

*his Apocalypse, discovered at Nag Hammadi, contains Jesus' interpretation of Peter's visions. It is significant in that it exemplifies Gnostic passion theology. It was probably written in the third century.*

I had a vision (said Peter) that the Savior was sitting in the temple speaking these words to me. "Peter, blessed are those above who belong to the Father. They have revealed life to those who are of life. They have done this through me, since I have reminded them of who they are and whose strength that they are empowered with. And this power is the ability to distinguish words of unrighteousness and sin from those of righteousness. They are yet able to hear my words. For they are from the realm of the Authorities of Truth, having been brought to saving knowledge by the very One sought by all principalities. None have found him through scripture alone, since his name was never specifically mentioned therein, even among the generation of the prophets. Nevertheless, the Son of Man (who is exalted above all men, even those of like nature and being) has appeared among those who belong to him.

"But you, Peter, become completed, even though you are already completed in my estimation. Remember that I chose you out of all to become the foundation of the remnant whom I have summoned to knowledge (gnwssis). So be strong until the Image of Holiness - which is the one who has called you to know him, the one who was rejected by mankind, the one who is branded by the mark of rejection in the flesh of his hands and feet, the one who was crowned in the nether world, the one who has put on a body of radiance which is the hope of the servant and his badge of honor - tests you three times this night."

As the Lord was saying these things, I saw the priests and people quickly approaching us with stones; their intent was to kill us! I was afraid that we were going to die!

Then he said to me, "Peter, I have told you many times that these people are blind, and they have no leader. If you want to experience their blindness, hold your robe over your eyes, then tell me what you see." When I had done this thing, I saw nothing at all. "No one is able to see this way," I said. Then he told me to do it again. I did, and a mixture of fear and joy came into my being, for I saw a new light greater than the light of day. Then the light descended on the Savior, and I told him what I saw.

He spoke to me again, "Put your hands to your ears and listen to what the people are saying." I listened to the priests as they sat with their scribes, while the multitudes were shouting. I told him what I heard, and he again said to me, "Prick up your ears and listen to what they are saying." I listened again. "As you sit, the multitude is praising you!" When I said this, the Savior replied, "I told you before that these people can neither see nor hear. But now I tell you to listen to what they say, for their words are a mystery. Guard the words you hear! Keep them secret; do not tell anyone, for they are not for this time, but for the future. If you do this, you will be praised for your divine wisdom. On the other hand, if you tell all that you know, and make your visions public, the ignorant will beseech God against you!

"The interpretation is this: that many will accept our teaching at first, and will turn against the priests and back to the Father, for they have done his will. And the Father will reveal the Servants of the Logos. But if some choose to mingle with these priests, they will be taken captive by them, since they are naturally blind and without spiritual perception. In this way the guileless, good, and pure will join the congregation of those still looking for their christ and awaiting final delivery to the Worker of Death. Skilled men will come after you who will be highly praised for the propagation of false teaching. They will cause many to cleave to the

name of a dead man, thinking that through death alone (and not life) they have become pure. Their very means to purification will defile them, and they will fall into a congregation called 'Name of Error,' into the hands of evil and conniving men with manifold doctrines and laws, and they will be ruled by a heretic hierarchy.

"Some will speak against the truth as well as proclaim evil teaching. They will even revile each other. Some will give themselves impressive names - names of the very demons that control them and give them their strength! They will not be threatened, even by the possibility of suffering for the sake of their sexual immorality. They will solicit for dreams. And if they perceive that a dream came from a kindred demon, one skilled at deception, they shall pronounce judgments that will render perdition instead of incorruption.

"For a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. Whatever the tree is, that is what will come from it. Certainly not every one is of the truth. Not all are immortal! Actually, in our view all souls of these ages are naturally assigned to death, because the soul-man is always a slave, being generated to fulfill its desires and their destruction. Soul-men are in destruction and from destruction! Souls love the flesh which was generated with them!

"But immortal souls are not like these, Peter. Until death, the immortal resembles the mortal. But the revealed nature of the immortal soul produces thoughts of everlasting life, has faith, and desires to renounce that which is not good!

"Figs are not plucked from thorn trees by the wise, nor grapes from thistles. The mortal soul is always developing into what it already is. Since it is not from good, but evil, it becomes destruction and death. But the immortal soul which comes to be united with the Eternal One (which is the one of life), resembles immortality and all the good fruit that comes from Him.

"Therefore those who are deaf and blind will join with their own kind, and the things dead will dissolve into non-existence. Others will be transformed from their practice of evil speaking and misleading mysteries.

"Some of those who are 'intellectual' (yet 'unenlightened'), who do not understand true mysteries, will boast that they alone know all truth. They will come to believe their own fables; then, being envious of the immortals, will arrogantly and pridefully seek to lead others to their own point of view. (But these boasters have never been saved by the prescribed method; that is, the Way, although their greatest desire may yet be imperishability!) To hear them speak, one would think that they had direct communication with the various ranks of angels (principalities, powers, authorities), and that they were present at the very creation of the world! Their desire is to be remembered, praised and blessed by the immortals, even though they know that they have no part in immortality. Those who are deceived by such do indeed receive a feeling of soul-power, but it emanates from the intellect rather than the spirit. Thus, these 'disciples' immediately join those who mislead them!

"Other messengers of error oppose the truth by making up laws against thoughts that are pure (and are my thoughts). They speak from one narrow-minded doctrinal perspective, teaching that good and evil are from the same place. They make what they call 'God's Word' into a business concern, and promise a harsh fate to those who will not cooperate. Even the race of the immortal will continue in deception until my public return. Only through the power

of forgiving sins, will the chosen come out from among them, for I have ransomed them from the slavery of their adversaries. Even then, the free will create an 'imitation remnant' in the name of a dead man, who is in fact Hermas, the eldest son of unrighteousness, in order that the light which exists may not be believed by the 'little ones.' But those of this sort will be separated from the sons of light, and cast into outer darkness! For they will neither enter in themselves nor release those who are ascending for their reprieve.

"Still others think that they can improve upon the perfect wisdom that the 'brotherhood' already enjoys; that is, the spiritual fellowship of those united in the communion, through which comes the revelation of the binding of the corruptible with the incorruptible. A kindred fellowship of imitators will appear and be known as 'The Sisterhood.' These sisters will oppress their brothers by saying such things as, "Because Salvation came from the womb, God has given women special privileges." They do not know of the severe punishment they will have to endure for approaching and taking those little ones prisoner with this deception.

"Even some who are outside our fellowship have given themselves impressive titles such as Reverend So-and-so, Bishop Something-else, and Deacon What's-his-name, and speak as though they have received their authority directly from God. These defy the judgment of true leaders, and are but dry canals."

But I said, "I am very troubled by what you told me, that the little ones, in our view, are counterfeit, and that multitudes will mislead multitudes of those possessing life, and destroy them by intermingling. But when they speak your name, they will be believed."

The Savior said, "For a predetermined time in proportion to their error, they will have authority over the little ones. When the time is right, the Never-Aging One of Immortal Understanding will become young, and the little ones will overturn their rulers. He will excise the root of their error, and will expose it in all the impudent glory that it has taken for itself. Then those who witness this will become unchangeable, O Peter.

"Come, then, let us continue completing the will of the incorruptible Father. For behold, those who will bring false judgment are on their way, and they will be shamed. They cannot touch me now! But you, Peter, shall stand amongst them. You are a coward, but I tell you, have no fear! Their minds shall be closed, for the Invisible One has come against them!"

When he had said these things, I saw the multitude seize him. I said, "What do I see, O Lord! Are they really taking you away? Are you grasping at me? Who is this person I see, glad and laughing on the tree? And is it another one whose feet and hands they are striking at?"

The Savior said to me, "The person that you saw on the tree, the one who is glad and laughing, that is the living Jesus! The other one, into whose hands and feet they are driving spikes, that one is the body; he is the flesh-manifestation of the immortal being put to shame, the likeness perceived by the natural eye. Look at him, then look at me."

I looked, and was much afraid and perturbed. In my confusion I said, "Lord, no one is looking at you. Let's get out of here!" But he said to me, "Haven't I told you to stay away from the blind? Can't you hear that they don't know what they are saying? They think that they have put my servant to shame, when in reality, they have hung the son of THEIR glory on the tree!"

Then I looked again and saw someone approaching that resembled the one who was laughing on the tree. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and I knew him then to be the Savior.

There was a great and searing light around and about him. And I perceived a multitude of luminescent and invisible angels blessing him. And when I looked at him, the Blessed One was revealed!

And he said to me, "Be strong, you have been trusted with these mysteries and their interpretation through divine revelation. The one whom they crucified was the first-born in the home of demons, in a corruptible vessel with which the god of this world had his way by means of the Law and its cross. But near the first-born you have seen the living Savior, the first in spirit, whom they seized and released, who looks at his assassins with joy, while they are yet confused and divided among themselves. He laughs at their lack of perception, knowing full well that they were born blind and are blind still. The one susceptible to suffering suffered; that is, this one who they perceive with their eyes. But what they have released is my divine body. Yes, I am the all-knowing spirit filled with radiant light! The light which you saw about me is our Heavenly Host, which unite perfect light with my Holy Spirit.

"These things you have seen you will present to a future generation. There is no natural honor in any one who is not immortal, but only in those chosen to be from an the immortal, the only substance able to contain the one who gives his abundance! It is for this reason that I said, 'Every one who has, it will be given him, and he will have plenty.' But the completely dead - those that are creatures of this place - are rooted out from the planting of the recreation of what is begotten of God. Even if the immortal substance appears to some extent in these, it will be taken from him and added the living. You, then, take courage and do not fear anything. None of your enemies will defeat you, for I will be with you. Take peace; be strong!"

When Jesus had said these things, I came to myself.