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# History and the Historical Jesus in the Nag Hammadi Literature

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by Mark R. Fairchild

In December 1945, two Egyptian brothers were digging at the base of a hill near Nag Hammadi for nitrates to fertilize their fields. While digging near a boulder one of the brothers discovered a large sealed earthenware jar. The jar contained thirteen Gnostic codices written in Coptic which date back to the fourth century. However, scholars do not always agree about the date of the original writings. Elaine Pagels claims:

Some of them can hardly be later than c. A.D. 120-150, since Irenaeus, the orthodox Bishop of Lyons, writing c. 180, declares that heretics “boast that they possess more gospels than there really are,” and complains that in his time such writings already have won wide circulation.<sup>1</sup>

Helmut Koester believes that the sayings in the *Gospel of Thomas* actually antedate those in the canonical gospels.

A comparison of the sayings in the *Gospel of Thomas* with their parallels in the synoptic gospels suggests that the sayings in the *Gospel of Thomas* either are present in a more primitive form or are developments of a more primitive form of such sayings. Indeed, the *Gospel of Thomas* resembles the synoptic sayings source, often called “Q” . . . which was the common source of sayings used by Matthew and Luke.<sup>2</sup>

This collection of Gnostic primary sources comprises the largest and most important body of Gnostic writings yet known. Yet, these writings probably are not the works of a single Gnostic sect. George MacRae notes that different works probably belong to the Sethians,

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the Valentinians, and other Gnostic groups (including even the pagan Hermetic Gnostics).<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, bearing in mind the syncretism of Gnostic sects, it is likely that those at Nag Hammadi borrowed from many different areas. In fact, one of the 52 tractates found there was Plato's *Republic*.

These writings thus shed valuable light upon the doctrines and beliefs of early Gnosticism. James Robinson believes that the reader of these documents must not be misled:

. . . into thinking that the stance inherent in these essays is unworthy of serious consideration. Rather, we have to do here with an understanding of existence, an answer to the human dilemma, an attitude toward society, that is worthy of being taken quite seriously by anyone able and willing to grapple with such ultimate issues.<sup>4</sup>

It is the intention of this paper to investigate the view of history and existence as it is found in the Nag Hammadi documents and to see how this bears upon the question of the historical Jesus.

Gnosticism in general is a dualistic system of thought. According to the Gnostics the presently existing world is the result of a fall in the world of light. A pre-cosmic being, through its ignorance, fell from the realm of light and has now been divided into an innumerable number of parts. These parts now co-exist with evil elements in the souls of men who are now under the influence of ignorant and evil demiurge, Yahweh, who created the world. "The creation of the world and matter has resulted from ignorance and error."<sup>5</sup> As a result, these particles of light are now incarcerated inside a fleshly body residing upon a material earth. Here the realm of light is considered to be in drastic enmity with the world of material and with the evil aeons which control and suppress the world.

In order to resolve the plight of these particles of light, God has graciously sent another being from the realm of light (disguised in an earthly body) to redeem the particles. This being (the Gnostic redeemer or Christ) descends to earth and transfers information to men concerning how their enlightened souls may reascend to the realm of light. This redemptive word is the knowledge or *γνῶσις* which allows the inner souls of men to attain their salvation.<sup>6</sup>

Apparently Platonic thought has considerably influenced Nag Hammadi's Gnostic thought in the areas of ontology and history. It

has already been mentioned that Plato's *Republic* was one of the tractates that was found among the writings.

Hans Joachim Kramer has pointed out that there are two basic ontological structures prevalent in the Platonism of late Antiquity. One consists of three levels: 1) the sphere of pure being consisting of a monadic intellectual principle containing the ideal forms and numbers; 2) the demiurgic sphere of the world soul, often considered to be the lower level of a bipartite Intellect rather than a separate sphere; and 3) the sphere of the material principle. . . . The other basic structure consists of four levels and is the same as the three-level structure except that a highest level beyond being, occupied by "the One," dominates the other three.<sup>7</sup>

Similar to this, the basic dualism of spiritual and material realms is evident in several of the Nag Hammadi writings. John D. Turner, after surveying the tractates of the Apocryphon of John (ApocryJn), the Trimorphic Protennoia (TriProt), Allogenes (Allog), Zostrianos (Zost), and the Three Stelles of Seth (3StSeth) concludes that "it cannot be doubted that the structure and deployment of these ontological triads in Allog, Zost, and 3StSeth derive from the metaphysics originating in the Platonic Academy."<sup>8</sup> Also, "The general ontology and cosmology of the upper world in ApocryJn and TriProt also intersects with the general Platonic ontological stratification of the cosmos."<sup>9</sup> The ontological triad spoken of above consists of:

. . . a level beyond being occupied by the Unknown God or Invisible Spirits; a level of pure being occupied by the First Thought of the Unknown God, Barbelo and her Aeon, and a perceptible level consisting of the material world. A fourth, psychic level intermediate between the Aeons and the material world is possible, but is not consistently portrayed.<sup>10</sup>

A few extracts from these writings should be sufficient to demonstrate that history and existence to these Gnostics was important only in the upper spiritual levels of being.

On the second page of Zost, lines 25-32, the author asks the question of how ultimate Existence "from the aeon of those who

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exist” can come into being in the world.<sup>11</sup> Or “How has Existence which does not exist appeared in an existing power? I was pondering these matters in order to understand them” (3:11-14). Afterwards Zostrianos met “the Messenger of the knowledge of the eternal light.” Whereupon, they both ascended to the realm of true existence. Zost 5:24-6:5 claims:

I ascended to the Transmigration which really exists. . . .  
I ascended to the Repentance which really exists. . . .  
I ascended to the [ . . . ].  
I stood there having seen a light of the truth, which really exists from its self-begotten root.

Apparently, true existence and significant history for Zostrianos did not exist in the present world. “Real existence” was spiritual and otherworldly.

The tractate *Allogenes* reads similar to this. Here the Triple Power of Existence, Life, and Mind are said to be that which “truly exists” (45:13-22). Furthermore, *Allog* implies that it is a sin not to seek this true existence. “(The judgment is) from himself because he did not find the origin that truly exists. He was blind apart from the eye of revelation that is at rest, the one that is activated, the one from the Triple Power of the first thought of the Invisible Spirit” (64:28-36).

In the treatises *Zost*, *3StSeth* and *Allog*, revelation is not brought below by a descending revealer, but rather occurs only after the Gnostic has ascended to the peak of the world of being in successive stages of detachment and self-unification by an autonomous mystical technique; only at this point does revelation of the unknown God occur.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, for the Gnostic, significant and meaningful existence occurs only in this mystical and spiritual state. And for this reason the significance of history in this physical and material realm fades into the background. History and existence in this realm becomes important only in the sense that it affords an opportunity to assimilate spiritual existence and allows men to begin their quest to reascend to the world of light. And here, for the Gnostic, Christ brought the *γνώσις* of how this could be done. Thus, the historical aspects of Jesus are of secondary importance in relation to the

teachings of Jesus. And because of this emphasis upon the teachings of Jesus some Gnostics preferred to reinterpret and demythologize the supernatural Christ. To these Gnostics, a plain and literal view of the resurrection was an immature interpretation. Pagels explains:

Some Gnostics called the literal view of the resurrection the “faith of fools.”<sup>13</sup> The resurrection, they insisted, was not a unique event in the past; instead, it symbolized how Christ’s presence could be experienced in the present. What mattered was not literal seeing, but spiritual vision.<sup>14</sup>

“What interested these Gnostics far more than past events attributed to the ‘historical Jesus’ was the possibility of encountering the risen Christ in the present.”<sup>15</sup>

This is reflected in several of the Nag Hammadi writings. The Treatise on Resurrection asserts:

The world is an illusion! . . . But the resurrection does not have this aforesaid character; for it is the truth which stands firm. It is the revelation of what is, and transformation of things, and a transition into newness. For imperishability descends upon the perishable; the light flows down upon the darkness, swallowing it up; and the Pleroma fills up the deficiency. These are the symbols and the images of the resurrection (Treatise on Resurrection, 48:27-49:7).

So likewise the Gospel of Philip states that “Those who say they will die first and then rise are in error. If they do not first receive the resurrection while they live, when they die they will receive nothing” (73:1-4).

Even the Gospels of Nag Hammadi downplay the historical aspects of Jesus’ life. All the emphasis is upon the *teachings* of Christ. Commenting on The Gospel of Truth, MacRae observes that “In spite of the title, this work is not a gospel of the same sort as the New Testament gospels: it does not focus upon the words and deeds of the historical Jesus.”<sup>16</sup> And even in one of the Gospels that does focus in upon the sayings of Jesus (the Gospel of Thomas) mention of historical events is completely lacking. The Gospel of Thomas is a collection of one hundred and fourteen sayings, but not one of them is connected with any movement or historical data.

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Hans Jonas has noted that oriental thought has had a significant impact upon the Hellenistic world during the formative years of Gnosticism and Christianity.<sup>17</sup> Among other things this influence is exhibited in:

. . . an exceedingly transcendent (i.e. transmundane) conception of God and in connection with it an equally transcendent and otherworldly idea of the goal of salvation. Finally, they maintain a radical dualism of realms of being — God and the world, spirit and matter, soul and body, light and darkness, good and evil, life and death — and consequently an extreme polarization of existence affecting not only man but reality as a whole: the general religion of the period is a dualistic transcendent religion of salvation.<sup>18</sup>

Jonas' insights into Gnosticism are particularly noteworthy, bearing in mind that the first German edition of his book *Gnosis und Spätantiker Geist* was written before the discovery at Nag Hammadi.<sup>19</sup> Later, when these Gnostic manuscripts were published, Jonas' thesis was greatly supported. According to Pagels, Jonas turned from the questions concerning the historical sources of Gnosticism and "asked where it originated *existentially*. Jonas suggested that Gnosticism emerged in a certain 'attitude toward existence' "<sup>20</sup> To this question of course Jonas answers that it emerged from oriental influences; but the real significance of his work is found in the recognition of existentialist categories in Gnostic thought. As Jonas said:

We have found "gnosis" to mean one of these things: knowledge of the secrets of existence as related in the gnostic myth, and these comprise the divine history from which the world originated, man's condition in it, and the nature of Salvation; then, more intellectually, the elaboration of these tenets into coherent speculative systems; then, more practically, knowledge of the "way" of the soul's future ascent. . . ; and, most technically or magically, knowledge of the sacraments.<sup>21</sup>

In the second edition of *The Gnostic Religion*, Jonas added an epilogue which "drew a parallel between Gnosticism and twentieth

century existentialism, acknowledging his debt to existentialist philosophers, especially to Heidegger, in forming his interpretation of the 'Gnostic religion.' ”<sup>22</sup>

Thus the Gnostics interpreted life in the material realm to be just a shadow of the real existence in the spiritual realm. As a result, life in the physical world must be reinterpreted in order to find significance in the spiritual realm. In this way Christ's historical-physical existence on earth cannot be understood in a crudely literal fashion. Instead, the life of Christ must be spiritualized. This spiritualized significance is conveyed through the secret *gnosis* of these Gnostic cults, and the obtaining of this *gnosis* eventually leads to the salvation of the Gnostic (mystic ascension to the realm of light).

Against these doctrines Irenaeus argues at great length. Against the Gnostic Valentinians, Irenaeus explains:

These men call those things which are within the Pleroma real existences, . . . while they maintain that those which are without the Pleroma have no true existence. . . . They have thus banished themselves in this world (since they are here outside the Pleroma) into a place which has no existence. Again when they maintain that these things below are images of those which have true existence above, they again most manifestly rehearse the doctrine of Democritus and Plato.<sup>23</sup>

Irenaeus also criticizes the Valentinians for their gross reinterpretation and allegorization of the events of Christ's life. Here it is said that "they improperly and illogically apply both the parables and the actions of the Lord to their falsely-devised system."<sup>24</sup> Thus, they claim that the twelve disciples typify twelve Aeons and another thirty Aeons are typified by Christ's baptism at the age of thirty.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Irenaeus said that they are so far "from being able to raise the dead, . . . that they do not even believe this can possibly be done, and hold that the resurrection from the dead is simply an acquaintance with that truth which they proclaim."<sup>26</sup>

This appears to be the same position that was held by the two false teachers in II Timothy 2. In verses 17 and 18 mention is made of a certain "Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have swerved from the truth by holding that the resurrection is past already." And another reference to this Gnostic belief might be found in the writings of

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Justin Martyr who mentions a group of false Christians:

. . . who do not admit this truth, and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven. Do not imagine that they are Christians.<sup>27</sup>

Another Gnostic group called the Sethians reflect this same belief. This group is represented in the Nag Hammadi writings by the Second Treatise of the Great Seth and by the Three Steles of Seth (mentioned above). Irenaeus even mentions this group among his many heresies and notes that they likewise do not believe in a literal resurrection:

When his disciples saw that he had risen, they did not recognize him — no, not even Jesus himself, by whom he rose again from the dead. And they assert that this very great error prevailed among his disciples, that they imagined he had risen in a mundane body, not knowing that “flesh and blood do not attain to the Kingdom of God.”<sup>28</sup>

Thus, it is rather apparent that the early Gnostics practiced their own particular method of demythologizing the life of Jesus. This demythologization basically involved an allegorical or symbolical interpretation that was primarily based upon a dualistic concept of existence. In this way the events of physical and material existence have significance only in the sense that they are a darkened and hidden shadow of what true existence can be in the spiritual realm. Thus, the goal of Gnostic exegesis is to uncover and reveal the real character of existence through an exposition of their *gnosis*.

Their allegorical interpretations of the Christian gospel were particularly troublesome for the orthodox Christians because of the difficulty of refuting an allegorical interpretation. The problem was compounded by the fact that the Christians themselves often appealed to allegory in their exegesis. Thus, when the Gnostics carried this allegory so far as to depreciate the historical Jesus, the Christians experienced great difficulty in combating this “false doctrine.”

Of course this emphasis upon “true existence” as opposed to carnal existence closely parallels Rudolf Bultmann’s existentialist



interpretation of the New Testament documents. This parallel has not gone unnoticed by Bultmann himself who says:

As the development of the Kyrios-cult drew Hellenistic Christianity into the syncretistic process, the development, under Gnostic influence, of the doctrine of redemption did so still more. . . . side by side with positive influence from Gnosticism we also find rejection of it.<sup>29</sup>

Later, Bultmann notes that “the utter difference of human existence from all worldly existence was recognized for the first time in Gnosticism and Christianity, and thus the world became foreign soil to the human self.”<sup>30</sup> Bultmann then claims that Gnosticism “and its terminology offered the possibility of elucidating the eschatological occurrence as one inaugurated by the history of Jesus Christ and now at work in the present.”<sup>31</sup> Existentially interpreted, this means that the Christian gospel and the Gnostic *gnosis* is simply “a genuine understanding of myself which dominates and determines my life in its every manifestation.”<sup>32</sup> Yet, even in this sense Bultmann recognized that Gnostic existentialism exceeded that of the Christians:

This Gnostic failure to recognize true human existence as fulfilling itself in one’s actual history leads also to a nonhistorical interpretation of the “kinship” idea — i.e. to a misconception of what fellowship in the church is. Under this misconception, “knowledge” (*γνῶσις*) seeks its culmination in “de-historizing” ecstasy (i.e. an ecstasy which divorces its subject from his concrete existence).<sup>33</sup>

Thus, it is not surprising that most of the Gnostic writings received their revelations through visions and other ecstatic experiences.

However Pagels indicates that similar ecstatic experiences with the risen Christ can be found to coexist in the Gospel tradition alongside literal, bodily appearances of Christ. In the appearance to Mary Magdalene (John 20:14-18) and to the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) it is noteworthy to observe that “through a *verbal interchange*, the recipients come to recognize him.”<sup>34</sup> Later, similar visions are found in the vision of Stephen (Acts 7:55-56), the appearance to Paul (Acts 9:3-7), and the appearance to John on

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Patmos (Rev. 1:10-18). “Such accounts lend themselves to interpretation as visions which are perceived by the ‘inner eye’ or ‘inner ear.’”<sup>35</sup>

The Orthodox Church emphasized a literal resurrection while the Gnostics preferred a more subjective view of the resurrection and thus emphasized visionary resurrection appearances. “Gnostic Christians use and develop such accounts, which, in their terms, leave behind the *historia Jesu*, the ‘earthly Jesus’ of the Living One.”<sup>36</sup> Thus, a common postresurrection appearance in the Nag Hammadi writings is through a vision rather than through a physical manifestation of Jesus. In The Letter of Peter to Philip, the apostles see the Lord after a period of impassioned prayer (133:17-134:9). “Then a great light appeared so that the mountain shone from the sight of him who had appeared. And a voice called out to them saying, ‘Listen to my words that I may speak to you. . . . I am Jesus Christ who is with you forever’” (134:10-18). Later, in answer to the question of how they can attain salvation and escape from this world, the voice answered: “When you strip off from yourselves what is corrupted then you will become illuminators in the midst of dead men” (137:6-9). Obviously the references to the dead men of this world and the spiritual light from the higher realm are part of the de-historicized framework in which the Gnostics worked. True and meaningful existence came only from the higher realm.

It is Pagels’ position that the leaders of orthodoxy came to emphasize this literal-physical resurrection purely on the expedient of ecclesiastical power.<sup>37</sup> According to this theory the disciples strove for positions of authority even before the death of Jesus (Mark 10:35-45). Later, when the Savior was killed, the leadership of the community fell into the hands of the eleven. They of course, held the position of recounting the authoritative words of the Lord. Thus, when they chose a twelfth apostle, it had to be “one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us” (Acts 1:21). These leaders also received teaching and authority from Jesus *after* His death when He appeared to them in the resurrection appearances. In this way Peter was appointed chief leader when Christ told him to “Shepherd My Sheep” (John 21:15-17). However in Pagels’ theory, opposition to this apostolic authority came early. Laying aside textual problems, the Gospel of Mark reports that, of all people, Jesus first appeared to a woman.

. . . He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons. She went and reported to those who had been with him, while they were mourning and weeping. And when they heard that He was alive, and had been seen by her, they refused to believe it (Mark 16:9-11).

And the Gospel of John claims that at first Mary did not even know that the person with whom she was conversing was the Lord Jesus.

Along with these accounts Pagels notes several similarities in The Gospel of Mary.<sup>38</sup> Here Mary is true to Gnostic doctrines when she says:

I saw the Lord in a vision and I said to him, "Lord, I saw you today in a vision." He answered and said to me, "Blessed are you, that you did not waver at the sight of me. For where the mind is, there is the treasure." I said to him, "Lord, now does he who sees the vision see it through the soul or through the spirit?" The Savior answered and said, "He does not see through the soul nor through the Spirit, but the mind which is between the two" (10:11-22).

In this treatise Mary asserts her authority over the apostles saying "What is hidden from you I will proclaim to you" (10:8). But her message is rejected by Andrew and his brother Peter, who says "Did he really speak privately with a woman and not openly to us? Are we to turn about and all listen to her? Did he prefer her to us?" (17:18-22). Thus, the Gnostic tension with orthodoxy becomes apparent again. On the one side are the orthodox Christians who maintained that their authority came from Christ himself, who delegated this power to them during his post-resurrection appearances. These physical manifestations, however, ceased after forty days and authority from that time on proceeded from apostolic succession.

Gnostic Christians, on the other hand, refuse to accept the canonical limitation of the appearances. Instead they develop traditions of continuing appearances of the Living One — appearances not bound to the resurrection as a "unique event set in historical time," nor restricted to the forty-day period that Luke attests. . . . thereby they challenge the claim that definitive religious authority is

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restricted to the first 'apostolic' generation.<sup>39</sup>

Regardless of whether or not Pagels is right concerning the motives and countermotives of Christian and Gnostic views of the resurrection, Pagels' argument is a valid demonstration of Gnosticism's non-historical interpretation of the historical Jesus.

Jacques Lacarriere confirms this conclusion by observing the overall Gnostic view of history:

We see superimposed on the tragedy of human fate, another which nourishes and confirms it: the tragedy of history itself, that terrestrial measure of cosmic time — time, which, for the Gnostics, was always the most significant sign of our alienation. . . .

It is in a sense a shadow-history, a counter-history whose successive pages make a desperate attempt to deny history itself, to rescue man from the treadmill of time's passing.<sup>40</sup>

Since life in the physical realm was an illusion of true existence, it naturally follows that the Gnostics considered history in the physical realm to be pseudo-history. As Lacarriere puts it: "Their mythical history thus transmutes itself into a counter-history."<sup>41</sup>

Thus, as far as the historical Jesus is concerned, the Gnostics defined His historical significance in two ways that directly opposed the orthodox church. First, His existence in the material realm was depreciated along Platonic categories so that His earthly existence was devalued to a mere shadow of true (spiritual) existence. Along this line it should be remembered that they did *not* deny Christ's very being, but rather they reduced the quality of His existence in this realm. Secondly, it can be seen that the Gnostics reinterpreted the earlier traditions along non-literal, symbolic lines. The primary tool in this respect was allegory. But this was an allegorical type of interpretation that excluded any factual basis to the story. This entire system was wrapped up in the myth of a cosmic struggle between the forces of darkness and the forces of light, with Christ being the Gnostic redeemer who communicated the saving *gnosis* to the believers. In the Nag Hammadi writings this historical outlook is illustrated by the fact that historical data is rarely recounted, while on the other hand, the context of this *gnosis*, the teachings of the Savior, receives a considerable amount of attention.

## Footnotes

- <sup>1</sup>Elaine Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York, Vintage Books, 1979), p. xv.
- <sup>2</sup>Helmut Koester, "The Gospel of Thomas," *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. James M. Robinson (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1977), p. 117.
- <sup>3</sup>George W. MacRae, "Nag Hammadi," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, supplementary volume, ed. Keith Crim (Nashville, TN: Abingdon: 1976), pp. 617-18.
- <sup>4</sup>James M. Robinson, "Introduction," *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. J.M. Robinson, p. 3.
- <sup>5</sup>Edwin M. Yamauchi, *Pre-Christian Gnosticism: A Study of the Proposed Evidences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), p. 15.
- <sup>6</sup>A good summary definition of Gnosticism in general can be found in Yamauchi's *Pre-Christian Gnosticism*, pp. 13-19. It must be borne in mind however that different systems of Gnosticism differ in some of the details.
- <sup>7</sup>John D. Turner, "The Gnostic Threefold Path to enlightenment," *Novum Testamentum*, XXII (1980), 333.
- <sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, 341.
- <sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 332.
- <sup>11</sup>This quotation and all subsequent quotations from the Nag Hammadi writings are from *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* edited by James M. Robinson.
- <sup>12</sup>Turner, "The Gnostic Threefold Path to Enlightenment," pp. 331-32.
- <sup>13</sup>Cf. Origen, *Commentarium in I Corinthians* in *Journal of Theological Studies X* (1909), 46-47.
- <sup>14</sup>Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, p. 12.
- <sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 14.
- <sup>16</sup>George W. MacRae, "The Gospel of Truth," *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. James M. Robinson, p. 37.
- <sup>17</sup>Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), pp. 24-26.
- <sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 31-32.
- <sup>19</sup>Hans Jonas, *Gnosis und Spätantiker Geist*, vol. 1, *Die Mythologische Gnosis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Reprecht, 1934).
- <sup>20</sup>Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, p. xxxii.
- <sup>21</sup>Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, p. 284.
- <sup>22</sup>Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, p. xxxiii.
- <sup>23</sup>Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* II, xiv, 3.
- <sup>24</sup>Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* II, xx, 1.
- <sup>25</sup>Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* II, xxi-xxii.
- <sup>26</sup>Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* II, xxxi, 2.
- <sup>27</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, LXXX.
- <sup>28</sup>Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* I, xxx, 13.
- <sup>29</sup>Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. Kendrick Grobel, Vol (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), p. 164.
- <sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 165.
- <sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 181.
- <sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 182.
- <sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 182-83.

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<sup>34</sup>Elaine H. Pagels, "Visions, Appearances, and Apostolic Authority: Gnostic and Orthodox Traditions," in *Gnosis: Festschrift für Hans Jonas* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), p. 418.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 418-19.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 415-17.

<sup>38</sup>Pagels, *The Gnostic Gospels*, pp. 13-16.

<sup>39</sup>Pagels, "visions, Appearances, and Apostolic Authority," p. 417.

<sup>40</sup>Jacques Lacarriere, *The Gnostics*, trans. Nina Rootes (London: Peter Owen, 1977), p. 56.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 85.