

Was Jesus Married? Dr. Andrew Wilson Weighs In

Krista Moon
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Dr. Karen King, Harvard Divinity Professor and a historian of early Christianity, identified the papyrus fragment in the Coptic language that she says contains the first known statement saying that Jesus was married.

A newly uncovered fourth-century fragment of papyrus mentioning Jesus' wife has become major news since its appearance on September 18, 2012 and created a buzz among scriptural scholars. Among the religiously-inclined, some view the fragment as a reinforcement of the Unification Church's belief that Jesus intended to marry and have a family.

Dr. Karen King, Harvard Divinity Professor and a historian of early Christianity, discovered the existence of a new, early Christian Gospel from Egypt, "The Gospel of Jesus' Wife," according to a news release from Harvard Divinity School. Dr. King has identified the papyrus fragment in the Coptic language that she says contains the first known statement saying that Jesus was married. The small, faded fragment contains the phrase, "Jesus said to them, 'My wife...'" and a proactive clause that supposedly says, "She will be able to be my disciple."

Unificationists believe that Jesus came as the Messiah, or the "Second Adam," to find a bride with whom he would have established the first family of God on earth as the "True Parents" of mankind. Because Jesus was rejected by the people and crucified before fulfilling this mission, God's Providence for creating a Messianic couple was postponed. Unificationists declare Rev. Moon and his wife to have inherited the role of the Messiah.

"Christian tradition has long held that Jesus was not married, even though no reliable historical evidence exists to support that claim," Dr. King said in a news release from Harvard Divinity School. "This new gospel doesn't prove that Jesus was married, but it tells us that the whole question only came up as part of vociferous debates about sexuality and marriage. From the very beginning, Christians disagreed about whether it was better not to marry, but it was over a century after Jesus' death before they began appealing to Jesus' marital status to support their positions."

NBCnews.com mentions the Unification Church's belief in their news article, "Too holy for sex? The problem of a married Jesus." They wrote "[the Unification Church believes] Jesus was supposed to get married. [Their] beliefs however have more to do with their own theology of marriage rather than scripture."

According to Dr. Andrew Wilson, director of Scriptural Research and professor of Scriptural Studies at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS), there is evidence through Rev. Sun Myung Moon's personal revelation — the Wollli Wonbon, the first Divine Principle text by Rev. Moon — that states Jesus was indeed married to Mary Magdalene.

Another Unificationist, Mark Gibbs, who studied at UTS, found ancient records indicating a sexual relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene, and brings this to light in his book, *Secrets of the Holy Family* via, analysis and interpretation of ancient texts, artifacts, and works of art. According to *The New York Times*, the origin of the papyrus may remain a mystery; however, the discovery could revitalize the debate over whether Jesus was married, whether Mary Magdalene was his wife, and whether he had a

female disciple. The papyrus has ignited discussions about the culture of the early centuries of Christianity and the Roman Catholic Church's teachings of priesthood.



Among the religiously-inclined, some view the newly-uncovered papyrus fragment as a reinforcement of the Unification Church's belief that Jesus intended to marry and have a family.

Dr. King told Smithsonian Magazine that the fragment casts doubt "on the whole Catholic claim of a celibate priesthood based on Jesus' celibacy." She added, "What shows is that there were early Christians for whom...sexual union in marriage could be an imitation of God's creativity and generativity, and it could be spiritually proper and appropriate."

Rev. Moon encouraged the end of the practice of priesthood celibacy. The best-known Roman Catholic leader who took this encouragement to heart is former Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo, who received Rev. and Mrs. Moon's Marriage Blessing in 2001 -- despite the prohibition for ordained priests. Inspired by Rev. Moon's reformation, Milingo then established Married Priests Now in 2006, an advocacy group that promotes the acceptance of married priests. The media development of this story has spread to outlets such as The New York Times, Reuters, Washington Post, Fox News, ABC News, NBC News, Smithsonian Magazine, Time Magazine, The Daily Mail, and others. See articles below.

Whatever the repercussions of the fragment appearance, one thing is certain; the timing of the discovery of this revelation has come during a time of considerable change within the Unification Church; that is, after the ascension of Rev. Moon, the transfer of leadership to his widow Mrs. Moon, and the following global leadership change within the movement.