

**The John Ankerberg Show  
presents**

**What About  
the  
Missing  
Gospels  
and Lost  
Christianities?**

**Transcript of a series with  
Dr. John Ankerberg,  
featuring  
Dr. Darrell Bock**

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# What About the Missing Gospels and Lost Christianities?

Dr. John Ankerberg with Dr. Darrell Bock

## Introduction

Today on The John Ankerberg Show, What about the “Missing Gospels and Lost Christianities” that archaeologists say they have now? Some scholars at Harvard, Princeton, and Yale claim that these lost Gospels and alternative Christian groups existed shortly after the time of Jesus and the apostles.

Further, these people claimed to be true Christians, but did not believe Jesus was God, nor did they believe in his resurrection from the dead. Some scholars claim that this new evidence indicates we must rewrite church history and give up traditional beliefs about Jesus, God, and the Bible. Is this true? What evidence refutes these views?

Today, you will find out. My guest is considered one of the top historical Jesus scholars in the world. He is Dr. Darrell Bock, research professor of New Testament studies at Dallas Theological Seminary in Dallas, Texas. He has appeared on ABC with Diane Sawyer, on NBC’s dateline with Stone Phillips, and with Bill O’Reilly on Fox. His new book “The Missing Gospels, Unearthing the Truth Behind Alternative Christianities,” examines these lost Gospels and tells why they are not true Christianity. He has also written 13 other books including, “Breaking the Da Vinci Code.”

We invite you to join us.

## Program 1

**Dr. John Ankerberg:** Welcome to our program. I'm talking with one of my favorite guests, Dr. Darrell Bock, and the topic that we're talking about is crucial. We're talking about the new school of theology in our universities. If you send your son, your daughter, to one of our American universities, they're going to hear the kind of things we're talking about today. And it's a broadside against Christianity. They're saying they've found some hard evidence that if you read that evidence, you need to rewrite Church history as we know it; that their evidence will be better than the Christian traditional evidence. That's wrong, and we're going to tell you why it's wrong today. And, Darrell, let's, first of all talk about, what are these "lost gospels"? People didn't know they were lost. We're actually talking about some strange-sounding books that were found in 1945 in Egypt. Tell us about those books and why they're so important.

**Dr. Darrell Bock:** Well, these books were found in Egyptian caves, and they were part of what is called a Gnostic Christian community. Now, I need to stop there and just say, what's Gnostic? Well, Gnostic is a belief that you have access to special knowledge. It's knowledge of mysteries. And *gnosis* is the Greek word for knowledge, so that's where it comes from. So it's a special type of Christian-

ity that really redefines the faith. It says that the creation is bad and evil from the start; there was not a good creation at the beginning. It says that God wasn't responsible for that creation, but rather underlings were. The actual word, technical term, is *demiurge*. It says that Jesus wasn't both human and divine. And in fact, what the Gnostics often said is that he was just divine; whereas today they tend to suggest that he's just human. And then finally, it suggests that salvation doesn't have anything to do with sin or our responsibility before God. It has everything to do with proper knowledge about yourself and that there's a divine spark within you. So out of those kinds of four areas, you see the differences between this kind of Christianity and Christianity as we've known it historically.

**Ankerberg:** Now people still aren't catching, though. What we're trying to say is what the professors at some of our schools.... Let me give them a quote from one of our profs at Yale, okay? And he's writing in books like this, this is Elaine Pagels at Princeton, "The Gnostic Gospels." We've got "The Secret Teachings of Jesus." If you go into any bookstore you'll find "The Gnostic Bible." You find the popular literature like "The Da Vinci Code" and the movies that are being made about these kinds of things.

They're giving the popular side of this scholarly discussion that we're talking about.

But here's a quote from Harold Bloom, Sterling Professor of Humanities at Yale, okay? He says that as a result of these books that we're talking about, these Gnostic library books, okay? "The Gospel of Thomas"—which is one of them— "spares us the crucifixion, makes the resurrection unnecessary, and does not present us with a God named Jesus. If you turn to the Gospel of Thomas, you encounter a Jesus who is unsponsored and free."

Now, my mother that might be listening to this program would be out there saying, "Why does that even concern me?" Well, if you have a son or a daughter that's going to these universities, they are saying, "The traditional Christianity that your parents raised you in is not historically true. This is the good stuff, that's the bad stuff. This stuff trumps that stuff, and you need to be free, you need to get a new Jesus." But like you say, you've got a new God, you got a new Jesus, you got a new problem—you don't have sin. And so, the fact is, that's what we're dealing with here, right?

**Bock:** Yes, it's a very different deal. I mean, Dan Brown said it best in "The Da Vinci Code." He basically said everything that the Church has told us about the first three centuries is false. And so they want to totally reconfigure the way we think about Christianity. And it not only involves your kids, it involves your neighbors. If you've got people next to you who don't know very much about Christianity and they're trying to hear about what true Christianity is, and you start talking about traditional Christianity, they'll go, "No, no, no, no, no. I just saw

on TV last week. That's not the way it really is. Let me tell you what the scholars are saying." And so this is a serious problem that is creeping rapidly into our culture, and is trying to reformulate the way everybody thinks about Christianity.

**Ankerberg:** Alright. Let's talk about the two sides. The new religious views, they're making the old traditional Christianity the bad guys, and they're the good guys, their Gnostic texts are the good guys. Before we talk about their stuff, let's talk about how Christianity came down to us. Because what they're saying is, "Look, you've got your books, but the fact is, we've got our books. And these books, they came out about the same time your books, and this is an alternative Christianity. This stuff is just as good as your stuff." That's not true, and their claims are exaggerated.

But let's talk about, first of all, how Christianity has come down to us. Just give us a quick outline. We're going to keep coming back to this, but so people that haven't even heard this before, how did it come down? Start with Jesus and work down through history.

**Bock:** Okay. In the beginning there was Jesus.

**Ankerberg:** Uh huh.

**Bock:** Let's start there.

**Ankerberg:** Uh huh.

**Bock:** And he went around and ministered and he ministered with the twelve, the apostles. Part of the reason he ministered with, and picked out, twelve was so that some of the people around him would be very, very familiar with what his ministry was all about. Because he was well aware, not long into his ministry, that he was likely headed to death, to die. He was going to

be crucified, he was going to be removed from the scene, and whatever he represented would have to be picked up and carried on, the baton would have to be passed, to these twelve.

Then from the twelve, we have writings, either that they are directly responsible for or people around them are responsible for. If we look at our four Gospels, we've got Matthew and John that go back, in each case, to one of these twelve. Or we've got Mark and Luke that go back, in the case of Mark probably to Peter and his circle; in the case of Luke to Paul and his circle. And Luke probably was well-circulated [and] knew many of these twelve. So we've got these apostolic roots.

But there's a practical problem. And that is, even though these Gospels were produced in the latter part of the first century, somewhere between 50 and 90 AD, they weren't functioning in the way we think of the Bible until at least the end of the second century, that we know. Individual books may have been cited and engaged, but they weren't working like the four Gospels like we think about today. So then the question becomes, "How do we know that this stuff is true?", and more importantly, "Before these books were being circulated so that people would know what the truth is, how did Christians know what to believe?"

Well, we know that from the little bits of material in our best historical sources, which are in these books, these little traditions that were passed on in memorable form; hymns that were sung so that theology would be remembered through singing; and rites that the Church participated in, like the Lord's Table, in which you reviewed the death of Jesus every time you went to the table. So these

things allowed the basic core of orthodoxy to be affirmed to people who, by the way, normally you didn't have books in this period—everything that you did, if you were an average person, on the street would normally have been done orally. You would have heard it.

**Ankerberg:** Let me see if I can frame it in Ankerberg terms here, and you correct me, okay? Today we have alternative Christianities. Everybody knows the Mormon Church, Jehovah's Witnesses, okay? The Mormon Church says Jesus was a God, the Holy Spirit was another God, and the Father was a third God. And, oh, by the way, if you join the Mormon Church, and follow their ways, you can become a God too. Okay? And they had extra texts that they would point to.

We, as Christians, if you want to refute that, you say, we've got this New Testament, okay? You point to a verse. Jehovah's Witnesses, they subtract from the New Testament, okay? Jesus is not a God, he's something in between God and man, okay? And they have to subtract verses from the New Testament. Now, Christians use the New Testament and the Old Testament to talk to them.

Now, take the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons and go back into the first 200 years of Christianity when you had no New Testament. What you're saying is, what did the people point to? How would they say, "If you've got another Jesus, you've got another god"? How in the world would those people, without a Bible, how would they talk to somebody?

And what you're saying is you start with the twelve. You've got Jesus, who makes his own declarations, and the twelve that are around him. The people

saw the twelve, I mean, they lived with him and walked with him for three years. The fact is, then Jesus passes off the scene and you've got these disciples, these apostles, preaching, and they're founding churches, and people knew what they said. And then you've got the disciples of the apostles and they're writing. And so you've got these historical links that the new religious people, they would sell their grandmother to get this kind of evidence. If our students are listening right here, they don't have this kind of evidence.

**Bock:** Exactly right.

**Ankerberg:** But we've got this kind of evidence, and it does go back. But you're saying it didn't come out in a book. The 27 books of the New Testament didn't come out in a package. Those were letters, each one of those were independent witnesses that were sent to congregations or to people. And they influenced those people; they were read out loud. This was not secret stuff; this was out loud stuff.

**Bock:** That's right. It's for the public.

**Ankerberg:** And so that was the corrective, and that was what people were talking about. Take it from there, now.

**Bock:** Well, basically, within those pieces that are being read in the churches, which are long—I mean, it would take a long time to go through the Gospel of Matthew, or the Gospel of Luke, and even to go through the letters of Paul; I mean, you know, that would take a while to listen—but embedded within them are pieces of traditional material. This is stuff that was passed on orally. These would be one- or two-verse bits of material, real small, real memo-

orable, laid out in parallelism so that you could remember it. Repeated over and over and over so you would remember it. It's a lot like memory verses today. You know how sometimes we give people memory verses: "If you'll remember these two things, you'll have at least a start on this topic." That's exactly what's going on, except it's going on orally. There isn't a Bible to point to to do it, it's just simply, "This is what we've passed on." Because we're coming out of a Jewish culture, and Jewish culture honored the oral word and the tradition.

**Ankerberg:** Alright, we're going to take a break. When we come back we're going to talk about one of the number one questions that's in "The Da Vinci Code" and on the minds of people that might be listening right now, and that is, "Well, listen, when you finally did get these letters, who picked them out? And, I mean, how did you guys know those were authoritative? And how did you put down these other books that this Gnostic library now has come out, and the new scholars are saying, 'hey, that's the stuff?'" Who made those decisions, and why do we believe what you're saying, Darrell, versus what the guys at Princeton, Yale and Harvard are saying? Okay? We'll talk about it when we come right back.

## BREAK

**Ankerberg:** Alright, we're back. We're talking with Dr. Darrell Bock, and we're talking about "Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew." Our professors at our universities, many of them, are talking about the lost Scripture books, so called,

the Gnostic books that have been found. And they're reading those and saying, "This is an alternative Christianity. It's something we didn't know before, and now, the fact is, we know it and this stuff is better than your traditional Christianity. And, oh, by the way, you don't need the God of the Bible, you don't need Jesus being God, you don't have a problem with sin. You've got a whole different religious view over here, and that's just as valid as what you guys are saying."

Darrell, we were talking about, the fact is, how the information came down from Jesus and the apostles. And we have core beliefs that have historical links all the way back. And let's drive that in. Why is that important? And then the next thing is, people want to know, when we finally did choose the New Testament and rejected other books, how did the church do that, and who were the people that were powerful enough to do that? Was that because of Constantine in 325 at Nicea? Or was that because of the church collectively understanding some of these core beliefs that had come down?

**Bock:** Well, the core beliefs are those things that were passed on in the oral tradition, verbally, literally mouth-to-mouth. I mean, Paul talks about in 1 Corinthians 15 how he passed on to the Corinthians what he himself received, and he's talking about something that came to him orally. And he's talking about the resurrection, so that if you look at 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, for example, you see that "Jesus was crucified according to Scripture, that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Now that is a real brief amount of material. That's what I'm talking about when I talk about a theo-

logical summary of a core belief: the theological summary is in three lines, and the core belief is the resurrection. And it's stated in a form that everyone can remember it.

**Ankerberg:** And the reason that's cool is that we know the book was written in 55 [AD] and he says it goes back before he got there.

**Bock:** Exactly right.

**Ankerberg:** So this goes right back to, if Jesus died about 30 AD, you're getting right back to Jesus.

**Bock:** In fact, you can almost push it all the way back to the 30s. And the reason I say that is that when Paul has his experience of Jesus on the Damascus Road, and the Lord says to him, you know, "I, the Lord, am speaking to you" in effect, he's got to know who that is and what he did, and why that would make a difference. Paul didn't have to struggle to process that. He knew immediately what had taken place, who it was he was seeing, and why it was significant he was seeing Jesus. If he's seeing Jesus, Jesus must be raised from the dead. So that puts you back into the 30s. So you're talking about perhaps THE peg of all the core beliefs going in right there. And out of the resurrection comes everything else that comes from Christianity.

**Ankerberg:** Why is information right back to the time of Jesus, why does that trump information that came up 100 years later, or 200 years later?

**Bock:** Well, your question pretty much says it, and that is that you've got a time gap in this new material. It doesn't go back to these early roots. No one claims that this material goes back that far.

**Ankerberg:** The material being in the Gnostic library.

**Bock:** The NEW material, that's right, the new Gnostic material. Not only does nobody claim that, but the most they can claim is, "Oh, well there were a lot of people taking the name of Jesus and identifying with it, calling themselves Christians, and they just had a wide variety of beliefs." But then the next question is, why should someone believe this Christianity—the new Christianity—versus the old, when that material is later, the theology is very different? I think it's very clear when you compare these two theologies to one another why, immediately, both sides kind of clash, because these were very distinct theologies. You can't believe what's going on over here and at the same time believe what's going on over there.

**Ankerberg:** Let's put it the other way. America is about 200 years old, okay, the fact is that if you have somebody writing about George Washington now, or if you go back to Thomas Jefferson and the boys who actually wrote then, and knew Washington, which one would you trust?

**Bock:** Well, you'd certainly have to start with the...

**Ankerberg:** Guys that were right on the scene.

**Bock:** Exactly. The guys who were right there who lived with them, who knew them, etc. And the thing here that's important is that we aren't dealing with a portrait over here, say the traditional Christianity, biblical Christianity, orthodox Christianity, in which something's being said, and then this is coming along side and elaborating it. That's not what's going on. What we've got is

orthodox Christianity over here saying certain things about God, Jesus, salvation, the redemption of the body, as well as the redemption of all the creation, what salvation involves. It involves the totality of what God created.

And over here you've got something very different. So it's not elaboration. Sometimes reflection over time does give you historical perspective. But what we've got going on over here are two completely different models of what's going on.

**Ankerberg:** Yes, and they are really different. In the weeks to come we're going to fill in this outline. When we say that they've got a concept of God, it is a completely different God than the one that Jesus is talking about, the one of the Old Testament, or the New Testament books.

**Bock:** Exactly right. Let me just give you an example. For example, in one of these books we have the "Pistis Sophia", a divine feminine, if you will, that's so popular in a lot of the discussion. She's responsible for the creation. She creates without consulting her consort. She didn't check with the chief, in other words.

**Ankerberg:** This is the stuff you find in the Gnostic library.

**Bock:** This is in the Gnostic library.

**Ankerberg:** This is the God over here you've....

**Bock:** That's exactly right. And she creates, and she botches the job. I mean, it's a messy creation. In fact, creation is so messed up that the creation itself, the material world, is evil from the beginning. And because it's evil from the beginning, it can never be redeemed. Well, that's not only different

from what Christianity taught, orthodox Christianity, that's also different from what orthodox Judaism taught and what the Old Testament taught.

**Ankerberg:** Which is going to be very important in the weeks to come.

**Bock:** Exactly right. Because, what they were teaching was that creation came directly from God, and that in the beginning it was good. It was very good. It wasn't evil. Matter is worth redeeming, because it's part of what God gifts us with when he places us in the creation. And then what happened is that we had the fall, we had sin, and that was our responsibility. That became our responsibility. See, in the Gnostic model, the responsibility is elsewhere. In the Christian model, we are responsible for how we act before God. That's a very big difference.

**Ankerberg:** And of course our guys today and even a lot of people back then, they didn't like that idea that I'm responsible before God for how I live and accepting his gift of salvation. And the fact is that, I mean, that's still with us today, if what we're talking about in Christianity is true, that's still on the table. You're face to face with Jesus and what you're going to do with him. Elaine Pagels, at Princeton, writes a little section about why she doesn't like the old Christianity. Okay? And she says, you know, it's kind of restrictive and you've got a different god and you can know yourself and you can kind of float with the spirit.

Well, that's the spirit of our age. Okay? We said we were going to tell them who picked out this information. We got down to Nicea. It's very popular in "The Da Vinci Code" and other books like "The Da Vinci Code" in popular

literature, and even some of the scholars are saying, "Look, the powerful won!" Okay?

**Bock:** Yes.

**Ankerberg:** "If it had been anybody else, we might have been reading those Gnostic gospels now, not the stuff you guys have in the New Testament. The powerful won because the Church leaders, they're the ones that put the screws down on this thing. And that's how we got what you're talking about." Why is that wrong?

**Bock:** Well, the mantra is that history is written by the winners. But sometimes the winners deserve to win. And in this particular case, the people who won deserved to win. Because what's going on is, these choices weren't made at Nicea. We know that by the end of the second century the four Gospels were being used in the church and other books were being excluded. We have quotes from Origen in the early part of the third century—200s—125 years before Nicea saying, "We don't read Thomas in the churches." And we have quotes from Irenaeus. In 180 he says "The Gospel is the fourfold Gospel"—that's Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. He says, Justin Martyr, in 155 says the Gospels are called "the memoirs of the apostles."

The reason these Gospels rose to the top was because, if I can say it this way, they came from the top. These were people who had walked with Jesus, talked with Jesus, and their assistants who had exposure to Jesus or exposure to the people who had exposure to Jesus. They put this material down. In some cases what they were recording were traditions that were circulating in the church, much like the pieces of

tradition that we talked about, these little individual stories about Jesus that make up the contents of our Gospels. And they wrote that down so the church would have it—to use the words of Muhammad Ali—“forever and ever and for all time.” And so that’s what’s going on. And so those works go all the way back, and they were chosen—it isn’t so much that..., well, they were chosen in one sense, but in another sense they were recognized. They were recognized for being the authentic tradition of Jesus that they claimed to be.

**Ankerberg:** We’re also going to show them, starting next week, why the Christians rejected these Gnostic books. Because you’re going to give us some sections that will curl their hair. If you had a little bit more, the fact is, it would curl yours, too. But the thing is, this stuff, it sounds so silly, and yet, like you say, if it wasn’t the scholars at Harvard and Yale and Princeton and University of North

Carolina, and in our schools in California that were saying this, it would just be hype, because the foundation is not there. But if our kids are going to the school, and they don’t have this information that we’re going to be talking about, the fact is they can fall to that, and they can leave Christianity because they don’t have a solid foundation.

So folks, we’re going to talk, next week, about the God that you find in these Gnostic books. And we’re going to compare that with this traditional material that we’ve been talking about that came down from Jesus, the apostles, the apostles of the apostles, and all the way down. We’re going to show you this, the historical links and the core evidence, all the many witnesses to the belief in God that we have, the person of Jesus, the work of Jesus and the problem that man actually has before God. So, please, please join us for that program.

## Program 2

**Ankerberg:** Welcome. We're talking about "The Secret Teachings of Jesus." If you go in any bookstore in our country, you're going to find these kinds of titles on the shelves. You have probably seen this. You probably didn't buy one, but the fact is it's there in all the bookstores, "The Gnostic Bible."

And the scholars at some of our major universities, Harvard, Yale, Princeton, University of North Carolina, out in the west coast, and so on, you've got scholars that are saying, "You see these books here? These are the lost Gospels." They were found in 1946 and they've been translated through the years, and they're coming out now. And the scholars are looking at that and saying it's an alternative Christianity. In fact, they're saying, "You know, we kind of like that."

But they've got a different God, a different Jesus, a different plan of salvation, a whole bunch of things that are different. And they're saying, "That's just as legitimate as what you guys have been saying." In fact, now they're turning it around and saying, "What you guys are saying is not as legitimate as that. We've got hard evidence over here."

They don't, and that's what I want you to hear about. Your kids who are going to university, even down in high school, they need to know this. The people that

you work with, they're hearing this on the news, they're reading it in popular books, and so on. They need to understand what's being said.

Darrell, tell us who wrote these Gnostic books, where they came out. For folks that weren't with us last week, give us a rehash. What is this stuff, the lost Gospels?

**Bock:** Well, in fact, we, in most cases, don't know exactly who wrote most of this material. All that we know is that it has been deposited in libraries of groups that held to this Gnostic Christianity. We can tell that most of the works come from the second and third century. And what they tended to do was to attribute the authorship to other key figures in the Christian movement to try and give them some credibility. So you have "The Gospel of Peter," for example. Or you have "The Apocryphon of John." Not all these works share the name "gospel." But they're still talking about the life and ministry of Jesus. In fact, one of the interesting things about these works is that they tend to zero in on Jesus' teaching after he was resurrected as opposed to what happens in the Gospels that we're familiar with, where almost all the teaching comes from what Jesus said on earth and often in open public.

**Ankerberg:** Let me just take you

back to “Da Vinci Code” here, because you had a great quote in the book, and it goes back to Teabing in “The Da Vinci Code,” which a lot of people have read, where Teabing says, he claims, “There were more than eighty Gospels that were considered for the New Testament, but then only four were chosen.”

**Bock:** What is so outrageous about this claim is the suggestion that what happened is that we kind of had a book club with bishops walking in and said, “Alright, we’re going to give you bishops a copy of all these 80 gospels. You line up and you vote.” That never took place. What happened was these books impressed themselves upon the original church, the ones that ended up being a part of our Bible, impressed themselves on the original church, and people began to ask, “What are people using, and what goes back to the apostles?” And out of that background came what became the Canon. And not in 325 or some period after that for the Gospels. We know that they’re functioning that way by the end of the second century, through our historical material that we have access to.

**Ankerberg:** Alright, now, I want to read some of these titles, because you say, “What are the books in here?” And you always kid me and say, “Well, if you were to take this and use this for your devotions, you would turn to something like ‘Three Forms of First Thought.’ Or ‘The Gospel of Truth.’ Okay. You’ve got ‘The Gospel of Philip.’ Or ‘The Round Dance of the Cross.’” These are titles on these books. “The Sermon of Zostrianos.” “Three Steles of Seth.” These are not things that just fall off our tongue, alright?

**Bock:** No.

**Ankerberg:** But let’s take some of the ones that are known. People are hyping this thing on “The Gospel of Thomas.” Is this the apostle Thomas? Nobody says that, but why is that name on there?

**Bock:** I think that name is on there to try and give the book some credibility; to say that this goes back to one of the twelve. And in counter response to the existence of the Gospels that actually do have apostolic roots, or have apostolic roots associated with someone very close to an apostle. So that’s one thing that’s going on. I think the other reason why you’re getting this name is that it adds an air of credibility to make this kind of a connection, to make this kind of suggestion. And in the case of Thomas, what we have that’s interesting, because of all the works that we have that are outside the Canon, Thomas is the most interesting. There’s no doubt about it. About 50% of Thomas, you can actually look at your biblical gospels and you can go, “That looks recognizable to me. That’s just a varied form of something that I’ve seen in the Gospels.” And then the other 50% is stuff you’ve never seen before.

**Ankerberg:** That also tells you when it was written.

**Bock:** That’s right.

**Ankerberg:** Because if it’s referring to stuff that’s already in the Gospels, the Gospels came first, that came second.

**Bock:** Except that what happens with these scholars who have the new way, is they’ll sit there and they’ll say, “No, the earliest form of this tradition is in Thomas.” Now, in fact it may be the case... Thomas is not like a Gospel that we’re familiar with in our Gospels. Thomas is

nothing but 114 independent sayings and/or parables of Jesus. That's all it is. Just a running list...

**Ankerberg:** Yes, no narrative about what happened in the events. It's just...

**Bock:** No outline, no order of ministry, just 114 sayings. Here they come at you: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, until you get to 114. And the other thing that's interesting about them is that they do mimic the Gospels and they do reflect to have some touch with the same tradition, some of it does, with what's in the Gospels. So some people will say, "Maybe there are a few sayings of Jesus in there that really in fact do go back to him." And that is conceivable. There is, out of the 114, there may be a half dozen that might actually reflect something Jesus said, or something very close to what Jesus said.

But the bulk of it doesn't. The bulk of it comes from the second century, from the early second century. It's on the edge of when Gnosticism is emerging, and that is a second century movement in all likelihood, according to most of the experts. And so, this material as a whole is late. But there are a few individual sayings that might be early. But anyone who suggests to you that that entire Gospel goes back to that early period is not only running against the evidence in the text, it's running against the expertise of what Thomas scholars are saying about Thomas.

**Ankerberg:** Also, people in the church knew about this book, didn't they?

**Bock:** They did.

**Ankerberg:** And they rejected it.

**Bock:** Origen explicitly tells us in the early part of the third century that this text

was not read in the churches. It was not to be read in the churches, and it wasn't being read in the churches.

**Ankerberg:** Okay. But here you go around the circle. The new scholars come back and say, "But, yeah, but that shows you that the powerful won, and they were the ones that wrote history. And now we've got this suppressed group—good old Thomas—we're getting him back so he can talk without all of these church leaders involved." What do you say to that?

**Bock:** Well, I think you say two things: 1) there is some evidence that there were some people calling themselves Christians who believed the types of things that you see in Thomas. That one you can't dispute. But then the next question is, alright which one of these two groups has the best claim to, ... let's say, which has the best genealogy, okay? Which one has the best genealogy that will take you all the way back to Jesus?

**Ankerberg:** Yes.

**Bock:** And when you ask that question, Thomas falls away, and the four Gospels surface.

**Ankerberg:** Yes, because you've got historical links that go before Thomas and these other Gnostic writings, and you've got a whole bunch of stuff. And that's one of the things that we want to talk about now, is that when you look at some major points of theology like who is the God they're talking about? Who is the person of Jesus, although Thomas is interesting on Jesus; and the new scholars, they're trying to get away from this Jesus who claimed to be God.

**Bock:** That's right.

**Ankerberg:** Okay. But Thomas

messes them up right on that point, doesn't he?

**Bock:** Yes, but they don't tell you that.

**Ankerberg:** Okay.

**Bock:** Okay, ...

**Ankerberg:** What is it?

**Bock:** What the new scholars will say about Thomas is we've got a human Jesus. And we've got a human Jesus and then the traditional group came along and they wanted to elevate this Jesus because he was crucified and they wanted to keep him around in their theology. So they made him God. Okay. That's what the new scholars are claiming happened in traditional Christianity.

**Ankerberg:** That's the spin.

**Bock:** That's the spin. That's the hype. That's the buzz. But in fact what's really going on is that even in Thomas, Jesus is divine. There's a very famous saying, just remember the number 77. Okay? 77. Saying 77 in Thomas says that if you look under a piece of stone—this is Jesus saying this—I am there. If you split a piece of wood, I am there. He's claiming to be omnipresent. Now, omnipresence isn't the normal characteristic of a human being, at least not most of the human beings I know. This is a claim of high Christology.

But most new scholars will not even mention that verse being in Thomas because what they want is a Jesus who is human. And in fact, it's even worse, because none of the material that we have, none of it, has a strictly human Jesus. Even though books like "The Da Vinci Code," in trying to popularize this, said that what we had originally was a human Jesus who was elevated to this high status, we don't have a single piece of evidence that has a human Jesus

portrayed in any of this material. He's either human and divine, as the tradition has argued, or he is so divine he can't be human.

**Ankerberg:** I can see why Diane Sawyer asked you to be on that "Passion" deal with Mel Gibson. I mean, you're a walking encyclopedia. And the thing that blows my mind is you've actually read all this stuff in the original, which just knocks me out. But we want to get down to, we've got to take a break here and we're going to come back. The fact is, some of the big points that the new scholars are not telling us, and won't tell the kids when they go to school, is we got some major differences in terms of who the God is of these Gnostic gospels, okay? And we want to get some of those quotes from some of these things—and they sound like Spock here talking on Star Trek—when we come back. But the fact is I want you to listen to what we're saying, because this is what's going on at our universities, this is what's going coming down in the popular literature. You need to know this to talk to your non-Christian friends. So stick with us, we'll be right back.

## BREAK

**Ankerberg:** Alright, welcome back. We're talking with Dr. Darrell Bock. And we're talking about stuff like this: "Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew." They're talking about, there are varieties of Christianity back in the year 200 that have legitimate claims to be the thing that we should believe.

We believe they're wrong, we don't think the evidence supports it, and we're

trying to tell you why. Because your kids, if they go to the university, they're going to hear this stuff. If you read popular magazines, newspaper articles, and even a lot of news reports, you hear this stuff. We're trying to unscramble it for you.

And one of the things we're talking about, what are the core beliefs of this group that wrote "The Gnostic Bible," all the different books that have been published now? Found in 1945 at Nag Hammadi, Egypt, these books, the Gnostic gospels, what do they talk about? What is their belief? When you compare their belief about God with the traditional beliefs, you're going to find out it's completely black and white. This is not even close, alright? And we want you to see this so you understand why, and then why it is that we believe that the core beliefs of Christianity go right back to Jesus himself. Because there's solid historical evidence for that, and there's not for the Gnostic gospels.

Darrell, start us off in terms of God. Who is the God of these Gnostic writers?

**Bock:** Well, I need to start off with saying a little bit about Gnostics and Gnostic Christianity before we talk about God.

**Ankerberg:** Okay.

**Bock:** And the place to start with Gnostics is, we've said that it's already about knowledge, it's "gnosis", it's what you know. But then the question is, know about what? Well, first, what do you know about God and the creation? And the key to Gnosticism is the idea of dualism. It's basically opposition. There's good and there is bad. Or there is the pure and there is the less than

pure. In regards to God, God is pure light; he is unknowable; he is completely transcendent. That is, the top dog God, if you will.

**Ankerberg:** Uh huh.

**Bock:** And then there are all these emanations that come off from all these other gods, these, you might call "God Juniors," okay? And these God juniors are really responsible for the creation. Or we can look at the dualism that's in the creation itself. Matter is bad. But the spiritual things—ideas—are good. It's a variation of Platonism, actually. It grows out of what's called Middle Platonism, which had this distinction between ideas being good and then the actual fleshing out of that in the earth and the material world is bad. So dualism is very, very important to Gnosticism, and it's very, very important to the portrait of God.

**Ankerberg:** It's one of their core beliefs.

**Bock:** It's one of their core beliefs.

**Ankerberg:** And that completely differs with what the God of the Bible is saying.

**Bock:** Exactly right. In the God of the Bible, you've got one creator God, and that creation is good from the beginning. And in the Gnostic view you've got this... actually God isn't very responsible for the creation. He kind of facilitates it, he steps in when it needs help, but the most of these underlings do the work. These junior gods are called, in the technical terminology, "demiurges", or assistants to God. And they help to do the creation, and they don't do a very good job. And because they don't do a very good job, the creation is flawed from the beginning, and unredeemable.

**Ankerberg:** This is the kind of rea-

soning that the Gnostic writers gave...

**Bock:** That's right.

**Ankerberg:** ...that the creation was screwed up because of these juniors that were down there doing it.

**Bock:** And it really is a kind of theodicy. They're trying to explain why the world that we live in is so messed up. Whereas in Christianity, and in Judaism—this is important—in Christianity and in Judaism, the claim is that the flaw results from flaws in humanity that caused the creation to fall. In Gnosticism the idea is, no it was botched from the beginning, and we've been trying to recover ever since.

**Ankerberg:** Alright, so give us some quotes, because some of these quotes, and folks, they're going to sound from outer space here, but the fact is, we want you to hear them so you can compare that with the traditional teaching that has come down to us from Jesus, the apostles, the disciples of the apostles, and down, and formed the New Testament Canon later on. Start us off, Darrell, with a quote from one of these Gnostic sources that would give the people an idea of what they're saying.

**Bock:** Okay. Well, this is coming from my favorite title out of all this material, and I love this title so much, I can't say it normally. It's "Hypostatis of the Archons." It's going to be a movie one day.

**Ankerberg:** Yes! I mean, that's a book.

**Bock:** That's a book. And it basically means "The Reality of the Rulers." And the rulers are these spiritual forces, these little junior gods. And so it talks about that they're really real and they really exist.

Here is the beginning of the story of the creation: "As incorruptibility looked down into the regions of the waters, her image [and that's a reference to "Pistis Sophia", the feminine divine] appeared in the waters and the authorities of the darkness became enamored of her. But they could not lay hold of that image, which had appeared to them in the waters, because of their weakness. Since beings that merely possess a soul cannot lay hold of those that possess a spirit." There's your dualism, okay? These Archons are soulish, okay, and they have matter, okay, but Pistis Sophia is pure spirit. And so she's good and they're bad, and the two can't mix.

**Ankerberg:** Okay.

**Bock:** "For they were from below while it was from above. This is why 'incorruptibility looked down into the regions of the waters, so that by the father's will, she might bring entirety into the union with the light.'" You listen to that and you have to think about it. What in the world is going on? Well, salvation for Gnosis is the spirit part of a person being rejoined to the true spirit above. That's all that it is. It's the divine spark coming to life and rejoining this region of pure light and spirit above. "The rulers," that is the Archons, "laid plans and said, 'Come, let us create a man that will be soil from the earth.'" So the creation here is not God creating man, it's the Archons creating man. "And they modeled their creature as one holy of the earth,..." and we're off and running then into the creation.

**Ankerberg:** Okay. Now, what's wrong with this?

**Bock:** Well, the main thing is that it's the idea that God is no longer the Creator. It's that creation is the responsibility

of these underlings, and so it lowers the responsibility for the creation.

**Ankerberg:** And they've botched the job, and matter is evil, and the creation is evil.

**Bock:** That's right. And the result of that is going to be that there is no responsibility to the Creator God in the creation. That creator God just comes in and tries to fix stuff. He's Mr. Fix-it, okay, and that's about all.

**Ankerberg:** Alright, and you're actually telling about what the problem is, what's their answer to get out of this mess that they're in? In other words, the knowledge is what?

**Bock:** Well, the knowledge is that God has placed within each one of us this divine spark. And if we are aware that this divine spark, which is about spiritual things and spiritual matter, is awakened in us, then we will be in touch, if you will, with the divine, and we recognize what really matters and what really doesn't. And then one day we'll be reunited, not body, soul and spirit, or not in terms of our whole person, but the spirit part of us will rejoin God.

**Ankerberg:** And you're supposed to do that by introspection of yourself, and thinking, and getting more knowledge. And then what happens?

**Bock:** Basically, you get enlightened that the things that really matter are the spiritual things. And this physical world is either something that doesn't make any difference, in which case you veer off into kind of an immoral lifestyle, or this physical life is something to be avoided, in which case you veer off into a kind of a very moral, but aesthetic lifestyle.

**Ankerberg:** Okay, that's what the Gnostics said. Give us—we've got one

minute left—what about the traditional stuff? The fact is, why is that black from white here?

**Bock:** You've got one God in traditional Christianity and in Judaism. He is responsible for the Creation. The creation is originally good. God is directly responsible for the creation of man, which makes us his creature and accountable to him. Man turns his back on God; he falls. That introduces sin and disruption into the creation. And now the solution is, how are we going to solve the sin problem? How are we going to solve the tendency of the creature to ignore the Creator? It's a very different picture.

**Ankerberg:** And, if you want to know what Jesus really said, what we as Christians are saying today and down through Church history, we've said we've got the historical links that go back to Jesus. We can show that, where the Gnostics all of a sudden just got this revelation, and all of a sudden, this new stuff, that's not attached to these historical links at all.

**Bock:** In fact, we can say more than that. We can say not only do the historical links go back to Jesus, but they also go back to Judaism and the Old Testament, which is the very environment out of which Jesus spoke.

**Ankerberg:** That's crucial. We've got to talk about that some more. Alright. We're going to try to show these core beliefs of the two groups as they came down. And the next one we want to go to is the person of Jesus himself. The Jesus of the Gnostics is not the Jesus of the Christian church today, nor was it, do we think, the Jesus of history. And we'll tell you why when you join us next week.

### Program 3

**Ankerberg:** Welcome to our program. We're talking about "The Gnostic Bible." We're talking about the Lost Gospels. We're talking about "The Secret Teachings of Jesus" that are so popular. If you go into any of our bookstores across America, you find these things. They're best sellers. And if you go to our top universities—Harvard, Yale, Princeton, and some of our other schools—you find professors that are saying, "We need to rewrite Church history as you guys know it. The fact is, we've got a different God, a different Jesus, a different plan of salvation. And the fact is, we've got hard evidence to back up these views and show that it's better than what you've got."

And that hard evidence, they say, is the stuff that you find here in "The Gnostic Bible," these books that give us information. They say these are alternative Christianities; that is, that they are Christianities that were back there with some of the traditional teaching, but they are just as valuable, just as legitimate as what you guys are saying. And then they're saying, in some cases, more.

Now, what we want to talk about are the core beliefs of both groups. And we want to talk about why traditional Christianity does have historical sources and historical links that go right back to this person called Jesus that beats anything

that the Gnostics are talking about. Then we want you to see that these core beliefs are not close. They're not something that can be merged. These things are black and white. You've got a completely different Jesus. In fact, let me give you a quote from Harold Bloom who's at Yale University. He says, "The Gospel of Thomas," one of these books that have been discovered, "spares us the crucifixion, makes the resurrection unnecessary, and does not present us with a god named Jesus."

Well, your kids are going to be taught this stuff, [so] I want you to understand why that stuff is wrong. I want you to hear it from the expert who has read all of those books in the original. He's appeared on ABC with Diane Sawyer, and he's been on Dateline, and he's been with O'Reilly. When they need an expert, this is the man they call. And I love him because, Darrell, you can say it so my mother can understand.

Tell us why this is important for people that are listening, that they grasp what is being said. What are the issues here, and then let's talk about the Jesus that the Gnostics have.

**Bock:** Well, the key issue here has to do with whether Christianity really goes back to the person of Jesus, or whether Christianity is just kind of another religion out there on the shelf that I can walk

up and say, “Well, I’ll take that one, that one, and that one. Or maybe I’ll mix a little this and that”—whether we’re part of a religious cafeteria, in effect. And what’s clear is that traditional Christianity has made very unique claims about who Jesus is; the uniqueness of his work, the uniqueness of his person. And the Gnostic materials deviate on this. They have a very different Jesus. It is an alternative Christianity. It’s very much different than what the traditional orthodox Christianity is. And so it’s important to know that, because some people think, “Ah, this is just religious talk, and as long as you’re going in the right direction, I mean, who cares?”

**Ankerberg:** Yes. And now “Da Vinci Code” comes out and takes the popular form of the scholarly views and says, “Look, I’ll tell you what, Jesus’ divinity, the person of Jesus was really invented in 325 at Nicea by the Church Fathers, and they jammed it down the culture’s throat, and that’s why you’ve got the views you hold today. And the first 200 years of Christianity, you didn’t have all the Christians thinking that was the Jesus that you have.” What’s wrong with that?

**Bock:** Well, the real problem is that we don’t have a single text anywhere that presents us with just a human Jesus. Even the most popular work out of the alternative, which is “The Gospel of Thomas,” presents us with a Jesus who is omnipresent. Who says that you lift up a stone, I’m there. You split a piece of wood, I’m there.” And so there’s this high view of Jesus that’s even in these alternative texts. We don’t have any texts from Gnosticism that simply present Jesus as a human being. In fact, the problem is the exact opposite of what we seen in the Gospels. In the Gospels

we see a Jesus who is completely human and who is completely divine. Whereas in these Gnostic works what we sometimes see is a Jesus who is so divine he can’t be human at all. He can’t identify with us; he can’t share in our sufferings; he can’t represent us; he can’t connect with us; because he’s such a transcendent being. The real Jesus is such a transcendent being, in these Gnostic views, that he can’t take on matter, because matter is bad, it was created bad.

**Ankerberg:** Okay. Let’s go back, because some people say, “But, what evidence do you guys have for your traditional Christian views?” We’ve got 27 independent books, if you want, that were all written before 100 AD, alright? Gnostic books came out 100 years after all of that stuff.

I love, there’s one statement in your new book that’s coming out, that you said, every one of those 27 witnesses that compiled those New Testament books, every one of them mentioned that Christ was deity, and they said it in different ways, but they all had that same theme. So you have 27 independent witnesses before 100 AD saying Jesus claimed to be God, was God, or they identify him as God in some way in those passages. And this is 100 years before the Gnostics come on the site. Now, the fact is, you’re saying some of those Gnostic sites even reflect that tradition, right?

**Bock:** And they alter it, but they don’t alter it by pulling Jesus down, they alter it by raising him up to such an extent that he no longer is in contact with us. Actually, these 27 witnesses are not only saying that Jesus is fully divine, which is the problem that “The Da Vinci Code”

wants to deny, they're also saying that he's completely human, which is something that these Gnostic works want to deny; or at least some of them. And so, these works, these Gnostic works, that begin to show up in the second century, but really proliferate at the end of the second century, they're so concerned to have a pure Jesus, that he can't be human. So it's actually the opposite problem to what "The Da Vinci Code" is claiming.

**Ankerberg:** Alright, two questions. Number one is that, I always remember, the people that actually saw Jesus, they knew he was human. They had a hard problem accepting the fact he was God.

**Bock:** That's right.

**Ankerberg:** Okay. Then after he passes off the scene, the apostles pass off the scene, they had no problem accepting he was God, their problem was, "Was he really a man? Did he really suffer pains? Did he really suffer on the cross?" This kind of thing. Now, that's was my first observation. The second thing is, are the scholars—Harvard, Yale, and so on—[Eliane] Pagels, and Bart Ehrman, and these folks—are they giving us the whole scoop on who the Gnostics were saying that Jesus was, or are they just pulling things out of the Gnostic writings? Are there any hints of both in the Gnostic writings, or are they giving us the straight scoop?

**Bock:** Actually, what you have in the Gnostic writings is a spectrum, okay. And so some of them come close to the kinds of things that we see in Christianity, with a little bit of human, and a little bit of divine. And then some of them have an exclusively divine Jesus. What none of them have is an only human Jesus. See, here's the interesting thing. Once

you embrace Jesus as being the key to Christianity, the problem is not how low to make him, the question is, how high should you go; which is the opposite of our modern instinct. Our modern instinct is to say, "Well, he started out as a human being, and everyone would have perceived him as a human being, and then it's going up." No. If you embrace Jesus, he was the core of Christianity. Even the alternatives agree about that. But the question is, "How is he the core?" Is he a core because he's both human and divine? Or there's what's called docetism—he appeared to be human, but he really was divine. That's the kind of thing that you see in the Gnostic materials.

**Ankerberg:** Alright, let's go around this circle. Let's start with the Gnostics and come back to the traditional texts and we'll show the difference here in the sense of the core beliefs that came down, and why this is night and day difference here. The fact is, give me a statement from the Gnostic writings that is kind of descriptive of their total view of Jesus, in the sense of who he was.

**Bock:** Well, here's one example. This example that I'm going to give you is from a work that is called "The Apocalypse of Peter." Here's the quote: "I [that is, Peter], said, 'What am I seeing, O Lord? It is you, yourself whom they take? And are you holding on to me? Who is this one above the cross who is glad and laughing? And is it another person whose feet and hands they are hammering?' The Savior said to me, 'He whom you see above the cross, glad and laughing, is the living Jesus. But he whose hand and feet they are driving in is his physical part, which is the substitute. They are putting to shame that

which is his likeness.” In other words, they are not crucifying the real Jesus.

**Ankerberg:** So what’s the bottom line? The Gnostics in this text are saying that you’ve got two Jesuses?

**Bock:** You’ve got a Jesus and you’ve got a substitute. The real Jesus is up above in heaven...

**Ankerberg:** He’s spirit.

**Bock:** He’s spirit, and he is laughing at what is going on on the earth, because they think they’re crucifying him, but they’re really not.

**Ankerberg:** What’s the importance of that in terms of what we’re saying? Why does that matter?

**Bock:** It matters because now the cross and the work of the cross goes entirely out of the picture, and the only thing that matters is what your relationship is to God as an individual, and you’ve lost any mediating work or any central role of Jesus. So Jesus becomes a key figure in pointing you to the way in Gnosticism, but that way has nothing to do with him.

**Ankerberg:** He’s just a pointer.

**Bock:** That’s exactly right.

**Ankerberg:** His death on the cross doesn’t really affect your sin problem; in fact they’re not even saying your sin problem is important, because you haven’t got sin.

**Bock:** Exactly right.

**Ankerberg:** Alright, we’re going to talk about this more, who the Jesus of the Gnostics actually was. And the fact is, we’re also going to give you the information in the New Testament witnesses and the disciples of the apostles and the Church Fathers. We’re going to show you that it all jibes together.

They’ve got one view in terms of Jesus was both human and divine. He was God-man. Alright? We’ll talk about that when we come right back.

## BREAK

**Ankerberg:** Alright, we’re back. We’re talking with Dr. Darrell Bock. We’re talking about “The Gnostic Bible,” the books that have been found in 1945. And, Darrell, we want to talk about how the Christian witnesses, ... we had 27 independent books that were written before 100 AD, and these go back to Jesus himself, and you’ve got historical links that go back to Jesus. This is better evidence than what the Gnostics ever dreamed of having. They don’t have it. It doesn’t exist. The new scholars are spinning a web of fantasy here. Talk about the evidence about Jesus that we do have and how it has come down to us.

**Bock:** Well, these 27 books that you talk about really come from nine figures. We’re talking about Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; we’re talking about James and Jude, the author of Hebrews, who as Origen said, only God knows who that is. So, you know, people like this. So we’ve got relatives of Jesus in the case of James and Jude. We’ve got people who walked with Jesus as part of the twelve in Matthew and John. By the way, even if you are a moderate, even if you think this comes through the Matthean school or the Johannine school as opposed to going back directly to Matthew and John, you’re still saying this is coming through a tradition whose roots go back to Jesus.

**Ankerberg:** Yes, because Matthew was one of the apostles, John was one of the apostles. And everybody knows that Luke traveled with Paul, and Mark traveled with Peter.

**Bock:** That's right.

**Ankerberg:** So the fact is, this goes right back to the boys themselves.

**Bock:** Exactly right. And so what you've got is material that is taking you back to the earliest time. The Gnostic material doesn't have anything like that. The only book that they have that comes close is "The Gospel of Thomas."

**Ankerberg:** Gnostic books came out when? They were written when?

**Bock:** Generally speaking, they start appearing in the second century, early second century, and then they really start to proliferate in the middle part of the second century, the latter part of the second century, the early part of the third century.

**Ankerberg:** So this stuff is 100 years past the end of the apostles.

**Bock:** By the time it's starting to multiply, yes.

**Ankerberg:** Okay. And the view that we find in the traditional sources here, this information that you're just talking about, how do we know who Jesus actually is? Give us indications of that from that information.

**Bock:** Well, as we suggested, what we have within the witnesses that we have that are in the Bible that are our best historical witnesses, these texts are important to us in this discussion, not so much because they are a part of the Bible, but because they are our best historical witnesses. And history is about sources. And when you look at these

earliest sources, they have these short traditional summaries, and they have hymns, which means that people were singing this stuff regularly. And usually when you sing stuff, you remember the words—all you have to do is hear the tune and you're off and running. Or you have religious rites that you are undertaking on a regular basis where you have liturgy that you are repeating or liturgy that you're hearing regularly. So, for example, with the Lord's Supper, you know, when you take the bread and you take the cup you're hearing about the death of Jesus on a regular basis. Those are the types of things that we're thinking about.

And most of the witnesses that we have for these little pieces of tradition are embedded in the Pauline epistles, which are our earliest witnesses that come from the 50s. And we know that it predates that. And as I also have suggested, when you think about Paul's own experience, about how he came to the Lord, he had to have a process by which he recognized who the risen Jesus was and what the theology was that was informing that, when he had that experience in the 30s, so we know that some of this stuff goes back to, really to the very beginning points of Christianity.

**Ankerberg:** Give us some of those little tidbits that we find in these writings that talk about Jesus.

**Bock:** I'll summarize a few of them for you. In Romans 1, we have this section, in verses 2-4 that connects Jesus at a human level to being the son of David, but it connects him at a divine level as being demonstrated to be full of divine power, or the son of God, as a result of the resurrection. That's one example. That's a traditional piece.

Example of a hymn is in Colossians 1 where we get Jesus being the firstborn of the creation who actually participates in and is responsible in the creation and for the creation. And then the second part of it has to do with him being head of the church. So it has a creator/re-deemer theme built within it. It's all within five verses, it's laid out in an even structure in Greek so that you can tell this is something that's been laid out to be memorized.

Third example: 1 Corinthians 8 where Paul says there may be many gods in the world, but for us—that is for Christians—there is one God, the Father—and again it talks about the creation—and one Lord, Jesus Christ—and it talks about the creation again. So within the biblical material—that's only two verses long—within the biblical materials, we have these short little bits of, if you will, teaching that are chock full of theology that were passed on and were put in memorable bits so that people would know, here are the core teachings of the faith.

**Ankerberg:** Diane Sawyer asked you to be on her special on the Passion when she was interviewing Mel Gibson. You were one of the experts. You've been on Dateline, you've been on O'Reilly, and all these programs as the expert. And I remember one of the things that, in the Passion, everybody just kind of blew by real quick was that Jesus claimed, when he was on trial there in front of the Jewish leaders, "Are you the Christ"—meaning the Messiah—"the son of the blessed one?"—that's the son of God. And he says, "I am, and then you'll see the son of man coming in the clouds of glory, great power..." and so on. You did your doctoral dissertation in

Germany on that "son of man." People didn't catch the impact of what you have. And all the gospel writers talk about that little section. The fact is that he was the "son of man." What does that mean, and why was that a mind-blowing phrase that is recorded in our earliest documents?

**Bock:** Well, in fact, it's the very reason Jesus was crucified. His answer to that question put him on the cross. And the reason it was a mind-blowing claim was because in the background of Judaism, there's only one God. No one shares God's glory. They could conceivably contemplate a religious great of some type possibly sharing glory under certain circumstances, very special circumstances. But it certainly wouldn't be an independent Galilean teacher roaming the fields in the first century with no background to have that kind of a connection.

So when the High Priest asks, "Are you the son of God?" by which I think he's actually asking, "[Are] You the Messiah," because he wants to prove to Pilate that he's claiming to be a king that Rome didn't have anything for. Jesus actually gives him more than he bargained for. He says in Mark, "I am. And you will see the son of man seated at the right hand of power, coming on the clouds of heaven."

Two Old Testament passages: Psalm 110:1, Daniel 7. Psalm 110:1 is the idea of this figure being seated at the right hand of the father. And the coming on the clouds is a statement out of Daniel 7. That's one like the son of man coming to the Ancient of Days. Now that's all gibberish until I explain it to you, so let me go through those one at a time. Start with Daniel 7 first. When you ride on the clouds in the Old Testament, you're

either God or the gods in the Old Testament.

**Ankerberg:** And the guys he was talking to knew this by heart.

**Bock:** They knew this by heart. They clicked in immediately with what it was he was saying. So when he says, "I'm coming on the clouds," he says "I have divine authority. I'm like a figure, the son of man. I'm actually a judge. In other words, let me put it to you this way, I may be on defense, the defendant in this trail, but one day, in the day that really counts, I'm going to be your judge." They didn't want to hear that.

The second thing that's important here is the idea of the right hand. And the right hand of God is important because Jesus was making it clear by his remark about riding the clouds that what he was envisioning is somehow a vindication that took him to heaven, and then, from heaven he's able to ride the clouds. Because right now he's on earth. He's on terra firma. So, "I'm going to be at the right hand of the father." They immediately understood that what he was claiming is God was going to vindicate him in such a way that Jesus was going to end up being parked at the side of God. "No one shares God's glory. At least you don't. We know that." Because in their minds they didn't think he was divine and had any kind of rights like that. And only someone who could share divine glory could park in God's presence.

So Jesus answered the question, "Not only am I the Messiah, but I'm going to park in heaven by the side of God, and I'm going to ride the clouds, and one

day be your judge." It's even worse than it sounds in some ways, because we know that in the Temple that was in Jerusalem, in the Most Holy Place, a human being could only go in once a year to offer a sacrifice. He was in and out. In fact, one of the Jewish traditions says the High Priest had a rope tied around him so they could pull him out in case something happened so no one else had to go in. That's sacred space. Jesus is saying— it's worse than saying— "I'm going to go into the middle of the Temple, the Holy of Holies, and I'm going to live there." We know that if someone had made that kind of a claim or had performed that type of an action, they would have been totally offended. And that's exactly how the Jewish leaders heard it, because they didn't buy the premise. And the premise that Jesus was making is, "I have the right to be there because of who I am."

**Ankerberg:** Alright. We're out of time this week, but we're going to pick this up, because we've got more. We want to go on to the disciples of the apostles, the Church Fathers down below, how they actually repeated these phrases. And the fact is, again, all 27 books, they have statements that Jesus is both God and man. And we want to get to that suffering part, because it has to do with the salvation. And the Gnostics have a Jesus that doesn't suffer any pain. And yet you've got a human Jesus all the way through the New Testament. You've got human and divine. And why that's important. Folks, this is tremendous information. Join us next week. We're going to continue talking about these supposedly lost gospels.

## Program 4

**Ankerberg:** Alright. We're talking with one of my favorite guests, Dr. Darrell Bock. And we're talking about some of the things that are on the bookshelves in our stores across America right now, and it's being taught in our universities and it's something that you need to know. It's called "Lost Christianities." It's called "The Gnostic Bible."

What they're saying is that there are books that have been discovered in the sands of Nag Hammadi, Egypt, that go back to about 200 AD and they are alternative Christianities. That is, that they were groups that called themselves Christian, but they held different beliefs than what you guys in the church hold.

So you've got traditional Christianity over here, but they're saying that you've got these alternative Christianities over here, and these alternative Christianities, these views over here, have a Jesus who was not both God and man. You've got a different God, you've got a different creation, you've got a different problem, you've got a different plan of salvation. But that was a legitimate, the scholars are saying, that was a legitimate view that we ought to look at today. In fact, some have converted over to that view, and they're trying to convert your kids that are going to these schools, that there's historical evidence that shows this is better than what you in

the Church have held. That's wrong, and we've got the expert here to explain this and unscramble it.

And I want to start with one of the quotes of Bart Ehrman at University of North Carolina, who's got this "Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew." Here's what he says, and then Darrell, I'd like you to unscramble this. Their view is, "the early Christian church was a chaos of contending beliefs." You've got all these different various beliefs. "Some groups of Christians claimed there was not one God, but two, or twelve or even thirty gods." This is a Gnostic view, and you'll have to explain that in a minute. "Some believe that the world had not been created by God, but by a lesser ignorant deity." We talked about that in a couple program, but mention it again. "Certain sects maintained that Jesus was human but not divine, while others said he was divine but not human."

And, the fact is, the scholars are saying this is what's out there, they've got hard evidence for it. You're saying that's wrong. Unscramble that for us.

**Bock:** Well, the idea of early Christianity being chaos depends on, really, what period you're talking about. Are we talking about AD 50, when Paul is writing? Are we talking about the middle of the second century, or the end of the

second century when these groups are starting to spring up and are creating enough of a stir that there are people writing huge tomes in response to them, because obviously, they are drawing some attention? If he's talking about the late second century, then that statement has an element of truth to it. But if he's talking about the earliest period, it really is way off.

Another problem with the statement is the idea that there's this human Jesus with no divinity attached to him. Bart Ehrman, when he makes this claim, is doing it through the idea that, just like you have "The Gospel of Thomas," that doesn't have a divine Jesus—and we've already shown that there are problems with that—there also is the tradition in the Gospels, the teaching that Matthew and Luke share, which is often called "Q" material, that also doesn't have a divine Jesus. But he's managed to leave out another important passage. And unfortunately for Bart, there is the temptation of Jesus, which is a part of the "Q" material, where Satan comes and confronts Jesus as the son of God.

**Ankerberg:** Alright. This "Q" material. People are saying, "What in the world is 'Q' material?"

**Bock:** "Q" material is teaching material that Matthew and Luke share. And the belief is that it was one of these traditional sources of Jesus' teaching, because the argument is, Matthew and Luke didn't use each other, but they obviously have about 200 verses between them that they share. Where did it come from? It must have come from an early church source.

**Ankerberg:** And that's not unbelievable, because Luke himself says he knew about many sources in Luke 1:1.

**Bock:** Exactly right. And even if it isn't a "Q" source, even if Matthew's got it from Luke or visa versa, it still is the case that you have this material that Ehrman is claiming comes from Q and that Q never discusses the divinity of Jesus, and yet the temptation...

**Ankerberg:** Why do they use the letter "Q"?

**Bock:** It means "source." That's what most people think it...

**Ankerberg:** Q from Quelle.

**Bock:** "Quelle" for the German word.

**Ankerberg:** Okay, so they're saying you had this source. Keep going.

**Bock:** So, he's wrong on suggesting that the early period was terribly chaotic. I mean, the chaos in the first century wasn't with these views about multiple gods, etc. The chaos in the first century was with the reaction of Judaism. He's wrong with regard to the suggestion that the sources that we have, the earliest sources that we have, suggest that there's a human Jesus. We don't have any text anywhere, any source strand anywhere in all our materials, that has just a human Jesus. When someone embraces Jesus, they either view him as human and divine or exclusively divine.

**Ankerberg:** And the Gnostics were exclusively divine.

**Bock:** Some of them. Some of them. Some of them had a mix. And some of them had this Jesus who had become so divine that, when the figure who goes on the cross goes on the cross, that's not Jesus.

**Ankerberg:** You've got two entities at that point.

**Bock:** Exactly.

**Ankerberg:** Alright. Go back to this

thing that Helmut Koester at Harvard has put out there and Elaine Pagels has picked it up and it's been reflected in "The Da Vinci Code," the popular stuff, that the reason that the traditional view of Jesus—that he was actually saying that he was God, he actually died on the cross, he actually did these miracles—was because down the pike at Nicea at 325 this was jammed down everybody's throat by a group of powerful men. Helmut Koester goes back and says, look there's evidence that, geographically in the Roman Empire, across the Mediterranean, and so on, in different places, you had these groups that had this Gnostic Jesus, but they didn't have the traditional Jesus. Why has that been shown to be false now?

**Bock:** Well, this is an important claim. And Koester popularized it, but the real person it goes back to is Walter Bauer. He wrote a work in 1930's, 1934, in German. And it was called "Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Earliest Christianity." And his theory was that if you break Christianity up into the geographical regions—so think about Northern Egypt, think about Asia Minor, what is now the Turkey area, think about Antioch and Syria, and think about Rome—that if you divide it up into those areas, some of these areas were alternative Christian majorities. In fact, many of them were, and a few of them were the more orthodox. Rome was orthodox....

**Ankerberg:** That was his theory.

**Bock:** The problem is that church historians working this material basically say Bauer's got it wrong. He's only got one area where it may be the case. It's a place called Edessa. Now, the reason you've never heard of it is because it's not one of the great centers of Christian-

ity in early Christian history. Antioch of Syria was much more important. Alexandria of Egypt was much more important. Rome was much more important. He doesn't mention Jerusalem at all, which obviously was orthodox from the beginning. And so the problem here is that at Edessa, it might be the case. The problem is, we have next to no evidence of materials from Edessa, so anyone can say just about anything they want about Edessa and make it plausible.

Take Edessa out of the equation, all the other areas, according to most church historians, it was not the case that these alternative views were the most prevalent. In fact, they were a substantial minority in many cases. And in some cases views have switched. Birger Pearson, who's probably the foremost expert about Egypt, his view has changed on this in light of new evidence that came up in the 60s and 70s that's been publicized.

**Ankerberg:** The second scholarly opinion that's coming into the popular books is, okay, the different geographical areas, they did have this traditional view, but there's a reason for it, namely is that you had these bishops, the Roman Catholic Church, these guys, they enforced this view and they destroyed all the other books, and now it's just surfacing. So the suppressed Gnostic view that was really back there, now we've got to give them a real hearing.

**Bock:** Yes, and I think the problem with this is that this is really an argument from silence. There are three scenarios that one could work with here. One is that the traditional view was right, and the reason we don't have these materials in the early period: they weren't there. They weren't there; there's nothing to

have evidence for. If that's the case, the traditional view is right. The second idea is that, well, we've got these later materials and we can project back earlier that because they're in these later materials, maybe they actually are a little older than the materials we actually have.

Now, most of the work that I've done has operated on this premise. Let's assume that that's the case. We can't prove it, but let's assume that that's the case. Where does that leave us? Well, what it leaves us with is, we still have two problems. One is, these two views are so different there's no way to meld them. They're going to be opponents.

**Ankerberg:** They're black and white.

**Bock:** They're going to be opponents no matter what. So even if it is earlier, you've still got different views. And then the second factor is, only one of these traditions really has a line, a genealogy that takes you back to the roots of Christianity, and that's the traditional model.

**Ankerberg:** And the scholars today are trying to say, look we just had these views that are out there, they were floating, they were kind of co-existing. The fact is, what they're not telling the kids, and they're not telling the public, is both views knew of the other and criticized, and said, we can't live with that view. They weren't trying to join up.

**Bock:** That's right.

**Ankerberg:** Talk about how the Gnostics looked at their own critics.

**Bock:** Well, the way the Gnostics looked at their own critics, and you can see this in some of the materials that they have...

**Ankerberg:** And the critics were the Church Fathers.

**Bock:** The critics were the Church Fathers, that's who they were criticizing. And we have some quotations here, they're short, from "The Apocalypse of Peter," The leaders of the competitive view—that would be the apostles and the bishops and the line that they represent—are described as "empty channels" in "The Apocalypse of Peter" 79:30—just in case you want to look it up—

**Ankerberg:** Yah.

**Bock:** And then in "The Testimony of Truth" 34:26 it says of the traditionalists, "They do not have the word which gives life." Now, that's pretty clear. That's pretty clear that the Gnostics were teaching, "We can't coexist with these people. They don't have the truth."

**Ankerberg:** That's what the Gnostics were saying about the Christians. What did the Christians say about the Gnostics?

**Bock:** Well, what the Christians were saying about the Gnostics can be indicated in a text like 2 John 7. And 2 John 7 says, "Many deceivers have gone out into the world, people who do not confess Jesus as Christ coming in the flesh. This person is the deceiver and the antichrist." Now, that's also pretty clear. You may not have the word "heresy" being used here, but that's what you're saying.

**Ankerberg:** But if that goes back to 85, 90 AD, these groups in full bloom weren't over there. This was knocking the idea that was emerging at that time, right?

**Bock:** Exactly. Exactly right. What was happening was that this view was emerging because, ... and notice what it is that they're knocking. The problem

isn't that Jesus is human and needs to be developed into the divine; it's the problem going the other way. Jesus, the Christ, has not come in the flesh. He's not human. That's the first thing to note about this. The second thing to note about it is that some of these ideas were emerging because they percolated in the Greek philosophy of the time...

**Ankerberg:** The Gnostic ideas.

**Bock:** The Gnostic ideas. And Gnostic ideas are really what we call syncretistic. It's a mix, okay. It's a mix of Christianity with Greek philosophy.

**Ankerberg:** They were pulling from all sources.

**Bock:** That's right, or trying to get whatever they could. Because their goal was to say, "Let's make Christianity more palatable to the culture." And this is a more palatable way to think about it—because of the way people thought about God. To think that God would lower himself to become human? Ah, come on. Let's do something else.

**Ankerberg:** Alright, we're going to take a break. When we come back we're going to hit the main point that we want to get across. In these traditional sources vs. these Gnostic sources, you've got a completely Jesus, and you have a Jesus who doesn't even suffer on the cross in the Gnostic view. Where you have a Jesus that really suffered for our sins. If you think of "The Passion," and the stripes that were on Christ, and the nails going through his hands, did he really experience that pain, or didn't he? And what difference does it make? We're going to talk about that when we come right back.

**BREAK**

**Ankerberg:** Alright, we're back. We're talking with Dr. Darrell Bock here, and we're talking about something that is very important. The books that have been found at Nag Hammadi, called the Gnostic books, over 50 different books, that go back to about the second century, that claim they've got a Christianity that is not like the traditional Christianity. And the scholars today at Princeton, Harvard, University of North Carolina, Yale, are saying, "Listen, this stuff is going to be just as valid as what you Christians believe." Some say it's even more valid; it's at least a legitimate option out there.

But the fact is, when you look at the core beliefs of this group vs. the core beliefs of Christians that have come down to us, they don't have the historical links back to Jesus that we do, and we're trying to show those links. And they've got, when you look at their content, they've got a different God, a different Jesus, a different problem in terms of humanity, whether it's, we say sin is the problem, you're separated from God, they've got you're just lacking knowledge, you've got to get some self-knowledge, some self-understanding, and that's the problem.

So you have a different Jesus, and we're talking about the view of Jesus, and we're showing the historical links. And, Darrell, take us back to, we've already shown some of the ones that were the apostles and close to the apostles. So you've got Jesus talking, we assume Jesus knew what he was talking about himself. His apostle heard that, they recorded that. But we're going one step further in the historical link. We're going to the disciples of the apostles, if you want, and the Church

Fathers after that. It's all a continuous thread of who Jesus was, and that's very powerful evidence. Share some of that with us.

**Bock:** Yes. What we're arguing is that in the traditional stream, which we're calling orthodoxy, that the tradition was passed on, and that this theology, this core theology the traditionalists had, was consistent as you work through these periods. And so after the period when the apostles pass away, you have the period of the Church Fathers who knew the apostles, that's why they're called that. And then the next group that comes along is called the apologists. They're the people who are actually making an active full defense of the faith. Justin Martyr being the first of those in the middle of the second century. So we're now into works that are being written at the same time these alternative works are starting to pop up on the scene like popcorn. And 2 Clement is an interesting work. It's a second century work,...

**Ankerberg:** Christian work.

**Bock:** Christian work, it's a part of this orthodox tradition that we're talking about, this is not...

**Ankerberg:** And this is criticizing the other side.

**Bock:** That's right. It's talking about, the other side is saying, remember, that the flesh is corrupt. And because it's corrupt it's not going to be saved, you're just going to redeem the spirit, or in some cases the soul, but matter gets left behind. You're not going to get a transformed flesh like 1 Corinthians 15 claims.

**Ankerberg:** And the Gnostics would say the Christians are wrong in their view, and the Christians have said that

they're wrong. So you've got two different conflicting opinions. And you're showing the Christian side. Now, what does the Christian side say?

**Bock:** Here's what 2 Clement says. This is 2 Clement 9:1-5: "Let none of us say that this flesh is not judged and does not rise again. Understand this: in what state were you saved, in what state did you recover your sight, if it is not while you were in this flesh? We must therefore guard the flesh as a temple of God. For just as you were called in the flesh, so you will come in the flesh. If Christ, the Lord who saved us, became flesh, even though he was originally spirit, and in that state called us, so also we shall receive our reward in this flesh." And so this is a statement about the humanity of Jesus alongside the divinity. Remember the Gnostic view is either that we've got this mix or, more often, that Jesus is uniquely divine and can't become completely human, he can only appear to be human. And so 2 Clement is writing against that.

**Ankerberg:** Okay, my listeners out there might be saying, their eyes might be glazing over and saying, "What difference does it make? I mean, what difference does it make that Jesus actually came in the flesh vs. being in the spirit? I mean, what does it... I mean, who cares!?"

**Bock:** Well, what traditional Christianity has said from the very beginning is that it matters a great deal that Jesus came in the flesh. John 1: "In the beginning the word was with God, the word was God." "The word," John 1:14, "became flesh." "He tabernacled amongst us." Hebrews says that we have a sympathetic High priest, that we have a representative. When he goes to take

our place on the cross it's because he represents us. He's lived a life that cleanses us. He shows us that it is possible to live such a life through the Spirit. All this is very important.

Remember that Gnosticism doesn't see us as the problem, other than in our knowledge: as long as we get the right knowledge—that we've got a divine spark in us—that's all that we need. But traditional Christianity said, "No, the problem's much deeper than that. And if you don't face up to this, you'll never really fix the problem. Because the problem is us and our responsibility and our accountability before a Creator."

So the Gnostic view of God has an uneducated human being, if you want to think of it that way, who needs knowledge. The traditional view of God has a human being who is flawed and who has turned against the Creator and needs to be reconciled with that Creator in order to reestablish a healthy relationship with God.

**Ankerberg:** And let's just put it where it's at. The traditional view has got all the historical evidence, and if it's right, that means Darrell Bock and John Ankerberg are responsible to that God for what we've done in this flesh. We are sinners. Now, we need an answer for our sin problem, and Jesus came to be that answer. Explain that.

**Bock:** Yes. Jesus came to be that answer. He's our representative. He is our substitute. He is the one who identifies with us. He shows that it is possible to be a human being and walk with God, through the work that he does in being obedient to God, etc. And all this flows into the forgiveness that he then offers and the restored relationship that he offers.

I like to say that eternal life is not about the fact that I'm going to live forever, or that one day I'm going to be transformed. Eternal life is about having an eternity of a quality of life with God. It's an unending life of quality with God. "I came that you might have life, and have it abundantly." It isn't just that it's going to last forever, or that I'm going to miss out on some judgment. No, I'm interested in salvation, not because of what I am spared, I'm interested in salvation because of what it does in my relationship to God. It puts me back in touch with the creator God.

**Ankerberg:** Alright. We've got one minute left. Summarize what we've seen today, and where we're going next week.

**Bock:** Well, what we've seen today is there really are difference between this Gnostic alternative Christianity—it's not historically grounded, it's historical claims are false, as well as the way it's describing the theology of what's going on. Both of them are false at both levels, and it can be shown to be false at those levels. The traditional Christianity has its roots going all the way back, back, back, back, back to the beginning, not only just to Jesus, but into Judaism. That's very, very important. And so part of the reaction to this group was not only that they had responded to Jesus inappropriately, they had responded inappropriately to the picture of God.

**Ankerberg:** Alright. I think we want to go next week to the salvation that is really being offered by Jesus Christ. Look, Jesus blew the apostles minds, he blew the minds of the people that heard him when he said, "I'm the I AM that brought your forefathers out of Egypt. I'm God standing here talking to you." Okay? But then Paul couldn't get over the fact

that this one who was the Messiah, who was God in the flesh, went to the cross and suffered for our sins. And the Gnostics say Jesus, when he went to the cross, didn't suffer any pain, because he didn't need to, okay? And we want to talk

about, what are the different plans of salvation that are presented, the core ideas that have come down through Christianity, and that are being presented today in Gnosticism. We'll talk it next week.

## Program 5

**Ankerberg:** Alright, we're talking about a broadside that's coming against the Christian church by some of our leading scholars in our universities today. It has to do with the books that were found at Nag Hammadi, Egypt. It's been put into this book, "The Gnostic Bible." And, Darrell, I want you to tell our audience what some of these professors at our leading universities are saying and why they think that the evidence shows we need to rewrite Christian history: Jesus isn't God, the God of the Bible—they've got a different God than the God of the Bible, and the whole plan of salvation is different. And they're saying the evidence supports that. You say they are dead wrong. But first of all, tell our audience, give them the flavor of what these scholars are saying to our students.

**Bock:** Well, as we've been suggesting, we do think that they are wrong historically. But we think what makes this attractive is it fits the spirit of our age. If we can make Jesus into just another religious teacher, then we've removed the problem of his uniqueness. If we can affirm religious diversity, so that every religious approach to God is on equal ground, then we'll have less conflict in the world and we'll get along better. I think that's part of what motivates some of this.

Let me give you a couple of examples of material coming from these teachers. This is a quote, well this is actually a blurb about a book that Marvin Meyer wrote, entitled "The Gnostic Gospels of Jesus," that came out last year. And this is how the catalog trumpeted the arrival of this book: "These texts, especially when taken together, present an image of Jesus as the ultimate wisdom teacher, a kind of mysterious Jewish Zen Master, who scandalized listeners by his radical egalitarianism regarding women, slaves, the poor, the marginalized, as having equal status and by his insistence on truly living the message."

Now, if you think through that list of things, you'll see that we've said that Jesus is wise, we've said that Jesus is Jewish in his background, and yet he kind of fits in with Zen. He's an egalitarian; he cares about the slaves, the poor, the marginalized. You can see the feel of this. It really appeals to the spirit of our age. And just like the Gnosticism of the Gnostic gospels was an attempt to combine and syncretize Christianity with the philosophy, the Greek philosophy of its time, this is an attempt to syncretize, I think, Christianity with a kind of acceptable cultural angle of things that people, many people, care about in our culture.

**Ankerberg:** You're also saying that some of these guys are selling you a

product that even the Gnostic gospels sometimes do not support.

**Bock:** Absolutely. And later on in this show we're going to show you that. Let me give you another taste of this. This is from "Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas." You know, you can't have one of these titles that has the word "gospel" in it without having an adjective: secret, or missing, newly-discovered, or something like this. This is Elaine Pagels, [who] teaches at Princeton, and she says this: "But the discovery of Thomas's Gospel shows us that other early Christians held quite different understandings of the gospel. For what John rejects as religiously inadequate: the conviction that the divine dwells as light within all beings"—See we all have the spark of God within us; all we need to do is find it—"is much like the hidden good news that Thomas's Gospel proclaims. Many Christians today who read the Gospel of Thomas assume at first that it is simply wrong, and deservedly called heretical. Yet what Christians have disparagingly called Gnostic and heretical, sometimes turns out to be forms of Christian teaching that are merely unfamiliar to us; unfamiliar precisely because of the active and successful opposition of Christians such as John."

And I say, that idea is incomplete. It's not unfamiliar because of the successful opposition, active opposition, of Christians such as John, it's unfamiliar because it wasn't the Christianity of the beginning, as our evidence shows. And neither is it reflective of the Christianity that Jesus taught when he presented himself and his work, and when his followers picked up the baton and continued his teaching and developed it in light of his resurrection.

**Ankerberg:** What else is going on here?

**Bock:** Well, I think they're playing off the hype that you can develop when you can say something's hidden, something's secret, something's been lost and found. There's drama that comes up with that. That has a flare of mystery about it. And I think they've been playing off of that element as well.

But the real truth is that we knew about this material long ago. It isn't new. It isn't hidden. And it isn't secret. The writings of the Church Fathers in the second and third centuries described what these people held, told us what they believed, and criticized it.

Now, the one thing that is new is, rather than hearing it through the opposition of the critics from the tradition side against this stuff, we now have the stuff directly. But that allows us to lay this stuff next to what the Church Fathers said in the second century, Church Fathers like Irenaeus, and say, "Did Irenaeus basically get this right?" Well, when we read what Irenaeus wrote, most scholars today say, "Well, you know what he's describing? He's describing stuff in 'The Apocryphon of John.' Which means he got it right."

So they're playing up and hyping and spinning this stuff, and historically we've known about it for centuries. And it kind of died a death, and then now they're trying to resurrect it again on the basis of these new finds. And they're overplaying the evidence.

**Ankerberg:** Okay.

**Bock:** That's really what's going on.

**Ankerberg:** Go back and review for our people, the new scholars are also saying, "Look, this was just one of many

options in the first 200 years of Christianity.” Some say it was just side-by-side. Some would say it’s there by itself. But the fact is, regardless, it was a legitimate option. Where we are saying, “Look you’ve got real, historical links that go back to the real Jesus. You might not like this information; you might not like that Jesus is God; you might not like that you’re a sinner; you might not like that he died on the cross for your sin problem, but this is real, solid stuff, and you’re face to face with this guy that actually showed up, named Jesus Christ, who made these claims. Alright? Show the links, because they would say this throw-away to the students, “Well, you didn’t have a Bible in the first 200 years.”

**Bock:** Yes. Really, the turning point here, if you listen to the story of the made-over history, the revisionist history, that is coming is that we ought to blame Irenaeus and Tertullian in the late second century, the early third century, Constantine, the Council of Nicea—now we’re coming into the fourth century—for orthodox Christianity.

Now, everything that I have been citing to you up to this point has come from the period before that. And the reason we’re going backwards is, we’re trying to show there is a consistent theology that is orthodox that is running through these writers. And these core beliefs were passed on from generation to generation by tradition and by these writings that were emerging that eventually became part of the Canon and part of the Bible. But the reason they were accepted and responded to and recognized is because they expressed the theology that the church held to. And so we work backwards.

So we start with someone, say, like

Justin Martyr. Justin Martyr is writing in the middle of the second century, in 155. And let me just read you a little summary of the type of thing that he said. This is in his first “Apology,” from chapters 12 and 13: “Our teacher of these things is Jesus Christ, who also was born for this purpose, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the times of Tiberius Caesar. And that we reasonably worship him, having learned that he is son of the true God himself. And holding him in the second place, and the prophetic Spirit in the third, we will prove. For they proclaim our madness to consist in this: that we give to a crucified man a place second to the unchangeable and eternal God, the creator of all, for they did not discern the mystery that is herein, to which, as we have made plain to you, we pray you to give heed.”

Now, a little of that English at the end is a little tricky, but here’s basically what you’re getting from Justin Martyr. He’s saying, you know, the person that we worship is Jesus Christ. We hold him in second place to God. That’s a reference to the ranking within the function of the Trinity. You have the Father, and then you have the Son, and then you have the Spirit. And he’s talking about the work that he performed in terms of a crucified man.

So you have all the basics of faith. And if you will run that backwards in time from Justin Martyr, then back into the books that are written in the 90s in the New Testament, all the way back to the books that are written in the 50s in the New Testament, by Paul, you will see this teaching consistently coming forth all the way through. And if you think about what led to Paul’s conversion and the way he responds, and the experience that he

represents, you push it all the way back to the 30s and the time of the resurrection and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

**Ankerberg:** These historical links are vital for scholars. And the fact is, you can't get around it. Sources rule!

**Bock:** That's right.

**Ankerberg:** You can't just hype it, you can't discard it. And a lot of the scholars today are ignoring this. They don't even talk about this line. Why?

**Bock:** Well, actually, what they're trying to do, they don't ignore it; they try and discredit it. And when they try and discredit it, they'll say things like, "Well, you know, the resurrection, there are little differences in the stories." Or, "The resurrection is something that came later, it didn't come early. I mean, after all, Paul's writing in the 50s, so there's been 20 years for this to develop."

But what they're missing is, you've got to explain the conversion of Paul. And everyone recognizes the fact that Paul was converted in the 30s. He was converted within, some people say, as short as a year or two years within the time of the events of the crucifixion and resurrection. He knew exactly what was going on in Jerusalem. And we get to hear his voice directly as to what turned him from a persecutor into one of the people who was one of the most prominent people in the church, and that all is historically well grounded. There probably is no event in history that is as well grounded as the conversion of Paul. And that's rooted in the resurrection and the claims of Jesus.

**Ankerberg:** Alright, we're going to take a break. When we come back we're going to talk about a broadside on the resurrection, and a broadside on

what Jesus did at the cross and what salvation is. The Lord's Supper, what is that all about? And these are two powerful pieces of evidence that show up in all of the writings, and it's so consistent. You've got to stick with us. We'll be right back.

## BREAK

**Ankerberg:** Alright, if you've been into your local bookstore, you've seen "Lost Christianities," talking about the Gnostic gospels and how this is a broadside from our scholars in some of our major universities to our students on campus, that we ought to chuck church history as we know it, we want to revise it, and we want to come up with this new plan of salvation. And they're discarding some of the key elements of traditional Christianity, one being, we don't need a resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and we don't need Jesus dying on the cross for the sins of humanity.

Darrell, there is strong evidence, whether you like it or not, it's the evidence that came down from Jesus, from Jesus himself. Talk about the Lord's Supper, or the resurrection, either one.

**Bock:** Well, let's start with the resurrection, since we've been working backwards towards it. You know, we've got to be able to explain what caused Paul to move from Saul to become Paul. Saul the persecutor to Paul the apostle. What caused that? Well, Paul tells us that it was his experience with the risen Jesus. Well, what's the presupposition for that? The presupposition for that is the resurrection itself.

Now what I'd like to do is explain why

the resurrection could not, out of its Jewish background, be a created event by the early church, which is what many of these scholars will suggest. They'll suggest the resurrection was created by the early church to try and get a Jesus who had been crucified to continue to live on to generate the movement. Because now he was gone from the scene, and so it was the best explanation they could put forward.

But in the context of Judaism, out of which this came, the idea that someone would be raised physically from the dead—in the midst of history—is an innovation. Jews believed in a resurrection. The resurrection that they believed in was the idea that, at the end, everyone would be raised and there would be a judgment. So had this been done in the context of the expectations of Judaism, what we would have seen is a Jesus raised at the end of time, who then is inserted into the role of judge. But that's not what we get.

**Ankerberg:** What you're saying is that if the disciples had made it up, they would have made it up in that Jewish frame of mind, because they were all Jewish, basically.

**Bock:** Exactly right. And those were the categories that they had. Something caused them to shift their thinking on resurrection. And we know this was the Jewish view, because a book like 2 Maccabbes 7 has persecuted Jews who were getting ready to lose tongues and limbs, say, "You can destroy this body now, but I'm going to get it back in the end." So we know they believed in a physical resurrection.

By the way, that's in counter distinction to the Gnostics, who didn't hold a physical dimension to resurrection at all.

So that goes back into Judaism as well. The reaction to Gnostic Christianity was not just a Christian reaction; it was a reaction to the Jewish roots. So that's one reason why it wouldn't be created.

The second reason why it wouldn't be created is the issue of the women. You wouldn't have women discover the empty tomb as your first event. You wouldn't create that in the culture. Why? Because women didn't have any role as witnesses in the culture. So if you were making up a story, you wouldn't make up a story that has your first witnesses be people who don't count as witnesses. That doesn't make sense.

So these counter cultural elements in the resurrection story speak to its credibility. And it means, then, that the resurrection is likely not made up, that the innovation comes as a result of a real event that changed the disciples' minds; and the women are seen as the witnesses at the empty tomb at the start because they were the witnesses at the empty tomb at the start, and there was no way to eradicate that from the story.

**Ankerberg:** Alright, everybody take a breath, because, I mean, the conclusion of that is, you're face to face with a Jesus that rose from the dead.

**Bock:** Exactly right. And we know this, . . . And now we'll kind of pull together what we've been saying through all the shows, we know this through the rites that the early church practiced. And what I mean by that is that when you come to the Lord's Supper, and you take the cup, and you take the bread, and you do that in the context of solemn worship, because this is the Lord's Table, that itself mirrors the Last Supper. And you recognize that the bread and the cup represent the body and the blood of Jesus,

you're right onto the central point of his work.

So that if we think through the nature of Paul's conversion, and we think through the nature of the Last Supper, or the Lord's Table, both of which go very, very, very far back into the roots of Christianity, they both go into those core events leading to the core teaching, we've got the death of Jesus Christ, and we've got the resurrection of Jesus Christ, right at the hub of what Christianity is all about.

And I think that the other point to see here is that when you actually go back to the Last Supper, and you ask yourself, what is that event? That event is a Passover meal, or at least it happens in the Passover week, and Jesus is changing Jewish liturgy. What gives him the authority to do that? How can we go from having this look back to the Exodus to having it now look back to his impending crucifixion? See, and that's part of why it made an impression.

But it also communicates the authority of Jesus. Here is someone who has authority over the very worship structures that go back to the God of Israel. And this is why the Jewish-Christian connection is so important. Because Christianity is inheriting from Judaism its view of God, its view of resurrection. And it's those things that the Gnostic alternative Christianities are rejecting.

There's another way to say this. And maybe this is being a little to clever, but I think you don't hear talk about alternative Judaisms at this point, but really, the alternative Christianities are also alternative Judaisms. And that's why the traditional Christians rejected it, because they were rooted in the basic doctrines of Judaism: that there was one

God who was the creator, and there is a resurrection coming at the end where we'll all be accountable to him; and it will be physical as well as spiritual.

**Ankerberg:** Alright. If you're talking to students out there—and you are right now—that are going to go to universities where some of these professors are presenting these views, what do you want them to know? Summarize what you've been saying; what are the punch lines? Why is this wrong? Why is this right? Why are you stuck with the Jesus, a real Jesus, of traditional Christianity? Summarize it.

**Bock:** Alternative Christianities are wrong because the sources that they're working with are late. Alternative Christianities are wrong because the sources that they're working with do not go all the way back to Jesus. Alternative Christianity is wrong because it's working with the wrong kind of problem. I don't need to find an actualization into myself in order to discover the way to God.

Jesus has got to be a key to Christianity in order for Christianity to be Christianity. Without it, it's "Jesus-anity" or something else, but it's not Christianity.

Traditional Christianity is right because it goes all the way back to Jesus. Traditional Christianity is right because the sources are well rooted. Traditional Christianity is right because it identified the right kind of problem. That problem is a problem within us—our tendency to turn away from God into rebellion. And what Jesus provided is a way to turn us back, to bring reconciliation.

And this isn't a matter of a classroom, this is a matter of life. Life and death.

And the offer that God is making is not an intellectual offer about history. It's not even an issue of ideas or wisdom or how to live life better. He's not offering you a pop religion, which is what these alternatives are doing. What he is offering you is an ongoing eternal quality relationship with God. Forget the fact that if you come to Jesus you're not going to be judged. That's not why God wants to save you. God doesn't want to save you to spare you from something. God wants to save you to bring you to someone—himself. And he does that by showing the depth of his love in the work and person of Jesus Christ, the offer of the forgiveness of sins. And if you'll just trust him for that, he will bring you into relationship with him by doing two major things: forgiving your sins, and giving you his spirit so you can be in touch with him. And you can be in touch with him forever.

Jesus said, "I came to give you life, and to give it to you abundantly." So we're talking about quality of life here. You know, the world goes all over the place searching for quality of life. And it

can be found, very simply, in trusting Jesus Christ.

**Ankerberg:** We've been talking about what the scholars are saying at Princeton, Yale, Harvard, many other schools today. What the popular books are doing is copying what the scholars are saying, and now you've got "The Da Vinci Code," as one of them, that's sold over 25 million copies. You've got a movie coming out. And one of the things that you have written about has to do with these Gnostic sources that said, "Hey, you know, Jesus was actually married to Mary Magdalene." And the Church, "The Da Vinci Code" suggests that the church wanted to keep that secret, because if Jesus was married it would destroy this whole idea that he was deity, and it would just destroy the church as you know it.

We're going to talk about all that and let you unscramble what "The Da Vinci Code" hype is all about, and what the sources are saying, and what traditional Christianity shows. Joins us next week.

## Program 6

**Ankerberg:** Alright, we're talking with one of my favorite guests, Dr. Darrell Bock, and we're talking about "The Hidden Gospels." And I want to bring it to "The Da Vinci Code." Most of you have probably read the book "The Da Vinci Code." It's coming out in a movie right now. And there is a real key point that has gotten everybody's attention. Television specials have been done on this topic. And that is, was Jesus married to Mary Magdalene? And was his marriage kept hidden, kept secret, for centuries for the reason that the Church feared that it would undermine his claims to divinity.

Now, you've written this book, "Breaking the Da Vinci Code," which is a great book. Summarize what you saw in "The Da Vinci Code," and tell me the hype, the historical errors, why it was based on the "hidden gospels," and what does true history tell us here about this. Was Jesus married to Mary Magdalene?

**Bock:** Okay, let's summarize what we've already covered. We've already suggested that Jesus didn't become divine at the Council of Nicea, and Constantine didn't have anything to do with it. That goes back to the very beginning roots of Christianity, and can be seen in the encounter that he has with the Jewish leadership. So we've taken care of that one.

We've talked about the fact that the

Canon, even though the naming of the books didn't end up being finalized until the fourth century, that the Gospels themselves were functioning by the end of the second century, and that if you look at the material within the Gospels, there are traditional materials, hymns, and worship rites that were teaching theology, and that theology was consistent all the way through. That includes the doctrine of God, the person of Jesus, and the nature of salvation. And we've gone through that already in great detail.

The one detail that's left to deal with is the idea that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. And in some ways this is the easiest point to deal with. Beliefnet.com asked me and John Dominic Crossan, who is a theological liberal, to write on the question, Was Jesus married to Mary Magdalene? And we both responded that he was single, that he wasn't married to her.

And that was interesting in and of itself, because as you can tell, it isn't very often that conservatives and liberals agree with one another. In fact, I tell my classes that when you get a conservative and a liberal agreeing about something on the historical Jesus, it's probably true.

But what's interesting was the way John Dominic Crossan made the argument. He basically used a proverb, and the proverb went, "If it acts like a duck,

quacks like a duck, walks like a duck, it must be a camel.” And he said that’s the argument. The argument is, all the evidence points to the fact that Jesus was single. In fact, we don’t have a single text that states that Jesus was married anywhere—in the alternative materials or in the traditional materials. And yet the claim is that two texts that suggest that Jesus had a special relationship to Mary Magdalene get magnified into being the fact that she was married.

This is just unlikely. We have gobs of material; I have 38 volumes in my library in my office on church history. Now, these 38 volumes are hundreds of pages long, single spaced, small font, okay, double columned, okay. And out of all that material, 38 volumes, multiple hundred pages each, there’s not a single text that says that Jesus was married. The idea that Jesus was married is so far fetched that even liberal and conservative Christians agree it’s not the case.

**Ankerberg:** Pull back some of the statements that are made in “The Da Vinci Code” and unscramble them.

**Bock:** Well, one of the most interesting parts of “The Da Vinci Code” is the way in which women are handled, and so we probably should handle some of the statements about women and the role of women in the early church. For example, the suggestion is made that the early church taught that Mary Magdalene was an apostle to the apostles, and therefore that she held a very significant office. Now, there are two problems with this statement, which actually, if you trace it down, is a slightly inaccurate representation of something Hippolytus said. Hippolytus lived at the end...

**Ankerberg:** Christian.

**Bock:** Christian, and lived at the end of the second century. And he wrote about the women who were witnesses at the tomb—all of them, not just Mary—and said they were apostles, plural, to the apostles. But they weren’t using apostles in the technical sense of church office. They were using apostles with its generic, everyday meaning. An apostle is someone who is commissioned with a message, and who speaks on behalf of another.

An example of an apostle in our day is the Press Secretary. The Press Secretary speaks for the President. Or at least he speaks for the President unless he says something wrong, and then the President will distance himself from it. But the general point is that when the Press Secretary speaks, the White House speaks. When the White House speaks, the President speaks.

**Ankerberg:** He’s the apostle for the President.

**Bock:** He’s an apostle for the President, exactly right. That’s the picture. Well, these women were apostles for Jesus, because their message was, “He is risen, and the resurrection is real.” And so, in that sense, they were apostles to the apostles. Not in a church office sense. So that puts a different twist on both what the Church Father was saying, and what the evidence was about the role of offices for women in the earliest church. At least, in this particular case.

Now, let’s deal with another issue related to the issue of women, because that’s a culturally sensitive issue related to “The Da Vinci Code,” and that’s the claims about the Divine Feminine. And

one of these we've actually already covered, and that is the role of Sophia, or Pista Sophia, the Divine Feminine in the creation in these alternative Christianities, that she is responsible for the flawed creation according to some of these accounts.

So the question you've got to ask yourself is, if we're going to lift up the role of women and say that she's a part of divinity, we'd better think about what kind of Divine Feminine we want! Because in this particular case, she's responsible for the flaws in creation. And I don't think my wife would appreciate it if I walked up to her and said, "You know what, honey? Your progenitor is really responsible for why we're in all this mess!" That's not a very affirming role of femininity!

**Ankerberg:** Slow that down. The fact is, when they say the Divine Feminine, they're talking about God. And these Gnostic texts talked about Father, Mother and Son being in the Godhead.

**Bock:** That's right.

**Ankerberg:** Some of them had the Mother-God as an underling who actually created the world and screwed it all up.

**Bock:** That's right.

**Ankerberg:** Okay, and the fact is that therefore matter is evil, and so on. But Dan Brown in his "Da Vinci Code" is making this sound like this was the thing back in Jesus' day. This is what Jesus taught.

**Bock:** Yes, and these men suppressed this. They were suppressing this feminine element. It was a way of keeping the women under control. That is a very poor reading of early church history. And let me give you another text that shows you this even more, how do I

want to say it, more vividly. It's a very famous text; it comes from our most famous alternative text. It is "The Gospel of Thomas." It is the last saying in that Gospel. It's "The Gospel of Thomas" saying 114. That's in case anyone wants to have devotions in it later.

Now, I need to issue a cultural warning before I read this. This is very politically incorrect, so I'm just warning you.

**Ankerberg:** But this is what the current scholars, this is one of the things they kind of leave out, but this is part, if you accept what they're saying, you've got to accept this too.

**Bock:** Exactly right. And I will say to Elaine Pagels' credit, she actually tries to tackle this text, and we'll talk about what she says in just a second. Here's what the text says. Peter is complaining that Mary is not worthy of kingdom life. And Jesus replies, "I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who shall make herself male will enter the kingdom." End of saying, end of "Gospel of Thomas." So it's quite a climactic note. And the point here is that the woman has to become a man in order to enter the kingdom. Now, that's not a very positive view of the role of femininity. We're just going to wipe it off the map in order for people to get into the kingdom. So when these groups are suggesting that these texts are pro-women, they are selling you a bill of good.

**Ankerberg:** Alright. Let's take a break. We're going to come back, we'll talk about other things that are in "The Da Vinci Code," as well as this thing that the Council of Nicea actually brought about the Canon and invented this whole concept that Jesus was God; before

that, nobody ever thought that he was God. And we'll talk about it when we come right back.

## BREAK

**Ankerberg:** Alright, we're talking about some of the claims that are being made in the popular book "The Da Vinci Code." We're talking about "The Hidden Gospels," what you find in real history. And one of the questions that surfaces in the book, Darrell, is, the fact is, if Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene, would that have destroyed his being deity? Interesting question.

**Bock:** It is an interesting question, and Christians don't agree on the answer. Some will say, well, if there had been a descendent there would have been some question as to who this person would have been, whether he would have attracted attention, practical kinds of questions. And then the more theological amongst us asks, you know, how do you deal with the sin/sinless problem, if Jesus actually had given birth to a physical child. So they think it's theoretically impossible.

I think it's theoretically possible. My view would be that, had Jesus given birth to a child, all this would have done was to show that he was human: he got tired, he had to drink, he had to sleep, etc.; he died; you know, and so it's just another aspect of his humanity, and it wouldn't touch the perception of his divinity at all.

What's interesting is that when the ABC special was done, I was asked this question, a church historical colleague of mine was asked this question, and a Catholic priest was asked this question.

None of us knew we were asked this question—all being asked the same question—to see what our reaction was. We all three gave the same answer, "No, this didn't impact, this wouldn't impact, the perception of Jesus' divinity at all." So the premise upon which the book is base, for the cover-up, and destroying of divinity, itself is very, very questionable.

**Ankerberg:** Oh, yes. If Jesus had been married to Mary Magdalene, every one of the Gospels would have said that. I mean, they would have gone out of their way to point that out.

**Bock:** No need to be embarrassed about it at all.

**Ankerberg:** Alright. Talking about the deity of Jesus Christ, you know, "Da Vinci Code" says everything your father told you about the church is wrong, and implying that all the things the Church Fathers told us about the church are wrong, and that Jesus' deity was actually cooked up by the Council of Nicea. Well, if it wasn't cooked up by the Council of Nicea, and it's based on something else, people want to know what was it based upon? And also, about this Canon, okay? If we didn't have the New Testament until after 325 AD, what did people refer to in the first 200 years of Christianity? Because these are the important questions where the public is at right now.

**Bock:** Okay, let me work backwards. Let's start with the Council of Nicea and what it is and then just go backwards. Because it's also a good way to review what we've been saying.

**Ankerberg:** Uh huh.

**Bock:** In AD 325, Constantine called together a Council, and he drew together the Bishops of Christendom of the time,

216 gathered there. They did not gather to vote on the divinity of Jesus. In fact, there was never a vote taken at the Council of Nicea. All that was done is that a creed was written, known as the Nicene Creed.

The debate that existed about Jesus at that conference was not WHETHER Jesus was divine, but HOW he was divine. And there were two primary views: One view was called Arianism, coming from the person, Arius. And what he believed is that Jesus was the first and greatest exalted created being, basically. He existed before the creation, but he was the first created being. But he was still son of God.

The alternative that ended up being placed into the Creed was the statement that Jesus was eternally with the Father. That they shared the same personhood, if you would, they both were “very God.” They were totally divine. And that was what was decided upon.

Now, there was no vote at Nicea, as I said. What you did is you signed on to the Creed once it was created. Of the 216 Bishops who were there, 214 signed on to the Creed. Now, if I do my math, and think of this as a political contest, there were no hanging chads at Nicea, it wasn't that close. CNN didn't come on at 2:00 in the morning saying, “We're going to be up until the morning counting the votes.” Okay? What we have is a plurality—A plurality? A MAJORITY!—of, what is it, almost 99%, around the 99? Now, I would guess that most politicians, if they were in an election, would hail a 99% vote.

**Ankerberg:** Yes, and Dan Brown, in “The Da Vinci Code” just lies through his character at that point when he says it was “a close vote. He hardly made it.”

**Bock:** That's right. Okay, now that's the situation in 325. Now, if we just work back, Jesus is both divine and human; the idea that he's just divinity is wrong, the idea that he's just human is wrong. But he's both divine and human. And you can see it in statements that go from Irenaeus and Tertullian in the third and the end of the second century, to Justin Martyr in the middle of the second century, back to the Church Fathers at the beginning of the second century. And then you dive into the books that are now a part of our Bible, and you see that they're all the way through there as well. And it goes all the way back to the implications of what Jesus said and taught that caused him to be crucified.

And these things are being summarized, not only in these books, because another question that we have to ask is, and you raised it earlier, is what did people appeal to when there wasn't a New Testament to appeal to? A functioning New Testament to appeal to?

Well, they may have appealed to one or two of these books that might have been read in their local churches, or a handful of them. The later we get, the more books were probably available for them to appeal to, and the more they would have appealed to them. But before 180, when Irenaeus tells us there are four gospels functioning, the epistles of Paul are functioning, what did they do?

Well, what they did is, they had these little snippets of theological tradition that summarized what the core doctrines were. Or they had hymnic portions that they were singing that summarized what these key doctrines were. Or they had the Lord's Table, the Eucharist, which summarized the most central act of

Jesus' sacrifice on their behalf.

And all of this goes back into the teaching of the apostles and the teaching of the ministry of Jesus. And so what you've got is, you know, you sometimes hear the discussion that there's a purple thread of redemption running through Church History, well, what you really have is a traditional rope of theology—I'm not going to call it a thread, because it's thick, okay—it's a rope of theology running all the way from the Nicene Creed, all the way back into the ministry of Jesus. And when you tug on that rope, it's not coming apart, because it's made up of several corroborative strands.

**Ankerberg:** Fantastic stuff, Darrell. Now, summarize all that we've seen in light of the hype that's going on about these secret Gnostic gospels that have come out, these "hidden gospels" that are supposed to take the place here, and we need to rewrite church history. In light of what we're saying, keep going, and let's step back and get the broader picture yet of what scholarship is saying. You've got these hidden gospels, that's the popular view, as "The Da Vinci Code", but the fact is, what the scholars are saying over here, take that and relationship to this thread, this rope going right back to Jesus.

**Bock:** And I think what I would say is this, that if you look at this alternative Christian theology, it not only doesn't fit historically in terms of the nature of the sources, and lateness of the sources, but it also is a violation of the fundamental genealogical relationship of Christianity to Judaism. And so the reason there was a reaction was not only because it had a faulty view of Jesus, but it also had a faulty view of God. And that combination,... it had a faulty view of

resurrection, and those combination of factors meant that at several different levels it was flipping switches, okay?

The innovation is the resurrection, a physical resurrection of Jesus in the midst of history rather than at the end, which is where Judaism had it. What caused that innovation? What caused that innovation, traditional Christianity says, is the resurrection itself.

Now, what is the resurrection, theologically, and what does it mean to this discussion? Well, it means everything. Because the resurrection is the vindication of God about Jesus and his claims. It is God's vote in this matter. And when it comes to theology, only one vote counts, and that's the vote of God.

And so when Jesus is laid in the tomb, and he's left for dead, and his followers are a little distraught because they think it's all over; and then Jesus raises from the dead, and he's at the right hand of the Father, and he begins to appear to people, what God was saying in that act is, "This is my son." And when the Spirit was distributed to the people of God afterwards, he was saying, "This is my promise which comes through my son." And the distribution of the Spirit shows that forgiveness of sins is on offer, and that God is at work within the lives of people. And that, my friends, is good news.

**Ankerberg:** Doesn't mean we understand it all clearly.

**Bock:** That's right.

**Ankerberg:** But the fact is, you're face to face with this guy that did rise from the dead and claimed to be God's son. That's what we're looking at.

**Bock:** What they understood, as a result of that act, is that everything that

Jesus claimed about who he was and what he was doing in relationship to representing humanity and in relationship to being sent by God, there are lots of statements in the Gospel, “I have come” in order to do certain things, or the son of man has come in order to do certain things, “to seek and save the lost,” “to be a ransom for many,” etc. All those statements become truth claims. They’re not only truth claims, they become the truth.

**Ankerberg:** One last 30-second comment. The person that’s been listening to all of this says, “Okay, I believe Jesus is special, he is the historical Jesus, he did claim to be God, what do I do with that information?”

**Bock:** What you do with that information is you turn in faith to Jesus Christ

and say, “I believe that I’m a sinner. I believe what you taught is true. I believe that you have taken my place, and that you’re offering your forgiveness. I want that forgiveness. I believe that you are the one whom God raised from the dead, that you’re at the right hand of the Father and you are my Lord. And I am now entering into a relationship that you’re offering to me so that I can follow you forever and ever. Amen.”

**Ankerberg:** Folks, I hope that you will do that. Anything that you see that Darrell Bock has written in the bookstore, buy it. It’s great stuff. Darrell, thank you. Thank you very much for sharing this information.

**Bock:** My pleasure.

## **Appendix: The Nicene Creed**

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe one holy catholic [universal] and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.