

*October 2, 2011*

**THE DAWN OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
**Excerpts from various Second Century Documents**

I. Gnostic and Other Non-Canonical Writings  
of the 2nd to 5th Centuries

The Gospel of the Nazareans  
The Gospel of the Ebionites  
The Gospel According to the Hebrews  
The Gospel According to the Egyptians  
The Coptic Gospel of Thomas  
The Book of Thomas  
The Unknown Gospel  
The Gospel of Peter  
The Gospel of Mary  
The Gospel of Philip  
The Gospel of Truth  
The Gospel of the Savior  
The Infancy Gospel of Thomas  
The Proto-Gospel of James  
The Epistle of the Apostles  
The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter  
The Second Treatise of the Great Seth  
The Secret Gospel of Mark

The Acts of John  
The Acts of Paul  
The Acts of Thecla  
The Acts of Thomas  
The Acts of Peter

The Third Letter to the Corinthians  
Correspondence of Paul ad Seneca  
The "letter of Peter to James" and its "Reception"  
The Homilies of Clement  
Ptolemy's Letter to Flora  
The Treatise of the Resurrection  
The Letter of Barnabas  
The Preaching of Peter  
Pseudo-Titus  
The Shepherd of Hermas  
The Apocalypse of Peter  
The Apocalypse of Paul  
The Secret Book of John  
On the Origin of the World  
The First Thought in Three Forms  
The Hymn of the Pearl

## II. THE INFANCY GOSPEL OF THOMAS (early second century)

“1 I, Thomas the Israelite, make this report to all of you, my brothers among the Gentiles, that you may know the magnificent childhood activities of our Lord Jesus Christ—all that he did after being born in our country. The beginning is as follows:

2. “When this child Jesus was five years old, he was playing by the ford of a stream; and he gathered the flowing waters into pools and made them immediately pure. These things he ordered simply by speaking a word. He then made some soft mud and fashioned twelve sparrows from it. It was the Sabbath when he did this. A number of other children were also playing with him. But when a certain Jew saw what Jesus had done while playing on the Sabbath, he left right away and reported to his father, Joseph, ‘Look, your child at the stream has taken mud and formed twelve sparrows. He has profaned the Sabbath!’ When Joseph came to the place and saw what had happened, he cried out to him, ‘Why are you doing what is forbidden on the Sabbath?’ But Jesus clapped his hands and cried to the sparrows, ‘Be gone!’ And the sparrows took flight and went off, chirping. When the Jews saw this they were amazed; and they went away and reported to their leaders what they had seen Jesus do.”
3. “Now the son of Annas the scribe was standing there with Joseph; and he took a willow branch and scattered the water that Jesus had gathered. Jesus was irritated when he saw what had happened, and he said to him: ‘You unrighteous, irreverent idiot! What did the pools of water do to harm you? See, now you also will be withered like a tree, and you will never bear leaves or root or fruit.’ Immediately that child was completely withered. Jesus left and returned to Joseph’s house. But the parents of the withered child carried him away, mourning his lost youth. They brought him to Joseph and began to accuse him, ‘What kind of child do you have who does such things?’”
4. “Somewhat later he was going through the village, and a child ran up and banged into his shoulder. Jesus was aggravated and said to him, ‘You will go no further on your way.’ And right away the child fell down and died. Some of those who saw what happened said, ‘Where was this child born? For everything he says is a deed accomplished?’ The parents of the dead child came to Joseph and blamed him, saying ‘Since you have such a child you cannot live with us in the village. Or teach him to bless and not to curse—for he is killing our children!’”
5. “Joseph called to the child and admonished him privately, ‘Why are you doing such things? These people are suffering, they hate us and are persecuting us!’ but Jesus replied, ‘I know these are not your words, and so I also will keep silent for your sake. But those others will bear their punishment.’ and immediately those who were accusing him were blinded. Those who saw these things were frightened and disturbed: they began saying about him, ‘Everything he has said, whether good or bad, has become an amazing reality.’ when Joseph saw what Jesus had done, he rose up, grabbed his ear, and yanked hard. The child was irritated and said to him, ‘It is enough for you to seek and not find; you have not acted at all wisely. Do you not know that I am yours? Do not grieve me.’”

### III. THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH (Valentinus: early second century)

“The gospel of truth is joy for those who have received from the Father of truth the grace of knowing him, through the power of the Word that came forth from the *pleroma* (*ideal forms, cf Plato*), the one who is in the thought and the mind of the Father, that is, the one who is addressed as the Savior, that being the name of the work he is to perform for the redemption of those who were ignorant of the Father, while in the name of the gospel is the proclamation of hope, being discovery for those who search for him.”

“When the totality went about searching for the one from whom they had come forth—and the totality was inside of him, the incomprehensible, inconceivable one who is superior to every thought—ignorance of the Father brought about anguish and terror; and the anguish grew solid like a fog, so that no one was able to see. For this reason error became powerful; it worked on its own matter foolishly, not having known the truth. It set about with a creation, preparing with power and beauty the substitute for the truth.”

“This was not, then, a humiliation for him, the incomprehensible, inconceivable one, for they were nothing, the anguish and the oblivion and the creature of deceit, while the established truth is immutable, imperturbable, perfect in beauty. For this reason, despise error.”

“Thus it had no root; it fell into a fog regarding the Father, while it was involved in preparing works and oblivions and terrors, in order that by means of these it might entice those of the middle and capture them.”

“The oblivion of error was not revealed. It is not a [...] from the Father. Oblivion did not come into existence from the Father, although it did indeed come into existence because of him. But what comes into existence in him is knowledge, which appeared in order that oblivion might vanish and the Father might be known. Since oblivion came into existence because the Father was not known, then if the Father comes to be known, oblivion will not exist from that moment on.”

“Through this, the gospel of the one who is searched for, which was revealed to those who are perfect through the mercies of the Father; the hidden mystery, Jesus, the Christ, enlightening those who were in darkness through oblivion. He enlightened them; he showed them a way; and the way is the truth which he taught them.”

“For this reason error grew angry at him, persecuted him, was distressed at him (and) was brought to naught. He was nailed to a tree (and) he became a fruit of the knowledge of the Father. It did not, however, cause destruction because it was eaten, but to those who ate it it gave cause to become glad in the discovery, and he discovered them in himself, and they discovered him in themselves.” (Bart Ehrman, page 45-46). cf. Paul: 1Timothy 6.20-21

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#### **IV. THE SECRET BOOK OF JAMES:**

(page 5, chapter 2.10-16 of The Secret Teachings of Jesus, Marvin W. Meyer.)

*“For this reason I tell you: be filled, and let there be no empty space within you, for otherwise the one who is to come can laugh at you.”*

*Then Peter answered, “Behold, three times you have told us to be filled, but we are already filled.”*

*The Savior answered and said,*

*“I have told you to be filled so that you may not lack anything since those who are lacking will not be saved.*

*Thus, to be filled is good and to lack is bad.*

*Yet, it is also good for you to be lacking, but bad for you to be filled.*

*For those who are filled are also lacking, and one person who is lacking is not filled in the same way as another.*

*The one who is filled, though, becomes sufficiently perfect.*

*Hence, you should be lacking when you can be filled, and filled when you can be lacking,*

*because then you can be filled even more.*

*So be filled with spirit but lacking in human reason, for human reason is only human reason, and the soul, too, is only soul.”*

#### **V. THE SECRET BOOK OF JOHN (Excerpted from Meyer).**

“The throng of angels stood by and received these seven psychical substances from the authorities. Then they could create a network of limbs and trunk, with all the parts properly arranged. The first angel began by creating the head:

Eteraphaope-Abron created the head,

Meniggesstroeth created the brain,

Asterechme the right eye,

Thaspomocha the left eye,

Yeronomos the right ear,

Bissoum the left ear,

Akioreim the nose,

Banen-Ephroum the lips,

Amen the teeth,

Ibikan the molars,

Basiliademe the tonsils,

Achchan the uvula,

Adaban the neck,

Chaaman the vertebrae,

Deracho the throat,

Tebar the right shoulder ...

Abitrion the right palm... “ (This goes on for four pages.)

## VI. TEACHING OF MARCION

- Two gods: Jehovah, of the Old Testament who was an evil, stern, and warlike judge, and the other, the Father or Supreme God of the New, a gentle, mild, kind, and supremely good god: .
- The Supreme God's purpose was for there to be only a spiritual world; however, the evil Jehovah god, managed to make this material world. He is vindictive, arbitrary, wrathful, and...he did indeed inspire the Old Testament.
- The Supreme Father god of Christians however requires nothing of us, but rather gives everything freely, including salvation. This God does not seek to be obeyed, but to be loved. He sent his Son to save us. But Jesus was not really born of Mary, since such a thing would have made him subject to Jehovah. Rather, he simply appeared as a grown man during the reign of Tiberius. Naturally, at the end, there will be no judgment, since the Supreme God is absolutely loving, and will simply forgive us.
- Scriptures: The Old Testament, or Hebrew scriptures were simply set aside. They were the words of an inferior god and should not be read in church.
- Very ascetic practices, no marriage.

### Teachers and Apologists of the Second Century:

- **Irenaeus of Lyons** was made bishop of Lyons (Gaul) in A.D. 178.
- **Pantaenus** founded a Catechetical School at Alexandria
- **Clement of Alexandria:** he was a disciple of Pantaenus and flourished between 180-200 AD; he died in 215 AD.
- **Hegesippus:** A second century Jewish Christian convert, he collected historical documents and traveled about assuring orthodox teaching in various churches around the Mediterranean world.
- **Aristides:** in 138 A.D. wrote an apology that has recently been rediscovered.
- **Justin Martyr:** Wrote: *Apology I and II*, around 155-160 AD, and *A Dialogue with Trypho*, a Jewish rabbi. died in 165,
- **Athenagoras,** 177-180 wrote, *A Plea for Christians*, a treatise he sent to the emperor, arguing the truth of Christianity. '

*“And when we say that those women who use drugs to bring on abortion commit murder, and will have to give an account to God for the abortion, on what principle should we commit murder? For it does not belong to the same person to regard the very fetus in the womb as a created being, and therefore an object of God's care, and then when it has passed into life, to kill it; (or on one hand) not to expose an infant, because those who expose them are chargeable with child-murder, and on the other hand, when it has been reared to destroy it. But we are in all things always alike and the same, submitting ourselves to reason, and not ruling over it.”*

- **Tatian** wrote *An Address to the Greeks* and a harmony of the Gospels in 170 A.D., which is thought to be the first translation from the Greek of the Gospels into a local language, the Syriac language.
- **Theophilus,** bishop of Antioch, wrote *Three Books to Autolytus*.

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## **APOSTLES CREED**

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
the Maker of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried;

He descended into hell.

The third day He arose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost;  
the holy catholic church;  
the communion of saints;  
the forgiveness of sins;

the resurrection of the body;  
and the life everlasting.

**Amen.**