

Is This Manuscript on Jesus' Youth Reliable?

Recently, German researchers have set the world ablaze with the announcement that they have decoded what they consider to be the oldest manuscript in existence to detail the life of a child.

Some have viewed this as a historic revelation, while others view it as yet another attack on Christianity.

As reported by Fox News, "The papyrus manuscript dates back more than 1,600 years to the 4th or 5th century. The document had been stored at a library in Hamburg, Germany, as no one believed the document was of any significance."

Yet this did not stop Prof. Lajos Berkes and a team of researchers from searching through the texts to find what was hidden within them.

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"The fragment is of extraordinary interest for research," Berkes says. "On the one hand, because we were able to date it to the 4th to 5th century, making it the earliest known copy. On the other hand, because we were able to gain new insights into the transmission of the text.

"It was thought to be part of an everyday document, such as a private letter or a shopping list, because the handwriting seems so clumsy," Burkes adds in the news release. "We first noticed the word Jesus in the text. Then, by comparing it with numerous other digitized papyri, we deciphered it letter by letter and quickly realized that it could not be an everyday document."

The part of the discovery that has caught the eye of many, and thusly made them doubt the validity of the manuscript, was that it came from the gospel of Thomas, “an apocryphal book that was not included in the Bible.”

Daily Wire personality and program host Michael Knowles, a devout Catholic, was none too impressed with this announcement and voiced his doubt in an X post.

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headline:

– Michael Knowles (@michaeljknowles) June 12, 2024

“What happened: someone found another copy of a gnostic text that the church has known about and rejected as apocryphal and heretical since the second century” Knowles wrote.

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“Even a passing familiarity with the gnostic texts suffices to affirm the wisdom of the councils that rejected them,” Knowles wrote in response to a question of the church’s intentions behind rejecting texts such as the gospel of Thomas.

The press release from the researchers certainly holds some questionable content for all who believe in Jesus, such as the beginning of the tale “vivification of the sparrows,” from Jesus’ childhood in which He turns 12 clay sparrows into live birds.

This story from the gospel of Thomas is described in the press release stating: “Jesus plays at the ford of a rushing stream

and molds 12 sparrows from the soft clay he finds in the mud. When His father Joseph rebukes Him and asks why He is doing such things on the holy Sabbath, the five-year-old Jesus claps His hands and brings the clay figures to life.”

For many such as Mr. Knowles, it will take more than decoded text from a rejected apocryphal gospel to convince them of the accuracy and authenticity of these writings.

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