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Abel - The biblical Abel is the son of Adam and Eve and the brother of Cain, who slew him. Gnostic manuscripts, providing much more information about him, interpret Abel and the events of his life as allegorical. In the first three centuries of Christianity, the paternity of Abel was a subject providing opportunity for speculation among both Christian and non-Christian Gnostic sects. Suggested as his father are various notables: Abel is the son of Eve without Adam because Eve, in Adam's absence and without his ever knowing about it, is seduced by the Archons, the rulers of the seven planets, who are ignorant of the existence of the Supreme Divinity. Another Gnostic manuscript describes the seduction of Eve by Ialdabaoth (similar to Satan), the ignorant creator of the lower, visible world. With Ialdabaoth, Eve gave birth to both Cain and Abel, the "accursed ones." Ialdabaoth and the Archons, who are said to have created Eve, are so attracted by her beauty that they lead her away from Adam and seduce her. In another account the God of Genesis, who the Gnostics believed to be Ialdabaoth, appeared as himself, or as the Serpent, and seduced Eve.

These astonishing accounts of cosmic powers seducing Eve express two important motifs of early Common Era Gnosticism: the entities of the supernal world are actively involved in the affairs of the physical world; and the particulars of the physical world are patterned on the activities of the universals in the supernal realms.

Abel's' birth was preceded by the birth of Cain, who had a murderous heart and who represents the inscrutable evil of those who prey upon others -- those powered by forces as yet not fully understood. Cain is a necessary component to the symbolism expressed by the philosophy of Dualism, the Principle of opposing forces, a philosophy embraced by Gnosticism, Christianity, Judaism, and other religions, both major and minor.

As the son of Ialdabaoth, Abel is one his twelve powers. It would seem to make better sense if Cain were one of the ignorant creator's powers, but this, too, is a further expression of Dualism -- even Ialdabaoth has "good" and "bad" within him.

The beings of the supernal world, emanations of a hidden, infinite God, hand-made Adam

and Eve from base Matter. In one account of this creation, the angels had to "borrow" earth from Matter, who loaned it to them. The children of Adam and Eve were born to them according to the biological laws of the natural world; intercourse and human birth. The story of Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, the Archons, Ialdabaoth, God and the Serpent, a story steeped in symbolism, begins the structure upon which is built early Common Era Gnosticism, the most ambitious and esoteric religious philosophy ever conceived. By the inner path and by interior knowledge, by prophecy, vision and revelation, this philosophy seeks Gnosis: knowledge of the inconceivable, unbegotten God.

Abel is also named Yave, who is set over two elements, fire and wind. Cain is Eloim, who is set over the other two elements, water and earth. Yave, fire and wind, is righteous and Eloim, water and earth, is unrighteous. The four elements, the constituents of matter, were elucidated by Aristotle. When he wrote of them, he considered them equal in rank and originating from the fifth element, quintessence--ether or spirit.

The Gnostic designation of Eloim and Yave for Cain and Abel is a thinly disguised reference to the dualistic god of Judaism, Yahveh and Elohim, united by Moses into Jahveh Elohim, "Lord God." The Gnostics intended to convey that the "accursed ones" of the Bible included not only Cain and Abel but also Jahveh Elohim, who represents Fire, Air, Water, and Earth, the constituents of Matter. According to these correspondences the Hebrew God of the Old Testament is Ialdabaoth, the unrighteous god of Matter and the material world. Ialdabaoth indirectly originated from the supreme quintessence, who is not responsible for Ialdabaoth's existence nor diminished by it.

"Farming in the world requires the cooperation of four essential elements. A harvest is gathered into the barn only as a result of the natural action of water, earth, wind, and light. God's farming likewise has four elements--faith, hope, love, and knowledge." (*The Gospel of Philip*, Gnostic papyri)

Abraham- Also Abram. The biblical Abraham, patriarch of Judaism, was a citizen of Ur in the Sumerian half of Babylon. About 2000 BCE, Abraham's father, Terah, took Abraham and Abraham's wife Sarah and his grandson Lot, the nephew of Abraham, and emigrated from Ur. After Terah died, Abraham had a personal encounter with the Lord "Jehovah," who instructed Abraham that his descendants would become his Chosen People to reign in Canaan. In return, Abraham must obey Jehovah's commandments that all newborn males be circumcised on the eighth day after birth or, if converted, be circumcised upon conversion.

"Abraham circumcised the flesh of the foreskin, teaching us that it is proper to destroy the flesh." (*The Gospel of Philip*, Gnostic Papyri)

The intervention of the supernal into human affairs is a popular, recurring theme in nearly

all religions, interpreted to be God speaking to his people. But the Gnostics conceived of an infinite, hidden and unknowable God, one who would not, could not (without destroying us), personally intervene into the mundane affairs of humanity. They surmised, therefore, that any account of a personally intervening God is an account, not of God, but of an emanation of an emanation of God, divine but besmirched by its proximity to Matter. Most Gnostics believed the Old Testament Jehovah to be Ialdaboath, the subordinate demiurge, inferior to the supreme divinity but ruler of the material world. They said it was Ialdaboath who spoke with Abraham and made a covenant with him.

"His disciples said to him. "Is circumcision beneficial or not?" He said to them, "If it were beneficial, their father would beget then already circumcised from their mother." (*The Gospel of Thomas*, Gnostic papyri)

The Gnostic belief that the god of the Old Testament is a second-class god is confirmed, they said, by passages in the Bible wherein, by his own words, this god exposes himself as inferior.

According to the Hebrew *Great Hekhaloth*, Abraham and Enoch founded astrology. The Jews, in asserting their religion as superior to that of the Persians, claimed Zoroaster, the great religious leader of Persia, was Abraham's astrology student. The Gnostic Ishma'ilites considered Abraham to be the head of the generation of the Perfect, to which Zoroaster belonged. Mohammed, founder of Islamism, claimed all Arabs were descended from Abraham. Although the bible gives Abraham's profession as that of a shepherd, he may have been a merchant prince in Ur. It is recorded outside Jewish literature that Abraham was well versed in the celestial sciences. When he left Ur, he took with him his extensive knowledge of the Babylonian religion, the theology of Dualism.

Abrasax - Also Abraxas. This is the name that Basilides, an important Gnostic thinker and leader, gave to the great Creator-Archon who is usually known as Ialdabaoth. According to Basilides, Abrasax, the supreme divinity of the lower, visible world, comprised within himself the 365 gods who presided over the days of the year. In one system of numerology, the Greek letters of Abrasax have a mystical value of 365. Abrasax is identifiable with Osiris, the god of the Nile, because the Greek for Nile, Neilos, has a numerological value of 365. The Gnostic sect, Mithras, a delineation of Persian theology, has a mystical value of 365.

Gnostics believed that this numerological equivalency of Mithra to Abrasax proved the divinity of both. Mithra is the spiritual intermediate principle of Persian Dualism identified as the sun god of Persia.

Abrasax, also defined as one of the guardians of the Aeons (supernal powers and eternal realms), is depicted on engraved gems with the head of a cock and legs of a serpent.

Abrasax is associated with Aberamentho of mystical texts, who has the head of a cock. Worshipped by a Seth-Typhon cult in Egypt, and portrayed by then as having an asses head and a serpent's body, Aberamentho is identified by this cult as Jesus, who they said transported himself and his followers into the upper realms of the universe to celestial ships manned by fantastic beings and flying in space. After the crucifixion of Jesus, Roman graffiti was found portraying Jesus on the cross as a man with the head of an ass. Another account of this animal-headed divinity involves Zacharias, who was struck dumb in the Temple at Jerusalem when he had a vision of a being with a human body and the head of an ass. When he reproached the Jews for worshipping such a god, they put him to death. After his terrible vision, the high-priests were instructed to carry little bells whenever they went into the temple. That way, God would hear the tinkling of the bells and have enough time to hide himself and not be caught in that ugly shape and figure.

Into this tangled Judaic/Egyptian/Roman/Persian quarternity of Abrasax-Aberamentho-Jesus- Mithra came the Gnostics, who cleared up (?) the confusion by identifying Aberamentho- Abrasax as Ialdaboath, the son of the god of the Old Testament, and Mithra as an Aeon, and Jesus as a divinized human, a man Christified by the Cosmic Christ force who merged with him.

"And it was in the place of the Darkness, and the fire, and the power of the mind, and the light, that human beings came into existence." (*The Paraphrase of Shem*, Gnostic papyri)

Adam - In the Bible, Adam is the first human created by God. He becomes the husband of Eve and the father of Cain, Abel, Seth, and others. According to St. Paul, whose thinking was dominated by the concept of original sin, humanity is contaminated by the guilt of Adam, the first sinner. In Hebrew writings outside the Bible, Adam is symbolic, known as Adam Qadmon, the archetypal and primordial man, the Microprosopos (Lesser Countenance) of the Macroprosopos (Vast Countenance). The Adam of Gnosticism is no sinner, but is symbolic and prophetic, and the events of his life are allegorical.

Various Gnostic books were inspired by Adam, as channeled from him. He is called Adamas (Indomitable), The First Man, so named by the Chaldeans, Medes and Hebrews. According to the Gnostics, the name Adam is symbolic and is derived from the language of the angels. The name Adam is said to correspond to the four cardinal points and the four elements; fire, water, air and earth. Adam was called Thoth by Zosimos, who relates that Adam's spiritual name is Phos (light). This defines Adam as an angel of light.

In Gnosticism, the supernal beings of creation are composed of Light, from which they derive their powers. The ancients conceived of a great celestial drama wherein there is the continuous plotting on the part of the powers of Darkness to steal Light from the beings of light. The spirit Phos is tricked by the Archons (rulers of the seven planets) into putting on

the body of Adam, a body born of fatality and formed of the four elements. The Archons hoped to trap Phos in matter and deprive him of his light. Zeus (of Greek mythology) in sympathy sent him Pandora, called Eve by the Hebrews.

In Greek mythology, Pandora opened the Box, releasing the ills of the world. The biblical Eve disturbed the tree of knowledge and unbalanced the Good and Evil synthesized on the tree. They flew apart into the dualistic thesis-antithesis relationship. This Hebrew account of the consequences of Eve's action symbolizes the divine dyad, the first opposites, as emanating from the unity of the supreme monad.

The blending of Greek mythology with Gnostic mythology is typical of the eclecticism of the Gnostics, who incorporated into their theology all elements which they believed complimented their concepts.

The Gnostic Adam and Eve received the revelation of gnosis (Greek for knowledge) from the serpent, the anointed agent of the supreme divinity. In some Gnostic accounts the serpent, the errant son of Ialdabaoth, acts against his father's wish and helps Adam and Eve. Ialdabaoth traps the couple in the prison of matter. The serpent, determined that the pair should become aware of their serious situation, brings them Gnosis. As soon as they gain knowledge, their third eye chakra is opened and they no longer worship Ialdabaoth, who then ejects them from Paradise, along with his mutinous son.

The intellectual Gnostics considered these accounts of the first humans struggling with the cosmic powers to be more allegorical than actual. These accounts symbolize events occurring at the supernal level, as well as represent each human's individual, personal experiences in the struggle against Error. The symbolic Adam represents, in one respect, the fate of a humanity fallen from angelic grace, one that hopes its psychic power will be restored, that power taken from humanity by the fatality dispensed by the spheres (planets). Once restored, immortality can be recovered.

Adam is said to have deposited in the Cave of Adam, where he and his descendants are buried, the gifts the Magi carried to Bethlehem. The Cave of Adam is also the Cave of Treasure. This cave is thought to be in Azerbaijan, or perhaps Persia (Iran). Adam is said to have dictated to Seth a book of wisdom in which he prophesied the birth of Jesus and the Deluge. In other accounts Adam, after death, inspired Seth to write the book. Seth passed this book on to his descendants, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch and Noah. Noah took the books onto the Ark and later passed them on to his descendants. This book, or books, may be a reference to the Book on the Sapphire Stone, a legend of the primitive Jews.

At the command of the Father, Adam created all the things seen in Heaven and Earth. In other accounts, he gives names to the creatures created by the Archon-angels. Adam

credits the Father with having created 27 universes, all outside this heaven and earth. 12 of the universes are hidden from the angels, 7 more were created, then 5 more to contain the Spirits of the Power, and then 3 more for the Dwellings of the Angels.

There are various creation accounts regarding Adam. When he was created, he was alive but inert. This is the Adam Michelangelo depicts in the "Creation of Man" painted on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Ialdabaoth, the trickster, was himself tricked into breathing life into the inert Adam, making him resplendent. Adam became superior to his creator-angels who then jealously cast him into the nether realms.

According to a Greek account, borrowed from Persia, each of Adam's seven body parts was fabricated by each of the seven planets (including the sun and the moon) in its turn. Adam is the microcosmic representation of the macrocosm, the Microprosopos of the Macroprosopos. Uttering words of wisdom far beyond his own abilities, Adam was thought to be channeling (modern terminology) the supreme divinity. The creator-angels and the creator Mother believed his words were divinely spoken. She pitied Adam for this great power moving through him and sent him a spark, a thought of light called Zoe. But the creator-angels again forged together the four elements to make another creation in opposition to Adam. They then took the first Adam away to Paradise, where the delights are illusory.

In another account, Jesus is said to have descended to Eden three times to help Adam stand upright, to exercise the demons of mortality away from him, and to make him taste the Tree of Life, whereupon Adam gained gnosis of his ignorant creators. The Gnostics said that although Adam was never born, he died. In those early Common Era times, this piece of information became part of a riddle known throughout the Mediterranean world.

There is an account of three Adam's. The first Adam (Adam of Light) is spirit-endowed and appeared on the first day. The second Adam is soul-endowed and appeared on the sixth day. The third Adam is a creature of the earth and appeared on the eighth day, Sunday, the day of "tranquillity of poverty." The third Adam is the father of humanity. The third Adam and his mate Eve were allotted lifespans of 1,000 years. Each of the Archons subtracted 10 years from their lives so that 930 years became their allotted time, years lived in pain and weakness and evil distraction. When Adam died he descended to hell, where all the residents there, everyone who had been born before the birth of Jesus, waited for their release - the advent of the descent of Jesus into hell.

"My son, do not allow your mind to stare downward, but rather let it look by means of the light at things above. For the light will always come from above." (*The teachings of Silvanus*, the Gnostic papyri)

Adamanous - From a Hermetic treatise "Upon the Creation of Man" attributed to Hermes,

Adamanous is the Form of Forms, the template upon which humanity is patterned. Nous means 'mind.' In this Egyptian-Gnostic account of creation, the first man is Adamanous, a creation of Harous, who is himself the creation of the planets seeking spiritual expression. Above Harous, and enabling this creation, is the heavenly Virgin. Adamanous is the living microcosm patterned after the highest heavens. Harous channels the forces of the Archons into Adamanous, who is perfect in appearance, but ignorant and mute. Harous then channels the power of the stars into Adamanous so that he becomes intelligent and speaks. Even though the colossal Adamanous is as tall as the clouds and can hear the sound of the rotation of the planets, he worships Harous for his size, who is so tall he can touch the planets and any sign of the zodiac. Harous creates a mate for Adamanous, called Haivanous.

The planet Saturn, who is excluded from participation in these creations, becomes enraged and wishes to destroy both micro- and macrocosm. Harous invokes powers to constrain Saturn, and to bind all impure spirits to the four corners of the macrocosm where they are held as prisoners in watch-towers. Adamanous and Haivanous, now free from danger, parent 14 children - seven sets of twins, each pair a boy and a girl. The planets endow these children with their respective personalities and appearances.

"How has the existence which does not exist appeared from an existing power?" (*Zostrianos*, Gnostic papyri)

Aeons - The supernal beings comprising their eternal realms; the occult forces of the universe, the hierarchy of divine beings in the universe who are emanations of an utterly transcendent deity existing in negative existence, and who, in successive emanations, are the patterns and causation of material reality. Each successive Aeon of the universe is formed on the basis of the models in the layer above, with each Aeon less perfect than its model.

"Their begetting is like a process of extension...They are a unity and a multiplicity." (*The Tripartite Tractate*, Gnostic papyri)

The Aeons are the light-beings of the eternal, celestial drama, and all the world's a stage whereon the Aeons, through humanity and all of nature, actualize themselves. Beside these, historic persons and facts are sublimated half-way between the real and the symbolic, so that the events of the world seem to disappear beneath the weight of their symbolic content.

"The entire system of the Aeons has a love and a longing for the perfect, complete discovery of the Father...who grants that he be conceived of in such a way as to be sought for." (*The Tripartite Tractate*, Gnostic papyri)

The Aeons are "places on the path which leads toward him...They are silent about the incomprehensibility of the Father, but they speak about the one who wishes to comprehend him... All the names which are great are kept there by the Aeons, names which the angels share." (*The Tripartite Tractate*, Gnostic papyri)

"They are not crowded against one another, but to the contrary they are alive, existing in themselves and agreeing with one another, as they are from a single origin. Each of the aeons has ten thousand aeons in himself." (*Zostrianos*, Gnostic papyri)

Gnostics believed they could take their place in the Pleroma as Aeons, as humans who become divine and who function with powers and responsibilities of divinities.

"If you become spirit, it is the spirit which will be joined to you... If you become light, it is the light which will share with you. If you become one of those who belong above, it is those who belong above who will rest upon you." (*The Gospel of Philip*, Gnostic papyri)

Aeons are the power of creation of the human body. Basilides elaborated on five Aeons; Nous (Mind); The Word; Reflection; Wisdom and Force; and the Virtues, powers and angels who engendered a succession of emanations by which the world was created. Each emanation is a world complete, filled with angels and layers of firmaments ranging from vaporous idea to dense matter, and each stage of emanation is ruled by an administrative power. As generations of humanity progress, one successively following the other, so do the parallel macrocosmic generations of Aeons progress, one after the other but at a much slower rate. Expressed alchemically as 'As Above So Below,' humanity and the Aeons are linked together by a sacred cord.

In some Gnostic systems, heavenly bodies were systematically on a time schedule of seven aeons. Each planet with its planetary as Aeon, reigned at its assigned time for one millennium, during which time its powers determined the course of human events.

In one account of the creation of the cosmos, two Aeons, one masculine who governs all things, the other feminine who gives birth to all things, have neither beginning nor end. These two opposites generate an offspring - intangible apace with no beginning or end, in which resides the androgynous Father who upholds, protects and nourishes all finite things. From this Father emanates one bindu after another, thoughts which drop into the field of time, break into opposites, and participate in the lower, visible world. The words "a new Aeon" refer to a spiritual rebirth.

"I am in the process of becoming." (*On the Origin of the World*, Gnostic)

papyri)

Alchemy - Popular Hermiticism involving magic and astrology, thought to have originated in Egypt about the time of the building of the pyramids, and as such, represents the practical application of a brand of Egyptian Gnostic-like philosophy.

Olympiodorus of Alexandria gave an alchemical interpretation to the Persons of Adam and Eve, saying they were composed of basic, integrated alchemical substances: fire, earth, mercury, sulphur, water and air. In this respect, they are symbolic of Prime Matter. Adam represents red earth, mercury, sulphur, soul and fire. Eve means white earth, philosopher's mercury, root of moisture and spirit.

Allogeneous Books - Important and widely distributed Gnostic writings said to have originated from the spiritual realms and to have been, in modern terminology, channeled ("books written from God"). A channeled book, rather than a "divinely inspired" book, involves the knowledge and conversation of a spiritual entity. The text concerning Adamanous, *Upon the Creation of Man*, is channeled from Hermes, the spirit, and written by Tat (Thoth), the person. Through conversations with Tat, Hermes channels to him the mysteries of the Hebdomad, the Ogdoad, and the Ennead, the layered architecture of the celestial realms. Many of the anonymous writers of the Hermetic texts said their manuscripts were channeled. Both groups attributed their books to the great spirits and prophets whom they believed were writing the books; Seth, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Abel, Cain, Sophia, Eve, Horea, Adam, Zoroaster, and the apostles. *The Book of Foreigners*, an allogeneous book, is a book channeled with spiritual entities described as foreigners, or aliens.

In keeping with tradition, many authors of the manuscripts not said to be channeled remained anonymous, although the Gnostics of that time probably knew, among themselves, who the authors were. According to heresiologists, and many modern scholars, the crediting of writings to great prophets and spirits was done to give the books more validity and authority. It is more likely the writers, at least in the beginning, were crediting their books to the early human and the great spiritual entities whom they believed to be their guides. Since Gnostic manuscripts accurately relate that the Divine Messengers who give spiritual guidance and revelation remain as strangers in our world of time, the writers often guessed as to the identities of the spiritual guides with whom they were working.

"Jesus said to them. 'When you make the two one, and when you make the inside like the outside and the outside like the inside, and the above like the below, and when you make the male and the female one and the same...then will you enter the kingdom.'" (*The Gospel of Thomas*, Gnostic papyri)

Androgyny - The principle of perfection in which opposites co-exist in harmony. In alchemy, the "union of the opposites" represents the attainment of perfect spiritual harmony. The separation of Eve from Adam symbolizes the breaking of an original androgynous unity. When God is conceived of as being an original monad, the creator exists as a single one, like the number one, before anything else comes into being. The further away one gets from the one, the more the division and the involvement in matter.

"For the end will receive a unitary existence just as the beginning is unitary." (*The Tripartite Tractate*, Gnostic papyri)

Anthropos - Son of the supreme divinity, issued by Him as a first Thought containing within himself all the archetypes of the abstract universes as macrocosmic shapes upon which all microcosms are patterned. These macrocosmic shapes are redistributed in varying degrees throughout the material universe. In *Poimandres*, a Hermetic treatise, the supreme divinity loved his child Anthropos and empowered him to create in His name. Anthropos' image is the pattern upon which the Archons fashioned Adam. Everything that exists is patterned on some part of the body of Anthropos, and its shape is determined by the celestial patterns contained by that body part of Anthropos.

Anthropos' brother is the Word. From the supreme divinity emanated Thought, then the Word considered to mean Spirit), and then Matter. In other accounts, Word came first, followed by Anthropos, sometime called the demiurge. Word and Anthropos associated to create the seven planets whose rotation produced the lower, visible universe. The Gnostic Ophites deemed Anthropos to be the supreme divinity, rather than His son.

"Tell me, Lord, what the beginning of the path is,' he said. 'Love and goodness... And you will go via the path which you have known." (*The Dialogue of the Savior*, Gnostic papyri)

"For what is inside of you is what is outside of you." (*The Thunder: Perfect Mind*, Gnostic Papyri)

"This is the name of my city, 'Nine Gates.' Let us praise God as we are mindful that the tenth is the head." (*The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*, Gnostic papyri)

"Rabbi, in what way shall I reach Him-who-is, since all those powers and these hosts are armed against me?" (*The First Apocalypse of James*, Gnostic papyri)

Archons - The seven planets, the base Powers who rule the lower, visible world. It was believed the Archons cut off humanity from the Aeons of the Powers, that they educate

humanity in corruption, and block the knowledge of truth and wisdom. The Archon of Darkness prevents the souls of the passionate from passing to the Light. The flayed and stretched-out skins of the Archons form the sky, a mythology similar to that of the Egyptian goddess Nut, whose body forms the sky. The Archons were seduced by Norea, Barbelo, Helen, Sophia, and the Virgin of Light to deprive them of their allotment of divine Light. The ancients always knew the moment the Archons were being seduced. When bolts of lightning flashed across the dark skies of night, the Archons were being violently dispossessed of their Light.

The Archons are sometimes portrayed as having human bodies with the heads of animals. In Chaldean astrology, the Archons are the Guardians of the gateways leading from one planetary sphere to another. When souls, after death, re-ascend the spheres to the higher heavens, they must encounter the Archons guarding the gateways, who will yield only to certain passwords. The Gnostics drew up meticulous lists of passwords the Archons would accept. As the souls re-ascend the spheres and encounter the Archons, they are in danger of losing their way in the middle places, the places between the paths and the spheres.

"And in particular three of them will seize you they who sit as toll collectors...When you come into their power, one of them who is their guard will say to you, 'Who are you or where are you from?' You are to say to him, 'I am a son. and I am from the Father.' He will say to you, 'What sort of son are you, and to what father do you belong?' You are to say to him, 'I am from the Pre-existent Father, and a son in the Pre-existent One'...When he also says to you, 'Where will you go?' you are to say to him, 'To the place from which I have come, there shall I return.' And if you say these things, you will escape their attacks." (*The First Apocalypse of James*, Gnostic papyri)

In *Book of the Treatise According to the Mystery*, Jesus describes the Archons as being 72 in number, each having 8 powers. In some accounts the Archons, in their constant battle against the Good, contrived to have Jesus crucified. The word "archangel" may be derived from "archon-angel," or from the Ark (sometimes "Arc") of the Covenant that was guarded by two angels -- arkangels or arcangels. St. Paul referred to the Archons of this world as "Princes of the Aeon."

"Strive to rid yourselves of anger and jealousy." (*The Dialogue of the Savior*, Gnostic papyri)

Archontici - A Gnostic sect which claimed to be knowledgeable about the planets, could invoke their powers, and could understand the harmony of the spheres. The Archontici made use of a book called *Symphonia*, in which are unusual sequences of seven vowel sounds, each corresponding mystically to one of the planets and expressing the harmony

of the spheres. The Archontici taught that the biblical Seth had been taken up to heaven for 40 days to speak with God and to learn of the inferior, visible world. Two of their prophets, Martiades and Marsanes, were taken up to heaven for three days to explore its secrets after having studied the Archontici mysteries. The names Martiades and Marsanes may be taken from Mashya (Martya) and Mashyane (Martyani), Persian for the first man and first woman. If so, the Archontici are descendants of ancient Persian theology. Martana and Martos, two prophetesses adored as goddesses by the baptist sect of the Sampseans, also were taken up into heaven for three days, a further evidence of Persian theology as an important part of Gnosticism.

"When a certain astronomer, who was present, asked the Lord Jesus. whether he had studied astronomy?, The Lord Jesus replied, and told him the number of the spheres and heavenly bodies, as also their triangular, square, and sextile aspect; their progressive and retrograde motion; their size and several prognostications; and other things which the reason of man had never discovered." (*The First Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus Christ*, Gnostic papyri)

Astrology, Classical - The "Laws of Physics" of the ancient world. Astrology is said to have originated in Babylonia, Chaldea, and Egypt. Classical astrology was a widely accepted system of cosmogony in which the physical world, its occupants and events were under the influence of the heavenly bodies, from which dominion there was no escape. By looking up into the dome of night, the ancients derived from the starry heavens a system of correspondences and beliefs in which the physical and spiritual nature of humanity mirrored that of the celestial inhabitants of the heavenly realms. They recognized in the movement of the stars the Aeons of the Powers of their theology, and noted the Pole star, the ruler of the heavens with the brilliant beings of light revolving around it. Opposite the Pole star were the realms of the kingdoms of Darkness, and far in the East was situated the Mountain of Lights. From the East, the stars, the beings of light, rose to sit on their astral thrones as the moon worked to collect from them their light. At the break of dawn, the sun began to wage his war against the stars, which retreated wisely for awhile into the realms of darkness.

Below the sphere of the stars revolved the seven Archons, the planets. Some Gnostics exempted from these the ships of the Sun and the Moon, replacing them, to keep the count up to seven, with the head and tail of the constellation Draco, wherein are enthroned the four Aces of the tarot deck. It was Draco who ate the sun and the moon during eclipses, and it was through the body of Draco that souls were forced to pass in descent into the abysses of hell. The long line of souls form Draco, whose tail descends even into the deepest, darkest realms of hell.

In the incarnational process, each soul descends to birth from heaven by successively passing from one planet, one Archon, to another. The Archons dispense a positive and

negative influence on each soul as it passes by so that it takes on the properties of both. The soul at birth is gifted with these positive and negative qualities, upon which it draws during a lifetime. Finally, at the moment of incarnation, the soul takes on the properties of Matter; Fire, Water, Air, and Earth.

"The soul that had been cast down went to a body which had been prepared for it." (*The Apocalypse of Paul*, Gnostic papyri)

It was believed that the Archons played upon the negative attributions of the soul to turn a person away from truth and knowledge, while the good angels worked with the positive planetary attributions to bring the person to enlightenment and gnosis. Within one's body, the Aeons of Light and the Aeons of Darkness waged a war for the human soul. At the end of life, the soul begins its re-ascent to its heavenly origins, with ease of passage to the uppermost realms determined by the quality of the Soul's deeds on earth and the acquisition of gnosis. As the soul re-ascends, it sheds the planetary influences as though they are layers of astral clothing until, as pure spirit, the soul returns to the celestial realm of origin. As it passes by each planet, it must pass through the portals guarded by the planetary ruler, usually the Archons.

In order to pass through the gateways and ascend to the next sphere, it must supply the guardian of the portal with a password. Without knowledge of the passwords, the soul will be pulled into the rotation of the sphere to revolve there forever or until an amnesty is given. Many Gnostics believed Sabaoth the Good, who regulated the movement of the heavens, proclaimed a periodic amnesty, affected by the reversal of the rotation of the spheres. The souls released from their ceaseless movement around the spheres then ascend or descend, depending upon their characteristics. In some Gnostic texts, it is Jesus who reverses the rotation of the spheres. In that early Common Era, it was believed the reversal would neutralize the Egyptian astrologers and diviners who, after Jesus' action, no longer professed the truth. Jesus is also said to have made the knowledge of the passwords a part of his teachings.

Those astrological beliefs found their way into Hebrew mysticism, along with the addition of elements of Hellenistic astrology, such as the idea that the planets furnish themselves with Chariot-Thrones. When the deity is seen enthroned on a chariot, it shows a cultural diffusion. In this system of astrology, the planetary rulers (not the Archons) furnish themselves with moveable thrones because they reign over the rotation and movement of the planets. This chariot-throne, Merkaba, is a favorite image in Jewish mysticism. Merkaba is draped with a cosmic veil which, when lowered, prevents those of the material realms from viewing the palaces (Hekhaloth) of the celestial realms in which are held the preexistent images of all things manifest, the form of forms. In Judaism, the Lord Sabaoth, Lord of the Seven Planets, sits the chariot-throne at the Pole Star. In Gnosticism, the Propater, primordial Father, is this Aeon standing motionless, the master of the Pole upon the constellation of the Chariot (Auriga), with the Aeon Sophia beside him. Dwelling in

the zenith of the heavens, each is served by myriads of angels, the circumpolar stars, who spin around the dome of the sky in a flurry of activity and energy.

"He created the curtain between the immortals and those that came afterward." (*The Sophia of Jesus Christ*, Gnostic papyri)

"A veil exists between the world above and the realms that are below." (*Hypostasis of the Archons*, Gnostic papyri)

The veil at first concealed how God controlled the creation, but...the veil is rent and the things inside are revealed..." (*The Gospel of Philip*, Gnostic papyri)

"Those whom he intentionally produced are in chariots..." (*The Tripartite Tractate*, Gnostic papyri)

The guardians of rabbinical orthodoxy discouraged contemplation of the meaning of the chariot-throne. In Christian orthodoxy, the original meaning of the chariot-throne is discarded and replaced by the Divine Chariot-Throne, appropriated to the worship of God. The Divine Chariot-Throne is powered by Cheribum.

"Do not make the kingdom of heaven a desert within you." (*The Apocryphon of James*, Gnostic papyri)

Athoth - The first of the twelve powers engendered by Ialdabaoth when he united himself with the ignorance that is in him. Thoth means "truth." Athoth means "without truth," or "untrue." Athoth and the other powers are obliged to have two names. One name, when spoken, evokes their powers, while the other name weakens and reduces their powers.

Audians - The Gnostic sect established by Audius, a Syrian of Mesopotamia and an ascetic, who established monasteries and fought against the loose conduct of the clergy. The Audians re-established themselves in the 5th century CE, and again in the 8th century CE. Audius is noted for his teaching of the five creators of the human body who impart seven substances or elements to it; Wisdom, Intelligence, Elohim, Adonai, Royalty, Zeal and Thought. Audius taught that Eve's offspring were begotten by the Aeons (lower powers) and not by Adam.

St. Augustine - After converting from Gnosticism to Christianity, St. Augustine wrote so extensively and brilliantly against Gnosticism that he was sainted for his efforts. St. Augustine was a Gnostic for nine years, a "hearer" of the Manichaean sect. A "hearer" was not a part of that sect which practiced a strict asceticism. The Manichaean ascetics ate only fruit and refused to eat anything which had to be killed to be eaten. Their second

level of devotees, called "hearers," were not required to practice asceticism.

St. Augustine accused the Manichaeans of selecting from Gnostic religious thought that which they liked and discarding the rest. "Even the New Testament scriptures," he wrote, "as though they had been falsified, are read by them so that they take from them what they want and reject what they do not want, and give preference to several apocryphal writings, as if they contained the whole truth." St. Augustine selected from Manichaeism what he wanted, condemned as ignorant that which he did not want, and bequeathed to medieval Christianity the parts of Gnostic philosophy that he liked. He later admitted he had found some gold in the Gnostic "mud."

St. Augustine, like many Christian leaders, abandoned Gnosticism for Christianity. While the Hebrews ignored their mystics, the Christians, whose orthodoxy had yet to be established, could not afford that luxury. Christian theology was solidified into orthodoxy by the Christian heresiologists and their furious refutation of Gnostic doctrines.

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