

THE Gnostic GOSPEL OF LUKE: A Gnostic-HERMETIC EXEGESIS OF THE TENTH CHAPTER OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

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In this essay, I will attempt to show that the tenth chapter of the *Gospel According to Luke* contains elements of Gnostic and Hermetic philosophy, including a Græco-Egyptian astrological tradition. Among the canonical scriptures, the *Gospel According to John* is usually considered to be the one favored by the Gnostics. This idea has been written on extensively. Therefore, I will not elaborate upon what is readily available in multiple works. But, it is nevertheless important to at least mention this fact, because of the far reaching influence of the Johannine works on Gnostic tradition and scriptures. For example, the prologue to the gospel contains peculiar language that is not common to the synoptic gospels, but is more reminiscent of Gnostic scriptures. The *Gospel of John* also emphasizes the spiritual nature of Jesus, and stresses the supremacy of the spiritual over the material. This is made obvious in statements such as *John* 6.63a: "It is the spirit that makes a thing live. The flesh benefits nothing." The *Gospel According to Luke*, however, while conforming largely to the gospel narratives found in *Matthew* and *Mark*, also contains a number of unique sayings and parables that suggest a secret knowledge that is to be bestowed upon God's elect, using language that would have been recognized by Gnostics and Hermeticists. Of course, to the Gnostics, and other Christian mystics, all of the scriptures may have multiple layers of meaning which, when taken together collectively, may offer a broader, richer, and fuller understanding of the text than what might be immediately apparent on the surface. And perhaps we should not be surprised to find evidence of Gnostic mysticism within Luke's writings, especially given his close companionship with Paul, whose teachings were highly valued by the early Gnostics, and whose writings share much of the same terminology as the Gnostics. In fact, concerning the great Gnostic teacher Valentinus, Elaine Pagels writes, "Paul communicated his pneumatic teaching to his disciple Theudas, and Theudas, in turn, to Valentinus; and Valentinus to his own disciples."¹ In addition, if we accept that Luke was a physician, a commonly held view, then we may probably safely assume that he had studied the Hermetic texts over the course of his education, as many of those works were known to have dealt extensively with medicine and healing; particularly,² "tracts on astrological medicine, such as the *Book of Asclepius Called Myriogenesis*."

Let me be clear at the outset that this is primarily a Gnostic theological work, though it may have some academic implications as well. The ancient Gnostics were arguably the Church's first theological exegetes. In modern times, however, it has been left largely to the secular academia to provide insight into a belief system that they themselves do not necessarily share. To be sure, many excellent works have been produced by the academic community, and I do not wish to diminish their efforts in any way. There are some excellent historical works available, and without the superb translation efforts of the last several decades, most of the original Gnostic scriptures would still be lost to us. On the other hand, the modern Gnostic cannot help but to notice a deficiency in some of the commentaries and attempts at exegesis. This deficiency is not due to poor scholarship; rather, it is due to the fact that they are written from an outside perspective, trying to make sense of a religious tradition that, by its very nature, can only

be understood experientially. While it is my intention to present scholarly and reasonable hypotheses, I do not want to mislead the reader by supposing some impartiality, or theological neutrality, that does not exist. In spite of my admitted bias, however, I think that there is ample evidence to support the bulk of my ideas in those cases where empirical, or strong circumstantial evidence, may confirm or support the hypothesis.

The structure of this essay is as follows: After this brief introduction, the first part of our exegesis will cover *Luke* 10.1-24, followed by a second section addressing verses 25-37. These two sections comprise the main body of this work. Finally, the conclusion will attempt to anticipate certain questions, and to briefly survey other sections of *Luke* and place them in a Gnostic context consistent with the analysis offered in the main body. The reader may notice that the first section of this exegesis is disproportionately longer than the second section. This imbalance is regrettable, but necessary due to the natural divisions of the text. In the early stages of the development of this exegesis, these two sections existed as two separate essays. It seemed beneficial, however, to combine them into a single work. It is only by treating them together that a comprehensive conclusion may be offered. For, without placing these passages in a proper context, the analyses offered herein may be seen as anomalous, or could too easily be dismissed as fanciful speculation. A scriptural anomaly might be interesting to comment upon, but would not necessarily demand a rigorous investigation. What I intend to show here is that there is a pattern of esoteric symbolism scattered throughout *Luke*, but especially concentrated in the tenth chapter.

Translations of New Testament texts throughout this essay are my own, being translated from the *Greek New Testament*, Fourth Corrected Edition (UBS4)³ which contains the same text as the *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th Edition (NA27), which was also consulted throughout the translation process. The translations found here are not substantially different from many others, but they do illustrate certain variances among the source texts, and certain wording that lends itself more easily to the type of exegetical treatment that is to follow.

This first passage from *Luke* that I have selected for this paper is perhaps the most overlooked example of Gnostic and Hermetic philosophy among the canonical scriptures. I believe that this oversight may be largely due to the available translations of the Greek text, which seem to favor a particular variation of the text that does not lend itself as well to the interpretation that is to be put forth here shortly. I must admit, however, that I am surprised that (to my knowledge), this subject matter has not been addressed by scholars and students of early Christian literature who are familiar with the Greek sources. It is equally possible, of course, that there are such extant works, of which I am merely ignorant. Regardless, I hope that this brief treatise can offer a fresh perspective on the matter. Here, then, is the *Gospel According to Luke*, 10.1-24:

¹And after these things, the Lord appointed seventy-two others, and he sent them two by two before his face into every city and place where he was about to go. ²And he was saying to them, "Indeed, the harvest is great, but the workers few; ask then, the Lord of the harvest that he might send out workers into his harvest. ³Go! Behold, I send you as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴Do not carry a purse, nor a wallet, nor sandals, and greet no one along the way. ⁵And into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house,' ⁶And if there is a son of peace, your peace will rest upon him; otherwise, on you

it will return.⁷ And in the same house remain eating and drinking the things with them; for the worker is worthy of his wage. Do not move from house to house.⁸ And into whichever city you enter and they receive you, eat the things being set before you⁹ and heal the ones in it who are sick and say to them, "The Kingdom of God has come near to you."¹⁰ But into whatever city you enter and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say,¹¹ "Even the dust from your city that has clung to our feet we shake off against you; but know this that the Kingdom of God has come near."¹² I say to you that for Sodom in that day it will be more bearable than with that city.¹³ Woe to you Chorazin, woe to you Bethsaida; because if the miracles that have happened in you had occurred in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.¹⁴ But for Tyre and Sidon it will be more bearable in the judgment than for you.¹⁵ And you Capernaum, will you not be exalted up to heaven? No, you will come down to Hades."

¹⁶ "The one listening to you, listens to me, and the one rejecting you rejects me; but the one rejecting me, rejects the one who has sent me."

¹⁷ And the seventy-two returned with joy saying, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."¹⁸ And he said to them, "I watched Satan fall like lightning from heaven.¹⁹ Behold, I have given to you the authority to walk on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the adversary, and nothing at all may hurt you.²⁰ However, do not rejoice in this that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names have been recorded in the heavens."

²¹ In the same hour he was full of joy in the Holy Spirit and he said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you concealed these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to young children; yes, Father, for thus it was well-pleasing before you.²² Everything was handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son and to whom the Son wishes to reveal Him."

²³ And having turned toward the disciples privately he said, "Blessed are the eyes seeing what you see.²⁴ For I say to you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see and they did not see, and to hear what you hear and they did not hear."

You will notice in the very first verse of this chapter a small, but significant, difference from other translations. I am referring specifically to the statement that, "the Lord appointed seventy-two others." Most translations read "seventy," rather than "seventy-two." The reason for this seems to be due to a discrepancy among the ancient manuscripts; some reading "seventy," while others having "seventy-two." The text I have translated from, the *Greek New Testament* (UBS4) is considered by many students of New Testament (Koine) Greek to be the foremost edition. This edition contains the Greek, "hebdomekonta duo," that is, "seventy-two." Likewise, the Latin *Nova Vulgata* (Stuttgart Vulgate, Fourth Edition) contains, "septuaginta duos."⁴ I stress this point because much of my argument, as you will see, is dependent upon this particular reading of the text. Taken at face value, it really makes little difference which interpretation is used. But, when we apply the "seventy-two" reading, mystical depths are opened up to us.

It is entirely possible, and in my opinion probable, that "seventy-two" was at some point abbreviated to "seventy," either for convenience, or by inadvertent omission.

The abbreviation of "seventy-two" into "seventy" would not be unique to this particular passage. For example, the legend regarding the development of the Septuagint states that the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek by seventy-two scholars, over a period of seventy-two days. However, the word "Septuagint" comes from the Latin, meaning "seventy." And when the Septuagint is referenced in academic works, it is usually represented by the Latin numerals for seventy, "LXX."⁵ While this usage may have been adopted for convenience, it loses the numerological significance of the number seventy-two.

In the number seventy-two, we see an allusion to the Jewish tradition that there were seventy-two nations with seventy-two different languages in the world. Therefore, the seventy-two disciples are representatives of the whole of the known world, and thus representative of the Universal Kingdom of Christ; that is, the Church. As we shall see, though, this symbolism of universality extends far beyond the four corners of the Earth. The unique wording and peculiar phraseology of this passage suggests that the reign of Christ's power extends throughout the whole of the cosmos. The number seventy-two also suggests a connection to Jewish mystical and numerological traditions, such as the Schemhamphorasch (the 72 names of God derived from Exodus 14:19-21), and the sum of the values of the Hebrew letters⁶ of the Tetragrammaton when they are arranged in the style of the Pythagorean tetractys. However, while these traditions are not wholly unrelated to the subject at hand, a more in depth exploration of them lies outside the scope of the present work.

The seventy-two disciples are sent out in pairs, so that there are thirty-six groups of two. These thirty-six pairs suggest a connection to the thirty-six decans of Egyptian astrology. In the introduction to his translation of the *Hermetica*, Brian P. Copenhaver writes, "The most important of the astrological Hermetica known to us is the *Liber Hermetis*, a Latin text whose Greek original contained elements traceable to the third century BCE. This *Book of Hermes* describes the decans, a peculiarly Egyptian way of dividing the zodiacal circle into thirty-six compartments, each with its own complex of astrological attributes."⁷ The decans are called so because they each represent ten degrees of the zodiacal circle. The 20th century scholar of mystical and esoteric philosophical traditions, Manly P. Hall, has described it thus: "The early star gazers, after dividing the zodiac into its houses, appointed the three brightest stars in each constellation to be the joint rulers of that house. Then they divided the house into three sections of ten degrees each, which they called decans."⁸ (In a certain form of the Egyptian calendar, this translated into twelve months, each month having three ten-day weeks. At the end of the 360-day year, there were five additional days that corresponded to certain principal Egyptian deities, and lied outside of the calendar year proper.) Even the philosophical Hermetica, such as *Asclepius* (which was quoted from liberally by early Church Fathers such as Lactantius in his *Divine Institutes*⁹ in defense of Christian doctrine) acknowledges, "the thirty-six...the stars that are always fixed in the same place."¹⁰

We may find similar references in early Gnostic writings as well. For example, in the proto-Sethian text, *Eugnostos the Blessed*, we read, "Then the twelve powers...consented with each other. Six males each and six females each were revealed, so that there are seventy-two powers. Each one of the seventy-two revealed five spiritual powers, which together are the three hundred sixty powers."¹¹ This establishes a pattern

in the spiritual realm, which is later imitated in the physical cosmos. This pattern is confirmed further on in *Eugnostos*, "The twelve months came to be as the type of the twelve powers. The three hundred sixty days of the year¹² came to be as the type of the three hundred sixty powers who appeared from Savior." As explained previously, this type of calendar system is uniquely Egyptian; a fact that does not go unnoticed by Douglas M. Parrott, the translator of the *Eugnostos* text. For he comments in his introduction to the text, "Egyptian religious thought also appears to have influenced its picture of the supercelestial realm."¹³

Another early Gnostic example of this type of cosmology may be found in the *Gospel of Judas*, in a discourse of Jesus to Judas which states, "And the twelve aeons of the twelve luminaries constitute their Father, with six heavens for each aeon, so that there are 72 heavens for the 72 luminaries, and for each of them five firmaments, for a total of 360 firmaments."¹⁴ This reference is also noticed by Bart D. Ehrman in his analysis of the *Judas* text, wherein he draws a connection to a variation of the same Egyptian tradition previously mentioned. His analysis states in part, "These numbers are not accidental, of course. The text doesn't explain them, but they appear to be astronomical references: there are twelve months of the year and twelve signs of the zodiac; in Egyptian lore there are seventy-two 'pentads' (stars) that reside over the days of the week, and so seventy-two luminaries; and there are 360 degrees in the zodiac (and 360 days in some calendars of the year) and so 360 firmaments."¹⁵

The numbers seventy-two and thirty-six are, by themselves, enough to consider a likely astrological connection. For, we have seen that the pattern for the decans was present in the Aeons, or eternal realms. To the Gnostics, though, the physical cosmos is not a direct emanation of the Most High, as the Aeons are, but instead have been fashioned by an imperfect demiurge. Therefore, the decans of the material world are but imperfect reflections; shadowy images of their supercelestial counterparts, requiring the purification and perfection that can be brought only by the Son, whom we are told in the *Letter to the Hebrews* is, "appointed heir of all things, through whom He also made the Aeons." Granted, the occurrence of these numbers here could be coincidental, or lack the specific implications that I am suggesting. But, fortunately, we have additional clues throughout the passage that make the possibility of mere coincidence seem much less likely. Looking at verses 5-7 we find further curious language, suggestive of an astrological connection. The thirty-six pairs are instructed to take up residence in various "houses," to offer peace upon the inhabitants of each house, and to "not move from house to house." Anyone with even a passing familiarity with astrology will recognize that "house" is a term used to designate each of the twelve major divisions of the zodiac circle. And, according to Gnostic and Hermetic sources, the inhabitants, or rulers, of the zodiac are demons, or spirits, that influence the lives of humans. The fact that verse 6 mentions, "if there are sons of peace," would seem to indicate that there may be a number of "sons" who are not "of peace." Also, the use of the term "sons" in verse 6 should not be seen as arbitrary. Referring again to Copenhaver, he states, "Excerpt VI [of Stobaeus'

*Anthology*¹⁶ deals with astrology, in particular with the decans and their 'sons,' the star] demons." For one description of these demons of the zodiac, we may look to the pseudo-Solomonic grimoire, *The Testament of Solomon*, which has a number of similarities to other Gnostic, Hermetic, and Jewish magical texts of the period, and which may well have been in circulation in some form at the time *Luke* was written. In the

Testament of Solomon, Solomon compels the demons of the zodiac to help build his temple. When he calls them forth, they announce, "We are the thirty-six elements, the world-rulers of this darkness."¹⁷ When he begins to interrogate the demons, the first says, "I am the first decans of the zodiac circle."¹⁸ Solomon continues to question each of the thirty-six, causing each to reveal its name, its powers, and its weaknesses. The powers of these demons include a broad range of nefarious acts; from leading people into error and heresy, to breaking up the harmony among families, to causing blindness and deafness in unborn children. The banishing of the demons typically consists of invoking certain divine or angelic names, and performing certain ritual actions. After subjugating the entire assembly, Solomon sets them to work at building his temple. The idea is that the possessor of this grimoire will likewise be able to compel the spirits. But if this is the power of Solomon, how much greater is the power of Christ, who is known throughout the scriptures as one "greater than Solomon?"¹⁹ Indeed, as great as the power of Solomon was, when he fell into apostasy, "At once the Spirit of God departed from me, and I became weak as well as foolish in my words."²⁰ As we will see, Christ's power over the world-rulers will be perfect, complete, and unlike Solomon, eternal.

In verses 8 and 9, Jesus indicates that those archons that do not resist the messengers of Christ should be treated respectfully, and that their sickness should be healed. Their sickness, of course, is their spiritual darkness, or ignorance. And while those zodiacal rulers may never be granted access into the realms of eternal light and life, since their origin is with the demiurge, rather than the True God of Light, they may still occupy an exalted position in the cosmos, and help to bring Christ's love into the world, and into the hearts of men. Verses 10-16, on the other hand, constitute an admonishment and warning to all those who would oppose the power of Christ.²¹ The message to them is that God's reign will extend throughout the cosmos, with or without their cooperation; and that if they choose to resist, they will, by their own actions, remove themselves from the grace of Christ.

In verse 17 we learn that the seventy-two (thirty-six pairs) have been successful. They are full of joy and declare, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." Given our elaboration on the nature of the decans, this statement takes on a richer, and clearer meaning. The explanation offered in this analysis casts light on an otherwise vague and cryptic statement. That is, given our celestial / spiritual interpretation, their ordeal has been nothing less than the subjugation of the entire assembly of the "world-rulers." Since these demons control and influence the personalities and affairs of humanity, then we can see that the disciples' ordeals actually represent the mastery of self as much as they represent mastery over external forces. So, the joy of the disciples is due to the fact that, through Christ, they have attained to a perfect understanding of the order of things, and thus have learned to overcome their lower, sinful natures.

Jesus' reply in verse 18 is equally as cryptic, claiming to have "watched Satan fall like lightning from heaven." The very nature of this statement suggests that we are not dealing with real-time events here. Depictions of the fall of Satan are generally placed in the "beginning," or at the "end of days." Since Christ is the "Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end,"²² we can say that His position is above, or outside of, our normal space-time experience. That is, the fall of Satan is not a fixed point in space-time, but rather an event occurring in perpetuity. To the Christian faithful, the fall of Satan is seen from a relative perspective. To those who reject Christ and His

message, the Devil is lording above them, and ruling their world. But those who, through the grace of Christ, have found the knowledge of the Father, and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, are raised above the adversarial powers. So to them, from their particular vantage point, Satan is seen to fall.

Let us take a look at some of the Gnostic scriptures for similar accounts of the adversary and his fall; in this case, the demiurge, Yaldabaoth. In the *Reality of the Rulers* (or *Hypostasis of the Archons*), we read of such a fall, "She [Zoe] breathed into his face,

and her breath became a fiery angel for her; and that²³ angel bound Yaldabaoth and cast him down into Tartaros, at the bottom of the abyss." Then, a bit further down, we read about one of Yaldabaoth's "sons" who rejects evil: "He [Sabaoth] loathed her [matter], but he sang songs of praise up to Sophia and her daughter Zoe. And Sophia and Zoe found him and put him in charge of the seventh heaven, below the veil between above and below."²⁴ Thus, this "son of peace" has been elevated because of his righteousness, and his rejection of the things of this world. In *On the Origin of the World*, there is yet another account of Sabaoth's worship of Sophia, who raises him up to the seventh sphere and, with the aid of archangels, "established the kingdom for him above everyone so that he might dwell above the twelve gods of chaos."²⁵ These "twelve gods of chaos" are the principal zodiacal archons created by Yaldabaoth in the *Secret Book of John*,²⁶ and in other Gnostic sources.

Returning now to our passage in *Luke*, Jesus continues to address the seventy-two who have returned. In the reference to "snakes and scorpions" we have symbols of the adversary, and of death itself. But, we also see what seems to be yet another astrological reference, indicating well-known constellations. With Draco in the Northern Hemisphere, and Scorpius in the Southern Hemisphere, together they can be seen to represent the poles of the cosmos. This authority given to the disciples to "walk on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the adversary," suggests an elevation over the planetary and zodiacal influences, and is strikingly similar to the elevation of Sabaoth over the powers of the demiurge and his archons. This verse also reminds us of Solomon's subjugation of the demons discussed earlier and, together with verse 21, bears a strong resemblance in wording to the following passage from *The Testament of Solomon*: "And when I saw the prince of demons [Beelzeboul], I glorified the Lord God, Maker of heaven and earth, and I said: 'Blessed art thou, Lord God Almighty, who hast given to Solomon thy servant wisdom, the assessor of the wise, and hast subjected unto me all the power of the devil.'"²⁷

It is also possible that rather than referring to two separate constellations, that both the snake and the scorpion are referring to the zodiacal sign of Scorpio. According to Manly P. Hall, the sign of Scorpio, "has three different symbols," or forms. The first is that of the Scorpion, representing, "deceit and perversion." The second form is that of the Serpent, "often used by the ancients to symbolize wisdom." The third form, interestingly, is that of the Eagle, representing, "the highest and most spiritual type of Scorpio, in which it transcends the venomous insects of the earth."²⁸ In this sense, then, it becomes a symbol of the process of initiation: the Scorpion symbolizing that degree, or stage, of initiation wherein the passions are subdued, which begins the process of the purification of the soul; the Serpent representing the stage of growth and maturation, wherein various knowledge is accumulated, though largely of a material or temporal sort; and finally the Eagle, which is not named here, but whose presence would be implied to

the initiated reader. The Eagle represents the completion of the initiation process, where the spiritually perfected initiate is raised up above all worldly things, and all temporal knowledge.

Even if we were to concede that *Luke* is the more ancient of the texts (which is not at all certain), and that the Gnostic and Hermetic authors were influenced by Luke, rather than the other way around, it is nevertheless clear that the Gnostic and Hermetic authors would have seen in this account, an allusion to the spirits of the zodiac. The Valentinian Gnostics certainly recognized a compatible theology here, since we read in the "Valentinian Liturgical Readings," a direct reference to verse 19: "It is fitting for you at this time to send your son Jesus the Anointed and anoint us, so we can trample on snakes and the heads of scorpions and all the power of the devil, since He is the shepherd of the seed."²⁹ Verse 20 concludes Jesus' discussion with the seventy-two by reminding them that their true reward is not the ability to compel spirits, but rather that they have had their place in the eternal realms secured for them by his grace; that is, the divine gnosis.

Verses 21 and 22 constitute a prayer of Jesus to the Father.³⁰ This prayer reinforces the concept of Jesus as the revealer of divine knowledge, or gnosis. That the Father has, "concealed these things from the wise and intelligent," indicates that this special knowledge can be gained neither through philosophical reasoning, nor through academic pursuits, but only by "young children;" that is, those who have been reborn in the spirit. It is made clear in verse 22 that this knowledge of God is revealed through the Son, to whom he pleases. The idea of a secret or hidden knowledge, revealed only to the elect, is carried over in verses 23-24.³¹ The fact that Jesus is speaking to his disciples privately is a further indication that He is imparting a special knowledge, not intended for the multitude. In Verse 24, the "prophets and kings" refer to those who seek power and glory from a sense of self-importance, and those who have incomplete, or imperfect knowledge. To them, the real power, and the true knowledge is not given. But to those who come as little children, to them is given the Kingdom of God.

This completes, then this first section of our interpretive analysis of the tenth chapter of *Luke*. It is, however, far from being the final word on the subject. Of the several points addressed here, many have merely skimmed the surface, and a number of questions remain unanswered. For example, why was this allegory devised to begin with? Is this an historical account or teaching of Jesus? Or is it an invention of the author of *Luke*? Perhaps it is a bit of both. As the reader will have undoubtedly noticed, this passage bears an uncanny resemblance to the accounts given in *Mark* 6.7-11, *Matthew* 10, and *Luke* 9.1-6, of Jesus sending out the twelve Apostles, as well as similarities to various other scriptural elements as noted throughout this exegetical work. Why were these various elements put together in this way? Perhaps the author of *Luke* drew a connection between the twelve Apostles and the twelve houses of the zodiac, then reworked the account in order to stress this connection, and to elaborate on the premise using Gnostic and Hermetic literature and traditions that would have been well-known to the literate, Greek-speaking world at that time. Perhaps this allegory comes to us from some other source, now lost. For now, we can only speculate as to the origin of this passage. I think we can be fairly certain, though, that this Gnostic-Hermetic, astrological connection is real and not merely coincidental. The unique and specific language that is used throughout the passage gives us a preponderance of evidence that cannot be easily

dismissed. After our analysis of the second section of *Luke* 10, perhaps we can return to some of these questions and gain a better understanding and insight into the inner workings of this enigmatic gospel.

Before continuing, let me recap some of the major points of this analysis thus far:

- The seventy-two are sent out in thirty-six pairs, corresponding to the thirty-six decans of Egyptian astrology.
- The "houses" referred to are the twelve houses of the zodiac.
- The "sons" are the star demons of the Hermeticists, the Archons of the Gnostics, and the thirty-six world-rulers of the *Testament of Solomon*.
- Sabaoth, in Gnostic mythology, is one of the "sons of peace" who renounced evil. □ Jesus watching Satan fall is further evidence that this entire passage is dealing with celestial and spiritual events.
- The "authority to walk on snakes and scorpions" refers to the elevation of the disciples above the powers of the planetary and zodiacal rulers; and the disciples' ability to cause said rulers to submit to them in the name of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus' prayer to the Father in verses 21-22 shows Jesus in the role of the "revealer of gnosis."
- Jesus' private discussion indicates that the disciples have received a special, or secret knowledge, reserved for God's elect.

The next section of this essay deals with *Luke* 10.15-37, which contains the parable of the "Good Samaritan." You will notice that this section is less academic in nature, and more strictly theological. This is due, in part, to the fact that we do not have to wrestle with the complex astrological symbolism contained in the first section. The parable of the Good Samaritan lends itself to a fairly straight forward Gnostic interpretation. That is, if we approach the story from a traditional Gnostic perspective, we will see that there is a message beyond the moral admonishment to judge people by who they actually are, and what they do, rather than by our preconceptions of them. Even the lessons of selflessly helping those who are in need are, at best, incomplete. The moral message is no doubt useful; but from a Gnostic perspective, it is the lesser meaning. The greater meaning of this parable concerns the salvation of the spirit from its hylic imprisonment.

In order for the reader to have a greater appreciation for a Gnostic interpretation of the text, I will give a very brief description of Gnostic ontology and soteriology. While some details differ among the various Gnostic schools of thought (Valentinian, Sethian, etc.) they mostly agree upon certain foundational premises. First of all, regarding the nature of human existence, Gnostics view man as having three bodies, or conditions of being. The Spiritual, or pneumatic, body is the part of man that is pure and incorruptible; the Vital Life Force that animates the psychic and hylic bodies. The pneumatic body descended from the original spiritual fullness (Pleroma), and seeks a return to its divine origin. The material, or hylic, body comes not from the True God, but from the imperfect demiurgic creator of the cosmos. The hylic body is often compared to a prison because it binds and conceals the pneumatic spark. The soul, or psychic body, resembles a comingling of the hylic and pneumatic bodies. The psychic body contains the passions as well as reasoning; thoughts as well as feelings. The lower regions of the

psyche, then, belong to the hylic; containing the passions and what would be considered the "sinful" nature of man. The higher regions of the psyche, however, are associated with the pneumatic body, and contain the sublime aspects of mind (nous) such as the mystical revelations of divine gnosis. Thus, our human experience is realized largely by the soul, which, if left untended, will be wholly consumed by our hylic nature. For the Christian who seeks the knowledge of God (gnosis), however, the psychic body may align itself to the pneumatic and help to restore the pneumatic body to the Pleroma, and thus itself be saved from dissolution into matter. This is the meaning of *Luke 9.24*, which states, "For whoever wants to save his soul will lose it, but whoever loses his soul on account of me will save it." That is, if the lower self clings to the soul, then the soul will suffer the same fate as the flesh. But if the soul is given up to the higher, spiritual nature of Christ, then it will be preserved for eternal life in the Holy Realms.

Just as the human condition may be divided into three categories, or bodies, so too can the human population be likewise divided (more especially in the Valentinian School). Those who have attained spiritual perfection, or who are destined to attain perfection, are designated as Pneumatics. The Psychics are those who are striving toward spiritual enlightenment, but have not yet attained a perfect understanding. And finally, there are the Hylics, who are wholly ignorant of their own spiritual darkness, and therefore are not aspiring toward spiritual knowledge. There are some Gnostics, both past and present, who are not entirely comfortable with this type of classification, seeing it as either elitist, or as supporting a doctrine of predestination that infringes upon free will. This is not the place to debate the merits of the various approaches, but I will say that these classifications are not without canonical support. *John 6.64* tells us that, "Jesus had known from the beginning who the non-believers were." And the differences between the Psychic and the Pneumatic are stated quite plainly in *1 Corinthians 2.14-15*: "Psychic man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolish to him, and he is not able to know them, because they are pneumatically discerned. Now, the Pneumatic man discerns all things, but he is discerned by no one."

Having given this brief introduction to Gnostic thought, then, let us proceed with our analysis of the parable of the Good Samaritan:

Luke 10.25: And behold, a certain lawyer rose to put him [Jesus] to the test saying, "Teacher, what must I accomplish to receive eternal [aionion] life?"

The first words uttered by the lawyer would have indicated to Jesus that this man is not yet in a pneumatic state. By asking what he must accomplish, he implies that he does not realize that it is only by grace that he may receive eternal life. That is, eternal life, or "aeonic" life, may not be earned in the sense of it being the requisite compensation for some act or series of deeds. Actions are certainly required of us on our spiritual journey, but our salvation is through grace (charis) not as recompense. And to the Gnostic, gnosis itself is that saving grace. However, the fact that he is seeking the means to eternal life shows that he is aspiring toward the spiritual.

Luke 10.26-29: And he said to him, "What has been written in the Law? How do you read it?"

And he answered saying, "You will love [agape] the Lord your God from the whole of your heart, and in the whole of your soul, and in the whole of your strength, and in the whole of your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

And he said to him, "You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live."

But wanting to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus tests the lawyer by asking him how he interprets the (demiurgic) Law. The Valentinians believed that the demiurge, and his laws, were not wholly evil, but imperfect. In this respect, their doctrine of the demiurge seems to be closer to the views held by the Hermeticists and Neoplatonists, than that of their more traditional Sethian counterparts, who tended to view the demiurge as more nefarious than merely imperfect. In his "Letter to Flora," Ptolemy, a successor of Valentinus, writes, "The law of god [that is, the demiurgic god, not the True God of Light,] pure and not mixed with inferiority, is the Decalogue, those ten sayings engraved on two tables, forbidding things not to be done and enjoining things to be done. These contain pure but imperfect legislation and required the completion made by the savior. There is also the law interwoven with injustice, that an eye should be cut out for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, and that a murder should be avenged by a murder. The person who is the second one to be unjust is no less unjust³² than the first; he simply changes the order of events while performing the same action." We can see therein the imperfection of the demiurge, and the Mosaic Law. In order to enforce his laws of justice, he must require a second injustice. So, how the lawyer responds to this inquiry will reveal much to Jesus about his character. That is, Jesus is testing him to determine whether he is oriented toward the just aspects of the law, or toward the imperfections of the law. When the lawyer responds that one must "love the Lord your God," and "your neighbor as yourself," Jesus seems satisfied with this response. This is because even though the man's faith may be misplaced in the demiurge, the quality of complete and unconditional love (agape) is an attribute that emanates from the True God of Light. In other words, the act of love is in itself salvific to an extent; or it may lead toward the salvific gnosis. Notice, though, that Jesus' response seems to be somewhat lacking. While he tells the man that he will live, he does not specifically guarantee the eternal, or aeonic, life that he is seeking. Perhaps sensing that there is a greater truth to be gained, the man asks of Jesus who the neighbor is, that he should love as himself. This, of course, opens the door for Jesus to relate the parable.

Luke 10.30: Jesus replied, "A certain man was coming down from Jerusalem into Jericho and fell upon some highwaymen, who having both stripped and beat him, went away leaving him half dead."

The man coming down from Jerusalem represents the spark of divine spirit (pneuma) descending from the eternal realms, or aeons, into the cosmos. Upon entering this world, the Spiritual Man is confronted by the demiurge and his archons, represented here as highwaymen. What they strip him of is the knowledge and memory of who he is and where he came from. Ignorance of divine knowledge is often depicted as nakedness

in Gnostic scripture and exegesis. For instance, in the Gnostic interpretation of Genesis, Adam and Eve's nakedness represents their spiritual ignorance. This is stated quite plainly and clearly in the *Reality of the Rulers* when they eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, "And their imperfections became apparent in their lack of knowledge. They recognized that they were naked of the spiritual."³³ Their shame, then, is due to the fact that they had forgotten their origin in the realms of light. This spiritual amnesia is not only a common Gnostic theme, it is the very condition from which we must be redeemed.

The reason that our Spiritual or Pneumatic Man is now "half dead" is because his true nature has been mixed with, and obscured by, the hylic and psychic natures of this world.

Luke 10.31-38: "And coincidentally a certain priest was coming down that road and having seen him, passed by on the other side. And likewise, a Levite also came upon the place, and having seen him, passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan came upon him while traveling and having seen him, was moved with compassion. And having approached, he bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine over them, and having set him upon his own animal, brought him to an inn and cared for him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the inn-keeper and said, 'Take care of him, and whatever else you spend, I will repay you when I return.'"

When the man encounters the priest and the Levite, they are unwilling, and in fact unable, to help him because they themselves are priests of the demiurge, not of the True God of Light. The demiurgic Law of Moses is an imperfect law. While it serves to preserve Jewish customs, identity, and a semblance of order, its strict adherence leads to isolationism and contradiction rather than the upliftment of humanity. The law of the True God of Light, however, is the Law of Agape; the very same Law that Christ came to bear witness to. It is a Samaritan, a stranger and foreigner, who ultimately rescues our battered traveler. It is a common theme among Gnostic myths for the Pneumatic, or true Gnostic, to be depicted as a stranger; alien to this world.³⁴ This image is confirmed by Jesus himself, who often depicts himself as being a stranger to this world.³⁵ The symbol of the Samaritan as one of God's elect is also found later in *Luke*, in chapter 17, where the only one to give praises to God for his healing was the foreigner (Allogenes), a Samaritan.³⁶ It is interesting to note that while the Allogenes is a hero of several Gnostic texts, its only canonical usage is in *Luke*.

Luke 10.36-37: "Who, of these three, seems to you to have become a neighbor to the one who fell upon the highwaymen?" And he said, "The one who showed him compassion." And Jesus said to him, "Depart and do likewise."

When Jesus asks the lawyer which of the three is the neighbor to the fallen traveler, the man responds that, of course, it is the one who has shown compassion. When Jesus tells him to depart and do likewise, he is not only telling him to be compassionate to his fellow man, but in fact, to be a stranger to this world; as Christ himself is. This parable also tells us that we are unable to raise ourselves up out of ignorance on our own. It requires an intervention from a spiritual force outside of

ourselves to remind us of our origins, and to be restored to the Pleroma, or fullness of God, from which we came. So, the Samaritan here is representative of Christ, the redeemer, as well as of our own potential perfected self; that is, our spiritual, or pneumatic self that has been liberated from the bonds of matter and the lower mental states by the grace and compassion of Jesus Christ. So, just as Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead, that is, brought the ignorant into spiritual awareness, so too is the enlightened Christian called upon to help raise up his fallen brethren into the light of gnosis, and to tend to them until they are able to walk on their own, clothed in the robe of the glory of Christ; and in turn help to raise up yet others who have fallen prey to the darkness of this world.

In this parable of the Good Samaritan we can see that the attainment of gnosis and the elevation of the soul above the influence of its hylic imprisonment is not some selfish or elitist entitlement. In fact, we cannot even say that spiritual enlightenment is the destination of the Gnostic path. Rather, the attainment of enlightenment, or gnosis, can be more accurately depicted as a process than as a single event. Gnosis is not the end; it is the means by which the fragments of spiritual light will be ultimately restored to the Pleroma. The path of the living gnosis, therefore, leads inevitably to acts of compassion, and to the general upliftment of humanity. For, as it is written in the Gnostic scriptures, "Each one by his deeds and gnosis will reveal his nature."³⁷

Speaking of "Good Samaritans," I could hardly discuss Gnosticism and Luke without addressing the only overt canonical reference to the Gnostics, the appearance of Simon Magus of Samaria in *Acts*. Given our hypothesis of a Gnostic undercurrent in *Luke*, we would expect a more sympathetic treatment of Simon Magus than we find in Luke's *Acts of the Apostles*. On the other hand, given the Church's later harsh suppression of Gnosticism, one might expect to find a more vehement denouncement than we see in Luke's casual dismissal. Perhaps, though, there is more to this account than meets the eye. Let us take a look at these events from *Acts*, and then consider how this account might be reconciled with our previous hypotheses.

In the eighth chapter of *Acts*, Simon is introduced as a magician who is, "amazing the people of Samaria, saying to be someone great."³⁸ This passage goes on to say that Philip converted the people of Samaria, and that "Simon himself also believed and, having been baptized, was following Philip, and seeing signs and great works being done, was amazed."³⁹ Later, Simon witnesses Peter and John conferring the power of the Holy

Spirit upon people through the laying on of hands. Simon offers⁴⁰ money for this Apostolic power, and is roundly rebuked and chastised by Peter.

On the surface, this seems to be merely the rejection of the teachings and works of a pretender to the messianic throne. For instance, Simon's miracles are relegated to mere magic, while the miracles wrought by Philip are, "signs and great works." Likewise, for Simon to attempt to purchase Apostolic authority is to reduce him to a mere charlatan. While it is a common tactic to diminish the importance of one's adversary, in order to raise one's own perceived worth, such fraudulence as is attributed to Simon here, does not match up well with what we know of his lofty philosophical doctrines. Anyone reading this account, at the time, who was familiar with Simon's Gnostic doctrine, would likely have seen right through this weak attempt at refutation. Luke, the author of *Acts*, who is thought to have been highly educated, certainly would have realized the weakness of his straw man argument. In fact, it should not surprise us at all if Luke had at least a

professional respect for Simon, considering Luke's profession, and the fact that Simon was known to have produced works on anatomy and the circulatory system.⁴¹ What if, however, instead of trying to outright dismiss the Gnostics, he was actually embracing them, while saving face for the fledgling Christian Church?

We have already seen examples of the Samaritan as a symbol for the Gnostic. Perhaps this "conversion" of the Samaritans is actually a thinly veiled account of the absorption of the Samaritan Gnostics into the Christian fold. This would explain Luke's superficial dismissal of Simon Magus (after all, Christ can be the only leader of the Church), while embracing Simon's followers, as well as a fair amount of his philosophy. We do not have any surviving works today, to which we may turn for a comprehensive description of Simon's Gnostic philosophy. We do know, however, through fragments, and from the heresiologists (Irenaeus, Hippolytus, et al), some of his core doctrines. One of his principal teachings was that the First Thought (Ennoia) of god was separated from her masculine counterpart, and eventually imprisoned in the material world, from which she must be liberated, and restored to her heavenly estate.⁴² This forms one of the bases for both the Gnostic Sophia myth, as well as the Gnostic concept of the soul's descent into matter. How can we possibly see as coincidence, then, that the tenth chapter of *Luke* contains a parable about a Samaritan that, as we have seen, follows a story line that is nearly identical to the philosophy espoused by Simon Magus, the greatest Samaritan spiritual leader of the time? The Good Samaritan parable seems to be a wink and a nod to those early Christian Gnostics of Samaria; just as the account of the seventy-two disciples seems to acknowledge the Alexandrian Gnostics and Hermeticists. It also seems that the reputation of Simon Magus, one of the most profound Gnostic philosophers of the first century AD, has been an unfortunate casualty of the early Church's battle for supremacy. (We see this also with the downgrading of John the Baptist, though with less animosity.)

We have seen, I believe, that the tenth chapter of *Luke* contains elements, and an overall aire, of an unmistakably Gnostic and Hermetic character. This is confirmed by the fact that we have nothing quite like these accounts in all the rest of the canonical scriptures, but that we do, however, find similarities in a number of outside texts. As noted throughout this essay, nearly all of the allegorical images, and even much of the specific language may be found in numerous Hermetic and Gnostic sources.

It is also interesting to note that many of the themes and images introduced in the tenth chapter, at the beginning of Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem, are carried throughout the journey, over the next several chapters. Even in cases where we have parallels between *Luke* and other synoptic passages, the wording in *Luke* is often altered ever so slightly, so as to reflect its unique character. For example, in *Luke* 11.9-13 we have a passage that mirrors, nearly identically, a similar excerpt from *Matthew* 7.7-11. There are a couple of differences in *Luke*, however, that while seemingly insignificant, actually serve to provide a semantic continuity from the previous chapter, and to illustrate the spiritual nature of the work as a whole. Let us examine, then, these two passages, and briefly discuss these minor, but significant discrepancies.

Matthew 7.7-11: "Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone asking receives, and the one seeking finds, and to the one knocking it will be opened. What man is

among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give a stone to him? Or if he asks for a fish, surely you will not give to him a snake? If, therefore, you being evil know to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those asking him!"

Luke 11.9-13: "And I say to you, Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone asking receives, and the one seeking finds, and to the one knocking it will be opened. But what father among you, whose son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead of a fish? Or if he will ask for an egg, will give to him a scorpion? If, therefore, you being evil ones, know to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father from heaven give the Holy Spirit to those asking Him!"

There are a couple of variances in the above passages that should be immediately apparent. The first concerns the requests of the hypothetical son, and the responses. Both Matthew and Luke have the son requesting a fish, which is negatively juxtaposed with a snake. In both passages the symbolism is readily apparent. The fish is an obvious symbol for Christ, which is quite naturally contrasted with the serpent, representing the adversary. Beyond that, we have a discrepancy between the two texts. In *Matthew*, we have an image of bread, contrasted with a stone. This too seems to be a natural comparison. The bread is the bread of life, Christ himself, and the life-giving law he brings. The stone is representative of the old Law, that which does not nourish the soul. In *Luke*, we are presented with a different set of symbols. There is the egg, which is a natural symbol for life and rebirth. The egg is contrasted with the scorpion, which is certainly a symbol of death, but is also significant in that it mirrors the "snakes and scorpions" imagery from chapter ten. It seems obvious, then, that this passage has been specifically reworded in order to maintain a continuity of symbolism; and perhaps as a subtle reminder of the underlying esotericism.

If the subtlety of the word play in the previous example was not enough to illustrate this point, it is made obvious at the end of the passage in *Luke*. In *Matthew*, the passage concludes with the Father giving "good things" to those who ask. This concept is in agreement with the Jewish view of God as the provider of material sustenance. This is consistent with the prevailing hypothesis that Matthew's target audience is Jewish. Luke, however, makes a small, but theologically significant, alteration to the text. The passage in *Luke* concludes with the Father giving the "Holy Spirit" to those who ask. I think this tells us something about the intended audience of Luke's gospel. It is generally speculated that Luke's audience is primarily Greek. I will not dispute that, but would posit, additionally, that many aspects of the gospel, especially elements of the journey toward Jerusalem, are targeted specifically at Neoplatonists, Hermeticists, and even early Gnostics. To those groups I just mentioned, for the Father (that is, the True God, not an inferior demiurge), to give anything except spiritual gifts would be unthinkable. So, to state that the Father gives the Holy Spirit, acknowledges Him as the True God of Light, and not the demiurgic creator of the cosmos.

Another curious aspect of this gospel is the fact that the author basically states that he is merely retelling what has already been recorded. Let us look at his specific wording at the beginning of the gospel, and then discuss some of the implications.

Luke 1.1-4: Seeing that many have attempted to compile their recollections about the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning had been eyewitnesses and servants of the Logos, it also seemed good to me, having investigated everything carefully from the start, to write to you in an orderly manner, most noble Theophilus, that you may know with assurance the words about which you have been instructed.

In the first verse, Luke states that there have been "many" compilations of the gospel. If we go by the traditional number and ordering of the gospels, then that would place *Luke* as the third to compile a gospel of Jesus Christ. Even if we were to place *Luke's* authorship after the *Gospel According to John*, that would still only place it fourth in line according to tradition. Two or three prior works can hardly be considered "many" by any stretch of the imagination. We must assume, then, that there were a number of works circulating at the time, that never found their way into the official canon of the Church. Some of these works have undoubtedly vanished from the pages of history. Others, however, may be with us, but not previously suspected as having influenced our modern canon.

When we examine the various sayings, narratives, and parables of *Luke*, much of the material finds its parallel in the other "synoptic" gospels of *Matthew* and *Mark*. We are left, however, with a significant amount of material that is present nowhere else in the official canon. This creates an interesting dilemma, because if we accept the orthodox canon, then the gospels are complete, as we now have them. If, however, we accept *Luke's* opening statements at face value, that he is retelling what has already been recorded, then we cannot accept that the orthodox canon is complete. We have already seen that there are a number of concepts in the tenth chapter that seem to have their origin in Hermetic and proto-Gnostic doctrines. But there are a number of other passages among the chapters that comprise the "journey toward Jerusalem" section, that seem to have their parallel in the Thomasine literature. I will mention but a few here briefly, merely to illustrate the point. *Luke* 14.15-24 tells the parable of the "Great Supper."⁴³ A remarkably similar version also exists as saying number 64 of the *Gospel of Thomas*.⁴⁴ Saying number 107 of that same work contains a version of the "Lost Sheep" parable found in *Luke* 15.3-7. There are also shorter passages, such as *Luke* 17.20-21, that are elaborated upon in sayings 3 and 113 in the *Gospel of Thomas*.⁴⁵ And verse 22 of that same chapter in *Luke* is echoed in saying 38.⁴⁶ It may be argued that the author of the *Gospel of Thomas* may merely be retelling the accounts found in *Luke*. We do not have any definitive proof, one way or the other. But we do have *Luke's* admission that he is using other sources for the compilation of his gospel. So, while we cannot, with absolute certainty, establish a chronology for these documents (since we do not have the original source texts), we can nevertheless reasonably infer a relationship between the two works.

One final work that I would like to address in this comparison is a poem attributed to Thomas in the *Acts of Thomas*, called "The Song of the Pearl"⁴⁷ (or, alternatively, "The Hymn of the Soul," or "The Hymn of the robe of Glory"). This narrative tells the story of the soul's journey into the world to recover that which was lost. The soul here is symbolized as a prince who has left his father's kingdom in search of a pearl of great value. In good Gnostic fashion, the prince, upon his entrance into Egypt (the material world) falls into a sleep that causes him to forget his origin and mission. A messenger is sent to remind the prince of his parents and his mission. The pearl is eventually recovered, and the prince is restored to his rightful place in the kingdom. This story (of which I have given but the briefest description), contains remarkable similarities both to the "Good Samaritan" parable, which we have already discussed, and if to a lesser extent, to the "Prodigal Son" parable of *Luke* 15.11-32, wherein a wayward son is ultimately reconciled to his father's household.

The above examples, while not exhaustive analyses, serve to show, I think, that we must look to the Gnostic scriptures to find parallels to many of the, otherwise unique, passages throughout *Luke*. Though the principal theme and purpose of this essay is an exegesis of the tenth chapter, it was necessary to illustrate that a Gnostic and Hermetic interpretation is not out of place in a broader context of *Luke*, specifically, within the "journey toward Jerusalem" section of the text. Indeed, far from being anomalous, these mystical tendencies seem to form a pattern running throughout the text as a sort of sub-current to the standard gospel narrative.

There is still much left unsaid regarding the hypotheses set forth in this essay. To be sure, there is much additional material that could be brought into discussion on the topic. And hopefully, a more exhaustive analysis of the text will eventually be accomplished; whether by this author or another. Doubtless, many among the Christian orthodoxy will be inclined to refute my conclusions on principle alone. Likewise, secular biblical scholars may feel that I have drifted too far from the academic into the speculative and theological. But, as stated in the introduction to this essay, this is intended to be a primarily theological work, which may have certain academic implications. I certainly have attempted to use academically sound reasoning in my analyses. In the end, I simply ask the reader to contemplate the work with an open mind and, having carefully examined all of the supporting material that I have presented, to give serious consideration to the ideas articulated here. For what I am advocating here is not a radical redefinition of Christianity, but rather a return to a more universal and encompassing Christianity that recognizes that the scriptures at once speak on multiple literal and symbolic levels, and to multiple audiences; and that one of the primary audiences of early Christianity was the Gnostic in his varied forms, whether Jewish, Neoplatonic, or Hermetic. We now know that many among these Gnostic groups were in fact Christianized, and thrived within the pre-Nicene Christian community. Many of these early Christian Gnostics were not operating outside of the Apostolic tradition, as is so often depicted today in popular writings and television programs. In fact, most of the Gnostic teachers claimed to have received their teachings from one or another of the Apostolic schools, whether it be from Matthew, John, Paul, or others. Many of the early Gnostics represented an Apostolic tradition that ran parallel to, and sometimes overlapped, the Apostolic tradition that was to survive as the "orthodoxy." It is my hope that this short work will add to the mounting evidence that the canonical scriptures are

filled with fragments of an underlying secret mystical tradition that may rightly be called, "Gnostic;" as well as add to the ever-growing body of modern Apostolic Gnostic literature and research. For a parting thought, I leave the reader with the words of the Apostle:

"Awake, sleeper!
And arise from the dead,
And the Christos will shine upon you."

- Ephesians 5:14b

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- ³¹ *Matthew* 13:16-17.
- ³² Grant, Robert M., trans. "Letter to Flora." *The Gnostic Bible*. Boston: New Seeds, 2003. p. 303.
- ³³ Layton, Bentley, trans. "The Reality of the Rulers." *The Gnostic Bible*. Boston: New Seeds, 2003. p. 171.
- ³⁴ Cf. Turner, John D., and Orval S. Wintermute, trans. "Allogenes." *The Nag Hammadi Library*, 3rd Revised Edition. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1988. pp. 490-500,
- ³⁵ Cf. *John* 17:14-18. *Luke* 17:
- ³⁶ 11-19.
- ³⁷ Bethge, Hans-Gebhard, and Bentley Layton, trans. "On the Origin of the World." *The Gnostic Bible*. Boston: New Seeds, 2003. p. 437.
- ³⁸ *Acts of the Apostles* 8:9b. *Ibid.* 8:13.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.* 8:18-24.
- ⁴⁰ Yarker, John. *The Arcane Schools*. Zion, IL: Triad Press, 2006. p. 157. (Originally published by
- ⁴¹ William Tait, 1909.)
- ⁴² Hoeller, Stephen A. *Gnosticism: New Light on the Ancient Tradition of Inner Knowing*. Wheaton, IL: Quest books, 2002. p. 95.
- ⁴³ Meyer, Marvin, trans. "The Gospel of Thomas." *The Gnostic Bible*. Boston: New Seeds, 2003. pp 60-61. *Ibid.* p.
- ⁴⁴ 68.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 45, 69. *Ibid.* p. 54.
- ⁴⁶ Barnstone, Willis, trans. "The Song of the Pearl." *The Gnostic Bible*. Boston: New Seeds, 2003. pp. 386-
- ⁴⁷ 394.