

THE GOSPEL OF GNOSIS
A New Gospel for a New Age
An interpretation of The Gospel Of Thomas
By
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Unless otherwise noted all quotations from
The Gospel of Thomas and other Nag Hammadi texts are from The Nag Hammadi Library in English,
James M. Robinson, General Editor Harper & Row 1988

All Bible quotes are from The Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha
Oxford University Press
Cambridge University Press 1989

For an online source to both Nag Hammadi and other Gnostic texts, see The Gnostic Society Library
<http://www.gnosis.org/library.html>

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<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GospelofThomas/join>

I do not seek financial gain from writing this book, but would like to see it read by as many interested parties as possible. If anyone has information on publishing, printing, or posting to other sites, please contact me via e-mail, docgroove1017@aol.com

This book is not really intended for those who are comfortable in traditional Christianity, but it is for those who are attracted to Jesus' teachings but yet repelled by a church that insists they believe the unbelievable.

Found in Egypt in 1945, having been successfully hidden in a clay jar inside a cave for over 1700 years, *The Nag Hammadi Library* was finally translated into English in 1977. It contains 114 sayings attributed to Jesus in *The Gospel of Thomas*.

I believe *The Gospel of Thomas* is the most important archeological record to date for authentic teachings of the early Jesus movement, predating Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. I believe it was designed to be used as a study guide for the select few initiated into the inner mysteries of the Jesus movement. As interesting as the sayings themselves can be, the most interesting part may be what *Thomas* does not say.

It does not contain a supernatural virgin birth in a manger. It does not promote a doctrine of original sin or even mention the word "sin". It does not mention Jesus' death or a supernatural bodily resurrection. It does not interpret Jesus' death as payment of a debt to "atone" for our sins. It does not include any supernatural healings. It does not exclude, but goes out of its way to include women.

Gnosis is the Greek word for "Knowledge" used by the early Christian sect known as "Gnostics". *The Gospel of Thomas* invites all who hear it to look within themselves to find the "Knowledge" that God is within them and they are within God.

Once hidden,
now I am revealed.
Once lost,
now I am found.
Once rejected,
now I am the cornerstone.
Once buried treasure,
now I emerge from the tomb, alive!
Once imprisoned in Egypt,
now I declare freedom
to all who hear my words,
which have been resurrected
to bring you Life.

These are the secret sayings
which the living Jesus spoke and
which Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down.
(1) And he said, "Whoever finds the interpretation
of these sayings will not experience death."

Isaiah 55:3
"Come to me and listen to my words,
hear me and you will have life."

John 6:68
"Your words are words of eternal life"

Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 654
"whoever hears these words
shall not taste death"

John 8:52
"if anyone keeps my word,
he will not taste death
for all eternity"

John 6:63
"The words I have spoken to you
are both Spirit and Life"

Life is a verb.
Become a human being.
Being laughs,
Being plays,
Being continues . . .
Even after returning the body to the ground,
the "ground of being" continues to dance.

When the two are made One,
life and death
are no longer separate.

from Pseudo-Dionysius The Complete Works
Translation by Colm Luibheld, 1987, Paulist Press

"He grants the highest measure of existence to those more exalted beings described in scripture as eternal. But beings are never without being which, in turn, comes from the Preexistent. He is not a facet of being. Rather, being is as facet of him. . . . He is the eternity of being, the source and the measure of being."

(2) Jesus said,
"Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds.
When he finds, he will become troubled.
When he becomes troubled, he will be astonished,
and he will rule over the All."

Luke 12:57

"Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?"

The Buddha said,

"But believe only what you yourself judge to be true"

SEEKING God,
we often find but a thread.
But this one FIND,
will lead to two excited states.
The first is being TROUBLED,
because the thread is often difficult to follow,
but eventually, you will be ASTONISHED,
because, following the thread,
it leads within, where we learn,
we can judge for ourselves what is true.
When we learn there is no outside judge
waiting to judge us, we are no longer a slave,
but master of our own demons;
we RULE ourselves.

(2) cont.

GREEK VERSION

Jesus said,

"Let not him who seeks, cease until he finds,
and when he finds he will be astonished;
when he is astonished, he will reign;
when he reigns he will rest."

GOSPEL OF THE HEBREWS

"He who seeks will not cease until he finds;
when he finds he will be astonished,
when he is astonished, he will reign;
when he reigns, he will rest."

SEEK, first by "wiping the slate clean"
of any preconceived notions.
Wash them all away
in the flowing waters of BAPTISM.

FIND the spark that will ignite the blaze.
Anoint your head with the fire of CHRISM.

You will be ASTONISHED as you consume
words of Wisdom, which the Mother of all
has concealed within the bread of Life (96),
and as you drink fruit of the true Vine (40),
which contains Knowledge of the Father,
celebrating the EUCHARIST.

You will REIGN
after you declare your freedom from false gods
and rulers who seek to imprison your soul.
This is a rite of passage;
this is your REDEMPTION.

Next, you must make the two into One;
this will transform your soul into a living Spirit.
The pairs are joined together
in the BRIDAL CHAMBER.
There you will finally have a place
to lay your head and REST (86).

(3) Jesus said,
"If those who lead you say to you,
'See, the kingdom is in the sky,'
then the birds of the sky will precede you.
If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,'
then the fish will precede you.
Rather, the kingdom is inside of you,
and it is outside of you.
When you come to know yourselves,
then you will become known,
and you will realize that it is you who are
the sons of the living father.
But if you will not know yourselves,
you dwell in poverty and
it is you who are that poverty."

Deuteronomy 30:11-14
"This commandment ...
is not in the heavens ...
Nor is it beyond the sea, ...
it is ...on your lips
and in your heart"

Beware of leaders who point you this way and that.
You can search high and low, but it is within yourself
that you must make the two into One, so that there
no longer is an inside or an outside.
This is both Knowledge of your self and Knowledge
that there is no self. Recognizing your kinship with
Life, Knowledge and Spirit results in unimaginable riches.
Ignorance, however, is poverty and it is you, yourself,
who is responsible if that is your destiny.

(4) Jesus said,
"The man old in days
will not hesitate to ask
a small child seven days old
about the place of life, and he will live.
For many who are first will become last,
and they will become one and the same."

The otherworldly "place of Life" is the place where the chosen ones existed before they were born and it is the same place to which they will return upon death of the body.

This is similar to *The Hymn Of The Pearl* in that you are from another place and must eventually return there, but shortly after your arrival into this (foreign) world, you tend to forget where you came from.

In *Thomas*, not only is there a reversal of the order, with the first now being the last and the last now being the first, but the two become one and the same, thus the old man and the child trade places, yet they are also one and the same.

The seventh day is the "day of rest" and thus this child is associated with the Gnostic goal of "repose".

(5) Jesus said,
"Recognize what is in your sight,
and that which is hidden from you
will become plain to you.
For there is nothing hidden
which will not become manifest."

Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 654.31

Jesus said: [everything not] before your sight and [what is hidden] from you will be revealed
[to you. Nothing] hidden will not [become] manifest and buried which will not be [raised].

While traveling down the highway of life,
don't worry about things so far off
that you cannot yet see them clearly.
Pay attention to what lies right in front of you now.
As you roll on down the road,
the distant objects, which were unclear,
will come into sharper focus.
Some things, you get on a "need to know" basis.

I think the phrase in the Greek version:
"And there is nothing buried that will not be raised"
was a deliberate misinterpretation by
those who wanted to promote the idea
of an end-time "bodily resurrection".

(6) His disciples questioned him and said to him,
"Do you want us to fast? How shall we pray?
Shall we give alms? What diet shall we observe?"

(14) Jesus said to them,
"If you fast, you will give rise to sin for yourselves; and if you pray,
you will be condemned; and if you give alms, you will do harm to your spirits.
When you go into any land and walk about in the districts,
if they receive you, eat what they will set before you,
and heal the sick among them.
For what goes into your mouth will not defile you,
but that which issues from your mouth
-it is that which will defile you."

(6 cont.) Jesus said,
"Do not tell lies, and do not do what you hate,
for all things are plain in the sight of heaven.
For nothing hidden will not become manifest,
and nothing covered will remain without being uncovered."

There is no standard "cookbook recipe" or
"regimen" to acquire Knowledge. This differs
from Eastern thought, where devotees follow
a prescribed path to Enlightenment.

Joseph Campbell points out that this idea of
everyone finding their own way, appears in
the search for the Holy Grail, as told by
Wolfram von Eschenbach, where everyone
must "enter the forest" at a different point,
which they, themselves, must choose.

This obviously differs from following a specified "path".
As J.C. would say: "Follow your bliss".

from Reflections on the Art of Living
A Joseph Campbell Companion
Selected and Edited by Diane K. Osbon,
1991, HarperCollins
"When the world seems to be falling apart,
the rule is to hang onto your own bliss.
It's that life that survives."

(7) Jesus said,
"Blessed is the lion which becomes man
when consumed by man; and cursed is the man
whom the lion consumes, and the lion becomes man."

The Apocryphon of John

"a lion-faced serpent ... called ... Yaltabaoth"

On the Origin of the World

"he called himself Yaldabaoth.
But Ariael is what the perfect call him,
for he was like a lion."

The Book of Thomas the Contender

"these visible bodies survive by
devouring creatures similar to them"

This saying has to do with
the superiority of "humans" to "animals"
and also their superiority to "archons".

Blessed is the flesh transformed
to fuel man's fire of discovery.
Cursed is the man,
consumed by the lion-faced archon
of jealousy and greed, who thereby allows
this evil archon to gain a human form.

(8) And he said,
"The man is like a wise fisherman
who cast his net into the sea
and drew it up from the sea full of small fish.
Among them the wise fisherman found
a fine large fish.
He threw all the small fish back into the sea
and chose the large fish without difficulty.
Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear."

This saying is not about final judgment;
it is not about sorting out goats and sheep;
it is about discerning the truly best option
to assist you on your spiritual journey.

When faced with so many religious sects,
spiritual gurus and cults,
you must select one that will satisfy your hunger.
Finding the Jesus of *The Gospel of Thomas*,
I feel I have found "a fine large fish" (8).

(9) Jesus said,
"Now the sower went out,
took a handful (of seeds),
and scattered them.

Some fell on the road;
the birds came
and gathered them up.

Others fell on the rock,
did not take root in the soil,
and did not produce ears.

And others fell on thorns;
they choked the seed(s)
and worms ate them.

And others fell on the good soil
and it produced good fruit:
it bore sixty per measure and
a hundred and twenty per measure."

In this parable, it seems that the "seeds" are not really intended for those already on the wide path. Falling in the road, they are trampled underfoot or eaten by "birds". To the "birds", the seeds are just a snack, an interesting tidbit, perhaps, but they derive nothing substantial from them. These seeds do not take root. This crazy farmer does not even try to seek out the good soil for planting. He scatters his seeds everywhere, notably "off-road" among rocks and weeds! I believe Jesus perceived his mission as being not for those on "the path" of organized religion, but to those by the wayside, those ignored and overlooked by the scribes and priests, as in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37).

Although it is possible for seeds to sprout and grow within any given path, it seems to me that most the well-known "paths" have way too many "birds" and not enough Good Earth.

The phrase: "bore sixty per measure and a hundred and twenty per measure." may refer to each of the twelve disciples receiving FIVE measures, as in the five Gnostic sacraments. $12 \times 5 = 60$
If they each doubled what they were given, as in the parable of the "talents" in Matthew 25:14-29, that would be TEN measures each. $12 \times 10 = 120$

(10) Jesus said,
"I have cast fire upon the world,
and see,
I am guarding it until it blazes."

The following quotes are from:

Your Word Is Fire,

The Hasidic Masters

On Contemplative Prayer

Edited and translated by Arthur Green
and Barry W. Holtz, 1977, Schocken Books

"When God is seated upon His throne,
a fire of silence falls upon
the heavenly beings."

When a person says the words of prayer
so that they become a throne for God
an awesome silent fire takes hold of him.
Then he knows not where he is;
he cannot see, he cannot hear.
All this happens in the flash of an instant-
as he ascends beyond the world of time.

Or Ha-Emet 2b.
(Merkavah mysticism)

A person at prayer is like a bed of coals,
As long as a single spark remains,
a great fire can again be kindled.
But without that spark there can be no fire.

Always remain attached to God,
even in those times
when you feel unable to ascend to Him.
You must preserve that single spark-
lest the fire of your soul be extinguished.

Liqqutim Yeqarim 15b; Keter Shem Tov 37b-38a.

(11) Jesus said,
"This heaven will pass away,
and the one above it will pass away.
The dead are not alive, and the living will not die.
In the days when you consumed what is dead,
you made it what is alive.
When you come to dwell in the light,
what will you do?
On the day when you were one
you became two.
But when you become two,
what will you do?"

"when all are One and one is All"

Stairway to Heaven

Led Zeppelin

Heaven is not in this sky,
nor in the realm of the archons.
Those who die without Knowledge
were dead even when alive,
but those who have found Life will not die,
their Spirits are eternal.
By consuming animal flesh,
you transformed what was dead into a living being and
by reinterpreting the dusty works of the prophets,
you brought new life to their words.
When you were born,
already age one*,
you entered the world of matter,
made of two dueling opposites,
but when you "make the two into One",
you no longer belong to this world alone,
Although you are One,
you co-exist both within and without
and by living on purpose
you obtain rest in both the outer world
and also within.

* Jewish tradition holds that a
newborn infant is one year old at birth.

(12) The disciples said to Jesus,
"We know that you will depart from us.
Who is to be our leader?"
Jesus said to them,
"Wherever you are,
you are to go to James the righteous,
for whose sake heaven and earth came into being."

Contrast

John 6:68,70

Simon Peter answered him,

"Lord, to whom shall we go?

Your words are words of eternal life."

Jesus answered,

"Have I not chosen the twelve of you?"

This saying shows that *The Gospel of Thomas* belongs to a tradition that followed James, "brother" of Jesus, after Jesus' death. It also leaves the door open for much of the wild speculation of Robert Eisenman, Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, Barbara Thiering, and others, regarding "James the Just" and correlation to The Dead Sea Scrolls.

James was obviously a much more important figure than the canonical writings would lead us to believe, but whether or not he was "the Teacher of Righteousness" or a "Messiah" in his own right seems to be pure speculation.

(13) Jesus said to his disciples,
"Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like."
Simon Peter said to him, "You are like a righteous angel."
Matthew said to him, "You are like a wise philosopher."
Thomas said to him, "Master, my mouth is
wholly incapable of saying whom you are like."
Jesus said, "I am not your master. Because you have drunk,
you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring
which I have measured out."
And he took him and withdrew and told him three things.
When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him,
"What did Jesus say to you?" Thomas said to them,
"If I tell you one of the things which he told me,
you will pick up stones and throw them at me;
a fire will come out of the stones and burn you up."

I believe Jesus is quoting Isaiah when he asks the disciples to:
"Compare me to someone and tell me whom I am like."

Isaiah 46:5

"To whom will you liken me? Who is my equal?
With whom can you compare me? Where is my like?"

(13) cont.

Simon Peter said to him, "You are like a righteous angel."

Matthew said to him, "You are like a wise philosopher."

Thomas said to him,

"Master, my mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom you are like."

Matthew 16:13-19

Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

They answered, "Some say John the Baptist, others Jeremiah, or one
of the prophets." "And you," he asked, "who do you say I am?"

Simon Peter answered: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Then Jesus said: "Simon son of Jonah, you are favoured indeed!

You did not learn that from any human being; it was revealed to you by
my heavenly Father. And I say to you; you are Peter, the Rock; and on
this rock I will build my church, and the powers of death shall never
conquer it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of Heaven"

Luke 9:18-20

One day, when he had been praying by himself in the company of his disciples,
he asked them, "Who do the people say I am?" They answered, "Some say

John the Baptist, others Elijah, others that one of the prophets of old has
come back to life." "And you," he said, "who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "God's Messiah."

Thomas has a profoundly different set of responses than those found in Matthew and Luke, where Peter is promoted as having the correct answer, which is that Jesus is "the Messiah". I prefer *Thomas's* answer because he basically says, "there is no answer to that question"!

Matthew's version promotes Peter as the leader of the "church". This is again quite different than Saying (12) where the disciples are told to go to James the righteous.

(13) cont.

Jesus said, "I am not your master.

Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring which I have measured out."

(108)

"Jesus said, 'He who will drink from my mouth will become like me. I myself shall become he, and the things that are hidden will be revealed to him.'"

Odes of Solomon

Ode 30:1,2,5,7

"Fill ye waters for yourselves from the living fountain of the Lord, for it is opened to you.

And come all ye thirsty, and take the draught; and rest by the fountain of the Lord.

For it flows forth from the lips of the Lord

Blessed are they who have drunk therefrom and have found rest thereby.

Hallelujah"

This portion of Saying (13) is related to Saying (108) and is also related to the "Living Water" sayings of Jeremiah and John.

Jeremiah 17:13

"Lord...all...who forsake you will be inscribed in the dust, for they have rejected the source of living water"

Jeremiah 2:13

"My people have committed two sins: they have rejected me, a source of living water, and they have hewn out for themselves cisterns, cracked cisterns which hold no water."

John 7:37-38

"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says "Streams of living water shall flow from within him."

John 4:14

"Whoever drinks the water I shall give will never again be thirsty. The water that I shall give will be a spring of water within him, welling up and bringing eternal life."

(13) cont.

And he took him and withdrew and told him three things. When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him, "What did Jesus say to you?"

Thomas said to them,

"If I tell you one of the things which he told me, you will pick up stones and throw them at me; a fire will come out of the stones and burn you up."

Ecclesiasticus 27:25,27

"Throw a stone in the air and you throw it on your own head ...

The wrong anyone does recoils on him, and he has no idea where it comes from."

This portion must remain a mystery as to what Jesus actually said, but it must have been considered blasphemous if Thomas was to be stoned for repeating it.

Some possibilities might be:

God is within you,

God is within me,

YHWH (the angry god of the sky) is not the true God,

or

You no longer need to keep the law.

Attempting to hurl "commandments" at others will cause the law you attempt to impose upon others to consume you.

(14) Jesus said to them,
"If you fast, you will give rise to sin for yourselves;
and if you pray, you will be condemned;
and if you give alms, you will do harm to your spirits.
When you go into any land and walk about in the districts, if they receive you,
eat what they will set before you, and heal the sick among them.
For what goes into your mouth will not defile you,
but that which issues from your mouth - it is that which will defile you."

Saying (14) answers the four questions posed in Saying (6).

"Do you want us to fast?"

How shall we pray?

Shall we give alms?

*What **diet** shall we observe?"*

The answer to the fourth question about **diet** also appears in Mark, Matthew, and Luke.

Mark 7:15 "nothing that goes into a person from outside can defile him; no, it is the things that come out of a person that defile him."

Matthew 15:11 "No one is defiled by what goes into his mouth; only by what comes out of it."

Luke 10:8 "When you enter a town and you are made welcome, eat the food provided for you"

Note that Mark's version is the most generic and open to several interpretations. What "goes into a person" could mean food or it could mean sexual intercourse. Likewise, "the things that come out of a person" could be words from the mouth or they might be excrement or other contaminated bodily fluids.

Both *Thomas* and Matthew narrow the field to what goes into and comes out of the mouth. This seems to go along with Matthew 12:37

"For out of your own mouth you will be acquitted; out of your own mouth you will be condemned."

This saying, which places more importance on words than on diet, seems to point out the importance of keeping tight reigns on your tongue.

(15) Jesus said,
"When you see one who was not born of woman,
prostrate yourselves on your faces and worship him.
That one is your father."

The **umbilicus** is the physical mark
of being "born of woman".

I think the goal of the Gnostics "ascents" into the heavens was to "ascend" to the level of the Father. This saying tells them what to look for, so they will know when they have arrived.

This reminds me of the question:
"Did Adam have a belly button?"
If so, why?
pure aesthetics?
so he could have it pierced?

If the Father created Adam, then he would
be created, not born, thus Adam would also
be one "not born of woman".

However, if Sophia, a woman, created the
Universe of matter, and everything within it,
then only that which transcends this world
of opposites is "not born of woman".

That means your earthly body and your
genetically inherited instincts are "born of woman".

That which is "not born of woman" would include:
the twin souls of heart and mind united
through Knowledge to produce a living Spirit.

(16) Jesus said,
"Men think, perhaps, that it is peace
which I have come to cast upon the world.
They do not know that it is dissension
which I have come to cast upon the earth:
fire, sword, and war.
For there will be five in a house:
three will be against two,
and two against three,
the father against the son,
and the son against the father.
And they will stand solitary."

The peace Jesus brings is not to the world,
but to the solitary individual.
It is the individual,
who must find unity within themselves,
but this will not necessarily
bring harmony to the entire earth.
The individual finds rest only after
seeking, then becoming "troubled", etc.
The borders of the new Kingdom will not
necessarily fall along family lines.
In fact, Jesus claims to stir the pot,
creating "fire, sword, and war",
turning family members against each other,
turning one family against another,
and turning nation against nation.

(17) Jesus said, "I shall give you
what no eye has seen and
what no ear has heard and
what no hand has touched and
what has never occurred to the human mind."

I Corinthians 2:9

"What eye has never seen, nor ear heard,
what has never entered the mind of man,
God has prepared for those who love him."

The Prayer of the Apostle Paul

"Grant what no angel eye has seen and
no archon ear has heard and
what has not entered into the human heart."

The Second Apocalypse of James: 56

"my beloved, Behold I shall reveal to you
those things that neither the heavens
nor the archons have known."

John 5:37

"the Father...
His voice you have never heard,
his form you have never seen."

Isaiah 48:6-8

"From now on I show you new things,
hidden things you did not know before.
They were not created long ago,
but in this very hour;
before today you had never heard of them.
You cannot claim, 'I know them already.'"

Isaiah 52:15

"They see what they had never been told and
their minds are full of things unheard before."

What Jesus is offering to give is
beyond the 5 senses,
and it is beyond intellect.
It transcends space, time, matter, and reason.
It is Knowledge not available
from traditional sources.

(18) The disciples said to Jesus,
"Tell us how our end will be."
Jesus said,
"Have you discovered, then, the beginning,
that you look for the end?
For where the beginning is,
there will the end be.
Blessed is he who will take his place in the beginning;
he will know the end and will not experience death."

(19) Jesus said,
"Blessed is he who came into being before he came into being."

(4) Jesus said,
"The man old in days will not hesitate to ask a small child seven
days old about the place of life, and he will live. For many who are
first will become last, and they will become one and the same."

Matthew 19:30
"But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

The Gospel of Philip
The Lord said, "Blessed is he who is before he came into being.
For who is, has been and shall be."

Confucius said,
"If we do not yet know about life, how can we know about death?"
Analects

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)
"As the end of a thing corresponds to its beginning,
so it is not possible to be ignorant of the end of
things if we know their beginning."

This is again the idea of pre-existent souls,
which occupy these bodies as a spacesuit
for a time, then return back to their origin.

The following except is from
The Operator's Manual For Planet Earth
by D. Trinidad Hunt, 1996, Hyperion,
and is reminiscent of *The Hymn of the Pearl*.

Principles of Planetary Purpose

1. Planet Earth is a classroom.
2. In order to enter Earth's classroom each of you must wear a body suit.
3. When you receive you body amnesia will set in and you will forget who you really are.
4. Earth's curriculum centers around remembering the spirit and the love that you already are.
5. When you do begin to remember the love that you are, you intention to fully manifest that love will be challenged.
6. This is because each of you will also receive a Pesonal Ego and Free Will along with you body when you are born.
7. All learning and growth centers around the challenge of rising above the ego to manifest the love that you are.
8. Graduation from Earth's classroom depends on fully becoming love in action.

(19) Jesus said,
"Blessed is he who came into being before he came into being.
If you become my disciples and listen to my words,
these stones will minister to you.
For there are five trees for you in Paradise which
remain undisturbed summer and winter and whose leaves do not fall.
Whoever becomes acquainted with them
will not experience death."

Isaiah 55:3

"Come to me and listen to my words, hear me and you will have life."

Pistis Sophia

"he had not told them in which places
the five trees are spread"

Eating the fruit
of the tree of good and evil
produced "the fall",
because it brought about the myth
that duality is reality.
The truth is good and evil are One,
therefore that tree is not
one of these five trees.

I believe the five trees in Saying (19) are the five Gnostic rites of initiation and may have been associated with actual plants as were the Greek gods and goddesses.

1.) BAPTISM = LILY (WATER) = JUNO
[goddess of childbirth- "born again"]

2.) EUCHARIST = VINE (WINE) = BACCHUS
[another dying and resurrecting god!]

3.) CHRISM = OLIVE (OIL) = MINERVA
[goddess of Wisdom/Sophia, "Spirit"]

4.) REDEMPTION = OAK = JUPITER
(god of the sky)
[meeting archons in ascent through heavens]

5.) BRIDAL CHAMBER = LINDEN = PHILEMON & BAUCIS
[the eternal couple representing mutual love]

for more info on trees and gods see: <http://www.cybercomm.net/~grandpa/treemyth.html>

(19) cont.

In the *Pistis Sophia*, Jesus augments all twelve of the standard-issue souls in his twelve chosen ones with special supercharged “powers”.

Pistis Sophia: Chapter 7

“when I entered the world I brought twelve powers with me, ...which I took from the Twelve saviors of the Treasury of Light, ...These now I cast into the wombs of your mothers when I came into the world, and it is these which are in your bodies today.

For these powers have been given to you above the whole world, for you are those who are able to save the whole world, so that you should be able to withstand the threat of the archons of the world, ... and all their persecutions which the archons of the height will bring upon you.”

“the power which is within you I have brought from the twelve saviors...For this reason ...you are not from the world; I also am not from it. For all men who are in the world have received souls from (the power) of the archon of the aeons. The power, however, which is in you, is from me but you souls belong to the height.”

John 6:68,70

Simon Peter answered him,

“Lord, to whom shall we go?”

Jesus answered,

“Have I not chosen the twelve of you?”

Jesus’ choosing of the twelve disciples takes place after being baptized in the Jordan and going into the desert for forty days and forty nights. This is analogous to Joshua’s choosing of the twelve men to represent the twelve tribes after coming out of the desert for forty years and then crossing the Jordan on dry land.

Joshua 4:2-8

“Choose twelve men from the people, one from each tribe, and order them to take up twelve stones from this place in the middle of the Jordan, ...They are to carry the stones across and place them in the camp ... These stones are to stand as a memorial among you.”

I can’t help but picture Jesus standing among these twelve stones, arranged like a zodiac wheel, when he says:

(19) cont.

If you become my disciples

and listen to my words,

these stones will minister to you.

The stones represent the power of the 12 tribes, present within the 12 disciples, now transformed into 12 saviors capable of saving “the whole world”.

(20) The disciples said to Jesus,
"Tell us what the kingdom of heaven is like."
He said to them, "It is like a mustard seed.
It is the smallest of all seeds.
But when it falls on tilled soil,
it produces a great plant and
becomes a shelter for birds of the sky."

Mark 4:31-32

"It is like a mustard seed; when sown in the ground it is smaller than any other seed, but once sown, it springs up and grows taller than any other plant, and forms branches so large that birds can roost in its shade."

Matthew 13:31-32

"The kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Mustard is smaller than any other seed, but when it has grown it is taller than other plants; it becomes a tree, big enough for the birds to come and roost among its branches."

Chadogya Upanishad 800 B.C.

"There is a spirit that is mind and life, light, and truth and vast spaces. He enfolds the whole universe and in silence is loving all. This is the spirit that is in my heart, smaller than a grain of mustard seed, greater than the earth, greater than the heavens."

The Jesus Seminar's book The Five Gospels has the following interpretation of Saying (20):

"The birds stand for those irritating
'toll collectors and sinners'
(the followers of Jesus)
who are attracted to a noxious plant
(God's domain),
and God's empire thus sprouts up
in Israel's ordered field
as an unwanted intrusion."

Like a raging fire started with just a spark,
the Kingdom grows from something very small
into something "greater than the heavens".

We are told in the popular book:

"Don't Sweat The Small Stuff...",

but sometimes the smallest details do matter. There is another book title which reads,

"God Is In The Small Stuff

And It All Matters"!

(21) v.1 Mary said to Jesus,
"Whom are your disciples like?"
v.2 He said "They are like children
who have settled in a field which is not theirs.
v.3 When the owners of the field come,
they will say, 'Let us have back our field.'
v.4 They will undress in their presence
in order to let them have back their field,
and to give it back to them.
v.5 Therefore I say, if the owner of a house
knows that the thief is coming,
he will begin his vigil before he comes
and will not let him dig through into his house
of his domain to carry away his goods.
v.6 You (pl.), then, be on your guard against the world.
v.7 Arm yourselves with great strength
lest the robbers find a way to come to you,
for the difficulty which you expect will (surely) materialize.
v.8 Let there be among you a man of understanding.
v.9 When the grain ripened, he came quickly
with his sickle in his hand and reaped it.
v.10 Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear."

translation by Lambdin division into verses *ala* "The Jesus Seminar"

Verses 1-4 seem to be part of a lost parable, possibly a more original version of "The Wicked Tenants", Saying (65). This new parable would go something like this:

Some young children (the Gnostics) settle in a field (a vineyard?) which is not their own (this world). The owner of the field (Yaldabaoth) sends representatives (archons) to collect his due. These collection agents attempt to seize the children, but they are only able to take what already belongs to them, the empty shells of body and soul, which the children leave behind. They cannot harm the children's eternal Spirits.

In this Gnostic parable, rather than identifying "the owner" as God, and the owner's "son" with Jesus, as in the traditional interpretation of "The Wicked Tenants", we would identify the squatters as the Gnostics and the owner of the field as Yaldabaoth.

Within this context, Yaldabaoth also corresponds to the "thief" (verse 5) and "robber" (verse 7) trying to overpower the unarmed weakling.

Yaldabaoth could also be "The Grim Reaper"(verse 9) trying to steal some unfortunate's soul who was caught unprepared.

(22) Jesus saw infants being suckled.
He said to his disciples, "These infants being suckled
are like those who enter the kingdom."

They said to him,
"Shall we then, as children, enter the kingdom?"
Jesus said to them, "When you make the two one,
and when you make the inside like the outside
and the outside like the inside,
and the above like the below, and when you
make the male and the female one and the same,
so that the male not be male
nor the female female;
and when you fashion eyes in the place of an eye,
and a hand in place of a hand,
and a foot in place of a foot,
and a likeness in place of a likeness;
then will you enter the kingdom."

The Gift: Poems by Hafiz the Great Sufi Master
Translated by Daniel Ladinsky, 1999, Arkana

"Every **child** has known God,
Not the God of names,
Not the God of don't,
Not the God who ever does anything weird,
But the God who only knows four words
And keeps repeating them, saying:
'Come dance with Me.'
Come dance."

The following quote is from Jesus In Blue Jeans
by Laurie Beth Jones, 1997, Hyperion

Luke 18:17 (paraphrased)

Jesus said, "Unless you become like a little child,
you cannot even enter the kingdom of Heaven."

"What is implied is that the kingdom of heaven is really for beginners. Those who think themselves full of knowledge about it won't even get in. My friend and minister Wendy Craig Purcell once said that she would rather be a beginner in a field that held her interest than remain a master doing work she no longer cared about. Considering the fact that most of us never utilize more than 10 percent of our total mental capacities in any endeavor, the opportunities we have to be beginners is limitless. Yet often as we grow up we quit asking question. Once we decide that we must pretend to know, rather than ask, we have cut off any chance for advancing ourselves."

(22) cont.

"when you make the inside like the outside"

This recurring theme in Thomas seems to be about integrity, not putting up false fronts, being genuine. It's about restoring unity, not creating divisions.

(22) cont.

*"and when you fashion eyes in the place of an eye,
... and a likeness in place of a likeness"*

This section of the saying seems to deal with the Gnostic rite of the mirrored bridal chamber, in which the Gnostic initiate is to acquire the resurrection body made of Spirit rather than flesh.

(23) Jesus said,

"I shall choose you,
one out of a thousand,
and two out of ten thousand,
and they shall stand as a single one."

Matthew 22:14

"For many are called, but few are chosen"

Gospel of the Hebrews

"I choose for myself the best
that my Father who is in heaven gives me."

It has been calculated that:

$$\begin{array}{rcl} 1 \text{ per } 1,000 & = & .0010 \\ + & & + \\ 2 \text{ per } 10,000 & = & .0002 \\ \hline & & .0012 \end{array}$$

Twelve disciples per 10,000 people

With today's world population at over 6,000,000,000, this no longer amounts to an elite few. There should be many who are "chosen". I think the term "chosen" must be viewed as a figure of speech, alluding to the time when Jesus walked the earth "choosing" disciples. In the modern world, it is the individual who does the choosing. They must choose whether or not to listen to the voice of Jesus, which says, "Follow me". Then the real question becomes which "Jesus" do you follow? In saying (8), the wise fisherman chooses the fine large fish without difficulty. Likewise, today's Jesus-seeker must choose the proper "Jesus" or they risk being left spiritually hungry.

(24) His disciples said to him,
"Show us the place where you are,
since it is necessary for us to seek it."
He said to them,
"Whoever has ears, let him hear.
There is light within a man of light,
and he lights up the whole world.
If he does not shine, he is darkness."

*(24) His disciples said to him,
"Show us the place where you are,
since it is necessary for us to seek it."*

Matthew 6:33
"Seek first the Kingdom of heaven"

Luke 17:21
"the Kingdom is within you"

*(24) cont.
There is light within a man of light,
and he lights up the whole world.
If he does not shine, he is darkness."*

(61) "Therefore I say,
if he (*duality?*) is destroyed
he will be filled with light,
but if he is divided,
he will be filled with darkness."

The Dialogue of the Savior (8) "The Savior said...
'As long as the things inside you are set in order, ...
your bodies are luminous.'"

(25) Jesus said,
"Love you brother like your soul,
guard him like the pupil of your eye."

Matthew 5:44,47

"Love your enemies...
If you greet only your brothers,
what is there extraordinary about that?"

Contrast Saying (55)

"And whoever does not hate his brothers...
will not be worthy of me."

In Saying (25), the "brothers" Jesus refers to are "brothers" in the Spirit, not necessarily biological siblings or "kinsfolk". In Saying (55), however, "brothers" represent those we are to separate ourselves from. These are our biological siblings who try to bind us to the old ways. Although we are told to love even our enemies, we are to give extra protection to those who share our "vision".

I believe Saying (25) is related to the rites of "redemption" and the "bridal chamber". To "love you brother like your soul" is a reminder to guard your soul from the thievery of the evil archons of the false-god, Yaldabaoth. The redemption ritual is the catechism recited to declare your freedom from him. To "guard him like the pupil of your eye" is a reminder to place top priority on the gift of "sight" as the medium through which you see God "eye to eye" in the mirrored "bridal chamber".

As Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) put it:

"The eye with which I see God
is the same as that with which he sees me.
My eye and the eye of God are one..."

If your eye is one with the eye of God, and your "brother's" eye is also the eye of God, then you should be able to see God in your brother's eyes!

(26) Jesus said,
"You see the mote in your brother's eye,
but you do not see the beam in your own eye.
When you cast the beam out of your own eye,
then you will see clearly
to cast the mote from your brother's eye."

Matthew 7:3-5 (also Luke 6:41,42)

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye, with never a thought for the plank in your own? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own? You hypocrite! First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's."

Man In The Mirror

by Glen Ballard and Siedah Garrett

"I'm gonna make a change, ...
gonna make a difference,
gonna make it right. ...
I'm starting with the man in the mirror,
I'm asking him to change his ways.
And no message could have been any clearer:
If you wanna make the world a better place,
Take a look at yourself and then make a change."

You need to clean out your own house before attempting to clean up your neighbor's yard!

I think Michael Jackson may have been looking to plastic surgery to make a "skin deep" change, but the lyrics of the song, **Man In The Mirror**, express the same sentiment as Saying (26); you need to start with yourself.

This is similar to Saying (98), where in order to kill the powerful man, the would-be killer had to start "in his own house".

In Saying (69), it is those "who have been persecuted within themselves" who have "truly come to know the Father".

And in Saying (70), our salvation comes from within.

"That which you have will save you if you bring it forth from yourselves.
That which you do not have within you will kill you if you do not have it within you."

Thomas A. Kempis (1380-1471)

Imitation of Christ

"First keep the peace within yourself,
then you can also bring peace to others."

(27) Jesus said,
"If you do not fast from the world,
you will not find the Kingdom of God, and
if you do not keep the Sabbath for the whole week,
you will not see the Father."
(Greek version)

(110) Jesus said,
"Whoever finds the world and becomes rich,
let him renounce the world."

(111) Jesus said, ...
"Whoever finds himself is superior to the world."

Mark 2:27

"The sabbath was made for Man,
not man for the Sabbath"
(capitalization for emphasis, mine)

Matthew 5:17,18

"Do not suppose that I have come
to abolish the law and the prophets;
I did not come to abolish, but complete.
Truly I tell you: so long as heaven and earth endure,
not a letter, not a dot, will disappear from the law
until all that must happen has happened.

In Gnostic thought, "the world" is to be considered inferior to both the realm of the soul and the realm of the Spirit. Although *Thomas* does not appear to be radically ascetic, the disciples are to be on their guard against becoming too deeply infatuated with material possessions.

The Sabbath is one day of physical rest per week,
but the Gnostic's goal is to achieve a mental state
of repose "24 / 7". Although Matthew 5:17,18 is traditionally interpreted as referring to a future
apocalyptic messiah, what if "so long as heaven and earth endure," means as long as heaven and earth
are separate, as long as they are two? Once the two are made into One, "on earth as it is in heaven",
then you become free of the law!

(28) Jesus said,
"I took my place in the midst of the world,
and I appeared to them in flesh.
I found all of them intoxicated;
I found none of them thirsty.
And my soul became afflicted for the sons of men,
Because they are blind in their hearts
And do not have sight;
for empty they came into the world,
and empty too they seek to leave the world.
But for the moment they are intoxicated.
When they shake off their wine,
then they will repent."

"I took my place in the midst of the world, and I appeared to them in flesh",

This phrase expresses the Christian idea of "God incarnate". I believe this must be re-interpreted as a metaphor or myth, otherwise Christians will continue to believe that their religion supercedes all others.

The following quotes are from John Hick's book,
The Metaphor Of God Incarnate
Christology in a Pluralistic Age
1993, Westminster/John Knox Press

"A theology ... stipulating that Jesus has been and will be the ONLY divine incarnation...means that Christ is in a category distinct from all other forms of revelation; the divine manifestation in him is thus both exclusive and final; it is qualitatively superior to all others, and it can never be surpassed."

"The doctrine ... is inherently liable to dangerous misuse"

"The Christian superiority complex in relation to the peoples of other faiths (has been) defended by appeal to the idea of Jesus' deity "

Hick offers an alternate view of incarnation as a METAPHOR, freeing Christians from a literal interpretation, which would promote bigotry by ruling out other faiths as necessarily inferior.

"In the case of the metaphor of divine incarnation, ...Jesus was a human being exceptionally open and responsive to the divine presence...In so far as Jesus was doing God's will, God was acting through him on earth and was in this respect 'incarnate' in Jesus' life"

(28) cont.

*"I found all of them intoxicated;
I found none of them thirsty. ...
But for the moment they are intoxicated.
When they shake off their wine,
then they will repent"*

(47) No man drinks old wine
and immediately desires to drink new wine.

(13) Jesus said, "I am not your master.
Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated
from the bubbling spring which I have measured out."

This metaphor of being "intoxicated" in Saying (28) is similar to Saying (47), where Jesus' words are "new wine", but his audience is still quite content with the old wine they've just consumed to excess. Here in Saying (28), "intoxicated" is used as a negative to contrast with "thirsty", while in Saying (13), Thomas is drunk on "Living Water", not wine, and that "intoxication" is to be praised; it makes him equal with Jesus.

(28) cont.

*"And my soul became afflicted for the sons of men,
because they are blind in their hearts and do not have sight;
for empty they came into the world,
and empty too they seek to leave the world."*

Here again, there seems to be a sense of urgency in this call for those with "eyes to see" to gather Knowledge and Wisdom while they can.

(29) Jesus said,
“If the flesh came into being because of spirit,
it is a wonder.
But if spirit came into being because of the body,
it is a wonder of wonders.
Indeed, I am amazed
at how this great wealth
has made its home in this poverty.”

To a mystical spirit of pure mind/imagination,
being confined to a body would be quite limiting.
Just as cinematography without special effects
or digital editing would seem limiting to someone
used to doing animation.

To be pure mind/imagination would be like doing animation, where if you can imagine it, you can do it.
If you can dream it, then all you need to do is draw it!

With live action footage or live theatre, however,
you must work within the limits of what is physically possible.

In the children's movie: *Warriors Of Virtue*,
a bizarre Taoist “Wizard of Oz”, the hero is physically handicapped until he awakens in a parallel dream
world of kangaroo Ninjas. Once inside this dream world, he is no longer handicapped and realizes
that he never really was; the limits of his body cannot limit his mind once he has found “The Way”.

In this world, physical limits may impoverish your perceived reality, but never your dreams.

(30) Jesus said,
"Where there are three gods,
they are gods.
Where there are two or one,
I am with him."

"Two's a party, three's a crowd"
The theme in *Thomas* seems to be
making the two into One,
you and your heavenly "twin".
There is no need for a "third wheel"
in the bridal chamber.

Of the three Gnostic divisions
(hylic, psychic, and pneumatic),
only two (psychic and pneumatic)
are considered "worthy" of consideration.

Hylics identify with the BODY and mistake
God's identity with the outer representation
of an icon or idol. They believe God resides
within the form. They are "three":
BODY, a soul bound to the earth,
and a hidden spark of Spirit.

Psychics identify with the SOUL and worship
a "Higher Power". Their God is outside themselves
and judges good and evil. Because they no longer
identify God with the body, they are "two":
SOUL and an external Spirit.

Pneumatics identify with the SPIRIT and
have found God within themselves. They are
no longer concerned with an external judge;
they judge for themselves what is true.
They have made the two into One.
They are pure SPIRIT.

(31) Jesus said,
"No prophet is accepted in his own village;
no physician heals those who know him."

Mark 6:4

"A prophet never lacks honour
except in his home town,
among his relations
and his own family."

Matthew 13:57

"A prophet never lacks honour,
except in his home town
and in his own family."

Luke 4:24

"Truly I tell you,
no prophet is recognized in his own country."

John 4:44

"a prophet is without honour in his own country"

In both Mark and Matthew
this saying goes against family,
a familiar theme in *Thomas*.

Those who know you well enough
to have smelled your farts
will have a hard time believing
there is anything extraordinary
about your insights or abilities.

(32) Jesus said,
“ A city being built on a high mountain
and fortified cannot fall,
nor can it be hidden.”

Matthew 5:14

“You are a light for all the world.

A town that stands on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Camelot is under construction
inside of you and in this world.
While under construction,
it must be protected
from those who would tear it down.
The Kingdom's radiance
does not allow it to be hidden
from those who seek it.
It is to be a beacon
for anyone who becomes lost,
a safe haven
where people can live
without fear.

(33) Jesus said,
“Preach from your housetops
that which you will hear in your ear.
For no one lights a lamp
and puts it under a bushel,
nor does he put it in a hidden place,
but rather he sets it on a lampstand
so that everyone who enters and leaves
will see its light.”

Matthew 10:27 “What I say to you in the dark you must repeat in broad daylight; what you hear whispered you must shout from the housetops.”

Matthew 5:14-16 “You are light for all the world. ...
When a lamp is lit, it is not put under the meal-tub, but on the lampstand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. Like the lamp, you must shed light among your fellows”

Luke 11:33-35 “No one lights a lamp and puts it in a cellar, but on the lampstand so that those who come in may see the light. The lamp of your body is the eye. When your eyes are sound, you have light for your whole body; but when they are bad, your body is darkness. See to it then that the light you have is not darkness.”

Once mature,
you can no longer stay in your chrysalis,
you must break free
and fly throughout the world without fear.
You have become a new creation
and by showing your self,
you show others the way.

(34) Jesus said,
"If a blind man leads a blind man,
they will both fall into a pit."

Matthew 15: 12-14

Then the disciples came to him and said,
"Do you know that the Pharisees have taken
great offence at what you have been saying?"

He answered:

"Leave them alone; they are blind guides,
and if one blind man guides another
they will both fall into the ditch."

Religious teachers who try to lead "sight-seekers"
to experience God, while they themselves
have closed their own eyes to the truth,
will lead all to false conclusions.
These "teachers" will cling to false doctrines,
professing to believe in things
that they know don't ring true,
all because they are ruled by fear of an angry god.

The world's major religions remind me of the ancient Indian fable,
The Blind Men & The Elephant where all the blind seekers discover
different partial truths, extrapolate false conclusions,
then argue about who is correct!

The moral of that story is:

"Knowing in part may make a fine tale,
but wisdom comes from seeing the whole."

(quote from Seven Blind Mice 1992 by Ed Young)

(35) Jesus said, "It is not possible for anyone to enter
the house of a strong man and take it by force
unless he binds his hands;
then he will be able to ransack his house.

Isaiah 49:24-25 "Can spoil be snatched from the strong man...? Yes, says the Lord,"

Mark 3:27 "On the other hand, no one can break into a strong man's house and make off with his goods unless he has first tied up the strong man; then he can ransack the house."

Matthew 11:12 "Since the time of John the Baptist the kingdom of Heaven has been subjected to violence and violent men are taking it by force."

Luke 11:21 "When a strong man fully armed is on guard over his palace, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he carries off the arms and armour on which the man had relied and distributes the spoil."

Thomas (21) ... Therefore I say, if the owner of a house knows that the thief is coming, he will begin his vigil before he comes and will not let him dig through into his house of his domain to carry away his goods. You then, be on your guard against the world. Arm yourselves with great strength lest the robbers find a way to come to you, ..."

The phrase "unless he binds his hands" always seemed ambiguous to me. Although I always assumed it meant to bind the hands of the "strong man", it might also mean, "bind your own hands", even though you are the same one entering the house by force!

Matthew 11:12 claims violent men are taking the kingdom by force; I believe we are to identify with these violent men. I read (35) as being related to (98), "Slayer of the powerful man", in that it promotes violence, ransacking and killing when necessary. I also believe the "house" to be ransacked and the "person" to be killed reside within us.

Built from lies and fear,
we fabricate a false illusion of ourselves,
piling them up like a house of cards.
This false self must die
and the house (soul) it resides in must be
ransacked in order to free our true Spirit.

Note that Luke has turned this saying around, so that it seems that we are the one being attacked, not the attacker. We should be defending ourselves with armor against attack. This makes it less violent and brings it in line with Saying (21)'s "thief" who is trying to rob us. Luke's idea of armor may have been influenced by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:8 "but we, who belong to the daylight, must keep sober, armed with the breastplate of faith and love, and the hope of salvation for a helmet."

(36) Jesus said,
"Do not be concerned
from morning until evening
and from evening until morning
about what you will wear."

Matthew 6:28-30,34

"And why be anxious about clothes?
Consider how the lilies grow in the fields;
they do not work,
they do not spin;
yet I tell you,
even Solomon in all his splendour
was not attired like one of them.
If that is how God clothes the grass in the fields,
which is there today
and tomorrow is thrown on the stove,
will he not all the more clothe you?"
"So do not be anxious about tomorrow;
Tomorrow will look after itself.
Each day has troubles enough of its own."

Luke 12:25

"Can anxious thought add a day to your life?"

Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 655.1-17

Jesus says, "Do not worry, from morning to evening nor from evening to morning, either about you food, what you will eat, or about your clothing, what you will wear. You are much better than the lilies, which do not card or spin. As for you, when you have no garment, what will you put on? Who might add to your stature? That very one will give you your garment."

To those with "eyes to see",
New clothing is like the Emperor's,
It can't hide the naked truth.
True colors shine through.

As in *The Hymn Of The Pearl*, the "garment" is the earthly body, which is "poverty" when compared with the "robe" worn in the Kingdom where we originated and to which we are to return.

(29) "Indeed, I am amazed at how this great wealth
has made its home in this poverty."

(37) His disciples said,
"When will you become revealed to us
and when shall we see you?"
Jesus said, "When you disrobe without being ashamed
and take up your garments and place them under you feet
like little children and tread on them, then will you see
the son of the living one, and you will not be afraid."

The Letter of Peter to Philip:
"When you strip off from yourselves
what is corrupted, then you will become illuminators
in the midst of mortal men."

The Second Apocalypse of James:
"For just as you are first having clothed yourself,
you are also the first who will strip himself,
and you shall become as you were
before you were stripped."

The Dialogue of the Savior:
"when you rid yourselves of jealousy, then you will clothe
yourselves in light and enter the bridal chamber."

Authoritative Teaching:
"And she learns about her light, as she goes about stripping
off this world, while her true garment clothes her within,
and her bridal clothing is placed upon her in beauty of mind,
not in pride of flesh."

The so-called "*Gospel of the Egyptians*"
cited in Patristic literature:
"When Salome inquired when the things
about which she had asked would be known,
the master said,
'When you have trampled on the garment of shame
and when the two become one' "

(Note: this is not the NHL tractate also known
as "The Gospel of the Egyptians")

To Gnostics, "clothing" and "garments" had another deeper meaning. They signified things belonging to the dead outer world of the body. They were to discard these earthly "garments" in order to gain the return of their spiritual robe of light. This robe was originally theirs, before they "came into being" as related in the Gnostic myth, *The Hymn of the Pearl*.

(38) Jesus said,
“Many times have you desired to hear
these words which I am saying to you,
and you have no one else to hear them from.
There will be days when you will look for me
and will not find me.”

(92) Jesus said,
“Seek and you will find.
Yet, what you asked me about in former times
and which I did not tell you then,
now I do desire to tell,
but you do not inquire after it.”

Wisdom of Solomon 6:11
“be eager to hear me;
long for my teaching,
and you will learn.”

Isaiah 55:6
“Seek the Lord while he is present,
call to him while he is close at hand.”

John 7:33,34
“For a little longer I shall be with you; then I am going away to him who sent me. You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come.”

Proverbs 1:20,21,24,28
“Wisdom cries aloud in the open air,
and raises her voice in public places.
She calls at the top of the bustling streets ...”
“But because you refused to listen to my call ...”
“ When (you) call to me, I shall not answer;
when (you) seek, (you) will not find me.”

In saying (38),
Jesus speaks as if he is the voice of Wisdom.
The keys that are to be obtained are again found by hearing Jesus' words.
The idea that you might miss your opportunity and seek and yet not find or as in Saying (92),
not ask at the appropriate time, reminds me of the parable of “The Banquet”, Saying (64), where the
invitation arrives at a most inopportune moment.
I see this as advice to jump through the transitory “windows of opportunity” as they present themselves on
your journey to find Wisdom. “Reap the grain when it's ripe” as it says in Saying (21).

(39) Jesus said, "The pharisees and the scribes
have taken the keys of knowledge (gnosis)
and hidden them. They have not entered,
nor have they allowed to enter those who wish to.
You, however, be as wise as serpents
and as innocent as doves."

Greek version:

"They took the key of knowledge and hid it."

Luke 11:52

"Alas for you lawyers! You have taken away the key of knowledge.
You did not go in yourselves, and those who were trying to go in,
you prevented."

Matthew 23:13

"Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You shut the
door of the kingdom of Heaven in people's faces; you do not
enter yourselves, and when others try to enter, you stop them."

(102) Jesus said, "Woe to the pharisees, for they are like a
dog sleeping in the manger of oxen, for neither does he eat
nor does he let the oxen eat."

Matthew 10:16

"I send you out like sheep among wolves;
be wary as serpents, innocent as doves."

The key to Gnosis is hidden.
It's not supposed to be hard to find,
but someone buried the key in horse manure,
then put superglue in the keyhole.

Knowledge and Wisdom
will always find a way,
to come to those who seek them.
Truth is cunning,
the Spirit will be released.

(40) Jesus said, "A grapevine has been planted
outside of the father, but being unsound,
it will be pulled up by its roots and destroyed."

Matthew 15:13

"Any plant that is not of my heavenly Father's planting will be rooted up."

Isaiah 5:1,2

"My beloved had a vineyard ...

He planted it with choice red vines; ...

He expected it to yield choice grapes,

but all it yielded was a crop of wild grapes."

Jeremiah 5:10

"Go along her rows of vines;

destroy them,

make an end of them.

Lop off her green branches,

For they are not the LORD'S."

Matthew 3:10

(John the Baptist said to them)

"The axe lies ready at the roots of the trees;

every tree that fails to produce good fruit

is cut down and thrown on the fire

The Gospel of Philip:

"For so long as the root of wickedness is hidden,
it is strong. But when it is recognized it is dissolved.

When it is revealed it perishes. That is why the word says, 'Already the ax is laid at the root of the trees'.

It will not merely cut – what is cut sprouts again – but the ax penetrates deeply until it brings up the root."

"As for ourselves, let each one of us dig down after the root of evil which is within one, and let one pluck it out of one's heart from the root. It will be plucked out if we recognize it. But if we are ignorant of it, it takes root in us and produces its fruit in our heart. It masters us. We are its slaves. It takes us captive, to make us do what we do not want; and what we do want we do not do. It is powerful because we have not recognized it. ... Ignorance is the mother of all evil. ... Ignorance is a slave. Knowledge is freedom."

Although the grapevine was commonly used as a metaphor for the Jewish nation, I believe the true vine of Knowledge does not necessarily follow the family tree. You cannot inherit you father's sin or your father's Knowledge. You, alone, are responsible for your own actions and you must acquire Knowledge for yourself. Gnostics were originally "born" from a kiss, passing the sayings along in an oral transmission; thus, they were not "born of flesh and blood", but born of the true Spirit.

(41) Jesus said,
"Whoever has something in his hand
will receive more,
and whoever has nothing
will be deprived of even the little he has."

Matthew 13:10-13

"The disciples came to him and asked,
'Why do you speak to them in parables?'
He replied, 'To you it has been granted to know
the secrets of the kingdom of Heaven,
but not to them.

For those who have will be given more,
till they have enough and to spare;
and those who have not
will forfeit even what they have.

That is why I speak to them in parables;
for they look without seeing,
and listen without understanding."

After reading this saying I couldn't help but
wonder if the Kingdom operated like binary code,
all or nothing.

But I think a better model would be:
right plus left equals One.
one plus one equals One.
One plus infinity equals One.
But, right plus right equals zero
and left plus left equals zero.

Whoever has created One whole,
will receive infinitely more,
but whoever has zero,
will be deprived of even
the incomplete parts he has.

(41) cont.

Matthew 25:14-29

"It is like a man going abroad, who called his servants and entrusted his capital to them; to one he gave five bags of gold, to another two, to another one, each according to his ability. Then he left the country. The man who had the five bags went at once and employed them in business, and made a profit of five bags, and the man who had the two bags made two. But the man who had been given one bag of gold went off and dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money. A long time afterwards their master returned, and proceeded to settle accounts with them. The man who had been given the five bags of gold came and produced the five he had made; "Master," he said, "you left five bags with me; look, I have made five more." "Well done, good and faithful servant!" said the master. "You have proved trustworthy in a small matter; I will now put you in charge of something big. Come and share your master's joy." The man with the two bags then came and said, "Master, you left two bags with me; look I have made two more." "Well done, good and faithful servant!" said the master. "You have proved trustworthy in a small matter; I will now put you in charge of something big. Come and share your master's joy." Then the man who had been given one bag came and said, "Master, I knew you to be a hard man: you reap where you have not sown, you gather where you have not scattered; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your gold in the ground. Here it is – you have what belongs to you." "You worthless, lazy servant!" said the master. "You knew, did you, that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered? Then you ought to have put my money on deposit, and on my return I should have got it back with interest. Take the bag of gold from him, and give it to the one with the ten bags."

The parable concludes with:

"For everyone who has
will be given more,
till he has enough to spare;
and everyone who has nothing
will forfeit even what he has."

I would like to offer a Gnostic reading of Matthew's parable of the "talents" or "pounds".

The servant given FIVE bags of gold represents one who has undergone all five rites of initiation into the mystery of Gnosis: baptism, chrism, eucharist, redemption, and bridal chamber.
This is the person of Spirit, the pneumatic.

The servant given TWO bags of gold represents a novice who has received only the elementary lessons. He has yet to "make the two into One", thus he is two. Ruled by a soul, which focuses on dualism, judging good and evil, this is the psychic.

The servant given only ONE bag of gold still identifies only with an earthly body. He is ignorant of the presence of a soul or Spirit. His body ends up buried in a hole in the ground, where he waits for an angry god to come and "take what is theirs" (88).
This is the hylic.

(42) Jesus said,
"Become passers-by."

"Jesus, on whom be peace, has said:
'This world is a bridge.
Pass over it.
Build not your dwelling there.' "

Arabic inscription at Fateh-pur-Sikri commemorating triumphal return Moghul Emperor Akbar in 1601

As we used to say,
back in the day,
"Keep on truckin' " and
"Just passin' thru"

Do not be anxious about things of this world,
Here, all things must pass.
Seek within for inner truth.
Find peace that lasts.

(43) His disciples said to him,
"Who are you,
that you should say these things to us?"
Jesus said to them,
"You do not realize who I am from what I say to you,
but you have become like the Jews,
for they either love the tree and hate its fruit
or love the fruit and hate the tree."

I remember when I first bought my house, how much I loved all the large mature trees on the property. After one year of mowing, raking and maintaining the yard, however, I realized what a mess most of those trees made: prickly Sweetgum balls that kept you from going barefoot, Black Walnuts that stained your hands and turned the swimming pool the color of iced tea, Wild Cherries for the birds to eat and then stain your car with their droppings, Maple tree "whirligigs" that clogged all the gutters, an English Linden that produced a mist of powdery seeds and seemed to attract Japanese beetles from the entire city, seed cones from the Magnolia and Pine trees and huge acorns and Buckeyes that even the best mulching mower couldn't mulch.

I guess, I too, loved the trees but hated the fruit.

Many people seem to have this same
relationship with work and money.
Either they love their art,
but hate the fact that they
don't produce an income from it,
or
they love their salary,
but hate their job.

(44) Jesus said, "Whoever blasphemes against the father will be forgiven,
and whoever blasphemes against the son will be forgiven,
but whoever blasphemes against the holy spirit
will not be forgiven either on earth or in heaven."

Mark 3:28,29

"Truly I tell you: every sin and every slander can be forgiven;
but whoever slanders the Holy Spirit can never be forgiven;
he is guilty of an eternal sin."

Matthew 12:31,32

"So I tell you this: every sin and every slander can be forgiven,
except slander spoken against the Spirit; that will not be
forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man
will be forgiven; but if anyone speaks against the Holy Spirit,
for him there will be no forgiveness, either in this age or
in the age to come."

Luke 12:10

"Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be
forgiven; but for him who slanders the Holy Spirit there
will be no forgiveness."

The "Holy Spirit"

represents the divine's feminine side,
the Mother of the Universe,
the source of Life,
the one capable of bringing forth new birth.

So in effect, Jesus was saying,
"Don't you talk about our Momma that way! "

I think of the "Holy Spirit" as Wisdom/Sophia
and also as Mother Earth.
To blaspheme against Mother Earth would be
to commit a crime against the Planet.
This could be an incident like
the Exxon Valdesse oil spill
or just failing to recycle.

(45) Jesus said,
“Grapes are not harvested from thorns,
nor are figs gathered from thistles,
for they do not produce fruit.
A good man brings forth good from his storehouse;
and evil man brings forth evil things from his evil storehouse,
which is in his heart, and says evil things.
For out of the abundance of the heart he brings forth evil things.”

Luke 6:43-45

“There is no such thing as a good tree producing bad fruit, nor yet a bad tree producing good fruit. Each tree is known by its own fruit: you do not gather figs from brambles or pick grapes from thistles. Good people produce good from the store of good within themselves, and evil people produce evil from the evil within them. For the words that the mouth utters come from the overflowing of the heart.”

Matthew 7:15-20

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you dressed up as sheep while underneath they are savage wolves. You will recognize them by their fruit. Can grapes be picked from briars, or figs from thistles? A good tree always yields sound fruit, and a poor tree bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, or a poor tree sound fruit. A tree that does not yield sound fruit is cut down and thrown on the fire. That is why I say you will recognize them by their fruit.

James 3:10,12

“Out of the same mouth come praise and curses.
This should not be so”
“can a fig tree produce olives,
or a grape vine produce figs?”

Isaiah 27:2-4

“On that day sing of the pleasant vineyard.
I, the LORD am its keeper, ...
Night and day I tend it, but I get no wine,
I would as soon have briars and thorns.”

The following quote is from

THE KINGDOM WITHIN

The Inner Meaning of Jesus' Sayings

by John A. Sanford, 1987, HarperSanFrancisco

“The kingdom of God requires that the outer person and the inner person correspond to each other. It is of no avail to cultivate an outer personality if it is not founded upon awareness of our inner selves, for no matter what we strive to accomplish outwardly in our lives, no matter what pretensions we make to righteousness, the actual fruit of our lives will be brought into existence from what is within our hearts.”

(46) Jesus said,
“Among those born of women,
from Adam until John the Baptist,
there is no one so superior to John the Baptist
that his eyes should not be lowered before him.
Yet I have said,
whichever one of you comes to be a child
will be acquainted with the kingdom
and will become superior to John.”

Matthew 11:11

“Truly I tell you:
among all who have ever been born,
no one has been greater than John the Baptist,
and yet the least in the kingdom of Heaven
is greater than he.”

Luke 7:28

“I tell you,
among all who have been born,
no one has been greater than John;
yet the least in the kingdom of God
is greater than he is.”

John 1:30

(John replied,)
“After me there comes a man
who ranks ahead of me.”

This saying suggests an ongoing evolution of mankind, with the newly emerging “child of the Kingdom” as the next evolutionary step up the ladder. Although John attempted to bring the apocalyptic ax crashing down via repentance, baptism and stark asceticism, he succeeded only in bringing it down on his own head. John’s violently apocalyptic rally cry was replaced by Jesus’ cryptic parables of an upside-down “Kingdom” where you were to “love your enemies”. John’s prophetic message to repent now and cleanse your soul of sin by baptism in water or risk provoking God’s wrath and burning in eternal hell-fire was replaced by Jesus’ call to make the inside and the outside one and the same and to be baptized in the fire of the Spirit. Although Jesus’ message is often portrayed as complementary to John’s, Jesus’ teaching should be considered a new beginning with the “first” of the new order greater than the “last” of the old. John’s “fire and brimstone” preaching colors the canonical gospel writers’ elaborations on Jesus’ sayings, but John’s influence seems to have been “watered-down” by the Gnostics. John’s legacy, however, lives on within mainstream Christianity. The altar call of “Sinner, Repent!” can still be heard every Sunday morning all around the world; so unfortunately, John’s message does not face extinction any time soon.

(47) Jesus said, "It is impossible for a man to mount two horses or to stretch two bows. And it is impossible for a servant to serve two masters; otherwise, he will honor the one and treat the other contemptuously. No man drinks old wine and immediately desires to drink new wine. And new wine is not put into old wineskins, lest they burst; nor is old wine put into a new wineskin, lest it spoil it. An old patch is not sewn into a new garment, because a tear would result."

TWO HORSES

Although you can't mount two horses, by using a double yoke, you can make the two into One, transforming the two halves of the soul, heart and mind, into one Spirit

TWO BOWS

Attempting to stretch two bows will result in two divergent trajectories. Unable to sight down both bows, at least one arrow, if not both, will miss the mark. Even a small degree of separation initially will be magnified as the distance to the target increases.

TWO MASTERS

Working in a dental office where several dental assistants were expected to work for two different doctors, I can attest to the truth of this saying. They never treated both doctors equally; usually, they loved one and hated the other.

OLD WINE

Those comfortably numb, high on self-righteousness, have no desire to give up their seniority in the old regime in order to join a new one.

NEW WINESKINS

Once, I helped plan a Sunday morning worship service for a brand new church entitled "Leave Your Baggage At The Door". We piled up old suitcases on the doorstep, and encouraged others to (figuratively) do the same. The idea was that this was a new beginning and it required leaving bad feelings, old prejudices, past hurts, previous issues with other churches, and other "baggage" outside in order to "let them go" and make a fresh start. I think Jesus must have felt the same way when starting his own ministry and abandoning John the Baptist's. John's movement was "old wine", but Jesus' was brewing something so new that attempting to pour it into the old container would cause the old container to be "rent from top to bottom"! John and Jesus also represent the two horses, two bows and two masters.

NEW GARMENT

The new garment results from a metamorphosis into a new life. The old parts are not compatible with this new equipment. Here again, John the Baptist was of the "old cloth".

Two Masters: Matthew 6:24 and Luke 16:13
Wineskins: Mark 2:21-22, Matthew 9:16-17
and Luke 5:36-39

(48) Jesus said,
"If two make peace with each other in this one house,
they will say to the mountain, 'Move away,'
and it will move away."

(106) Jesus said,
"When you make the two one,
you will become the sons of man,
and when you say, 'Mountain, move away,'
it will move away."

Mark 11:23
"Truly I tell you:
if anyone says to this mountain,
'Be lifted from your place
and hurled into the sea,'
and has no inward doubts,
but believes that what he says will happen,
it will be done for him."

Matthew 17:20-21
"He answered, 'Your faith is too small.
Truly I tell you: if you have faith
no bigger than a mustard seed,
you will say to this mountain,
'Move from here to there!'
and it will move;
nothing will be impossible for you.'

I Corinthians 13:2
"I may have faith enough to move mountains;
but if I have no love, I am nothing."

The "mountain" is a physical barrier
separating God and man.
Whoever makes the two into One,
reunites God and man,
thus removing the barrier.

(49) Jesus said,
"Blessed are the solitary and elect,
for you will find the kingdom.
For you are from it,
and to it you will return."

(19)
Blessed is he
who came into being
before he came into being

It is only the solitary
who can enter the bridal chamber.
It is an individual,
not a group, experience.
The "elect" are those
who existed before they were born.
They are from the Kingdom;
they are princes and princesses,
sent here with the sole purpose
of learning to *live on purpose* !

(50) Jesus said,
"If they say to you,
'Where did you come from?',
say to them,
'We came from the light,
the place where the light came into being
on its own accord and established [itself]
and became manifest through their image.'
If they say to you,
'Is it you?',
say,
'We are its children,
we are the elect of the Living Father.'
If they ask you,
'What is the sign of your father in you?',
say to them,
'It is movement and repose.'"

The First Apocalypse of James

"James, behold,
I shall reveal to you your **redemption**.
When...you undergo these sufferings...
three of them will seize you...
Not only do they demand toll,
but they also take away souls by theft. ...
one...will say to you,
'Who are you or where are you from?
You are to say to him,
'I am a son, and I am from the Father.'
He will say to you,
'What sort of son are you,
and to what father do you belong?'
You are to say to him,
'I am from the Pre-existent Father,
and a son in the Pre-existent One.'...
When he also says to you,
'Where will you go?',
you are to say to him,
'To the place from which I have come,
there shall I return',
and if you say these things,
you will escape their attacks."

(50) cont.

The Letter of Peter to Philip: 137

"It is because of this that you are being detained, because you belong to me."
"And this is the reason that you will fight against the powers, because they do not have rest like you, since they do not wish that you be saved."

(60) "look for a place for yourself within repose"

(90) Jesus said, "find repose for yourselves"

(2) Jesus said, ... "when he reigns he will rest."

The Odes Of Solomon

"I went up into the light of Truth as on a chariot, and the Truth led me and brought me...
And I stretched out my hands in the ascent of my soul
and directed myself toward the Most High
and **I was redeemed** by him."

quote from Kurt Rudolph's book

Gnosis, HarperSanFrancisco, 1987

"Only rarely is the ascent of the soul accomplished automatically, but requires help and support. The reason for this lies in the existence of the powers which rule the world, the Archons, who try to impede the soul's return in order to prevent the perfecting of the world of light and thus protract the world process. The description of the menace to be encountered on the journey is a central theme in numerous Gnostic traditions, as is also that of the overcoming of these obstacles. "

The "redemption" ritual consists of a catechism, reciting answers to questions posed by archon gatekeepers in the "ascent" of your soul. You are to declare your freedom from the false creator-god, Yaldabaoth, and his archons.

This "sacrament" consists of repeating a saying, something to the effect of, "I am not your slave, I am a child of the Living Father".

The rite of "redemption" was originally part of the initiation into the Jesus mystery cult. It may have consisted of a series of three questions asked to the initiate by three cult elders acting out the roles of the three menacing archons.

#1 Q: Who are you?

A: A son of the Living Father.

#2 Q: Where are you going?

A: Back to the light, where I'm from.

#3 Q: What's the sign of the Father in you?

A: movement and rest.

"Movement and rest" have been described as the characteristics of a child in its mother's womb, sometimes moving, other times resting.

You are to become "pregnant" with Knowledge!

(51) His disciples said to him,
"When will the repose of the dead come about,
and when will the new world come?"
He said to them,
"What you look forward to has already come,
but you do not recognize it"

(91) "you have not recognized the one who is before you,
and you do not know how to read this moment."

The Treatise On The Resurrection

"the resurrection ...
is the truth which stands firm.
It is the revelation of what is,
and the transformation of things,
and a transition into newness."
"flee from the divisions and the fetters,
and already you have the resurrection."
"why not consider yourself as risen
and already brought to this?"

The Gospel of Philip:73

"Those who say they will die first
and then rise are in error.
If they do not first receive
the resurrection while they live,
when they die they will receive nothing."

Although many of Jesus' disciples were expecting an apocalyptic end to the world at any moment, Jesus taught a "realized eschatology" where you could move across an invisible barrier from this perishable world into the eternal realm of the "Kingdom" merely by changing your outlook! Because this change occurred at different times for each individual, as they "realized" their immortality, this did not produce an apocalyptic "end-time" destruction of the planet. It resulted in the "end of time", only in the sense that eternal life had now begun, they had already "put on" the resurrection.

Excerpt from The First Coming

by Thomas Sheehan, Random House, 1986

"The reigning orthodoxy held out the promise of a future apocalyptic triumph in return for strict observance of the Law: the hard bread of obedience in this life, but an eschatological victory in the near future. The Baptist, on the other hand, preached a threatening judge who offered to save those who repented and changed: some existential anguish at first, but then the conviction that one was justified in God's sight. But Jesus proclaimed a loving Father who was *already arriving among his people*, bringing peace and freedom and joy. One simply had to let him in, for the kingdom of God had *begun*." "in Jesus' message the offer was the presence of the Father, and the required response was mercy toward one's neighbor." "a radically personal eschatology that was fulfilled in a new interpersonal ethic."

(52) His disciples said to Him,
"Twenty-four prophets spoke in Israel,
and all of them spoke in You."
He said to them,
"You have omitted the one living in your presence
and have spoken (only) of the dead."

The use of the number 24 is symbolic of the completion of a 24-hour daily cycle, signifying "end-times", but trying to make Jesus fit into a mold of a "Messiah" or end-time prophet is incorrect. "The one living" (the new wine) is contrasted with "the dead" (old wineskins). Jesus' message was eschatological but not apocalyptic. He advocated a "realized eschatology" where the Kingdom becomes present for that individual when "those with ears hear" are transformed by his words.

I think Jesus would be more likely to associate himself with the number 13, which symbolizes a new beginning, a new order. The 12 disciples plus Jesus equals 13, which is not necessarily "bad luck" as many would believe.

(53) His disciples said to Him,
"Is circumcision beneficial or not?"
He said to them,
"If it were beneficial, their father would beget
them already circumcised from their mother.
Rather, the true circumcision in spirit
has become completely profitable."

Deuteronomy 30:6
"The LORD your GOD
will circumcise your hearts...
so that you will love him
with all your heart and soul
and you will live."

Jeremiah 4:4
"circumcise your hearts"

Jeremiah 9:25,26
"The time is coming, says the LORD,
when I shall punish all the circumcised...
for all alike, the nations and Israel
are uncircumcised in heart."

To paraphrase:
"It ain't what's on the outside that matters."

"True circumcision in Spirit" may have been Jesus'
re-interpretation of Deuteronomy and Jeremiah's "circumcision of the heart".

This saying is about making a new covenant with God. Jesus' message was that it is no longer necessary to keep the whole law or even the 10 commandments but merely to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul" and to "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 as quoted by Jesus in Matthew 22:37,39)

(54) Jesus said,
"Blessed are the poor,
for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven."

William Barclay,
Ethics In A Permissive Society

There was nothing of inverted snobbery
in the attitude of Jesus to wealth.
He did not glorify poverty as such.
He had friends in every walk of life. ...
Even if we insist on the dangers of riches,
we cannot fly to the other extreme,
and make poverty a virtue.

Although Jesus did not promote poverty, he did provide HOPE to those helplessly entrenched in poverty by telling them they were connected with a royal Kingdom, that they were blessed by God and would achieve fulfillment. Whether this fulfillment was to happen in this world or the next is not spelled out. A more Gnostic view would be that this fulfillment would happen within a separate inner reality.

This saying may also have had an underlying tongue-in-cheek meaning if "the Poor" also meant those members of a religious group that shared a common purse as Jesus' followers did.

(55) Jesus said,
"Whoever does not hate his father and his mother
cannot become a disciple to me.
And whoever does not hate his brothers and sisters
and take up his cross in my way
will not be worthy of me."

The Gospel of Philip: 73

"Philip the apostle said
'Joseph the carpenter planted a garden
because he needed wood for his trade.
It was he who made the cross
from the trees he planted.
His own offspring
hung on that which he planted.
His offspring was Jesus
and the planting was the cross."

The Gospel of Philip: 63

"for Jesus came to crucify the world"

Hating family means you will always be a child to your mother and father. Your sisters and brothers will always be jealous of anything you alone possess, so don't look to them for confirmation of what is right, but look to you Heavenly Father who knows the real you.

To "take up his cross in my way" must mean something other than the obvious call to be crucified with Jesus. Much has been made of this symbolism, but when could Jesus actually have said this and in what context? How would those hearing it prior to the crucifixion know what it was meant symbolically? Maybe Niks Kazantzakis got it right in his book [Last Temptation Of Christ](#) where he depicts Jesus working as a carpenter, building crosses for the Romans. In that context it sounds like something he might have said. Kazantzakis's idea of Jesus as a cross builder seems to come from the allegory in *The Gospel Of Philip:73*.

A more Gnostic interpretation is also found in the *Gospel of Philip: 63* where Jesus is said to have come "to crucify the world". By crucifying duality, two become One, and unity is restored.

(56) Jesus said,
"Whoever has come to understand the world
has found (only) a corpse,
and whoever has found a corpse
is superior to the world."

(80)
Jesus said,
"He who has recognized the world
has found the body,
but he who has found the body
is superior to the world."

(110)
Jesus said,
"Whoever finds the world and becomes rich,
let him renounce the world."

(81)
Jesus said,
"Let him who has grown rich be king,
and let him who possesses power renounce it."

In Sayings (56) and (80) "understood/recognized the world... found the corpse/body" means that things of this world are not eternal, but if you understand this, YOU ARE, and you are therefore superior to it.

These sayings are also related to Sayings (110) and (81) where we are told to find the world, grow rich and powerful, renounce the power, and renounce the world. These things are not eternal.

The somewhat derogatory mention of the world as a carcass or corpse troubles me, because I believe the Earth is Holy. The Gnostic view of the Creator (Demiurge) being corrupt makes for an interesting mythology, but bad planetary ecology.

It is important to note that I do not associate Yaldabaoth with the Creator, but consider him only as a "pretender". I consider Sophia as the true Mother of All. I think of Yaldabaoth as the "blind" god who mistakenly thinks he is God because he can "see" no one greater than himself.

(57) Jesus said, "The Kingdom of the Father is like a man who had [good] seed. His enemy came by night and sowed weeds among the good seed. The man did not allow them to pull up the weeds; he said to them, 'I am afraid that you will go intending to pull up the weeds and pull up the wheat along with them.' For on the day of the harvest the weeds will be plainly visible, and they will be pulled up and burned."

You can blame your enemy, "the evil one", for the weeds in your garden if you want to, but don't go out uprooting the plantings when only God can tell the wheat from the weeds.

The weeds or "tares" here, refers to a variety of weed that so closely resembles the growing wheat plant, that they are virtually indistinguishable from the wheat until the plants have matured.

While I think "burning" of the weeds is an appropriate demise for "weeds", it is still hard not to think of hellfire. It seems "Matthew" liked this fiery ending so well he appended it to the parable of the Great Net, Matthew 13:47-48 / Saying (8), so that rather than having the leftover fish being thrown back as in Gospel of Thomas, they too are "burned up" by Angels. What a pyromaniac, that Matthew!

I now have a garden and through gardening this parable has become a little more real for me. While away on vacation recently, we made arrangements for some friends to water our garden. When we returned my daughter was upset that all her carrot plants, which had begun sprouting prior to our trip, were gone. We later learned that our friends had not only watered but also decided to do some "weeding" and pulled up all her carrots!

This saying does not necessarily have anything to do with "judgment day" where the "bad" will be separated from the "good". It has more recently been interpreted as an admonition to wait until you are mature enough to try weeding out the ideas which have been planted in your mind, as being beneficial and true or as useless patterns of thought and behavior that lead nowhere.

(58) Jesus said,
"Blessed is the man
who has suffered
and found life."

Mahatma Gandhi said:

"patience means self-suffering" ...
"vindication of truth,
not by the infliction of suffering on the opponent,
but on one's self." ...

"pursuit of truth (does) not permit violence
(to be) inflicted on one's opponent,
but ... he must be weaned from error
by patience and sympathy."

True Patriotism - 1939

(59) Jesus said,
"Take heed of the Living One
while you are alive,
lest you die
and seek to see Him
and be unable to do so."

The Gospel Of Philip: 66

"And so he dwells either in this world
or in the resurrection or in the middle place.
God forbid that I be found there!
In this world there is good and evil ...
But there is evil after this world
which is truly evil –
what is called "the middle."
It is death.
While we are in this world it is fitting
for us to acquire the resurrection,
so that when we strip off the flesh
we may be found in rest
and not walk in the middle.
For many go astray on the way."

Speaking of "walking in the middle", in Philip Pullman's fictional trilogy [The Golden Compass](#)/[The Subtle Knife](#)/[The Amber Spyglass](#) there is a scene where the heroes go to the "land of the dead", a hell-like underworld where the dead, separated from their souls, are detained indefinitely, a fate worse than death. The scariest part is that while stuck in this "land of the dead" it seems you could seek forever and yet never find!

(60) <He saw> a Samaritan who was trying to steal a lamb while he was on his way to Judea.

He said to his disciples:

"That (person) is stalking the lamb."

They said to him:

"So that he may kill it (and) eat it."

He said to them:

"As long as it is alive he will not eat it,
but (only) when he has killed it
(and) it has become a corpse."

They said to him:

"Otherwise he cannot do it."

He said to them:

"You, too, look for a place for your repose
so that you may not become a corpse
(and) get eaten."

Translation by Hans-Gebhard Bethge et al.
from The Fifth Gospel, 1998

The following, from The Nag Hammadi Library's
"*Authoritative Teaching*" 29-33 may represent an expanded dissertation based on this allegory from Thomas.

"The adversary spies on us, lying in wait ...wishing to seize us, rejoicing that he might swallow us. For he places ...before our eyes, things which belong to this world...love of money, pride, vanity, envy, beauty of body...greatest of these...ignorance and ease. Now all such things the adversary prepares beautifully and spreads out before the body, wishing to make the mind of the soul incline toward one of them and overwhelm her ... But the soul- she who has tasted these things- realized that sweet passions are transitory. She has learned about evil: she went away from them... she learns about her light... And she learns about her depth and runs into her fold, while her shepherd stands at the door... She gave her body to those who had given it to her, and ... the dealers in bodies sat down and wept because they were not able to do any business with that body... They did not realize that she has an invisible spiritual body, thinking, 'we are her shepherd who feeds her.'" But they did not realize that she knows another way, which is hidden from them. This her true shepherd taught her in Knowledge."

(61) Jesus said, "Two will rest on a bed:
the one will die, and the other will live."
Salome said, "Who are you, man, that you...
have come up on my couch and eaten from my table?"
Jesus said to her,
"I am he who exists from the undivided.
I was given some of the things of my father."
< ... > "I am your disciple."
< ... > "Therefore I say,
if he is destroyed he will be filled with light,
but if he is divided, he will be filled with darkness."

Jesus said, "Two will rest on a bed:the one will die, and the other will live."

The Treatise On The Resurrection

"the visible members which are dead shall not be saved, for only the living members which exist within them...arise."

The Second Treatise of the Great Seth

"I did not die in reality but in appearance"

Apocalypse of Peter

"since the body is the substitute...what they released was my incorporeal body."

Salome said, 'Who are you, man, that you...have come up on my couch and eaten from my table?'

translation: Jesus! You ain't nothin' but a hound dog!

Jesus said to her,

"I am he who exists from the undivided. I was given some of the things of my father."

The Gospel of Philip

"life and death...are brothers of one another.

They are inseparable. ... But those who are exalted above the world are indissoluble, eternal."

"I am your disciple."

translation: Salome says, "but you're my hound dog!"

"Therefore I say, if he is destroyed he will be filled with light"

The Apocryphon of James

"for the Kingdom of God belongs to those who put themselves to death"

"but if he is divided, he will be filled with darkness."

The Dialogue of the Savior

"Strive to rid yourselves of anger and jealousy...so that you will not lead your spirits and your souls into error."

(62) Jesus said, "I disclose my mysteries
to those [who are worthy] of [my] mysteries.
Do not let your left hand know
what your right hand is doing."

translation by Marvin Meyer
THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS
The Hidden Sayings of Jesus, 1992

"I disclose my mysteries to those who are worthy of my mysteries."

Not all are ready to know,
or care to know the truth.
Many believe ignorance is bliss.

In the movie *THE MATRIX*, after the hero learns that the reality he knew was only a fantasy, he is given the option of taking a blue pill or red pill. One will allow him to remember what he has learned, the other will cause him to forget, but allow him to go back to living the fantasy. Which will you choose?

"Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."

Sounds like Jesus would have been
a hell of a piano player!

The U.S. Government seems to have taken this left hand/right hand thing to mean secretly backing both sides in a war, so no matter who wins, they'll have some control.

A politician once said,
"A bird needs a right-wing and a left-wing to fly".

This saying is about making a distinction between those who participate only in the outer mysteries and those who have been initiated into the inner mysteries. Those uninitiated (left hand) must be kept in the dark regarding those things, which only the fully initiated (right hand) can properly comprehend. The five fingers of the right hand may also represent the five Gnostic rites, while the five fingers of the left hand are merely mirror images, which do not unlock the hidden powers of the rituals.

I think this could also mean that even within the same "body", different parts have different purposes.

Note:
The right hand and left hand come together
(two made One)
when you fold hands in prayer.

(63) Jesus said,
"There was a rich man who had much money.
He said, 'I shall put my money to use
so that I may sow, reap, plant, and
fill **my** storehouse with produce,
with the result that I shall lack nothing.'
Such were his intentions, but that same
night he died.
Let him who has ears hear."

Lyrics from the pop song "*Ironic*"
by Alanis Morissette
"won the lottery,
died the next day"

Even the "best laid plans of mice and men" seldom go as planned, but because this rich man's only concern is for earthly riches for himself, he seems destined for failure. He has a problem with his priorities. He has no concern for his lack of Spiritual Knowledge and no concern for others.

This "rich man" was probably the prototype for Charles Dickens' character, Scrooge, who was also (at least initially) spiritually empty. Just like Dickens' Christmas Carol, this parable also promotes a sense of urgency. There is only a limited time available in which to find the kingdom.

We are given "windows of opportunity"
through which we must act
to bring forth the Kingdom.
Like Wolfram's Percival, in the Grail legend,
if we miss our opportunity,
it may not return
or return only after great difficulty.

The phrase: "Such were his intentions",
reminds me of a joke.

Q: "What makes God laugh?"
A: "People who make plans!"

(64) Jesus said, "A man had received visitors. And when he had prepared the dinner, he sent his servant to invite the guests.

He went to the first one and said to him, 'My master invites you.' He said, 'I have claims against some merchants. They are coming to me this evening. I must go and give them my orders. I ask to be excused from the dinner.'

He went to another and said to him, 'My master has invited you.' He said to him, 'I have just bought a house and am required for the day. I shall not have any spare time.'

He went to another and said to him, 'My master invites you.' He said to him, 'My friend is going to get married, and I am to prepare the banquet. I shall not be able to come. I ask to be excused from the dinner.'

He went to another and said to him, 'My master invites you.' He said to him, 'I have just bought a farm, and I am on my way to collect the rent. I shall not be able to come. I ask to be excused.'

The servant returned and said to his master, 'Those whom you invited to the dinner have asked to be excused.' The master said to his servant, 'Go outside to the streets and bring back those whom you happen to meet, so that they may dine.' Businessmen and merchants will not enter the places of my father."

This parable shows Jesus' trademark reversal / paradox. God's dinner party is not for aristocrats, socialites, and businessmen, but for those in the streets.

Compare Matthew 22:1-6 and Luke 14:16-24

Note that Matthew's version is much more violent than either Thomas' or Luke's. He has the people being invited attacking and killing the messengers (borrowed from "The Wicked Tenants") and he has the poor guy without proper dinner attire getting "bound hand and foot" and banished to the darkness, to "the place of wailing and grinding of teeth". It should be no wonder that Matthew is a perennial favorite of the "fire and brimstone" preachers!

(65) He said, "There was a good man who owned a vineyard. He leased it to tenant farmers so that they might work it and he might collect the produce from them. He sent his servant so that the tenants might give him the produce of the vineyard. They seized his servant and beat him, all but killing him. The servant went back and told his master. The master said, 'Perhaps he did not recognize them.' He sent another servant. The tenants beat this one as well. Then the owner sent his son and said, 'Perhaps they will show respect to my son.' Because the tenants knew that it was he who was the heir to the vineyard, they seized him and killed him. Let him who has ears hear."

Compare Mark 12:1-9,
Matthew 21: 33-41,
and Luke 20:9-16

This parable portrays God as an absentee landlord,
who's only interested in collecting the rent!

As written, this parable seems to have an agenda to:

- * promote God as distant and wholly other
- * promote Jesus as "Son of God"
- * predict Jesus' own death
- * predict apocalyptic vengeance of the wrath of God
(synoptics only)

The title of "wicked tenants" does seem appropriate for the temple aristocracy and/ or the Herod royals.

I can imagine Jesus saying something like:

The vineyard was originally left in the good hands of tenant farmers, but squatters assumed control of the vineyard and laid false claims to its ownership. These squatters did not acknowledge the true master. When the master sent ambassadors to try to get these unruly residents to change their ways, his message was misinterpreted and ignored. His messengers were discredited and eventually even murdered by these truly wicked tenants.

The messengers here would refer to past prophets and especially John the Baptist.

(65) cont.

Or maybe "The Wicked Tenants" are really the wicked tenets.

Webster's Dictionary defines "tenet" as "a principle, belief or doctrine held by a person or group"

These are some of the wicked tenets:

- *Always look out for #1.
- *You only go around once.
- *Everyone does it.
- *I'm not hurting anyone but myself.
- *It's not my job.
- *Close enough for government work.
- *There is no connection between my professional life and my private life.
- *There is just not enough to go around.
- *I don't deserve to be loved.
- *One person can't make a difference.
- *One vote can't make a difference.
- *There is no God.
- *There is always tomorrow!

These wicked "tenets" take over the field of the mind and do not want to give anything back to God. They don't realize that He is the source of everything. They beat and mistreat and often kill his messengers.

(66) Jesus said,
"Show me the stone
which the builders have rejected.
That one is the cornerstone."

Psalm 118:22

"The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone."

Isaiah 28:16-17

"I am laying a stone in Zion ...
a precious cornerstone...
I shall use justice as a plumb-line
and righteousness as a plummet"

Compare Mark 12:10

Matthew 21:42

Luke 20:17-18

Ephesians 2:20

1Peter 2:7

This quote of Psalm 118 underlines the purpose of the Jesus movement to realign the trajectory of Israel's religious thought and to lay a new foundation for an emerging Kingdom, a "temple" without walls, large enough to contain the entire Universe.

Did anyone else ever wonder what shape Jesus' "cornerstone" was? I imagine it as anything but square!

The irony is that Saying (66) could be referring to *The Gospel of Thomas* itself. *The Gospel of Thomas* was rejected by those who "fixed" the canon, but is now the cornerstone for Jesus' sayings material!

(67) Jesus said,
"If one who knows the all
still feels a personal deficiency,
he is completely deficient."

The Book of Thomas the Contender
"He who has known himself
has at the same time already achieved
knowledge about the depth of the all."

The Sentences of Sextus: 333
You cannot receive understanding
unless you know first
that you possess it.
In everything there is again this sentence.

The Gospel of Truth: 24
For the place where there is envy and strife
is deficient, but the place where there is unity
is Perfect. Since the deficiency came into being
because the Father was not known, therefore
when the Father is known, from that moment on
the deficiency will no longer exist.

(70) Jesus said,
"That which you have will save you
if you bring it forth from yourselves.
That which you do not have within you
will kill you if you do not have it within you."

If you have known the All and still feels deficient this is because you have not come to know yourself. You do not recognize that you already possess all that you need to be complete. It is within you, but you must find it and bring it forth.

It is often easier to believe that
Life has somehow short-changed us,
or "dealt us a bad hand",
than to admit that it is we, ourselves,
who are lacking in
motivation,
dedication,
or imagination.

(68) Jesus said,
"Blessed are you
when you are hated and persecuted.
Wherever you have been persecuted
they will find no place."

Men hate change.
Men hate things they don't understand.
When men react to you this way,
interpret it as a sign
that you have found your place,
and they have not.

(69a) Jesus said, "Blessed are they
who have been persecuted within themselves.
It is they who have truly come to know the father.

(2) "When he finds, he will become troubled. "

On your path to Enlightenment,
you must pass through turbulence.
Old demons die hard.

(69b) Blessed are the hungry,
for the belly of him who desires
will be filled.

Spiritual "hunger" is analogous to "thirst" quenched with "living water"

(74)

"there are many around the drinking trough,
but there is nothing in the cistern."

John 4:14

"whoever drinks the water I shall give
will never again be thirsty"

(70) Jesus said,
"That which you have will save you
if you bring it forth from yourselves.
That which you do not have within you
will kill you if you do not have it within you."

Excerpt from

A Gnostic Book Of Hours: keys to inner wisdom

by June Singer, 1992, HarperSanFrancisco

"That which you do not have within you will kill you if you do not have IT within you." What is "IT"? Can it be that very JUDGE whom we seek outside of ourselves and despair of finding? Can it be the one who knows the darkness, the internalized dark god of the underworld? It has been said that the Kingdom of Heaven is within. Can it be that the Kingdom of Hell is within also? If the bright god, the creator and ruler of the universe and a thousand suns, is within us, is not the dark god, the denizen of chaos, the destroyer of love ... and of sanity - is not that god within us also? If we project these gods outside of ourselves and say they are beyond us and too great for us to comprehend, then surely they will destroy us. But if we learn to know them as aspects of ourselves and if, knowing them, we learn to accept them, they will not kill us but will save us. For true knowledge (gnosis) lies in this awareness: that all that you see outside of yourself is also within, and whatever you discover within, that also is in the world.

(71) Jesus said,
"I shall destroy this house,
and no one will be able to build it."

Compare:
Mark 14:58,
Mark 15:29,
Matthew 26:61,
Matthew 27:40,
Acts 6:14,
and John 2:19

If the "house" to be destroyed represents a house of worship or temple, maybe the reason "no one will be able to build it" is because the new house of worship is invisible. It is "the Kingdom of the Father spread out upon the earth and men do not see it" (113). I believe Jesus wanted to do away with the temple, because he saw it as unnecessary for forgiveness of sins and taught a direct experience of God unmediated by priests and burnt offerings.

It is also possible that the "house" represented the earthly body, which cannot be resurrected. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom" (1 Corinthians 15:50). Only the Spirit survives!

from rabbinical literature quoted in
Timothy Freke's
The Illustrated Book of Sacred Scriptures
1998, Quest Books

Berakot 1 5B; Bereshit Rabbah 9; Zahar to Terumah

"Just as the womb takes in and gives forth again, so the grave takes in and will give forth again."

"the body... An encumbering garment which falls away at death...leaves the true man free to rise into the light of the heavenly life."

(72) A man said to him, "Tell my brothers
to divide my father's possessions with me."
He said to him, "O man, who has made me a divider?"
He turned to his disciples and said to them,
"I am not a divider, am I?"

Luke 12:13-14

"Someone in the crowd said to him,
'Teacher, tell my brother
to divide the family property with me.'
He said to the man,
'Who set me over you to judge or arbitrate?'

Exodus 2:11-14 "One day after Moses was grown up, he went out to his own kinsmen and observed their labours. When he saw an Egyptian strike one of his fellow-Hebrews, he looked this way and that, and seeing no one about, he struck the Egyptian down and hid his body in the sand. Next day when he went out, he came across two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one who was in the wrong, 'Why are you striking your fellow-countryman?' The man replied, 'Who set you up as an official and judge over us?' "

One of the recurring themes in *Thomas* is that of "making the two into One", combining, not dividing.

But, I also believe that any external judge must be exterminated, as was the Egyptian slave driver.

All judgment must come from within. As Jesus says:

"Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?" (Luke 12:57)

(73) Jesus said,
"The harvest is great
but the laborers are few.
Beseech the Lord, therefore,
to send out laborers to the harvest."

(72) A man said to him, "Tell my brothers
to divide my father's possessions with me."
He said to him, "O man, who has made me a divider?"
He turned to his disciples and said to them,
"I am not a divider, am I?"

Abundance may be the theme common to
both Saying (72) and Saying (73).

In Saying (72),
within the Kingdom of the Father,
dividing possessions becomes meaningless,
because of sheer abundance.
There is enough!
There is no need to be greedy!

In Saying (73),
the harvest is so great,
the workers cannot get it all in!
[sounds like last year's tomato garden]
The Kingdom is large enough,
but it is those who can "see" it
that are in short supply!

In the inverted logic of the Kingdom,
when you make the two into One
you don't end up with half as much,
but twice as much!

(74) He said,
"O Lord, there are many around the drinking trough,
but there is nothing in the cistern."

Jeremiah 2:13

"My people have committed two sins:
they have rejected me, a source of living water,
and they have hewn out for themselves cisterns,
cracked cisterns which hold no water."

Confucius *ANALECTS*

"All around I see Nothing
pretending to be Something,
Emptiness pretending to be Fullness."

Arab Proverb

"I hear the clacking of the mill,
but I do not see any flour"

Matthew 7:9 (NRSV-1989)

" Is there anyone among you who,
if your child asks for bread,
will give a stone?
Or if the child asks for a fish
will give a snake?"

Excerpt from Chuck Meyer's book

DYING CHURCH LIVING GOD

2000, Northstone

"Megachurches...end up serving
the same stones and serpents
to those who desperately desire
the spiritual equivalent of bread and fish."

(75) Jesus said,
"Many are standing at the door,
but it is the solitary
who will enter the bridal chamber."

(49) Jesus said,
"Blessed are the solitary and elect,
for you will find the kingdom.
For you are from it,
and to it you will return."

Matthew 6:6 (as quoted in *Gospel of Philip*)
He said, "Go into your [singular] chamber
and shut the door behind you,
and pray to your father who is in secret."

I believe that the "mirrored bridal chamber"
is where the Gnostic initiate is to look into the
mirror to see God looking back at him.

As Meister Eckhart (1260-1328) said:
"The eye with which I see God
is the same as that with which he sees me.
My eye and the eye of God are one eye,
one vision,
one knowledge, and
one love."

'Dialogue of the Savior' (11), (12)
Matthew said,
"Lord, when I speak, who is it who listens?"
The Lord said,
"It is the one who speaks who also listens, and
it is the one who can see who also reveals."

The Acts Of John
I am a lamp to you who behold Me,
I am a mirror to you who perceive Me,
I am a door to you who knock at Me,
I am a way to you, a wayfarer.
You have Me for a couch; rest upon Me.

(76) Jesus said, "The kingdom of the father is like a merchant who had a consignment of merchandise and who discovered a pearl. That merchant was shrewd. He sold the merchandise and bought the pearl alone for himself. You too, seek his unfailing and enduring treasure where no moth comes near to devour and no worm destroys."

Matthew 13:45,46

"Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like this. A merchant looking out for fine pearls found one of very special value; so he went and sold everything he had and bought it."

Matthew 6:19

"Do not store up for yourselves treasure on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and thieves break in and steal..."

Luke 12:33

"Provide for yourselves... never-failing treasure in heaven, where no thief can get near it, no moth destroy it."

The pearl of extreme value is knowing your purpose/living on purpose.

The place where no moth or rust can destroy is "within you"

While discussing pearls, I can't help but think of *The Hymn Of The Pearl*, the apocryphal Gnostic myth which tells of the hero's journey to find the jewel, which is, here in Joseph Campbell's retelling, essential to completing your life's adventure.

(76) cont.

Excerpt from Reflections on the Art of Living
A Joseph Campbell Companion,

Selected and Edited by Diane K. Osbon,
1991, HarperCollins

"The hero's journey always begins with the call. One way or another, a guide must come to say, "Look, you're in Sleepy Land. Wake. Come on a trip. There is a whole aspect of your consciousness, your being, that's not been touched. So you're at home here? Well, there's not enough of you there." And so it starts. The call is to leave a certain social situation, move into your own loneliness and find the jewel, the center that's impossible to find when you're socially engaged. You are thrown off-center, and when you feel off-center, it's time to go. This is the departure when the hero feels something has been lost and goes to find it. You are to cross the threshold into new life. It's a dangerous adventure, because you are moving out of the sphere of the knowledge of you and your community. When one thinks of some reason for not going or has fear and remains in society because it's safe, the results are radically different from what happens when one follows the call. If you refuse to go, then you are someone else's servant. When this refusal of the call happens, there is a kind of drying up, a sense of life lost. Everything in you knows that a required adventure has been refused. Anxieties build up. What you have refused to experience in a positive way, you will experience in a negative way."

"If what you are following, however, is your own true adventure, if it is something appropriate to your deep spiritual need or readiness, then magical guides will appear to help you. If you say, "Everyone's going on this trip this year, and I'm going too," then no guides will appear. Your adventure has to be coming right out of your own interior. If you are ready for it, then doors will open where there were no doors before, and where there would not be doors for anyone else. And you must have courage. It's the call to adventure, which means there is no security, no rules.

...

You come then to the final experience of discovering and making your own that which was lacking in the place from which you departed.

...

Bringing back the gift to integrate it into a rational life is very difficult.

...

You do not have a complete adventure unless you do get back. There is a time to go into the woods and a time to come back,

... the final thing is knowing, loving, and serving life in a way in which you are eternally at rest.

...

Even though you are active out there in the world, within you there's a point of complete composure and rest. When that's not there, then you are in agony."

(77) Jesus said,
"It is I who am the light
which is above them all.
It is I who am the all.
From me did the all come forth,
and unto me did the all extend.
Split a piece of wood, and I am there.
Lift up the stone, and you will find me there."

John 8:12
"I am the light of the world."

Exodus 3:14 "...tell them that "I AM" has sent you..."

"I AM" (Consciousness), the Light of the World!

John 10:30,31
"The Father and I are one."
"Once again they picked up stones to stone him."

"Lift up the stone, and you will find me there."
"Cleave the wood, and I am there."
(Oxyrhynchus Papyrus)

Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyers,
The Power Of Myth, 1988, Doubleday
"Jesus...realized...he and what he called the Father were one.
...the basic Gnostic and Buddhist idea is that that is true of
you and me as well."

Meister Eckhart (1260-1328)
"All that a man has here externally in multiplicity
is intrinsically One. Here all blades of grass, wood, and stone,
all things are One. This is the deepest deep."

The Wisdom Of The Zen Masters
compiled by Timothy Freke,
1998, Journey Editions
When a student asked Master Guangfan,
"What am I?"
he replied,
"What is there in the entire Universe
that is not you?"

(78) Jesus said,
"Why have you come out into the desert?
To see a reed shaken by the wind?
And to see a man clothed in fine garments
like your kings and your great men?
Upon them are the fine garments,
and they are unable to discern the truth."

alternate translation

GTh(78), Jesus said [about John], "Why have you come out into the desert?
To see a reed [swaying] in the wind? And to see a man dressed in soft clothes,
like your rulers and great men? They are dressed in soft clothes,
and they are unable to discern the truth."

Compare Matthew 11:7-10
and Luke 7:24-28

from *The Five Gospels*, Robert W. Funk,
Roy W. Hoover and *The Jesus Seminar*,
1993, A Polebridge Press book.

"These two rhetorical questions employ vivid images with an ironic edge: a "reed shaken by the wind" is a person without firm convictions (very unlike John the Baptist): persons dressed in soft clothing belong in Kings' courts or aristocratic parlors (not in the austere desert, where John lived and worked.)"

from *The Book Of Hymns The Dead Sea Scriptures*
Theodor H. Gaster, 1976, An Anchor Press Book
[some believe the author to be John the Baptist]

"I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord,
because, in a dry place,
Thou hast set me beside a fountain.
...by Thine unswerving truth...
Thou hast delivered me...
from the congregation of them
that seek smooth things....
They have plotted...to make Thy people
exchange for smooth words,
Thy teaching which Thou hast
engraven on my heart...
Thou hast made me a symbol of truth
and understanding to all whose way is straight....
men that are foolish at heart
cannot understand these things,"

(79) v. 1 A woman from the crowd said to him,
"Blessed are the womb which bore you
and the breasts which nourished you."
v. 2 He said to [her], "Blessed are those
who have heard the word of the father
and have truly kept it.
v. 3 For there will be days when you (pl.) will say,
'Blessed are the womb which has not conceived
and the breasts which have not given milk.'"

Jeremiah 15:10
"Alas, my mother, that you gave birth to me."
Jeremiah 20:14,15
"The day my mother bore me,
may it be ever unblessed."

Gospel of the Egyptians

"Salome said, 'How long will men die?'
The Lord replied,
'As long as you women have children'.
Salome replied,
'I did well then, by not having children'.
The Lord said, 'Eat every plant, but do not eat the one which contains bitterness'.

Mark 13:17,19

"Alas for women with child in those days,
and for those who have children at the breast!"
"For those days will bring distress such as there has never been before since the beginning of the world which God
created, and will never be again."

Verse 1 seems to exist just so Jesus can turn it over and stand it on its head in verse 3. Taken together, verses 1 and 2 seem to be an admonition against worshipping either Jesus himself, or his "Mother". The part I find most interesting, however, is verse 3, paralleled in Luke 23:29. This seems to be a pessimistic prophecy of difficult times to come, although not necessarily the "end times" of Mark 13:17 (paralleled in Matthew 24:19 and Luke 21:23)

Saying (79) could be read as a prediction of famine, plague, war, or persecution, but it may have just functioned as a warning to "would-be" women disciples of the hardships involved during prolonged travel for evangelism without the comforts of home, husband, children, and family.

Saying (79) seems to fit with Saying (16) "I bring ... fire, sword, and war" and with Saying (55) "hating family", but virtually contradicts Saying (22) "the infants being suckled are like those who enter the kingdom".

Hopefully the troubled times ahead are only a phase which must be passed through to eventually "be astonished, reign and rest" (2).

(80) Jesus said,
"He who has recognized the world
has found the body,
but he who has found the body
is superior to the world."

Similar to (56) Saying (80) reminds me of Leonardo da Vinci's idea of our planet, Mother Earth, "the world", as an organism, analogous to the human "body", the microcosm and the macrocosm mirroring one another. This was brought up in a column by evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould. He explains that Leonardo theorized that rivers and waterways functioned as a "circulatory" system for the earth's body, etc.

The idea here in Saying (80), however, is that the Kingdom transcends the world and is, therefore, superior to it.

(81) Jesus said,
"Let him who has grown rich
be king,
and let him who possesses power
renounce it."

(81) JESUS said,
"The one who has become rich should reign.
And the one who has power should renounce."
translation by Bentley Layton
the gnostic scriptures, 1987

(110) Jesus said, "Whoever finds the world
and becomes rich, let him renounce the world

The Greek version of Saying (2)
and *Gospel Of The Hebrews*
"...when he is astonished, he will reign;
when he reigns he will rest."

Renouncing power and renouncing the world does
not necessarily mean to take a vow of poverty
and celibacy. (Thank God!)

It does mean you have to get rid of worldly attachments which divide the heart and mind.
Even if you are still biologically attached to the world, you must be capable of becoming mentally
detached from it in order for your Spirit to ascend.

Once "rich" in Spirit,
you reign over all your demons.
You achieve rest, however,
not by tightly "gripping the reigns"
but by renouncing your power,
"letting go".

(82) Jesus said,
"He who is near me is near the fire,
and he who is far from me is far from the kingdom."

(10) Jesus said,
"I have cast fire upon the world,
and see, I am guarding it until it blazes."

Luke 12:49
"I have come to set fire to the earth,
and how I wish it were already kindled!"

Jeremiah 5:14
"I shall make my words a fire in your mouth,
and it will burn up this people like brushwood!"

FIRE has been a metaphor for God for as long as man has been able to control fire and sit around the campfire sharing stories. Here, Jesus is comparing his work (helping the Kingdom to emerge) with fire.

*it's contagious

*it helps you to see in the dark

*it provides warmth in the cold

*it kills dis-ease

*it consumes the weeds

*it refines gold

In *Thomas*, Jesus mentions "fire" on this earth as an analogy for "spreading" the Kingdom, not as a means to destroy this earth in an apocalyptic mushroom cloud and most certainly not "hellfire" as an eternal punishment.

(83) Jesus says:

- (1) "The images are visible to humanity,
but the light within them is hidden in the image.
- (2) The light of the Father will reveal itself,
but his image is hidden by his light."

translation by Bethge et al. The Fifth Gospel,
1998, Trinity Press International

Treatise On The Resurrection

"He...swallowed the visible by the invisible,
and gave us the way of our immortality"

The "images visible to man" are the worldly bodies, but "the light of the Father" within them is Spirit. Human beings can see the external forms, but they can't see the invisible "light" within these forms.

This "light of the Father" is a completely different type of "light". Rather than making things visible, it makes them invisible!

The Father's "light" will be "revealed" to those with "eyes that see", but His form is not visible to human beings because it is a cloak of invisibility.

With man, we see forms,
but not the light within them.
But in the case of the Father,
we can "see" His light,
but not His form.

(84) Jesus said,
"When you see your likeness,
you rejoice.
But when you see your images
which came into being before you,
and which neither die nor become manifest,
how much you will have to bear!"

(22)" when you fashion eyes in the place of an eye
and a hand in place of a hand,
and a foot in place of a foot,
and a likeness in place of a likeness,
then you will enter the kingdom."

Looking into a mirror
you can see an image of God,
because you were made in His image.
But when you enter the mirrored bridal chamber,
and you see your Spiritual twin staring back at you,
you realize that you are not just flesh,
but also have eyes, hands, and feet,
all fashioned from eternal Spirit.

(85) Jesus said,
"Adam came into being
from a great power
and a great wealth,
but he did not become worthy of you.
For had he been worthy,
he would not have experienced death."

Although Adam had a soul, and knew right and wrong, he had not yet "evolved" to the point where he was able to undergo metamorphosis into Spirit, which is eternal and beyond duality. The Spirit within him remained scattered.

As "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny", we too must pass through an "immature" form in which our soul governs our being. However, as our Spirit awakens to its potential, the soul becomes merely the shell or cocoon within which our new Spiritual being transforms. Once our transformation is completed, the shell of what was our soul can be discarded.

(86) Jesus said,
"The foxes have their holes
and the birds have their nests,
but the son of man has no place
to lay his head and rest."

Sly ones hide down in the ground,
Shrewd ones, high in the sky.
But, out in the open,
the truth can be found.
Out here,
is no place to lie.

The "son of man" can also be translated as the
"son of Adam", thus like the previous saying, (85), where Adam is not "worthy", here in Saying (86),
the "son of Adam" is also unable of achieve the Gnostic goal of repose/rest.

(87) Jesus said,
"Wretched is the body
that is dependant upon a body,
and wretched is the soul
that is dependent on these two."

(29) Jesus said,
"If the flesh came into being
because of spirit,
it is a wonder.
But if spirit came into being
because of the body,
it is a wonder of wonders.
Indeed, I am amazed at how this great wealth
has made its home in this poverty.'

(112) "Jesus said,
"Woe to the flesh that depends on the soul:
woe to the soul that depends on the flesh"

The Gnostics taught that man's make-up
is that of a three-fold nature.

BODY (HYLIC): natural, biological, driven by evolutionary success.

SOUL (PSYCHIC): governed by moral standards, ethical behavior, lives in a world of duality, emphasis on good and evil

SPIRIT (PNEUMATIC): the state where all are One, state that transcends all duality, even life and death

Rather than dwell on the "wretchedness" of the "despised" body, I view the Spiritual "Pneumatic"
as the "fully mature state" and the other states as necessary evolutionary steps toward that end.

(88) Jesus said,
"The angels and the prophets
will come to you
and give to you
those things you (already) have.
And you too,
give them those things which you have,
and say to yourselves,
'When will they come and take what is theirs?'"

Prophets and even angels are merely "psychic".

They contain Spirit, but the Spirit within them remains scattered. They have not undergone the "transition" whereby the soul is transformed into a living Spirit.

What they will "take" back is the physical body and the cocoon shell of what used to be the soul.

The visible body, and the soul of duality, will be replaced by the invisible Spirit, swallowed up like matter and light disappearing into a black hole.

(89) Jesus said,
"Why do you wash the outside of the cup?
Do you not realize that he who made the inside
is the same one who made the outside?"

Matthew 23:25-27

"Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
You clean the outside of a cup or a dish, and
leave the inside full of greed and self-indulgence!
Blind Pharisee! Clean the inside of the cup first;
then the outside will be clean also.
Alas for you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
You are like tombs covered with whitewash;
they look fine on the outside, but inside
they are full of dead men's bones and corruption."

Luke 11:39

"But the Lord said to him,
'You Pharisees clean the outside of cup and plate;
but inside you are full of greed and wickedness.
You fools! Did not he who made the outside make
the inside too?"

It ain't what's on the outside that matters!
It is about being consistent, no duplicity.
Outer appearances are meaningless;
if the inside is rotten the whole thing stinks!

Even within ourselves, our heads and our hearts must work together. We must not be divided!

Excerpt from HEART

A Personal Journey Through Its Myths and Meanings

By Gail Godwin, William Morrow, 2001

"Most of us, whether we admit it or not, still live our lives under the influence of the great rift between heart and head that fractured seventeenth-century thought. This rift, concurrent with the Industrial Revolution of the next two centuries, utterly changed the landscape of human relations, splitting us into divided kingdoms of intellect versus feeling, provables versus intangibles, and a host of other "either/ or" dualities.

Wholeness, and *wholeheartedness*, are concepts to be achieved all over again, but this time on a sturdier level of consciousness.

(90) Jesus said,
"Come unto me,
for my yoke is easy and my lordship is mild,
and you will find repose for yourselves."

Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to me all who are weary
and whose load is heavy;
I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me,
for I am gentle and humble-hearted;
and you will find rest for your souls.
For my yoke is easy to wear, my load is light"

Like Saying (16), where Jesus brings not peace,
but a sword, this saying also uses puzzling imagery.
Here, Jesus brings not freedom, but a yoke!
A yoke is an instrument of slavery or bondage for
a beast of burden!

But maybe the yoke represents a bridge
between the twin souls of heart and mind.
Making the two into One.

You can't ride two horses (47), but with a yoke
you can harness the two into One.

(91) They said to him,
"Tell us who you are
so that we may believe in you."
He said to them,
"You read the face of the sky
and of the earth,
but you have not recognized
the one who is before you,
and you do not know
how to read this moment."

Luke 12:54-56

He also said to the people, "When you see clouds gathering in the west, you say at once, "It is going to rain," and rain it does. And when the wind is from the south, you say, "It will be hot," and it is. What hypocrites you are! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but cannot interpret this fateful hour.

(91)

"you have not recognized the one who is before you"

First, I would like to state what this saying does not mean to me. It does not mean that Jesus is the long-awaited "Messiah" standing before the disciples unrecognized.

I believe "the one who is before you" is your spiritual twin, the reflection that can be found looking back at you in the mirrored bridal chamber.

It is the uninitiated seeker who asks this apparition, "Who are you?".

If you do not recognize your twin as part of your self, then you are still "blind". You may search high and low, yet not find what is right in front of you, unless you have "eyes to see".

Knowing "how to read this moment"
is to experience the present
as communion with God,
not looking to the past
for predictions of the future.

(92) Jesus said,
"Seek and you will find.
Yet, what you asked me about in former times and
which I did not tell you then, now I do desire to tell,
but you do not inquire after it."

(38)
Jesus said,
"Many times have you desired to hear
these words which I am saying to you,
and you have no one else to hear them from."

This saying points out that you must acquire basic understanding before you can comprehend advanced concepts. As with a newborn, first you see dimly, then gradually, little by little, things come into sharper focus.

It tells the seeker not to become complacent with what they already know, but continue to learn and acquire a deeper level of Knowledge and Wisdom.

Once you have climbed this hill, then you can navigate the next section of road beyond it.

(93) <Jesus said, >
"Do not give what is holy to dogs,
lest they throw them on the dung heap.
Do not throw the pearls [to] swine,
lest they ...it [...]."

Matthew 7:6
"Do not give dogs what is holy;
do not throw your pearls to the pigs;
they will only trample on them,
and turn and tear you to pieces."

This saying points out the reality that not everyone is concerned with seeking the truth. Those who are not seeking the truth will not "see" the truth, so don't waste time presenting these "animals" with something they won't understand!

I think it is necessary to distinguish between "seeds" to be sown everywhere and "holy pearls" which are only for those who already "have eyes to see".

In Saying (9), the "seeds" are scattered on the road, on the rock, and on thorns. The sower was obviously not too picky about where he scattered these seeds.

In Saying (5), however, "that which was hidden from you", the advanced teachings, or "pearls", are only for those of you who have already recognized "what is in your sight".

(5) Jesus said, "Recognize what is in your sight,
and that which is hidden from you will become plain
to you. For there is nothing hidden which will not become manifest."

(94) Jesus said,
"He who seeks will find,
and he who knocks will be let in."

Matthew 7:8 (and Luke 11:9)
"ask, and you will receive;
seek, and you will find;
knock, and the door will be opened to you."

Jeremiah 29:13
"when you seek me, you will find me"

(92) Jesus said,
"Seek and you will find."

(2) Jesus said,
"Let him who seeks continue seeking until he finds."

This is a promise that if you are searching for truth, and will continue to make an effort to find truth, you will be successful!

(95) Jesus said,
"If you have money, do not lend it at interest,
but give it to one from whom you will not get it back."

This saying contrasts the difference between mere "lending" and true "giving". The practical application is that when you realize there is enough to share, you can give freely, not like lenders and merchants, who expect a return or profit on their investments or products.

This distinction can also be applied to contrast the soul and the Spirit. Your soul, which is a judge of good and evil, belongs to the chief archon god, Yaldabaoth. Your soul is merely on loan to you, as they will "come and take what is theirs"(88). Your Spirit, however, is a gift from your true Mother and Father and is yours to keep forever.

(96) Jesus said,
"The kingdom of the father
is like a certain woman.
She took a little leaven,
concealed it in some dough,
and made it into large loaves.
Let him who has ears hear."

Wisdom grows.

Saying (96) is one of several sayings that emphasize the expansive nature of the kingdom.

In Saying (9) seeds "produce 120 per measure",
In Saying (10) fire is guarded "until it blazes",
In Saying (20) the mustard seed,
"the smallest seed", becomes "a great plant".
In Saying (96) yeast rolls rise up and expand.

The expansive nature of the kingdom makes me wonder if a modern interpretation of this metaphor might read something like:

The Kingdom of the Father is like:
a pot of ham and beans,
or red beans and rice,
or a crock-pot full of chili.
Satisfy your hunger.
Experience Fullness!

"Leaven" or "yeast", which was considered "unclean", is used as a metaphor for the Mother's hidden Wisdom. Bread is the feminine half of the Eucharistic meal. Associating the unclean with God is both unorthodox and paradoxical. This is why I believe this saying is unquestionably authentic.

Excerpt from Jesus and the Lost Goddess by
Timothy Freke and Peter Gandy,
Harmony Books, 2001

"According to Christian Gnostics, there are many allusions to the mystical marriage in the Jesus story. The most important is the Eucharist ritual, which is based on the ancient rites of the mystical marriage in the Pagan Mysteries. In the Mysteries of Euleusis, the Goddess Demeter was represented by bread and the Godman Dionysus by wine."

(97) Jesus said,
"The kingdom of the father is like a certain woman who was
carrying a jar full of meal. While she was walking on the road,
still some distance from home, the handle of the jar broke
and the meal emptied out behind her on the road.
She did not realize it; she had noticed no accident.
When she reached her house,
she set the jar down and found it empty."

Gospel of Eve

I am thou and thou art I,
and wheresoever thou art I am there
and I am sown in all,
from whencesoever thou willest
thou gatherest Me; and gathering Me,
thou gatherest Thyself."

I believe Sayings (96) and (97) are related to the Gnostic creation myth. The woman is Sophia and the "leaven" which is concealed (96), the ground "meal" which is spilled (97), as well as the seeds "sown" in the *Gospel of Eve*, all represent the "divine spark" or "Spirit" which she has scattered (accidentally?) throughout the Universe.

Although this "divine spark" is scattered throughout this creation full of awe-inspiring beauty and wonder, the "Spirit" within nature remains scattered. It is not until Jesus awakens Knowledge of the Father, that man can transform into a fully Spiritual being.

I think of this "divine spark" as what was known in the original *STAR WARS* mythology as "the Force", now represented by a cellular inclusion known as "mitichlorions" in the more recent *STAR WARS* pre-quels.

Philip Pullman's fictional trilogy [The Golden Compass...](#) has a similar "elementary particle" referred to as "dust" which is drawn to conscious beings.

The woman spilling "the meal" out behind her makes me think of James spilling the magic "beans" in "James and the Giant Peach" where they transform everything they touch.

Yeah, Sure, Right! The handle broke off and all the meal spilled out, but yet she "did not realize a trouble"! This reminds me of the also very hard to believe, but often-told story of a woman who delivers her baby, but didn't realize she was pregnant!

Could Sophia have been "pregnant" with Creation yet telling the Father she "didn't know how it happened"?

If Sophia conceived without the Father's consent would this pregnancy not be an "accident"?

(98) Jesus said,
"The kingdom of the father is like a certain man who wanted
to kill a powerful man. In his own house he drew his sword
and stuck it into the wall in order to find out whether
his hand could carry through.
Then he slew the powerful man."

From Frank Herbert's *Dune*,
the teachings of the Bene Gesserit:
"The mind commands the hand, and the hand obeys.
The mind commands itself, and meets resistance."
"Fear is the Mind killer"

Slay the demons in your own house (mind),
before you set out to slay demons in the world.
Before you wage a war and go into battle, you must have sufficient resources and they must be battle-
ready. You must be sure those wielding weapons are trained and tested, fully prepared to carry through
with their tasks. Like the Boy Scout motto says,
"Be prepared"

Who the enemy is here is unclear. Possibly the archons of Yaldabaoth, as in the introduction to
Hypostasis of the Archons, where the author quotes Paul: "the great apostle – referring to the 'authorities
of darkness' (Colossians 1:13) - told us that 'our contest is not against flesh and blood; rather, the
authorities of the universe and the spirits of wickedness' (Ephesians 6:12)"

The enemy here may lie within us. It could represent previously acquired beliefs, improper world-views,
or bad habits, which cloud perception and prevent the New World from becoming reality.

The Four Agreements

By Don Miguel Ruiz, 1997, Amber-Allen Publishing

"The Judge in the mind is wrong because the belief system, the Book of Law, is wrong. The whole dream
is based on false law. Ninety-five percent of the beliefs we have stored in our minds are nothing but lies,
and we suffer because we believe all these lies."

(99) The disciples said to him,
"Your brothers and your mother
are standing outside."
He said to them,
"Those here who do the will of my father
are my brothers and my mother.
It is they who will enter the kingdom of my father."

Mark 3:31-35

"Then his mother and his brothers arrived; they stayed outside and sent in a message asking him to come out to them. A crowd was sitting round him when the word was brought that his mother and brothers were outside asking for him. 'Who are my mother and my brothers?' he replied. And looking round at those who were sitting in the circle about him he said, 'Here are my Mother and my Brothers. Whoever does the will of God is my Brother and Sister and Mother.' "

Matthew 12:47-50

"Someone said, 'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside; they want to speak to you.'
Jesus turned to the man who brought the message and said, 'Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?' and pointing to his disciples, he said, 'Here are my Mother and my Brothers. Whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my Brother and Sister and Mother.' "

Note that the biological "brothers" and "mother" are standing outside, but it is "those here", who do God's will, who are spiritual "Brothers" and "Mother".

(55) Jesus said, "Whoever does not hate his father and his mother cannot become a disciple to me. And whoever does not hate his brothers and sisters and take up his cross in my way will not be worthy of me"

(101) Jesus said, "whoever does not hate his father and his mother as I do cannot become a disciple to me. And whoever does not love his Father and his Mother as I do cannot become a disciple to me. For my earthly mother gave me death, but my true Mother gave me life."

Those within the Kingdom are your true family; don't bother with those who loiter around outside the door, for like the pharisees and scribes in Saying (39), "They themselves have not entered, nor have they allowed to enter those who wish to."

If "no prophet is accepted in his own village; no physician heals those who know him" (31), then it should be no surprise that those who think they know us best, our family members, will reject our prophecies and healings. You are not spiritually related to those who have not yet evolved out of the animal kingdom and into the Kingdom of the Father.

(100) They showed Jesus a gold coin and said to him,
"Caesar's men demand taxes from us."
He said to them,
"Give Caesar (*god of earth*) what belongs to Caesar,
give God (*archon god of sky*) what belongs to God,
and give me (*of the unseen Kingdom*) what is mine."

(Italics mine)

Mark 12:13-17
(also Matthew 22:17-22 and Luke 20:22)

"A number of Pharisees and men of Herod's party were sent to trap him with a question. They came and said, 'Teacher, we know you are a sincere man and court no one's favour, whoever he may be; you teach in all sincerity the way of life that God requires. Are we or are we not permitted to pay taxes to the Roman emperor? Shall we pay or not?' He saw through their duplicity, and said, 'Why are you trying to catch me out? Fetch me a silver piece, and let me look at it.' They brought one, and he asked them, 'Whose head is this, and whose inscription?' 'Caesar's,' they replied. Then Jesus said, 'Pay Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and God what belongs to God.' His reply left them completely taken aback."

Saying (100) seems to refer to an unseen middle way, involving neither the angry "god" of the sky, nor the "divine" ruler of the earth.

This is also similar to Sayings (3) and (113) with the Kingdom neither "in the sky" nor "in the sea", but "spread out" on the land, yet unseen by many.

This is also how I interpret Saying (86), with the "son of Adam" in the middle, searching for rest, neither nesting with the birds of the sky, nor with the foxes, holed up in the earth.

Giving Jesus "what is his" may mean giving him your undivided attention if you have not yet awakened to your true identity, or it may mean giving of your Spirit, which is essentially already one and the same with all Spirit. It is all water of the same ocean. But in giving, you will also receive, thus circulating and replenishing your Spirit.

alternate translation

(101) Jesus said,
"whoever does not hate his father and his mother
as I do cannot become a disciple to me.
And whoever does not love his Father and his Mother
as I do cannot become a disciple to me.
For my earthly mother gave me death,
but my true Mother gave me life."

(55) Jesus said,
"Whoever does not hate his father and his mother
cannot become a disciple to me. And whoever does not hate his brothers and sisters and take up his cross in my way
will not be worthy of me."

(99) The disciples said to him,
"Your brothers and your mother are standing outside." He said to them, "Those here who do the will of my father are
my brothers and my mother.
It is they who will enter the kingdom of my father."

The Dialogue of the Savior

"Whatever is born of truth does not die.
Whatever is born of woman dies."

Heavenly Father = source of Knowledge,
"not born of woman",
Invisible Spirit

True Mother (Sophia) = source of Wisdom,
Mother of Zoë (Life), responsible for
scattering Spirit throughout Creation

Father + Mother = ETERNAL LIFE (Spirit)

-----but-----

earthly father + earthly mother = DEATH

This produces that which is "born of woman",
which is that which dies, the earthly body and
a soul owned by archons who wish to enslave you.

(102) Jesus said,
"Woe to the pharisees,
for they are like a dog
sleeping in the manger of oxen,
for neither does he eat
nor does he let the oxen eat."

Aesop's Fable 702

"A wicked dog was lying in a manger that was full of hay. When the cattle came to eat, it would not let them but bared its teeth in a threatening expression. The cattle then said to it, 'It is unfair for you to begrudge us the natural appetite that you do not have. For it is not your nature to eat hay, and yet you prevent us from eating it.' "

(93) "Do not give what is holy to dogs..."

(39) Jesus said,

"The pharisees and the scribes have taken the keys of knowledge (gnosis) and hidden them. They have not entered, nor have they allowed to enter those who wish to. You, however, be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves."

The lone carnivore is denying access
to the many hungry herbivores,
access to "food"
which only they can "digest".

To some,
the Word is Life-giving "food";
to others,
it's just dog bedding.

I find it interesting that the only manger in
The Gospel of Thomas has a dog in it, not a god.

Could the birth narratives have resulted from a dyslexic transmission error?

(103) Jesus said,
"Fortunate is the man who knows where the brigands will enter,
so that he may get up, muster his domain, and arm himself before they invade."

(21) "Therefore, I say, if the owner of a house knows that the thief is coming, he will begin his vigil before he comes and will not let him dig through into his house of his domain to carry away his goods. You (pl.), then, be on your guard against the world. Arm yourselves with great strength lest the robbers find a way to come to you, for the difficulty which you expect will surely materialize."

Matthew 24:43 (also Luke 12:39-40)

"Keep awake, then, for you do not know what day your Lord will come. Remember, if the householder had known at what time of night the burglar was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. Hold yourselves ready, therefore, because the Son of Man will come at the time you least expect him."

In the synoptics it is the "Son of Man" who comes "like a thief in the night". This imagery has certainly been responsible for more than a few childhood nightmares! I, too, was "taught to fear Jesus, in a small town" like John "Cougar" Mellencamp.

In *Thomas*, however, it is "the brigands", who are trying to break in. These "brigands" which I interpret as dark forces, archon/demons, want to steal peace from those who have found repose.

In the synoptics, the focus is on the time when the "thief" is coming, while in *Thomas* it is the place where the break-in will occur. This goes along with the apocalyptic expectations in the synoptics for a future "Son of Man" in what fundamentalists call the "second coming".

quote from Harold Bloom's Omens of Millennium,
1996, Riverhead Books

"This idea is borrowed from Zoroaster's 'Saoshyant', a future benefactor or messianic figure, ...who will prevail against all evil forces, and who will resurrect the dead. Before Zoroaster, all religions envisioned time as being cyclic, perpetually to return upon itself. From Zoroaster on, apocalyptic expectations flourished...Gnosticism, then and now, in my judgment rises as a protest against apocalyptic faith"

I read Saying (103) as a message to be on the watch, ever vigilant, never content to believe you are so safe you don't need every security precaution, because "the difficulty you expect will surely materialize" (21) in this world or perhaps only in your mind/psyche.
When defenses are down, the demons will attack!

(104) They said to Jesus,
"Come, let us pray today and let us fast."
Jesus said,
"What is the sin that I have committed,
or wherein have I been defeated?
But when the bridegroom leaves the bridal chamber,
then let them fast and pray."

(6) His disciples questioned him and said to him,
"Do you want us to fast?
How shall we pray? ... "

(14) Jesus said to them,
"If you fast, you will give rise to sin for yourselves;
and if you pray, you will be condemned;
...you will harm your Spirit"

Jesus' response in Saying (104) is, "What sin have I committed? What have I failed to do?" In this context fasting and praying are associated with paying penance for sins by those concerned with saving their souls. Worrying about your soul will harm your Spirit!

As I understand the message in *Thomas*, the Kingdom is neither "black" nor "white". It is neither "heaven" nor "hell". Those within it are neither "saved" nor "damned", neither "saints" nor "sinners". You must make the two into One.

To "fast and pray" after the bridegroom leaves, does not sound authentic to me. This again, sounds like Jesus predicting his own death.

(105) Jesus said,
"He who knows the father and the mother
will be called the son of a harlot."

alternate translation

(105) Jesus said,
"He who knows the Father and the Mother
will be called the Son of a Whore."

Although we can't rule out a reference to rumors of Jesus' illegitimacy, I interpret this through the light of the Gnostic creation myth.

Our Mother, Sophia, conceived apart from the Father, thus as in *Thunder Perfect Mind*,
She is a virgin and She is a whore. Life is indeed a paradox!

"For I am the whore and the holy one.
I am the wife and the virgin.
I am the mother and the daughter.
... I am the barren one and many are her sons."
Thunder Perfect Mind

If we know our Heavenly Father
and acknowledge our kinship with our Mother Sophia,
we have made the two One,
combining Father Sky and Mother Earth.

alternate translation

(106)

Jesus said,

"When you make the two one,
you will become the Sons of Adam,
and when you say,
'Mountain, move away,'
it will move away."

Gospel Of Philip

"When Eve was still in Adam
death did not exist.

When she was separated from him
death came into being.

If he again becomes complete
and attains his former self,
death will be no more."

Note: The original Adam was not male, but male and female.

The goal here is a "transition into newness",
to synthesize a new man,
that is made not of matter,
nor of soul,
but of a new form of Life,
which has the ability to remold the other two.

(107) Jesus said,
"The kingdom is like a shepherd
who had a hundred sheep.
One of them, the largest, went astray.
He left the ninety-nine sheep
and looked for that one until he found it.
When he had gone to such trouble,
he said to the sheep,
'I care for you more than the ninety-nine.'"

I interpret the lost sheep as Sophia (Wisdom) and the many worlds of matter She created. She "went astray" by creating Life without the Father's "knowledge". This Life (Zoë) She created was also without "knowledge" of the identity of Her true Father. The Father sought out this missing portion of Himself to restore Himself to Fullness, and by bringing us "Knowledge" we were reunited with Him. The Father was surprised, however, by how much He loved this Creation, once lost, now found.

There is a common theme in "The Prodigal", "The Lost Sheep", and also in *Hymn Of The Pearl*, you must be "lost" before you are "found".
"Seek and you will find" Luke 11:9

In the traditional interpretation of "The Lost Sheep" we are to identify with the lost sheep.
(Matthew 18:12-14 and Luke 15:4-7)

I was taught in Sunday school that this showed we have "gone astray" and need to be "saved" and that God isn't satisfied with 99 out of 100!

I believe that although Jesus saw his mission as being to those "outside the flock", he did not attempt to bring them back into the flock, but gave them an opportunity to create new life right where they were.

Therefore, I would prefer an alternate interpretation where we are the "seeker", where the "lost sheep" is "Knowledge", and we are the ones who must seek, find and "trouble" to bring Knowledge to rest within ourselves.

As for the "sheep" being the fattest or the largest, like the "fish" in Saying (8), I think this may have been added by those who wanted to interpret this as "Israel", God's favorite. Like the geography-challenged King of Siam in *The King And I*, Israel probably assumed they were the largest nation because they were God's chosen people.

(108) Jesus said,
"He who will drink from my mouth
will become like me.
I myself shall become he,
and the things that are hidden
will be revealed to him."

The Gospel Of Philip

"man receives nourishment...from the mouth"

"For it is by a kiss that the perfect conceive and

give birth. For this reason we also kiss one another. We receive conception from the grace which is in one another."

"And the companion of the Saviour is Mary Magdalene. But Christ loved her more than all the disciples and used to kiss her often on her mouth."

"Greet ye one another with a holy kiss"

Romans 16:16, 1 Corinthians 16:20,

2 Corinthians. 13:12, 1 Thessalonians. 5:26

"Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity"

1 Peter 5:14

The Odes Of Solomon

"come all ye thirsty, and take the draught;

and rest by the fountain of the Lord.

For it flows forth from the lips of the Lord."

These sayings certainly point to an oral tradition rather than a written one.

(108) Jesus said, "He who will drink from my ...
will become like me."

(1) "Whoever finds ... will not experience death"

I've always thought the whole idea of the elusive Holy Grail, believed to be Christ's goblet used at the Last Supper, and its magical ability to give eternal life, was probably derived from someone's literal (mis-) interpretation of Sayings (108) and (1).

They seemed to miss the point that
the magic in is the sayings.

(109) Jesus said,
"The kingdom is like a man who had
a hidden treasure in his field without knowing it.
And after he died, he left it to his son.
The son did not know (about the treasure).
He inherited the field and sold it.
And the one who bought it went plowing
and found the treasure.
He began to lend money at interest
to whomever he wished."

Matthew 13:44:

"The Kingdom of heaven is like treasure
which a man found buried in a field.
He hid it again, and in joy
went and sold everything he had,
and bought the field"

Proverbs 2:4:

"(Wisdom) and understanding...
dig for her as buried treasure"

The Kingdom's treasure cannot be inherited, cannot be stolen. Even if you own the field, you won't find the treasure, 'til your hands get dirty. It is the workingman who finds the treasure, not the legal heir. Although this worker is not the landowner, selling everything he owns becomes a small price to pay for the treasure he has found. He's bought the dusty book at the garage sale and found the bookmark inside was the winning lottery ticket!

In the canonical gospels, Jesus' words of Wisdom are buried among false interpretations, miracle stories, and other scenes invented to promote Jesus as the 'Messiah'. There, Jesus' words are buried treasure. In *Thomas*, however, the pearls are strung together, free of other distracting elements, to produce a simple elegance. Once hidden, now they are uncovered and plainly visible for anyone with "eyes to see".

(110) Jesus said,
"Whoever finds the world and becomes rich,
let him renounce the world."

(81) Jesus said,
"Let him who has grown rich be king, and let him who possesses power renounce it."

Meister Eckhart (1260-1328)

"What is required of a man to dwell in God? ...

First, to renounce himself and all things,"

"it is a process of 'letting go'...

to achieve the freedom and the stillness"

"When the mind is free to listen to God,

the body relaxed and the demands of the senses stilled, we see God in one single image."

Finding the world and acquiring wealth requires intelligence,
but this is not the destination. It may be a stepping-stone,
but not a stopping point.

Finding the world and becoming rich can be wonderful,
but this luxury may become a trap, preventing evolution of the Spirit.

To "renounce" in a card game is to change suits.
When you have played out of a particular suit,
you "renounce" it and must switch to another suit.
Renouncing the world involves
changing our focus to another area,
from worldly endeavors to Spiritual endeavors.

Renounce clubs for spades.
Renounce diamonds for hearts.

(111) Jesus said,
"The heavens and the earth
will be rolled up in your presence.
And the one who lives from the living one
will not see death."
Does not Jesus say,
"Whoever finds himself is superior to the world?"

The heavens and earth "rolled up" is not apocalypse, not afterlife, but an astral journey while still in this life. This is a "dry run", to spread your wings, to show that you are not limited to this world. This is rehearsing a vision, to embed a dream-like image. This is "acquiring the resurrection" while you still live. It is for those who have found God within and thus have self-Knowledge. This was part of the Gnostic rite of redemption. After passing the test questions of the gatekeepers, you were free to ascend beyond the heavens to the living Father.

alternate translation

(112) Jesus said,

"Woe to the body that depends on the soul;
woe to the soul that depends on the body."

Both "body" and "soul" are to be considered inferior to "Spirit".

I interpret "the body which depends on the soul" as the stereotypical "church lady". I interpret the "soul" as the "judge", therefore this person judges everything and everyone as "good" or "evil", "sacred" or "damned", "in-group" or "out-group". This person is so busy judging others they don't develop the Spirit within themselves. Their focus is on dividing, therefore they have trouble seeing any unity. They make the "One" into "two"!

I interpret "the soul which depends on the body" as the stereotypical "not-so-bright bodybuilder". I see this as a saying against an unbalanced worship of the male/female form. This devotion to Adonis /Aphrodite, focusing only on the outer physical forms can blind you to the development of the Spirit within. This can result in Hedonism with selfish-pleasure as its only goal.

(112) Jesus said,
"Woe to the flesh that depends on the soul;
woe to the soul that depends on the flesh."

A quite different interpretation from
A Gnostic Book Of Hours: keys to inner wisdom
by June Singer, 1992, HarperSanFrancisco

"Woe to the flesh that depends upon the soul ... suggests that...In this world we need to function as pragmatists, resolving...issues, refusing to allow the darker powers, to take possession of us. If we obsessively fix our eyes upon the soul, we can easily overlook things that need attention in the material world. With these out of sight, we exist in ignorance, and we depend on the soul to rescue us somehow from the results of our blindness."

"Woe to the soul that depends upon the flesh"

"The soul is equally vulnerable when she depends upon the material world to justify her existence.... she must keep a respectful distance from the concerns of the body and materiality, lest she once more fall under the power of the archons, who make their home in the house of our ignorance."

(113) His disciples said to him,
"When will the kingdom come?"
<Jesus said, >
"It will not come by waiting for it.
It will not be a matter of saying
'here it is' or 'there it is.'
Rather, the kingdom of the father
is spread out upon the earth,
and men do not see it."

FIND IT

original song lyrics-08/1999

Verse 1:

The kingdom, it is spread out on the land,
But, man, well, he just can't find it,
Open up your heart,
Open up your mind,
Then your gonna find,
The Spirit will lead you,
You can't say "Look!", "Here it is!",
Can't say "Hey!", "It's got to be over there!",
For the Kingdom, it is within us,
We're sons and daughters of the living Father,

Verse 2:

If it's true, the Kingdom's in the sky,
Then if birds fly, they're flying ahead of you
If they say the Kingdom's in the sea,
Then the fish are gonna be,
getting there before you, too,
Can't say "Look!", "Here it is!",
Can't say "Hey!", "It's gotta be over there!",
For the Kingdom, it is within us,
We're sons and daughters of the living Father,
(Repeat Chorus)

Chorus:

Seek it out and you will find it,
Seek it out, now go you'll find it,
Seek it out and yes, you'll find it,
It's inside of you,
It's inside you too,

Bridge:

God's word on your lips,
God's love in you heart,
God's word in your mouth,
God's love in your heartbeat,
The Kingdom it's outside of you,
but it's inside you too.
It's inside You, too,

(Repeat 1st verse, Chorus, and fade)

(114) Simon Peter said to him,
"Let Mary leave us,
for women are not worthy of life."
Jesus said,
"I myself shall lead her
in order to make her male,
so that she too may become a living spirit
resembling you males.
For every woman who will make herself male
will enter the kingdom of heaven."

Whatever the exact wording of the original saying may have been, I think the overall meaning is pretty clear. **In the kingdom, women are equal to men.**

In the original wording, maybe the text was:
"In the kingdom, women shall become equal to men."

Either way this is a concept St. Peter's Church still doesn't understand!

That this one saying is said to be "a later addition" and thus to be ignored seems to be a recurring problem. Jesus' disciples and the early church obviously didn't understand it, didn't believe it, and didn't practice it.

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