

The Apocryphon of John

(The Secret Book of John -- The Secret Revelation of John), Long Version

Nag Hammadi Codex II,1 & Nag Hammadi Codex IV,1

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1 The teaching [of the Savi]or and the re[vel]ation of the mysteries [together with the things] hidden in silence a[nd those (things) w]hich he taught to Joh[n, his dis]ciple.

2 [Now] it happened one [d]ay when John [the brother] of James, the so[n]s of Ze[bed]ee, was going up to the temple, a [Pha]risee named Arimanios [appr]oached him. And he said to him, "Where is your teacher, the one whom you used to follow?"

I [said] to him, "He returned to the pla[ce] from which he came." The Pharisee [said to me, "This Nazorene] deceived you (pl.) with error. He filled [your (pl.) ears with lies], and he shut [your hearts. He turned you (pl.)] from the tradi[tions of your fathers."

When I, John,) heard] these things, [I turned] from the temp[le to a mountainous and desert place] and I grieved [greatly in my heart, asking] "How [was the Savior appointed?]" and "Why was he sent [into the world] by h[is father? Who is his] father who [sent him? And of what sort] is [that] aeon [to which we will go?] For what did he slay about it? He told us] that the aeon to which [we will go is mo]deled on the [indestructible] aeon, [but he did not tea]ch us abou[t what sort] the latter is."

3 Just th[en, while I was thinking these things, behold the [heavens opened, and] the [whole] crea[tion] below the heaven [was] illumi-nated. And [the world] quaked.

[I] was [afraid and behold] in the light [I] saw [a child stand]ing by me. When I sa[w him, he becam] e like an old person and he shifted hi[s semblance, becoming like a servant. These (semblances) before me were not multiple beings but there was only a (single) [li]keness [having] many forms in the lig[ht]. And the [semblances] appeared through each other, a[nd] the [semblan]ce had three forms.

[He] said to me, "John, Jo[h]n, why do you doubt and why [are you] fearful? Are [you] are a stranger to this likeness?—This is to say, do not [be] faint[hea]rted! I am the one who [dwells with you (pl.)] al-ways. I [am the Father. I am] the Mother. I am the So[n]. I am the one who is undefiled and unpolluted.

[Now I have come to teach] you what exists [and what has come into being an]d what must [come into being so that you will under-stand the] things which are not apparent [and those which are appar-ent, and to teach] you about the [immovable] genera[tion of] the perfe[ct Human].

N]ow [then lift up] your [face so that] you will [receive] the things that [I will teach you] today [and you will tell them to your fellow] spirits who c[ome from the immovable] generation of the perfect Hu-man.

4 And [I asked so that I might [know.

And he said] to me, "The Monad [is a mo]narch[y with]out any-thing existing over it. [It exists as the God] and Father of the [A]ll., the [invisi]ble which dwells above [the All, ...] imperishableness which exi[sts as the] pure light upon which it is not possible for any eye to] gaze.

[It is the] invisible [Spirit], and It is not appropriate [to consider It] to be like the g[o]ds or that It is something similar. For It is more than divine, [without anything] existing over It. For nothing lords [over It].

[. . .] not [...] in an[yth]ing less [... exists in It.

It alone [is eternal] since It does not need [anything.] For It is totally perfect. [It] does not [lack] anything such that [anything] would perfect It, [but] It is [al]ways completely perfect in [light]. It can-not be [limi]ted because there is nothing [before It] to limit It. [It is] inscrut[able because there] is no one who exists before It [to scrutinine It.] [It is im]measurable because there is nothing [which exists before It to measure] It. [It is] in[visible because there is] no one to see [It. It is an eternity existing] eternally. [It is ineffable because] there is no one able to comprehend It in order to sp[eak about It.] It is [un]nameable because [there is no one before It] to name [It.] It is [the immeasurable light,] which is pure, [holy, and unpolluted. It is in]effable [being perfect i]n incorruptibility. (It does) [not] (exist) in per[fection], blessed[ness, or] divini[ty] but It is [far] supe-rior (to these).

It is neither corporeal [nor in]corporeal. [It] is not large or small. [It is not] such that one could [say] that It has quantity or [quality]. For it is not possible for anyone [to know It]. It is not something among [existing things, but It is] far [super]ior—[not] as [being supe-rior] (to others as though It is comparable to them) but as that which belongs to Itself. It does [not partici]pate in the aeons or in time (as a constitutive part of them). For that which participates i[n an aeon] was first prepared (by others). It was [not given a p]ortion in time [because] It does not receive anything [from anothe]r- for [what-ever] It received would be received as a loan. For what exists prior] to anything else is not deficient such that It should receive [from any-thing].

For this one gazes marveling at Itself [alone] in Its light. [...] For It is a vastness. [It possesses the immeasurable [simpli]city. [It is] an aeo[n gi]ving aeon, life giving [life, a ble]ssed one giving blessedness, a knowledge giving understanding, a goo[d one giving] goodness. It is mer[cy giving] mercy and salvation. It is grace giving grac[e—not] such that it possesses it but that It gives.

5 [How am I to speak] with you about the immeasurable, incomprehen[sible light]? [For] Its [aeon] is indestructible, being tranquil [and] existing in [si-lence, being at rest]. It exists prior [to the All, for] It is the he[a]d of [all] the aeons [and] It gives them strength in Its goodness.

For we do not [understand these ineffable matters, and] none of us knows those [immeasurable] things ex[cept for] the one who appeared from the Father. This is the one who [spoke to us alone].

For (It is) the one who gazes at Itself [alone] in Its light that sur-rounds [It], which is the spring of the living water.

And It provides for [all] the ae[ons].

And in every way It ga[z(es upon)] Its image, seeing it in the spring of the Spirit, willing in Its light-w[ater which is in the spri]ng of the pure light[-water which] surrounds It.

And [Its thinking became a] thing. And she who ap[pea]red in Its presence in [the lu]min[escence of] Its light was revealed. She is the first [power who came into] being before them a[ll.. She appeared] from Its thought, [the Pronoia of the All], her light [. . .] light, the [perfect] power, that is, [the image of the perfect invisible vir-ginal Spirit, [the first po]wer, the glory of Barbelo, the glory which is perfect in the aeons, the glory of the revelation.

[She] glorified the virginal Spirit and praised It since she had ap-peared because of It. That one is the first Thought (Protennoia) of Its image. She became a womb for the All because she is prior to them all, the Mother-Father, the first Human, the holy Spirit, the triple male, the triple power, the triple named androgyne, and the eter-nal aeon among the invisible ones, and the first to come forth.

6 Barbelo requested the invisible virginal Spirit to give her Fo[re]kn[ow]ledge. And the Spirit stared. When [It stared], Fore-knowledge was revealed [an]d stood with [P]ronoia. She is from] the Thought of the invisible [vir]ginal Spirit. She glorified It a[nd] Its perfect power [Ba]rbelo, fo[r] it was b[eca]use of her that she had come into being.

A[nd again she reque]st[ed] (It) to give her In[destr]uct[ibility]. And It stared. And in [Its staring], Indest[ruct]ibility [was revealed. And she stood with Thought and Foreknowledge. She glorified the Invisible one and Barbelo, for they had come into being because of her.

And Barbelo requested (It) to give her Ete[r]nal L[ife]. And the in[v]isible Spirit stared. And in Its staring, Eternal Life was re-vealed. And [they s]to[od]. They glorified the invisible [Spit]it and Barbelo, for they had come into being because of her.

And again she asked (It) to give to her Truth. And the invisible Spirit stared. Truth was revealed. And they stood. They glorified the invisible Spirit who was approving and his Barbelo, for they had come into being because of her.

This is the pentad of the Aeons of the Father, who is the first Human, the image of the invisible Spirit. This is Pronoia, namely: Barbelo, Thought, Foreknowledge, Indestructibility, Eternal Life, and Truth. This is the androgynous pentad of the Aeons which is the decad of Aeons, the Father.

7 And It gazed into Barbelo in the pure light which surrounds the in-visible Spirit and Its luminescence, and she conceived from It. It begot a spark of light in a light resembling blessedness, but it was [not] equal to Its greatness. This one was only-begotten of the Mother?Father who had appeared. He is his only offspring, the only-begotten of the Father, the pure light.

Then the invisible virginal Spirit rejoiced over the light [which] had come into being, that one who first appeared from the first power of Its Pronoia, which is Barbelo. And It [an]ointed him from Its own goodness/Christhood until he became perfect, not lacking anything of [good]ness/[Christ]hood because It had anointed him in the [good]d[ndss]/[Christ]st[ho]od of the invisible Spirit. And he stood in Its presence while It poured upon him. A[nd] im[medi]ately when he had received from the Sp[irit], he gl[or]ified the holy Spirit and the perfect Pro[n]oia, for he had been revealed because of her. And he asked to be given a fellow worker, which is Mind. And It stared. And in the invisible Spirit's act of staring, Mind was re-vealed. And he stood with Christ, glorifying him and Barbelo, for all these came into being in silence.

And Thought willed to create a work through the Word of the invisible Spirit, and his Will became a work. And he was revealed with Mind and Light, glorifying It. And the Word followed the Will. For because of the Word, Christ the divine Autogenes created the All. Eternal Life with Will, and Mind with Foreknowledge stood. They glorified the invisible Spirit and Barbelo for they had come into being because of her.

And the holy Spirit perfected the divine Autogenes, the son of Itself and Barbelo, so he might stand before the great and invisible virginal Spirit. The divine Autogenes, the Christ, (is) that one who honored It with a mighty voice. He appeared through the Pronoia. And the invisible virginal Spirit placed Autogenes as true god over the All and It subjected to him all authority and the truth which dwells in It so that he might know the All. (He is) that one whose name they call by a name which is more exalted than any name. For they will say that name to those who are worthy of it.

8 For from the light, which is the Christ, and Indestructibility, through the gift of the Spirit, he gazed out so as to cause the four Lights from the divine Autogenes to stand before him.

And the three (are): Will, Thought, and Life. And the four powers are: Understanding, Grace, Perception, and Prudence. Now it is Grace which dwells in the Light Aeon Armozel, who is the first angel. And three other Aeons are with this Aeon: Grace, Truth, Form. And the second Light Oriael is the one who was established over the second Aeon. And three other Aeons are with him: Pronoia, Perception, Memory. And the third Light is Daveithai, the one who was established over the third Aeon. And the three other Aeons with him are: Understanding, Love, and Likeness. And the fourth Aeon was established over the fourth Light Eleleth. And the [th]ree Aeons with him are: Perfection, Peace, Wisdom. These are the four Lights who stand before the divine Autogenes. These are the twelve Aeons which stand before the Son of the great Autogenes Christ, through the will and the gift of the invisible Spirit. And the twelve Aeons belong to the Son of [A]utogenes.

9 And the All was firmly founded through the will of the holy Spirit, through Autogenes. And from the Foreknowledge of the perfect Mind through the revelation of the will of the invisible Spirit and the will of Autogenes, the invisible Spirit named the perfect Human, the first revelation and the truth, Pigera-Adamas.

And It set him up over the first Aeon with the great Autogenes Christ, beside the first Light, Armozel. And Its powers dwelled with him.

And the Invisible one gave him an unconquerable intellectual power. And he spoke and glorified and praised the invisible Spirit, saying, Because of you the All came into being and it is to you that the All will return. And I will praise and glorify you and Autogenes with the three Aeons: the Father, the Mother, the Child, the perfect power.' And It set up his Child Seth over the second Aeon beside the second Light Oroiel. And in the third Aeon were set up the seed of Seth over the third Light, Daveithai. And the holy souls were set up. In the fourth Aeon were set up the souls of those who were ignorant of the Fullness and did not repent immediately but they persisted a while. And afterward they repented. They dwelled beside the fourth Light Eleleth. These are the creatures who glorify the invisible Spirit.

10 Sophia of the Epinoia, being an Aeon, thought a thought from within herself and the thought of the invisible Spirit and Foreknowledge. She willed a likeness to appear from within herself without the will of the Spirit—it had not approved—and without her partner and without his consideration. For the countenance of her masculinity did not approve, and she had not found her partner. She deliberated apart from the will of the Spirit and the understanding of her partner. She brought forth.

Because of the unconquerable power within her, her thought did not remain idle. And an imperfect product appeared from her, and it was different from her pattern because she created it without her partner. And it was not patterned after the likeness of its Mother, for it had a different form. When she saw (the product of) her will, it was different, a model of a lion-faced serpent. His eyes were like flashing fires of lightning. She cast him out from her, outside of those places so that none among the immortals might see him, for she had created him in ignorance.

And she surrounded him with a luminous cloud. And she placed a throne in the midst of the cloud in order that no one might see him except the holy Spirit, who is called the mother of the living. She named him Yaltabaoth. This is the Chief Ruler, the one who got a great power from his Mother.

11 And he withdrew from her and he abandoned the place where he had been born. He seized (another place). He created for himself another aeon inside a blaze of luminous fire, which still exists now.

And he was stupefied in his Madness, the one who dwells within him, and he begat some authorities for himself.

The name of the first is Athoth, the one whom the generations call the [reaper]. The second is Harmas, who is [the eye] of envy. The third is Kalila-Oumbri. The fourth is Yabel. The fifth is Adonaiou, who is called Sabaoth. The sixth is Cain, whom the generations of humanity call the sun. The seventh is

Abel. The eighth is Abrisene. The ninth is Yobel. The tenth is Armoupieel. The eleventh is Melcheir-Adonein. The twelfth is Belias; he is the one who is over the depth of Hades.

And he set up seven kings over the seven heavens, one per firmament of heaven, and five over the depth of the abyss so that they might rule.

12 And he divided his fire among them, but he did not send them (anything) from the power of the light which he had received from his Mother. For he is ignorant darkness. When the light mixed with the darkness, it caused the darkness to shine, but when the darkness mixed with the light, it darkened the light, so that it became neither light nor dark, but it was weak.

Now this weak ruler has three names. The first name is Yaltabaoth. The second is Saklas. The third is Samael. He is impious in his Madness, she who dwells in him. For he said, am God and no other god exists except me, ' since he is ignorant of the place from which his strength had come.

And the Rulers created seven powers for themselves. And the powers created for each of them six angels until they had produced 365 angels.

These are the bodies of the names: The first is Athoth; he has a sheep's face. The second is Eloaiou; he has a donkey's face. The third is Astaphaios; he has a hyena's face. The fourth is Yao; he has a serpent's face with seven heads. The fifth is Sabaoth; he has a ser-pent's face. The sixth is Adonin; he has a monkey's face. The sev-enth is Sabbede; he has a fiery face which shines. This is the hebdomad of the week.

But Yaldabaoth possessed a multitude of faces, adding up to more than all of them, so that when he is in the midst of the seraphim, he could masquerade in front of them all at will.

13 He shared with them (portions) from his fire.

Because of the power of the glory which dwells in him from the light of his Mother. he became Lord over them. Because of that, he called himself God, and he was not obedient to the place from which he had come.

And he mixed with the authorities who dwell with him. Through his thinking and his speaking, seven powers came into being. And he named the powers one after another, beginning with the highest (as follows): First is Goodness/Christhood with the first (authority) Athoth. The second is Pronoia with the second one Eloaio. The third is Divinity with the third one Astraphaio. The fourth is Lord-ship with the fourth one Yao. The fifth is kingdom with the fifth one Sabaoth. The sixth is Envy with the sixth one Adonein. The seventh is Understanding with the seventh Sabbateon. For these are those who have a firmament corresponding to each aeon. These were named according to the glory of those who belong to heaven for the destr[uction of the] power[s]. The names which they were given by the Chief Begetter had power in them, but the names which were given to them according to the glory of those who belong to heaven are for them destruction and powerlessness. Thus they have two names.

He ordered everything following the likeness of the first Aeons, which had come into being, so that he might create them in the in-destructible pattern. Not because he had seen the indestructible ones, but the power in him which he had gotten from his Mother bore in him the likeness of the world.

14 And when he saw the creation which surrounded him and the multi-tude of the angels surrounding him who had came into being from him, he said to them, 'I am a jealous God and no other god exists be-side me.' But his proclamation indicated to the angels who dwell with him that another God does exist. For if there were not another who exists, of whom would he be jealous?

The Mother began to wander. She understood her deficiency when the brightness of her light was diminished and she was darkened, because her partner had not been in concord with her."

But I said, "Lord, what does it mean 'she wandered'?"

He smiled and said, 'Do not think it means as Moses said 'upon the waters.' But in fact, when she saw the evil which had happened and the theft which her offspring had committed, she repented and she was overcome with forgetfulness in the darkness of ignorance. And she began to be ashamed. [She did not dare] to return but [she was ...] in motion. This movement is the wandering.

The Arrogant one had gotten a power from his Mother. For he was ignorant, thinking that no one existed except his Mother alone. And seeing the multitude of the angels whom he had created, he then exalted himself over them.

And when the Mother understood that the garment of darkness was not perfect, she then understood that her partner had not been in concord with her. She repented with great weeping.

And the entreaty of her repentance was heard and all the Fullness praised the invisible virginal Spirit on her behalf. The holy Spirit poured over her (something) from their entire Fullness. For her partner did not come to her (by himself), but it was through the Fullness that he came to her in order that he might correct her de-ficiency. Yet even so, she was not conveyed to her own Aeon, but (was placed) above her child so that she might dwell in the Ninth until she corrects her deficiency.

15 And a voice came from the exalted heavenly Aeon, The Human ex-ists and the Child of the Human.' The Chief Ruler, Yaltabaoth, heard it, but he thought that the voice had come from his Mother, and he did not understand where it had come from.

And the holy and perfect Mother-Father, the perfect Pronoia, the im-age of the Invisible, who is the Father of the All, in whom the All came into being, the first Human, taught them by revealing his like-ness in a male model.

The Aeon of the Chief Ruler trembled all over and the foundations of the abyss quaked. And upon the waters which dwell under matter, the underside was [illum]ined by the ap[pearance] of his image which had been revealed. And when all the authorities and the Chief Ruler stared (on the water), they saw all the region below which was shining. And by the light, they saw the model of the image upon the water.

And he said to the authorities who dwell with him, 'Come, let us create a human according to the image of God and according to our likeness so that his image might illuminate us.' And they created (using) the power from each of them according to the characteristics which they had been given.

And each one of the authorities supplied for (the human's) soul a characteristic corresponding to the model of the image which he had seen. He created a real being in accordance with the likeness of the perfect first Human. And they said, 'Let us call him Adam in order that his name might become a power of light for us.'

And the powers began (their work): The first one, Goodness, created a bone-soul. The second one, Pronoia, created a sinew-soul. The third one, Divinity, made a flesh-soul. The fourth one, Lord-ship, made a marrow-soul. The fifth one, Kingdom, made a blood-soul. The sixth one, Envy, created a skin-soul. The seventh Understanding, created a hair-soul.

The multitude of the angels stood before him. They received the seven substances of the soul from the powers so that they might create the harmony of the parts and the harmony of the limbs and the proper combination of each of the parts.

16 The first began to create (starting) from the head. Eteraphaope Abron created its head. Megiggsstroeth created the brain. Asterechmen, the right eye. Thaspomocham, the left eye. Yeronumos, the right ear. Bissoum, the left ear. Akiopeim, the nose. Banen Ephroum, the lips. Amen, the teeth. Ibikan, the molars. Basiliasdeme, the tonsils. Achcha, the uvula. Adaban, the neck. Chaaman, the vertebrae. Dearcho, the throat. Tebar, the right shoulder. N[. . . the] left shoulder. Mniarchon, the right elbow. [... the] left elbow. Abitrion, the right underarm. Evanthen, the left underarm. Krys, the right hand. Beluia, the left hand. Treneu, the fingers of the right hand. Balbel, the fingers of the left hand. Krیمان, the fingernails. Astrops, the right breast. Barroph, the left breast. Baoum, the right shoulder joint. Ararim, the left shoulder joint. Areche, the belly. Phthave, the navel. Senaphim, the abdomen. Arachethopi, the right ribs. Zabedo, the left ribs. Barias, the right hip. Phnouth, the left hip. Abenlenarchei, the marrow. Chnoumeninorin, the bones. Gesole, the stomach. Agromauma, the heart. Bano, the lungs. Sostrapal, the liver. Anesimalar, the spleen. Thopithro, the intestines. Biblo, the kidneys. Roeror, the sinews. Taphreo, the spine of the body. Ipouspoboba, the veins. Bineborin, the arteries. Aatoimenpsephei, theirs are the breaths which are in all the parts. Entholleia, all the flesh. Bedouk, the right buttock (?). Arabeei, the left <buttock. . . >, the penis. Eilo, the testicles. Sorma created the genitals. Gorma Kaiochlabar, the right thigh. Nebrith, the left thigh. Pserem, the kidneys (muscles?) of the right side. Asaklas, the left kidney (muscle). Ormaoth, the right knee. Emenun, the left knee. Knyx, the right shin. Tupelon, the left shin. Achiel, the right ankle. Phneme, the left ankle. Phiouthrom, the right foot. Boabel, its toes. Trachoun, the left foot. Phikna, its toes. Miamai, the toenails. Labernioum <...>.

And seven were appointed over all these: Athoth, Armas, Kalila, Yabel, Sabaoth, Cain, Abel.

17 And those who animate the parts are, according to parts: the head, Diolimodraza. The neck, Yammaeax. The right shoulder, Yakoubib. The left shoulder, Verton. The right hand, Ouididi. The left, Arbao. The fingers of the right hand, Lampno. The fingers of the left hand, Leekaphar. The right breast,

Barbar. The left breast, Imae. The chest, Pisandraptēs. The right shoulder joint, Koade. The left shoulder joint, Odeaor. The right ribs, Asphixix. The left ribs, Synogchouta. The belly, Arouph. The womb, Sabalo. The right thigh, Charcharb. The left thigh, Chthaon. All the genitals, Bathinoth. The right knee, Choux. The left knee, Charcha. The right shin, Aroer. The left shin, Toechtha. The right ankle, Aol. The left ankle, Charaner. The right foot, Bastan. Its toes, Archentechtha. The left foot, Marephnouth. Its toes, Abrana.

Seven, 7, [have power] over all of these: Michael, Ouriel, Asmenedas, Saphasatoel, Aarmouriam, Richram, Amiorps.

And those who are over the senses, Archendekta. And the one over the perception, Deitharbathas. And the one over the imagination, Oummaa. And the one over the assent, Aachiaram. And the one over the whole impulse, Riarnacho.

And the source of these demons who are in the whole body is fixed as four: heat, cold, wetness, dryness. And the mother of them all is matter. The one who rules over the heat, Phloxpha. The one who rules over the cold, Oroorrothos. The one who rules over what is dry, Erimacho. "The one who rules over the wetness, Athuro. The mother of all these, Onorthochrasaei who is limitless, stands in their midst and she mixes with them all. And truly she is matter, for they are nourished by her.

Ephememphi is the one who belongs to pleasure. Yoko is the one who belongs to desire. Nenentophni is the one who belongs to grief. Blaomen is the one who belongs to fear. The mother of them all is Esthensis Ouch Epiptoe. The passions come into being from these four demons. From grief (comes) envy, jealousy, suffering, trouble, pain, heartlessness, anxiety, mourning, and the rest. And from pleasure comes much wickedness and empty boasting and similar things. From desire (comes) anger, wrath, bitterness, bitter yearning, insatiable greed and similar things. From fear (comes) panic, flattery, anguish, shame. These all resemble virtues as well as vices. The insight into their true character is Anaro, who is the head of the material soul which dwells with the seven senses Ouch Epiptoe. This is the number of the angels: altogether they are 365. They all labored on it until, part by part, the psychic and material body was completed. Now others whom I have not mentioned to you rule over the rest.

If you want to know about them, it is written in the Book of Zoroaster.

And all the angels and demons labored until they had created the psychic body.

18 And their product was completely inactive and motionless for a long time.

But when the Mother wanted to retrieve the power which she had given to the Chief Ruler, she entreated the Mother-Father of the All, the one who possesses great mercy. Following the holy design, he sent the five Lights down to the place of the angels of the Chief Ruler. They advised him with the goal of extracting the power of the Mother.

And they said to Yaldabaoth, 'Breathe into his face by your spirit and his body will arise.' And into his face he blew his spirit, which is the power of his Mother. He did not understand because he dwells in ignorance. And the power of the Mother left Yaldabaoth and went into the psychic body that they had

made according to the likeness of the one who exists from the beginning. The body moved and gained power, and it was luminous.

And in that moment, the rest of the powers became jealous for it was because of them all that he had come into being and they had given their power to the human.

Yet his understanding was stronger than those who had made him and greater even than the Chief Ruler. When they understood that he was luminous, could think better than they did, and was naked of evil, they picked him up and threw him down into the lowest part of all matter.

But the Blessed one, the Mother-Father, the beneficent and merciful, had mercy upon the Mother's power that had been brought forth from the Chief Ruler lest yet again they might have power over the psychic and perceptible body. So through his beneficent Spirit and his great mercy, he sent a helper to Adam. She is a luminous Epinoia, who is from him (and) who was called Life. It is she who aids the whole creation by toiling with him, guiding him by cor-rection toward his fullness, and teaching him about the descent of the seed and teaching him about the path of ascent, the path which it had come down. The Epinoia of the light was hidden in Adam in order that the rulers might not know, but Epinoia existed as a cor-rection for the deficiency of the Mother.

19 And the human appeared because of the shadow of the light which exists within him. And his thought was superior to all those who had created him. When they looked up, they saw that his thought was superior, and they took counsel with the whole host of the rulers and the angels. They took some fire, earth, and water. They mixed them together with each other and the four fiery winds. And they wrought them together and made a great disturbance.

And they enclosed him in the shadow of death in order that they might yet again form from earth, water, fire, and spirit a thing from matter, which is the ignorance of the darkness, desire, and their counterfeit spirit. This is the tomb of the molding of the body with which the robbers clothed the human, the chain of forgetfulness. And he came to be a mortal human.

This is the one who came down first and the first partition. The Epinoia of the light who was in him is the one who will awaken his thinking.

20 And the Rulers took him and they placed him in paradise. And they said to him, 'Eat that is in idleness. For indeed their delight is bitter and their beauty is licentious. For their delight is deception and their trees are impiety. And their fruit is an incurable poison and their promise is death. And in the midst of paradise, they planted the tree of their life.

But I, I will teach you what the mystery of their life is, the plan they made with each other, the likeness of their spirit.

Its root is bitter and its branches are deaths. Its shade is hate and deception dwells in its leaves. And its blossom is the anoint-ment of evil. And its fruit is death, and desire is its seed, and it blossoms from the darkness. The dwelling place of those who taste from it is Hades, and the dark is their resting place.

But what they call 'the tree of the knowledge of what is good and evil' is the Epinoia of the light. They (the rulers) remained in front of it in order that he might not look up to his fullness and come to know the nakedness of his shamefulness. But as for me, I set them right so that they would eat."

And I said to the Savior, "Lord, was it not the snake who taught Adam so that he would eat?"

The Savior laughed and said, "The snake taught them to eat from a wicked desire to sow which belongs to destruction, in order that he (Adam) would become useful to it. And it knew that he was dis-obedient to it because the light of Epinoia dwelled in him, making him more correct in his thinking than the Chief Ruler.

21 And he wanted to bring out the power which he had given to him. And he brought a trance upon Adam."

And I said to the Savior, "What is the trance?"

He said, "It is not as Moses wrote as you heard. For he said in his first book that he laid him down in sleep, but rather it concerned his sensibility. For indeed it is said by the prophet, 'I will make their hearts heavy so that they might neither give heed nor see.'

Then the Epinoia of the light hid in him.

And the Chief Ruler wanted to bring her from his rib. But the Epinoia of the light is not graspable. Although the dark pursued her, it did not lay hold of her.

And he brought forth a part of his power from him (Adam). And he created another molded form in a woman's shape according to the image of Epinoia who had appeared to him. And into the molded form of womanhood he put the part which he had taken from the power of the human— not 'his rib' as Moses said. And he saw the woman beside him.

Immediately, the luminous Epinoia appeared for she had uncovered the veil which had been on his understanding. He became sober from the drunkenness of the darkness and he recognized his likeness. And he said, 'Now this is bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh. Because of this, man will leave his father and his mother and he will cling to his wife and they will no longer be two but a single flesh.' For his partner will be sent to him and he will leave his father and his mother.

It is our sister Sophia who came down in innocence in order that she might correct her deficiency. Because of this she was called Zoe (Life), the mother of the living by Pronoia of the authority of heaven and [...] to him [. . .]. And through her they tasted the perfect knowledge.

In the form of an eagle, I appeared on the tree of knowledge, which is the Epinoia from the pure, luminous Pronoia, so that I might teach them and awaken them from the depth of the sleep. For they were both in a fallen state and they recognized their nakedness. Epinoia appeared to them as light, awakening their thought.

22 But when Yaldabaoth knew that they had withdrawn from him, he cursed his earth. He found the female preparing herself for her male. He was lord over her, for he did not understand the mystery which had come to pass from the holy design. And they were afraid to blame him. And he revealed his ignorance that dwelled in him to his angels. And he cast them out of paradise and he clothed them with a dark gloom.

And the Chief Ruler saw the virgin who stood beside Adam and that the living luminous Epinoia appeared in her. And Yaldabaoth was filled with ignorance.

When the Pronoia of the All knew, she sent some beings and they snatched Zoe from Eve. And the Chief Ruler defiled her. And he begat two sons from her. The first is Eloim and the second is Yawe. Eloim has a bear face while Yawe has a lion face. The one is righteous while the other is unrighteous. (IV Yawe is right-true, but Eloim is unrighteous.) He set Yawe over the fire and the wind, while he set Eloim over water and earth. He named these Cain and Abel with trickery in mind.

Now up to the present day, intercourse has continued from the Chief Ruler. And he planted a seed of desire in her who belongs to Adam. From intercourse he caused birth in the likeness of bodies and he supplied them from his counterfeit spirit. He set two rulers over the principalities so that they might rule over the tomb.

When Adam perceived the likeness of his own foreknowledge, he begot the likeness of the Child of the Human; he called him Seth following the way of the generation in the aeons.

Likewise the Mother also sent down her Spirit in the likeness of the female being who is like her, as a counterpart to she who is in the Fullness, so that she might prepare a dwelling place for the aeons that were going to descend.

And they were made to drink water of forgetfulness by the Chief Ruler so that they would not know themselves (and would not know) where they had come from.

And the seed existed like this for while: providing assistance, so that when the Spirit descends from the holy aeons, it will correct (the seed) and heal it from the deficiency so that the entire Fullness might become holy and without deficiency."

23 I said to the Savior, "Lord, will all the souls be delivered into the pure light"?

He replied, saying to me, "These are great things that have arisen in your thinking. For it is difficult to disclose these things to any others except those who are from the immovable generation. Those upon whom the Spirit of the Life will descend and (with whom) it will be powerfully present, they will be saved and will become perfect. And they will become worthy of the great realms. And they will be purified in that place from all evil and the concerns of wickedness. Then they will not take care for anything except the imperishability alone, attending to it from this point on without anger or envy or jealousy or desire or greed of anything at all. For they are not re-strained by anything except the reality of the flesh alone, which they bear while fervently awaiting the time when they will be visited by those who will receive (them). For such as these are worthy of the imperishable eternal life and the calling,

enduring everything, bearing everything so that they might complete the contest and inherit eternal life."

I said to him, "Lord, will the souls of those upon whom the power of the Spirit of Life descended but who did not do these works be excluded?"

He replied, saying to me, "If [the] Spirit descends [up]on them, they will be saved in any case, and they will migrate. For the power will descend upon every human being—for without it, no one is able to stand upright. After they are born, then if the Spirit of Life increases and the power comes to strengthen that soul, it is not possible to lead it astray into the works of wickedness. But those upon whom the counterfeit spirit descends are drawn by it and they are led astray."

I said, "Lord, then when the souls of those leave their flesh, where will they go?"

He laughed and said to me, "The soul in which the power will become stronger than the despicable spirit—for this one (the soul) is powerful and it flees from evil—it will be saved by the visitation of the Incorruptible and it will be admitted into the repose of the aeons."

I said, "Lord, then where will the souls be who do not know to whom their souls belong?"

He said to me, "In those, the despicable spirit has proliferated by leading them astray. He burdens the soul and draws it into works of wickedness, and he casts it down into forgetfulness. After it comes forth, they hand it over to the authorities who came into being through the Ruler. And they bind it in chains and cast it into prison. And they consort with it until it awakens from forgetfulness and receives knowledge. And in this way, it is perfected and saved."

I said, "Lord, how does the soul become smaller and return back into the nature of its mother or the human?"

Then he rejoiced when I asked this, and he said to me, "Truly you are blessed, for you have understood! That soul is made to follow another who has the Spirit of Life in it. It is saved by that (other) one. Then it is not cast into another flesh."

And I said, "Lord, what about those who understood and yet turned away? Where will their souls go?"

Then he said to me, "They will be admitted into that place where the angels of poverty go, the place where repentance does not occur. And they will guard them until that day when those who have blasphemed against the Spirit will be tortured. And they will be punished with an eternal punishment."

24 I said, "Lord, where did the despicable spirit come from?"

Then he said to me, "(It all began when) the Mother-Father whose mercy is great, the Spirit who is holy in every respect, the compassionate, and who troubles herself with you, that is, the Epinoia of the luminous Pronoia awakened the seed of the perfect generation and its thinking and the eternal light of the Human. When the Chief Ruler knew that they surpassed him in excellence—for their thoughts were higher than his—he wanted to restrict their planning, for he was ignorant that they excelled him in

thinking and that he would not be able to restrict them. He made a plan with his authorities, that is, his powers. Together they committed adultery with Sophia. And through them was begotten bitter Fate, which is the last of the counterfeit chains. And it is such that (it makes) each one different from every other. And it is painful and it oppresses that (soul) since the gods and angels and demons and all the generations have inter-mingled with it up to the present day. For from that Fate appeared every iniquity and injustice and blasphemy and the fetter of forgetfulness and ignorance and every harsh command and severe sins and great fears. And this is how they made the whole creation blind so that they might not know the God who is above them all. And be-cause of the fetter of forgetfulness, their sins were hidden. For they were bound with measures and times and seasons—for it (Fate) was lord over them all.

And he had regrets about everything which had come into being through him. Again he planned to bring a flood over the human creation.

But the greatness of the light of Pronoia taught Noah. And he preached to the whole offspring, that is, the children of the humans. But those who were strangers to him did not listen to him. It is not like Moses said that they hid themselves in an ark, but they were hidden — not only Noah, but many other people from the immovable generation.

They entered a place. They were hidden in a luminous cloud. And he understood his authority. And she who belongs to the light was with him for she illumined them, for he had brought dark-ness upon the whole earth.

25 And he created a plan with his powers. He sent his angels to the daughters of men so that they might take some of them for them-selves, and they might raise a seed, to be a respite for them. And at first they were not successful, but when they did not succeed, they gathered together again and made another plan. They created a de-spicable spirit in the likeness of the Spirit who had descended so that through it they might pollute the souls.

And the angels changed their own likenesses into the likeness of each one's mate, filling them with the spirit of darkness, which they mixed with them and with wickedness.

They brought gold, silver, a gift, and copper and iron and metal and every sort of thing belonging to these classes. And they beguiled the human beings who had followed them into great troubles by leading them astray into much error.

They grew old without having enjoyment. They died without having found any truth and without having known the God of Truth. And thus the whole creation became enslaved forever, from the foundation of the world until now.

And they took women; they begot children out of darkness ac-cording to the likeness of their spirit. And their hearts became closed and hardened by the hardening of the despicable spirit until now.

26 Therefore I, the perfect Pronoia of the All, changed into my seed. For I existed from the first, traveling on every road. For I am the wealth of the light. I am the remembrance of the fullness. I traveled into the vastness of the dark, and I persevered until I entered the midst of the prison. And the

foundations of chaos quaked. And I hid myself from them because of their evil, and they did not recognize me.

Again I returned for the second time and I traveled. I came forth into those who belong to the light, which is I, the remembrance of the Pronoia. I entered the midst of the dark and the inside of Hades, seeking to put my household in order. And the foundations of chaos quaked such that (it seemed) they would fall down upon those who dwell in the chaos and destroy them. And again I fled up to my luminous root so that they would not be destroyed before the time was right.

Still for a third time, I who am the light that exists in the light and the remembrance of the Pronoia, I traveled in order to enter into the midst of the darkness and the inside of Hades. I filled my countenance with the light of the consummation of their aeon. And I entered the midst of their prison, which is the prison of the body. And I said, 'Whoever hears, arise from lethargic sleep!'

And he wept, shedding tears; heavy tears he wiped from himself. And he said, 'Who is it who calls my name and from where does this hope come to me who am dwelling in the fetters of the prison?' And I said, 'I am the Pronoia of the pure light; I am the thought of the virginal Spirit, the one who raises you to the place of honor. Arise and remember that you are the one who has heard, and follow your root, which is I, the compassionate. Fortify yourself against the angels of poverty and the demons of chaos and all those who ensnare you, and be watchful of the lethargic sleep and the garment of the inside of Hades.'

And I raised him up and sealed him with the light of the water with five seals so that death would not have power over him from this day on.

27 Behold, now I will go up to the perfect aeon. I have completed everything for you in your ears. I have told you (John) all things so that you might write them down and give them in secret to your fellow spirits. For this is the mystery of the immovable generation." And the Savior gave these things to him so that he might write them down and keep them secure.

And he said to him, "Cursed be any one who should exchange these things for a gift, whether for food or drink or clothing or any-thing else of this kind."

And these things were given to him in a mystery. And immediately he disappeared before him. And he (John) went to his fellow disciples. He related to them the things which the Savior had said to him.

Jesus Christ Amen.

The Secret Revelation according to John

Based on the translation in:

Michael Waldstein and Frederik Wisse,

The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1;III,1; And IV,1 With BG 8502,2 ,

Brill Academic Pub, 1995

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The Apocryphon of John is commonly referenced by two other names: The Secret Book of John and The Secret Revelation of John, each depending upon how the word "Apocryphon" is translated. This edition has been edited and formatted by Lance Owens and is based on the Waldstein and Wisse translation. The two "long versions" of the text, found in NHC II and NHC IV, are virtually identical except for orthographic variations. The translation presented here is based on NHC II,1: Michael Waldstein and Frederik Wisse, The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1;III,1; And IV,1 With BG 8502,2 (Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies), Brill Academic Pub, 1995. The "Short" version of this text, based on NHL Codex III,1 and Codex BG 8502,2 is also available in the Gnostic Society Library.

Sectional numbering has been added following the system proposed by Karen King -- for details, see Karen King, The Secret Revelation of John, Harvard University Press, 2006.

For purposes of academic citation, please always refer to the print editions of the texts.

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