

B. MATTHIAS THE MAN

All of these possibilities lead to a universe of fascinating speculation about the Man and Apostle called Matthias. The few quotes from the Traditions of Matthias have a Gnostic flavor to them. David Ross' analysis of the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 840 finds parallels in canonical scripture. [Click here for David Ross's complete paper.](#)

These few quotes from the *Traditions of Matthias* reveal the nature of this man's character. Matthias was most likely a stern taskmaster when it came to faith. He was most likely an ascetic like James of Jerusalem. James, brother of Jesus, was a vegetarian and we are told that he did not bathe. Whether or not Matthias mirrored James exactly, we do not know. We know that he was born in Judea and elected as the 13th Apostle in Jerusalem. Therefore, taking his own teachings at face value we can safely make the assumption, that despite Peter's efforts to get him elected over Joseph called Barsabbas, he was most likely a part of Jerusalem faction of the early Church headed by James, brother of Jesus. In his 1997 epic tome, [James, Brother of Jesus](#), Robert Eisenman amplifies this when he discusses Matthias' election in Chapter 1 of the Book of Acts, "James though, intrudes forcefully in to the story-line in a manner that implies he had either already been introduced previously or, in any event that we should know who he is."

Gerald Massey, along with most modern scholars, have come to accept that the Church headed first by James in Jerusalem was probably Gnostic in character. He says in his 1898 lecture, "The Church in Jerusalem, at the head of which was James, called the "brother of the Lord," was one of the Essenic or Therapeutic communities that were founded by the Gnostic Nazarenes." One of Massey's Anglican contemporary scholars, The Right Reverend Joseph Barber Lightfoot considered this thought heretical and most likely considered much of what Massey wrote as verging on heresy. Today, such discussions in the search for the truth about God, appear like so many angels dancing on pinheads to liberal Christians.

Another speculation is that Matthias carried with him a "secret discourse of the savior," As David Ross points out above, "Basilides, therefore, and Isidorus, the true son and disciple of Basilides, say that Matthias communicated to them secret discourses, which, I being specially instructed, he heard from the Savior." It is that secret discourse that perhaps one day we will find in the form of the Gospel of Matthias.

Finally, on the election of Matthias over Joseph Barsabbas, even though Peter ultimately went to Rome, as chief of the Apostles, he tried to keep the early church from splitting between the Jerusalem or Gnostic faction and the Roman literal faction. The election of Matthias may be part of that effort. Unfortunately, Peter did not wholly succeed after Saint Paul entered the picture. The church fathers that followed him pursued division from the beginning with their suppression of the early Gnostic form of Christianity. They were fighting Gnostic thinking up to the sixth century.

1. HIS PLACE IN THE MASS

Matthias has a place in the liturgy of the Mass. Because Matthias was the replacement for the traitor Judas Iscariot, it could be said that Matthias was part of the new era of the Church, the time of the Apostles and the beginning of the apostolic tradition. He has been compared to the Jewish Patriarch Jacob, whose son Benjamin was the 12th son. Matthias' place in the canon of the original Tridentine mass comes after mention of the other eleven Apostles and after the transubstantiation of the bread and wine during the commemoration of others. This gives Matthias a singular honor in the mass.

Matthias spent many long years of labor on behalf the early Church. To discover his Gospel, as we did Thomas and Phillip and Barnabas and others, all of which fill in many holes in our understanding of Jesus Christ, that discovery may even open our eyes to a new vision of the Savior. This quiet almost unknown Apostle teaches us that as Christians we must continually explore all sources to learn the whole truth.