

Karen L. King. *The Gospel of Mary of Magdalene* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2003),

In Gospel of Mary 3, the themes of sin, adultery, and death are raised by Jesus in response to Peter's question "What is the sin of the world?" The Savior replied, "You yourselves are what produces sin when you act in accordance with the nature of adultery, which is called 'sin'." This is why you get sick and die; because you love what deceives you.¹

In Rom 7-8, Paul is writing to fellow Christians in Rome about how Gentiles can receive salvation from God through faith in Christ. His argument centers around the question of how Gentiles can overcome the carnal desires and passion to which they are enslaved in the face of their refusal to acknowledge the true God. Paul argues that they cannot overcome these sinful passions through the law, for only through faith in Christ's death and resurrection (or through Christ's faithfulness) will they be able to serve God in the new life of the Spirit. Paul likens situation of Gentiles who are dominated by sinful passion to that of an adulterous woman.²

For the Gospel of Mary, sin is not a matter of right or wrong acts; rather it has to do with the improper mixing (adultery) of material and spiritual natures, which in turn leads to the improper domination of the spiritual nature by material. Salvation is achieved by overcoming attachment to the body and the material world, for it is this attachment which keeps people enslaved to suffering and death. Ultimately it is attachment to the body that produces sin.³

Both Paul and the *Gospel of Mary* have been misunderstood. Already in the period of the early church, the author of the *Letter of James* strove to ensure that Paul's insistence on faith as the sole route to salvation not be taken to mean that the ethical life is not important: "What does it profit, my brethren, if a person says he has faith but has not works? Can his faith save him?... Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:14, 17). Both Paul and the Gospel of Mary insist that the proper relationship to God requires strong ethical sensibilities and practice.⁴

For Paul moral behavior is essential in purifying the body in order for it to be the spiritual dwelling place of God.⁵ Because sin is attachment to the world, turning from the love of the world to the love of God removes humanity from the power of sin.⁶

¹ Karen L. King. *The Gospel of Mary of Magdalene* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2003), 119.

² Karen L. King. *The Gospel of Mary of Magdalene* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2003), 121.

³ Karen L. King. *The Gospel of Mary of Magdalene* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2003), 122.

⁴ Karen L. King. *The Gospel of Mary of Magdalene* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2003), 122.

⁵ Karen L. King. *The Gospel of Mary of Magdalene* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2003), 126.

⁶ Karen L. King. *The Gospel of Mary of Magdalene* (Santa Rosa, CA: Polebridge Press, 2003), 127.