

That Christ *did not die on the cross* . . . is maintained by Muslims (and is mentioned in the Koran)<sup>1</sup> to this day, and one particular Gnostic tenet has it that Jeshua passed the “cup” on to another, his “evil” twin—and that he himself escaped to laugh another day. This is one of the lesser known but more intriguing of Gnostic “heresies,” namely that pertaining to Judas Thomas, Jeshua’s twin brother (Thomas means “twin”). John D. Turner, for example, writes in his introduction to *The Book of Thomas the Contender* (Nag Hammadi Library): “Thomas the *athlete* (i.e., ‘one who struggles’ against the fiery passions of the body)... As the saviour’s twin, Thomas had a claim to direct insight into the nature of the Saviour and his teaching.” The text itself has Jesus saying: “Now since it has been said that you are my twin and my true companion, examine yourself and learn who you are, in what way you exist and how you come to be. Since you will be called my brother, it is not fitting that you be ignorant of yourself.”

It is around about now that the paranoid’s investigations begin to pay off in gold: alarm bells start to sound, visions of the Universal Solvent dance before his eyes. For not only is this precise idea a blight and a curse upon orthodox teachings, but also a veritable assault to reason. Yet mythopoetically, it has that ring of Truth—or truth outside Truth—to it. The Immaculate Conception was *twins: two bodies*. The redeemer and the betrayer, sons of salvation and perdition both in one. The idea of a single consciousness or soul divided between two bodies is embodied in the myth of the *doppelganger*; recall the twin brothers Horus and Set, or Cain and Abel. And now we have Jesus and Judas? In the paranoid’s version, Judas, like all other evil twins of mythology, is Jesus’ devil: his *double*. And Jesus himself says it: “Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a *devil*?” (John 6, 70.)<sup>2</sup> There are hints abounding in the orthodox New Testament, but it is only in the apocryphal texts that it becomes explicit: “After his baptism, the Savior foretells his ascent at the end of his mission on earth. In its anger, Nature will try to seize him, but will only manage to crucify Soldas (that is, the terrestrial Jesus).”<sup>3</sup>

In the *Apocalypse of Peter*:

The savior said to me, “He whom you saw on the tree, glad and laughing, is the living Jesus. But this one into whose hands and feet they drive nails is his fleshy part, which is the substitute being put to shame, *the one who came into being in his likeness*. But look at him and me... he whom they crucified is the

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1: “They denied the truth and uttered a monstrous falsehood against Mary. They declared: ‘We have put to death the Messiah Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of Allah.’ They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but they thought they did.” *Koran*, “Women” (Penguin edition).

2: It has been noted that in most cases where the word devil appears in the New Testament, it has been translated from the Greek word *daimon*; this corresponds more or less with the German *doppelganger* (as in the French, where *diable* comes from *double*, or vice versa.)

3: Michael Roberge, introduction to *The Paraphrase of Shem*, Nag Hammadi Library. See also Blavatsky’s *Secret Doctrine*: “...regenerated man, the mortal who, by crucifying the man of flesh and his passions on the Procrustean bed of torture, became reborn as an Immortal, leaving the body, the animal man, behind him, tied on the Cross of Initiation like an empty chrysalis, the Ego-Soul became as free as a butterfly.”

first born, and the home of demons and the stony vessel in which they dwell, of Elohim, of the cross which is under the Law. But he who stands near him is the living Saviour, the first in him, whom they seized and released, who stands joyfully looking at those who did him violence, while they are divided amongst themselves. Therefore he laughs at their lack of perception, knowing that they are born blind. So then the one susceptible to suffering shall come, since the body is the substitute. But what they released was my incorporeal body. [Emphasis added]

If Judas was “in fact” (in the original, uncontaminated myth) Jesus’ twin brother, it is perfectly consistent that he would have willingly taken “the bitter pill” for himself, as a kind of deserved *atonement*—instant karma if you will—by which he might redeem himself for his former sins. That it was *he*, the “betrayers,” who died on the cross—the sacrificed flesh—while his better half stood by laughing? (More than enough to give the Pope a stroke; and yet the idea can be glimpsed again in the Gospel, in the metaphor of the two thieves, one of whom repents, the other of whom doesn’t.)<sup>4</sup> At the end of *the Book of Thomas the Contender*,<sup>5</sup> Jesus advises his brother: “Watch and pray... And as you pray, you will find rest, for you have left behind the sufferings and disgrace. For when you come forth from the suffering and passions of the body, you will receive rest from the good one, and you will reign with the king, you joined with him and him with you, from now on, for ever and ever.”

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4: One can begin to see why such a “heresy” would not have been too popular in Christian circles. It gives the *lie* to the central tenet of the religion, because the head-corner-stone of Christianity has always been the *crucifixion*, even though it was *this* that numbered Christ with the transgressors, and this misguided focus that led to a religion of pain, suffering and guilt.

5: The name itself is intriguing, and brings to mind Terry Malloy’s famous speech from *On the Waterfront*: “I could of been a contender!” Did Judas Thomas indeed aspire to the messianic destiny himself? If so, then he got it, though recognition is slow in coming.