



## Synopsis

The early Christian Church was a chaos of contending beliefs. Some groups of Christians claimed that there was not one God but two or twelve or thirty. Some believed that the world had not been created by God but by a lesser, ignorant deity. Certain sects maintained that Jesus was human but not divine, while others said he was divine but not human. In *Lost Christianities*, Bart D. Ehrman offers a fascinating look at these early forms of Christianity and shows how they came to be suppressed, reformed, or forgotten. All of these groups insisted that they upheld the teachings of Jesus and his apostles, and they all possessed writings that bore out their claims, books reputedly produced by Jesus's own followers. Modern archaeological work has recovered a number of key texts, and as Ehrman shows, these spectacular discoveries reveal religious diversity that says much about the ways in which history gets written by the winners. Ehrman's discussion ranges from considerations of various "lost scriptures" - including forged gospels supposedly written by Simon Peter, Jesus's closest disciple, and Judas Thomas, Jesus's alleged twin brother - to the disparate beliefs of such groups as the Jewish-Christian Ebionites, the anti-Jewish Marcionites, and various "Gnostic" sects. Ehrman examines in depth the battles that raged between "proto-orthodox Christians" - those who eventually compiled the canonical books of the New Testament and standardized Christian belief - and the groups they denounced as heretics and ultimately overcame. Scrupulously researched and lucidly written, *Lost Christianities* is an eye-opening account of politics, power, and the clash of ideas among Christians in the decades before one group came to see its views prevail.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

An insightful read to anyone interested in religious studies of the Abrahamic faiths. A must have!

But boy, what terrible editing. Constantly flipping back and forth--topics not presented in a unified way. But a great introduction.

It's a good overview of the earliest church's wide range of theologies and beliefs. Also illustrates the self-promoting nature of some of the leaders.

I love history books, and I love religious books, this brings those two together well. Gives great historical and cultural details.

It arrived before expected and in very good shape. It was just as presented in the explanation of appearance/usage. The subject matter is very thought-provoking!

Really like this. Excellent bibliography for further review. Good starting point for understanding how the faith got its start. Casts absolutely no doubt on my beliefs...actually enhances the "mystery of the faith".

This is a well written, clear argument that busts the modern myth that mainstream Christianity has always been mainstream. Early Christianity had many variations, conflicting doctrines, and unique scriptures that were mostly destroyed when mainstream Christianity destroyed competing views.

This is an extensive (yet not exhaustive) excellent overview of the wide variety of Gospels that were available after the death of Jesus : there were different interpretations on the life & death of Jesus and what it meant (hence a variety & sometimes contradictory Gospels). Some of the Gospels were authentic & others were forgeries, some were included in the New Testament & others excluded. The powers that be at the time (Constantinople & Roman Empire) decided on what is to be taught in the Church (hence the New Testament Gospels were chosen) & voting on the Divinity of Jesus (as some Gospels pronounced Jesus human & others Divine) and the Trinity of the Godhead. The

Gospels that did not make it where banned & their followers driven underground. This is a great introductory read on Early Christianity and how it was crafted the way it was & why?

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