

### Creation of the universe

33 And it (the first ruler) put all things in order,<sup>i</sup> according to the image of the original aeons that had come to exist, so as to 13 make all things in the incorruptible manner: •not that the ruler itself had seen the 1 incorruptible, •but rather, the power within it, which it had gotten from 2 its mother, and which had begotten within it the image of the ordered world.<sup>a</sup>

Gn 1:1  
RR 94:34+  
FTh 40:4  
Zs 10:1  
IrSat 1.24.1  
EpS 39.1.4

### Ialtabaōth's arrogance

5 And seeing the creation surrounding it and the multitude of angels 8 around it that had come to exist out of it, it said to them, •“For my 9 part, I am a jealous god. •And there is no other god apart from me.” 9 In uttering this it signified to the angels staying with it that another god 12 did exist. •For if no other one existed, of whom would it be jealous?

11:18  
RR 94:21  
FTh 44:1  
EgG III 58:23  
IrG 1.29.4  
IrUnid 1.30.6  
EpG 25.2.3  
v.8  
Ex 20:5  
Dt 49:9  
v.9  
Is 45:5

### The mother's “movement”

13,14 Then the mother began to move. •She knew about the lack when the 15 radiation of her light diminished. •And she grew darker, for her consort had not come into harmony with her.

Gn 1:2

## IV. DIALOGUE OF JOHN AND THE SAVIOR

### A. INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS 1-4

#### The meaning of “move”

17 And I said, Sir, what is meant by “move”?

18 But it laughed and said, Do not suppose that it means “over the 22:22 waters” as Moses said. •No, rather when she saw the imperfection that had come to exist and the theft<sup>b</sup> that her offspring had committed,<sup>c</sup> she repented.

24 And in the darkness of unacquaintance, forgetfulness came over her. 25 And she began to be ashamed, moving back and forth. •*And she did 26 not rashly try to return, but rather she went back and forth.* •And the going back and forth is the meaning of “move.”

27,28 Now, the arrogant (ruler) had gotten power from its mother. •For it 28 was without acquaintance, •since it thought that no other existed but its 30 mother alone. •And seeing the multitude of angels that it had created, accordingly it exalted itself over them.

#### Repentance and elevation of wisdom

32 But when the mother learned that the garment<sup>d</sup> of darkness had not come to exist perfectly, she knew accordingly that her consort had not 36 been in harmony with her, •and she repented 14 with much weeping.

1,2 And the entreaty of her repentance was heard, •and all the fullness lifted up praise on her behalf unto the invisible virgin spirit, *and it 5 consented.*<sup>a</sup> •And while the <sup>holy spirit</sup> was consenting, the holy spirit

Gn 1:2  
FTh 40:3  
EgG III 59:6  
Zs 10:7  
IrG 1.29.4  
EpG 25.2.4

i. Or “fashioned all things.” At this point the story begins to parallel Genesis (Gn 1:1f).

13 a. “And they were named . . . ordered world” (12:26-13:2f): this passage is not present in MS BG (NHC III is imperfect here).

b. Of wisdom's power (cf. 10:20f).

c. “the imperfection . . . committed”: MS

BG instead has “the imperfection and the coming rebellion of her offspring.”

d. MS BG, “the aborted foetus,” perhaps correctly (NHC III is imperfect here). Ialtabaōth is meant.

14 a. “consented:” here and throughout this passage, the Coptic verb can be translated also “gaze out.”

7 poured over her something of the fullness of all. •For her consort did  
8 not come to her (in person); •rather, it came to her through the fullness,  
9 in order to rectify her lack.<sup>b</sup> •And she was conveyed not to her own  
11 eternal realm but to a place higher than her offspring, •so as to dwell in  
the ninth<sup>c</sup> (heaven) until she rectified her lack.<sup>d</sup>

23:20, 25:9  
EgG 61:14+  
Zs 45:17

### Projection of an image of a human being

13,14 And a voice emanated from above the exalted aeons: •“The human  
15 being exists, and the child of the human being.”<sup>e</sup> •But Ialtabaōth the  
18 first ruler listened and thought that this voice came from its mother,  
and it did not know where it had come from.

18 And the holy mother-father<sup>f</sup> and complete, perfect forethought, the  
image of the invisible, i.e. of the parent of the entirety in whom the  
entirety had come to exist, the first human being, showed them<sup>g</sup> that it  
24 had revealed its image in a representation like a portrait statue. •And  
26 all the eternal realm of the first ruler trembled, •and the foundations of  
26 the abyss moved. •And through the waters that are over the material  
realm, the bottom [shone] because of the [appearance] of its image that  
had appeared.

EgG III 59:4  
IrSat 1.24.1

30 And when all the authorities and the first ruler were dumbfounded,<sup>h</sup>  
33 they saw that the whole lower part shone; •and by the light, they saw  
in the water the representation of the image. 15

30:19?

Gn 1:2b  
Gn 1:3

Gn 1:4a

### Creation of the animate Adam

1,2 And it (the first ruler) said to the authorities dwelling with it, •“Come,  
let us make a human being after the image of god<sup>a</sup> and after our images,  
3,5 so that the human being's image might serve as a light for us.” •And  
they performed the act of creation by means of one another's power,  
6 according to the characteristics given to them. •And each of the  
authorities<sup>b</sup> put into that being's soul<sup>c</sup> a characteristic corresponding to  
9 the representation of the image that they had seen. •And they made a  
11 subsistent entity, after the image of the perfect first human being. •And  
they said, “Let us call him Adam, so that we might have his<sup>d</sup> name as  
a luminous power.”

Gn 1:26  
RR 87:23 +  
FTh 40:24  
IrUnid 1.30.6  
EpS 39.2.1

13 And the powers began:

14 the first, kindness,<sup>e</sup> made an animate element<sup>f</sup> of bone. 12:15

15 The second, forethought, made an animate element of connec-  
tive tissue.

16 The third, divinity, made an animate element of flesh.

b. “For her consort . . . her lack”: MSS BG and NHC III instead have “Her consort came down to her to rectify her lacks (plural). It was pleased to rectify her lacks by the agency of forethought.”

c. In the list of twelve aeons given in 8:7f, the ninth from the bottom is afterthought.

d. By returning to regain the stolen power (“lack”) in the person of life (Zōē), a luminous afterthought sent from afterthought proper.

e. “human being . . . child of the human being”: or “man . . . son of man”; i.e. the Geradamas and the great Seth.

f. MS BG instead has “the holy perfect parent.”

g. All the rulers.

h. MSS BG and NHC III instead have “bent down.”

15 a. Forethought, the “first human being.”

b. MSS BG and NHC III instead have “powers.”

c. Or “animate (subsistence).” The original reading of the text is uncertain here.

d. For convenience of identification, the name Adam is hereafter picked up by “he” in the English translation.

e. In MS BG the list is somewhat different: (1) divinity; (2) kindness; (3) fire (cf. “zeal”); (4) forethought; (5) kingship; (6) intelligence; (7) wisdom (Sophia).

f. “animate element”: lit. “soul,” Greek *psykhē*.

1  
4:34+  
40:4  
1:1  
1.24.1  
39.1.4

3  
4:21  
44:1  
III 58:23  
1.29.4  
iid 1.30.6  
25.2.3

0:5  
9:9

1:5

2

2

1:2  
40:3  
III 59:6  
0:7  
1.29.4  
1.25.2.4

- 18 The fourth, lordship, made an animate element of marrow.<sup>g</sup>  
 19 The fifth, kingship, made an animate element of blood.  
 20 The sixth, zeal, made an animate element of skin.  
 22 The seventh, intelligence, made an animate element of hair.<sup>h</sup>
- 23,24 And the multitude of angels stood before him. •And the seven  
 substances of the animate subsistence<sup>i</sup> were taken by the authorities,  
 26 so that the regularizing of limbs and parts and the joining, i.e. ordering,  
 of each of the constituents might be brought about.
- 29 The first,<sup>j</sup> Raphaō, began by making the crown of the head;  
 Abrōn (?) made the skull;  
 Mēniggesstrōēth made the brain;  
 32 Asterekhmē, the right eye;  
 Thaspomakha, the left eye;  
 33 Ierōnumos, the right ear;  
 Bissoum, the left ear;  
 35 Akiōreim, the nose; **16**  
 1 Banēnephroum, the lips;  
 Amēn, the front teeth;  
 Ibikan, the back teeth;  
 2 Basiliadēmē, the tonsils;  
 Akhkha, the uvula;  
 3 Adaban, the back of the neck;  
 Khaaman, the neck bone;  
 Dearkhō, the throat;  
 5 Tēbar, the right shoulder;  
 [. . .], [the] left shoulder;  
 6 Mniarkhōn, the [right] elbow;  
 [. . .], the left elbow;  
 7 Abitriōn, the palm of the right hand;  
 Euanthēn, the palm of the left hand;  
 Krus, the back of the right hand;  
 Bēluai, the back of the left hand;  
 9 Trēneu, the fingers of the right hand;  
 Balbēl, the fingers of the left hand;  
 Krima, the fingernails;  
 12 Astrōps, the right nipple;  
 Barrōph, the left nipple;  
 13 Baoum, the right armpit;  
 Ararim, the left armpit;  
 14 Arekh,<sup>a</sup> the bodily cavity;  
 Phthauē, the navel;  
 Sēnaphim, the abdomen;  
 16 Arakhethōpi, the right side;  
 Zabedō, the left side;  
 18 Barias, the lower back on the right;  
 Phnouth, the lower back on the left;  
 18 Abēnlenarkhei, the marrow;  
 Khnoumeninorin, the skeleton;  
 20 Gēsole, the stomach;  
 Agromauma, the heart;

g. MS BG next has "and all the system of the body."

h. MS BG next has "and they set all the body in order"; NHC III, "and they set all [the] human being in order."

i. Or "soul."

j. The following passage, 15:29–19:8f ("... *Book of Zoroaster*"), is not found in MSS BG and NHC III.

16 a. Or "Arekhē."

- Banō, the lungs;  
 Sōstrapal, the liver;  
 Anēsimalar, the spleen;  
 Thōpithrō, the intestines;  
 Biblō, the kidneys;  
 24 Roerōr, the connective tissue;<sup>b</sup>  
 24 Taphreō, the vertebrae;  
 25 Ipouspobōba, the veins;  
 Bineborin, the arteries;  
 Latoimenpsēphei, the pneumatic<sup>c</sup> system within all the limbs;  
 28 Ēnthollei[.], all the flesh;  
 28 Bedouk, the right buttock (?);  
 Arabēei, the left (buttock (?));  
 29 ⟨. . .⟩,<sup>d</sup> the penis;  
 Eilō, the testicles;  
 Sōrma, the private parts;  
 30 Gormakaiokhlabar, the right thigh;  
 Nebrith, the left thigh;  
 Psērēm, the muscles of the right thigh;  
 Asaklas, the muscle of the left thigh;  
 34 Ormaōth, the right knee;  
 Ēmēnun, the left knee;  
 Knuks, the right leg; 17  
 1 Tupēlon, the left leg;  
 2 Akhiēl, the right ankle;  
 Phnēmē, the left ankle;  
 Phiouthrom, the right foot;  
 Boabel, the toes of the right foot;  
 Trakhoun, the left foot;  
 Phikna, the toes of the left foot;  
 Miamai, the toenails;  
 6 Labērniūm, ⟨the . . .⟩.<sup>a</sup>

7 Now, those which are ordained in charge of the preceding are seven in number:

- 8 Athōth;  
 Armas;  
 Kalila;  
 Iabēl;  
 Sabaōth;  
 Cain;  
 Abel.

8 And those which provide activation in the limbs are, according to parts:

- 10 first the head, Diolimodraza;  
 10 the back of the neck, Iammeaks;  
 11 the right shoulder, Iakouib;  
 the left shoulder, Ouertōn;  
 12 the right hand, Oudidi;  
 the left hand, Arbao;  
 the fingers of the right hand, Lampnō;  
 the fingers of the left hand, Lēekaphar;

b. Or "nervous system."

c. Or "respiratory."

d. The word "⟨buttock⟩ (?)" and the angel's name are missing. Through an inadvertence, MSS NHC II and IV omit a few

words, having "Arabēei, the left penis."

17 a. One or more words are inadvertently omitted here.

- 15 the right nipple, Barbar;  
the left nipple, Imaē;  
the chest, Pisandiptēs;  
17 the right armpit, Koadē;  
the left armpit, Odeōr;  
18 the right side, Asphiksiks;  
the left side, Sunogkhouta;<sup>b</sup>  
19 the bodily cavity, Arouph;  
the abdomen, Sabalō;  
20 the right thigh, Kharkharb;  
the left thigh, Khthaōn;  
22 all the private parts, Bathinōth;<sup>c</sup>  
22 the right knee, Khouks;  
the left knee, Kharkha;  
the right leg, Aroēr;  
the left leg, Tōekhtha;  
the right ankle, Aōl;  
the left ankle, Kharanēr;  
26 the right foot, Bastan;  
the toes of the right foot, Arkhentekhtha;  
the left foot, Marephnouth;  
the toes of the left foot, Abrana.

29 [And (?)] seven, i.e. 7, were [ordained (?)] in charge of the preceding: 17:8

- 30 Mikhaēl;  
Ouriēl;  
Asmenedas;  
Saphasatoēl;  
Aarmouriam;  
Rikhram;  
Amiōrps.

32,33 And those which are in charge of perception are Arkhendekta; •and the  
34 one that is in charge of reception,<sup>d</sup> Deithar bathas; •of imaging,<sup>e</sup> Oummaa;  
35,1 of [harmony (with imaged information)], 18 Aakhiam; •of all impulse  
to action,<sup>a</sup> Riaramnakhō.

2 And the wellspring of the demons that are in all the body is divided  
5 in four: heat, cold, wetness, dryness. •And the mother of them all is  
matter.

- 6 Ruling over heat (is) Phloksopha;  
cold, Oroorrothos;  
dryness, Erimakhō;  
wetness, Athurō.

10 And Onorthokhrasaei the mother of all these stands in their midst, of  
13 unlimited extent; and she is mixed with all of them. •And truly she is  
matter, for they are nourished by her.

14 The four leading demons:

- 15 Ephememphi belongs with pleasure;  
16 Iōkō, with desire;  
17 Nenentōphni, with grief;  
18 Blaomēn, with fear.

b. Or "Sounogkhouta."

c. Or "Thabin."

d. Or "perceived information."

e. Or "received information."

18 a. "reception . . . imaging . . . [harmony] . . . impulse to action": jargon from the ethical division of Stoic philosophy.

18,19 And the mother of them all (is) Esthēnsis-Oukh-Epi-Ptoē.<sup>b</sup> •And out of the four demons came passions.

20 From grief:

envy;  
 fanaticism;  
 pain;  
 distress;  
 contention for victory;  
 lack of repentance;  
 anxiety;  
 mourning;  
 and so forth.

24 From pleasure come many imperfections and vain boasting, and the like.

26 From desire:

anger;  
 wrath;  
 [bitterness];  
 bitter lust;  
 insatiableness;  
 and the like.

30 From fear:

terror;  
 entreaty;  
 anguish;  
 shame.

31,32 Now, all these are as it were virtues<sup>c</sup> and vices. •And the thought of  
 1 their truth is Anaiō (?), which is the head of the material soul: 19 •for it dwells with Esthēnsis-Zoukh-Epi-Ptoē.<sup>a</sup>

2,3 Here is the number of the angels: all told, they amount to 365; •and they all labored at him (the human being), until limb by limb the animate and material body<sup>b</sup> was completed. 11:25

6 Now, others, whom I have not mentioned to you (sing.), preside over  
 8 the rest of the passions; •and if you want to know about them, the matter is written in the *Book of Zoroaster*. Porph 16.3+

### His immobility

10 And all the angels and demons labored, until they put the animate  
 13 body in order. •And for a long time their product existed inactive and immovable.<sup>c</sup> RR 88:4  
 IrSat 1.24.1  
 IrUnid 1.30.6

### Passage of wisdom's power into Adam

15 So when the mother wished to recover the power that she had surrendered to the first ruler, she entreated the greatly merciful mother- 10:19  
 RR 87:4  
 FTh 40:25  
 IrSat 1.24.1  
 IrUnid 1.30.6

b. I.e. Greek *aisthēsis oukh epi ptoā*, "perception not in a state of excitement": more Stoic ethical jargon, a description of the psychic state of the virtuous person.

c. Or "valued categories."

19 a. Greek for either "perception not in a state of excitement" or "the seven perceptive faculties not in a state of excitement"; cf. note 18b.

b. "and material": with these words the narrator anticipates slightly, since the material body's creation is described at 20:28f. The present passage tells only how the "animate . . . body was completed."

c. MSS BG and NHC III next have "For, the seven authorities could not raise it; neither could the 360 angels that had constructed the chains."

18 father<sup>d</sup> of the entirety; •and by divine counsel the mother-father sent  
21 five luminaries<sup>e</sup> in place of<sup>f</sup> the angels of the first ruler. •[And] they  
counseled it (the ruler), and in consequence, the mother's power was  
extracted from it.

EgG III 65:23?

22 Indeed, they said to Ialtabaōth, "Blow some of your spirit into his  
25 face and his body will arise." •And Ialtabaōth blew some of its spirit,  
that is, the power of its mother, upon him.

Gn 2:7  
RAAd 64:22 +  
RR 88:3  
FTh 45:28  
IrUnid 1.30.6

27,28 It did not understand, since it existed without acquaintance. •And the  
mother's power left Altabaōth (i.e. Ialtabaōth) and entered the animate  
body, which they had labored at after the image of the aboriginal existent.

### Relegation of Adam to the realm of matter

32,34 The body moved, became strong, and shone. •And in that moment  
1 the rest of the powers became envious; 20 •for by the efforts of all of  
2 them he had come to exist, •and they had given their power to the  
3 human being.<sup>a</sup> •And his intelligence became stronger than those which  
had made him, and stronger than the first ruler.

IrUnid 1.30.8

5 Now, when they knew that he shone, thought more than they did,  
and was naked of imperfection, they took him and cast him down into  
the lower part of all matter.

20:19 +

### Sending of a helper (life) to Adam

9 But the blessed, beneficent, compassionate mother-father had pity on  
13 the mother's power, which had been extracted from the first ruler; •and  
furthermore (had pity) because they were about to gain control over the  
14 animate and perceptible body. •And by its beneficent spirit whose mercy  
is great it sent unto Adam a helper, a luminous afterthought,<sup>b</sup> which  
19 derived from it and which was called life (Zōē). •And afterthought  
rendered assistance to the whole creature, suffering along with him;<sup>c</sup>  
20,21 leading him into his fulfillment;<sup>d</sup> •teaching him about his descent as the  
23 posterity—•about the way of ascent, by which he had descended.

RR 88:13  
Th 14:10 +  
FTh 35:12  
IrSat 1.24.1  
Gn 3:20  
Th 16:11  
FTh 35:12  
v.19

24 And the afterthought of the light hid within Adam so that the rulers  
27 might not understand, •and that rather the afterthought<sup>e</sup> might be a  
rectification of the mother's lack.<sup>f</sup>

20:3, 20:30  
21:14, 22:15  
22:28, 28:2  
Gn 2:18  
RAAd 64:12  
RR 88:17  
IrUnid 1.30.12  
v.21  
3St 127:20

### Creation of Adam's material body

28 And the human being became visible because of the light's shadow  
30 that existed within him, •and his thinking surpassed all those who had  
32 made him. •When they looked up, they beheld that his thinking was  
33 higher. •And along with all the host of rulers and the host of angels,  
35 they made a plan. •Taking fire, earth, 21 and water, they mixed them  
2 together with the four fiery winds. •And they became forged to one  
4 another, and a great disturbance was made. •And they brought him into

IrUnid 1.30.9

20:19 +

RR 87:23 +

Gn 2:7

d. Forethought.

e. MS BG instead has "sent the self-originate and its four luminaries."

f. MSS BG and NHC III, "after the manner of."

20 a. MS NHC III next has "And he bore (within him) the souls of the seven authorities and their powers."

b. Forethought (the "mother-father") sends wisdom back down into the material world from her temporary residence in the ninth

heaven, the realm of the aeon afterthought (14:11f). Wisdom as an envoy of forethought is called forethought's afterthought, an "afterthought, which derived from it."

c. Or "to all creation, suffering along with them."

d. Or "fullness."

e. "the afterthought": MSS BG and NHC III instead have "wisdom (Sophia) our sibling that resembles us."

f. I.e. might bring about the reclamation of the missing power.

3G III 65:23?

1 2:7  
Ad 64:22 +  
R 88:3  
Th 45:28  
Unid 1.30.6

Unid 1.30.8

:19 +

88:13  
14:10 +  
h 35:12  
at 1.24.1  
3:20  
16:11  
h 35:12  
9  
3, 20:30  
14, 22:15  
28, 28:2  
2:18  
d 64:12  
88:17  
nid 1.30.12  
1  
127:20

nid 1.30.9

19 +

87:23 +

2:7

the shadow of death, in order to perform again the act of modeling, out  
7 of earth, water, fire, and the spirit that derives from matter—•that is,  
out of the ignorance of darkness, and desire, and their counterfeit spirit.<sup>a</sup>  
9 That is the cave<sup>b</sup> of the remodeling of the body in which the brigands  
12 clothed<sup>c</sup> the human being, the bond<sup>d</sup> of forgetfulness. •And he became  
13 a mortal human being. •It is he who was the first to descend, and the  
first to separate.

22:32 +

Gn 2:21

20:19 +

14 But it was the afterthought of the light within him that was raising his  
thinking.

### His introduction into paradise

16 And the rulers brought him and put him in the garden (paradise).  
18,19 And they said to him, "Eat"—namely, at leisure. •For in fact their food<sup>e</sup>  
21 is bitter, and their beauty is lawless; •while their enjoyment is deception,  
their trees are impiety, their fruit is incurable poison, and their promise  
24 is death. •And it was in the midst of the garden that they put the tree  
of their life.

Gn 2:15

RR 88:24

### Trees of paradise

26 Now, I shall teach you (plur.) what is the mystery of their life, the  
29 plan they made with one another, the image of their spirit:<sup>f</sup> •its root is  
31 bitter; its branches are deadly; •its shade is hateful; deception resides  
33 in its leaves; •its blossom is the anointing of wickedness; its fruit is  
34,36 death; •its seed is desire; and it is in the dark that it blossoms. •The  
2 dwelling place of those who eat 22 of it is Hades, •and the darkness is  
their realm of repose.

FTh 44:19

3 But as for that tree which is called by them the tree of acquaintance  
with good and evil, and which is the afterthought of the light, they<sup>a</sup>  
remained in its presence<sup>b</sup> lest he<sup>c</sup> gaze upon his fulfillment<sup>d</sup> and recognize  
9 the nakedness of his shame. •But I rectified them so that they ate.

Gn 2:9

RR 89:34

IrG 1.29.3

IrUnid 1.30.9

EpG 26.2.6

### The snake

9 And I said to the savior, Sir, was it not the snake that taught Adam  
to eat?  
11,12 The savior laughed and said, •The snake taught them to consume  
imperfection consisting of the sowing of desire for corruption, so that  
15 he (Adam) might become useful to it. •And it knew that he was disobedient  
to it<sup>e</sup> because of the light of the afterthought dwelling within him and  
18 making him more upright in his thinking than the first ruler. •And it

Gn 3:4

20:19 +

21 a. "counterfeit": or "mimicking, imitative." Cf. 29:14f. MS BG instead has "adversarial spirit."

b. "shadow . . . cave (Greek *spēlaion*)" (21:4–9f): Platonist clichés for the material world, based ultimately on Plato's *Republic*, book 7. "Cave" is also traditionally associated with "brigands" (21:9f).

c. The "brigands" (a cliché for demons) are the rulers; the material body is here likened to the soul's garment in which it is "clothed," another cliché.

d. "bond": a Platonist cliché for the material body.

e. Or "enjoyment."

f. The counterfeit spirit. Instead of "the

image of their spirit" MSS BG and NHC III have "namely their counterfeit spirit that derives from them so as to turn him back, so that he might not know his fulfillment (or fullness). That tree is of the following sort."

22 a. The rulers.

b. "remained in its presence": MSS BG and NHC III instead have "gave the command not to taste of it, i.e. not to hearken to it; for the commandment was directed against him."

c. Adam.

d. Or "fullness."

e. The snake is identified with one of the rulers, as in IrUnid.

wanted to extract from Adam the power that it had imparted to him.  
20 And it caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam.

Gn 2:21

### Creation of Eve

21 And I said to the savior, What does "deep sleep" mean?

RR 89:3

22,23 And it said, It is not as you have heard that Moses wrote; •for in his First Book (i.e. Genesis) he said that he made him lie down: no, rather  
25 (it means) in his perceptions.<sup>f</sup> •For also he said through the prophet, "I shall make their hearts<sup>g</sup> heavy, that they might not understand, and might not be able to see."

13:18

IrSat 1.24.2

28,29 Next the afterthought of the light hid within him. •And the first ruler  
31 wanted to extract it from his side. •But the afterthought of the light is  
32 incomprehensible: •although the darkness was pursuing it, it could not comprehend<sup>h</sup> it.

20:19+

32 And it (the ruler) extracted a portion of his power from him and performed another act of modeling, in the form of a female, after the  
36 image of the afterthought that had been shown forth to it. •And into the modeled form of femaleness it brought 23 the portion it had taken from the power<sup>a</sup> of the human being—not "his rib," as Moses said.

21:13

Gn 2:21

RR 89:7+

IrUnid 1.30.7

EpS 39.2.1

4,5 And he saw the woman beside him. •And at that moment the luminous afterthought was shown forth, for it had removed the veil from around  
8 his heart; •and he became sober out of the drunkenness<sup>b</sup> of the darkness.  
9 And he recognized his partner in essence, and said, "This now is bone  
11 of my bones and flesh of my flesh. •Therefore man will leave his father and his mother and cleave to his wife, and they shall both become one flesh. For his consort will be sent to him."

Gn 2:23

RR 89:13

20 Now, wisdom (Sophia) our sibling, who innocently descended<sup>c</sup> in order to rectify her lack, was therefore called life (Zōē)—i.e. mother of  
25 the living—by the forethought of the absolute power of heaven. •And  
25 [. . .] him [. . .]. •And thanks to it (life) they tasted perfect acquaintance.

14:8+

10:16

Gn 3:20

26 I myself was shown forth in the manner of an eagle upon the tree of acquaintance—which is the afterthought deriving from the uncontaminated, luminous forethought—so that I might teach them and raise them  
30 out of the depth of sleep. •For they both dwelled in a corpse,<sup>d</sup> and knew  
31 that they were naked. •The shining afterthought was shown forth to  
33 them, raising their thinking.

### The expulsion from paradise

35 But when Aldabaōth (i.e. Ialtabaōth) knew that they had withdrawn  
37 from it, it cursed its earth. •It found the female preparing 24 herself for  
1,2 her male—he was master over her,<sup>a</sup> •for he was not acquainted with the mystery that had come to pass from the holy plan.

RR 90:19

IrUnid 1.30.8

Gn 3:17

v.1

Gn 3:16

4,4 And they were afraid to rebuke it (Ialtabaōth). •And he (Adam)  
6 showed<sup>b</sup> its lack of acquaintance that is within it to its angels. •And it<sup>c</sup>  
7 expelled them from the garden, •and clothed them in obscure darkness.

Gn 3:24

f. MSS BG and NHC III instead have "rather, it covered his perceptions with a veil and weighed him down with unconsciousness."

g. MSS BG and NHC III, "the ears of their hearts."

h. Or "seize."

23 a. Wisdom's "power" is now divided between Adam and Eve; by them it will be transmitted into succeeding generations in the form of soul, cf. 26:26f.

b. Another common cliché for unperceptiveness, especially typical of gnostic texts.

c. As the luminous afterthought.

d. "corpse," or "fallen thing": the body.

24 a. "It found . . . over her" (23:37–24:1f): MSS BG and NHC III instead have "And what is more, it gave over the female so that the male might be master over her."

b. Or possibly "it (Ialdabaōth) displayed."

c. MS BG instead has "its angels."

him.

Gn 2:21

RR 89:3

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IrSat 1.24,2"I  
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RR 90:19  
IrUnid 1.30.8  
Gn 3:17  
v.1  
Gn 3:16

Gn 3:24

**Cain and Abel**

8 And the first ruler saw the female virgin<sup>d</sup> standing with Adam, and saw that the living, luminous afterthought had been shown forth within  
12,13 her. •And Aldabaōth became filled with lack of acquaintance. •Now, the forethought of the entirety learned of this, and sent certain beings,  
15 who caught life (Zōē) up out of Eve. •And the first ruler defiled her,<sup>e</sup> and begot on her two sons—the first and the second, Elōim and Iaue.<sup>f</sup>  
18,19 Elōim has the face of a bear; Iaue, the face of a cat. •One is just; the  
20 other is unjust: Iaue is just, Elōim is unjust. •It established Iaue in charge of fire and wind, and established Elōim in charge of water and  
24 earth. •And it called them by the names Cain and Abel, with trickery in mind.

26 And to the present day sexual intercourse, which originated from the  
28 first ruler, has remained. •And in the female who belonged to Adam it  
29 sowed a seed of desire; •and by sexual intercourse it raised up birth in  
31 the image of the bodies. •And it supplied them some of its counterfeit  
32 spirit. •And it established the two rulers in charge of realms, so that they ruled over the cave.<sup>g</sup>

**Seth**

34 Now, after Adam had known the image of his own prior acquaintance,<sup>h</sup> he begot the image 25 of the child of the human being,<sup>a</sup> and called him Seth, after the race<sup>b</sup> in the eternal realms.

2 Likewise, also the mother sent down her spirit<sup>c</sup> in the image of the female being that resembled her, as a counterpart of what is in the  
5 fullness; •for she<sup>d</sup> was going to prepare a dwelling place for aeons that were going to descend.

**Oblivion of Adam and Eve**

7 And they were given water of forgetfulness<sup>e</sup> by the first ruler, so that they might not know themselves and realize where they had come from.

9 And so the posterity temporarily remained, rendering service, so that whenever the spirit<sup>f</sup> would descend from the holy aeons it might rectify  
14 the posterity and heal it of the lack: •so that the entire fullness might become holy and without lack.

**B. THE SALVATION OF SOULS****The spirit of life**

16 And I for my part said to the savior, Sir, will all souls then be saved and go into the uncontaminated light?

d. Eve.

e. Carnal Eve, from whom wisdom has now escaped.

f. "Elōim . . . Iaue": in Genesis and other Old Testament books Elohim and Yahweh (Jehovah) are names of the creator of this world, the god of Israel.

g. I.e. the material world (cf. note 21b).

h. Had had intercourse with Eve.

25 a. Or "the son of man."

b. Or "after the manner of birth."

c. To compensate for the departure of the spiritual element from Adam, Eve, and their

first two offspring (cf. 24:13f), wisdom now sends the "spirit" of life to humankind. It will remain in Seth's posterity as the element capable of being awakened and saved by true religion.

d. "the female being . . . she": possibly Seth's sister and wife, Nōrea, known from other Sethian texts where considerable emphasis is placed upon her role in establishing the posterity of Seth; cf. RR 91:34f; EpS 39.5.2-3; EpG 26.1.1f.

e. Or "deep sleep."

f. Forethought (the "holy spirit") as savior.

Gn 4:1  
RAAd 66:25  
RR 91:11  
EgG 71:6  
IrUnid 1.30.9  
EpS 39.2.1  
EpA 40.5.3  
v.13  
RAAd 64:28  
RR 89:25RAAd 67:2  
Th 18:28Gn 4:25  
RR 91:30  
EgG 71:10  
IrUnid 1.30.9  
EpS 39.2.4  
EpA 40.7.1  
RAAd 65:5  
9:11  
v.2  
EpG 26.1.7+?

RAAd 65:9

RAAd 73:10  
RR 92:30  
14:8+

18 It answered and said to me, The matters that have arisen in your mind  
 20 are important ones: °indeed, it is difficult to disclose them to any but  
 those who belong to the immovable race,<sup>g</sup> upon whom the spirit of life  
 25 will descend and dwell with power.<sup>h</sup> °They will attain salvation and  
 26,26 become perfect. °And they will become worthy of greatnesses. °And  
 there they will become purified of every imperfection and of the anxieties  
 29 of wickedness: °being anxious for nothing except incorruptibility alone;  
 30 meditating on it thenceforth without anger, envy, grudging, desire, or  
 33 insatiableness as regards the entirety; °restrained by nothing but the  
 35 subsistent entity of the flesh, which they wear, °awaiting the time when  
 1 they will be visited 26 by those beings who take away. °Such souls are  
 3 worthy of eternal, incorruptible life and calling: °abiding all things and  
 enduring all things so that they might complete the contest and inherit  
 eternal life.

RAd 66:1 +  
 RR 96:22 +  
 FTh 41:21  
 EgG 74:30  
 IrSat 1.24.2  
 EpS 39.2.4  
 EpG 26.6.2

RAd 76:21

7 I said to him, Sir, can the souls upon whom the spirit of life has  
 descended, but who did not perform these deeds [attain salvation]?

10 It answered and said to me, If the spirit descends upon them, it is  
 12,12 quite sure that they will attain salvation; °and they will migrate. °Indeed,  
 14 the power will descend unto everyone<sup>a</sup>—°for without it no one can stand  
 5 up. °And after they are begotten, if the spirit of life increases—for the  
 power comes (to them)—it strengthens that soul,<sup>b</sup> and nothing can  
 20 mislead it into the works of wickedness. °But those upon whom the  
 counterfeit spirit descends will be beguiled by it and go astray.

22,23 But for my part I said, °Sir, so when the souls of these people have  
 come forth from their flesh, where will they go?

25,26 And it laughed and said to me, °The soul—which means the power—  
 will increase within it (the flesh) more greatly than the counterfeit spirit;  
 28,28 for it (the soul) is strong and will flee from wickedness. °And by visitation  
 of the incorruptible it will attain salvation and be taken into the repose  
 of the aeons.

### The counterfeit spirit

32 But for my part I said, Sir, then where will the souls of these others,  
 who have not known to whom they belong, reside?

35 And it said to me, In the case of those others, the counterfeit spirit  
 1 has increased 27 within them while they were going astray. °And it  
 2 weighs down the soul, °and beguiles it into the works of wickedness,  
 3,4 and casts it into forgetfulness<sup>a</sup> (or deep sleep). °And after it has come  
 forth it is given into the charge of the authorities, who exist because of  
 6 the ruler. °And they bind it with bonds and cast it into the prison.<sup>b</sup>  
 8 And they go around with it<sup>c</sup> until it awakens out of forgetfulness and  
 10 takes acquaintance unto itself. °And in this way, when it becomes perfect  
 it attains salvation.

11,12 But for my part I said, Sir, how is it that °the soul becomes thinner  
 and thinner, returning then to the nature of its mother or to the human  
 being?

14,16 Then it was happy when I asked it this, and said to me, °You are

g. The posterity of Seth.

h. Or "with the power."

26 a. Wisdom's "power" (19:28f) is transmitted, "descends," to all the posterity of Adam in the form of soul, the animating element.

b. The Coptic text of MSNHC II is slightly corrupt here. MS NHC III instead has "After a person is begotten, the counterfeit spirit of

life of [ . . . ] is introduced. Now, if the strong (i.e. true) spirit of life [comes], the power or [soul] becomes strong [and is not] misled into wickedness."

27 a. Cf. 22:23f, 25:7f.

b. Cause it to become reincarnate in another material body ("prison").

c. In cycles of reincarnation.

17 truly blessed, for you have understood! • That soul will be made to follow  
19 the guidance of another in which the spirit of life resides, • and by that  
20 other it attains salvation, • and so is not cast into flesh again.

EpG 26.10.7+

### Apostates

21 And I said, Sir, where will the souls go of those who have gained  
acquaintance and then turned away?

24 Then it said to me, They will be taken to the place where the angels  
26 of poverty go—• it is the place where no act of repentance is performed—  
27 and they will be kept until the day when those who have uttered  
blasphemy against the spirit will be tortured and punished with eternal  
punishment.

## C. THE ENSLAVEMENT OF HUMANKIND

### Destiny

31 But for my part I said, Sir, where did the counterfeit spirit come  
from?

33 Then it said to me, It is the mother-father who is greatly merciful, the  
holy spirit who in every way is compassionate and 28 suffers with you  
2 (plur.), that is, the afterthought of the luminous forethought.<sup>a</sup> • And it  
raised up the posterity of the perfect race, raised their thinking, and  
raised up the eternal light of the human being.

20:19+

6 When the first ruler knew that they were greatly superior to it and  
that they thought more than it did, it then wanted to arrest their  
pondering; and it did not realize that they were superior to it in thought  
11 and that it could not lay hold of them. • In the company of its authorities,  
12 that is, its powers, it made a plan. • And in turns they fornicated with  
13,15 wisdom; • and by them, destiny was begotten as bitterness (?): • this is  
the last and varied bond, which is of diverse sorts, for they (the  
17 authorities) differ from one another. • And it is difficult and overpowers  
that being with whom the deities, angels, demons, and all the races have  
21 mingled down to the present day. • For out of that destiny were shown  
forth all impieties; violent action; blasphemy and the bond of forgetful-  
24 ness; lack of acquaintance; • and all burdensome precepts, burdensome  
26 sins, and great fears. • And thus they made all creation blind so that the  
29 deity above them all might not be recognized. • And because of the bond  
of forgetfulness, their sins became hidden (to them); for they had been  
bound with measures, times, and ages, since it exerted mastery over  
all.

RR 87:17

FTh 43:13

### The flood and Noah

32 And it (the ruler) repented of all things that had come to exist because  
34 of it. • Again it made a plan: to bring down a flood 29 upon the human  
creation.

1 But the greatness of the light of forethought taught *Noah*, and he  
4 preached to all the posterity, that is, the children of humankind. • And  
6 those who were alien to him did not pay heed to him. • They did not—  
7 as Moses said—hide in an ark; • rather, it was in a certain place that  
8 they hid. • Not only Noah, but many other people from the immovable

RAd 69:2  
RR 92:3  
EgG 72:10  
IrUnid 1.30.10  
EpS 39.3.1  
EpG 26.1.7  
v.1  
Gn 6:5f  
IrUnid 1.30.10  
EpG 26.1.7+?  
RAd 69:19  
RR 92:8

28 a. The text may be corrupt here. Possibly some words have been left out, as follows: "The mother-father that is greatly merciful, the holy spirit that in every way is compas-

sionate and suffers with you (plur.), (< . . . >), that is, the afterthought of the luminous forethought." Instead of "mother-father," MS BG has simply "mother."

12 race, went into a certain place and hid within a luminous cloud. •And RAAd 70:16  
 13 they recognized his absolute power. •And with him was that being which  
 belonged to the light, who had illuminated them.

### The counterfeit spirit

14,16 For it (the ruler) had brought darkness down over all the earth. •And  
 17 in the company of its powers, it made a plan. •It sent its angels to the Gn 6:2  
 daughters of humankind to take some of them unto themselves and so  
 20 to raise up a posterity as a comfort for themselves. •And at first they  
 21 did not succeed. •Then after they had not succeeded, they assembled  
 23 again, and all together made a plan. •They made a counterfeit spirit in  
 the image of the spirit that had descended, by which they would befoul  
 26 the souls. •And the angels changed in image, after the images of their  
 spouses,<sup>a</sup> filling them with the spirit of darkness, which they mixed with  
 30 them, and with wickedness. •They brought gold, silver, gifts, copper,  
 33 iron, metal, and all kinds of raw materials. •And they beguiled the people  
 who followed them into great anxieties, 30 leading them astray in many  
 2 errors. •Humankind grew old without having any leisure, and died  
 without discovering any truth or becoming acquainted with the god of  
 4 truth. •And thus was the whole creation perpetually enslaved, from the  
 foundation of the world down to the present time.  
 7 And they married women and begot children out of the darkness, Gn 6:5  
 8,9 after the image of their spirit. •And their hearts became closed and  
 hardened with the hardness of the counterfeit spirit, down to the present  
 time.

### V. POEM OF DELIVERANCE

11 Then<sup>a</sup> I, the perfect forethought of the entirety, transformed myself RR 97:1  
 into my posterity.  
 13 For, I existed in the beginning, traveling in every path of FTh 36:4+  
 travel.  
 15 For it is I who am the riches of the light;  
 15 It is I who am the memory of the fullness.  
 17 And I traveled in the greatness of the darkness,  
 17 And I continued until I entered the midst of the prison.  
 19 And the foundations of chaos moved. 14:26?  
 20 And for my part, I hid from them because of their evil;  
 21 And they did not recognize me.  
 21 Again I returned, for a second time. FTh 47:11  
 23 And I traveled, coming into the beings of the light— EpS 39.3.1  
 24 I, who am the memory of the forethought.  
 25 I entered the midst of the darkness and the interior of Hades,  
 striving for my governance.  
 27 And the foundations of chaos moved, as though to fall down  
 upon those who dwelt in chaos and destroy them.  
 30 And once again I hastened back to my luminous root,<sup>b</sup>  
 31 Lest they be destroyed before their time.  
 32 Yet a third time I traveled— RR 96:28+  
 33 I who am the light that exists within the light,

29 a. Or "doubles."

30 a. The following passage, 30:11f ("Then I . . .") to 31:27f ("in your ears") is not present in MSS BG and NHC III, which

instead have simply "then in the beginning the blessed mother-father, who is greatly merciful, takes form in its posterity. I have come to the perfect realm (aeon)."

b. Or "source."

- 34 I the memory of the forethought—  
 35 So that I might enter the midst of the darkness and the  
 interior 31 of Hades:  
 1 I filled my face with the light of the end of their realm. IrSat 1.24.2+  
 3 And I entered the midst of their prison,  
 4 Which is the prison of the body.  
 4 And I said, "O listener, arise from heavy sleep."  
 6 And that person wept and shed tears, heavy tears; RAd 66:1  
 7 And wiped them away and said, "Who is calling my name? FTh 35:21  
 9 "And from where has my hope come, as I dwell in the bonds  
 of the prison?"  
 10 And I said, "It is I who am the forethought of the  
 uncontaminated light;  
 12 "It is I who am the thinking of the virgin spirit, 4:26+  
 13 "And I who am leading you to the place of honor.  
 14 "Arise! Keep in mind that you are the person who has  
 listened;  
 15 "Follow your root, which is myself, the compassionate;  
 16 "Be on your guard against the angels of poverty and the  
 demons of chaos and all those who are entwined with you;  
 20 "And be wakeful, (now that you have come) out of heavy  
 sleep and out of the garment in the interior of Hades."  
 22 And I raised and sealed that person, with the light of the  
 water of five seals,<sup>a</sup> FTh 49:27+  
 24 So that from thenceforth death might not have power over  
 that person. EgG 56:25  
 25 And lo, now I shall enter the perfect eternal realm:  
 27 I have completed all things for you (sing.) in your ears.  
 28 For my part, I<sup>b</sup> have told you (sing.) all things, so that you might  
 write them down and transmit them secretly to those who are like you  
 31 in spirit. •For this is the mystery of the immovable race.<sup>c</sup> RAd 85:3  
 Fr 68:16

## VI. FRAME STORY (CONCLUSION)

- 32 And the savior transmitted these things to him (John) so that he might  
 34 write them down and keep them safe. •And it said to him, "Cursed be  
 anyone who sells these in exchange for a bribe, for foodstuffs, for drink,  
 1 for clothing, or for anything else 32 of the sort." •And these things were  
 transmitted to him mystically; and immediately, it vanished from before  
 4 him. •And he came to his fellow disciples and informed them of what  
 6 the savior had told him. •JESUS (IS) THE ANOINTED (CHRIST)!<sup>a</sup> AMEN!<sup>b</sup>

31 a. The "five seals" are associated with the reception of *gnōsis* in gnostic baptism (for which, see "Historical Introduction" in Part One).

b. The savior, forethought.

c. MS BG here adds: "Now, the mother came before me once again. Moreover, these are the things she did in the world. She caused the posterity to stand at rest. I shall tell you (plur.) about what is going to come to pass."

32 a. "the anointed": the divine self-origi-

nate (cf. 6:23f). This is the only reference in BJn to the Incarnation. Because it does not occur within the central body of the work, some scholars have suspected that it is not part of the original but rather is a pious exclamation added by an ancient Christian gnostic copyist or editor. On the other hand, for gnostic elaborations of the Incarnation, see FTh, EgG, IrUnid, EpS, EpA, EpG; and probably RAd.

b. In the manuscripts the title of this work is written after the text (at 32:7f).