

THE GNOSTIC SOCIETY LIBRARY

The Secret Book of John

(The Apocryphon of John)

Translated by Stevan Davies

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Notes by the Translator

It has always seemed to me that the Secret Book of John evolved to be more difficult to read than it originally was. The Secret Book of John is a complex developmental mythology that has been made more complicated because, over the years, versions of it have been "improved" by several levels of scribal alteration. One set of levels is the evident addition of rather lengthy texts (a list of magical names, a dialogue on the soul, a providence hymn) to an original version that lacked them. Another set of levels is the addition by various scribes of what they intended to be useful comments, explanations, clarifications and supplementary details. The former processes continue to be added to the text when scholars such as myself add introductory paragraphs, or indeed whole book-length texts to introduce or comment on the Secret Book of John. The latter processes continue when scholars interrupt the flow of the text by adding subheadings (such as the section headings added here in ***Bold Italics***) and notes intended to assist the reader's understanding.

I believe that readers will benefit from seeing the various individual elements constituting the text as separable units and so be relieved from thinking that somehow all of this material constitutes one originally coherent whole. To this end, in this version of my translation I use two formatting techniques to identify and separate-out several forms of material that seem to have been added at different times to the original. For more extensive textual additions I have arranged that the translation make use of different color fonts. There is one font color for [the main body](#) of the Secret Book of John (**font color 1**), another for the material I believe to have been added by a [Christian editor](#) who sought to present the text as a long dialogue between Jesus and John son of Zebedee (**font color 2**); this material occurs in two large blocks at the beginning and toward the end of the text and also in occasional dialogues imbedded throughout the last half of the text. Another font (**font color 3**)

distinguishes a long list of demons' names that are associated with specific body parts, a magical text apparently taken from an unknown source called the "[Book of Zoroaster](#)". Another (**font color 4**) is used for the included [dialogue about the soul](#). Finally a font (**font color 5**) designates the [three part hymn](#) spoken by God's Providence (Pronoia).

In addition to these different fonts, I have put in square brackets the occasional short passages, or sentences, or phrases that I believe were added to the text by scribes over the years, additions that were intended to make the text more understandable, or to identify elements of the text with aspects of the Christian religion. If you ask how I know which parts were added as comments and so forth, the answer is that I make informed guesses. That's really what most scholarship comes down to... informed guesses.

([Click here](#) to purchase the print edition of *The Secret Book of John*, translated and annotated by Stevan Davies. Note that the print edition includes introductory material and an extensive line-by-line commentary on facing pages.)

Visit the [Apocryphon of John Collection](#) for more information

[The Teaching of the Savior]
The Revelation of the Mysteries Hidden in Silence
[Those Things that He Taught to John, His Disciple]

Prologue

One day John, the brother of James [these are the sons of Zebedee], was going up to the Temple. A Pharisee by the name of Arimanios came up to him and challenged him, asking: "Where is the teacher you used to follow?"

John replied, "He has gone back to the place from which he came."

The Pharisee said, "That Nazarene misled you (plural), told you lies, closed your hearts and turned you away from your ancestral traditions."

When I heard these things, I, John, turned away from the temple and went off to a deserted mountainous place. I was very unhappy, saying to myself:

"How was the Savior designated?
Why did his Father send him into the world?
Who is his Father?
What kind of realm will we go to?"

For, although he told us, 'This realm is modeled on the imperishable realm,'
He didn't teach us about the latter."

All of a sudden, while I was contemplating these things,
Behold!

The heavens opened and the whole of creation shone with a light from
above,

And the world quaked!

I was afraid, yet
Behold!

A little child appeared before me in the light.

I continued looking at him as he became an old man

And then he changed again, becoming like a young man.

I didn't understand what I was seeing,

But the one likeness had several forms in the light,

And these likenesses appeared each through the other
And the vision had three forms.

He said to me,

“John, why doubt?
Why be afraid?
Don't you know this image?

Be not afraid.

I am with you (plural) always.
I am the Father
 The Mother
 The Son
I am the incorruptible
 Purity.

I have come to teach you

About what is
And what was
And what will be
In order for you to understand
 The invisible world
 And the world that is visible
 And the immovable race of perfect humanity.

Raise your head;
Understand my lessons;
Share them with any others who have received the spirit,
 Who are from the immovable race of perfect humanity.”

The Inexpressible One

The One rules all. Nothing has authority over it.
It is the God.
It is Father of everything,
 Holy One
 The invisible one over everything.
It is uncontaminated
 Pure light no eye can bear to look within.

The One is the Invisible Spirit.
It is not right to think of it as a God or as like God.
It is more than just God.

Nothing is above it.
Nothing rules it.
Since everything exists within it
It does not exist within anything.
Since it is not dependent on anything
It is eternal.

It is absolutely complete and so needs nothing.
It is utterly perfect
Light.

The One is without boundaries
Nothing exists outside of it to border it
The One cannot be investigated
Nothing exists apart from it to investigate it
The One cannot be measured
Nothing exists external to it to measure it

The One cannot be seen
For no one can envision it
The One is eternal
For it exists forever
The One is inconceivable
For no one can comprehend it
The One is indescribable
For no one can put any words to it.

The One is infinite light
Purity
Holiness
Stainless,

The One is incomprehensible
Perfectly free from corruption.
Not "perfect"
Not "blessed"
Not "divine"
But superior to such concepts.
Neither physical nor unphysical
Neither immense nor infinitesimal
It is impossible to specify in quantity or quality
For it is beyond knowledge.

The One is not a being among other beings
It is vastly superior
But it is not "superior."

It is outside of realms of being and time
For whatever is within realms of being was created
And whatever is within time had time allotted to it
The One receives nothing from anything.
It simply apprehends itself in its own perfect light

The One is majestic.
The One is measureless majesty

Chief of all Realms
Producing all realms

Light
Producing light

Life
Producing life

Blessedness
Producing blessedness

Knowledge
Producing knowledge

Good
Producing goodness

Mercy
Producing mercy

Generous
Producing generosity

[It does not "possess" these things.]

It gives forth light beyond measure, beyond comprehension.

[What can I say?]

His realm is eternal, peaceful, silent, resting, before everything.
He is the head of every realm sustaining each of them through goodness.

The Origin of Reality

[We would know nothing of the ineffable
And nothing of the immeasurable
Without the help of the one who comes forth
from the One who is the Father.
He alone has informed us.]

The Father is surrounded by light.
He apprehends himself in that light
 [which is the pure spring of the water of life
 that sustains all realms].

He is conscious of his image everywhere around him,
 Perceiving his image in this spring of Spirit
 Pouring forth from himself.
He is enamored of the image he sees in the light-water,
 The spring of pure light-water enveloping him.

His self-aware thought (ennoia) came into being.
Appearing to him in the effulgence of his light.
She stood before him.

This, then, is the first of the powers, prior to everything.
Arising out of the mind of the Father
The Providence (pronoia) of everything.
Her light reflects His light.

She is from His image in His light
Perfect in power
Image of the invisible perfect Virgin Spirit.

She is the initial power
glory of Barbelo
glorious among the realms
glory of revelation

She gave glory to the Virgin Spirit
She praised Him
 For she arose from Him.

[This, the first Thought, is the Spirit's image]

She is the universal womb
She is before everything
She is:
 Mother-Father

First Man
Holy Spirit

Thrice Male
Thrice Powerful
Thrice Named

Androgynous eternal realm
First to arise among the invisible realms.

She, Barbelo, asked the virgin Spirit for foreknowledge (prognosis).
The Spirit agreed.
Foreknowledge came forth and stood by Providence
[This one came through the Invisible Virgin Spirit's Thought.]
Foreknowledge gave glory to the Spirit
And to Barbelo, the Spirit's perfect power,
For She was the reason that it had come into being.

Primary Structures of the Divine Mind

She, Barbelo, asked the virgin Spirit for Incorruptibility
The Spirit agreed.
Incorruptibility came forth and stood by Thought and
Foreknowledge.

Incorruptibility gave glory to the Invisible Virgin Spirit
And to Barbelo,
For She was the reason that it had come into being.

She asked for everlasting Life.
The Spirit agreed
Everlasting life came forth and they all stood together.
They gave glory to the invisible Spirit

And to Barbelo,
For She was the reason that it had come into being.

She asked for Truth.
The Spirit agreed
Truth came forth and they all stood together.
They gave glory to the invisible Spirit

And to Barbelo,
For She was the reason that it had come into being.

This is the fivefold realm of the Father:

The First Man who is
The Image of the Invisible Spirit who is
Providence who is
Barbelo who is
Thought.
And
Foreknowledge - Incorruptibility - Life Everlasting - Truth

[These are an androgynous fivefold realm - therefore it is a realm of ten - of the Father.]

Secondary Structures of the Divine Mind

The Father looked into Barbelo
[into the pure light surrounding the Invisible Spirit]

Barbelo conceived and bore a spark of light
Who had blessedness similar to, but not equal to, her blessedness,

Who was the only child of that mother-father
The only offspring,
The only begotten child of the pure light, the Father.

The Invisible Virgin Spirit celebrated the light that had been produced
Coming forth from the first power who is
The Providence
Barbelo

The Spirit anointed him with Goodness, making him perfect
[he lacked no goodness whatsoever,
for he was anointed with the Invisible Spirit's Goodness]

He stood in the Spirit's presence and it was poured upon him.

Having received this anointing from the Spirit he immediately glorified Him
And he glorified the perfect Providence.
Because of Her he had come into being.

He asked for Mind (nous) to be a companion to him.
The Spirit consented

When the Invisible Spirit consented
Mind came into being.
It stood by the Anointed
and glorified the Spirit and Barbelo

[These beings came into existence through silence and thought.]

He wished to act through the Word of the Invisible Spirit.
Whose Will became an action and appeared with Mind
Glorifying the Light.

And then Word followed Will into being.

[The Christ, the divine autogenes,
created everything through the Word.]

Everlasting Life and Will,
Mind, and Foreknowledge
Stood together.
They glorified the Invisible Spirit and Barbelo.
Because of Her they had come into being.

Tertiary Structures of the Divine Mind

The Holy Spirit
Brought his and Barbelo's divine autogenes Son to completion
In order that he could stand before the great Invisible Virgin Spirit
As the divine autogenes Christ
And honor Him with a mighty voice.

[The Son came through Providence].

The Invisible Spirit
Placed the divine autogenes over everything.
All authorities were subordinated to him.
The truth within him let him learn everything

[He is called by the highest name of all.
That name will be told only to those who are worthy to hear it
From the light, [which is the Christ,]

From the incorruptibility,
Through a gift of the spirit
The Four Lights arising from the divine autogenes stood before him.

[The four fundamental powers are Understanding, Grace, Perception, and
Consideration.]

Grace exists within the realm of the Light called Harmozel, the first angel.
Along with Harmozel are
Grace

Truth
Form

The second Light is called Oriel and it stands over the second realm.
With Oriel are:

Conceptualization (Epinoia)
Perception
Memory

The third Light is called Daveithai and it stands over the third realm.
With Daveithai are:

Understanding
Love
Idea

The fourth Light is called Eleleth and it stands over the fourth realm.
With Eleleth are:

Perfection
Peace
Wisdom (Sophia).

These are the four lights standing before the divine autogenes.

Twelve realms stand before the Son of the Powerful
The autogenes

The Christ
Through the intention
And the grace
Of the Invisible Spirit

Twelve realms belong to the Son of the autogenes.

[All of this came into being through the intention of the Holy Spirit
Through the autogenes.]

From the perfect mind's foreknowledge
Through the intention of the Invisible Spirit
And the autogenes's will.
The perfect human appeared,
Its first true manifestation

The Virgin Spirit named the human Adamas
And placed him over the first realm with the mighty autogenes Christ
With the first Light Harmozel and its powers.

The Invisible One gave Adamas invincible power of mind.

Adamas spoke, glorifying and praising the Invisible Spirit:

“Everything has come into being from you
Everything will return to you.

I will praise you and glorify you

And the Autogenes

And the triple realm:

Father – Mother – Son,
the perfect power.”

Over the second realm was appointed Adamas’s son Seth
With the second Light Oriel.

In the third realm were placed the children of Seth
With the third Light Daveithai.
[The souls of the saints are placed there.]

In the fourth realm were placed the souls of those ignorant of the fullness
Those who did not repent at once
But who, after some time, eventually repented,
They are with the fourth Light Eleleth.

All of these created beings glorify the Invisible Spirit

A Crisis that Became the World

It happened that the realm (aeon) Wisdom (Sophia)
Of conceptual thought (Epinoia),
Began to think for herself,
She used the thinking (enthymesis)
And the foreknowledge (prognosis)
Of the Invisible Spirit.

She intended to reveal an image from herself
To do so without the consent of the Spirit,
Who did not approve,
Without the thoughtful assistance of her masculine counterpart,
Who did not approve.

Without the Invisible Spirit’s consent
Without the knowledge of her partner
She brought it into being.

Because she had unconquerable Power
Her thought was not unproductive.
Something imperfect came out of her
Different in appearance from her.

Because she had created it without her masculine counterpart
She gave rise to a misshapen being unlike herself.

Sophia saw what her desire produced.

It changed into the form of a dragon with a lion's head
And eyes flashing lightning bolts.

She cast him far from her,

Outside of the realm of the immortal beings
So that they could not see him.

[She had created him in ignorance.]

Sophia surrounded him with a brilliant cloud,

Put a throne in the center part of the cloud
So that no one would see it.

[Except for the Holy Spirit called the Mother of the Living]

She named him Yaldabaoth.

Yaldabaoth is the chief ruler.

He took great Power (dynamis) from his mother,
Left her, and moved away from his birthplace.

He assumed command,
Created realms for himself

With a brilliant flame that continues to exist even now.

The Fashioning of This World

Yaldabaoth united with the thoughtlessness (apnoia) within him.

He begot ruling authorities (exousia)

Modeling them on the incorruptible realms above.

The first is Athoth

The second is Harmas [called the eye of flame]

The third is Kalilaumbri

The fourth is Yabel

The fifth is Adonaiu [called Sabaoth]

The sixth is Cain [called the sun]

The seventh is Abel

The eighth is Abrisene

The ninth is Yobel

The tenth is Armupiel

The eleventh is Melcheir-adonein

The twelfth is Belias

Who rules over the very depth of Hades.

He made the first seven rulers to reign in the seven spheres of heaven.
He made the next five rulers to reign in the five depths of the abyss.

He shared a portion of his fire with them,
But shared none of the power of Light he had received from his mother.

[He is ignorant darkness.
When the Light mingled into the darkness
the darkness shone.
When darkness mixed with the Light,
the Light diminished,
No longer Light nor darkness but dim.]

This dim ruler has three names:
Yaldabaoth is the first.
Saklas is the second.
Samael is the third.
He is blasphemous through his thoughtlessness.
He said "I am God, and there is no God but me!"
Since he didn't know where his own Power originated.

His rulers created seven Authorities for themselves.
Each of these Authorities created six demons apiece,
There came to be 365 demons altogether.

Here are the seven Authorities' names and physical forms:
First, Athoth with a sheep's face
Second, Eloaios with a donkey's face
Third, Astaphaios with a hyena's face
Fourth, Yao with the face of a seven headed snake
Fifth, Sabaoth who has the face of a dragon
Sixth, Adonin whose face is that of a monkey
Seventh, Sabbataios with a face of flame and fire.
These are the seven of the week.
These Authorities rule the world.

Yaldabaoth has many faces.
More than all that have been listed
So he can convey any face he wants to the seraphim around him.

Yaldabaoth shared his fire with his seraphim
But gave them none of his pure Light
Although he ruled them by virtue of the power and glory
Of the Light had received from his Mother.

[Therefore he called himself "God" and defied his place of origin.]

He united his thought's sevenfold Powers with the Authorities who accompanied him.

He spoke and it happened.

He named those sevenfold Powers starting with the highest one:

Goodness paired with the first: Athoth

Providence paired with the second: Eloaios

Divinity paired with the third: Astaphaios

Lordship paired with the fourth: Yao

Kingdom paired with the fifth: Sabaoth

Zeal paired with the sixth: Adonin

Understanding paired with the seventh: Sabbataios

Each has its own realm modeled on one of the higher realms.

And each new name refers to a glory in the heavens

So that Yaldabaoth's demons might be destroyed.

The demons' own names, given by Yaldabaoth, are mighty names

But the Powers' names reflecting the glory above

Will bring about the demons' destruction and remove their

Power.

That is why each has two names.

Yaldabaoth modeled his creation

On the pattern of the original realms above him

So that it might be just like the indestructible realms.

[Not that he had ever seen the indestructible ones.

Rather, the power in him, deriving from his mother,

made him aware of the pattern of the cosmos above.]

When he gazed upon his creation surrounding him

He said to his host of demons

The ones who had come forth out of him:

"I am a jealous God and there is no God but me!"

[But by doing this he admitted to his demons that there is indeed another God.

For, if there were no other God, whom would he possibly be jealous of?]

His mother began to move back and forth

Because she had become aware that she now lacked Light

For her brightness had dimmed.

[Since her consort had not approved of her actions, she grew darker]

[I said "Master, what does it mean 'she moved back and forth'?"
He laughed, saying, "It's not as Moses said 'upon the waters.' Not at all."]

When she saw the evil that had taken place and
The theft of light that her son had committed
She repented.

In the darkness of ignorance
She began to forget.
She began to be ashamed.
But she could not yet return above
Yet she began to move.
And so she moved back and forth.

[The arrogant one removed Power from his mother
For he was ignorant
He thought no one existed except for his mother.
He saw the host of demons he had created
And he elevated himself above them.
But when the mother realized that that miscarriage
Was so imperfect
She came to realize that her consort had not approved.
She repented and wept furiously.]

All of the divine realms (pleroma) heard her repentant prayer
They sought blessing for her from the Invisible Virgin Spirit.
The Spirit consented.
He poured the Holy Spirit over her
Brought forth from the whole full realm.

[Her consort did not come down to her on his own,
but he came through the whole full realm
to restore her to her original condition.]

She was elevated above her son,
But she was not restored to her own original realm.
She would remain in the ninth sphere until she was fully restored.

Humanity Begins

Then came a voice from the highest realms saying:

“The Man exists! And the Son of Man!”

Yaldabaoth, chief ruler, heard it

He thought it came from his mother

He did not know the true source of the voice:

The Holy Mother-Father

Perfect Providence

Image of the Invisible

Father of Everything

In whom everything has come to be.

The First Man

[This is the one who appeared to them.

He appeared in the form of a human being.]

All of the realm of the chief ruler quaked!

The foundations of the abyss moved!

He illuminated the waters above the world of matter,

His image shown in those waters.

All the demons and the first ruler together gazed up

Toward the underside of the newly shining waters.

Through that light they saw the Image in the waters.

Yaldabaoth said to his subordinate demons:

“Let’s create a man according to the image of God

And our own likeness

So that his image will illuminate us.”

Each one through another’s Power created aspects of the man;

Each added a characteristic corresponding to the psychic factors

They had seen in the Image above them.

They made a creature of substance

In the likeness of that perfect First Man

And they said, “Let us call him Adam, so that his name will give us the power of light.”

Construction of the Human Body

The seven Powers began to work:

Goodness made a psyche of bone
Providence made a psyche of sinew
Divinity made a psyche of flesh
Lordship made a psyche of marrow
Kingdom made a psyche of blood
Zeal made a psyche of skin
Understanding made a psyche of hair

The host of demons took these substances from the Powers to create the limbs and the body itself. They put the parts together and coordinated them.

The first ones began by making the head: Abron created his head; Meniggsstroeth created the brain; Asterechme the right eye; Thaspomocha, the left eye; Ieronumos, the right ear; Bissoum, the left ear; Akioreim, the nose; Banenrphroum, the lips; Amen, the front teeth; Ibikan, the molars; Basiliademe, the tonsils; Achcha, the uvula; Adaban, the neck; Chaaman, the neckbones; Dearcho, the throat; Tebar, the shoulder; Mniarcon, the elbow; Abitrion, the right arm; Evanthen, the left arm; Krys, the right hand; Beluai, the left hand; Treneu, the fingers of the right hand; Balbel, the fingers of the left hand; Kriman, 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 skeleton; Gesole, the stomach; Agromauna, the heart; Bano, the lungs; Sostrapal, the liver; Anesimalar, the spleen; Thopithro, the intestines; Biblo, the kidneys; Roeror, the sinews; Taphreo, the spine; Ipouspoboba, the veins; Bineborin, the arteries; Atoimenpsephei, respiration; Entholleia, the flesh; Bedouk, the right buttock; Arabeei, the penis; Eilo, the testicles; Sorma, the genitals; Gormakaiochlabar, the right thigh; Nebrith, the left thigh; Pserem, the kidneys of the right leg; Asaklas, the left kidney; Ormaoth, the right leg; Emenun, the left leg; Knyx, the right shin; Tupelon, the left shin; Achiel, the right knee; Phnene, the left knee; Phiouthrom, the right foot; Boabel, its toes; Trachoun, the left foot; Phikna, its toes; Miamai, the toenails.

And those who were appointed over all of these are:

Zathoth,
Armas,

Kalila,
Iabel,
Sabaoth,
Cain,
Abel.

The energizing powers in the limbs were divided among:
the head made by Diolimodraza; the neck by Yammeax; the right shoulder Yakouib; the left shoulder Verton; the right hand Oudidi; 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 Pisandriaptes; the right shoulder joint Koade; the left shoulder joint Odeor; the right ribs Asphixix; the left ribs Synogchouta; the abdomen Arouph; the womb Sabalo; the right thigh Charcharb; the left thigh Chthaon; the genitals Bathinoth; the right leg Choux; the left leg Charcha; the right shin Aroer; the left shin Toechtha; the right knee Aol; the left knee Charaner; the right foot Bastan; its toes Archentechtha; the left foot Marephnouth; its toes Abrana.

Seven govern the whole body:

Michael,
Ouriel,
Asmenedas,
Saphasatoel,
Aarmouriam,
Richram,
Amiorps.

The one who governs perceptions: Archendekta
The one who governs reception: Deitharbathas
The one who governs imagination: Oummaa
The one who governs integration: Aachiarum
The one who governs impulse: Riaramnacho.

There is a fourfold source of the bodily demons:
Hot, Cold, Dry, Wet.

[Matter is the mother of them all.]

Ruler of hot:	Phloxopha
Ruler of cold:	Oroorrothos
Ruler of dry:	Erimacho
Ruler of wet:	Athuro.

Their mother stands among them: Onorthochrasaei
She is unlimited
She mixes with all of them.
She is matter
And they are nourished by her.

The four chief demons are:
Ephememphi, associated with pleasure,
Yoko, associated with desire,
Nenentophni, associated with distress,
Blaomen, associated with fear.
Their mother is Esthesis-Zouch-Epi-Ptoe.

Out from these four demons come passions:
From distress arises
Envy, jealousy, grief, vexation, Discord, cruelty, worry, mourning.

From pleasure comes much evil and unmerited pride, And so forth.

From desire comes Anger, fury, bitterness, outrage, dissatisfaction,
And so forth.

From fear emerges Horror, flattery, suffering, and shame.

[Their thought and truth is Anayo, the ruler of the material soul.
It belongs with the seven senses, Esthesis-Zouch-Epi-Ptoe.]

This is the total number of the demons: 365
They worked together to complete, part by part, the psychical and the material body.

There are even more of them in charge of other passions
That I didn't tell you about.
If you want to know about them
You will find the information in the Book of Zoroaster.

All of Yaldabaoth's servants and his demons
Worked to finish the psychic body.
For a very long time it lay inanimate
It did not move.

Yaldabaoth's mother wanted to take back the Power
She had turned over to the Chief Ruler.
She earnestly asked the most merciful,
The Mother-Father of everything,
For help.

Yaldabaoth Deceived

By His sacred command He sent down the five Lights
In the forms of the principal advisors to Yaldabaoth.

[This led to the removal of Yaldabaoth's mother's divine Power from him.]
They told Yaldabaoth:

"Blow some of your Spirit in the man's face,
Then his body will rise up."

Yaldabaoth blew some of his Spirit into the man.
That Spirit was the divine Power of his mother.

[He didn't understand what was happening, for he lived in ignorance.]

His mother's divine Power left Yaldabaoth
It entered the psychic human body
Modeled on the primordial image.

The human body moved!
It grew powerful!
It shone!

Yaldabaoth's demonic forces envied the man.
Through their united efforts he had come into being
They had given their Power to him.
His understanding was far greater than that of those who had created him.
And greater than that of the Chief Ruler himself.

When they realized that he shone with light
And could think better than they could
And was naked of evil,
They took him and cast him down
Into the lowest depths of the material world.

The Beginning of Salvation

The blessed one.

The Mother-Father
The good merciful one

Looked compassionately upon the Mother's Power
Relinquished by the Chief Ruler.

Since Yaldabaoth's demons might again overpower the perceptible psychic body

He sent down from his good Spirit a helper for Adam,
Out of his great compassion

A light-filled Epinoia emerged.
And he called her Life (Zoe).

She aids the entire creation
Working with him
Restoring him to the fullness.

She taught Adam about the way his people had descended
She taught Adam about the way he could ascend,
Which is the way he had descended.

The light-filled Epinoia was hidden in Adam.

So that the rulers wouldn't know about her
For Epinoia would repair the disaster their mother had caused.

[Adam was revealed because within him dwelt the shadow of light.

His mental abilities were far greater than those of his creators.
They had gazed upward and seen his exalted mental capability.]

The host of rulers and demons plotted together
They mixed fire and earth and water
Together with four blazing winds
They melded them together in great turbulence.

Adam was brought into the shadow of death.

They intended to make him anew

This time from
Earth,
Water,
Fire,
Wind,
Which are
Matter,
Darkness,

Desire,
The Artificial Spirit.
This all became a tomb,
A new kind of body.

Those thieves bound the man in it,
Enchained him in forgetfulness,
Made him subject to dying.

[His was the first descent
And the first separation.
Yet the light-filled Epinoia within him will elevate his thinking.]

Adam in Yaldabaoth's Paradise

The rulers took the man and put him into paradise
They told him to eat freely.

[Their food is bitter; their beauty is corrupt.
Their food is deceit; their trees are ungodliness.
Their fruit is poison.
Their promise is death.]

They placed the Tree of Their Life into the middle of paradise.

[I will teach you (plural) the secret of their life:
The plan that they made together about an artificial spirit.]

Its root is bitter
Its branches are dead.
 Its shadow is hatred
 Its leaves are deception
The nectar of wickedness is in its blossoms.
 Its fruit is death
 Its seed is desire
It flowers in the darkness.
 Those who eat from it are denizens of Hades
 Darkness is their resting place.

As for the tree called "The Knowledge Of Good And Evil"
 It is the Epinoia of the light.
They commanded him not to eat from it,
Standing in front to conceal it,
 For fear that he might look upwards to the fullness
 And know the nakedness of his indecency.

[However, I caused them to eat.

I asked the Savior,

“Lord, isn’t it the serpent that caused Adam to eat?”

He smiled and replied,

“The serpent caused them to eat

in order to produce the wickedness of the desire to reproduce
that would make Adam helpful to him.”]

The chief ruler, Yaldabaoth, knew that

Because the light-filled Epinoia within Adam
Made his mental abilities greater than his own,
Adam had been disobedient.

In order to recover the Power that he had put into Adam
Yaldabaoth made Adam completely forgetful.

[I asked the Savior, “What is it to be ‘completely forgetful?’”

He replied, “It is not what Moses wrote in his first book:

‘He caused Adam to fall into deep sleep’

Rather, Adam’s perceptions were veiled

And he became unconscious.

As he (Yaldabaoth) said through his prophet:

‘I will make their minds dull so that they do not see or understand.’”]

Woman Comes into Being

The light-filled Epinoia hid deep within Adam.

The Chief Ruler tried to remove her from his ribcage,
But Epinoia cannot be captured.

Although the darkness pursued her it did not catch her.

The Chief ruler did remove a portion of his Power from Adam

To create a person with a woman’s form

Modeled on the light-filled Epinoia that had been manifested to him.

He placed the Power removed from the man into the woman.

[It did not happen the way Moses said it did:

“he took a rib and made the woman.”]

Adam saw the woman standing next to him.

The light-filled Epinoia immediately appeared to him

She raised up the veil that dulled his mind.

He sobered up from the dark drunkenness
And he recognized his own counterpart.

He said: "This is bone from my bones
Flesh from my flesh."
Because of this a man will leave his mother and father
And be joined to a woman and those two will become one flesh.
For they will send his helper to him.

[Sophia, our sister, came down
Descending innocently
So as to regain what she had lost.
Therefore she was called Life.
The Mother of the Living
The one from the Providence of the Authority of Heaven
By her assistance people can achieve perfect knowledge.]

I appeared as an eagle perched on the Tree of Knowledge!
[Which is the Epinoia from the pure Providence of Light.]
In order to teach them
And raise them up from sleep's depths.

[For the two of them were fallen and aware of their nakedness.
Epinoia appeared as a being full of light
She enlightened their minds.]

When Yaldabaoth discovered that they had moved away from him
He cursed his earth.
He located the woman as she was preparing herself for her man.
He gave the woman over so that the man might be her master,
Because he did not know the secret of the divine strategy.

The man and woman were too terrified to renounce Yaldabaoth,
Who showed his ignorance to his angels
And he cast both of them out of paradise
Dressing them in heavy darkness.

The Chief Archon saw the young woman who was standing by Adam.
He realized that the light-filled Epinoia of life was within her.
Yaldabaoth became completely ignorant.

[When the Providence of all saw what was going to happen
She sent assistants to remove Divine Life from Eve.]

Yaldabaoth raped Eve.
She bore two sons.

[Elohim was the name of the first.
Yahweh was the name of the second.
Elohim has a bear's face.
Yahweh has a cat's face.
One is righteous;
One is not.
Yahweh is righteous;
Elohim is not.
Yahweh would command fire and wind
Elohim would command water and earth.]

Yaldabaoth deceptively named the two: Cain and Abel.

[From then until now sexual intercourse has persisted
Thanks to the Chief Ruler
Who put desire for reproduction into the woman who accompanies
Adam.
Through intercourse the Ruler caused new human bodies to be
produced
And he blew his artificial spirit into each of them.]

Yaldabaoth installed the two with authority over natural elements
So they can to rule over the tomb.

The Children of Seth Populate the World

Adam had intercourse with the image of his foreknowledge (prognosis)
He begot a son like the Son of Man
And he called that son Seth
Modeling him on the heavenly race in the higher realms.

In the same way the mother sent down her spirit
The image of herself
A model of the full higher realm,
In order to prepare a place for the descent of the realms.

The Chief Ruler, though, forced the humans to drink
From waters of forgetfulness
So that they might not know their true place of origin.

The children (of Seth) remained in this condition for a while
In order that when the Spirit descends from the holy realms
The Spirit can raise up the children and heal them from all defects
And thus restore complete holiness to the fullness of God.

Six Questions about the Soul

I asked the Savior, "Lord, will every soul be saved and enter the pure light?"

He replied, "You are asking an important question, one it will be impossible to answer for anyone who is not a member of the unmoved race. They are the people upon whom the Spirit of Life will descend and the power will enable them to be saved and to become perfect and worthy of greatness. They expunge evil from themselves and they will care nothing for wickedness, wanting only that which is not corrupt. They will achieve freedom from rage, envy, jealousy, desire, or craving."

"The physical body will negatively effect them. They wear it as they look forward to the time when they will meet up with those who will remove it. Those people deserve indestructible eternal life. They endure everything, bearing up under everything that happens so that they can deserve the good and inherit life eternal."

Then I asked him, "Lord, what about the souls who didn't do these things even though the Spirit of Life's power descended on them?"

He answered, "If the Spirit descends to people they will be transformed and saved. The power descends on everyone and, without it, no one can even stand up. After they are born, if the Spirit of Life increases in them, power comes to them and their souls are strengthened. Nothing then can leave them astray into wickedness. But if the artificial spirit comes into people, it leads them astray."

Then I said, "Lord, when souls come out of the flesh where do they go?"

He replied, smiling, "If the soul is strong it has more of power than it has of the artificial spirit and so it flees from wickedness. With the assistance of the Incorruptible One that soul is saved and it attains eternal rest."

I then asked him, "Lord, what of the souls of the people who do not know whose people they are? Where do they go?"

He responded, "In those people the artificial spirit has grown strong and they have gone astray. Their souls are burdened, drawn to wickedness, and cast into forgetfulness."

"When they come forth from the body, such a soul is given over to the powers created by the rulers, bound in chains, and cast into prison again. Around and around it goes until it manages to become free from forgetfulness through knowledge. And so, eventually, it becomes perfect and is saved."

Then I asked, "Lord, how does the soul shrink down so as to be able to enter its mother or a man?"

He was happy that I asked this and said, "You are truly blessed because you have understood. The soul should be guided by another within whom is the Spirit of Life. It will be saved by that means and accordingly will not have to enter a body again."

And I said, "Lord, what happens to the souls of people who achieved true knowledge, but who turned away from it?"

He said to me, "Demons of poverty will take them to a place where there is no possibility of repentance. There they will stay until the time when those who blasphemed against the spirit will be tortured and subjected to punishment forever."

I asked, "Lord, where did the artificial spirit come from?"

And he told me:

Three Plots against Humanity

The Mother-Father is merciful
 A Holy Spirit sympathizing with us.
Through the Epinoia of the Providence of the light
 It raises up the children of the perfect race
 Raising up their thought, their light eternal.

When the Chief Archon learned that they were elevated above him
 And that their mental ability surpassed his
He wanted to put a stop to their thought

But he did not know the extent of their mental superiority
And he could not stop them.

He made a plan with his demons
Who are his powers
Each of them fornicated with Wisdom (Sophia)
And produced fate
The last variety of imprisonment.

Fate changes unpredictably
It is of different sorts just as the demons are of different sorts.
Fate is hard.
Fate is stronger than
The gods, the authorities, the demons, the generations of people
Who are caught up in it.

Out of fate emerged
Sinfulness, violence, blasphemy, forgetfulness, ignorance,
Weighty commandments
Heavy sins
Terrible fear.
In this way all of creation became blind,
Ignorant of God above everything.

Because of imprisonment in forgetfulness
They are unaware of their sins,
They are bound into periods of time and seasons
By fate who is lord of it all.

Yaldabaoth eventually came to regret everything he had created.
He decided to bring a great flood
Upon creation, upon mankind.

But the great light of Providence warned Noah.
He preached to all of the children,
The sons of men,
But if they were strangers to him they didn't listen.

[It was not the way Moses said: "they hid in an ark."
Rather, they hid in a special place,
Not just Noah
but also many other people from the immovable race.
They went into hiding within a cloud of light.]

Noah knew his own authority
And that of the light Being who illuminated them
Although the Chief Ruler poured darkness over all the world.

The Chief Ruler and his powers plotted a strategy,
To send his demons to human daughters
And make themselves children by them to enjoy.
But they failed.

After their failure they made another plan.
They created an artificial spirit
Modeled on the Spirit who descended
So, to impregnate souls by means of this spirit,
The demons changed appearance
to look like the women's husbands
They filled the women with that spirit of darkness and wickedness.

They brought into being
Gold and silver,
Money and coins,
Iron and other metals and all things of this sort.

And the people who were attracted were led astray into troubles
And were greatly misled.
And grew old
Experiencing no pleasure,
And died
Finding no truth,
Never knowing the true God.

This is the way that they enslaved all of creation
From the foundation of the world until now.

[They took some women and produced children out of darkness
And they closed their hearts
And they hardened themselves
in the hardness of their artificial spirit
Until the present day.]

The Providence Hymn

I am the Providence of everything.
I became like my own human children.

I existed from the first.
I walked down every possible road.

I am the wealth of the light.
I am the remembering of the fullness.

I walked into the place of greatest darkness and on down.
I entered the central part of the prison.

The foundations of chaos quaked.

I hid because of their evil.
They did not recognize me.

I came down a second time
continuing on.

I emerged from among those of light
I am the remembering of Providence

I entered the middle of darkness,
The inner part of the underworld
To pursue my mission.

The foundations of chaos quaked.
Threatening to collapse upon all who were there
And utterly destroy them

I soared upward again
To my roots in light
So as not to destroy them all yet.

I descended a third time.

I am light
I am dwelling in light
I am the remembering of Providence

I entered the midst of darkness
I came to the deepest part of the underworld.

I let my face light up, Thinking of the end of their time
I entered their prison, The body is that prison

I cried out:
 "Anyone who hears,
 Rise up from your deep sleep!"

And the sleeping one awoke and wept
 Wiping bitter tears saying
 "Who calls me?"
 "Where has my hope come from
 As I lie in the depths of this prison?"

"I am the Providence of pure light," I replied,
"I am the thought of the Virgin Spirit
 Raising you up to an honored place.
 Rise up!

Remember what you have heard.
 Trace back your roots

To me.
 The merciful one.

Guard against the poverty demons.
Guard against the chaos demons.
Guard against all who would bind you.
 Awaken! Stay awake! Rise out of the depths of the underworld!

I raised him up
I sealed him with the light/water of the five seals.
Death had no power over him ever again.

I ascend again to the perfect realm.
I completed everything and you have heard it."

Conclusion

"I have told you everything now so that you can write it all down
And share it with your fellow spirits secretly
For this is the mystery of the unmoved race."

The Savior gave all of this to him to write and to keep carefully. He said to him, "Anyone who exchanges it for a present, or for food, or for drink, or for clothing, or for anything else of that sort will be cursed."

These things came to John in a mystery.
Instantly the Savior vanished.

John came to his fellow disciples and told them what the Savior had said to him.

Jesus the Christ.
Amen.

The Apocryphon of John