



The Kabbalistic Words of Jesus in the Gospel of Thomas: Recovering the Inner-Circle Teachings of Yeshua

By Dr. Lewis Keizer

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I have written this book because the many scholarly translations of The Gospel of Thomas available in books and online do not correctly interpret the logia. Neither literal translations nor attempts to clarify through paraphrase have been adequate. As a result, readers blissfully create their own interpretations of the sayings oblivious to which are Gnostic interpolations, which are authentic, and what the original Aramaic davarim of Yeshua really taught.

This book is for people who want to know what the sayings really meant to Yeshua, and what they can mean for twenty-first century people.

The key to understanding the teachings of Yeshua is familiarity with the thought-world of Jewish messianic mysticism upon which they were based. These included the Jewish wisdom tradition, prophetic and apocalyptic schools, and Merkabah mysticism. Much of this was transmitted orally and in private to close disciples by a Rav or Master of Israel.

Oral transmission of mystical knowledge or manda (Greek gnosis) concerning the inner meaning of Scripture was known as kabbalah (hlbq), “receiving” that which was spoken from the mouth of the teacher into the ear of the disciple. Although little of it was written until the medieval period for the sake of initiatic secrecy, scholars can restore much of the kabbalistic tradition of Yeshua’s era through sources like the Sepher Yetzirah, Sepher Ha-Razim, and the haggadah preserved in the Mishna, Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud, and the vast literature of the inter-testamental period known loosely as the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament. These were the Holy Scriptures of Essenes, Zadokites, and other messianic Jews of the period, including Yeshua and his disciples. The Psalms they chanted in worship and Shabbat Seder were not just those of our Old Testament, but the messianic Psalms of Solomon and others preserved in Enochian and apocalyptic scripture. A study of this forgotten literature allows modern scholars to reconstruct the oral kabbalah of Yeshua’s period.

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