



# The Lost Way: How Two Forgotten Gospels Are Rewriting the Story of Christian Origins

*Stephen J. Patterson*

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In this rigorously researched and thoughtful study, a leading Jesus Seminar scholar reveals the dramatic story behind the modern discovery of the earliest gospels, accounts that do not portray Jesus exclusively as a martyr but recover a lost ancient Christian tradition centered on Jesus as a teacher of wisdom.

The church has long advocated the Pauline view of Jesus as deity and martyr, emphasizing his death and resurrection. But another tradition also thrived from Christianity's beginnings, one that portrayed Jesus as a teacher of wisdom. In *The Lost Way*, Stephen Patterson, a leading New Testament scholar and former head of the Jesus Seminar, explores this lost ancient tradition and its significance to the faith.

Patterson explains how scholars have uncovered a Gospel that preceded at least three of those in the Bible, which is called Q. He painstakingly demonstrates how historical evidence points to the existence of this common source in addition to Mark—recognized as the earliest Gospel—that both Matthew and Luke used to write their accounts. Q contained a collection of Jesus's teachings without any narrative content and without accounts of the passion, though being the earliest version shared among his first followers—scripture that embodies a very different orientation to the Christian faith.

Patterson also explores other examples of this wisdom tradition, from the discovery of the Gospel of Thomas; to the emergence of Apollos, a likely teacher of Christian wisdom; to the main authority of the church in Jerusalem, Jesus's brother James. *The Lost Way* offers a profound new portrait of Jesus—one who can show us a new way to live.

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