



The Secret Revelation of John

Karen L. King

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Lost in antiquity, rediscovered in 1896, and only recently accessible for study, *The Secret Revelation of John* offers a firsthand look into the diversity of Christianity before the establishment of canon and creed. Karen L. King offers an illuminating reading of this ancient text--a narrative of the creation of the universe and humanity and a guide to justice and salvation, said to be Christ's revelation to his disciple John.

Freeing the Revelation from the category of "Gnosticism" to which such accounts were relegated, King shows how the Biblical text could be read by early Christians in radical and revisionary ways. By placing the Revelation in its social and intellectual milieu, she revises our understanding of early Christianity and, more generally, religious thought in the ancient Mediterranean world. Her work helps the modern reader through many intriguing--but confusing--ideas in the text: for example, that the creator god of Genesis, a self-described jealous and exclusive god, is not the true Deity but a kind of fallen angel; or, in an overt critique of patriarchy unique in ancient literature, the declaration that the subordination of woman to man was an ignorant act in direct violation of the "holy height."

In King's analysis, the Revelation becomes not strange but a comprehensible religious vision--and a window on the religious culture of the Roman Empire. A translation of the complete Secret Revelation of John is included.

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