



# Judas

*Marvin W. Meyer*

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Judas Iscariot has been demonized as the quintessential traitor, the disciple who betrayed his master for the infamous thirty pieces of silver. But the recent sensational discovery and publication of the long lost *Gospel of Judas*, with its remarkable portrayal of Judas Iscariot as the disciple closest to Jesus, raises serious new questions. Was Judas the only member of the Twelve who truly understood Jesus? Did Jesus secretly collaborate with Judas to set in motion the series of events that would redeem all of humankind? In search of answers, Marvin Meyer, one of the world's leading experts on the *Gospel of Judas* presents a collection of the earliest accounts of Judas, which together paint a fuller portrait of this most enigmatic disciple.

This book presents the essential texts that deal with the figure of Judas, including New Testament writings, Gnostic documents, and other early and later Christian literature. These are the earliest known testimonies about Judas and include selections from the gospels of *Mark*, *Matthew*, *Luke*, and *John*, the *Acts of the Apostles*, and relevant passages from Paul. The centerpiece of the book is the *Gospel of Judas*, followed by excerpts from three other Gnostic texts—the *Dialogue of the Savior*, the *Concept of Our Great Power*, and the "Round Dance of the Cross"—which may shed new light on the figure of Judas. A series of additional writings on Judas produced over the centuries provide glimpses of the vilification of Judas and the emergence of anti-Semitic themes.

Meyer offers evidence of traitors before Judas—the Genesis story of Joseph's brothers who sold him into slavery, the duplicitous friend of the poet in *Psalm 41*, and Melanthius the goatherd in Homer's *Odyssey*—all of which raise the question of whether the story of Judas Iscariot could be simply a piece of religious fiction derived from earlier stories.

*Judas* provides a rich collection of original sources that tell the story of Christianity's most infamous figure, offering the fullest understanding of Judas Iscariot's undeniable importance in the climax of Jesus's life.

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