

# The Apocalypse Of Peter

Also known as: The Revelation To Peter

c. 100-125 B.C.

The Apocalypse of Peter is the earliest Christian reference to the afterlife, describing in vivid detail the paradise of Heaven and the torments of Hell. The work is quite early, for it was referenced by Clement and likely used by the author of the Apocalypse of Paul; It may even predate the canonical Apocalypse (Revelation) of John. The book was included in the Muratorian Canon (c.200 C.E.) as well as the Codex Claramontanus. It is difficult to speculate why it fell out of favor in the orthodox church, except perhaps that it was often associated with the heretical Gospel of Peter.

The work survives in an extant Ethiopic text as well as a fragmentary Greek text discovered at Akhmîm with the Gospel of Peter. The two versions have striking dissimilarities, and it would appear that, although the work was originally composed in Greek, the Akhmîm text represents a later development. The work borrows heavily from Jewish apocalyptic tradition (1 Enoch), and the account of the transfiguration parallels the description in 2 Peter.

We have included 3 Apocalypse Of Peter documents below. First the ***Ethiopic version***, next the ***Akmim Fragment***, and finally one found in the ***The Nag Hammadi Library***

## The Apocalypse Of Peter

*Ethiopic Text*

### THE ETHIOPIC TEXT

First published by the Abbe Sylvain Grebaut in *Revue de l'Orient Chretien*, 1910: a fresh translation from his Ethiopic text by H. Duensing appeared in *Zeitschr. f. ntl. Wiss.*, 1913.

The Second Coming of Christ and Resurrection of the Dead (which Christ revealed unto Peter) who died because of their sins, for that they kept not the commandment of God their creator.

**And he (Peter) pondered thereon, that he might perceive the mystery of the Son of God, the merciful and lover of mercy.**

**And when the Lord was seated upon the Mount of Olives, his disciples came unto him.**

**And we besought and entreated him severally and prayed him, saying unto him: Declare unto us what are the signs of thy coming and of the end of the world, that we may perceive and mark the time of thy coming and instruct them that come**

after us, unto whom we preach the word of thy gospel, and whom we set over (in) thy church, that they when they hear it may take heed to themselves and mark the time of thy coming.

And our Lord answered us, saying: Take heed that no man deceive you, and that ye be not doubters and serve other gods. Many shall come in my name, saying: I am the Christ. Believe them not, neither draw near unto them. For the coming of the Son of God shall not be plain (i.e. foreseen); but as the lightning that shineth from the east unto the west, so will I come upon the clouds of heaven with a great host in my majesty; with my cross going before my face will I come in my majesty, shining sevenfold more than the sun will I come in my majesty with all my saints, mine angels (mine holy angels). And my Father shall set a crown upon mine head, that I may judge the quick and the dead and recompense every man according to his works.

And ye, take ye the likeness thereof (learn a parable) from the fig-tree: so soon as the shoot thereof is come forth and the twigs grown, the end of the world shall come.

And I, Peter, answered and said unto him: Interpret unto me concerning the fig-tree, whereby we shall perceive it; for throughout all its days doth the fig-tree send forth shoots, and every year it bringeth forth its fruit for its master. What then meaneth the parable of the fig-tree? We know it not.

And the Master (Lord) answered and said unto me: Understandest thou not that the fig-tree is the house of Israel? Even as a man that planted a fig-tree in his garden, and it brought forth no fruit. And he sought the fruit thereof many years and when he found it not, he said to the keeper of his garden: Root up this fig-tree that it make not our ground to be unfruitful. And the gardener said unto God: (Suffer us) to rid it of weeds and dig the ground round about it and water it. If then it bear not fruit, we will straightway remove its roots out of the garden and plant another in place of it. Hast thou not understood that the fig-tree is the house of Israel? Verily I say unto thee, when the twigs thereof have sprouted forth in the last days, then shall feigned Christs come and awake expectation saying: I am the Christ, that am now come into the world. And when they (Israel) shall perceive the wickedness of their deeds they shall turn away after them and deny him [whom our fathers did praise], even the first Christ whom they crucified and therein sinned a great sin. But this deceiver is not the Christ. [something is wrong here: the sense required is that Israel perceives the wickedness of antichrist and does not follow him.] And when they reject him he shall slay with the sword, and there shall be many martyrs. Then shall the twigs of the fig-tree, that is, the house of Israel, shoot forth: many shall become martyrs at his hand. Enoch and Elias shall be sent to teach them that this is the deceiver which must come into the world and do signs and wonders to deceive. And therefore shall they that die by his hand be martyrs, and shall be reckoned among the good and righteous martyrs who have pleased God in their life. [Hermas, Vision III.i.9, speaks of 'those that

have already been well-pleasing unto God and have suffered for the Name's sake'.]

And he showed me in his right hand the souls of all men, And on the palm of his right hand the image of that which shall be accomplished at the last day: and how the righteous and the sinners shall be separated, and how they do that are upright in heart, and how the evil-doers shall be rooted out unto all eternity. We beheld how the sinners wept (weep) in great affliction and sorrow, until all that saw it with their eyes wept, whether righteous or angels, and he himself also.

And I asked him and said unto him: Lord, suffer me to speak thy word concerning the sinners: It were better for them if they had not been created. And the Saviour answered and said unto me: Peter, wherefore speakest thou thus, that not to have been created were better for them? Thou resistest God. Thou wouldest not have more compassion than he for his image: for he hath created them and brought them forth out of not being. Now because thou hast seen the lamentation which shall come upon the sinners in the last days, therefore is thine heart troubled; but I will show thee their works, whereby they have sinned against the Most High.

Behold now what shall come upon them in the last days, when the day of God and the day of the decision of the judgement of God cometh. From the east unto the west shall all the children of men be gathered together before my Father that liveth for ever. And he shall command hell to open its bars of adamant and give up all that is therein.

And the wild beasts and the fowls shall he command to restore all the flesh that they have devoured, because he willeth that men should appear; for nothing perisheth before God, and nothing is impossible with him, because all things are his.

For all things come to pass on the day of decision, on the day of judgement, at the word of God: and as all things were done when he created the world and commanded all that is therein and it was done -even so shall it be in the last days; for all things are possible with God. And therefore saith he in the scripture: [Ezek. xxxvii.] Son of man, prophesy upon the several bones and say unto the bones: bone unto bone in joints, sinew. nerves, flesh and skin and hair thereon [and soul and spirit].

And soul and spirit shall the great Uriel give them at the commandment of God; for him hath God set over the rising again of the dead at the day of judgement.

Behold and consider the corns of wheat that are sown in the earth. As things dry and without soul do men sow them in the earth: and they live again and bear fruit, and the earth restoreth them as a pledge entrusted unto it.

[And this that dieth, that is sown as seed in the earth, and shall become alive and

**be restored unto life, is man. Probably a gloss.]**

**How much more shall God raise up on the day of decision them that believe in him and are chosen of him, for whose sake he made the world? And all things shall the earth restore on the day of decision, for it also shall be judged with them, and the heaven with it.**

**And this shall come at the day of judgement upon them that have fallen away from faith in God and that have committed sin: Floods (cataracts) of fire shall be let loose; and darkness and obscurity shall come up and clothe and veil the whole world and the waters shall be changed and turned into coals of fire and all that is in them shall burn, and the sea shall become fire. Under the heaven shall be a sharp fire that cannot be quenched and floweth to fulfil the judgement of wrath. And the stars shall fly in pieces by flames of fire, as if they had not been created and the powers (firmaments) of the heaven shall pass away for lack of water and shall be as though they had not been. And the lightnings of heaven shall be no more, and by their enchantment they shall affright the world (probably: The heaven shall turn to lightning and the lightnings thereof shall affright the world. The spirits also of the dead bodies shall be like unto them (the lightnings?) and shall become fire at the commandment of God.**

**And so soon as the whole creation dissolveth, the men that are in the east shall flee unto the west, unto the east; they that are in the south shall flee to the north, and they that are in the north shall flee to the south. And in all places shall the wrath of a fearful fire overtake them and an unquenchable flame driving them shall bring them unto the judgement of wrath, unto the stream of unquenchable fire that floweth, flaming with fire, and when the waves thereof part themselves one from another, burning, there shall be a great gnashing of teeth among the children of men.**

**Then shall they all behold me coming upon an eternal cloud of brightness: and the angels of God that are with me shall sit (prob. And I shall sit) upon the throne of my glory at the right hand of my Heavenly Father; and he shall set a crown upon mine head. And when the nations behold it, they shall weep, every nation apart.**

**Then shall he command them to enter into the river of fire while the works of every one of them shall stand before them (something is wanting) to every man according to his deeds. As for the elect that have done good, they shall come unto me and not see death by the devouring fire. But the unrighteous the sinners, and the hypocrites shall stand in the depths of darkness that shall not pass away, and their chastisement is the fire, and angels bring forward their sins and prepare for them a place wherein they shall be punished for ever (every one according to his transgression).**

**Uriel (Urael) the angel of God shall bring forth the souls of those sinners (every one according to his transgression: perhaps this clause should end the**

preceding paragraph: so Grebaut takes it) who perished in the flood, and of all that dwelt in all idols, in every molten image, in every (object of) love, and in pictures, and of those that dwelt on all hills and in stones and by the wayside, whom men called gods: they shall burn them with them (the objects in which they dwelt, or their worshippers?) in everlasting fire; and after that all of them with their dwelling places are destroyed, they shall be punished eternally.

(Here begins the description of torments which we have, in another text, in the Akhmim fragment.)

Then shall men and women come unto the place prepared for them. By their tongues wherewith they have blasphemed the way of righteousness shall they be hanged up. There is spread under them unquenchable fire, that they escape it not.

Behold, another place: therein is a pit, great and full (of . . .) In it are they that have denied righteousness: and angels of punishment chastise them and there do they kindle upon them the fire of their torment.

And again behold [two: corrupt] women: they hang them up by their neck and by their hair; they shall cast them into the pit. These are they which plaited their hair, not for good (or, not to make them beautiful) but to turn them to fornication, that they might ensnare the souls of men unto perdition. And the men that lay with them in fornication shall be hung by their loins in that place of fire; and they shall say one to another: We knew not that we should come unto everlasting punishment.

And the murderers and them that have made common cause with them shall they cast into the fire, in a place full of venomous beasts, and they shall be tormented without rest, feeling their pains; and their worms shall be as many in number as a dark cloud. And the angel Ezrael shall bring forth the souls of them that have been slain, and they shall behold the torment of them that slew them, and say one to another: Righteousness and justice is the judgement of God. For we heard, but we believed not, that we should come into this place of eternal judgement.

And near by this flame shall be a pit, great and very deep, and into it floweth from above all manner of torment, foulness, and issue. And women are swallowed up therein up to their necks and tormented with great pain. These are they that have caused their children to be born untimely, and have corrupted the work of God that created them. Over against them shall be another place where sit their children [both] alive, and they cry unto God. And flashes (lightnings) go forth from those children and pierce the eyes of them that for fornication's sake have caused their destruction.

Other men and women shall stand above them, naked; and their children stand over against them in a place of delight, and sigh and cry unto God because of

their parents, saying: These are they that have despised and cursed and transgressed thy commandments and delivered us unto death: they have cursed the angel that formed us, and have hanged us up, and withheld from us (or, begrudged us) the light which thou hast given unto all creatures. And the milk of their mothers flowing from their breasts shall congeal, and from it shall come beasts devouring flesh, which shall come forth and turn and torment them for ever with their husbands, because they forsook the commandments of God and slew their children. As for their children, they shall be delivered unto the angel Temlakos (i.e. a care-taking angel: see above, in the Fragments). And they that slew them shall be tormented eternally, for God willeth it so.

Ezrael the angel of wrath shall bring men and women, the half of their bodies burning, and cast them into a place of darkness, even the hell of men; and a spirit of wrath shall chastise them with all manner of torment, and a worm that sleepeth not shall devour their entrails: and these are the persecutors and betrayers of my righteous ones.

And beside them that are there, shall be other men and women, gnawing their tongues; and they shall torment them with red-hot iron and burn their eyes. These are they that slander and doubt of my righteousness. Other men and women whose works were done in deceitfulness shall have their lips cut off, and fire entereth into their mouth and their entrails. These are the false witnesses (al. these are they that caused the martyrs to die by their lying).

And beside them, in a place near at hand, upon the stone shall be a pillar of fire, and the pillar is sharper than swords. And there shall be men and women clad in rags and filthy garments, and they shall be cast thereon, to suffer the judgement of a torment that ceaseth not: these are they that trusted in their riches and despised the widows and the woman with fatherless children . . . before God.

And into another place hard by, full of filth, do they cast men and women up to the knees. These are they that lent money and took usury.

And other men and women cast themselves down from an high place and return again and run, and devils drive them. [These are the worshippers of idols] and they put them to the end of their wist (drive them up to the top of the height) and they cast themselves down. And thus do they continually, and are tormented for ever. These are they which have cut their flesh as [apostles] of a man: and the women that were with them . . . and these are the men that defiled themselves together as women. (This is very corrupt: but the sense is clear in the (Greek.)

And beside them (shall be a brazier ?) . . . and beneath them shall the angel Ezrael prepare a place of much fire: and all the idols of gold and silver, all idols, the work of men's hands, and the semblances of images of cats and lions, of creeping things and wild beasts, and the men and women that have prepared the images thereof, shall be in chains of fire and shall be chastised because of their

error before the idols, and this is their judgement for ever. (In the Greek they beat each other with rods of fire: and this is better.)

And beside them shall be other men and women, burning in the fire of the judgement, and their torment is everlasting. These are they that have forsaken the commandment of God and followed the (persuasions ?) of devils.

(Parts of these two sections are in the Bodleian Fragment. this point the Akhmim fragment ends. The Ethiopic continues :)

And there shall be another place, very high (corrupt sentences follow. Duensing omits them: Grebaut renders doubtfully: There shall be a furnace and a brazier wherein shall burn fire. The fire that shall burn shall come from one end of the brazier). The men and women whose feet slip, shall go rolling down into a place where is fear. And again while the fire that is prepared floweth, they mount up and fall down again and continue to roll down. (This suggests a narrow bridge over a stream of fire which they keep trying to cross.) Thus shall they be tormented for ever. These are they that honoured not their father and mother and of their own accord withheld (withdrew) themselves from them. Therefore shall they be chastised eternally.

Furthermore the angel Ezrael shall bring children and maidens to show them those that are tormented. They shall be chastised with pains, with hanging up (?) and with a multitude of wounds which flesh-devouring birds shall inflict upon them. These are they that boast themselves (trust) in their sins, and obey not their parents and follow not the instruction of their fathers, and honour not them that are more aged than they.

Beside them shall be girls clad in darkness for a garment and they shall be sore chastised and their flesh shall be torn in pieces. These are they that kept not their virginity until they were given in marriage, and with these torments shall they be punished, and shall feel them.

And again, other men and women, gnawing their tongues without ceasing, and being tormented with everlasting fire. These are the servants (slaves) which were not obedient unto their masters; and this then is their judgement for ever.

And hard by this place of torment shall be men and women dumb and blind, whose raiment is white. They shall crowd one upon another, and fall upon coals of unquenchable fire. These are they that give alms and say: We are righteous before God: whereas they have not sought after righteousness.

Ezrael the angel of God shall bring them forth out of this fire and establish a judgement of decision. This then is their judgement. A river of fire shall flow and all judgement (they that are judged) shall be drawn down into the middle of the river. And Uriel shall set them there.

**And there are wheels of fire and men and women hung thereon by the strength of the whirling thereof. And they that are in the pit shall burn: now these are the sorcerers and sorceresses. Those wheels shall be in a]l decision (judgement, punishment) by fire without number.**

**Thereafter shall the angels bring mine elect and righteous which are perfect in all uprightness, and bear them in their hands, and clothe them with the raiment of the life that is above. They shall see their desire on them that hated them, when he punisheth them, and the torment of every one shall be for ever according to his works.**

**And all they that are in torment shall say with one voice: have mercy upon us, for now know we the judgement of God, which he declared unto us aforetime, and we believed not. And the angel Tatirokos (Tartaruchus, keeper of hell: a word corresponding in formation to Temeluchus) shall come and chastise them with yet greater torment, and say unto them: Now do ye repent, when it is no longer the time for repentance, and nought of life remaineth. And they shall say: Righteous is the judgement of God, for we have heard and perceived that his judgement is good; for we are recompensed according to our deeds.**

**Then will I give unto mine elect and righteous the washing (baptism) and the salvation for which they have besought me, in the field of Akrosja (Acherousia, a lake in other writings, e.g. Apocalypse of Moses -where the soul of Adam is washed in it: see also Paul 22, 23) which is called Aneslasleja (Elysium). They shall adorn with flowers the portion of the righteous, and I shall go . . . I shall rejoice with them. I will cause the peoples to enter in to mine everlasting kingdom, and show them that eternal thing (life ?) whereon I have made them to set their hope, even I and my Father which is in heaven.**

**I have spoken this unto thee, Peter, and declared it unto thee. Go forth therefore and go unto the land (or city) of the west. (Duensing omits the next sentences as unintelligible; Grebaut and N. McLean render thus: and enter into the vineyard which I shall tell thee of, in order that by the sickness (sufferings) of the Son who is without sin the deeds of corruption may be sanctified. As for thee, thou art chosen according to the promise which I have given thee. Spread thou therefore my gospel throughout all the world in peace. Verily men shall rejoice: my words shall be the source of hope and of life, and suddenly shall the world be ravished.)**

**(We now have the section descriptive of paradise, which in the Akhmim text precedes that about hell.)**

**And my Lord Jesus Christ our King said unto me: Let us go unto the holy mountain. And his disciples went with him, praying. And behold there were two men there, and we could not look upon their faces, for a light came from them, shining more than the sun, and their rairment also was shining, and cannot be described, and nothing is sufficient to be compared unto them in this world. And**



the sweetness of them . . . that no mouth is able to utter the beauty of their appearance (or, the mouth hath not sweetness to express, &c.), for their aspect was astonishing and wonderful. And the other, great, I say (probably: and, in a word, I cannot describe it), shineth in his (sic) aspect above crystal. Like the flower of roses is the appearance of the colour of his aspect and of his body . . . his head (al. their head was a marvel). And upon his (their) shoulders (evidently something about their hair has dropped out) and on their foreheads was a crown of nard woven of fair flowers. As the rainbow in the water, [Probably: in the time of rain. From the LXX of Ezek.i.28.] so was their hair. And such was the comeliness of their countenance, adorned with all manner of ornament. And when we saw them on a sudden, we marvelled. And I drew near unto the Lord (God) Jesus Christ and said unto him: O my Lord, who are these? And he said unto me: They are Moses and Elias. And I said unto him: Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and the rest of the righteous fathers? And he showed us a great garden, open, full of fair trees and blessed fruits, and of the odour of perfumes. The fragrance thereof was pleasant and came even unto us. And thereof (al. of that tree) . . . saw I much fruit. And my Lord and God Jesus Christ said unto me: Hast thou seen the companies of the fathers?

As is their rest, such also is the honour and the glory of them that are persecuted for my righteousness' sake. And I rejoiced and believed [and believed] and understood that which is written in the book of my Lord Jesus Christ. And I said unto him: O my Lord, wilt thou that I make here three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias? And he said unto me in wrath: Satan maketh war against thee, and hath veiled thine understanding; and the good things of this world prevail against thee. Thine eyes therefore must be opened and thine ears unstopped that a tabernacle, not made with men's hands, which my heavenly Father hath made for me and for the elect. And we beheld it and were full of gladness.

And behold, suddenly there came a voice from heaven, saying: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased: my commandments. And then came a great and exceeding white cloud over our heads and bare away our Lord and Moses and Elias. And I trembled and was afraid: and we looked up and the heaven opened and we beheld men in the flesh, and they came and greeted our Lord and Moses and Elias and went into another heaven. And the word of the scripture was fulfilled: This is the generation that seeketh him and seeketh the face of the God of Jacob. And great fear and commotion was there in heaven and the angels pressed one upon another that the word of the scripture might be fulfilled which saith: Open the gates, ye princes.

Thereafter was the heaven shut, that had been open.

And we prayed and went down from the mountain, glorifying God, which hath written the names of the righteous in heaven in the book of life.

There is a great deal more of the Ethiopic text, but it is very evidently of later date; the next words are:

'Peter opened his mouth and said to me: Hearken, my son Clement, God created all things for his glory,' and this proposition is dwelt upon. The glory of those who duly praise God is described in terms borrowed from the Apocalypse: 'The Son at his coming will raise the dead . . . and will make my righteous ones shine seven times more than the sun, and will make their crowns shine like crystal and like the rainbow in the time of rain (crowns) which are perfumed with nard and cannot be contemplated (adorned) with rubies, with the colour of emeralds shining brightly, with topazes, gems, and yellow pearls that shine like the stars of heaven, and like the rays of the sun, sparkling which cannot be gazed upon.' Again, of the angels: ' Their faces shine more than the sun; their crowns are as the rainbow in the time of rain. (They are perfumed) with nard. Their eyes shine like the morning star. The beauty of their appearance cannot be expressed.... Their raiment is not woven, but white as that of the fuller, according as I saw on the mountain where Moses and Elias were. Our Lord showed at the transfiguration the apparel of the last days, of the day of resurrection, unto Peter, James and John the sons of Zebedee, and a bright cloud overshadowed us, and we heard the voice of the Father saying unto us: This is my Son whom I love and in whom I am well pleased: hear him. And being afraid we forgot all the things of this life and of the flesh, and knew not what we said because of the greatness of the wonder of that day, and of the mountain whereon he showed us the second coming in the kingdom that passeth not away.'

Next: ' The Father hath committed all judgement unto the Son.' The destiny of sinners -their eternal doom- is more than Peter can endure: he appeals to Christ to have pity on them.

And my Lord answered me and said to me: 'Hast thou understood that which I said unto thee before? It is permitted unto thee to know that concerning which thou askest: but thou must not tell that which thou hearest unto the sinners lest they transgress the more, and sin.' Peter weeps many hours, and is at last consoled by an answer which, though exceedingly diffuse and vague does seem to promise ultimate pardon for all: 'My Father will give unto them all the life, the glory, and the kingdom that passeth not away,' . . . 'It is because of them that have believed in me that I am come. It is also because of them that have believed in me, that, at their word, I shall have pity on men.

Ultimately Peter orders Clement to hide this revelation in a box, that foolish men may not see it.

We have not a pure and complete text of this book, which ranked next in popularity and probably also in date to the Canonical Apocalypse of St. John.

Below, is a fragment in Greek, called the Akhmim fragment, found with the Passion-fragment of the Gospel of Peter in a manuscript known as the Gizeh MS. (discovered in a tomb) now at Cairo:

## The Apocalypse Of Peter

### THE AKHMIM FRAGMENT

It begins abruptly in a discourse of our Lord.

**1 Many of them shall be false prophets, and shall teach ways and diverse doctrines of perdition. 2 And they shall become sons of perdition. 3 And then shall God come unto my faithful ones that hunger and thirst and are afflicted and prove their souls in this life, and shall judge the sons of iniquity.**

**4 And the Lord added and said: Let us go unto the mountain (and) pray. 5 And going with him, we the twelve disciples besought him that he would show us one of our righteous brethren that had departed out of the world, that we might see what manner of men they are in their form, and take courage, and encourage also the men that should hear us.**

**6 And as we prayed, suddenly there appeared two men standing before the Lord (perhaps add, to the east) upon whom we were not able to look. 7 For there issued from their countenance a ray as of the sun, and their raiment was shining so as the eye of man never saw the like: for no mouth is able to declare nor heart to conceive the glory wherewith they were clad and the beauty of their countenance. 8 Whom when we saw we were astonished, for their bodies were whiter than any snow and redder than any rose. 9 And the redness of them was mingled with the whiteness, and, in a word, I am not able to declare their beauty. 10 For their hair was curling and flourishing (flowery), and fell comely about their countenance and their shoulders like a garland woven of nard and various flowers, or like a rainbow in the air: such was their comeliness.**

**11 We, then, seeing the beauty of them were astonished at them, for they appeared suddenly. 12 And I drew near to the Lord and said: Who are these? 13 He saith to me: These are your (our) righteous brethren whose appearance ye did desire to see. 14 And I said unto him: And where are all the righteous? or of what sort is the world wherein they are, and possess this glory? 15 And the Lord showed me a very great region outside this world exceeding bright with light, and the air of that place illuminated with the beams of the sun, and the earth of itself flowering with blossoms that fade not, and full of spices and plants, fair-flowering and incorruptible, and bearing blessed fruit. 16 And so great was the blossom that the**

odour thereof was borne thence even unto us.

17 And the dwellers in that place were clad with the raiment of shining angels, and their raiment was like unto their land.

18 And angels ran round about them there. 19 And the glory of them that dwelt there was all equal, and with one voice they praised the Lord God, rejoicing in that place.

20 The Lord saith unto us: This is the place of your leaders (or, high priests), the righteous men.

21 And I saw also another place over against that one, very squalid; and it was a place of punishment, and they that were punished and the angels that punished them had their raiment dark, according to the air of the place. 22 And some there were there hanging by their tongues; and these were they that blasphemed the way of righteousness, and under them was laid fire flaming and tormenting them.

23 And there was a great lake full of flaming mire, wherein were certain men that turned away from righteousness; and angels, tormentors, were set over them.

24 And there were also others, women, hanged by their hair above that mire which boiled up; and these were they that adorned themselves for adultery.

And the men that were joined with them in the defilement of adultery were hanging by their feet, and had their heads hidden in the mire, and said: We believed not that we should come unto this place.

25 And I saw the murderers and them that were consenting to them cast into a strait place full of evil, creeping things, and smitten by those beasts, and so turning themselves about in that torment. And upon them were set worms like clouds of darkness. And the souls of them that were murdered stood and looked upon the torment of those murderers and said: O God, righteous is thy judgement.

26 And hard by that place I saw another strait place wherein the discharge and the stench of them that were in torment ran down, and there was as it were a lake there. And there sat women up to their necks in that liquor, and over against them many children which were born out of due time sat crying: and from them went forth rays of fire and smote the women in the eyes: and these were they that conceived out of wedlock (?) and caused abortion.

27 And other men and women were being burned up to their middle and cast down in a dark place and scourged by evil spirits, and having their entrails devoured by worms that rested not. And these were they that had persecuted the

righteous and delivered them up.

**28** And near to them again were women and men gnawing their lips and in torment, and having iron heated in the fire set against their eyes. And these were they that did blaspheme and speak evil of the way of righteousness.

**29** And over against these were yet others, men and women, gnawing their tongues and having flaming fire in their mouths. And these were the false witnesses.

**30** And in another place were gravel-stones sharper than swords or any spit, heated with fire, and men and women clad in filthy rags rolled upon them in torment. [This is suggested by the LXX of two passages in Job: xli. 30, his bed is of sharp spits; viii. 17, on an heap of stones doth he rest, and shall live in the midst of gravel-stones.] And these were they that were rich and trusted in their riches, and had no pity upon orphans and widows but neglected the commandments of God.

**31** And in another great lake full of foul matter (pus) and blood and boiling mire stood men and women up to their knees And these were they that lent money and demanded usury upon usury.

**32** And other men and women being cast down from a great rock (precipice) fell (came) to the bottom, and again were driven by them that were set over them, to go up upon the rock, and thence were cast down to the bottom and had no rest from this torment. And these were they that did defile their bodies behaving as women: and the women that were with them were they that lay with one another as a man with a woman.

**33** And beside that rock was a place full of much fire, and there stood men which with their own hands had made images for themselves instead of God, [And beside them other men and women] having rods of fire and smiting one another and never resting from this manner of torment....

**34** And yet others near unto them, men and women, burning and turning themselves about and roasted as in a pan. And these were they that forsook the way of God.

As the Savior was sitting in the temple in the three hundredth year of the covenant and the agreement of the tenth pillar, and being satisfied with the number of the living, incorruptible Majesty, he said to me ,

**" Peter, blessed are those above belonging to the Father, who revealed life to those who are from life, through me, since I reminded them, they who are built on what is strong, that they may hear my word, and distinguish words of unrighteousness and transgression of the law from righteousness, as being from the height of every word of this Pleroma of truth, having been enlightened in good pleasure by him whom the principalities sought. But they did not find him, nor was he mentioned among any generation of the prophets. He has now appeared among these, in him who appeared, who is the Son of Man who is exalted above the heavens in fear of men of like essence. But you yourself, Peter, become perfect in accordance with your name with myself, the one who chose you, because from you i established a base for the remnant whom I have summoned to knowledge. Therefore be strong until the imitation of righteousness - of him who had summoned you, having summoned you to know him in a way "whicheorth?-unknown" doing because of the rejection which happened to him , and the sinews of his hands and his feet, and the crowning by those of the middle region, and the body of his radiance which they bring in hope of service because of a reward of honor - as he was about to reprove you three times in this night".**

And as he was saying these things I saw the priests and the people running up to us with stones, as if they would kill us; and I was afraid that we were going to die.

And he said to me.

**"Peter, I have told you many times that they are blind ones who have no guide. If you want to know their blindness, put your hands before your eyes - your robe - and say what you see....."**

But when I had done it, I did not see anything. I said "No one sees this way"

And he said to me, "Do it again".

And there came in me fear with joy, for I saw a new light greater than the light of day. Then it came down upon the savior. And I told him about those things which I saw.

And he said to me again, "Lift up your hands and listen to what the priests and the people are saying"

And I listened to the priests as they sat with the scribes. The multitudes were shouting with their voice.

When he heard these things from me he said to me "prick up your ears and listen to the things they are saying." And I listened again, "As you sit, they are praising you".

And when I said these things , the Savior said "I have told you that these people are blind and deaf. Now then, listen to the things which they are telling you in a

mystery, and guard them, Do not tell them to the sons of this age. For they shall blaspheme you in these ages since they are ignorant of you, but they will praise you in knowledge"

"For many will accept our teaching in the beginning. And they will turn from them again by the will of the Father of their error, because they have done what he wanted. And he will reveal them in his judgment, i.e the servants of the Word. But those who became mingled with these shall become their prisoners, since they are without perception. And they praise the men of propagation of falsehood, those who will come after you. And they will cleave to the name of a dead man, thinking that they will become pure. But they will become greatly defiled and they will fall into a name of error, and into the hand of an evil, cunning man and a manifold dogma, and they will be ruled without law."

"For some of them will blaspheme the truth and proclaim evil teaching. And they will say evil things against each other. Some will be named: those who stand in the strength of the archons, of a man and a naked woman who is manifold and subject to much suffering. And those who say these things will ask about dreams. And if they say that a dream came from a demon worthy of their error, then they shall be given perdition instead of incorruption."

"For evil cannot produce good fruit. For the place from which each of them is produces that which is like itself; for not every soul is of the truth, nor of immortality. For every soul of these ages has death assigned to it in our view, and their eternal destruction, in which they are and from which they are. They love the creatures of the matter which came forth with them." "But the immortal souls are not like these, O Peter. But indeed, as long as the hour is not yet come, the immortal soul shall resemble the mortal one. But it shall not reveal its nature, that it alone is the immortal one, and thinks about immortality, having faith, and desiring to renounce these things". "For people do not gather figs from thorns or from thorn trees, if they are wise, nor grapes from thistles. For on the one hand, that which is always becoming is in that from which it is, being from what is not good, which becomes destruction for it and death. But that which comes to be in the Eternal One is in the One of the life and the immortality of the life which they resemble." "Therefore all that which exists not will dissolve into what exists not. For deaf and blind ones join only with their own kind." "But others shall change from evil words and misleading mysteries. Some who do not understand mystery speak of things which they do not understand, but they boast that the mystery of the truth is theirs alone. And in haughtiness they shall grasp at the pride to envy the immortal soul which has become a pledge. For every authority rule, and power of the aeons wishes to be with these in the creation of the world, in order that those who are not, having been forgotten by those that are, may praise them, though they have not been saved, nor have they been brought to the Way by them, always wishing that they may become imperishable ones. For if the immortal soul receives power in an intellectual spirit. But immediately they join with one of those who mislead them." "But many others, who oppose the truth and are the messengers of error, will set up their error and their

law against these pure thoughts of mine, as looking out from one perspective, thinking that good and evil are from one source. They do business in my word. And they will propagate harsh fate. The race of immortal souls will go in it in vain, until my Parousia. For they shall come out of them, and my forgiveness of their transgressions into which they fell through the adversaries, whose ransom I got from the slavery in which they were, to give them freedom that they may create an imitation remnant in the name of a dead man, who is Hermas, of the first-born of unrighteousness, in order that the light which exists may not be believed by the little ones. But those of this sort are the worker who will be cast into the outer darkness, away from the sons of light. For neither will they enter, nor do they permit those who are going up to their approval for their release."

"And still others of them who suffer think that they will perfect the wisdom of the brotherhood which really exists, which is the spiritual fellowship of those united in communion, through which the wedding of incorruptibility shall be revealed. The kindred race of the sisterhood will appear as an imitation. These are the ones who oppress their brothers, saying to them, "Through this our God has pity, since salvation comes to us through this", not knowing the punishments of those who are made glad by those who have done this thing to the little ones whom they saw, and whom they took prisoner."

"And there shall be others of those who are outside our number who name themselves bishop and also deacons, as if they have received their authority from God. They bend themselves under the judgment of the leaders. Those people are dry canals."

But I said " I am afraid because of what you have told me, that indeed little ones are, in our view, the counterfeit ones, indeed, that there are multitudes that will mislead other multitudes of living ones, and destroy them among themselves. And when they speak your name they will be believed." The Savior said, "For a time determined for them in proportion to their error they will rule over the little ones. And after the completion of the error, the never-aging one of the immortal understanding shall become young, and the little ones shall ruler over those who are their rulers. The root of their error he shall pluck out, and he shall put it to shame so that it shall be manifest in all the impudence which it has assumed to itself. And such ones shall become unchangeable, O Peter."

"Come therefore, let us go on with the completion of the will of the incorruptible Father. For behold, those who will bring them judgment are coming, and they will be put to shame. But me they cannot touch. And you, O Peter, shall stand in their midst. Do not be afraid because of your cowardice. Their minds shall be closed, for the invisible one has opposed them."



When he said those things, I saw him seemingly being seized by them. And I said "What do I see, O Lord, that it is you yourself whom they take, and that you are grasping me? Or who is this one, glad and laughing on the tree? And is it another one whose feet and hands they are striking?" The Savior said to me, "He whom you saw on the tree, glad and laughing, this is the living Jesus. But this one into whose hands and feet they drive the nails is his fleshly part, which is the substitute being put to shame, the one who came into being in his likeness. But look at him and me." But I, when I had looked, said "Lord, no one is looking at you. Let us flee this place." But he said to me, "I have told you, "Leave the blind alone!". And you, see how they do not know what they are saying. For the son of their glory instead of my servant, they have put to shame."

And I saw someone about to approach us resembling him, even him who was laughing on the tree. And he was filled with a Holy Spirit, and he is the Savior. And there was a great, ineffable light around them, and the multitude of ineffable and invisible angels blessing them. And when I looked at him, the one who gives praise was revealed.

And he said to me, "Be strong, for you are the one to whom these mysteries have been given, to know them through revelation, that he whom they crucified is the first-born, and the home of demons, and the stony vessel, in which they dwell, of Elohim, of the cross, which is under the Law. But he who stands near him is the living Savior, the first in him, whom they seized and released, who stands joyfully looking those who did him violence, while they are divided among themselves. Therefore he laughs at their lack of perception, knowing that they are born blind. So then the one susceptible to suffering shall come, since the body is the substitute. But what they released was my incorporeal body. But I am the intellectual Spirit filled with radiant light. He whom you saw coming to me is our intellectual Pleroma, which unites the perfect light with my Holy Spirit."

"These things, then, which you saw you shall present to those of another race who are not of this age. For there will be no honor in any man who is not immortal, which has shown that it is able to contain him who gives his abundance. Therefore I said, "Every one who has, it will be given to him, and he will have plenty, " But he who does not have that is, the man of this place, who is completely dead, who is removed from the planting of the creation of what is begotten, whom, if one of the immortal essence appears, they think that they possess him - it will be taken from him and be added to the one who is. You, therefore, be courageous and do not fear at all. For I shall be with you in order that none of your enemies may prevail unto you. Peace be to you, Be strong!"

When he had said these things, Peter came to himself.

# Gospel Of Peter

The early testimonies about this book have been set forth already. The present fragment was discovered in 1884 in a tomb at Akhmimin Egypt. The manuscript in which it is a little book containing a portion of the Book of Enoch in Greek, this fragment on the Passion and another, a description of Heaven and Hell, which is either (as I now think) a second fragment of the Gospel, or a piece of the Apocalypse of Peter. It will be given later under that head.

We have seen that the Gospel of Peter is quoted by writers of the latter end of the second century. It has been contended that Justin Martyr also used it soon after the middle of that century, but the evidence is not demonstrative. I believe it is not safe to date the book much earlier than A. D. 150.

It uses all four canonical Gospels, and is the earliest uncanonical account of the Passion that exists. It is not wholly orthodox: for it throws doubt on the reality of the Lord's sufferings, and by consequence upon the reality of his human body. In other words it is, as Serapion of Antioch indicated, of a Docetic character.

## FRAGMENT I

**I. 1 But of the Jews no man washed his hands, neither did Herod nor any one of his judges: and whereas they would not 2 wash, Pilate rose up. And then Herod the king commanded that the Lord should be taken into their hands, saying unto them: All that I commanded you to do unto him, do ye**

**II. 3 Now there stood there Joseph the friend of Pilate and of the Lord, and he, knowing that they were about to crucify him, came unto Pilate and begged the body of Jesus for burial. And Pilate sending unto Herod, begged his body. 5 And Herod said: Brother Pilate, even if none had begged for him, we should have buried him, since also the Sabbath dawneth; for it is written in the law that the sun should not set upon one that hath been slain (murdered).**

**III. 6 And he delivered him unto the people before the first day of (or on the day before the) unleavened bread, even their feast. And they having taken the Lord pushed him as they ran, and said: Let us hale the Son of God, now that 7 we have gotten authority over him. And they put on him a purple robe, and made him sit upon the seat of judgement, 8 saying: Give righteous judgement, thou King of Israel. And one of them brought a crown of thorns and set it upon the 9 Lord's head; and others stood and did spit in his eyes, and others buffeted his cheeks; and others did prick him with a reed, and some of them scourged him, saying With this honour let us honour (or at this price let us value) the son of God.**

**IV. 10** And they brought two malefactors, and crucified the 11 Lord between them. But he kept silence, as one feeling no pain. And when they set the cross upright, they wrote 12 thereon: This is the King of Israel. And they laid his garments before him, and divided them among themselves and 13 cast the lot upon them. But one of those malefactors reproached them, saying: We have thus suffered for the evils which we have done; but this man which hath become the 14 saviour of men, wherein hath he injured you? And they were wroth with him, and commanded that his legs should not be broken, that so he might die in torment.

**V. 15** Now it was noonday, and darkness prevailed over all Judaea: and they were troubled and in an agony lest the sun should have set, for that he yet lived: for it is written for them that the sun should not set upon him that hath been 16 slain (murdered). And one of them said: Give ye him to drink gall with vinegar: and they mingled it and gave him 17 to drink: and they fulfilled all things and accomplished 18 their sins upon their own heads. And many went about with 19 lamps, supposing that it was night: and some fell. And the Lord cried out aloud saying: My power, my power, thou hast forsaken me. And when he had so said, he was taken up.

**20** And in the same hour was the veil of the temple of Jerusalem rent in two.

**VI. 21** And then they plucked the nails from the hands of the Lord and laid him upon the earth: and the whole earth was shaken, and there came a great fear on all.

**22** Then the sun shone forth, and it was found to be the ninth 23 hour. And the Jews rejoiced, and gave his body unto Joseph to bury it, because he had beheld all the good things which 24 he did. And he took the Lord and washed him and wrapped him in linen and brought him unto his own sepulcher, which is called the Garden of Joseph.

**VII. 25** Then the Jews and the elders and the priests, when they perceived how great evil they had done themselves, began to lament and to say: Woe unto our sins: the judgment and the end of Jerusalem is drawn nigh.

**26** But I with my fellows was in grief, and we were wounded in our minds and would have hid ourselves; for we were sought after by them as malefactors, and as thinking to set 27 the temple on fire. And beside all these things we were fasting, and we sat mourning and weeping night and day until the Sabbath.

**VIII. 28** But the scribes and Pharisees and elders gathered one with another, for they had heard that all the people were murmuring and beating their breasts, saying: If these very great signs have come to pass at his death, behold how 29 righteous he was. And the elders were afraid and came unto 30 Pilate, entreating him and saying: Give us soldiers that we (or they) may watch his sepulchre for three days, lest his disciples come and steal him away and the people suppose 31

that he is risen from the dead, and do us hurt. And Pilate gave them Petronius the centurion with soldiers to watch the sepulchre; and the elders and scribes came with them unto 32 the tomb, and when they had rolled a great stone to keep out (al. together with) the centurion and the soldiers, then all 33 that were there together set it upon the door of the tomb; and plastered thereon seven seals; and they pitched a tent there and kept watch.

**IX. 34** And early in the morning as the Sabbath dawned, there came a multitude from Jerusalem and the region roundabout to see the sepulchre that had been sealed.

**35** Now in the night whereon the Lord's day dawned, as the soldiers were keeping guard two by two in every watch, **36** there came a great sound in the heaven, and they saw the heavens opened and two men descend thence, shining with (lit. having) a great light, and drawing near unto the sepulchre. **37** And that stone which had been set on the door rolled away of itself and went back to the side, and the sepulchre was

**X. 38** opened and both of the young men entered in. When therefore those soldiers saw that, they waked up the centurion and the elders (for they also were there keeping **39** watch); and while they were yet telling them the things which they had seen, they saw again three men come out of the sepulchre, and two of them sustaining the other (lit. the **40** one), and a cross following, after them. And of the two they saw that their heads reached unto heaven, but of him that **41** was led by them that it overpassed the heavens. And they **42** heard a voice out of the heavens saying: Hast thou (or Thou hast) preached unto them that sleep? And an answer was heard from the cross, saying: Yea.

**XI. 43** Those men therefore took counsel one with another to go and report these things unto Pilate. And while they yet thought thereabout, again the heavens were opened and a **45** man descended and entered into the tomb. And they that were with the centurion (or the centurion and they that were with him) when they saw that, hastened to go by night unto Pilate and left the sepulchre whereon they were keeping watch, and told all that they had seen, and were in great agony, saying: Of a truth he was the son of God.

**46** Pilate answered and said: I am clear from the blood of **47** the son of God, but thus it seemed good unto you. Then all they came and besought him and exhorted him to charge the centurion and the soldiers to tell nothing of that they had **48** seen: For, said they, it is expedient for us to incur the greatest sin before God, rather than to (and not to) fall into **49** the hands of the people of the Jews and to be stoned. Pilate therefore charged the centurion and the soldiers that they should say nothing.

**XII. 50** Now early on the Lord's day Mary Magdalene, a disciple (fem.) of the Lord-which, being afraid because of the Jews, for they were inflamed with anger, had

not performed at the sepulchre of the Lord those things which women are accustomed to do unto them that die and are 51 beloved of them—took with her the women her friends and 52 came unto the tomb where he was laid. And they feared lest the Jews should see them, and said: Even if we were not able to weep and lament him on that day whereon he was 53 crucified, yet let us now do so at his tomb. But who will roll away for us the stone also that is set upon the door of the tomb, that we may enter in and sit beside him and perform 54 that which is due? for the stone was great, and we fear lest any man see us. And if we cannot do so, yet let us cast down at the door these things which we bring for a memorial of him, and we will weep and lament until we come unto our house.

XIII. 55 And they went and found the sepulchre open : and they drew near and looked in there, and saw there a young man sitting in the midst of the sepulchre, of a fair countenance and clad in very bright raiment, which said unto them: 56 Wherefore are ye come? whom seek ye? not him that was crucified? He is risen and is departed; but if ye believe it not, look in and see the place where he lay, that he is not here: for he is risen and is departed thither whence he was sent. 57 Then the women were affrighted and fled.

XV. 58 Now it was the last day of unleavened bread, and many were coming forth of the city and returning unto their 59 own homes because the feast was at an end. But we, the twelve disciples of the Lord, were weeping and were in sorrow, and each one being grieved for that which had befallen 60 departed unto his own house. But I, Simon Peter, and Andrew my brother, took our nets and went unto the sea: and there was with us Levi the son of Alphaeus, whom the Lord (For Fragment II see Apocalypse of Peter.)