self-development. The story painted the picture of the happy souls who found themselves again by unraveling the complexity within and returning to a state of simplicity. It brought a message of hope, that no matter how lost one felt, there was always a way to return to the original state of being. A deeper truth revealed itself in the claim that one could become as they were as little children. This was not a call to regression, but rather an invitation to embrace the purity, wonder, and straightforward honesty that often characterize childhood. The story offered a reassuring promise that those who felt themselves divided could find a path to wholeness by returning to the simplicity of their original state. It was a story of hope, growth, and the timeless opportunity to rediscover yourself, like a small child looking at the world with new eyes.

Explanation: Jesus knows, yes, he knows, what beautiful things people are capable of, what wealth dwells in people. But what did they make of it?

Logion 50

Jesus said: “When people ask, ‘Where do you come from,’ say, ‘We came out of the light, where the light came from.’ When people ask, who are you, say: we are his sons, and we are the chosen ones. When people ask, what is the sign of your Father in you, say: it is movement and rest.”

In the quiet transition of a revolution in life, a story of awakening and change unfolded. It began with the promise of total transformation, a moment when the inner light shone brighter, and the world was seen with new eyes. But in the midst of this renewed reality, the story warned of the reactions of others. The narrative predicted that people, faced with the renewed version of you, would say that you have changed. They would claim not to know you anymore and declare that you are no longer the person they once knew. In this moment of awakening and change, it is wise advice to be careful and play the game.

The story revealed that explaining what had happened to others would be fruitless. It emphasized the misunderstanding that often accompanies personal transformation. So, in the midst of the comments and incomprehension of others, the advice was given to play the game, without feeling the need to explain everything. This story was a reminder of the loneliness of personal growth, and a warning to embrace the precious discoveries and changes in silence, knowing that some things cannot always be shared with those who have not walked the same path.

Explanation: In the Old Testament tradition, God created the entire cosmos at a single point in time, namely ‘in the beginning’. Since then, that cosmos has existed entirely on its own. But there is also another creation myth in classical antiquity, especially in Egypt. In that other creation story, the world is created new every moment. Just as the light shines from the sun anew every day, so in a never-ending process of creation reality flows from the source of being. This permanent process of becoming reality is called an emanation.

Many texts from the Gospel of Thomas, and especially this logion, can only be properly understood against the background of this Egyptian creation story. But everything there comes from

that one source. Also, the human body. Body and soul together, in their unity, are a face of the source. In ancient Egypt, the process of emanation was the core of religiosity. That is why one could see the divinity in everything then. A crocodile also originates from the source, with all the trimmings, so a crocodile is sacred. And likewise, a cat, a cow, a tree or whatever. For in each of these manifestations, the source expresses an aspect of itself. Man is also a manifestation of the source and therefore sacred in his wholeness, including the body. All nature, the whole cosmos is sacred. Everything in it, every phenomenon with its individuality, is a face of the source.

Logion 51

His disciples said to him, “On what day will death rest? And on what day will the new world come?” He said to them, “What you expect has already come, but you have not recognized it.”

In the shadows of a world that lulled itself to sleep, a story unfolded of the dead, who thought they were alive, and the sleeping, who thought they were awake. It started with the observation that these souls knew no rest. Their minds were constantly chained to the past and the future, entangled in solving problems, accumulating and defending possessions and opinions, and searching for meaning in a seemingly meaningless existence. In the midst of this endless inner activity, the story stated that a new world began when they ceased this endless search. For the awakened souls, those who were already part of this new world, it was a reality that the sleeping could not see. The story was steeped in paradoxes and deep truths, drawing attention to the fact that awakening was not always clearly visible to those who were still asleep. It painted a picture of a hidden reality accessible only to those who had released the burden of constant thought and where anchored in the now. This story was an invitation to awaken from the dormant state of endless thoughts and step into a new world, a world that already exists for those who have become conscious. It offered a glimpse into a reality that often remains invisible to those who are stuck in the endless cycle of their own thoughts.

Explanation: The first logion of the Gospel of Thomas began like this “Anyone who understands these words will not taste death.” In logion 18 and 19 an explanation of that promise was already given. Logion 18 says, “Happy is he who stands in the beginning. He will know the end and will not taste death.”

Logion 19 makes it even more puzzling than it already was:

“Happy he was before he got there.” So, there is the beginning, which beginning was apparently there before you existed and if you stand in it, you will not taste death. Logion 2 adds that you will find peace and quiet. Nice promises, but what do they mean? The students ask about it again. Apparently, it is still not

clear to them. And they add something to that question about the rest of the dead: when will the new earth come? So now it is no longer just about the personal redemption from death, but also about a new earth. That is a big step further. For your personal salvation, you should look for something in yourself that already existed before you were born. But the same applies to the whole earth! The new earth that Isaiah foretold is already here. Isaiah said (65:17): "Behold, I am creating a new heaven and a new earth. What used to be there is forgotten, it will never be remembered by anyone." That so-called new earth is already there, has always been there. But the students do not recognize them. It is nonsensical to focus your hopes on something that is yet to come. Because that is precisely why you think it away from the present. By putting your hope in the future, you are denying what you long for in the present. That new earth, which is therefore not new at all, can only be recognized in the here and now. And that will not make the past oblivion, as Isaiah said, but also the past will be healed by it.

Logion 52

His disciples said to him, “Twenty-four prophets have spoken in Israel, and they have all spoken through you.” He said to them, “You have forsaken the living and have spoken of the dead.”

In the reflection of prophecies and mystical visions, a story of a search and limitations unfolded. It started with the recognition that prophets and mystics caught fragments of the new man but had difficulty clearly showing the way. It told of the pitfalls in which they became entangled, sometimes due to the complexity of their message or by giving in to human weaknesses such as vanity. In the midst of this search for the new man, the story of the ‘teacher of justice’ was introduced. This teacher was presented as the guide who showed the way to truth and life, someone who was the living among the dead. This figure was presented as a source of guidance, free from the pitfalls that had hindered others.

The story emphasized the uniqueness of this teacher, someone who not only caught a glimpse of the new man, but who pointed the way clearly and unambiguously. It painted a picture of hope, a compass in a world of seekers and confusing messages. This story wove a story of guidance and clarity amid the complexities of spiritual quests, and it highlighted the importance of a teacher who could show the way to truth and life.

Explanation: Here Jesus is still clear in his opinion about the Jewish prophets. They are the dead and he is the living. You shouldn't understand that literally. He who passively waits for God to create a new earth does not live. Such a person misunderstands his humanity and is therefore spiritually dead. In that sense, Jesus says that the prophets are dead: they wait for God to act. But Jesus places the responsibility for the wholeness of creation entirely on man himself, on the living, on everyone who lives. We ourselves are part of life on earth. The quality we give to our own life is at the same time the quality we give to life as a whole. You are your own quality. When you become a different person, creation also changes.

He who heals himself, also heals creation, here and now.

Logion 53

**His disciples said to him, “Is circumcision useful or not?”
He said to his disciples: “If circumcision were useful,
the fathers would raise them up by already circumcised
mothers. But true circumcision in the spirit has proved
useful in all respects.”**

In the fabric of biological logic and human choices, a story of bodily idiosyncrasies and cultural adaptations unfolded. It started with a seemingly simple observation: if the foreskin was harmful, humans would have been born without it. This observation served as the first brushstroke of a deeper image. The story drew parallel lines between biological necessity and human adaptation. If it had made sense for humanity to fly, wings would have been a natural part of our being. Likewise, if clothing were a necessity, man would have been born with fur. The story put forward a provocative thought, namely that the various mutilations and adaptations that humanity adorns itself with do not intrinsically serve the preservation of life, but rather as a reflection of the way of life. It invited a deeper reflection on the fine line between natural needs and cultural habits, emphasizing the idea that not all human choices stem from strict biological necessity.

This story questioned the foundations of human adaptations and invited us to reflect on the role that culture plays in shaping our bodies and our way of life. It was an invitation to introspect about what is truly essential to life and what comes from the complex dance between nature and human creativity.

Explanation: Here Jesus, as a Jew, distances himself from the Old Testament and from the commandment that every Jew must be circumcised. But the meaning here is also different: are you good enough as a human being as you are? Does something still need to be cultivated about you, as a condition for a spiritual life?

No, you don't have to. You are good just the way you are. Let go of any illusion about yourself, even that you should still change, coincide with yourself just as you are, become a whole person, and that's it. Circumcision in the spirit is the letting go of all kinds of illusions about yourself.

Logion 54

Jesus said: “Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.”

In the simple shadow of modest possessions and modest minds, a teaching of true prosperity unfolded. Happiness seemed to reside in those who carried few possessions with them and filled their minds with only a modest wealth of knowledge. It was a hymn of praise to those who had little to lose, and in that lack of possession lay a certain freedom. These happy souls, with their minimal burdens, had only a little to give up compared to the rich and learned. While others struggled with the burdens of material abundance and the weighty ballast of vast knowledge, they lived in a state of freedom in which what little they had was enough.

A deeper truth revealed itself, namely that those who were willing to lose their social life would often discover the real life. In the act of letting go and simplicity lay the key to a life that was not overshadowed by the complexity of worldly possessions and an abundance of knowledge. This was a hymn to a life of simplicity, in which the treasures of the heart and the freedom to lose little had led to a true form of well-being and inner wealth.

Explanation: ‘Happy are the poor’ here of course refers to the ‘poor in spirit’ mentioned in the New Testament. These are people without illusion, or at least people who are not trapped in an illusion. So that has nothing to do with material poverty and also not with humility. Humility may be a result of spiritual liberation, and there is nothing wrong with humility, but that is not what is meant here. The poverty of spirit as a concept is related to the ‘emptiness’ of Buddhism. There too it is a state of consciousness, the illusionless consciousness. There too, it is the ‘empty-headed’ who can experience the state of ‘satori’, of all-encompassing happiness. The empty state of consciousness does not mean that there are no ideas, emotions or thoughts. It means that the spectator consciousness does not identify with it. The inner observer, also called the inner witness, can see them without judgment, without going into them and without

fighting with them. This state of consciousness is indeed called empty, but it is not without qualities. You can summarize those qualities of that consciousness as: trust, being and goodness.

Logion 55

Jesus said: “He who does not hate his father and his mother cannot be a disciple with me. And whoever does not hate his brethren and his sisters and bear his cross in my way will not be worthy of me.”

In the long journey through time, deeply rooted in the distant past, parents pass on a legacy to their descendants. This legacy is imbued with their own prejudices, fears, stubbornness, ambitions, and the scars of their personal journey through life. An age-old saying warns that the sins of the fathers are passed on to the third and fourth generation. To repair the break with the past, it is necessary to free yourself from the baggage that your parents carried with them, as well as your brothers and sisters. It is challenging to love them, while getting rid of their ways of thinking and actions. This assignment requires courage and determination, because it means breaking with entrenched patterns and holding on to your own authentic path. The path of awakening requires a willingness to break the chains of the past and shed the cargo of transferred baggage. Only by maintaining love for the essence of your family, while stripping yourself of the obstructive aspects, can you discover the true nature of yourself and awaken from the age-old cycles of inheritance.

Explanation: It must be a bit of a shock when you read the word ‘hate’ here. Hate your mom and dad? How can that be the intention? The surviving Coptic text of this logion clearly says ‘hate’, so the translation is correct in itself. However, the Coptic version was also a translation in itself. And is that Coptic translation, correct? In Aramaic, the language in which Jesus spoke and in which the original version of the Gospel of Thomas was most likely written, the word ‘hate’ also: ‘put aside’. That sounds much more plausible. The free translation of ‘to put aside’ is ‘to let go’. So, you have to let go of your father and mother. And also, your brothers and sisters. But that doesn’t mean you should abandon them.

What matters of course is that you carry your cross yourself, that as a free person you decide for yourself what you do with

your life and take responsibility for it yourself. You are not accountable to your parents or to your brothers or sisters. He who does not take this responsibility, who does not carry his own cross, but organizes his life in obedience to the commandments and prohibitions of his parents, or to those of the tribe, group, church or political party, will not be able to find the Christ, as a source of love, in himself. Proclaim yourself to be the highest moral authority in your life, regardless of what others think. Only in this way can you acquire the royal disposition of the love that dwells in your heart and experience the goodness that was spoken of in the previous logion.

Logion 56

Jesus said: “He who has understood the world has found a corpse. And whoever has found a corpse, the world is not worthy of him.”

In the sharp insight of the one who has fathomed society in all its meaninglessness, injustice and contradictions, a distance is created. It is a conscious choice to no longer participate in a society that is characterized by illogical aspects, injustices and internal contradictions. The person who takes this distance is considered too good for society. It is an acknowledgment of the inner integrity and moral compass of this person, who does not allow himself to be carried away by the current of meaninglessness and injustice for the sake of social conformity. This decision to no longer participate in a dysfunctional society requires courage and a deep understanding of what is truly valuable. It is an expression of self-awareness and the ability to break free from structures that do not contribute to the well-being of the individual and society as a whole.

Explanation: In the New Testament it is told that Jesus raised people from the dead. In the ecclesiastical tradition of Christianity, it has always been explained that Jesus then performs a miracle by making a physically dead person a physically living one again. He can do that, it is said, because he has the power over life and death as a God. However, through study of the ancient gnostic texts found at Nag Hammadi, and through other historical research, it becomes increasingly clear that there is a really big misunderstanding here. However the misunderstanding arose, it exists, and it can be easily clarified. The Gospel of Thomas began with the following salutation: “These are the secret words spoken by the living Jesus and written down by Judas Thomas the Twin.” And then it immediately follows: “Anyone who discovers the explanation of these words will not taste death.”

What is promised here? An eternal life? A life after physical death? So, it seems. But many statements in gnostic texts are ambiguous, they are ‘secret words’. They mean something

different than you might think at first glance. When we talk about 'death' and 'life', then those words have an everyday meaning, but they have an even different meaning in Gnosticism. But it is 'secret', in the sense that it is not self-evident. That is the meaning that is important in Gnosticism and therefore also in this text from the Gospel of Thomas.

Within the Gnostic circles, the symbolic function of these words was clear. They formed a kind of spiritual shorthand, in which everyday words were assigned a symbolic meaning that was clear to the members of the circle in which those 'secret words' were used. These symbolic meanings are the living element of a tradition. Access to such a tradition means, in part, access to the 'secret words'. One then learns the symbolic meaning of otherwise everyday expressions.

Logion 57

Jesus said: “The Father’s kingdom is like a man who has seed. His enemy came by night and sowed weeds under the good seed. The man did not let them pull out the weeds. He said to them, “I am afraid that if you uproot the weeds, the grain will be uprooted with them.” On the day of harvest, the weeds will be clearly visible. And it will be uprooted and burned.”

Deep in the vast universe, where stars performed their endless choreography and planets whispered about millennia of existence, lived a being. This being, a manifestation of purity, was unaware of his intrinsic perfection. Wandering through the fields of possibility, enveloped in the radiant energy of the universe, the creature felt a restlessness. A desire, vague and unnameable pulsated through his being. His mind, however, was clouded by a veil of stubbornness and pride, a shadow that blinded him to his own divine essence. The journey of the being through the universe involved encounters with beings of various kinds. Some shared in the ignorance, others had a hint of truth in their gaze. In those encounters, the being began to realize that the burdens it carried where self-created chains. Illusory conflicts, contrary to the natural harmony of his being, where unraveled.

Slowly the realization dawned: the key to liberation lay in understanding one’s own perfection. The burdens fell off, and the creature shone like a regained glory. It returned to the vast fields, no longer a searching soul, but a conscious creator of its own reality. This awakened entity became a source of inspiration, a living example of the salvation that lies in the realization of inner perfection. And so, the being danced through the cosmos, no longer driven by turmoil, but by the sheer joy of his own divine existence. In this awakening, the being realized that the secret of the universe was not hidden in stories, but in the silent essence of Being.

Explanation: This metaphor is not simple. Suppose you have read quite a few books about spiritual growth. Then the following could happen. You form an image of an enlightened person, and you discover that your daily actions and the state of your mind do not correspond to that image. Then you will force

yourself to live according to that image. You are going to wage war against yourself. You immediately start hoeing away all the weeds from your life, according to your own new standard. That doesn't work. Spiritual liberation does not thrive under duress. You cannot enforce it with your will. So, something else is needed for that. To begin with, you have to stop the fight against yourself. Make peace with yourself. From that state of inner peace, you can learn to look at your past defects in a completely different way. Some of those supposed flaws will turn out not to be flaws at all, but rather wonderful talents. Other characteristics fade and you can therefore let go of them with ease. That is the moment of the harvest.

Logion 58

Jesus said: “Blessed is the man who suffered and found life.”

In the depths of human existence lies an unexplored journey, imbued with sacrifice and imbued with inner struggle. It is a fierce battle, not against external forces, but an intense confrontation with one's own demons. When the struggle with yourself becomes unbearable, the question arises: why not give in to the overwhelming force? It is a paradoxical truth that giving up the fight with your inner self opens the entrance to a realm of bliss. A life without the heavy burdens of sorrow and pain. It is a reward that is not tangible but imbued with the subtle essence of peace and serenity. In the fabric of existence, where shadows and light meet, lies the choice to surrender oneself to the flow of life. Sometimes the greatest strength is found in surrender, in letting go of the urge to fight against the invisible enemy within. For in the midst of surrender, a new beginning blossoms, a journey to an unknown destination, where bliss awaits those who find the courage to give up the fight with themselves. It is a call to self-development, an invitation to let go of the burdens of inner struggle and embrace a life soaked in the calm waters of joy.

Explanation: This logion shows a completely different view of suffering. What is always important in the Gospel of Thomas is the wholeness as a human being. One cannot acquire that wholeness by amputating oneself in any way.

But also, not by wanting to change reality.

Suffering is an inescapable part of being human.

Unconditional love can only exist in combination with the unconditional willingness to experience the pain that life sometimes inflicts on us. It will not be possible as an ‘enlightened’ person to only want to have half of reality and to strive for a life without suffering. Whoever wants to become a whole person, and as a whole person wants to coincide with the source, will have to embrace reality as a whole, with all the trimmings, without any reservations. That’s called surrender. Surrender is unconditional. Only this surrender will be able to bring man the deepest possible joy in life. If one wants that joy, one will also have to take the suffering. Strangely enough,

love and joy of life do not exclude suffering, but rather include it. The three of them form the depth of reality. In the Christian tradition, suffering has unfortunately fallen under the spell of sin and martyrdom. In particular, the suffering of Christ has become dominated by penance. But one can also look at the story of Christ's descent on earth with the willingness to accept suffering there in another way.

Logion 59

Jesus said: “Look at the Living One as long as you live, lest you die and seek to see him, but will not be able to see him.”

In the realm of consciousness and awakening, there is a truth that shines like an inescapable light: once awakened, you can never fall asleep again without deceiving yourself. The slumbering soul, shrouded in the dreams of ignorance, cherishes a collective self-deception that is repressed and unconscious. In stark contrast to this is the self-deception of the awakened one. It is a consciously chosen path, imbued with the science of reality. There is a certain reprehensibility in this, for the awakened individual bears the responsibility of clarity of insight. It is a conscious departure from comfortable ignorance, a price paid for the truth that has been exposed. Awakening is like opening the eyes after a deep sleep, and once the eyes are opened, they cannot be closed without an act of self-deception. It is a journey that challenges the individual to throw off the veils of illusion, to embrace the raw reality that passes by the dreams of the sleeping masses. In the light of consciousness, the self-deception is no longer an innocent shadow, but a choice made by the awakened soul. It is a tightrope dance between truth and illusion, where every step is a conscious trade-off between the price of truth and the seductive slumber of ignorance.

Explanation: This logion builds on the following. The previous is about the willingness to experience reality in its totality, and not to exclude anything from it. As soon as we lock our experience from suffering, says the previous logion, we also close our emotional openness to all other essential experiences, such as love and joy of life.

Emotional openness is all-encompassing and unconditional.

An important theme in the Gospel of Thomas is ‘seeing’.

It is often said: It is already there, but you don't see it.

Emotional openness is the absolute condition for ‘seeing’, for the removal of the blindness to the Christ-nature of reality, and then here with emphasis for seeing the Christ-nature in one's fellow man. But Jesus adds something important to that. The meaning lies mainly in the contrast with Paul's statement:

(1 Corinthians 13:12) “Now we are still looking into a hazy mirror, but soon we will be face to face. Now my knowledge is still limited, but soon I will know completely, as I am known myself.” And that ‘later’, according to Paul, is after death, in heaven. But this logion corrects that view. It is not about contemplating after death, but about ‘seeing’ in this life. Always, and therefore also here, that is the recurring message of the Gospel of Thomas: not in heaven, not after death, not at the end of time, but in the here and now.

Logion 60

(They saw) a Samaritan carrying a lamb on his way to Judea. Jesus said to his disciples: “Why does he carry the lamb with him?” The disciples said to him, “To kill it and eat it.” He said to them, “As long as it lives, he will not eat it, but only if he kills it and it becomes a carcass.” They said, “Otherwise he can’t do it.” He said to them, “Seek a place to rest, lest you become a carcass and be eaten.”

In the shadows of a seemingly normal existence lies a deeper truth: as long as you do not live true life, you are ‘dead’ in the most essential sense. A slumbering shadow stretches across the path of those who keep themselves trapped in the illusion of the everyday. This ‘dead’ existence is characterized by more than just physical presence. It is a state of being in which the soul is subject to diseases of the mind and emotions that gnaw at the mind like voracious worms. In this seemingly impassive state, the true essence and meaning of life are lost. The call for true life is a call to awakening, to break the chains that keep the soul trapped in an endless cycle of superficiality. It is a search for the deeper meaning, the spark that brings life to life. So, instead of continuing to wander in the shadows of “dead” existence, the heart is encouraged to seek true life. It is a search deep into the core of existence, where the true colors of life manifest and where the soul finds itself in a dance of authentic emotions and fulfilled meaning. It is a journey that transforms “death” into a vivid expression of the human being, freed from the shackles of superficiality and filled with the true essence of life.

Explanation: This plays with the literal and figurative meanings of death and food. In the New Testament, there are various images that suggest the State of the mind free from illusion” or “an illusion-free state of the mind, as seen in logion 54. The virginity of Mary is also such an image. It is not about the literal historical meaning of Mary as the mother of Jesus, but about the woman as a symbol of the human soul. The soul of man must first become virgin before the Christ can be born in you. That is the symbolic meaning.

Another image is that of the Samaritan woman. At that time, the Samaritans were at the bottom of the Jewish social ladder. But it is precisely this good-for-nothing Samaritan woman who has the source of living water in the well-known story. Then there is also the story of the Good Samaritan. He too is a good-for-nothing. But it is precisely he who is capable of true love. The lamb is also such an image, and especially of the soul of man, which is not yet filled with images. The image of the lamb is comparable to the still uncircumcised seven-day-old child from logion 4. Here, in this logion, we see a Samaritan carrying a lamb in his arms. He is – very meaningfully – on his way to Judea. He might want to become a legalistic Jew and be circumcised. But in doing so, he will have to kill the lamb – the child in himself. But we are not there yet. Jesus draws his disciples' attention to that image of that Samaritan with a lamb in his arms on his way to a spiritual illusion. The students do not understand the figurative meaning. Their remark shows that they understand his words literally. Jesus then mocks them, by continuing to speak in the symbolic language that the disciples – and all those who want to understand his words literally – will of course find absurd.

Logion 61

Jesus said: “Two shall rest on one bed, one shall live, the other die.” Salome said, “Who are you, man? As if from one. You have climbed my bed and eaten from my table.” Jesus said: “I am He who is made up of the Undivided. I was given the things that are my Father’s.” Salome said, “I am your disciple.” Jesus said: “Therefore I say, if he is undivided, he will be filled with light; but if he is divided, he will be filled with darkness.”

Deep within the human being there is a complex duality. He has distanced himself from his true nature and now carries two souls in his chest: the wise and the stubborn. These two entities, as opposites, compete for dominion over man’s path of life. The one soul, the wise man, carries the light of insight and guides to life. She whispers wise lessons and offers a compass to a fulfilled existence. But the other soul, the stubborn one, is like a wandering ship that is leading life to the abyss. She embraces stubbornness and carries the burden of death in her shadow. In the enlightened man, who has embraced simplicity, rests the peace of a dead stubborn soul. Here the harmony between the two souls is achieved, and the enlightened sees the dance of life without the pressure of the stubbornness that leads to death. It is an inner struggle that every soul undergoes – the struggle between the wise and the stubborn. And in that struggle lies the key to enlightenment, to letting the stubborn soul die. Only then can man open himself to the spectacle of life, guided by the wisdom found in the simplicity of enlightenment.

Explanation: A) This logion is about ego and self. If you come to inner peace, the ego will die, and the self will wake up. The ego, that is the image you have made of yourself and that you think you are. The self is your true identity that will emerge if you dare to let go of your false self-image. The concept of egolessness has completely lost its original meaning in the church tradition. There the ego is mainly associated with egoism. Egolessness then means that you should not be selfish. It has thus become, quite wrongly, a moralizing concept. So, what was meant by it? The image that someone forms of himself in this way is his ego,

as part of an imaginary reality, which is carried by a collectivity. That image makes you blind to your own unique self, but also to the self of the other. To eliminate that blindness, it is necessary that you dare to let go of that self-image, that you become egoless. In the absence of the ego, the self will present itself 'by itself'. In order to become egoless, you need to create an inner 'place of rest', a safe place in your consciousness, where you coincide with your inner observer. From there you can learn to see your own ego constructs. See also logion 54. Seeing is salvation.

It is remarkable here that the question "Man, who are you?" is asked by a woman named Salomé, just like Mary Magdalene in logion 21. It is also remarkable here that Salome addresses Jesus as 'man'. And then she asks: "Who are you?" Salomé sees through the social masks of Jesus. She sees him as a 'son of man', a human being without a mask. But who is he then, if he doesn't have a social mask? She also gives a preliminary answer herself: 'It seems like you are coming on behalf of someone'. Apparently for her it is as if Jesus is not himself, but as a kind of ambassador effaces himself to speak on behalf of a superior, on behalf of God for example, like the Old Testament prophets. But Jesus immediately makes it clear that it is not so: 'I come on behalf of an equal,' he says. An equal!

prophets are not God they are not God's equal. They are only mouthpieces of the divine. Jesus is not a mouthpiece. He is essentially equal to the divine. Salome now understands what Jesus means, and how special that is. She wants to be his student. But Jesus immediately warns her again. If she were to make a distinction between her and Jesus, if she were to think that only Jesus is divine and she is not, then she would be divided within herself precisely because of that. Because then she places her divine essence outside of herself. As a result, she will create darkness about her own true nature, just like Heinrich.

She will also die in a spiritual sense and become a corpse.

Logion 62

Jesus said: “I say my mysteries to those who are worthy of my mysteries. Don't let your right hand know what your left hand is doing.”

In the silence of existence, where the kernel of truth whispers, lies a message for those who are willing to embrace a different life and long for justice. Deeply rooted in this message is the power of understanding, but only those with an open heart and an insatiable thirst for justice can fully grasp these words. The path to understanding and justice is illuminated by the simple act of acting without intentions. In these pure actions, free from hidden agendas, the resonance of sincerity resounds. It is an action that springs from a deep desire for justice, a desire that propels the soul forward without the pressure of personal gain. For those who embrace this truth, acting without intention is an art that transcends the boundaries of the ego. It is an act of purity, where the intention is dissolved in the flow of the moment. Only in this state of selflessness can one understand the deep meaning of justice, because it is no longer tainted by personal interests. Thus, the one who walks the path of justice and understanding travels enlightened by the power of pure intentions. It is a journey that connects the soul to the universal truth, and in which the words, profound and clear, resonate in the hearts of those who are willing to listen.

Explanation: The real contrast is of course between gnosis and faith. This distinction played an important role in early Christianity. It is one of the most important controversies between church and Gnosticism. The church has a creed. Gnosticism is about finding reality within yourself, and not about a story about reality that you should hold to be true. Everyone can believe, no matter what. There is a wide range of all kinds of faiths. Take your pick. For many people, including non-believers, faith is the same as religion or religion. For example, one wrongly speaks of the Buddhist faith. But Buddhism is not a religion at all. It is a spiritual tradition that shows you the way and offers exercises to learn to distinguish illusion from reality. Just like Gnosticism. The path

of Gnosticism demands that you first gather the courage to let go of all faith. The road to the gnosis, to experiential knowledge, is not available second-hand. You have to go that way yourself. Of course, you can spend time with others and exchange experiences along the way. That is the value of a spiritual tradition. But the road must be taken by yourself. If necessary, alone.

Logion 63

Jesus said: “A rich man had many goods. He said, “I will use my goods to sow, to reap, to plant, and to fill my barns with fruit, so that I may not lack anything.” That was what he thought in his heart. And that night he died. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

In the endless race to secure the future and the ongoing search for happiness, people often seem to forget what it really means to be alive. The days slip by as they determinedly strive for an elusive tomorrow, blinded by the pressure to arrange everything in their lives. Tomorrow's certainty seems to become a straitjacket, and the pursuit of happiness sometimes seems more like a distant horizon than a current experience. In this constant search for tomorrow, people often miss the precious present. Real life seems to slip by amidst deadlines, responsibilities, and the constant urge to have everything 'in order'. Ironically, when they finally think they have everything sorted out, it may be too late. Life, which has passed unnoticed while they were busy planning and organizing, turns out to be elusive. Leaving this world then happens without them having really experienced what it means to live fully and deeply.

In this race to plan, arrange and pursue happiness, some seem to forget that the present is the only certainty they have. Working, without attention to life itself, can lead to a life that passes without ever really having been lived. It is a reflection on the precious balance between progress and appreciating the present moment.

Explanation: To be rich in the gnostic symbolic language means: knowledge, to possess gnosis. Whoever enters the path of Gnosticism or of similar spiritual traditions that are aimed at liberation, learns to see through illusions, learns to recognize manipulations. You learn to 'see' the delusions in which people imprison themselves. And that inevitably creates power over others who still believe in their own illusions in an uninhibited way. And just as inevitably you come up with the situation that is so beautifully painted in the story about the temptation of Jesus in the desert. The great temptation is that you use your newly acquired insights for the greater glory of yourself, for

power over others, for self-glorification, for monetary gain. In the practice of life, it is not the devil who tries to seduce you. It is a bad symbol for the slavish followers, the sycophants, the followers, the profiteers, and unfortunately also of those tragic bewildered people who no longer dare to believe in themselves and think they can establish their salvation in the slavish worship of a guru. Those who have awakened, have risen from spiritual death, run a real chance that they will one day be tempted to worship their self-submissive followers. And those who cannot resist that temptation will die again in a spiritual sense. The awakened one who allows himself to be worshipped, who exalts himself above them through his fellow men, thereby chains not only his followers to himself, but also to his worshippers. He becomes the servile prisoner of his slavish followers, a slave of slaves.

Logion 64

Jesus said: "When a man had prepared a meal, he sent out his servant to invite guests. The servant went to the first man and said, 'My lord invites you.' The man replied, 'Merchants owe me money. Tonight, they will come to me, and I must give them instructions. I beg your pardon, but I cannot attend the meal.' The servant then went to another man and said, 'My lord invites you.' The man answered, 'I have bought a house, and I must go and attend to it. I do not have time.' The servant went to yet another man and said to him, 'My lord invites you...' " The man told him, "My friend is getting married, and I have to take care of the meal. I can't come. I beg your pardon for the meal." The servant went to another man and said to him, "My lord invites you." That man said to him: 'I bought a village. I go there to collect rent. I can't come. I beg your pardon." The servant came to his master and said, "Those whom you invited to the feast have asked me to apologize to you." The master said to his servant, "Go out into the roads and bring here whom you find, that they may have the feast. The businessmen and merchants shall not enter into my Father's Places."

For those who place their activities in society above life, for those who derive their identity from material possessions and refuse to detach themselves from them, for those who are stuck in their comfortable cage and do not dare to face the fear of the unknown, for those who are trapped in the cycle of momentary pleasures and are not willing to let go, For those who lose themselves in the illusion of power without seeing the injustice of it, the feast of true life remains unattainable. True life is a celebration of freedom, of letting go of the shackles that bind us to superficial pursuits and ephemeral pleasures. It requires a willingness to leave the cage of comfort and embrace the unknown, even if it comes with fear and uncertainty.

For those who cling to materialism and are fixated on the apparent value of possessions, the feast of true life will always remain at a distance. True joy comes from the simplicity of existence, not from the complexity

of material achievements. The feast of true life invites the virtues of detachment, courage, and the sense of justice. Only those who embrace these virtues can participate in the true feast of life, where freedom, simplicity, and true joy come together in a dance of existential fulfillment.

Explanation: Dare to make time to follow your calling.

Logion 65

He said, “A good man had a vineyard. He gave it to tenants so that they would cultivate the orchard, and he would receive fruit from them. He sent his servant that the tenants would give him the fruit of his vineyard. The tenants seized the servant, beat him, and almost killed him. The servant told his master. His master said, “Perhaps they did not recognize you,” and he sent another servant. The tenants also beat the other servant. Then the lord sent his son. He said: ‘Perhaps they are afraid of my son.’ The tenants, knowing that the son was the heir to the vineyard, seized him and killed him. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

In the gift of the earth, a place full of lush nature and wonders, people have been given the opportunity to live, thrive, and enjoy the overwhelming beauty that nature has to offer. However, in their foolishness, greed and vanity, many have destroyed the original balance, ravaged nature and continue to do so unabated. The arrogance of man, who places himself outside and above nature, makes him guilty of this destruction. Humanity seems blind to the connection with the earth and in its pride has withdrawn from the understanding that it is only part of this vast ecosystem. The prophets, whose voices sound like warnings, are mocked and ridiculed as impractical fools. These visionaries, who predict the consequences of human greed and negligence, often find little hearing in a world caught up in its own drive for short-lived gains.

The tragedy is that the true human being, who lives in harmony with nature, is often drowned out and sometimes even physically destroyed. Humanity seems to be killing its own conscience, turning away from the call for responsibility and respect for the earth. In this ongoing struggle between man and nature, the earth remains scarred by the scars of greed, while the voices of warning drown in the tumult of indifference.

Explanation: I can point to a stone and say: ‘That is a stone’. Then my fellow man can also see for himself what I am pointing to. But I cannot point out the state of my soul. I can’t show them. In order for a fellow human being to experience what I experience inside, I have to make music, write a poem, tell a story, in order to

try to let my fellow man experience what I experience. So that's pretty complicated. It becomes even more difficult if I would like to describe an inner process, so not just a stable state, but a development, a change. The way Jesus does that is in the form of parables. That is a form of spiritual psychology. It's not about something you should believe in or not, it's not an opinion, or a judgment. It is an attempt to describe a process that takes place in the inner life of man. This parable of logion 65 also gives an insight into the human inner self. It is about the messengers of the soul. What can we understand by that?

When you experience something, something nice or something bad, it changes the state of your mood. It makes you happy or sad. The state of your mind is a response to your experience of reality. You can't plan or program that. That just happens. A feeling is a message from your soul about the quality of the life situation you are in. How does that work? You do something and you experience a feeling of unease. That feeling of unease is a messenger from your soul letting you know that you are doing wrong. It is an expression of gnosis, the knowledge of love. What do you do then? You can ignore that feeling. Yes, you can, as a human being. You then hit that messenger. And another. And another. But if you continue to do so, one day there will be a deep inner protest within you, a despair perhaps about your existence. In this parable, this is the son, your own essence, the Christ in you. Will you kill them? Then you crucify the Christ in yourself. That makes you a dead person yourself. It is a kind of suicide of your soul.

But you will also receive other messages in your life.

You are working on something and that gives you a tingling feeling of pleasure. Your soul is telling you that this is your path. It is an inner confirmation that this is the meaning of your existence. Maybe you were planning something completely different, and it is not so convenient. Maybe you don't dare to act against your environment that doesn't want to allow you to do this and laughs at you for it. And then you hit that messenger anyway. And another. And another. Even then, sooner or later, a deep inner protest will arise in you, a depression perhaps. And if you don't listen to that, then you will also crucify the Christ in yourself. That also kills you spiritually.

Let him who has ears, hear!

Logion 66

Jesus said: “Show me the stone that the builders rejected. It’s the cornerstone.”

The social edifice, the vast culture, and the imposing Tower of Babel, all rest on the foundations of degenerate man. At the core of this immense edifice, if man returns to his origins, the entire system is in danger of collapsing. It is as if the whole edifice is dependent on the depravity of human nature. In the return to his origins, man discovers a truth that is simple and powerful: he himself, in his true state of being, is sufficient. It is a realization that the complex structures and systems that society has created are essentially derived from the essence of the individual human being. When man understands himself and returns to his true nature, the artificial structure of the social edifice is revealed as a house of cards that can collapse at the slightest turmoil. This degenerate man, who has strayed from his original state, bears the burden of the systems he has created.

However, in the awareness of the sufficiency of his own being, man can walk a new path. A path that does not depend on external constructions but is rooted in the intrinsic value of the human being himself. It is an opportunity to rebuild the edifice of society on foundations that respect human dignity and embrace harmony with one’s own nature.

Explanation: When we are born, we step into a story. Our parents, and all kinds of other people with them, tell us, the world through this story. And in doing so, they give us a role in the adult world. You are in your crib. Your parents, and all kinds of people with them, are looking at you. What do they see? Do they see you as you really are? In every human being there is an almost irresistible urge for self-development, for the realization of your personal individuality. That is the task that life gives to each of us. But that urge can come into conflict with your social environment. We must learn to, to suppress the keystone of our being, our natural individuality, our true self. Our individuality does not fit in with the social well-being of our everyday existence. But no matter how hard we try our personal qualities keep rearing their heads. That is their nature. And it

can then seem as if there is a hidden evil within our selves that constantly pushes us to ruin the self-evidence of our everyday lives. Everything you suppress will resurface sooner or later in your life.

And usually in some demonic form. If you have found yourself in such a situation, it is not the devil who has seduced you, but your shadow, the suppressed part of yourself, that demands attention, wants to be acknowledged, and interferes with your 'normal' life.

Logion 67

Jesus said: “He who believes that the All is imperfect is himself completely imperfect.”

The perception of nature reflects the inner conviction of man. The one who believes that nature is imperfect carries this belief as a mirror of his own self-image. It is a reflection of the idea that, just as nature is inadequate, so too is the individual inherently imperfect. On the other hand, those who believe that nature can be improved cherish the belief that self-development is possible. In this belief lies the confidence that just as nature evolves and can be adapted, so too is the individual capable of growth and change.

The belief in the perfection or imperfection of nature is a mirror that colors the perception of the self. It forms the lens through which one looks at one's own abilities. It is an inner dialogue that can influence the course of personal development. Ultimately, the relationship between humans and nature reflects not only the physical world around us, but also the deeper beliefs that shape our vision of ourselves. It is an acknowledgment that our views on nature run parallel to how we see ourselves, and in this insight lies the opportunity for self-reflection and growth.

Explanation: “He who knows everything but does not know himself, misses the All.” This is of course the core text of the Gospel of Thomas, but also of Hermeticism, and later Gnosticism. This logion is therefore not given its own explanation here, because all other logions can be considered as the explanation of this core text.

The Gnostic Gospel of Truth, one of the Nag Hammadi writings, says it this way: it revealed itself in their hearts, the living book of the living, which was written in the mind and consciousness of the Origin, and which existed even before the foundation of all in that part of him which is incomprehensible. (...) Those who will receive the doctrine are the living who are written in the book of the living; and they receive the doctrine only for themselves. Therefore, when a man has knowledge, he takes that which is his own and relates it to himself, that you may say in your heart that it is you who is this perfect day, that

you dwell in this light that does not pass away, and that you will speak of the truth with those who seek it. You are the children of understanding the heart. That is why they talk about Christ among themselves, that they may give a way back to those who are confused, ... while they are not striving for truth, or engaged in the search for truth, for they themselves are the truth.

Logion 68

Jesus said: “Blessed are you if you are hated and persecuted. Wherever you are persecuted, they will have no place.”

When the path you are on is marked by hatred and persecution, you know that you may be on the right course. In a world that is often unfair and unjust, honesty and justice are sometimes punished mercilessly. The path of integrity can be a lonely journey, where the sharp edges of truth collide with the compromises of an unjust society. However, in the shadow of opposition and rejection can be the confirmation that you are sticking to principles that are not always easy to maintain. If fairness and justice conflict with the norms of a society prone to injustice, the path can be a trial. But it is precisely in those difficult moments, when you are confronted with hatred and persecution, that the strength of your beliefs is tested. It can be a sign that you are on the right track, that you have the courage to stand up for what is right, even when circumstances are working against you. Sometimes the price for striving for fairness and justice is high, but it can also be the path to change and progress, where ultimately the power of truth and justice will prevail.

Explanation: Once upon a time, there was a young man, Joyce, who wanted to become a hero. He enlisted in the commandos, an elite unit of the army, and was accepted to his great delight. But a problem arose. When he faced an enemy, face to face, he was unable to get the dagger in his hand into the enemy's body. He could not, as he had practiced on the straw men, kill in cold blood. It was always as if his hand was held in a mysterious way. In the world of commandos, he was a coward. And therefore, in the words of this logion, he was hated and persecuted by his fellow commandos. He reproached himself for being a coward, so he hated and persecuted himself as well. Here we see a model of a human being who is included in a 'world' and whose entire endeavor is aimed at living up to the norms of that world. This is how we should understand the word 'world' in Gnosticism.

Like the world of commandos, there are many more worlds. They are based on agreements about good and evil, friend

and foe, hero and coward. They are the outer frameworks of meaning. It is the outside worlds that are supported and maintained by collectivities, usually with the help of an institution to protect 'the truth'. Apart from these outside worlds, there is also something else. In this story, that is Joyce's inner world, but of course that also applies to all other people. Everyone has an inner world. Thomas 22 says that it is about bringing the outside world into harmony with your inner world, in other words: that your actions in the outside world correspond to your own inner world. Make the two one, says this logion. This is clearly not the case with Joyce. There is a conflict between the two, they are in conflict with each other. Joyce is divided within herself. That's because Joyce identifies entirely with his role in the world of commandos. "I'm a coward," he says to himself. When he says 'I', he means himself as a commando, in this case as the failed commando, the coward according to the norms of the commando world. That's his ego. He experiences the inner refusal to kill cold-bloodedly as alien to this sense of self.

Logion 69

Jesus said: “Blessed are those who are persecuted in their hearts. It is they who will truly know the Father. Blessed are the hungry, for the bellies of those who desire will be filled.”

In the dance of life, there are those who are seemingly untouchable, celebrated and appreciated by society. Their path seems paved with success and recognition, and the need to change their lives is hard to find. These privileged people, who seem to have reached the top, often do not experience an urgent reason to change course. At the other end of the spectrum are those whose backs are pressed against the wall, those who are labeled losers, those who have been disenfranchised, and those who hunger for justice. For them, change is not a luxury, but a necessity, an opportunity to escape the suffocating grip of adversity.

It is the moments in which one is confronted with the harsh reality of life that the willingness to change arises. It is often in the depth of suffering, in the shadow of injustice, that the human spirit becomes resilient. The urge for a turnaround in life is driven by an inner hunger for justice and a desire for a better future. For those who are on the sidelines of society, change can be the only way out of the darkness. It is a call up, a striving for justice, and a chance for a new beginning. In their willingness to embrace change, they reveal the resilience of the human spirit and its ability to thrive even in the midst of the most challenging circumstances.

Explanation: Perhaps this is one of the most characteristic texts about the historical significance of Jesus. Charity, as is of course known, is a core theme of Christianity. But we know this through the church tradition mainly as a commandment, as a ‘Thou shalt’, or as a call to follow. Here, in this logion, it is emphasized that love is not just a moral commandment, however valuable it may be, but that love belongs to reality.

When you have come to know the Father, it is said here, you will automatically be willing to be touched in your soul. Then there is also the self-evident sense of unity with all-that-is. Then the separation is lifted. Then charity is a matter of course, because then we will be touched in our soul by everything that

happens around us. Then the pain and joy of our fellow man and other creatures is also our own pain and joy. Conversely, if we are willing to be touched in our soul by what is happening around us, then that willingness will bring us to the source within ourselves. Because if we want to open up emotionally to what is happening around us, that emotional openness will also make us know an inner desire in ourselves.

In every human being lives an inner longing, a hunger for wholeness, for the connection with the source. That is a natural desire. We are born with it. If we emotionally close ourselves off from the events around us, we will not be able to perceive that inner desire either. You can't selectively close your emotional experiences. You can't just have nice experiences and close yourself off from everyone else. Even if you only want to shut out one experience, you can only do that by locking the entire gate of your soul.

However, if we want to open up emotionally, we can only do so to all experiences, without exception. If we are willing to do so, if we also want and dare to experience the painful sides of human existence, without arming ourselves with all kinds of judgments, we also open the gate of our soul to the experience of love. If we dare to open our mind unconditionally, we will also be able to experience our own inner desire, the hunger for wholeness, in ourselves. That longing will lead us to the source, to the Christ-nature in ourselves. That desire then becomes our inner spiritual guide.

Logion 70

Jesus said: “That which you have in you will save you if you produce it from yourself. If you will not produce what you have in you, it will kill you.”

The whisper of conscience, an inner voice pointing in the direction of goodness and honesty, is like a lifebuoy in the turbulent sea of life. Those who take the time to listen to this inner guide will discover that conscience is the key to survival and flourishing in the complexities of existence. Honesty, as a powerful companion of conscience, is the signpost to ultimate triumph. In the battle between the darkness of dishonesty and the light of honesty, the latter will always prevail. It is a slow but steady progressing process, where the power of honesty will eventually break down the foundations of deception and deception. But for those who remain deaf to the whispers of their conscience, who refuse to listen to the inner voice of morality, an inevitable fate awaits. Without the guidance of conscience, life is an empty journey, devoid of meaning and steeped in superficiality. Without a moral compass needle pointing to honesty and goodness, the individual risks sinking into the depths of an existence without real meaning.

The essence is clear: conscience is a reliable guide that points the way to a fulfilled life, and honesty is the unshakable force that paves the way for ultimate victory. Without these inner compasses, life will pass without ever really being lived, and one will drift into the shadows of one's own negligence.

Explanation: logion 68 gave the example of Joyce, a young man who could not kill cold-bloodedly according to the standards of the world of commandos, even though he wanted to. When he stood face to face with an enemy, it was as if his hand was held in a mysterious way. If he were to take this inner refusal seriously, he would connect with his Christ-nature. So, if he makes that refusal the basis of his actions in the world, it will save him.

He thus ends up in a different experience of reality. He will live. If, on the other hand, he does not observe this inner refusal, that is, if he ignores that inner refusal, then he will kill himself in

a spiritual sense. If he nevertheless meets the demand to kill a fellow human being in cold blood, if he brings forth in his actions what is not in him, but comes to him from without, then he will die an inner death. This is the death that logion 1 says you will not taste when you find the meaning of these words.

Logion 71

Jesus said: “I will destroy this house, and no one will be able to rebuild it.”

“Jesus, imbued with a conviction that his message would bring about a radical change, predicted a change in the culture and life full of appearances. In his vision, he anticipated the idea that people would return en masse to a life of simplicity, willing to destroy everything that had been produced by the existing society. He predicted that no stone would remain standing on top of the other. This prophecy testifies to a deep-seated belief in the power of simplicity and truthfulness. ‘Jesus’ saw his message as a catalyst for a revolution of the soul, which would shake the foundation of the society of that time. It was not only a call for spiritual change, but also a warning of the inevitable collapse of artificial structures.

His vision reflected the power of a simple way of life, free from the complexity and falsehood that enveloped society. His prophecy expressed the conviction that humanity, once confronted with the pure truth of his message, would be willing to dismantle the established order and strive for a life that was in harmony with the deepest essence of human existence.

While the actual fulfillment of this prophecy is open to interpretation, it testifies to “Jesus” of a world transformed by simplicity, where the foundations of untruthfulness would be swept away to make way for a new, true way of life.

Explanation: The house, that is gnostic symbolism for the inner life of man. From the canonical Gospels we know the statement: “I will tear down that temple made by human hands and in three days I will build up another one that was not made by human hands.” (Mark 14:58). As always with Thomas, we must realize that an inner temple is meant, and not the material temple in Jerusalem.

Three days, that is the time between the death on the cross and the resurrection. ‘Three days’ is also symbolic: ‘as much time as necessary.’ Three is the number of wholeness. Three days is symbolically the time it takes to achieve wholeness.

What kind of values and norms are now on your inner altar, in the house or temple of your soul? That of an outer world? The ones from hearsay? That of some powerful institution that thinks it has a monopoly on the truth? Then you are a spiritually dead person, as was discussed in the previous logion. See also the explanation of logion 35 and 68. That outer world must first be broken down. Because it has to make way for something else. But that other thing was actually already there. It has always been there. But maybe you didn't know that yet, or you had forgotten. But once you have come to know that other thing, it can't go wrong, because it is the reality within yourself. And that inner reality is part of the all-encompassing reality. That's how you experience it: your self as part of the All, in unity with it. And once you have learned to distinguish that reality in yourself from the empty appearance, from the deadness of that external world, then it has lost its grip on you forever. These are moments on the spiritual path when your consciousness changes substantially, and from which there is no return.

That is what Jesus means here with 'and no one will be able to build it up again'. No institution, political or religious, will be able to exercise power over your inner house.

Logion 72

Someone said to him, “Tell my brothers to share my father’s belongings with me.” Jesus said to him, “O man, who made me a divider?” He looked at his disciples and said to them, “I am not a distributor, am I?”

Jesus’ message went beyond a fair distribution of possessions; it stretched out to the essence of human unity and justice. His teachings pointed to the restoration of the lost unity between people, in which the concept of possession would be replaced by a shared responsibility for the well-being of all. At the heart of his vision was the idea that in a just society the idea of possession would fade. Instead, everything would be available to all, removing the artificial boundaries of ownership and giving way to a common concern for the common good. The message was a call for a shift from the individual to the collective, from the selfish to the altruistic. In such a just society, the needs of the community would prevail over individual accumulation of wealth. It was a vision based on a deeper recognition of the interconnectedness of all people and the possibility of creating a just and harmonious world together. Although the concept of possession is a key issue in many societies, “Jesus” pointed to a higher truth, in which true wealth is measured not in individual possessions, but in the common care for one another. It was a call for a society in which the boundaries between “you” and “me” would blur in the face of a shared human brotherhood.

Explanation: If you have penetrated the world of the Gospel of Thomas to some extent, you will also see the humor in some statements. This is a word game about an inheritance.

In Gnosticism, people are seen as heirs of the source of all being. We come from that source like rays of light from the sun. The sun is pure light, and the rays it emits are not the sun itself, but they are also pure light. The sun and the rays are essentially similar. In a human sense, there is also such an essential relationship between fathers and mothers and their children. The parents and the children are all human, and in that respect essentially equal to each other. In a similar sense, in Gnosticism it is true that people are heirs of the source of all being. Just as

children resemble their parents, so man has an 'original face'. That is the divine essence of man, the true self. The view that man is an heir of the source, and therefore essentially like it, is characteristic of Gnosticism as opposed to that other view that God would be 'completely different' and therefore there is an essential difference between God and man. Now this comparison of man as heir of the source does not quite match the human situation between parents and children, as every comparison is flawed. And that's what this logion is about.

In human existence, the inheritance of the parents is usually divided between the children. There everyone gets their own and separate part. One gets something different than the other. But here, by surprise, not the case. Why not? Because the similarity of man with the source also means that people are similar to each other. There may be all kinds of external differences, and they are also significant in themselves, but in essence there is no essential difference between one person and another. Yes, we are all heirs of the source, but we all inherit the same thing, all the same essence of the source. Jesus, you might say, does manage the inheritance of the source, but instead of dividing the inheritance among the heirs, he gives everyone the entire inheritance. So, he is not a distributor. If we realize that we are all equal to the source in our essence, if we recognize this fundamental equality among ourselves, we can even say to a fellow human being, speaking from your own essence: 'You are me in a different form'. It is just another way of saying the greeting from Hinduism: 'I greet the light in you', or 'You are that', which also acknowledges that the other person and yourself, are both 'that', participating together in the same source. So, Jesus is not a distributor. He does distribute, as in the miraculous multiplication of fish and bread. Egg baskets of fish and bread are inexhaustible. And everyone gets everything, the entire inheritance.

Logion 73

Jesus said: “The harvest is great, but the laborers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord to send out laborers to the harvest.”

The world carries an overwhelming burden of misery, and many feel powerless in the face of the challenges of life in this society. In the midst of this overwhelming reality, however, there are few who see through the deeper game. Like crying in the wilderness, they try to make others aware of the hidden truths that form the basis of the human experience. The crying in the wilderness, are those who, in their understanding of the game, see that the system is flawed. They acknowledge the injustices, inequalities and challenges that many are struggling with. Their call for awareness is like an echo in the desert, where their message seems to be lost in the vastness of incomprehension. These few are trying to wake others up, to make them see that there is more than what is visible on the surface. They point to the complexity of the game being played, in which many are trapped without being aware of the rules. It is a lonely struggle to spread consciousness in the midst of a world that sometimes seems to close itself off from harsh realities.

Nevertheless, the crying in the wilderness, remain persistent. They hope that their message will eventually reach the hearts and minds of others, and that awareness about the true nature of the game will grow. It is a challenge driven by compassion for those who suffer and the desire to make a positive change, even if the road is difficult and lonely.

Explanation: In Matthew 9:37-38 we find almost the same text as this logion: He said to his disciples: “The harvest is great, but there are few laborers. So, ask the owner of the harvest if he will send workers to bring in the harvest.” Traditionally, this text is interpreted as a call to mission, to the conversion of others to the Christian faith. But that’s not what Thomas is about at all. The arrogance that there would be no salvation outside Christianity, and that therefore the pagans must be converted to the Christian faith, is alien to Thomas. For example, read logion 14 again. We must always remember that Thomas’ texts are ‘secret words’. They are not about historical events, nor about

spreading a faith, but about discovering the richness in the inner life of man. Thomas is a practical handbook for spiritual growth.

This logion is an expression of amazement that apparently, so few people set themselves to reap that harvest. The number of workers is small, that is, the number of people dedicated to working for the realization of unity with the source seems astonishingly small when you realize the great harvest that each of us could reap. Of course, you want to point out to your fellow man the rich harvest of spiritual growth. But don't worry about your supposedly unbelieving or non-spiritual fellow man. Leave the fate of the other person to the landlord if someone turns out to be deaf to what you would like to tell, about the inner richness that is also waiting to be discovered in him. Trust that every person has his own way to go. Who are you to judge that? There are no pagans. All people are on their way, each on his or her own path, wherever he goes.

Logion 74

He said, “O Lord, many are standing around the drinking trough, but there is nothing in the well.”

In the shadow of unfulfilled desires, a landscape spreads out where many thirst for full life. Searching souls gather around the pit of hope, but the words spoken by their leaders turn out to be empty and hollow. The leaders, charged with the responsibility of giving direction to the hungry crowd, turn out to be mere bearers of empty rhetoric. Their promises, like empty vessels, do not fill the pit of expectation. It is a mirror of disappointment, in which the seekers, who stand yearning around the drinking trough of life, are confronted with the emptiness of empty words.

The plea for meaning and fulfillment resonates in the hearts of those who long for more than superficial promises. It is a call to find truthfulness in the words of leaders, to discover that the promises are not just sounds. In the apparent gap between desire and reality, the need for leadership that is imbued with sincerity is revealed. It is a challenge to transform empty promises into deeds that truly fill the thirsty hearts of the crowd, paving the way to the full life that so many yearn for.

Explanation: Where you come across the word “many” or “a multitude” in Thomas or in the Gospels of the New Testament, be aware that this can be a symbolic word for a group of people who share a mutually agreed identity, for example, “we whites” as superior to non-whites, “we Christians” as superior to the Gentiles. ‘A crowd’, or ‘many’, has a collective sense of us and them. And the word ‘the well’ we must understand here as the source of all being.

The fellowship between people as referred to in logion 72 is based on the insight that all people are in reality one because every person is part of the source. That is the communion of saints in the sense of whole people, from which no one can be excluded. The realization that we are all one being, in spite of all external differences, allows for an infinite variety of forms, and also allows us to see the beauty of them. You can also say: every person is a child of God in his or her own way. That awareness of unity in diversity is the essence of charity, not only as a moral commandment but as an experienced awareness of that unity.

Logion 75

Jesus said: “Many are standing at the door. But it is the loner who will enter the bridal chamber.”

In the search for a happy life, many face an inner division, a conflict between different desires and compromises. It is a paradox that hinders the desire for happiness, because many are not willing to completely renounce their inner divisions. The path to bliss requires the courage to choose, to no longer want to spare the cabbage and the goat. Only the simple, those who are willing to make clear choices and not get caught up in contradictions, will ultimately attain true bliss.

The inner division can manifest as conflicting desires, conflicting beliefs, or clinging to things that don't contribute to the deeper pursuit of happiness. It requires an inner clarity and determination to let go of compromise and choose the simple path to fulfillment. In letting go of division, the simple find a way to inner peace and harmony, a path that leads to the true essence of bliss. It is a journey that requires sacrifice, but the reward is the deep joy of living a life that is in line with one's own inner values and clear choices.

Explanation: The word loner is almost a literal translation of the Latin word *individu*. The word *individual* comes from *in* = not and *dividere* = to divide. An individual is therefore not shared, a whole person, a loner. A whole person is originally the meaning of a holy person, a saint. In English, you can see that relationship even more clearly: whole and wholly. It is remarkable here in this logion that you must first be a loner before you can enter the bridal chamber. You have to become an individual first. Here, an important distinction is made from some other spiritual traditions that are strongly focused on egolessness. In gnosticism, egolessness plays no role. It is not present there as a concept. Gnosticism emphasizes the realization of your personal individuality. Your own unique and original identity is essential. The realization of this in the practice of life, proliferating with your talents, is everyone's personal divine mission

Logion 76

Jesus said: “The kingdom is like a merchant who has a shipment of merchandise and discovered a pearl in it. The merchant was shrewd. He sold the merchandise and kept the pearl for himself. You too are looking for an imperishable and permanent treasure that no moth can eat and that no worm destroys.”

In the silence of a moment of reflection, the call for authenticity penetrated the heart of a searching soul. “Get rid of everything that is not man’s own,” a whisper resounded in the depths of consciousness, like a gentle breeze that made the veil of illusions disappear. The challenge lay in letting go of false needs, of the artificial burdens that man had imposed on himself. In the maelstrom of modern life, the seeking soul discovered that an abundance of superficial needs had arisen, needs woven into the fabric of social expectations and external pressures. It seemed as if humanity had lost itself in a maze of desires that clouded its true nature. In the midst of this confusion sounded the call to get rid of what was not authentic.

The journey to self-development called for critical introspection, an honest evaluation of what was really needed and what was only a shadow of external influences. It was a process of detachment, in which the soul freed itself from the shackles of superfluous desires and apparent needs. The path to well-being revealed that the true essence of man was untouchable. In the midst of the coming and going of external circumstances, there was something that could not be taken away: the authentic core of the individual. It was the birthright of simplicity, of being who you really are, without the burden of artificial layers that obscured the true shine of the self. Thus, in letting go of what was not one’s own, in shaking off false needs, the seeking soul found the liberation to simply be itself. It was a coming home to one’s own essence, a rediscovery of the immutable truth that humanity’s most precious treasure had always been within.

Explanation: First you have to become a loner, says the previous logion, become what you are meant to be, only then can you enter the bridal chamber. To become a loner, you have

to let go of all kinds of silts about who you are. This is not you, you are not, peeling off, peeling off, layer after layer. Finally, an indivisible core remains. That core is beyond naming and does not require a label. But when you stumble upon that core, there is an undeniable experience: 'I am.' That experience will present itself automatically when we dare to let go of all images about ourselves. That experience transcends all transience. All the worries and all the fantasies about a life after death disappear like snow in the sun. You know that you are the deepest participant in something that transcends physical death. Your body is no more than a temporary form of that eternal source of life. Eternal does not mean endless time. Because in that experience of eternity, time no longer plays any role. There is no time in that. It is precisely the timelessness that is the hallmark of that experience. But it is not the case that you then realize that you have a body, and that eternal. There is no duality in that Source experience, in which your self-consciousness just coincides with all-that-is. There is no I and the other. Everything is sacred. Your body is also sacred, and an inseparable part of the all-encompassing wholeness. You know that you, in your appearance in time, are a form in which that source manifests itself and makes itself experienceable. Your body is a temple in which, like a pearl in an oyster, the sacred seems to hide. But for those who look closely, you will also be able to recognize the source in that body. In the transient dwells the eternal. In all that is transient, the eternal shows itself, in an infinite variety of forms.

Logion 77

Jesus said: “I am the one who is the light above all. It is I who is the All. From me the All has sprung, and to me the All spreads. Split a piece of wood, and I'm there. Raise the stone, and you will find me there.”

Deep in the silence of self-reflection, a journey unfolded before her, a journey to the core of existence, intertwined with the cosmos and all living beings. It was not a story that could be told, but rather a journey of discovery of the soul, a journey without words. There were moments of mystical ecstasy, in which she was one with everything around her. Fleeting concepts such as breezes, which came and went, and filled her heart with a deep connection with creation and its creatures. Those moments were like glimpses of a higher reality, in which the boundaries between the self and the universe where blurred. In her search for inner enlightenment, she discovered a lasting state of mystical experience. Not an end point, but rather a continuum of consciousness that embraced her. She was imbued with a pantheistic feeling, in which God was not to be found outside, but within her, interwoven with every fiber of her existence.

The journey to self-development was not a linear path, rather a dance of moments, a symphony of experiences that elevated her soul to new heights of understanding. She had found herself, not as a fixed story, but as a continuous unfolding of the mystery of being, a dancing journey through the endless horizon of consciousness.

Explanation: The eternal, of which we spoke in the previous logion, is omnipresent. Everything, without exception, is a manifestation of the source. So, it is not only present in you, but also in everything around you. That is the impressive discovery you can make when you have become a loner, when you have detached yourself from all kinds of identities that do not fit your essence, as was told in logion 75, and have experienced the eternal in yourself, as in logion 76. He who has experienced the eternal in himself, will then also see it in everything to

Everything around you is no longer ‘the other’, you are essentially connected to it. Everything is a form of the One,

of which you are also a part. Everywhere you meet that One,
wherever you are or whatever you see. You are everything.
All that is you. And then you can say, just like Jesus here: Lift up
a stone and there you will find me.

Logion 78

Jesus said: “Why did you go out into the wilderness? To see the reeds swaying in the wind? To see a man wearing fine clothes, like your kings and great men? They wear fine clothes, yet they are unable to discern the truth.”

Why do you enter society? Is it to let yourself be intoxicated by appearances, by the seemingly beautiful exterior that hides decay? Do you look at the great ones of the earth, while they are actually small in their humanity? Do you admire their learning and knowledge, when this is only a veil for their ignorance? And what about the artistic structures that man has erected? Are they not insignificant in comparison with the wondrous grandeur of creation itself? It is as if humanity is blinded by superficial splendor, while the real beauty is to be found in the overwhelming nature and the intrinsic value of simple human connectedness.

Society sometimes seems to be an illusion, full of glitz and glamour, but under that façade there are often hidden flaws and shortcomings. Perhaps it is time to look beyond the superficial appearance, to the essence of what it means to be truly human and to be part of a larger, more authentic reality.

Explanation: The journey here is the symbol of life, of the journey of life. Clothes are first and foremost the symbol of illusions, of delusions. They don't really exist, nor do the emperor's clothes in Hans Andersen's fairy tale. The question: why did you go on a journey, here means: why where you born? Or: what is the meaning of your life? Surely not to bow down to the powers that be, trembling like a reed?

Were you born to be obedient? To run anxiously after rulers? To clothe you with uniforms of servitude to the powers? That will not give you fulfillment. Because then you have become gripped by the non-existent.

So, you were not born for that.

You were born to participate in life from your own strength and to seek your own destiny. But to be able to do that, you have to have the courage to take off those non-existent clothes,

as logion 37 also says, to become naked with only your own essence.

Clothes are also the symbol of the meaning that you can give to life yourself, not as a submission to an illusion, but as a creative addition to life. After you have laid aside the uniforms of servitude to the powers, you start making your own clothes, giving meaning to your own life, from your own, really existing essence. That's what you were born for.

Logion 79

A woman from the crowd said to Jesus, 'Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts which you sucked.' But Jesus said to her, 'Blessed are those who hear the word of the Father and keep it in truth. For the days will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the wombs that have not borne and the breasts that have not nursed.'

In the shadow world in which he was born, there was no merit in leaving it. Rather, it was a winding path that led him, forced by the inevitable circumstances, into the unknown realms of the true world. His parents could not claim praise, nor could he himself consider his fate a personal triumph. It was a journey without a predetermined goal, a search for something elusive that he eventually found without knowing he was looking for it. In this day and age, there was little reason to feel sorry for those who placed children in society. To educate meant not only nurturing but also shaping individuals who fit into this divided world. They had to learn that sorrow, pain, and injustice were inescapable companions in the fabric of life.

That is why it is written: It would be better for them if a millstone were hung around their necks and they were thrown into the depths of the sea, than that they should deceive one of these little ones into sin. The burden of responsibility rested heavily on the shoulders of those who were tasked with guiding youth through the complexities of existence. The shadow world had to give way to the harsh reality, and those who guided the transition knew all too well that the price of innocence was sometimes unbearably high.

Explanation: For the meaning of this logion, we can consult Isaiah. With him (Isaiah 54:1) we read: "Rejoice, barren woman, you who never gave birth to a child; Break out in shouting and jubilation, you who have known no contractions. For, says the Lord, the children of this rejected woman will be more numerous than those of the married woman." Curiously, Isaiah first speaks of a barren woman, who later has children. That's why. The text of Isaiah is not primarily about women. It is about being cast out, like a barren woman can be cast out. The woman

who is rejected because of her infertility is here the image for the very worst form of being rejected. That will seem like a disaster at first, to be rejected like that. But after that it can turn out to be a liberation, a liberation from a barren existence. That is what is told here, because the woman, initially rejected because of her infertility, will later give birth to numerous children. She comes into new living conditions that are fertile. And she wouldn't have gotten there if she hadn't first been cast out of that first state of being. That initially barren state of being is that of imprisonment in the unreality of illusions. Rejection can be the beginning of the path to an illusionless state of connection with reality. This makes this logion an addition to the previous one. It was about liberation from the delusions of those in power, and that you could free yourself from that, that you do so consciously and actively.

Logion 80

Jesus said: ‘Whoever has recognized the world has found the body. But whoever has found the body is greater than the world’.

In that insight he met himself, he found the core of his being in the midst of the chaos of the world. The ultimate wisdom, which rose like a mountaintop above the landscape of knowledge, became his property. He was greater than the great ones of the earth, not because of power or prestige, but because of the understanding that embraced his soul. In his understanding of social structures, he realized that this ultimate wisdom was not reserved exclusively for a few but was accessible to anyone who was willing to see, understand and find himself.

It was a journey of discovery that was not tied to status or origin. He became a philosopher of everyday life, a seer of the truths that lay hidden behind the scenes of appearances. In the light of his understanding, he realized that the road to self-development and ultimate wisdom was open to all who dared to look, who dared to dig, who dared to be. And so, he became not only the master of his own destiny, but also the signpost for others who wanted to undertake the same journey.

Explanation: This logion is almost identical to logion 56.

It reads like this: Jesus said: “He who knows the world has discovered a corpse, and he who has discovered a corpse, he is not worthy of the world.”

It is mainly about the intellectual insight into the nature of the false reality, the shadow world. Seeing through this is an important moment on the spiritual path. But that intellectual insight is just the beginning. Intellectual insight can recognize the corpse, but intellectual insight is not gnosis. Gnosis is a step further. Gnosis is the experience of the really existing, of the body, the living body of reality, or the Christ-nature of reality, or, in yet another expression: the really existing as the body of Christ.

In the Middle Ages, people mocked the so-called scholastics who argued with hot heads about how many angels could sit on the tip of a pin. Whoever sees through the emptiness of this, has discovered a corpse, and he is no longer worthy of such a world

of words and thoughts. And whoever dares to trust in their own living experience of reality, having thus found the body, the living truth, has nothing to seek in dogmas, doctrines, or all other so-called truths.

Logion 81

Jesus said: “Let him who has become rich be king, and let him that has power forsake it.”

In the deep silence of self development, he found true life, and with that insight he penetrated the complexity of society and his fellow human beings. It was like a key that gave access to a knowledge that carried both strength and power. In the palm of his hand lay the potential to become masters of students and society itself. True life unveiled the subtleties of human interactions and the mechanisms of social structures. He could lead humanity, use his knowledge for personal gain, and wallow in the power that his understanding brought. But in the midst of these temptations, an inner voice whispered to him: resist the temptation to abuse this power.

The true master understood that the power of knowledge was not meant for oppression or manipulation, but for enlightenment and guidance. It was a test of his moral compass, a confrontation with the temptations of selfishness and the dark side of power. True life, found in the silence of self-awareness, called for responsibility and wisdom. Thus, he stood at the crossroads of possibilities, the key to power in his hand, and chose to be master not only of others, but also of himself. In that choice, he found the true meaning of life and the power to lead without deceiving, to rule without oppression.

Explanation: In Gnosticism, being rich is the symbolic word for the possession of gnosis. He who has gnosis is rich.

Let him who has become rich therefore means, let him who has acquired gnosis. In the symbolic language of Gnosticism, a king is someone who has realized the Christ-nature in himself. The word ‘Christ’ is the Greek translation of the Jewish word for ‘anointed one’, and with that term the Jewish kings were referred to as an ‘anointed of the Lord’. So, the word Christ simply means ‘king’. Paul puts it this way: “You have already become rich without us you have already become King.”

(1 Corinthians 4:8). That is purely gnostic imagery. Of course, the word “King” or “Christ” here does not refer to the secular form of rule. A secular King has power over others. But a King

or a Christ in the gnostic sense should renounce all power over other people. Jesus says in Mark 10:42-43: "You know that the nations are oppressed by their own rulers and that their leaders abuse their power. This is not how it should be with you."

Logion 82

**Jesus said: “He who is close to me is close to the fire.
And whoever is far from me is far from the kingdom.”**

In the intimate vicinity of the self, the road to enlightenment unfolds. There, where the distance between inner and outer is minimal, the bright light of understanding shines. But see, when the gap between the inner and the outer grows, a shadowy terrain of inauthenticity and darkness arises. Being close to oneself is like wandering through an illuminated forest where the trees of self-knowledge and self-acceptance let their leaves dance in the gentle breeze of inner peace. The path is brightly lit, every step is steeped in awareness, and the end goal, enlightenment, seems within reach. But when the gap between the inner world and the outer world expands, a shadowy area is created where the echoes of inauthenticity resound. The darkness creeps in and clouds the bright light of authenticity. The path becomes bumpy, and every step seems to be taken in the shadows of self-deception.

Thus, one stands at the crossroads, where the distance to the true itself determines the degree of enlightenment. In the vicinity of the inner the radiant light reigns, but when the chasm grows, the darkness becomes a master of the apparent self. It is in those moments of decision, of conscious choice, that the road to enlightenment becomes brighter or disappears into the shadows of self-alienation.

Explanation: This statement is surprising. There where expectations about the ‘kingdom’ among the Jewish people in the time of Jesus. According to Jewish belief, Canaan was once that promised kingdom. That land of milk and honey was promised to them by Moses, on behalf of the Lord. But that turned out differently in practice. Disaster after disaster occurred. That was the result, as the Old Testament explains again and again, of the recalcitrance of the Jewish people. And the burning wrath of God was interpreted as the just punishment for their sins.

This failed Old Testament dream of security took on a whole new meaning after the Babylonian exile, about 600 BC when the Jewish people were conquered by neighboring Babylonia.

That led to an encounter with the teachings of Zarathustra. He predicted a cosmic battle at the end of time between the forces of Darkness and Light. Then a final battle would take place and in that final battle the Light will win.

Evil will then have disappeared from creation. That idea of a final battle and the restoration of a blissful society is then found in the Old Testament story of Daniel, who is told to have been one of the Jewish exiles who had spent time in Babylon. At the end of time, we read in the Bible book of Daniel, a new kingdom will come after much struggle. Then all people who have ever lived and died will be raised from the dead and, together with those then living, will appear before a court that will pass an eternal judgment on them. The other interesting message now is that you can enter the kingdom by connecting with the inner core of your existence, the Christ within you. He who has strayed far from himself, has forgotten himself, is far from the kingdom. He who is close to himself, who has connected himself with the twin in himself, is close to the holy fire, the primordial light, and is one with the source of being. Tragically, in the church tradition, Jesus is included in the story of Zarathustra and Daniel. Jesus, who said 'Thou shalt not judge' and who taught that one should also love one's enemy, has been made a judge, who sits at the right hand of God at the end of time and judges the living and the dead. In that image of Jesus as a tough and implacable judge, love is really completely lost. That's what logion 83 is about.

Logion 83

Jesus said: “The images reveal themselves to men, but the light in them remains hidden in the image of the Father’s light. He will be revealed, but his image will be hidden by his light.”

In the moments of deep connection, man feels one with the vastness of creation. In this unity he discovers that what permeates his inner being is also the life force that flows through all creation. It is an experience that reaches beyond the senses, a subtle dance of energy that transcends the limits of the self. In the midst of this unity, he will experience the divine, a power that permeates everything but at the same time remains elusive to the physical senses. It’s like watching the wind blow through the trees without being able to see the wind itself. The divine is palpable in the breath of life, but it remains invisible to the naked eye.

In the experience of this unity, man becomes an observer of the invisible, a receiver of a universal energy that is the source of all life. He sees ‘god’, not as a physical entity, but as an invisible force that permeates the cosmos. It is a deep-seated experience of spirituality, in which seeing with the heart is more important than seeing with the eyes, and the connection with the divine is transcendent to the physical world.

Explanation: This is a warning. You may have an image of God, of the Christ, or of whatever. You thought your representation was of God himself. But that image is just an image; Every image is at best a resemblance of something that really exists. But if you believe in an image as if that image were the really existing, then you place the really existing self in the dark. If you live in a spiritual fantasy and you believe in your image of “the light of the Father,” then the light of the Father will be hidden by believing in the image of it. The belief in an illusion, obscures what really exists. The warning here is that on the spiritual path, you need to be prepared for a painful disappointment. All those beautiful images and stories to which you were so attached, in which you sincerely believed, will lose their reality along the way. They will pale in the light of reality, in your own surrender to the really existing. But in a different way, those images and stories

also take on a new meaning. They do not exist in themselves, but they have become a sign, a reference to something else that can be known in experience. And that is their right to exist, nothing more. The 'map is not the journey', but it is a means of preparing for it.

Logion 84

Jesus said: “When you see your image, you are happy. But when you see images that come into existence before you and are neither mortal nor visible, how much will you have to endure?”

When you truly behold who you are, joy can fill your heart. But imagine, what if you then experience the presence of the uncreated, an all-pervading essence that transcends the boundaries of the created? Would you be able to handle such an overwhelming experience? The mirror of self-reflection can reveal the authentic self, a discovery that can put a smile on your face. It is a moment of inner joy, in which you embrace yourself as you really are. But then comes the invitation to look beyond the boundaries of the created, to experience the uncreated, a power that reaches beyond the human form. This confrontation with the boundless, the uncreated, can be overwhelming. It is like standing on the edge of an endless abyss, where the depth of mystery extends to infinity. It is an experience that transcends the limits of human understanding, an encounter with something that cannot be captured in words or concepts. The question then remains: are you ready to embrace such a profound experience? Can you welcome the abundance of the uncreated without getting lost in infinity? It is a challenge that goes deeper than knowing the self, and the answer lies in the willingness to open yourself to the unknown, to the boundless mystery that lies behind the veil of creation.

Explanation: When you see your reflection, you take pleasure in it. But if you see your original face that existed before you where there, and that does not die or arise, how much joy you will experience! This is a further elaboration of logion 83. There it was about the loss of images. This is about the profit that this can bring. Whoever believes in images, as described in the previous logion, places the core of his own existence outside himself, namely in those seemingly separate images. But those who learn to experience the reality to which those images refer as a sign, will come closer and closer to themselves, and discover that ‘the light of the father’ from the previous logion is present in themselves, that all those images are an image of your

own essence, here called your original face. There is something in man that is separate from time. In the prologue of the Gospel of Thomas we called this the Christ-nature. The gain of the loss of the images is the joy of discovering the timeless Christ-nature, as really existing within yourself.

Logion 85

Jesus said: 'Adam was created from great power and great wealth, but he was not worthy of you. For if he had been worthy of you, he would not have tasted death.'

In the very beginning, man was a beautiful and unspoiled being, harmoniously intertwined with nature. However, by not listening to his inner compass, his conscience, he became alienated from both his own being and the nature around him. In this way he placed himself and his descendants outside the original harmonic framework, and in that alienation a form of inner 'death' began to make its appearance. The original purity, once inherent to man, continued to exist in the open-mindedness of grandchildren. They still embody the essence of true humanity, untouched by the circumstances that would follow later. However, these children are led, without being aware of it, into what appears to be an underworld, away from their inherent connection to nature and their own original state.

Parents, perhaps unintentionally, take their children along the edge of this underworld. They lead them away from the innocent wisdom that children naturally possess and instead introduce them to the complex layers of the world that has been shaped by the choices and mistakes of previous generations. The tragedy lies in the fact that these children, led to a world that deviates from their original nature, are often unaware of the deviation. They are taken along in a stream of norms, values and circumstances that are far removed from the simplicity and purity of their original state. It is a story of loss, of a beautiful beginning distorted by the inevitabilities of human journey.

Explanation: We can only understand this logion with the statement about Adam from that completely different interpretation, by the Gnostics of the paradise story in the Old Testament. A key passage on this from another Gnostic gospel, that of Philip, reads: "At the time that Eve was in Adam, there is no death. When she separated from him, death occurred. When he becomes complete again and comes to himself, there will be no more death." We know that Adam came forth from great power and great wealth because he was a copy

of the “image” and “likeness” of God; he was both male and female (Genesis 1:26-27). However, he was not worthy of Gnostic believers, for he sinned by growing and multiplying, by being divided into male and female when Eve was taken from his rib.

Logion 86

Jesus said: “The foxes have their dens, the birds have their nests. But the Son of Man has no place to lay his head and rest.”

In a remote forest, where the leaves whispered and the trees told their ancient stories, lived a community of different animals. They shared their world harmoniously, each creature fulfilling its role as nature intended. In this lush environment, where the rhythm of life was determined by the seasons and the sun rising and setting high in the sky, there was a serene balance. The animals, from the majestic deer to the bustling squirrels, had learned to listen to the subtle melodies of nature. They understood the language of the wind and the soft whispers of the river.

In the midst of this idyllic spectacle, however, there was a being who was different. Man, with his erect figure and seemingly unlimited imagination, had moved away from the original dance of life. Instead of listening to the harmony around him, he chose to forge his own path. Man, driven by stubbornness and desire, began to fight against the natural order. He created his own rules, his own standards, and imposed them on the world around him. In his quest for power and control, however, he forgot that he was also only a modest participant in the eternal game of life. His conscience never knew peace. While the other beings rested under the starry sky, man struggled with his inner conflicts. He built cities that choked the air, he plundered the Earth's Springs without regard for the consequences. His heart was heavy, laden with the burden of his own choices. Yet there was hope, because nature is resilient. The other animals in the forest observed humans with compassion. They knew that, despite his errors, somewhere deep inside there was a desire to return to the simple wisdom of nature. The question was whether man would ever listen to the whisper of the wind and the call of his own nature and thus restore the harmony that had once been lost.

Explanation: It is usually assumed that this ruling would be a lament. How tragic that the foxes and the birds have a home, but the son of man does not. And the son of man, that is the historical Jesus in his lonely role as the Christ, as the only ‘son of man’. But this logion is certainly not a lament in the context

of the Gospel of Thomas. This is about something completely different, namely that as 'a son of man', that is, as the whole human being that we can all become, we could muster up the courage to be consciously spiritually homeless, that we do not need faith or anything else to know what we have to do here on earth. Then we are simply and simply human with people. Then there is no us and no them, then there are no believers and unbelievers.

Every doctrine, every faith, every ideology, creates a distinction between 'us' and 'them': the Jews and the non-Jews, the Christians and the Gentiles, the proletarians and the capitalists, the chosen according to 'our faith' and the lost. But those who do not belong to a 'we' do not know a 'them'. Those who don't belong anywhere, belong everywhere.

From this meaning we can also look again at the texts in the New Testament. In Luke 9:57-62 we read: "As they were going on their way, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go.' Jesus said to him, 'The foxes have holes, and the birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.'" Here Jesus warns someone who wants to follow him be careful, what I have to offer you is not a new faith. It is not the same faith as what you think you have to leave now, like the faith of your fathers. There is no point in leaving one faith for another. What I have to offer, Jesus says, is fundamentally different. Do you want to follow me? Then realize that I have no shelter to offer in which you can hide yourself, in which you can flee from yourself, in which you can escape from your own responsibility, from the commandment of love within yourself. Those who understand what Jesus is really about no longer long for a hiding place, like the foxes for their holes or like the birds for their nests. Quite the opposite.

Logion 87

Jesus said: “Wretched is the body that is dependent on a body. And miserable is the soul that depends on these two.”

In the realm of the awakened, where the veil of ignorance has been lifted, the sight of those sleeping is a strange sight. Observing one sleeping person, who is thoughtlessly led by another sleeping person, or listening to a dialogue between two who are still in their dreams, resembles, as it were, the interplay of two masked figures. There is an atmosphere of appearances, like two people talking without revealing their true selves.

In this world of apparent tranquility, the burden of conscience is palpable, though stifled by uncommon sense. Conscience whispers softly, like a forgotten voice begging to be heard. But instead of listening to this inner voice, the sleeping people allow themselves to be guided by superficial thoughts and prejudices, like masked dancers carried along to the rhythm of an invisible melody. The misery of conscience, buried under layers of self-deception, is overshadowed by the uncommon sense that clouds clarity like a fog. It is a dance of deception, in which the truth is obscured by the shadows of superficiality.

In this spectacle of the sleeping, the awakened spectator witnesses a paradox. He sees humanity struggling in a world of appearances, in which the deep voice of conscience is drowned out by the fleeting murmur of reason. The question lingers in the air of this curious display: when will the sleeping awaken to the truth that hides behind the masks of their own illusions?

Explanation: This cryptic statement (compare logion 112) disdains the mortal body, which is born from another body. It is best for the soul to be as independent as possible from physical life. If you depend on another person to make you happy (your partner), you will never be happy. And if you have a child (a pure soul) with this person, he will suffer from the whirlwind of problems of this codependency. It is foolish to put your happiness in the hands of another human being. This logion is also about slavery. It is not so difficult to see what could be meant by slavery to the body. Those who let their actions be determined entirely by their physical urges may have the illusion

of being a free person I do what I feel like doing and don't care about anything – but in reality, they are a plaything of whims and desires. And as attractive as that may seem, it is a very unfree state that certainly does not make you happy. The key to understanding this is the frequent statement in Thomas that we must 'make the two one'. So, it's about the concept of 'the two'.

In Thomas 22, Jesus says: 'When you have made the two one ... then you will enter into the kingdom.' And in logion 106 Jesus says: 'If you make the two one, you will become a son of man.'

The Coptic word translated "the two" in logion 22 and 106 is also found here in logion 87. So here too, we can, and perhaps even should, translate that with 'the two'. And certainly, also in terms of meaning, we need to see the similarity. Well, making the two one is important. Thomas is about wholeness, because man in his wholeness is part of the source. And the body also belongs to that wholeness. But how can you, as a soul, be a slave to 'the two'? In the time of Jesus, Plato's dualism had a great influence on religious life. And this logion resists that. It is a sneer at the dualism of body and soul as popularized by Plato, in which 'the two' is glorified, and even made a condition for a purely spiritual life. Plato was a Greek philosopher. He lived in Athens for about 300 years BC. His influence on Christianity that formed in the centuries after Jesus was immense. Plato divided reality into two spheres of being: matter and spirit. That is 'the two' that this logion turns against. For Plato, all matter is inferior, contemptible. He saw the spiritual as the only good, far above matter. The body of man belongs to the sphere of being of matter, and the soul of man belongs to the sphere of being of the spirit, according to Plato. In this way he introduced a dichotomy between the body of man – which is only matter – and the soul of man – which is purely spiritual. He came up with 'the two' of which this logion rather viciously says that you can be a slave to them.

Logion 88

“Jesus said: ‘The angels and the prophets will come to you and give you what you already have. Give them also what you have; give them the things you possess, and say among themselves, “When will they come to take their own things?”’

In the state of awakening, messengers and prophets will come forward, armed with words that seek to give what you already possess within. They will be concerned with deciphering the truth that you already know and will try to convince you of insights that are already anchored in your being. It can be tempting to listen carefully to their voices but remember that it’s essential to stand firm and try not to forget what you know in the deepest core of yourself.

The messengers and prophets, no matter how well-intentioned their intentions may be, carry with them doubts and uncertainties. They grope in the dark, understanding only fragments of the whole. It is a paradoxical dance in which they try to share what they do not fully understand. In this phase of awakening, it is crucial to listen unconditionally to your own inner voice. Don't be seduced by the persuasiveness of others. You hold the key to your own understanding and growth.

The path of self-development requires courage and determination. While remaining steadfast in your own knowing, it can be helpful to invite others to hear their own inner voice. Ask yourself when they will understand that true wisdom is not only in words, but also in the quiet space of self-reflection. Perhaps one day they will see that the power to understand is already within them, just as it is within you.

Explanation: When you work hard to purify, you will get what you need. Don't get attached to earthly things, be willing to give them up. Spiritual traditions are a double-edged sword. You can get caught in them, but you also need them for salvation.

Captivity is not a characteristic of tradition, but of the way in which you can deal with a tradition. Do you take it literally, as a doctrine, as a belief? Then that tradition will kill you. But to be brought back to life, a spiritual tradition can be of great help to you. A spiritual tradition is at best a mirror in which you

recognize your own, original face. The images and stories of a tradition can confirm a deep inner longing in you, a longing that can lead you to unity with the source. A spiritual tradition can support you in recognizing and trusting that inner desire. The angels and the prophets, here the image of a spiritual tradition, will give you what is yours, if you deal with them in the right way, in freedom. And in turn, you will be able to enrich the tradition with your own experiences and insights: give what you have.

But beware: every tradition also seduces you all too easily into a firm belief that can uproot you from your own experience. Then tradition takes away what is yours. What was yours, they will say: it is ours. So be prepared for that if you are involved in a spiritual tradition. Trust your own desire. Follow your own intuition. Take advantage of the wisdom that a tradition can offer you in your own way.

Logion 89

Jesus said: “Why do you wash the outside of the cup? Don't you think that the one who made the inside is the same one who made the outside?”

Why do many of you pay so much attention to the outside? Why are you so busy, cleansing and beautifying your bodies? The inner reflects the outer. A healthy inner self results in a healthy appearance, while a disturbed inner self manifests itself in a disturbed appearance. The body acts as the mirror of the soul. It is an intriguing reflection: what does one really achieve by adorning the outside? Beauty that is only skin-deep has little meaning. The true integrity of someone comes from the inner well-being. A carefully modeled exterior can never compensate for the emptiness or disfigurement of the interior.

In the present time, a sad spectacle is emerging. Modern man, with his body that is deformed both outside and inside, shows a shabby appearance. Illness becomes visible in both the outer appearance and in the deepest recesses of the inner self. A connection is clear: the unhealthier the exterior, the unhealthier the interior. The finery of the exterior often serves as a façade, a mask to hide the inner imperfections.

In this spectacle of adorned exteriors, the question arises: how much is there really to hide? The more one tries to conceal, the greater the inner disorder seems to be. True beauty and flawlessness do not arise from outward appearances, but from the depth of inner well-being. The path to true harmony begins from within, and it is only when one becomes aware of this truth that true transformation can take place.

Explanation: This quote from Jesus says that too many people worry about their outward appearance and never worry about the inside. The Creator created us all inside and out, and everything should be cleansed. The reality is extremely multifaceted. Strangely enough, there are quite a few traditions that try to obscure part of it. They then usually split reality into two parts. They call one part good and the other evil. They are dualistic. Christianity, for example, has put the human body in the damn corner. Only the ‘spiritual’ is good there. Western

science, in turn, has created suspicion against human feelings and glorified thought.

This logic lets you know that no part of reality can be excluded. That is the essence of non-dualism. Nothing of 'that which is' is in itself good or bad. Good or evil does not belong to a domain of reality but arises from human actions. It is in the actions of man that good or evil takes shape. This also means that the responsibility for good and evil rests with people.

Logion 90

Jesus said: “Come to me, because my yoke is light, and my authority is mild. You will find peace for yourselves.”

Turn inward and stop fighting yourself, because in that inner battle you will always be the loser in the end. It is an exhausting undertaking to constantly try to be something other than who you really are, to constantly try to reconcile your inner contradictions. The road to peace and harmony begins with self-acceptance. Embrace the complexity of who you are. Let go of the tension and don't strive for an unrealistic ideal. Recognize that your inner conflicts are an integral part of your unique journey.

The power lies not in changing who you are, but in understanding and embracing your individuality. Embrace yourself with all your quirks and discover the peace that comes from authentic self-acceptance. It is a liberating journey, in which you no longer fight against the waves, but learn to surf the flow of your own being.

Explanation: If you want to be different from what you really are, you have to constantly fight against yourself. But he who coincides with himself can cease all struggle against himself and live with himself in peace. Of course, this also applies to the previous logion, in which it was said that the body is just as much a part of the unity as the soul. He who fights against the body, because the body is contemptible and only the spiritual good, is doomed to a lifelong struggle against his own human nature, with all the misery that entails. And here, of course, the view that we were born in sin, as is said in Psalm 51, is also rejected. This view would later lead to the view of original sin within Christianity. All ideas about a so-called human deficiency only distract man from his true nature. Being yourself has no struggle, no negative judgment about yourself, no suppression of any human aspect. Self-realization, and with it the restoration of unity with the source, begins with self-acceptance.

Logion 91

They said to him, “Tell us who you are so that we may believe in you.” He said to them, “You search the face of the heavens and the earth, but you have not recognized the one who is in front of you, and you know how to test it.”

Imagine that someone stands up and declares that he is enlightened. In the sea of opinions and convictions, the question arises: how can he prove his authenticity? Who would he have to be to be credible in the eyes of others? How do people recognize his true state of enlightenment? The answer rests not only on his words, but on the resonance of his being. The truth of his statements should lie not only in his argument, but also in the depth of his actions and the light of understanding that radiates from his eyes. True enlightenment is tangible, rather than just audible. The authentic master speaks not only with his mouth, but with his entire presence.

The students, looking for guidance, must trust their inner compass. They need to tune in to the frequency of truth and sincerity and feel the resonance that emanates from those who claim to be enlightened. It is not a matter of merely believing what is said but rather recognizing the truth that manifests itself in silence.

In the search for authenticity, students must not only listen to the words, but also to the silence between the words. They must follow their intuition, let themselves be guided by the inner knowing that whispers like a gentle breeze when truth is in close proximity. Thus, in the midst of many voices and assertions, they will recognize the true Master, not by outward display, but by the inner resonance of wisdom and truth.

Explanation: The students want a faith. They want Jesus to tell them what they should believe about him. They may want to make a god of Jesus, very different from themselves, far above themselves, so that they might worship him appropriately. But then they would place precisely what is present in themselves outside themselves, namely in the image they want to make of Jesus. But Jesus is not concerned with a faith. A belief makes blind all too easily. Jesus wants to lift

that blindness, He wants to show the disciples what it is. Jesus does not want them to make an image of him and believe in that image. He wants them to recognize something in him that is also present in themselves.

Logion 92

Jesus said: “Seek and you will find. But the things you asked me in former days, I did not tell you then, and I would like to tell you them now so that you need not search any longer.”

The master moves with caution, because the truth is often recognized by the discomfort it causes when you hear it. It's an unpleasant discovery to realize that you may have spent your entire life in some kind of slumber. The awakening brings with it a sharp pain. Yet, if you share this truth with others, you often encounter resistance. People often prefer their comfortable sleep to the awakening reality, unless they are forced, with their backs against the wall.

It's a game that many continue to play, without even considering whether they should play it. Humanity seems to prefer the false security of the familiar game to the uncertainty of the truth. It is only when they are confronted with the harsh reality of their own choices, when they have their backs against the wall and nowhere to go, that they consider the possibility of awakening. The master understands the tenderness of this awakening journey. He knows that truth is often a bitter pill to swallow, which is why he approaches it with care. He reaches out to those who are ready to listen, who may feel discomfort in their sleep, but are not yet aware of its source. It is a subtle game of revelations, in which the master serves as a guide for those who have the courage to look beyond the illusions of the game and dare to face the truth.

Explanation: Seek and you shall find. A true and wise expression. But they thought they had found it with you and stopped looking for it themselves. The desire that you first touched, and that you wanted to awaken, was recognized, but your words did not do what you intended. They thought you were the answer to their desire. Instead of waking them up, your words lulled them back to sleep. And when you wanted to continue, say what it was really about, they looked surprised. They believed in you, didn't they? You were their anchor, their security, weren't you? Why did they have to break

away from you? No, they don't want to lose the security you provided them. Rather than take responsibility for their own lives that you wanted to arouse them towards, rather than wake up and be free, they just wanted a different dream of security.

Logion 93

Jesus said: “Do not give holy things to the dogs, lest they throw them on the dunghill. Do not throw pearls before swine, lest they poison.”

These words carry a tenderness that must be shared with the stubborn but be on your guard. If they hold on to their path of untruthfulness, be cautious. They can twist these words and misuse them for their own agenda. If you notice that they are trying to manipulate words for their own gain, don't be reluctant to distance themselves.

Sometimes silence is a powerful message. It is not always necessary to share the truth with those who are not ready, especially if they are prone to misusing it. The truth remains unchanged, but its interpretation may vary depending on the recipient. Let these words be a beacon of insight for those who are open to growth but be vigilant against those who try to bend the truth to their own falsehoods. Sometimes the greatest wisdom is not only knowing when to speak, but also when to be silent.

Explanation: Give generously, without conditions.

Help everyone and don't expect to be refunded. Don't expect a refund for favors given in the past. And that is a great temptation for spiritual teachers. The boars will see their chance to gain power thanks to your admirers. They will say they support you, but they place themselves between you and the others, thus exercising power over the gullible dogs in your name. And as you change and grow, they will isolate you and make you an eternal and unchanging truth. And so, you have become unreachable for everyone. But how should you behave if you think you have something to say that really matters? Tell them: what you see is you. Teach them and encourage them to search within themselves for what they thought they had found in you. See the following logion.

Logion 94

Jesus said: “He who seeks shall find, and he who knocks shall be let in.”

The path to the narrow gate is one of determined searching, a journey that pushes you to the limit. Only those who persevere in their search, without stopping to the end, will be able to enter the gate. But be warned, beyond the gate there is no room for ballast; Everything that is not essential must be let go. It is a trial of the soul, a journey on which you have to throw off the excess burdens of superfluous baggage. Only after getting rid of this ballast will you be able to pass through the narrow gate. Here, at the threshold of the transcendent, there is no room for what is not essential. The door is open, but not for those who hesitate or only superficially search. It is an invitation to those who are willing to leave behind everything that is holding them back. There is no need to knock, because the door is always open to those who have fully dedicated themselves to the search. It is an invitation to liberation, but only for those who have the courage to let go of everything and fearlessly enter the narrow gate.

Explanation: This statement was originally intended for Jewish ears. For the statement ‘He who seeks, will find’ falls completely outside the meaning framework of Moses. So, he is revolutionarily different and opens up a new perspective. The main characteristic of the Jewish faith is faithfulness to the law of Moses. In Deuteronomy, Moses says it very clearly. Those who keep the God-given laws will be rewarded by God with happiness and prosperity. Those who do not keep the laws will be punished by God with misery and misery. But this text also does not fit within Christianity according to Paul, which is entirely based on faith. Within that framework, salvation can only be obtained by faith, and not by seeking. On one’s own strength, following one’s own desire, searching for the meaning of existence, there is called pride. Even faith must be given to you, as it has been sung in many keys in the Roman Church and within Protestant Christianity. So, this logion promises something completely different. Outside the laws of Moses,

outside the Christian faith, there is a spiritual path that starts with yourself. But what should you look for? Just ask yourself that question. For there is in every human being a suspicion, a longing, a homesickness that, apart from any outer authority, will lead you on your spiritual path if you have the courage to trust in it, and only in it. This logion thus offers, in addition to fidelity to Jewish law and in addition to faith, a third spiritual possibility, the way of gnosis. On that road, the rule is: 'He who seeks shall find.'

Logion 95

Jesus said: “If you have money, don't lend it at interest, but rather give it to someone from whom you won't get it back.”

The path of liberation begins with unconditional and definitive renunciation of possessions. It is a journey of letting go, in which the burden of material things is thrown off. But remember, it makes little sense to put this burden on someone else's shoulders. It is not an act of liberation if you simply pass on your possessions as a heavy inheritance to someone else.

True freedom comes from completely letting go of the shackles that possessions often bring. It is not just the physical letting go, but also the detachment from the emotional bonds that are linked to material things. It is a liberation from the attachment to what is impermanent and the embrace of a simpler, detached life. It is tempting to burden others with what we no longer wish to wear, but that is not the true path of liberation. It is a personal journey of saying goodbye, a conscious choice to become lighter in both matter and spirit. It is not only an act of detachment, but also an acknowledgment that true wealth is not to be found in possessions, but in inner freedom and peace.

Explanation: Wealth, money, those are symbolic words for gnosis in Gnosticism. Do you want to teach your fellow humans about this? Then do as was said in the previous logion: teach them to look for themselves and do not desire self-caress as interest. The Gospel of Philippus puts it this way: “He who has become a free man through knowledge is through love a servant to those who cannot yet bear the freedom of knowledge.” The knowledge enables them to become free people. Love does not appropriate anything, for why should it appropriate anything? After all, everything is hers? She doesn't say, “That's mine,” or “This is mine,” but she says, “It's yours.” Have you supported, encouraged, someone who was deep down and who could then cope with life again? Then don't look for recognition by the other person. Make sure that the other person believes in himself, not in you. If you where to look for recognition, you would make the other person dependent on you all too easily. Maybe the other person doesn't even realize how important you have been

to him, while you are aware of it yourself. Leave it that way. The best thing is when the other person is convinced that they have saved themselves on their own and does not need you further. Give generously without conditions. Help everyone and don't expect to be refunded. Don't expect a refund for favors given in the past.

Logion 96

Jesus said: “The Father’s kingdom is like a woman who took a little leaven, hid it in dough, and made huge loaves of it. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Just as leaven permeates the whole bread and causes it to rise, so the uncreated permeates the whole of creation and gives rise to the created. It is a subtle process, similar to the silent action of sourdough that exerts its influence on the dough. The invisible hand of the uncreated is present in the essence of all creation. In the depths of the universe, where time and space meet, the uncreated spreads its influence. It is a force that is not limited to a specific corner of the universe but penetrates every fiber of creation. Everything that is, bears the stamp of the uncreated.

Just as the rising of bread is a natural consequence of the pervasive action of leaven, so too is the origin of the created inherent in the omnipresent power of the uncreated. It is a subtle interplay of invisible influences, a dance of the transcendent with the immanent, in which the uncreated constantly permeates and shapes the endless varieties of creation.

Explanation: Sometimes you want to help someone, with the very best intentions, but they don't respond as you expect.

You sincerely do your best, but you don't see any results.

Be patient. Change is slow. An encouraging word, spoken now, can sometimes only be understood years later. God has planted seeds in all of us. With time and free will ‘grow’ and be able to transcend into heavenly beings.

Logion 97

Jesus said: “The Father’s kingdom is like a woman carrying a jar full of flour, still a long way from home. The handle of the jug broke, and the flour flowed behind her on the road. She hadn’t noticed anything. When she came home, she put the jug down and saw that it was empty.”

Imagine that man is like an old jar, filled with a multitude of thoughts, emotions and dualities. This jar carries the burden of an inner contradiction, a difference between inside and outside. To come to awakening, man must empty this jar, get rid of everything that is improper. Emptying is like pouring clear water into a cup, removing any drop that doesn't contribute to its purity. For example, man has to clear his head, a process comparable to cleaning up a room full of clutter. Every superfluous thought and every superfluous emotion must be removed, just as unwanted objects are removed from a crowded room.

Think of the head as a clear hot air balloon, floating in the limitless sky. Only when this balloon is stripped of ballast can it rise effortlessly. In the same way, man must rid his head of the heavy burden of inner contradictions. It is like releasing colorful balloons, every thought and emotion that does not contribute to the light ascent is carefully released. Awakening is like opening a door to a room that one did not know existed. This door can only be found when the jug has been emptied, when the ballast has been released, and when the balloons of thoughts and emotions have risen. It is a journey into the inner, where the emptiness is not empty, but filled with the purity of the true self. Man is like a traveler on a mountain trail, laden with a heavy backpack filled with thoughts and emotions. This burden weighs like a lead cloud, arising from the difference between the inner world and the outer appearance. The path to awakening begins with the realization that this backpack must be emptied.

Imagine that man’s head is like an old room, crammed with furniture and trinkets that are no longer of service. Emptying this space is like clearing out clutter that obscures the brightness of the room. Only by removing this superfluous ballast can the light of true self-unfoldment pour in. It is like turning over the earth in a neglected garden, where the roots of thoughts are deeply rooted. Only by hoeing and weeding,

by removing the weeds of unnecessary thoughts and emotions, can the fertile soil of consciousness be re-exposed.

Awakening is like opening a window in a stuffy room, and fresh air and brightness flood in as soon as the curtains of inner confusion are raised. Only when the head is completely empty of excess thoughts and emotional ballast will man awaken as an explorer who suddenly discovers a breathtaking panorama. It is a journey of stripping, a pilgrimage of self-development. Only when the burden of the improper is thrown off will man awaken to the space of inner silence and clarity. It is a journey of lightening, of liberation, where the true essence of the self, shines like the sun breaking through after a long night.

Explanation: This logion is an image of a woman who is on her way, spiritually speaking. In ancient times, the woman is often the symbol of the human soul, see also the explanation of logion 105. The woman carries on her back a jug full of images, dogmas, doctrines and what not. It is a heavy burden, and not exactly the light yoke of Thomas 90. She was still far from home, says this logion, so she was still separated from herself and from the source. But on her spiritual path, something happened along the way. The grip that the images, the dogmas and the doctrines had on her slackened, and without her realizing it, she let go of it. And then there came a moment when she suddenly felt that she coincided with herself. She has come home, one with the source. And her jug is empty. So, from now on she no longer has to carry it with her. She is free.

Logion 98

Jesus said: “The Father’s kingdom is like a man who wanted to kill a mighty person. He drew his sword and stuck it into the wall, to make sure his hand would be strong. Then he killed the mighty one.”

We know the concept of ego from all kinds of esoteric doctrines. In it we usually find the good advice to free ourselves from something. There is something in that, but it is also very dubious advice: put yourself to the test to see if you have the strength to bring the adventure to a successful conclusion.

Imagine that awakening is like a newly discovered color slowly blending into the palette of your life. It’s like the first rays of sunlight entering the morning sky, and before you share the world with your new perspective, there’s a moment of reflection. Let the awakening sink in, like the quiet descent of the evening mist. Understand its impact on those who are still asleep, because for those it is difficult to grasp that they are dreaming while thinking they are awake. It’s like trying to wake up someone who believes they’ve already awakened.

Like a skilled artist, practice the brushstrokes over and over again to refine awareness. Practice like a musician mastering his instrument, each note in harmony with the growing melody of self-realization. Proliferate with your talents like a gardener takes care of precious flowers, each talent is a colorful flower that contributes to the beauty of the whole. When you fully understand the game of awakening, step out as a thoughtful dancer on the stage of life. But be careful, like a careful guide in an unknown forest. Realize that not everyone walks the same path and that some are still trapped in their own dreams. Let your awakening be a source of inspiration for those who are ready to listen, a beacon of light in the darkness of ignorance. For it is only when you are awake that you can help those who are still asleep with loving care to find the way to consciousness.

Explanation: This logion is about the confrontation with the shadow. The ego, ‘a powerful person’, must be killed when it leads its own, independent life, separate from the self. That’s not easy. Then you have to draw the sword of discernment ‘in

your own home'. And in doing so, confront your shadow, your supposed wickedness. You need courage for that. You have to be strong for it and dare to trust the outcome. The mud wall is the symbol of the separation of ego and self. Through that wall you have to put the sword to kill the ego. Please note: the wall does not have to go. The wall must be pierced. The difference between ego and self does not have to be abolished, but the ego's own existence, the separateness of the ego apart from the self, does.

Logion 99

His disciples said to him, “Your brothers and your mother are outside.” He said to them, “Those who do the will of my Father here are my brothers and my mother. They are the ones who will enter into my Father’s kingdom.”

In the great theater of life, where everyone plays a role, your true kinsmen are the ones with whom you share a deep soul mate. It is the kindred spirits that resonate with your inner melody, a harmony that extends beyond the boundaries of consanguinity. For the righteous, the true family is composed of like-minded people, those who share the same values and principles. The righteous are at the heart of this spiritual family, where the bonds are stronger than blood. It is a community of equals, driven by a shared pursuit of justice and integrity. It is like a garden of like-minded souls, each individual a unique flower that adds to the splendor of the whole. In this garden of kindred spirits, the virtues flourish deeply rooted and the scent of honesty spreads like an intoxicating scent.

Like stars in the night sky that come together in a pattern of connectedness, kindred spirits are the constellations of your true family. It is a cosmic dance in which souls resonate in harmony and the righteous together form a beautiful constellation. In this world of relatives, bound by shared ideals, the meaning of family is being rewritten. It is no longer limited to blood ties but encompasses a deeper connection of mind and soul. It is a family formed by choice, in which kindred spirits find each other and together form a true community of justice.

Explanation: The key word here is ‘outside’. So outside and inside, that’s what it’s all about. The brothers and the mother who are outside are of course not the real brothers and mother of Jesus. They are the people who have listened carefully to Jesus, but now only repeat his teachings. They are still standing ‘outside’. Others have kept the words of Jesus in their hearts. They have not only listened with their heads, but also with their hearts. It really changed them. Those people are ‘inside’. These are the real brothers and mothers – and sisters – of Jesus. They have experienced within themselves what the words of Jesus are about. Not as a thought, but as the awakening of an inner knowing.

Logion 100

They showed Jesus a gold coin and said to him, “Caesar’s men are asking us taxes.” He said to them, “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, give to God what is God’s, and give me what is mine.”

In the spectacle of life, in which the rules are not always just, it is sometimes necessary to play the game of apparent normality. As an actor on the stage of injustice, it is important not to assume the role of a martyr, but rather to understand that your freedom is limited by the intolerance of those who are still asleep.

Do not be tempted to fight with their own weapons, because that is a path that will only lead to more conflict and division. Instead, disarm them with the power of honesty. Give in to appearances, do what they want you to do, but remain steadfast in your inner truth. Realize that they are acting out of ignorance, knowing no better than the limited reality they have embraced.

Like a mirror, you reflect their expectations, but you maintain inner integrity. Stay true to your own principles and honor, even in the midst of the seeming limitations that characterize them. It’s a delicate dance, where you go along with their game without losing yourself. Realize that they, blinded by their ignorance, act according to what they think is right. It is not up to you to judge them, but to understand them. Examine their motivations without judgment, and in that understanding you will find the strength to remain steadfast and honest, even in the midst of the seeming limitations they impose on you.

In the end, it is a balance between playing in the game of the world, without denying your inner truth. By embracing honesty, you disarm the world around you and maintain the freedom of your own mind, regardless of the restrictions, others try to impose. It is a subtle act of resistance, an inner revolution that reveals the true power of honesty.

Explanation: The emperor, who represents the secular authority, stands for the positive learned attitudes, God is the innate adult self, and Jesus is the innate recovery process. The third possibility here is beautiful: ‘give me what is me’. A coin has two sides, it is dualistic. But Jesus here refers to the non-dualistic unity within himself, which every human being can bring about within himself.

Logion 101

Jesus said: “He who has not hated (read: set aside) his father and his mother as I did, cannot become a disciple of mine. And whoever has loved his father and mother as he has loved me, cannot be a disciple of mine. Because my mother gave me lies, but my true mother gave me life.”

Love, not because they are perfect, but because they are human. As parents, they got you from the paradise of innocence, and they had the best intentions to prepare you for the world. They taught you about good and evil, not because they wanted to limit you, but because they were stuck in the dogmas of others. Understand that they have never learned to think for themselves, that they have embraced the words of others, whom they considered higher and more handsome than themselves. They fed you with the knowledge they could find, without being aware of the possibility of seeing beyond the limits of their own understanding.

Now is your time to grow, to find your own light. It is a journey of self-development, where you honor the ideas of your parents, but also take the space to add your own color to the palette of life. “Take a step back but do so with love and an understanding of the humanity of those who have shaped you and seek the truth that resonates with your soul.”

Explanation: The past only exists in your own imagination.

The past can nevertheless keep you imprisoned, especially if you derive a firm image of yourself from it, for example as a victim, and if in your imagination of the past there are still all kinds of people walking around with strong judgments about you.

When you get up in the morning, you immediately step back into that past. You remember how much you were once hurt, and all the sad feelings reappear. So, this day will be a sadness again, just like yesterday and the day before yesterday and many days before. In reality, you recreate the same image and the same feelings every day in this way. It is an existential treadmill in which you tell yourself the same story about yourself every day. And every day you feel like the tragic figure from your own story about the past. Hating your father and mother here stands for letting go of the past. That has nothing to do with your real

parents, certainly not as they are in the here and now. But in the story about yourself repeated every day, there may be two people who play the role of your real parents in that story. All those daily cherished images from the past can haunt you for the rest of your life. Strangely enough, this way you remain attached to your parents, while you may think that you have let them go. But really letting go here means that you have to let go of your own entrenched images of your parents, not your parents themselves. After that, you can build a relationship with your real parents in a new way. Now no longer from your wounded self-image, as a victim, but as a free adult. Imagine growing up in the shadow of your parents' beliefs, like a young plant planted in the soil of their ideas. But now it is time to detach yourself, to distance yourself from the roots that are no longer subservient to your growth. Take a step back. Not out of ingratitude, but out of necessity to find your own way. Your parents acted with good intentions, as gardeners who wanted their seedling to grow into a strong tree. However, they did not know that the soil in which they have planted you is not always fertile for your unique flowering.

Logion 102

Jesus said: “Woe to the Pharisees, for they are like a dog sleeping in the manger of the cattle. He himself does not eat, nor does he let the cattle eat.”

In the realm of spiritual leaders, where they take on the role of guides, the path they walk can often be tortuous and dark. Woe to those who think they possess the truth, while they have entangled themselves in the shadows of contradictions. These leaders, although charged with the task of leading others, themselves wander in a maze of uncertainties. They have twisted the straight and the simple path into a false path, while they ignorantly try to guide their flock. In their quest for justice, they prevent their followers from becoming righteous themselves, entangled as they are in their own injustices.

They are constantly juggling the contradictions between their teachings and their lives, their actions often in conflict with the ideals they preach. They desperately try to adapt their faith to the times, like a carpenter desperately trying to support a rickety structure. The leaders, although they consider themselves to be carriers of the light, are often shrouded in darkness. They have not found enlightenment in their own search, and thus their followers remain in the shadow of ignorance. They cannot enlighten others, because they have not yet discovered the light for themselves. In their asleep state they try to awaken others, but without being awakened themselves, they get stuck in the dream of their own error. Woe to the spiritual leaders, for they have a responsibility to lead others, but too often they lead them down a path that they themselves do not fully understand. In their search for truth and justice, they continue to falter in the web of their own inner struggle.

Explanation: Vain religiosity leads to starvation and ultimately to the spiritual ruin of both the clergy and the laity. The Pharisees guard the food in the manger like loyal watchdogs, but in their overzealous devotion to the doctrine they forget entirely what the spiritual food they guard is for: to be eaten. When the oxen come to the feeder to eat, they start barking violently. So those poor animals will die of hunger. But they don't eat themselves, so they die too.

Striking is the mildness with which Jesus here discusses the Pharisees speaks. That is a remarkable difference with the New Testament where the Pharisees are portrayed in an extremely negative way. Here it is told how Jesus sees how they sincerely do their best, but precisely because of that they completely miss the mark and how they not only shortchange their fellow human beings, but also themselves. That arouses compassion in Jesus, and not enmity.

Logion 103

Jesus said: “Blessed is the man who knows where the robbers come in, so that he can be watchful, get up and arm himself before they come in.”

Imagine that, after a journey of self-development, you have become human again. In this state of newfound humanity, you are like an elusive wind blowing through the arguments and reasonings of your opponents. You see crystal clear the weaknesses and contradictions in their arguments and are therefore untouchable. You don't carry a sword of defense, because you've discovered that the true power lies in disarming simplicity. Instead of arming yourself, disarm others with the clarity of your insight. It is like a smile that softens the sharpness of conflict, like a breeze that tempers the heat of opposition. In this state of untouchability, you don't have to lean on other people's theories or ideas. You carry the certainty within yourself, like an inner compass that guides you without the need for external references. It is as if you have discovered a source of wisdom that springs from deep within yourself.

You are no longer disturbed by the turbulences of the world, because you have found peace in your own being. Like a rock in the surf, you resist the waves of opposition, because your inner strength is firmly rooted. When you have become human again in this state of elusiveness, you are like a mirror that reflects the truth without a filter. You have left the need for complexity behind and embrace the simplicity of pure humanity. It is a state of being in which you are no longer trapped in the illusions of the world, but float above the dualities with a serene peace of mind.

Explanation: The thieves are the thoughts and those who want to rob you of your individuality and make you a slavish follower, in other words: the bandits are the learned self-destructive attitudes. When you are aware of this, you can arm yourself with constructive postures that can be learned.

By the way, it is good to realize how the thieves will try to rob you. They will break in at times when you feel insecure, when you doubt whether you are on the right track, when you are

lonely, or when you have suffered a grievous loss. Then they will try to get you to give up your freedom voluntarily and bind yourself to them with a message of salvation.

Logion 104

They said to him, “Come, let us pray and fast today.” Jesus said: “What then is the sin that I have committed, or in what have I been in transgression? When the bridegroom comes out of the bridal chamber, then they must fast and pray.”

Imagine that there comes a time in your life when the simplicity you once cherished seems to fade. It is as if you have entered a path that takes you away from the clarity of simplicity and you begin to live a split life. In these moments of inner ambivalence, it is often advised to fast and pray, as a kind of spiritual remedy.

Fasting and prayer, it is said, are rituals for the sleeping. These are actions that go hand in hand with the hope of healing and restoring inner harmony. But what if these practices, no matter how sincerely implemented, turn out not to be the solution to the split you are experiencing? Fasting seems like a temporary abstinence from the physical, an attempt to calm inner turmoil by avoiding external temptations. But what if the true struggle lies within, in the complexity of thoughts and emotions that cannot simply be swept away?

And then praying, as a call for guidance and clarity. But what if the answers are not outside of yourself, but have to be found deep inside? Praying in the hope of enlightenment but then discovering that the real enlightenment lies in understanding your own inner landscape. It is as if, in the midst of the rituals of fasting and prayer, you come to the realization that true simplicity is not found in external actions, but in the restoration of inner unity. Perhaps the path to clarity is not a path of hardship, but rather an inner journey of self-reflection and understanding.

So, amid the tumult of a split life, it may be that the true remedy lies not in external practices, but in returning to the simplicity of self-understanding. Perhaps the moment of awakening is not to be found in rituals, but in recognizing the truth that is already waiting to be discovered deep inside.

Explanation: Fasting, praying are exercises for people who have not yet achieved unity with God. The unredeemed state of man does not come from sin, but from separation.

The bridegroom, the man, is usually a symbol of action in the world. The bride, the woman, is usually the symbol of the soul. The thieves in the night strive to create a separation between the two, so that you in the world and your soul are no longer connected. You can also say, as in logion 98, that the ego and the self are separate, or that your personal nature and your Christ nature are not connected. Here they speak of the bride and the groom. They are different terms for the same process.

Logion 105

Jesus said: “Everyone who knows the father and the mother, the same one will be called a child of a harlot.”

Imagine an individual, shaped by the lessons of his parents. He leans on what he has been taught. His life seems to be drenched in unhappiness, and he hides behind the shadow of a childhood marked by setbacks. He justifies his actions by pointing to an unhappy childhood, and in that excuse relieves him of responsibility for his own path in life. This person seems to be trapped in the shackles of the past, holding on to the beliefs and patterns that have been handed to them. Like a puppet, he seems to dance on the strings of his youth, without seeing the freedom that lies in taking his own responsibility.

But what if he faced the truth? What if he realized that, however much his childhood may have been shaped by unhappiness, he no longer has to be bound by that history? It is as if there is a key to liberation that he holds in his own hands, a key that opens the door to personal responsibility. The path of taking responsibility for his own life may seem overgrown by the shadows of the past at first, but it is a path he can tread. He no longer has to bear the burden of an unhappy childhood as a justification for his actions.

Instead, he can rise like a phoenix from the ashes of the past and spread his wings to a new beginning. It is a journey of self-development, where he makes his own choices, shapes his own values and becomes the architect of his own happiness. So, amidst the shadows of the past, this person may realize that their life story is not fixed. He has the power to write his own chapters, to hold the pen and determine his own path. It is a journey to independence, a journey to taking responsibility and embracing the freedom that comes when one realizes that it is never too late to change course.

Explanation: The word ‘whore’ needs to be explained here first.

Virginity is just one of the symbolic words which describes a state of the soul that is a condition for the birth of the Christ in us. To be like a child, nakedness, emptiness, are similar symbols, which have already been discussed in various logions. Be like a child in logion 4. Nudity

in logion 21 and 37. The poverty of spirit and emptiness in logion 54. So, when your soul has become a virgin, the Christ can be born in you, the awareness of the transpersonal part of our consciousness, the Christ-nature, see the prologue of the Gospel of Thomas. If the soul remains virgin even after the birth of the Christ, then in time a close union will develop between the virgin mother-soul of man and the Christ.

Logion 106

Jesus said: “When you make the two into one, you will become sons of men, and when you say, ‘O mountain, move,’ then it will move.”

Imagine that, after an inner struggle with the contradictions within yourself, you finally find the harmony you were looking for. It's like solving a complex puzzle whose pieces didn't want to fall into place for a long time. Now, at some point, the conflicts settle down and you transcend the schizoid existence that has been holding you captive. In this moment of inner liberation, you feel the burden of duality slipping away from you. It is like the descent of a heavy fog that brings clarity to your inner landscape. You have ended the inner struggle, and as a result, you have become human again.

Now, as a human being in full bloom, the world seems to be open to you. You feel a renewed strength, a self-confidence that comes from understanding and accepting yourself. The world no longer seems like a battleground, but rather a stage on which you can let your authentic self shine.

You can take on the whole world, not because the world has changed, but because you have. You have freed yourself from the inner chains that have been holding you captive. It's like opening doors that were previously closed because you're now able to go through life with confidence.

In this moment of transformation, you realize that overcoming the contradictions within yourself is not only a personal triumph, but also a key to unlocking the treasure chest of human potential. You have pushed your own boundaries and discovered that there is power in embracing your own complexity. Now, as a human who has transcended his schizoid existence, you look forward with a new perspective. You have learned that true power lies not in suppressing conflict, but in embracing and understanding them. It is a journey of self-development that has led to a state of inner unity, through which you face the world with renewed courage and wisdom.

Explanation: This is an addition to the previous logion. There was talk of ‘a son of a whore’. Here it is confirmed once again that by making the two one, that is by letting the masculine and

the feminine in yourself marry each other in the inner bridal chamber, you can be born again from that marriage as a son of man. You are then no longer just the child of your biological parents, but as the King from logion 2 a human child, a free human being, connected to your fellow human beings.

Logion 107

Jesus said: “The kingdom is like a shepherd who has a hundred sheep. One of them, the largest, wandered off. The shepherd left the ninety-nine others behind and searched for that one sheep until he found it. After he had made this effort, the shepherd said to the sheep, ‘I love you more than the other ninety-nine.’”

In the glow of timeless wisdom, a story unfolded, woven with the soft threads of Jesus’ words about caring and love. “The kingdom is like a shepherd who has a hundred sheep,” sounded like the beginning of a spiritual tableau. In the vast pastures of the divine, where the flock rested as a symbolic unit of souls, the story began to breathe. “One of them was lost—it was the greatest,” it whispered, like a soft sigh of fate. Here unfolded the human drama of getting lost, of the search for fulfillment in the vastness of existence.

And so the shepherd, an image of divine care, danced among the ninety-nine, but his heart wept for the absence of the one who was lost. “He left the ninety-nine and searched for that one until he found it.” The shepherd, as a symbol of grace, set out in the dark valleys and over the hills of life. He searched for the lost soul, his love as a compass that pointed the way in the darkness of absence. And then, when the shepherd had finished his search, when the lost sheep had been found, the echo of universal love resounded: “I love you more than the ninety-nine.” A statement that illuminated the kingdom of compassion and unconditional love like a ray of sunshine. And so, the story continued, a testament of the caring shepherd, of the immeasurable love that reached beyond numbers. The kingdom, as an embrace of those who go astray, reminded souls that in the eyes of the loving shepherd, every sheep is precious, no matter how large the flock may be.

Explanation: It is striking that it is not said here that the shepherd brings the sheep back to the flock! Whether the sheep returns or not apparently does not matter. At least that is not what this is about. What matters is that the disappeared sheep is praised by the shepherd and even preferred by the shepherd to the sheep that remain in the flock: ‘You count more for me

than those ninety-nine.' There is a world of difference between a sheep that is taken back into the fold, and a sheep that is praised for freeing itself from the spiritual slavery of the flock. The sheep as part of the flock has no identity of its own. It is, in the crass terminology of Gnosticism, a 'son of a whore'. A son of a whore does not know his father, does not know his 'original face', cannot claim his inheritance.

The sheep that leaves the flock and has restored unity with the source in itself is a 'son of man'. That sheep will be known by 'the shepherd' as his own child. The sheep that connects with the source in itself, which therefore knows itself, and has a free will, will therefore also be known, as logion 3 predicted, here figuratively by 'the shepherd'.

Logion 108

Jesus said: “He who drinks from my mouth will become like me, and I will become like him, and the hidden things will be revealed to him.”

Imagine that there is someone who chooses to live unconditionally according to his conscience. This person, driven by inner compass needles, begins a journey to wholeness and life. It is as if he is planting a seed that will grow into a full-fledged tree. As he unswervingly clings to his conscience, a journey of self-development and growth unfolds. It is like walking a path marked by the teachers of life themselves. The disciple becomes one with the teachings of existence, and by remaining true to his inner truth, he begins to understand the lessons of life. Slowly but surely, the student grows, just like a seed that grows into a strong tree. He becomes like the master, not because he slavishly follows the footsteps of others, but because he walks his own unique path with integrity and courage. It is as if he begins to understand the music of the universe and dances in harmony with the melody of existence.

The understanding of oneself and life unfolds like a clear canvas that is pulled away. Everything becomes clear to him, not through the lens of dogmas and prejudices, but through the pure gaze of someone who has remained true to his inner compass. It is like opening windows to new horizons, where the world presents itself in all its richness and complexity.

In this state of wholeness, the person no longer lives in division, but in unity with his own essence. He breathes the air of freedom, for he has freed himself from the shackles of external expectations and conditions. It is a state of inner freedom that comes from the unconditional following of conscience. Thus, through his devotion to his conscience, the disciple becomes a whole person. He does not live just superficially but dives deep into the ocean of consciousness. He becomes the architect of his own life, a living example of how unconditional loyalty to the inner compass leads to a fulfilled and meaningful existence.

Explanation: “Whoever drinks from my mouth will become like me.” But he adds again, needless to say: “And I like him.” Epiphanes quotes Jesus in his *Panarion* (26.3.1) as follows: “You are me and I am you.”

That is a very different Jesus from the one we may have become accustomed to. Or rather: a very different image than the image of him that we have become accustomed to in the Christian West. This Jesus is not exalted above men. He is himself, and wants to be, human with people. But as a human being, like all other human beings, he is the bearer of a spark of God, the Christ in him.

Logion 109

Jesus said: “The kingdom is like a man who had a hidden treasure in his field, of which he knew nothing. And after his death, he left the field to his son. The son didn't know either, he sold the field. The man who bought it found the treasure while plowing. He started lending money at interest to whoever he wanted.”

In all times, people have been able to be aware of the incorrectness of the imposed laws for life. It is as if generation after generation lived and died without really understanding the deeper meaning of existence. People were guided by the man-made rules and remained insensitive to the inner knowing that was always present. Throughout the ages individuals have arisen who have sought to interpret the voice of conscience, but their calls have often gone unnoticed. History is permeated by these individuals, who, were crying in the wilderness, begging to listen to the inner voice. But amid the hustle and bustle of the world and the determination to cling to existing structures, their words were often drowned out. Now is the time to take seriously the call of conscience and not allow another generation to pass in a dormant state. It is a call to wake up, to live consciously, not only for yourself but also for future generations. There is an obligation on the shoulders of those who are awakened to pass on the light of consciousness to others.

Once you are awakened, carry this awareness like a torch and shine it on the injustices of the world. The just world grows when individuals collectively awaken and act from a deeper understanding of their own moral compass. It is a task not only to live according to imposed laws, but to strive for a just world based on inner truth and integrity. Do not let this time pass without heeding the call of conscience. Stand up, be aware, share the wisdom and see how the world around you transforms into a more just and conscious society. It is a legacy that you owe not only to yourself, but also to the future generations who will benefit from the awakening of the collective human consciousness.

Explanation: The field here symbolizes spiritual traditions. Spiritual traditions are repositories of lived wisdom. But not everyone who delves into this recognizes the essential message. People don't always realize what kind of treasure it contains. But nevertheless, they take care of the tradition and preserve it for future generations. And then there are also those who use a tradition for monetary gain or for power. These people sell the wisdom of tradition for big money to unsuspecting seekers. Curiously, they also maintain the tradition, and even spread it, no matter how misguided their behavior may be. Plough yourself with your inner desire as a guideline. And when you have found the treasure of wisdom, lend your wisdom.

Logion 110

Jesus said: “He who has found the world and has become rich must forsake the world.”

Imagine that there is someone who has gained deep insight, both into themselves and into the complexities of society. This person understands the depths of human nature and sees through the nuances of societal structures. It is like understanding a complicated game of chess in which human interactions and forms of cohabitation are revealed as strategic moves. However, despite this deep understanding, this person is not tempted to use this knowledge for personal gain. He refuses to give in to the lure of vanity, acknowledging that his insight is not a merit he has earned for himself, but rather a gift given to him.

Rather than succumbing to the lure of self-aggrandizement, he embraces the humility that comes from realizing that his understanding of himself and society does not come from personal greatness, but rather from an openness to learning and receiving. It is as if he has discovered an inner treasure and understands that this treasure is not meant to be used for one's own benefit, but rather to be shared with others. He recognizes that sharing wisdom and understanding is a responsibility that comes from gaining deep insights. Instead of showing off his acquired knowledge, this person becomes a servant of understanding and compassion. He shares his insights not to arouse admiration, but to inspire others to explore the depths of self-insight and social understanding as well. It is a reminder that true wisdom is not meant to be kept in a locked coffin, but rather to serve as a source of inspiration for others. Recognizing that understanding and insight are gifts to be shared, this person becomes a humble guide, pointing to a path of growth and understanding for all who are willing to listen and learn.

Explanation: Wealth is the symbolic word for gnosis. Those who are rich have found the treasure that was told about in the previous logion. It is remarkable that it is said here that you can also ‘the world’. That goes together. Seeing through the delusions of the day, i.e. ‘the world’, is perhaps redemption itself. But be careful, if you see through those delusions, if you understand the game, be careful not to become part of it yourself.

Logion 111

Jesus said: “The heavens and the earth will be rolled up in your presence. And the living from the living will not see death.” Doesn't Jesus say: “He who finds himself is greater than the world?”

As human beings, we have access to an experience that transcends all temporality at times. It can then seem as if you have mysteriously ended up outside of time as a spectator. That is the presence that this logion speaks of. The experience of this timeless presence can be more or less powerful. But when it presents itself in its fullness, it can drastically change your everyday consciousness. You look around you and see how the heavens and the earth roll up and down like a scroll, that is, how time unfolds. And it doesn't bother you. Because at such a moment there is a presence in you that is separate from it, that is outside of it, invulnerable to all, temporality.

Imagine that justice descends over the world like a soft blanket, like a changing wind that transforms the face of heaven and earth. It is as if a healing rain falls, cleansing and restorative, returning man and nature to their original pristineness. In this time of recovery, balance will be restored everywhere, like a harmonious song that is rediscovered after long silence. The water of the gods will flow unhindered over the fields of the divine, and nature will thrive without the disturbances that mankind once caused.

Man, imbued with a new understanding of justice, will no longer intervene in nature as a ruler, but rather as a keeper of the delicate balance. It is as if humanity is returning to the original role of steward, nurturing and nurturing what is naturally given.

In this time of recovery, the end will no longer be seen as an inevitable decay, but rather as a return to the beginning. It is like a circle that closes, a continuum of growth, bloom and renewal. The seasons of the world will no longer be disturbed by human interference but will take their natural course.

The earth will flourish in its original splendor, and the air will be pure of the harmful substances that once disturbed its harmony. It is as if nature herself breathes a deep sigh of relief, freed from the burdens

imposed on her. In this world steeped in justice, humanity will become a partner of nature, a co-inhabitant of this planet rather than a ruler. It is a vision of a restored world in which the balance between man and nature has been restored, and the cycle of life takes its peaceful course. Let this time of righteousness come like a gentle rain that drenches the thirsty earth. Let it be a time when man and nature go hand in hand, dancing to the melody of renewed balance and peace.

Explanation: It is a beautiful image, those heavens and the earth that will roll up. It refers to reading a scroll. On one side you roll up the read text and on the other side you roll out the text that still needs to be read. The scroll is like time with a past, a present and a future. Where you are now in the story, that is the present. With this image, this logion refers to a very specific experience.

Logion 112

**Jesus said: “Woe to the flesh that is dependent on a soul.
Woe to the soul that depends on flesh.”**

Imagine a world in which humanity is no longer trapped in the rigid frameworks of character. In this world, it is understood that adherence to character is an obstacle to growth and evolution. Pathetic is the man who has chained himself to the limitations of his character, because he does not realize that change is possible. The character, once formed as a product of adaptation to society, is seen as a living organism that can transform and adapt to new circumstances. Instead of being stuck in the static images of who we think we are, humans are challenged to recognize that they are capable of continuous self-development. The focus shifts from holding on to a fixed character to embracing change as a natural and necessary part of life. It is as if humanity understands that the dynamics of existence require flexibility and the ability to adapt to the constantly changing environment.

In this world, man is encouraged to explore the depths of his being, beyond the superficial layers of character. It is as if there is an acknowledgment that the true essence of an individual lies deeper than the social masks that have been learned.

This creates room for self-development and transformation. People are beginning to understand that they are not bound by the limitations of the past, but that they can evolve into more enlightened and authentic versions of themselves. Pathetic is not the one who holds on to his character, but the one who refuses to acknowledge that change is possible. In this world of continuous self-development, a deep understanding emerges that true freedom lies in the willingness to let go, to grow, and to flourish as a constantly evolving being.

Explanation: Before the beautiful final chord of this logia, one last warning: make sure you don't become dependent on anyone or anything. And how do you become dependent on something? By having an idea about it and clinging to it. So, you can think that only the soul matters, and the body is contemptible – then you are dependent on the soul. You can also consider that only the body matters; There is only matter – then you are dependent

on the body. Jesus rejects both views here. He is concerned with the non-dualistic unity, from which nothing is excluded. You have always been part of that unity, soul and body. “Flesh and spirit, body and soul, are two different components in man, merged into an unholy mix that means doom for both.” (Ancient Christian Gospels, p. 126).

Logion 113

**His disciples said to him, “When will the kingdom come?”
Jesus said: “It won't come if you wait for it. It's not a
question of here it is, or there it is. On the contrary, the
Father's kingdom is spread out over the earth, and men do
not see it.”**

Imagine humanity awakening from the dormant state of conformity. This awakening is not a passive process, but an active struggle that each individual must wage for himself. It is as if an inner fire is ignited, a flame of consciousness that illuminates the darkness of ignorance. To awaken, man must make the difficult choice between society and himself. It is a confrontation with the deep-rooted beliefs and expectations imposed by society. This choice is steeped in resistance, because it means breaking with the familiar paths and treading unbeaten paths. Humanity has strayed from its original state, alienated from its own being and nature. The way back to authenticity and harmony with nature requires a conscious effort. It is like a journey, inwards, where each step is a rediscovery of the omnipresent, the essence that has been lost in the maze of social expectations.

In this inner return, man must graft himself back onto the omnipresent, like a plant that connects itself to the soil in order to grow and flourish. It is a process of reunion with the fundamental forces of life, a recognition of the connection with the natural currents of existence.

The resistance to this inner journey is like a storm that has to be weathered. It is the resistance of old thought patterns, of the pressures of society, and of the fear of the unknown. But in the eye of the storm lies the core of truth and freedom. If man is willing to take up this struggle, to make the choice for self-development and authentic living, he will awaken. It is an awakening that not only affects the individual but has resonances in the collective stream of consciousness of humanity.

Let man fight his inner battle, make his choice and return to the original state of connection with nature. Let the awakening take place, like a sunrise after a long night, in which the individual lives again in harmony with himself and the omnipresent.

Explanation: That question to Jesus is not only theoretical, but extremely topical for that time. Apparently, the disciples of Jesus thought that he might be a prophet. They could then expect him, like the prophets before him, to be able to predict the signs by which one could recognize that the end times are near. So, the kingdom is not somewhere on earth, Jesus says, it is not like the land promised by Moses, nor is it in the future, like the kingdom predicted by Daniel at the end of time. No, the kingdom is everywhere, here and now. The problem lies in the blindness of the people, because 'one does not see it!' Indeed 'one' cannot see it. It takes an 'I' to be able to see the kingdom. Gospel of Mary 8,11-22 for comparison: "When the Blessed One had said these things, he greeted them all and said, 'Peace be with you. Obtain my peace for yourselves. See that no one deceives you by saying, 'Look here or look there, for the child of mankind is in you.

Logion 114

Simon Peter said to them, “Let Mary depart from us, for women are not worthy of life.” Jesus said: “Look, I will make her thoughts male (human), so that she too can become a living spirit like you men (men). For every woman who has become male (human) will enter the kingdom of the heavens.”

In the fabric of human experience and cultural embrace, a story unfolded in which the nuances of gender and culture were woven like brilliant threads. Men and women, originally born as children into a world of possibilities, danced in the shadows of expectations. They had dressed themselves in the roles that society offered, with thoughts, clothing, hairstyle, and decoration such as colorful robes that emphasized the differences.

The masculine man and the feminine woman, as caricatures of man, were distinguished not only by inner characteristics, but also by the culturally imposed finery on their appearance. The world had pigeon-holed them, with characteristics that covered the true essence. And yet, like the sun breaking through the clouds, the voice of freedom rang out. “Women can become true people as much as men can,” it whispered as a liberating melody. A reminder that behind the cultural masks, as the true human essence, was waiting to be discovered.

The story continued with a call for liberation from the imposed roles, an invitation to let go of the conditioned thoughts and embrace the true self. For in the depths of being human, in the core of the soul, there were no fixed boundaries of gender, only the infinite possibilities of humanity.

And so, the story danced on, as a journey of self-development and liberation. Men and women, not limited by the prescribed roles, but free to flourish as authentic human beings, with hearts pulsating to the rhythm of their own truth.

Explanation: It is generally agreed that this logion is a later addition to the Gospel of Thomas. The position of Mary Magdalene is questioned here, and with it that of all women. This logion was probably added as a response to the misogyny among Roman orthodoxy that formed in the time after Jesus.

Among the Gnostics of the first centuries, and later among the Cathars, women were completely equal to men. Women could also fulfill priestly functions.

The incarnation in Gnosticism stands for the coincidence with your true self. You are no longer attached to a fictitious image of yourself, but you are who you are: human with people. Jesus himself will make Mary Magdalene human, he says. He will connect with her. And just like this Mary Magdalene, all other women, from all times, are also completely equal to men for Jesus.

Part 3

Final remarks

Telling stories

Long ago, in the midst of endless libraries of ancient wisdom, stories emerged that cast both light and shadow over humanity. These stories, often bundled in holy books, where like enigmatic maps that guided the search for meaning. But in their seemingly innocent pages there were also seeds of division and conflict.

The story begins in the land of words, where books were born from man's desires to unravel the mysteries of existence. But instead of universal love and understanding, thorny disputes sometimes sprang from these books. People, fearful of the unknown darkness after death, clung to the stories as lifelines, while others used those same stories as weapons to force their own truths.

In the game of identity and territory, borders where drawn, and nationalism rose as a shield of protection. Ask any soul if they want peace, and almost everyone says deep down they long for a world without conflict. And yet, in spite of this inner desire, war arises, like a monster from the shadows. The soldiers, driven by orders from above, do not always understand the true price of the battle. War not only affects those who fight, but seeps into the lives of their families. War stems from popular discontent, a volcano of frustration that eventually erupts. Power-hungry individuals, sometimes like shadowy figures from a Shakespeare drama, rise up to feed the flames of war. When one leader falls, another rises again, like an endless cycle of tragedy. Yet voices of wisdom continue to be heard, although often lost in the tumult. Mothers, the embodiment of care and love, beg their children to understand that war means not only the loss of enemies, but also the loss of their own blood.

A war lost means a family lost.

In the midst of all this chaos, there are those who believe that we are on the right track, that humanity is making progress. But sometimes, against their better judgment, they ignore the lack of freedom that

is inherent to our humanity. They continue to hope for a theoretical solution to all problems, blind to the reality that fear, worry, pain and sadness are as much a part of life as happiness and love.

The story of humanity, woven with threads of opposites, continues to evolve. It is a story of desire, of searching for meaning amidst the tumultuous surf of life.

The idea of unity between the two natures of man and God in the Gospel of Thomas evokes parallels with the Buddhist understanding of 'Buddha-nature'. According to Buddhism, all beings and things possess Buddha-nature. The spiritual path in Buddhism is aimed at uniting the awareness of one's own Buddha-nature with that of the overall reality.

The Gospel of Thomas differs from other spiritual traditions by referring not only to the experience of mystical bliss, but also by striving for the unification of the different states of consciousness. It provides a way to bring these two levels of consciousness, the human and the divine, together in experience and to make them one. This idea emphasizes the importance of personal spiritual transformation and the integration of the divine and human aspects of consciousness.

However, the teachings of the church add an important nuance: salvation is only possible within the structure of the church. The church is considered the instrument of God's grace, which makes it an exclusive part in the distribution of salvation. This view implies that those who are outside the church and seek to redeem themselves undermine the authority of the church and its role in the granting of grace. This idea of exclusivity and the monopoly of salvation has some similarities with concepts from other religions. In Buddhism, for example, there is the idea that every person, every being, and everything has Buddha-nature. The spiritual path in Buddhism is aimed at realizing oneness with this Buddha-nature, which is both individual and universal.

Similar ideas are found in Hinduism, where the two aspects of human experience are referred to as Atman and Brahman. Atman represents the personal self, while Brahman is the cosmic self. The Bhagavad Gita, an important Hindu scripture, illustrates this unity by speaking to Arjuna Krishna, the divine representation of Brahman, about integrating the personal consciousness with the cosmic consciousness.

In both Buddhism and Hinduism, the spiritual path is about uniting personal consciousness with a larger, universal consciousness. These concepts place an emphasis on inner realization and transformation,

which in a way parallels Christian views of salvation and the use of sacraments and church systems as pathways to divine grace.

In Gnosticism, a profound vision of the nature of Christ is presented. According to this tradition, every human being possesses an inherent divine nature, and every human being is essentially a Christ. This idea is at the heart of the Gospel of Thomas, which emphasizes the spiritual realization of this inner Christ-nature. The Gnostic perspective suggests that most people, however, identify themselves exclusively with their temporary, personal existence and thereby become separated from their true Christ-nature. This separation prevents them from recognizing and experiencing their divine potential.

Constantine the Great

Constantine the Great, born on February 27 around the year 272 AD and died on May 22, 337 AD, is considered one of the most influential emperors in Roman history. He reigned, from the year 306 until his death and has had a significant impact on both the Roman Empire and the history of Christianity. One of the most iconic moments in Constantine's reign was the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312. According to tradition, Constantine saw a vision of the Christian symbol, the Chi-Rho, before the battle with the message. *In hoc signo vinces* (In this sign you will overcome). Constantine embraced this sign and won a decisive victory, leading to his dominance as the sole ruler of the Western Roman Empire.

Constantine also played an important role in organizing important church meetings. The Council of Arles in 314 brought together bishops and theologians to discuss theological issues and establish guidelines for Christianity. The most influential of these meetings was the Council of Nicaea in 325, where the Symbol of Nicaea was formulated. This council established fundamental beliefs, including the divine nature of Jesus Christ, and thus helped establish important theological standards.

The concept of the Last Judgment, as established at the Council of Nicaea in 325, implies that Jesus will return at the end of time to “judge the living and the dead.” This idea, often referred to as the “Apocalypse,” is an important part of Christian eschatology. The New Testament contains many passages that point to an impending apocalypse, but it is important to note that some of these references and threats of hell and damnation were added later and do not reflect the original message of Jesus.

From pope to criminal and murderer

The succession of the first pope, Peter, has led to a long line of more than 250 popes, some of whom have become known for their negative deeds. Sergius III, for example, is often considered an unscrupulous figure. Documents from his time include accusations of murder of his two immediate predecessors, Leo V and Christopher. In addition, he is said to have fathered an illegitimate son, John XI, who later became pope himself. Sergius III's pontificate is characterized as both "gloomy and disgraceful" and "efficient and ruthless."

Another controversial pope is Stephen VI, who ruled from 896 to 897 AD and became notorious for the Cadaver Synod. During this synod, the body of his predecessor, Pope Formosus, was exhumed and accused of perjury and the deliberate search for the papacy. The half-decomposed body of Formosus was placed on a throne and tried by Stephen VI. After the trial, the body was thrown into the Tiber river but later rescued by a hermit. Pope Theodore II, the successor of Stephen VI, restored Formosus to his honour and had him buried in St. Peter's Church.

Alexander VI, known as Rodrigo Borgia, became pope in 1492 and his pontificate has been marked by controversial and immoral practices. He obtained the papacy through money and influence, which led to accusations of corruption. Alexander VI had seven children by different mistresses, and his death is often attributed to poisoning. His reputation as a corrupt pope led to celebrations in the streets after his death.

Pope Pius III followed shortly after Alexander VI and was succeeded by Pope Julius II, who made efforts to repair the damage done by Alexander VI and regain lost territory.

John XII, who reigned from 937 to 964, was known for his dissolute behavior, including sexual offenses and the pursuit of pagan gods. His death is attributed to a man he had desired. John XII's pontificate was marked by violence and worship of pagan gods. Pope Benedict IX, who ruled between 1032 and 1048, is often accused of despicable

acts, including rapes and murders. He sold the papacy twice and was expelled in 1048 due to discontent among the population. It is speculated that he may have been involved in the poisoning of his successor, Pope Damasus II.

Pope Julius III, who reigned from 1550 to 1555, was characterized by a focus on personal pleasure and favoritism. He adopted Innocenzo Ciochi Del Monte, who was later charged with murder and rape.

Pope Urban VI, who reigned from 1378 to 1389, was notorious for his ruthlessness and persecution of opponents. His pontificate led to the Western Schism, in which three rival popes were active in different cities. It is clear that figures such as Stephen VI, Alexander VI, John XII, Benedict IX and Julius III, through their acts of corruption and moral misconduct, cast a shadow on the papacy.

At the same time, early church history regularly attempted to restrict access to the Bible and its translations. Isidore of Seville declared around the year 635 that Hebrew, Greek and Latin were the only sacred languages for the Holy Scriptures. Pope Gregory VII refused to allow church services in Slavic in 1079, declaring that the Bible should not be accessible to people who were considered “intellectually impaired.” Pope Innocent III in 1199 condemned those who tried to translate and discuss the Bible as heretics, leading to persecutions. The Council of Trent in 1546 ruled that all Bible translations had to have the approval of the Catholic Church, and Pope Paul IV in 1559 issued a ban on Bibles in the vernaculars, punishing possession and distribution of such translations.

The rule of the Roman Catholic Church in the Middle Ages was characterized by considerable influence and power. This influence came not only from religious authority but also from the temporal power exercised by the church. Often one of the children from a noble family became a member of the church, which contributed to the strengthening of church power. The church owned large estates and bishops often had armies at their disposal, while the pope himself had authority over an extensive area. A striking example of this is the bishop of Trier, who rode into his church in full armor.

Religion and faith were crucial in daily life during the Middle Ages. Belief in God and the observance of moral principles were seen as

means to obtain a place in heaven and to avoid hell. Believers could ask forgiveness for their sins and imperfections within the church.

An important and intriguing aspect of ecclesiastical power was the institution of the Inquisition. This judicial system, which functioned in the Middle Ages and the early modern period, was intended to maintain religious orthodoxy and combat dissent. The Inquisition served as a mechanism for detecting, prosecuting, and trying heretics. Inquisitors, who were usually appointed by the church, carried out these tasks. Their methods were often violent and inhumane, with torture being frequently used to extract confessions. Confessions obtained under such circumstances were often considered valid, leading to false confessions and suffering of innocent people.

The punishments for heretics ranged from penance and banishment to imprisonment and confiscation of property. In some cases, the death penalty was imposed, usually by burning at the stake. The impact of the Inquisition was profound, influencing the religious life of the time.

The Inquisition had several regional and historical manifestations, but it became most notorious in Spain. The Spanish Inquisition, which emerged in the late Middle Ages, was characterized by its excessive and cruel methods and was under royal protection. Despite the various forms of the Inquisition, it often had a significant impact on the religious and political landscape of its time.

The Crusades, which took place between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, were also an important historical phenomenon. These military campaigns were aimed at recapturing the Holy Land from the Muslim population. The Crusades were motivated by religious devotion, political interests, and economic considerations. Although not all Crusades were accompanied by violence and excesses, there are documentations of violent episodes, including looting and murders against Muslims and Jews.

The Reformation

The Reformation was a period of significant religious, social, and political change in Europe in the sixteenth century. This movement arose from dissatisfaction with certain practices and doctrines within the Roman Catholic Church and led to the establishment of various Protestant denominations.

At the end of the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church had a dominant role in religious, political and economic affairs. The ecclesiastical hierarchy, including the pope and the clergy, exerted considerable influence. However, there was increasing criticism of certain church practices, such as the sale of indulgences, which led to questions about the validity of some doctrines.

In 1517, the German Augustinian monk Martin Luther initiated the Reformation by attaching his '95 theses' to the door of the castle chapel in Wittenberg. In these theses, Luther criticized indulgence practices and expressed doubts about other aspects of Catholic doctrine. This act marked the beginning of open resistance to church authority.

Luther emphasized that the Bible should be the sole source of authority for faith and practice, leading to the principle of *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone). This became one of the five core principles of Protestant teaching: *Sola Scriptura*, *Sola Fide* (by faith alone), *Sola Gratia* (by grace alone), *Solus Christus* (Christ alone), and *Soli Deo Gloria* (glory to God alone).

The ideas of the Reformation spread rapidly throughout Europe with the advent of the printing press, which made it possible to distribute theological writings and Bibles in the vernacular. Other important reformers, such as John Calvin in Switzerland and Huldrych Zwingli in Germany, contributed to the diversity within the Protestant movement.

The Reformation led to fierce conflicts, including religious wars such as the German Boer War and the Thirty Years' War. The Peace of Augsburg in 1555 recognized Lutheranism alongside Catholicism, but conflicts continued.

In response to the Reformation, the Catholic Church started the

Counter-Reformation (Counter-Reformation), in which the Council of Trent (1545-1563) played a key role. This council confirmed traditional Catholic doctrine and introduced some reforms, but the schism within Christianity remained. More about this Council in the next chapter.

The Reformation resulted in lasting religious divisions in Europe and led to the establishment of several Protestant denominations. It also stimulated broader societal change, such as a greater emphasis on literacy, the rise of nation states, and a greater importance of individual faith and conscience.

The Reformation is one of the most influential periods in Western history and has had lasting effects on both religion and society.

Counter-Reformation

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Roman Catholic Church underwent a radical period of reaction and renewal, known as the Counter-Reformation. This movement arose in response to the increasing criticism and spread of Protestantism, which was promoted by figures such as Martin Luther during the Reformation. The Counter-Reformation aimed to restore unity within the Catholic Church and to regain the lost ground to Protestantism.

An important event in the Counter-Reformation was the Council of Trent. This council brought together Catholic leaders to affirm the Church's teachings and acted as a platform for reform and corrective action. The council emphasized the authority of both tradition and Scripture and condemned various Protestant teachings. Reforms were implemented, including improvements in the training of priests and an end to the sale of ecclesiastical offices.

Another important element of the Counter-Reformation was the establishment of the Society of Jesus, better known as the Jesuits, under the leadership of Ignatius of Loyola. The Jesuits were strongly loyal to the pope and played a crucial role in maintaining and expanding Catholic influence. They emphasized education and missions and were actively involved in combating heresy and regaining territories lost to Protestantism.

The Bible and the People

This text outlines an overview of how the Catholic Church has imposed historical restrictions on the translation and reading of the Bible, as well as the evolution of Protestant attitudes toward the biblical texts over time.

In the Roman Catholic Church, Latin was soon seen as the sacred language in which the Bible was supposed to be read and understood. In the year 1079, Vratislav, the Duke of Bohemia, asked to be allowed to hold church services in Slavic. Pope Gregory VII refused this request, arguing that the Holy Scriptures should remain difficult to understand in certain places. According to him, full accessibility for everyone would lead to misunderstandings and errors. He believed that the Bible could be misunderstood by people with limited intelligence and therefore should remain exclusive to the clergy.

In the year 1199, Pope Innocent III expressed his indignation at so-called “heretics” who had translated the Bible into French and were discussing it. He quoted Jesus, “Do not give what is holy to dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine” (Matthew 7:6), to justify why ordinary people should not have access to Scripture. He wanted to prevent simple, uneducated people from engaging with the Holy Scriptures. The Catholic Church went to great lengths to prohibit the possession of Bibles in the vernacular. Those who did not comply with this prohibition were handed over to the Inquisition. Torture was used to extract confessions, and those who would not give up their “heresy” awaited the gallies at the stake, life imprisonment, or forced labor. Confiscated Bibles were publicly burned. This policy continued well into the twentieth century.

The letter of Pope Innocent III was often cited to support the ban on translating the Bible into other languages, and the possession of such a Bible. After his decree, not only Bibles were burned, but also those who had a Bible in their possession. In the centuries that followed, Catholic bishops and princes strictly adhered to the prohibition imposed by

Innocentius. The Catholic hierarchy knew that many of their teachings did not come directly from the Bible but were based on church traditions. This may be a major reason why they discouraged the reading of the Bible by the general population. They wanted to prevent people from discovering that church doctrine did not always correspond to the biblical texts.

In 1559, Pope Paul IV compiled the first index of forbidden books, including several translations of the Bible into German, English, French, Italian, Dutch, and Spanish. The possession of these Bibles was forbidden without explicit written permission from the church authorities, and many people were accused of heresy if they did not comply.

But not only the Catholic Church was critical. Although Protestantism initially propagated the accessibility of the Bible for everyone, this changed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Certain Protestant theologians promoted study techniques that became known as higher biblical criticism. These approaches attempted to analyze the Bible scientifically and overruled some orthodox teachings. With the rise of Darwin's theory of evolution, many began to accept the idea that life was not created but arose through natural processes. Many Protestant theologians and clergy began to argue that the Bible was primarily based on myths and legends. This made many Protestant believers skeptical about the historical accuracy of the Bible. This has led to a contemporary attitude among many Protestants, in which the Bible is no longer considered literally historical.

The Catholic Church in the last century

On January 25, 1959, Pope John XXIII announced the Second Vatican Council, which took place from 1962 to 1965. The purpose of this great gathering in Rome of bishops from all over the world was to reflect deeply on the role of the Church in modern times and to reflect on its contribution to the people of the time.

The motto of the council, *aggiornamento*, reflected the intention to modernize the Catholic Church and to bring it into line with contemporary reality. This included increasing openness to modern society, recognising religious freedom as a fundamental right, and engaging in dialogue with representatives of other religions. While proponents hoped that these changes would future proof the church, opponents feared that such changes would undermine the identity and integrity of the church. The Second Vatican Council would eventually be characterized as a “compromise council,” in which the expected radical innovations were not fully implemented.

Important points of discussion during the council included mandatory celibacy for clergy, which was initially difficult to get on the agenda, and the issue of collegial governance. These topics were discussed during the Pastoral Council (1966-1970), which was convened by the bishops to translate the decisions of the Vatican Council to the local church provinces. This council confirmed the reform-oriented approach that had been taken by the Dutch bishops during the international meeting in Rome.

The Pastoral Council was received by the Holy See with some reluctance. The dialogue between higher and lower clergy, religious and laity was considered too Protestant. Despite this reluctance, the council emphasized the need for internal reforms within the Church and laid the groundwork for further discussions on theological and administrative issues.

The State of Israel

Is there convincing evidence that the territory of the State of Israel irrefutably belongs to the Israelites? Israel and Judea were separate and independent empires from the beginning, sometimes opposing each other. The idea of a United Kingdom therefore seems to have originated at the earliest during the kingdom of Judea. The lack of conclusive evidence for the name of this kingdom is striking; there is no archaeological evidence that conclusively proves that the land of Israel is inextricably linked to the Jews. Any attempt to examine the accuracy of the biblical descriptions is often considered a threat to the historical right to the land and the myth that revitalizes the kingdom of Israel. These symbols are so deeply ingrained in Israeli identity that any challenge to them is greeted with hostile silence.

Arthur James Balfour, a former British politician, advocated for the removal of Jews from the United Kingdom, stating in the British House of Commons that the country was suffering from a significant wave of immigration. According to Balfour, this immigration was a problem, because in his opinion the Jews behaved as a separate people. He pointed out that the Jews not only professed a different religion than the vast majority of the British population but also married exclusively within their own community. These views were later underlined by the Balfour Declaration, which was issued on November 2, 1917. The statement, addressed to prominent British Zionist leader Lord Rothschild, stated the British government's support for the establishment of a "national homeland for the Jewish people" in Palestine.

Edward Said, an influential postcolonial thinker and Palestinian-American literary scholar, has critically analyzed the Balfour Declaration. According to Said, the declaration was a project of a European superpower, namely Great Britain, that related to a non-European territory, Palestine. He emphasized that the indigenous majority of Palestinians in that territory were completely ignored in the decision-making.

Said argued that the Balfour Declaration contained a promise to

the Zionist movement, affecting the right to self-determination and the territory of the Palestinians. He pointed out that the Palestinian population was not consulted and that their presence and wishes were ignored in the establishment of a Jewish national homeland. In addition, Said pointed out the contradiction of the Balfour Declaration, in which Britain also made other promises to Arab leaders in the Middle East during World War I, leading to tensions between the Zionist movement and the Arab population in Palestine. Said's analysis of the Balfour Declaration reflects his broader critique of colonialism and postcolonial thought, drawing attention to the experiences and perspectives of indigenous people who were often ignored or marginalized by European powers.

Celibacy and sexual abuse

Celibacy, in which religious leaders choose to live without marriage and without sexual relationships, is intended to ensure a higher commitment to religion and a greater spiritual focus. However, this principle has led to some controversial consequences. Critics argue that celibacy can contribute to a culture of secrecy and abuse of power within religious institutions. In a celibate lifestyle, feelings of frustration or isolation can arise, which can contribute to harmful behaviors, such as sexual offenses, in some individuals. The isolation and authority structures within religious institutions can further obscure or make it more difficult for victims to tell their stories.

The revelations of sexual abuse within the Roman Catholic Church came to light mainly from the end of the twentieth century. Researchers and journalists discovered a systematic pattern of clergy abuse, often victimizing children and vulnerable youth. Many of these cases were handled internally by the church hierarchy, with the focus on protecting the institution's reputation rather than ensuring justice for the victims. This led to a culture of secrecy, where perpetrators were often transferred rather than punished, and victims were discouraged from making their experiences public.

The impact of these crimes was profound and long-lasting. Victims not only suffered physical and emotional damage, but often also developed long-term psychological and spiritual problems. The cover-up and lack of justice added to additional trauma for the victims and undermined the faithful's trust in the church authorities. The revelations about sexual abuse have led to worldwide calls for reforms within the Roman Catholic Church. Pressure has been exerted on church authorities to be more transparent about abuse cases, to take responsibility for the actions of clergy, and to take the necessary measures to prevent future abuses. This includes improving reporting procedures, providing support to victims, and ensuring tighter control over clergy behavior. The scandals have also sparked broader discussions about how reli-

gious institutions function and are held accountable. There has been a greater emphasis on ethics, transparency and accountability within religious Organisations. This has led to a revision of policies and a reappraisal of the role of celibacy and other rules of life in the context of institutional behaviour. In addition to contemporary problems with abuse, the church has also played a controversial role in other historical contexts. During the colonial occupation in Latin America, the church was often involved in forcing conversions of indigenous populations, often accompanied by violence and oppression. These periods illustrate how religious institutions abused their power for their own ends, leading to significant cultural and social damage to the indigenous population. During the dictatorships in Latin America in the second half of the twentieth century, the Catholic Church had several relationships with the ruling regimes. While some church leaders spoke out against human rights violations, others were accused of complicity or of keeping silent about the regimes' crimes. These relationships highlight the complex and often problematic role that religious institutions can play in political and social conflicts.

The Vatican and the Mafia

The Vatican and the Mafia have worked together for a long time, with the Vatican bank serving as the main financial entity for the criminal organization. In this shadowy collaboration, archbishops worked closely with mafia leaders, playing an active role in laundering significant amounts of drug money. Moreover, they were involved in the bribery of Italian politicians. These disturbing revelations came to light when journalist Gianluigi Nuzzi obtained the entire black accounts, which covered the period between 1970 and 2000.

The full disclosure of this black accounting sent shockwaves through society and put the Vatican in an extremely uncomfortable position. The result was a significant increase in pressure on church authorities to take decisive action and improve the level of financial transparency. Since then, the Vatican has actively taken steps to implement stricter regulations and control mechanisms, with the aim of minimizing the likelihood of such corruption recurrence in the future.

This dark history has its origins several decades ago, when the Vatican's bank, officially known as the Institute for Works of Religion (IOR), acted as a tool to hide and grow illegally obtained money. The mafia, with its extensive network and considerable financial resources, saw in the Vatican bank a reliable ally to facilitate its illegal activities.

Archbishops, who often acted as intermediaries between the criminal world and the Church, played a crucial role in this troubling alliance. They leveraged their position and influence to receive significant sums of money from the Mafia and where then actively involved in laundering these illicit funds.

This was done, among other things, by creating complex financial constructions.

The revelation of the connections between the Vatican bank and the mafia sheds a sharp light on the complicated relationship between

religion, power and crime. It emphasizes that even institutions that are considered sacred are not immune from the lure temptations of corruption and the influence of organized crime.

The publication of the book *Vatican B.V.* (in 2010) marked a pivotal moment in the history of the Vatican and marked an intensification of efforts against financial corruption within the Catholic Church. This groundbreaking book has not only drawn attention to existing problems but has also served as a catalyst for more extensive research, ambitious reforms and concrete measures. The main aim of these initiatives was to promote financial transparency and integrity, with the ultimate aim of preventing similar abuses in the future.

Bankers of God

In the summer of 2008, the Italian journalist Gianluigi Nuzzi obtained, as mentioned, an essential collection of documents that revealed the entire black accounts of the Institute for Religious Works (IOR), the Vatican's bank. These documents came into the hands of Nuzzi through the actions of Monsignor Renato Dardozzi, who had passed them on as a posthumous act of revenge. Dardozzi, who was ordained a priest at the age of 50, had overseen the bank for 20 years and witnessed extensive financial corruption and abuse of power within the Vatican.

Dardozzi was a key figure within the IOR, appointed by Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, an influential figure within the Vatican. Dardozzi had an impressive career before becoming a priest, with experience in mathematics, engineering, and education. He collected detailed documents on the bank's financial activities, including bribery of politicians and money laundering.

Under the leadership of Paul Marcinkus, a former personal guard of the pope who became president of the IOR, the bank became involved in controversial financial activities. In the 1970s and 1980s, Marcinkus worked with Sicilian banker Michele Sindona and Roberto Calvi of Banco Ambrosiano. This network facilitated tax evasion, money laundering of drug money and political influence. Sindona and Calvi used their influence to set up a complex network for hiding illegal funds. Roberto Calvi, known as "the banker of God," had close ties to the Vatican and played a central role in the bank's financial networks. On June 17, 1982, Banco Ambrosiano, a major private bank in Italy, went into receivership. That same day, the bankmanager, Roberto Calvi, was found dead at Blackfriars Bridge in London. His body hung from a pillar, he had stones in his pants and \$15,000 in his jacket. He had been strangled.

In the late 1960s, the Italian government introduced legislation requiring the Catholic Church to pay taxes on dividend income, where the church had previously enjoyed tax exemption. Pope Paul VI ordered the church's shares to be transferred abroad to facilitate tax evasion. This task was entrusted to Paul Marcinkus and Michele Sindona. The

complex network they set up stretched from America to Italy and the Vatican. Their common goal was to launder money from the mafia's heroin trade, tax evasion, and influence politicians from the Italian Christian Democratic Party (DC).

Nuzzi's book, *Vatican B.V.*, which emerged from the leaked documents, caused a huge uproar. The book highlighted how the IOR functioned as an offshore bank for dubious transactions, enjoying a protected status that made it difficult to investigate suspicious activity. The book led to a critical assessment of the ethical responsibilities of religious institutions and the impact of their financial practices on wider society. Nuzzi makes it clear that the IOR functioned as an offshore bank for dubious transactions. Vatican City's unique status prevented the bank from being held accountable, which made it difficult to investigate suspicious transactions. The IOR guaranteed complete discretion in the event of illegal activities and was above the law, with no possibilities for searches or interrogations of bank employees. Investigations into suspicious transactions through the IOR were often rejected or received evasive answers from the Vatican.

Espresso with fatal outcome

The triumvirate of Paul Marcinkus, Michele Sindona and Roberto Calvi played a major role in financial scandals surrounding the Vatican. Marcinkus, as president of the Institute for Religious Works (IOR), worked with Sindona, a Sicilian banker with strong mafia connections, and Calvi was director of the Banco Ambrosiano. Their cooperation resulted in the manipulation of Vatican finances and the creation of a complex network for tax evasion, mafia money laundering, and political influence.

Sindona was hailed in the news as “Man of the Year” by the U.S. ambassador in Rome in January 1974, but a few months later, his looting of a U.S. bank led to the bankruptcy of Italy’s Banca Privata. This incident had major financial consequences and Sindona later had his mafia friends murder the bank’s trustee, lawyer Giorgio Ambrosoli. Sindona ended his life himself, in an Italian prison in 1986, by means of an espresso containing cyanide.

The death of Pope Paul VI on August 6, 1978, who had protected the three men for many years, led to the appointment of Albino Luciano as Pope John Paul I. Luciano was known for his high moral standards and had previously had conflicts with Marcinkus and Calvi. Just 32 days after his appointment, he was found dead in bed, with confidential documents in his hands. Officially, it was a heart attack, but the lack of an autopsy and contradictory statements from the Vatican fueled rumors of possible poisoning. However, there is no concrete evidence of murder, although the Vatican further fueled the secrecy surrounding his death.

After the death of John Paul I, his successor Pope John Paul II maintained the policy: he gave Marcinkus the freedom to continue his role. In 1982, Banco Ambrosiano was declared bankrupt with a debt of \$1.3 billion. The bankruptcy and secrecy surrounding the death of John Paul I led to lengthy speculation and discussions about power dynamics within the Vatican.

Raimondi, a gangster who claims to be involved in the assassination

of Pope John Paul I, has stated that the assassination order came from Paul Marcinkus, the American Curia prelate and head of the Institute for Religious Works (IORS) between 1971 and 1989. Marcinkus was in the world spotlight in 1982 because of his role in the bankruptcy of the Banco Ambrosiano and his involvement in the Masonic lodge Propaganda Due (P2). P2 was a secret right-wing organization that sought control over key positions of power in Italy. Raimondi further claims that Pope John Paul II, who was appointed after the death of Paul I, became aware of the fraud surrounding the stock scam, but decided to remain silent for fear of his own safety. These claims add an intriguing dimension to the already mysterious circumstances surrounding the death of Pope John Paul I.

Abduction

On June 22, 1983, exactly one year after the murder of Roberto Calvi, fifteen-year-old Emanuela Orlandi was kidnapped on her way to music school. Despite intensive searches, her whereabouts are unknown to date. Carlo Calvi, Roberto Calvi's son, claims that Emanuela's kidnapping and death were a mafia threat to the Vatican authorities, in order to remain silent after the bankruptcy of Banco Ambrosiano. According to Calvi, the mafia would have killed Emanuela to prevent Vatican insiders, including Calvi himself, from revealing information about the bank and its connections to South American dictatorships. These claims expose a complex network of mafia activity, political intrigue, and Vatican involvement, but there is no definitive evidence to corroborate these theories.

Despite the scandal surrounding the bankruptcy of Banco Ambrosiano, Paul Marcinkus, the head of the Institute for Religious Works (IOR), experienced little impact on his career. Marcinkus, who was linked to the banking crisis in 1982, remained a confidant of Pope John Paul II. In 1984, IOR officials, including Renato Dardozzi, made a \$242 million payment to the Ambrosiano's receivers to limit reputational damage, although the Vatican's debt was still estimated at \$1.2 billion.

On February 20, 1987, an arrest warrant was issued against Marcinkus and two other IOR directors for involvement in the fraud, but due to the special status of Vatican City, they could not be arrested. Marcinkus remained at the head of the IOR until 1989 and then returned to the United States, where he died in 2006. This period remains a dark chapter in the Vatican's history, with persistent questions about the involvement of senior officials in financial scandals.

Cardinal Francis Spellman Foundation

In 1989, a significant change was made at the top of the Institute for Works of Religion (IOR) when Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, who had been in charge since 1971, was replaced by Angelo Caloia. Caloia, a banker from Milan, became the new president of the IOR. Despite this change, Monsignor Donato de Bonis, former secretary of Marcinkus, retained his influential role within the Vatican Bank until his death in 2001. According to revelations by journalist Gianluigi Nuzzi, De Bonis was a key figure in the complexity of the IOR's financial operations.

The archive of Renato Dardozi, a former IOR official, reveals how De Bonis set up an extensive network of secret accounts and fake charities. A notable example of this is the Cardinal Francis Spellman Foundation, established in 1987.

Francis Spellman, a prominent anti-communist American bishop, had influential contacts in Italy after World War II and supported the Christian Democratic Party financially. The foundation, which is named after him, was used as a front for financial activities that would otherwise not be acceptable.

Under the leadership of De Bonis, other 'charitable institutions' were also founded, such as the Foundation for Poor Children and the Fight against Leukemia. Although at first glance these foundations seemed to serve noble purposes, in reality they acted as facades for money laundering, receiving kickbacks and making payments to politicians and entrepreneurs. The size of the transactions, ranging from cash deposits to large loans, was immense, reaching amounts in the billions.

Nuzzi goes on to reveal that De Bonis regularly took suitcases full of money, which were presented as "charitable donations" from entrepreneurs linked to Giulio Andreotti, the influential Italian politician who had repeatedly served as prime minister. Despite the fact that some of these deposits actually went to charities, this only concerned a small part of the money flows. Massimo Ciancimino, son of Vito Ciancimino, a former mayor of Palermo with mafia connections, confirmed that mafia money was regularly collected at the IOR's office in Vatican City.

Vito Ciancimino also had two safes in the IOR for keeping mafia money.

These revelations highlight how the IOR acted as a tool for financial manipulation and corruption, using it as a means to facilitate hidden transactions and mafia connections. De Bonis' activities and the creation of the seemingly innocuous charitable foundations illustrate the scale and complexity of the hidden financial operations within the Vatican.

In the fall of 2009, the Vatican Bank, also known as the Istituto per le Opere di Religione (IOR), came to the attention of the Rome prosecutor's office for alleged money laundering. The investigation revealed that the IOR had opened anonymous accounts with the Banca di Roma in 2003, which not only violated Italian law but also indicated possible money laundering activities. In response to these accusations, Angelo Caloia, the then president of the IOR, was sacrificed by Pope Benedict's closest circles.

He was replaced by Ettore Gotti Tedeschi, a lay banker with close ties to Opus Dei. (Opus Dei is an official and recognized organization within the Roman Catholic Church and operates under the authority of the Pope).

On September 21 of the same year, Tedeschi and the general director of the IOR, Paolo Cipriani, were officially indicted by the public prosecutor's office in Rome. In addition, an amount of 23 million euros was seized, with the charge of 'money laundering'. The Vatican reacted quickly and stated through its mouthpiece, *L'Osservatore Romano*, that it was a "misunderstanding." On September 29, Pope Benedict Ettore received Gotti Tedeschi in audience, during which the banker reverently kissed the Pope's hand and presented him with his book *Money and Paradise*. During their meeting, the pope expressed words of encouragement to Tedeschi and emphasized his appreciation for his commitment as head of the IOR. Tedeschi was praised for acting in line with the tradition of other "bankers of God" who had preceded him over the past forty years.

These events shed new light on the role and reputation of the IOR, and a detailed light on the Vatican's alleged involvement in the Mafia, with a special focus on the role of the Vatican Bank. Founded in 1942, the IOR functioned as the Vatican's financial institution and managed the financial resources of the Holy See. However, for years, the IOR has built a shady reputation for alleged involvement in illegal activities, including money laundering, corruption, and serving as a haven for mafia organizations. It would have functioned as a conduit for crim-

inal money, allowing mafia bosses to transfer and hide their ill-gotten assets to the Vatican's banking system. These claims have given rise to ongoing criticism and extensive investigations, severely tarnishing the Vatican Bank's reputation.

The ability to investigate suspicious transactions through the IOR required a formal request to the Vatican from each country, with the Vatican often refusing or giving evasive responses. This situation provided the IOR with an exceptional degree of immunity and exemption from external scrutiny, thus acting as an enclave for activities that would otherwise be considered illegal or unethical.

The dark side of the Vatican, with its involvement in illegal activities, sheds a sharp light on the complicated relationship between religion, politics, organized crime and corruption. It emphasizes that even institutions that are considered sacred are not immune from the temptations of power and money. This underlines the crucial role of accountability, integrity and transparency at all levels of society, including within religious and financial institutions.

The revelations of the past would ideally have contributed to increased awareness and to efforts to address and prevent such abuses. They serve as a permanent reminder of the need for constant vigilance and accountability, ensuring that institutions that enjoy people's trust function as guardians of justice and ethics.

The revelations and accusations about the involvement of the Vatican and financial institutions in the mafia constitute a shadowy episode in the history of both the Catholic Church and Italian society. They shed an unrelenting light on the intricate dynamics between religion, politics and organized crime, revealing the corruption that took place within the highest echelons of both the church and the financial world.

It is crucial that we acknowledge and understand these historic events so that we can learn valuable lessons from the past and take proactive measures to prevent such abuses in the future. The revelations have sparked a wave of outrage and have fueled calls for sweeping reforms within both the Catholic Church and the financial system, with the aim of ensuring that such scandals cannot happen again.

However, the Vatican is once again confronted with a disturbing financial scandal in which, according to *La Repubblica*, an Italian newspaper, no less than 450 million euros have gone missing. Pope Francis himself

has been the victim of these financial malpractices, in which millions have disappeared from his private account. These funds are part of an extensive fraud scandal related to the purchase of a property in London, located within the ecclesiastical state. There is no evidence that Pope Francis is personally involved in financial malpractice or that millions have disappeared from his private account, as claimed in some media.

The fact that 20 million euros have disappeared from Pope Francis' private account represents only a fraction of the immense amount that has been funneled from the Vatican and ended up with cardinals, brokers and shady intermediaries.

Fifteen people have now been indicted by the Vatican judiciary, seven of whom come from the Vatican itself. They are accused of embezzlement, abuse of power and corruption. Cardinal Angelo Becciu, who is often considered the Vatican's deputy prime minister, is the main suspect in this case. He has been suspended by the pope and must also give up his cardinal title. The Vatican magistrates' investigative report describes it as a "well-organized plan to loot the Vatican's finances like never seen before."

During the weekly, Sunday prayers, Pope Francis made indirect references to the recent scandal, without explicitly mentioning the name of the former cardinal. In St. Peter's Square, the pope addressed the faithful with the words: "Jesus never lied. People can make mistakes but lies have no place in a Christian's life." The pope has meanwhile suspended the former cardinal and his associates and stopped the financial flows to the Vatican Ministry of State. The finances are now housed in APSA (Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See) and the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

The Vatican: the world's largest real estate owner

The Vatican is known as the world's largest property owner, with the Pope as the head of a sprawling real estate empire in Italy and beyond. In Italy alone, the Pope manages an impressive portfolio of 5 thousand hospitals, 9 thousand schools, as well as numerous hotels, basilicas and churches. About 22% of the total real estate in Italy, which corresponds to about 115 thousand properties, is estimated to be owned by the Roman Catholic Church. This equates to an astonishing 1.1 billion square meters, with an estimated value of €1,200 billion. In addition, the church has properties outside of Italy, including prominent locations in cities such as London, Paris, Zurich, and New York. A striking example is the building on New Bond Street in London, where Bulgari is located, but which is owned by the Vatican. Recently, The Guardian revealed that the Roman Catholic Church in England has a secret real estate empire worth at least 500 million pounds

The Vatican uses complex tax constructions to keep its properties hidden and thus facilitate tax avoidance. Officially, the Vatican states that the money comes from the Italian government and that it is seen as financial compensation. However, the transfer, which took place in 1929 under Mussolini, is considered a coincidence, as negotiations between the Holy See and the Italian government on financial arrangements had been going on for fifty years. The Vatican spokesman emphasizes that the Holy See's ownership of real estate is no secret, with an estimated annual return of as much as €30 billion. However, the Vatican has not published an official report on its real estate holdings for many years. In addition, the church owns significant amounts of land that are considered illiquid and thus are not mentioned in official documents.

During the eight years that the Vatican owned the property, the value of luxury offices in London rose rapidly. The sale at a loss has raised questions among real estate experts in the city. Some speculate that the Vatican may have overpaid on the purchase and received too little on the sale.

While the sale to Bain Capital puts an end to the Vatican's involvement in the modest office building, it does not shed light on the outstanding questions regarding the property. This issue has led to a profound overhaul of the Church's financial practices.

Ten years ago, the building in question was purchased by companies controlled by Raffaele Mincione, a former Italian banker, for a sum of £129 million. In 2014, Mincione sold part of the property to a Vatican unit tasked with managing charitable donations, known as Peter's Pence, for significantly more than the original price. In 2018, the Vatican acquired Mincione's remaining stake to gain full control.

Last year, Vatican prosecutors filed charges against Mincione, including allegations of fraud and embezzlement. The Vatican stressed that the losses arising from this transaction were charged to the reserve of the Secretariat of State and did not affect Peter's Pence and the donations of believers.

Currently, Mincione is the subject of a criminal investigation in the Vatican for his role in this deal. He argues that the increase in value of the property was justified on the basis of independent accountants and external advisors, and he denies all allegations of misconduct. This financial setback casts a shadow over the Vatican's efforts to make its finances more transparent and accountable. It illustrates the challenges faced by the Catholic Church in managing its financial operations and ensuring the integrity of donations intended to help those in need.

This recent scandal once again casts a shadow over the Vatican's financial practices and undermines confidence in the transparency and integrity of the Church's institutions. It is not the first time that the Vatican has become embroiled in such financial controversies. In the past, there have been several cases where the ecclesiastical state has been associated with money laundering, fraud and other financial crimes.

These events are once again forcing the Vatican to take decisive action to promote financial transparency and implement stricter controls. It is essential that church authorities thoroughly investigate this issue and take effective measures to hold those responsible accountable and prevent future abuses. Restoring credibility and trust is crucial to maintaining the Vatican's reputation and safeguarding the spiritual values that the Church stands for.

The epicenter of the scandal lies in the purchase of a property from the well-known Harrods department store in London, facilitated by Cardinal Becciu with funds from the so-called St. Peter's Medal,

which are intended for charitable works and come from donations from believers. The completion of the acquisition, an investment of approximately €300 million, took place in 2018. This transaction later turned out to be a financial misstep, but it was enough to significantly enrich the portfolios of the two intermediaries, banker Raffaele Mincione and broker Gianluigi Torzi.

According to reports, Mincione and Torzi would have earned €16 and €10 million in commissions respectively from this deal. Despite the fact that the Vatican already labeled Mincione as “morally unfit” for business transactions in 2013, and Torzi was blacklisted for money laundering, this did not prevent Cardinal Becciu from burdening the two with responsibility for hundreds of millions of euros.

As early as the summer of 2019, suspicious financial transactions from the Holy See, via Switzerland and Luxembourg to London, attracted the attention of the Vatican judiciary. Only recently did the case gain momentum due to international cooperation with the Italian judiciary.

The Roman Public Prosecutor’s Office, at the request of their colleagues in the Vatican, has reconstructed the entire financial route of Cardinal Becciu and his associates. They found that at least €500 million was invested in ‘risky financial companies’, some of which were located in tax havens with ‘clear irregularities’.

Gianluigi Torzi, the *broker* who was arrested, confirmed the findings of the Roman justice system after his arrest. He stated that London-based Italian Raffaele Mincione did indeed arrange several risky investments for the Cardinal through his investment company in Luxembourg and his company in Jersey, withholding significant sums for himself as commission. Mincione himself categorically denies all allegations and claims that everything went according to the rules.

Pope Francis

Pope Francis, formerly known as Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, and the Catholic Church are facing allegations of involvement in complicit silence and potentially more serious crimes during Argentina's "dirty war." The dirty war refers to a dark period between 1976 and 1983, during which the Argentine military junta committed atrocities, including murders, torture and kidnappings against alleged opponents of the regime. During this period, Cardinal Bergoglio held an important position within the Argentine Church. Some critics argue that the Catholic Church, including Bergoglio, remained passive in the face of the atrocities that took place. There have been allegations that the church did not respond adequately to human rights violations and in some cases was even involved in hiding the regime's atrocities. Pope Francis, who was elected pope in 2013, has repeatedly denied being directly involved in human rights violations during the dirty war. However, he has admitted that the church had shortcomings and has apologized for its failure to actively respond to the human rights abuses that were taking place at the time.

The allegations have sparked a lively debate and controversy over the role of the Catholic Church, including Pope Francis, during one of the darkest periods in Argentina's history. This remains an extremely sensitive topic that raises questions regarding accountability, transparency, and justice regarding the past of the Argentine Church and its leaders. The evidence that is available remains scarce and controversial. Documents have been destroyed, and many victims and perpetrators have died over the years, making it difficult to collect irrefutable evidence. While the moral argument is clear, we must also consider the complexity of life at the time, in which many, including priests and bishops, found themselves in a gray position. Speaking out against the regime was dangerous and could lead to being labeled as subversive, with serious consequences. Some, however, dared to raise their voices and disappeared as a result. Those who remained silent were later confronted with the burden of their conscience and sometimes ran

the risk of legal prosecution.

In 2000, the Argentine Catholic Church publicly apologized for its failure to speak out forcefully against the generals during this dark period in Argentine history. The Argentine Bishops' Conference declared at the time: "We want to confess before God what we have done badly." In February, a court, while sentencing three former servicemen to life imprisonment for the murder of two priests, pointed to the fact that the church hierarchy had "closed its eyes" to the violence against progressive priests. During his tenure as head of the Jesuit order from 1973 to 1979 (then Jorge Bergoglio, it was before he became pope) he held a position in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. This period coincided with a time when the broader church supported the military government in Argentina and urged its followers to be patriotic. During these crucial years in Argentina's history, Bergoglio found himself in a leadership position within the Jesuit order.

Remarkably, Bergoglio twice refused to testify in court about his role as head of the Jesuit order during the military regime. It was not until 2010 that he appeared before a judge, with lawyers claiming that he was trying to avoid his duty to testify. One of the main accusations against Bergoglio concerns his alleged involvement in the kidnapping of two Jesuit priests, Orland Yorio and Francisco Jalics, in May 1976. These clergy were kidnapped by naval officers and endured inhumane conditions as a result of their missionary work in the slums of the country, a politically risky activity at the time. These allegations raise legitimate questions about Bergoglio's role and actions during a tumultuous period in Argentine history, regarding the Catholic Church's support of the military government and the treatment of clergy involved in social activities. The lack of full openness and the refusal to testify have further fueled the debate about his involvement and the ethics of his actions during this period.

Horacio Verbitsky, a prominent journalist and author of the book *El Silencio* that investigates the church, serves as the chief prosecutor against Jorge Bergoglio. In his book, Verbitsky claims that as head of the Jesuit order, Bergoglio withdrew the protection of the two priests, Orland Yorio and Francisco Jalics, which effectively gave the army permission to kidnap them. These claims are based on conversations with Jalics, who was released after his ordeal and later moved to a German monastery.

In the context of the allegations surrounding his role during the dirty war in Argentina, relatives of the kidnapped Jesuit priests, Orland

Yorio and Francisco Jalics, claim that Jorge Bergoglio, then head of the Jesuit order, actively tried to cover up this charged issue. According to them, Bergoglio would have withdrawn the protection of his order for the two priests, effectively making them outlaws and exposed to the risk of kidnapping by the military regime. The claims of the relatives are further fueled by the fact that Bergoglio twice refused to testify about his role as head of the Jesuit order, which raises questions about his involvement and transparency in this case. These allegations have led to speculation about Bergoglio's alleged efforts to cover up this case and avoid exposing his involvement. Bergoglio has rejected the accusations and dismissed them as slander. He claims that he operated behind the scenes to save lives, including those of the two priests, and secretly protected others from the death squads. In one notable case, he even claims that he gave his identity papers to a dissident who looked like him so that this person could flee the country. For some, this is a heroic act, while others remain skeptical.

Eduardo de la Serna, coordinator of a left-wing group of priests focused on the plight of the poor, has expressed doubts about Bergoglio's role during that period. He emphasizes that Bergoglio is a powerful figure who is adept at positioning himself among influential people. Despite these conflicting perspectives, the debate over Bergoglio's actions during the dictatorship and his relationship with missing Jesuits remains a complicated and contested issue. After the election of the Argentine Jesuit as pope, rumors and speculation arose almost immediately about his role and attitude during the junta's period in Argentina. On various social media, including Twitter, a photo circulated showing the new pope together with Videla, the notorious Argentine dictator who was responsible for the deaths of at least 30 thousand Argentines between 1976 and 1981, during a reign of terror.

The distribution of this photo sparked further speculation and discussion about the possible ties between the pope and Videla's regime. This led to questions about the Pope's political and moral positions during that dark period in Argentina's history. The controversies mainly focused on the role of the pope when he was still Jorge Bergoglio, the archbishop of Buenos Aires. Charges were made about his alleged complicity or passive attitude towards the crimes of the military *junta*. The debate escalated and was further fueled by various testimonies and documents relating to the disappearances and human rights violations during that dark period.

Wealth and Religion

Jorge Bergoglio also appears to have counted Jorge Zorreguieta, the father of the Dutch Queen Máxima, among his circle of friends. This raises questions about the connections between wealth, religion and the Argentine elite. In many cases, the Argentine elite is part of the religious population, which donates substantial sums to the Catholic Church and various social projects. It is even suggested that a significant donation has taken place, given the close ties between the elite and the church in Argentina.

Despite these allegations, Bergoglio himself has never directly responded to these specific allegations. However, several years ago, he made a statement in the media, claiming to have helped several people find shelter. He also claimed to have assisted someone in crossing the border and escaping from the military authorities. Bergoglio stated that he had repeatedly inquired with the military about the two Jesuits, who were eventually released by the military regime.

Physical and sexual abuse

The Roman Catholic Church is associated with disturbing and criminal characteristics, as evidenced by the shocking fact that thousands of minors worldwide have been sexually abused by priests and clergy of this church. Despite her proclamation of goodness and humanity, some members of the Catholic Church have engaged in reprehensible behavior, including the sexual abuse of children.

The shadow of fear and crime not only hangs over the Netherlands, but extends to various countries worldwide, including the United States, Ireland, Germany, Canada, Mexico, France, Australia, New Zealand and England. Shocking statistics reveal the pervasiveness of sexual abuse within the Catholic Church, raising serious doubts about the integrity of this religious institution. It seems almost inevitable that such outrages have taken place and may still occur today in all countries where the influence of the Catholic Church reaches. This worrying reality makes us reflect on the number of innocent children worldwide who have fallen victim to these horrific crimes.

What is perhaps even more disturbing is the observation that the church has done everything it can to keep these terrible acts secret. As early as the 1950s, there were reports of priests being involved in abusive practices. This led to the drafting of the *crimen sollicitationis* in 1962 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of the Catholic Church. This confidential document contained guidelines to try clergy suspected of sexual crimes internally (i.e., they were placed elsewhere). The fact that child abuse was already an issue at the time is illustrated by the inclusion of a separate paragraph in the *crimen sollicitationis*, known as the *crimen pessimum* (the most reprehensible crime). This paragraph referred to very obscene and sinful acts with minors, men or even animals.

Anyone involved in such proceedings was forced to take an oath of perpetual secrecy. Those who violated this oath were automatically excommunicated. This method is disturbing, to say the least. People were aware of crimes committed, but instead of calling in the help of

the police, everything was handled internally, and a code of silence was imposed, similar to the omerta of the mafia.

This story paints a serious picture of the role of the former Benedict (Joseph Ratzinger) in the cover-up of child abuse within the Catholic Church. His position as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith between 1981 and 2005 gave him significant influence on how the Church dealt with such issues. The allegations suggest that Benedict has actively contributed to covering up abuse cases by handling them internally, keeping them out of the attention of the media and police, and by denying or downplaying them. His letter from 2001, the *delicta graviora*, which states that the police should not be called in and that investigations should be handled internally, points to a deliberate attempt to keep such matters within the ecclesiastical sphere. Benedict's statements in 2002 about manipulation by the media and his statement in 2003 that child abuse is due to "weak faith" suggest a lack of recognition of the seriousness of the problem.

His apology in 2005 seems to have come only when it was no longer possible to ignore the issue. The Church's recent guidelines regarding child abuse, which state that bishops may call in the police from 2011 but where it is not mandatory, indicate continued reluctance to take full responsibility for these issues. The fact that this is only a guideline and not a binding canon law can be seen as an indication that the church may still not be fully serious about tackling child abuse within its ranks.

Despite the public apology and the promise to address the problem, fundamental questions remain unanswered about how the church actually deals with the perpetrators of sexual abuse. How many of the accused priests and clergy have actually been convicted and are currently behind bars? What steps have been taken to remove perpetrators from their church functions and to prevent them from coming into contact with vulnerable communities again? There is a growing call for justice and the desire that the higher officials within the church, who have contributed to the cover-up culture, are also held accountable. The question remains whether Pope Benedict and other high-ranking figures in the Church will ever face the legal consequences of their actions or omissions.

Sexual abuse

The crime is still intertwined with the Catholic Church. She is rotten and criminal to the bone. It is unacceptable that they have been getting away with their misdeeds for centuries. The legal system must assert its authority and ensure that the church is not above the law. It is time to take action and stop these reprehensible practices. God in the Bible is a murderer of dissidents, a sadist, who has made an entire people suffer with ten plagues. He lies, sets people against each other, generalizes, patronizes, discriminates and is homophobic. This God, who gets angry when he doesn't like the fact that the people he has created himself don't do what he asks, clearly has no self-reflection and just blames others. This God created man in His image. Man has all his characteristics.

I don't believe in such a God. My God is warm and loving. He does not lie, can be trusted, can be understood and does not deceive or threaten. That is my 'God', The God who is portrayed in the Bible, is a reflection of man rather than of the divine being that I imagine.

Epilogue

The pretentious attitude of various religions to belittle human intelligence, as if they were incapable of realizing that the Bible is only a collection of myths and fantasies, is nothing less than a blatant insult to the mind. It is downright laughable that one dares to suggest that a single mortal, trapped in the arrogance of an age-old power structure, could be the representative of a divine figure like Jesus. The blindness with which such religious institutions deceive their followers is a sad proof of their contempt for the true search for wisdom and truth.

I rest my case.

Sources

I have been able to find a lot of information on the internet. Therefore, I would like to express my gratitude to:

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