

TRANSLATION OF THE GOSPEL OF MARY

Karen L. King, Ph.D.

Reprinted by permission of Polebridge Press from pp. 13–18 of
The Gospel of Mary of Magdala, by Karen L. King, 2003.

Papyrus Berolinensis 8502,1

1 (Pages 1–6 are missing.)

2 *The nature of matter*

“. . . Will m[a]tter then be utterly [destr]oyed or not?”

²The Savior replied, “Every nature, every modeled form, every creature, exists in and with each other. ³They will dissolve again into their own proper root. ⁴For the nature of matter is dissolved into what belongs to its nature. ⁵Anyone with two ears able to hear should listen!”

3 *The nature of sin and the Good*

¹Then Peter said to him, “You have been explaining every topic to us; tell us one other thing. ²What is the sin of the world?”

³The Savior replied, “There is no such thing as sin; ⁴rather you yourselves are what produces sin when you act in accordance with the nature of adultery, which is called ‘sin.’ ⁵For this reason, the Good came among you, pursuing (the good) which belongs to every nature. ⁶It will set it within its root.”

⁷Then he continued. He said, “This is why you get si[c]k and die: ⁸because [you love] what de[c]ei[ve]s [you]. ⁹[Anyone who] thinks should consider (these matters)!”

¹⁰“[Ma]tter gav[e bi]rth to a passion which has no Image because it derives from what is contrary to nature. ¹¹A disturbing confusion then occurred in the whole body.

¹²That is why I told you, ‘Become content at heart, ¹³while also remaining discontent and disobedient; indeed become contented and agreeable (only) in the presence of that other Image of nature.’ ¹⁴Anyone with two ears capable of hearing should listen!”

4 *The Savior’s farewell*

¹When the Blessed One had said these things, he greeted them all. “Peace be with you!” he said. ²“Acquire my peace within yourselves!”

³“Be on your guard ⁴so that no one deceives you by saying, ‘Look over here!’ or ‘Look over there!’ ⁵For the child of true Humanity exists within you. ⁶Follow it! ⁷Those who search for it will find it.

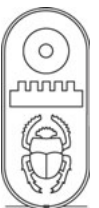
⁸“Go then, preac[h] the good news about the Realm. ⁹[Do] not lay down any rule beyond what I determined for you, ¹⁰nor promulgate law like the lawgiver, or else you might be dominated by it.”

¹¹After he had said these things, he departed from them.

5 *Mary comforts the other disciples*

¹But they were distressed and wept greatly. ²“How are we going to go out to the rest of the world to announce the good news about the Realm of the child of true Humanity?” they said. ³“If they did not spare him, how will they spare us?”

⁴Then Mary stood up. She greeted them all, addressing her brothers and sisters, ⁵“Do not weep and be distressed nor let your hearts



be irresolute. ⁶For his grace will be with you all and will shelter you. ⁷Rather we should praise his greatness, ⁸for he has prepared us and made us true Human beings.”

⁹When Mary had said these things, she turned their heart [to]ward the Good, ¹⁰and they began to deba[t]e about the wor[d]s of [the Savior].

6 *Peter asks Mary to teach*

¹Peter said to Mary, “Sister, we know that the Savior loved you more than all other women. ²Tell us the words of the Savior that you remember, the things which you know that we don’t because we haven’t heard them.”

³Mary responded, “I will teach you about what is hidden from you.” ⁴And she began to speak these words to them.

7 *Vision and mind*

¹She said, “I saw the Lord in a vision ²and I said to him, ‘Lord, I saw you today in a vision.’

³He answered me, ‘How wonderful you are for not wavering at seeing me! ⁴For where the mind is, there is the treasure.’

⁵I said to him, ‘So now, Lord, does a person who sees a vision see it <with> the soul <or> with the spirit?’

⁶The Savior answered, ‘A person does not see with the soul or with the spirit. ⁷Rather the mind, which exists between these two, sees the vision an[d] that is w[hat . . .]’

8 *(Pages 11-14 are missing.)*

9 *The ascent of the soul*

¹“ . . . it.’

²“And Desire said, ‘I did not see you go down, yet now I see you go up. ³So why do you lie since you belong to me?’

⁴“The soul answered, ‘I saw you. You did not see me nor did you know me. ⁵You (mis)took the garment (I wore) for my (true) self. ⁶And you did not recognize me.’

⁷“After it had said these things, it left rejoicing greatly.

⁸“Again, it came to the third Power, which is called ‘Ignorance.’ ⁹[It] examined the soul closely, saying, ‘Where are you going? ¹⁰You are bound by wickedness. ¹¹Indeed you are bound! ¹²Do not judge!’

¹³“And the soul said, ‘Why do you judge me, since I have not passed judgement? ¹⁴I have been bound, but I have not bound (anything). ¹⁵They did not recognize me, but I have recognized that the universe is to be dissolved, both the things of earth and those of heaven.’

¹⁶“When the soul had brought the third Power to naught, it went upward and saw the fourth Power. ¹⁷It had seven forms. ¹⁸The first form is darkness; ¹⁹the second is desire; ²⁰the third is ignorance; ²¹the fourth is zeal for death; ²²the fifth is the realm of the flesh; ²³the sixth is the foolish wisdom of the flesh; ²⁴the seventh is the wisdom of the wrathful person. ²⁵These are the seven Powers of Wrath.

²⁶“They interrogated the soul, ‘Where are you coming from, human-killer, and where are you going, space-conqueror?’

²⁷“The soul replied, saying, ‘What binds me has been slain, and what surrounds me has been destroyed, and my desire has been brought to an end, and ignorance has died. ²⁸In a [wor]ld, I was set loose from a world [an]d in a type, from a type which is above, and (from) the chain of forgetfulness which exists in time. ²⁹From this hour on, for the time of the due season of the aeon, I will receive rest i[n] silence.’”

³⁰After Mary had said these things, she was silent, ³¹since it was up to this point that the Savior had spoken to her.

10 *The disciples’ dispute over Mary’s teaching*

¹Andrew responded, addressing the brothers and sisters, “Say what you will about the things she has said, ²but I do not believe

that the S[a]vior said these things, f[or] indeed these teachings are strange ideas.”

³Peter responded, bringing up similar concerns. He questioned them about the Savior: “Did he, then, speak with a woman in private without our knowing about it? ⁴Are we to turn around and listen to her? Did he choose her over us?”

⁵Then [M]ary wept and said to Peter, “My brother Peter, what are you imagining? ⁶Do you think that I have thought up these things by myself in my heart or that I am telling lies about the Savior?”

⁷Levi answered, speaking to Peter, “Peter, you have always been a wrathful person.

⁸Now I see you contending against the woman like the Adversaries. ⁹For if the Savior made her worthy, who are you then for your part to reject her? ¹⁰Assuredly the Savior’s knowledge of her is completely reliable. That is why he loved her more than us.

¹¹“Rather we should be ashamed. We should clothe ourselves with the perfect Human, acquire it for ourselves as he commanded us, ¹²and announce the good news, ¹³not laying down any other rule or law that differs from what the Savior said.”

¹⁴After [he had said these] things, they started going out [to] teach and to preach.

¹⁵[The Gos]pel according to Mary

