

## **Eyewitnesses of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ**

Compiled By Glen W. Chapman-January 2003

This paper is based on extra-biblical texts of letters written by Pontius Pilot to both Herod Antipas and the letters of Pilate to both Tiberius and one of the Augustus Caesars. The second part of the extra-biblical writings includes excerpts from the writings of Nicodemus. This seemingly obscure Pharisee who is mentioned in the Bible, physically attended the trial of Jesus.

Joseph of Arimathea, the best friend of Nicodemus were a much larger part of the story of the crucifixion than Biblical history records.

These letters, written in a Syriac manuscript, exist in a British museum. This particular version is from the sixth century, which in turn was copied from the originals. They also appear in Paris written in Greek. It is important to understand that the original manuscripts had a shelf life of only a couple hundred years. Also understand that at the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century, many of the secret documents came out of hiding. This translation has been rewritten to make it more readable. The fact that the letters are corroborated from two different sources makes them most credible.

### **Letter of Herod To Pilate The Governor**

*I am experiencing great anxiety. I am writing to you so that you might feel my pain with me. My daughter Herodias, who is dear to me, was playing upon a lake covered with ice. The Ice broke under her, and as she passed through the ice, the ice cut off her head. Her head remained on the surface of the ice on the lake. Her mother is now crying and holding the head of her daughter in her lap. My whole house is in great mourning.*

*I heard that you wished to see me because you have seen Jesus again after His resurrection. I know that you wanted me to see, and hear Him also, as one man speaks to another. It is certain that because of the many evil things which I had done to John the Baptist, and because I mocked the Christ, I received my own reward at the death of my daughter for the blood of other people 's children, which I have shed upon the earth. The judgments of God are righteous; for every man receives according to his thought. However, I thought that since you were worthy to see that God-Man after His resurrection, I would ask you to pray for me.*

*My son Azbonius is also in the agony of death. I too, am in great pain because I have the dropsy. I am in great distress because I persecuted John who introduced baptism by water. Therefore, my brother, the judgments of God are correct. My wife, through grieving for her daughter, is become blind in her left eye, because she desired to blind the Eye of righteousness. The Lord said, "There is no peace for the doers of evil." There has already come great affliction upon the priests, and upon the writers of the law, because they delivered unto you the ruler of the world. Through their deeds they have consented that the Gentiles should become heirs of the kingdom. For the children of light shall be cast out, for they have not observed the things which were preached concerning the Lord, and concerning His Son.*

*Take courage with your wife when you remember that the kingdom belongs to the gentiles. For we, the chosen people, have mocked the Righteous One.*

*We would like to be buried by you, rather than being buried by the priests who will experience the vengeance from the death of Jesus Christ. Good luck to you and your wife Procula. I am sending you the earrings of my daughter and my own ring as a memorial of me and my family. Already there are worms from my body as a judgment for the things which I have done. I am afraid of that judgment to come after my death. Both of us will stand before the living God and receive an eternal judgment.*

## **LETTER OF PILATE TO HEROD.**

Pilate to Herod the Tetrarch: Peace

*When you delivered Jesus to me, I took pity on myself and testified by washing my hands that I was innocent concerning Him who rose from the grave after three days. You desired me to be associated with you in His crucifixion. But I learned from the executioners, and from the soldiers who watched His sepulchre, that He rose from the dead. I have especially confirmed what was told me, that He appeared bodily in Galilee, in the same form and with the same voice, and with the same doctrine, and with the same disciples. He was preaching with boldness about His own resurrection and an everlasting kingdom. Behold, the heaven and earth rejoice. Procula my wife believes in the vision, which appeared unto her which spoke of what would happen to me when you sent me Jesus to be delivered to the Jews.*

*Now when my wife Procula heard that Jesus was risen and had appeared in Galilee, she took Longinus the centurion and twelve soldiers with her to find Jesus. They were the same that had watched at the sepulchre. They went to see this great spectacle and found Him with His disciples. While they were standing, and wondering, and gazing at Him, Jesus looked at them and said to them, "What do you want? Do you believe in me now Procula? Remember the covenant, which God gave to the fathers. It is said that everybody who had perished should live by means of my death, which you have now seen. Now, you see that I live, the man who your husband had crucified. I suffered many things, till I was laid in the sepulchre. But now, hear me and believe in my father—God, who is in me. For I loosed the cords of death and I shall come again."*

*When my wife Procula and my guard had heard these things, they came and told me, weeping. I suffered because of what they had told me. I arose and put on a garment of mourning and took with me my wife and fifty Romans and went into Galilee. When I was in route to see this Jesus for myself, I testified that you, Herod, did these things through me. It was you who counseled with me and constrained me to arm my hands against Him, and to judge Him that judgeth all, and to scourge the Just One. When we drew nigh to Him a great voice was heard from heaven, and a dreadful thunder, and the earth trembled, and gave forth a sweet smell, like unto that which was never perceived, even in the temple of Jerusalem.*

*Now while I stood in the way, Jesus saw me as He stood and talked with His disciples. But I prayed in my heart, for I knew that it was He whom you delivered to me. I knew He was Lord of created things and Creator of all. When we saw Him, all of us fell upon our faces before His feet and I said with a loud voice, "I have sinned, O Lord, in that I sat in judgment over you, you who are the avenger of truth. I know that you are God, the Son of God. I only saw you as human and not as divine. Herod, with the priests of the Sanhedrin, constrained me to do evil against you. Have pity, therefore, upon men, O God of Israel!"*

*My wife, in great anguish, said, "God of heaven and of earth, God of Israel, reward me not according to the deeds of Pontius Pilate, nor according to the will of the Sanhedrin priests, nor according to the thought of the sons of the priests; but remember my husband in your glory!"*

*Now our Lord drew near and raised my wife and I and the Romans up, and I looked at Him and saw the scars from the cross upon him. And he said, "I am He who the prophets had foretold would come, and He who was not recognized by them when I did come. I am the Son of Man, the Son of the Most High, who is forever. I arose from the dead, and am glorified on high by all that He created, and established for ever and ever."*

## **THE REPORT OF PILATE THE GOVERNOR**

The next two letters are mirror images of each other, for the most part, yet they do contain slight

differences, so they are both included here. Apparently, Pilate wanted to say substantially the same thing to both Tiberius Caesar, and to one of the Augustus Caesars in Rome.

### **Concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, which was sent to Augustus Caesar, in Rome.**

*To the most potent August, divine and awful Augustus Caesar, Pilate, the administrator of the Eastern Province:*

*I have received information, most excellent one, and as a result I am seized with fear and trembling. For in this province which I administer, is a city called Jerusalem. In that city the whole multitude of Jews delivered unto me a certain man called Jesus and brought many accusations against Him, which they were unable to establish by consistent evidence. They charged Him with one Jewish heresy in particular; namely, that Jesus said the Sabbath was not a day of rest. He had performed many cures on that day. He made the blind see, the lame walk, raised the dead, cleansed lepers, healed the paralytic and gave them power to walk and run, removing their infirmity by His word alone.*

*There is another very mighty deed, which is strange to the gods we have. He raised up a man who had been dead four days, summoning him by His word alone. The dead man had begun to decay, and his body was corrupted by he worms and had the stench of a dog. However, seeing him lying in the tomb He commanded him to run. The dead man did not delay, but as a bridegroom out of his chamber, he ran from his tomb, smelling like perfume. He also cured strangers who were clearly demoniacs. These strangers dwelt in the deserts, and devoured their own cattle and all manner of creeping things. He turned them into inhibitors of cities, and by a word rendered them rational. He made them wise and powerful. He cast the unclean spirits into the depth of the sea.*

*There was another who had a withered hand. Not only did the man have a withered hand but half of his body was like a stone. The body of the man was not the shape of a man at all. Jesus healed him with a word and rendered him whole. Jesus healed a woman who had an issue of blood for a long time and whose veins and arteries were exhausted She did not bear the image of a human body and appeared as if she were dead She was speechless, so that all the physicians of the district were unable to cure her. The physicians had given her no hope of life. When Jesus passed by she mysteriously received strength as he passed by the women and His shadow fell upon her. She touched Him from behind on the hem of His garment as he passed by and immediately regained the strength in her exhausted limbs, as if she had never suffered from anything. She began to run alone towards Capernaum, her own city, and reached it in a six days.*

*This Jesus did other miracles greater than these. I have observed greater works~ of wonder done by Jesus than by the gods whom we worship. But Herod Antipas, Archelaus, Philip, Annas, and Caiaphas, delivered him to me, telling me with a loud commotion, that I must bring Him to trial. Therefore, I commanded Him to be crucified I first scourged Him, though I found no evil in Him.*

*When He was crucified, there was darkness over the entire world, and the sun was obscured for half a day, and the stars appeared, but no luster was seen in them. The world of the departed was swallowed up, so that the very sanctuary of the temple, as they call it, could no longer be seen. There appeared a chasm in the earth. There was rolling of successive thunders. Amid this terror the dead appeared rising again, as the Jews themselves bore witness. It was said that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, Moses and Job, who had been dead for thousands of years, were seen among them. There were many that I myself saw appearing in their body. They were lamenting over the Jews, because of the transgression which was committed by them.*

*The terror of the earthquake continued from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. When it was evening on the first day of the week, there came a sound from heaven, and the heaven*

*became seven times more luminous than on all other days. At the third hour of the night the sun appeared more luminous than it had ever shown, lighting up the whole hemisphere. As lightning flashes suddenly came forth in a storm, so there were seen men who were lofty in stature and glory. These were a countless host crying out. Their voices were heard like loud thunder, "Jesus, who was crucified, is risen again. Come up from Hades all you who were enslaved in the ground"*

*The chasm in the earth had no bottom. It appeared as if the very foundations of the earth were exposed Those that shouted in heaven waited in the body among the dead that were raised. He that raised up all the dead said, "Say to my disciples, 'He goeth before you into Galilee. There shall you see Him.'"*

*All that night the light continued to shine. Many of the Jews died in the chasm of the earth, being swallowed up, so that on the morrow most of those who had persecuted Jesus were nowhere to be found Others saw the apparition of men rising from the dead whom none of us had ever seen. Only one synagogue of the Jews was left standing in Jerusalem itself for they all disappeared in that ruin.*

*Therefore, feeling terror and trembling dreadfully, I have written what I saw at that time and sent it to your Excellency. I have inserted what was done against Jesus by the Jews and sent it to Caesar.*

#### **THE REPORT OF PONTIUS PILATE TO TIBERIUS CAESAR**

The report of Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea, which was sent to Tiberius Caesar in Rome.

*To the most potent, dreadful and divine Tiberius, from Pontius Pilate, Administrator of the Eastern Province.*

*I have undertaken to you the present state of affairs, though I am possessed with much fear and trembling. I administered this province from Jerusalem where the temple of the Jews is located in your Eastern Province. The Jews delivered up to me a certain man called Jesus. They had many accusations against Him. They themselves could not convict Him in anything. However, they spoke of one Jewish heresy against Him. They told me He had said that the Sabbath was not a day of rest.*

*That man Jesus had performed many cures and other good works. He had caused the blind to see. He cleansed lepers. He raised the dead. He healed paralytics who could not move with the word of His mouth. He had replaced all their bones in their rightful places. He gave them strength to walk and run by His word alone. He did another more mighty work, which would have been strange even among our gods. He raised Lazarus from the dead, who had been dead four days, by commanding with His word alone that the dead man should be raised. His body was already corrupted by worms, which bred in his wounds. He commanded the fetid body, which lay in the grave, to run as a bridegroom from his chamber. Lazarus ran forth from his grave, full of sweet perfume.*

*He healed some that were grievously afflicted by demons, and lived in desert places. They devoured the flesh of their own limbs, and lived among creeping things and wild beasts. He caused them to dwell in cities in their own houses. By a word He made them reasonable, and caused them to become wise and honorable. When He healed those that were vexed by unclean spirits and demons He sent those evil spirits into a herd of swine and then into the seas and were drowned. Another, who had a withered hand, and half of his body unsound, was made whole by a word alone.*

*There was a woman who had an issue of blood for a long time, so that all the joints of her bones were seen and shone through like glass. All the physicians had dismissed her without hope, but He healed her. As Jesus was passing by she touched, from behind, the hem of His garments,*

*and in that very hour the strength of her body was restored. She was made whole, as if she had never had an affliction, and she began to run fast towards her own city of Paneas. All these things happened, but the Jews reported that Jesus did these things on the Sabbath. I saw that greater marvels had been wrought by Him than by the gods whom we worship. Herod, Archelaus, Philip, Annas and Caiaphas. delivered Him up to me to be tried. I commanded that He should be crucified because of the tumult among the Jews.*

*When He was crucified, darkness came over all the world. The sun was altogether hidden, and the sky appeared dark while it was yet day so that the stars were seen, though they still had their luster obscured. I suppose your Excellency is not unaware that in all the world they lighted their lamps from the sixth hour until evening. The moon, which was like blood, did not shine all night long, although it was full. The stars and Orion made lamentation over the Jews, because of the transgression committed by them. On the first day of the week, about the third hour of the night, the sun appeared, as it had never shone before. The whole heaven became bright. As lightning comes in a storm, so certain men of lofty stature, in beautiful array, and of indescribable glory, appeared in the air, and a countless host of angels cried out and said, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men.*

*There came up from Hades all those who were in bondage in the depths of the earth. At the sound of their voices all the mountains and hills were moved, and the rocks were rent, and great chasms were made in the earth, so that the very depths of the abyss were visible.*

*Amid the terror, dead men were seen rising again, so that the Jews who saw it said, "We beheld Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob and the twelve patriarchs, who died some two thousand five hundred years before, and we beheld Noah clearly in the body. All the multitude walked about and sang hymns to God with a loud voice, saying, "The Lord our God, who hath risen from the dead, hath made alive all the dead, and Hades He hath spoiled."*

*Therefore, my Lord King, all that night the light continued. However, many of the Jews died, and were swallowed up in the chasms that night, so that not even their bodies were found. Now I mean, that those who suffered were the Jews who spoke against Jesus.*

*Through that terror I was amazed and seized with great trembling. I ordered what had been done by them to be written, and I have sent it to your Mightiness.*

## PARADOSIS

*[Paradosis is a Greek term that refers to a transmission, precept, ordinance, or tradition, and specifically, to Jewish law (Talmud).]*

When the report of Pilate reached Rome and was read to Caesar in the company of many, everyone was amazed that it was because of the lawless conduct of Pilate that the darkness and earthquakes came upon the whole world. Caesar was filled with anger and sent soldiers with orders to bring Pilate in chains. When he had been brought to Rome, and Caesar heard that Pilate was there, he sat down in the temple of the gods, with the whole senate, and members of his army, and all the great ones of his empire. He commanded Pilate to come forward and said to him, "How could you do such a thing, you impious one, when you had seen such great signs concerning that man? By your wicked daring you destroyed the whole world."

Pilate answered, "almighty Caesar, I am innocent of these things. It is the multitude of the Jews who are guilty instigators." Caesar asked. "Who are they?" Pilate said, "Herod, Archelaus, Philip, Annas, Caiaphas and all the multitude of the Jews." Caesar said, "As soon as they handed Him over to you, you should have kept Him secure and sent Him to me and not have followed them by crucifying such a righteous man who did such wonderful signs as you have mentioned in your report. For it is clear from these signs that Jesus was the Christ, the King of the Jews."

When Caesar said this, and named the name of Christ, all the gods fell down where

Caesar sat with the senate and became as dust. All the people who stood by Caesar trembled at the fall of their gods by reason of the naming of the name of Christ. Gripped by fear, they all went away, each to his own house, marveling at what had taken place. Caesar commanded that Pilate should be kept in custody in order that he might learn the truth about Jesus. On the next day, Caesar sat in the capitol with all the senate so he could continue to question Pilate.

Caesar said, "*Speak the truth, you most impious man, for through your godless behavior against Jesus, the working of your crime was made manifest even here in the overthrow of our gods. Tell me now! Who crucified the one whose name destroyed all the gods?*" Pilate answered, "*truly the charges made against Him are true. For I myself was convinced by His deeds that He is greater than all the gods whom we worship.*" Caesar said, "*Why then did you treat Him with such wickedness when you already knew Him. In doing this you must have wished to harm my kingdom.*" Pilate answered, "*I did it because of the insubordination of the lawless and godless Jews.*"

Then Caesar, filled with anger, took counsel with all the senate and his army and ordered the following decree to be recorded against the Jews.

### *To Licianus, chief Governor of the East: Greetings*

*At the present time, the Jews who live in Jerusalem and the neighboring towns have committed a lawless crime in forcing Pilate to crucify Jesus who was acknowledged as God. Because of their crime, the world was darkened and dragged down to ruin. Therefore, by this decree proceed there with all speed with a strong body of troops and take them prisoner. Obey, and advance against them dispersing them among all the nations. Enslave them and expel them from Judea, making the nation so insignificant that it is no longer to be seen anywhere, since they are men full of evil.*

When this decree arrived in the east, Licianus carried out his terrible instructions and destroyed the whole Jewish nation. Those who were left in Judea, he scattered as slaves among the nations so that Caesar was pleased when he learned of the actions of Licianus against the Jews in the East. Again Caesar questioned Pilate, and commanded an officer called Albius to behead him saying, "*As this man raised his hand against the Righteous Man called Christ, so do I raise my hand against him.*"

When Pilate came to the place of execution, he prayed silently, "*Lord do not destroy me with the wicked Hebrews. For it was through the lawless nations of the Jews that I raised my hand against you because they plotted a revolt against me. You know that I acted in ignorance. Therefore, do not condemn me because of this sin. Pardon me Lord, and your servant, Procula, whom God made to prophesy that He must be nailed to the cross and who stands by me at the hour of my death. Do not condemn her also because of my sins. Pardon us, and number us among your righteous ones.*"

### **THE WITNESS OF ANANIAS**

*I, Ananias, an officer of the Roman guard, being learned in the law, came to know our Lord Jesus Christ from the sacred scriptures, which I approached with faith and was accounted worthy of holy baptism. I searched for the reports made at that period of time concerning our Lord Jesus Christ and found these writings about the Jews while they were under the Governorship of Pontius Pilate. I found these acts in the Hebrew language, and according to God's good pleasure, I translated them into Greek for the information of all those who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in the eighteenth year of the reign of our emperor Flavius Thaeodosius, and in the fifth year of the nobility of Flavius Valentinianus in the ninth indiction. Therefore, all you who read this, and copy it out, remember me and pray for me that God may be gracious to me and forgive my sins, which I have sinned against him. Peace be to*

*those who read and hear it, and to their servants, Amen.*

*In the nineteenth year of the reign of the Roman Emperor Tiberius, when Herod was king of Galilee, when Joseph Caiaphas was Chief Priest of the Jews, Nicodemus, after the passion of the Lord upon the cross, recorded and delivered these things concerning the conduct of the Chief Priest and the rest of the Jews. The same Nicodemus drew up his records in the Hebrew language.*

## **THE TESTIMONIES OF TWO RESURRECTED BEINGS**

There were many other witnesses that were called by the Rulers of the Synagogue, and who testified that Jesus had risen from the dead, in the larger writings of Nicodemus. However, there were two witnesses that are of particular importance.

The Sadducees sent to Galilee and called for their servants to bring with them the two resurrected men who they had known while they were alive and who had been seen still walking the streets of Galilee. These two resurrected men were the sons of Symeon the priest, who had taken the place of Zacharias who was murdered. The messengers of the Sadducees walking in Arimathea found the sons of Symeon, Charinus and Lenthius. Charinus and Lenthius returned with the messengers to Jerusalem and sat before Caiaphas and Annas and the Rulers of the Synagogue, and testified in two separate rooms that they had been risen from the dead and had been present when Jesus descended into the world of the spirits and saw Him raise the spirits from that world. Each of them signed their testimonies separately in two books that were sealed. Joseph of Arimathea took one of those books and Caiaphas and Annas the other. Joseph took his book and showed it to Pilate, and later, he took his book with him in exile to England. Their testimonies were as follows:

*I Charinus and Lenthius are not allowed to declare the other mysteries of God, as the Arch Angel Michael had ordered. Saying, "You shall go with my brethren to Jerusalem and shall continue in prayers, declaring and glofying the resurrection of Jesus Christ, seeing He has raised you from the dead at the same time with Himself and you shall not talk with any man but sit as dumb persons till the time come when the lord will allow you to relate mysteries of His divinity." The Arch Angel Michael further commanded us to go beyond Jordan to an excellent and fat country where there are many who rose from the dead with us. For we have only three days allowed us from the dead to celebrate the Passover of our Lord with our families and to bear our testimony of Christ the Lord. And we have been baptized in the holy river of Jordan. This is as much as God allowed us to relate to you. Therefore, give praise and honor to Him and repent and He will have mercy upon you. Peace be to you from the Lord God Jesus, the Savior of us all, Amen, Amen.*

After they had made an end of writing and had wrote on two distinct pieces of paper, Charinus gave what he wrote into the hands of Annas and Caiaphas and Gamalial. Lenthius likewise gave what he wrote into the hands of Nicodemus and Joseph and immediately where changed into exceedingly white forms and were seen no more.

## **Gospel of Nicodemus**

The account that Nicodemus wrote in Hebrew, after the cross and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour God, and left to those that came after him, is as follows:--

**CHAP. 1.**--Having called a council, the high priests and scribes Annas and Caiaphas and Seines and Dathaes, and Gamaliel, Judas, Levi and Nephtholim, Alexander and Jairus, (3) and the rest of the Jews, came to Pilate accusing Jesus about many things, saying: We know this man to be the son of Joseph the carpenter, born of Mary; and he says that he is the Son of God, and a king; moreover, he profanes the Sabbath, and wishes to do away with the law of our fathers. Pilate says: And what are the things which he does, to show that he wishes to do away with it? (4) The Jews say: We have a law not to cure any one on the Sabbath; but this mans has on the Sabbath cured the lame and the crooked, the withered and the blind and the paralytic, the dumb and the demoniac, by evil practices. Pilate says to them: What evil practices? They say to him: He is a magician, and by Beelzebul prince of the demons be casts out the demons, and all are subject to him. Pilate says to them: This is not casting out the demons by an unclean spirit, but by the god AEsculapius.

The Jews say to Pilate: we entreat your highness that he stand at thy tribunal, and be heard. (1) And Pilate having called them, says: Tell me how I, being a procurator, can try a king? They say to him: We do not say that he is a king, but he himself says that he is. And Pilate having called the runner, says to him: Let Jesus be brought in with respect. And the runner going out, and recognizing Him, adored Him, and took his cloak into his hand, and spread it on the ground, and says to him: My lord, walk on this, and come in, for the procurator calls thee. And the Jews seeing what the runner had done, cried out against Pilate, saying: Why hast thou ordered him to come in by a runner, and not by a crier? for assuredly the runner, when he saw him, adored him, and spread his doublet on the ground, and made him walk like a king.

And Pilate having called the runner, says to him: Why hast thou done this, and spread out thy cloak upon the earth, and made Jesus walk upon it? The runner says to him: My lord procurator, when thou didst send me to Jerusalem to Alexander, I saw him sitting upon an ass, and the sons of the Hebrews held branches in their hands, and shouted; and other spread their clothes under him saying, Save now, thou who art in the highest: blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

The Jews cry out, and say, to the runner: The soils of the Hebrews shouted in Hebrew; whence then hast thou the Greek? The runner says to them: I asked one of the Jews, and said, What is it they are shouting in Hebrew? And he interpreted it for me. Pilate says to them: And what did they shout in Hebrew? The Jews say to him: HOSANNA MEMBROME BARUCHAMMA ADONAI. Pilate says to them: And this hosanna, etc., how is it interpreted? The Jews say to him: Save now in the highest; blessed is he; that cometh in the name of the Lord. Pilate says to them: If you bear witness to the words spoken by the children, in what has the runner done wrong? And they were silent.

**CHAP. 2.**--And Pilate seeing this, was afraid, and sought to go away from the tribunal; but when he was still thinking of going away, his wife sent to him, saying: Have nothing to do with this just man, for many things have I suffered on his account this night. And Pilate, summoning the Jews, says to them: You know that my wife is a worshipper of God, and prefers to adhere to the Jewish religion along with you. They say to him: Yes; we know. Pilate says to them: Behold, my wife has sent to me, saying, Have nothing to do with this just man, for many

things have I suffered on account of him this night. And the Jews answering, say unto Pilate: Did we not tell thee that he was a sorcerer? behold, he has sent a dream to thy wife.

And Pilate, having summoned Jesus, says to Him: What do these witness against thee? Sayest thou nothing? And Jesus said: Unless they had the power, they would say nothing; for every one has the power of his own mouth to speak both good and evil. They shall see to it.

And the elders of the Jews answered, and said to Jesus: What shall we see? first, that thou wast born of fornication; secondly, that thy birth in Bethlehem was the cause of the murder of the infants; thirdly, that thy father Joseph and thy mother Mary fled into Egypt because they had no confidence in the people.

Some of the bystanders, pious men of the Jews, say: we deny that he was born of fornication; for we know that Joseph espoused Mary, and he was not born of fornication. Pilate says to the Jews who said that he was of fornication: This story of yours is not true, because they were betrothed, as also these fellow-countrymen of yours say. Annas and Caiaphas say to Pilate: All the multitude of us cry out that he was born of fornication, and are not believed; these are proselytes, and his disciples. And Pilate, calling Annas and Caiaphas, says to them: What are proselytes? They say to him: They are by birth children of the Greeks, and have now become Jews. And those that said that He was not born of fornication, viz.--Lazarus, Asterius, Antonius, James, Atones, Zeras, Samuel, Isaac, Phinees, Crispus, Agrippas, and Judas (2)--say: *We are not proselytes, but are children of the Jews, and speak of the truth; for we were present at the betrothal of Joseph and Mary.*

And Pilate, calling these twelve men who said that He was not born of fornication, says to them: I adjure you by the health of Caesar, to tell me whether it be true that you say, that he was not born of fornication. They say to Pilate: We have a law against taking oaths, because it is a sin; but they will swear by the health of Caesar, (3) that it is not as we have said, and we are liable to death. Pilate says to Annas and Caiaphas: Have you nothing to answer to this? Annas and Caiaphas say to Pilate: These twelve are believed when they say that he was not born of fornication; all the multitude of us cry out that he was born of fornication, and that he is a sorcerer, and he says that he is the Son of God and a king, and we are not believed.

And Pilate orders all the multitude to go out, except the twelve men who said that He was not born of fornication, and he ordered Jesus to be separated from them. And Pilate says to them: For what reason do they wish to put him to death? They say to him: They are angry because he cures on the Sabbath. Pilate says: For a good work do they wish to put him to death? They say to him: Yes.

CHAP. 3.--And Pilate, filled with rage, went outside of the praetorium, and said to them: I take the sun to witness that I find no fault in this man. The Jews answered and said to the procurator: Unless this man were an evil-doer, we should not have delivered him to thee. And Pilate said, Do you take him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews said to Pilate: It is not lawful for us to put any one to death. Pilate said: Has God said that you are not to put to death, but that I am?

And Pilate went again into the praetorium, and spoke to Jesus privately, and said to Him: Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered Pilate: Dost thou say this of thyself, or have others said it to thee of me? Pilate answered Jesus: Am I also a Jew? Thy nation and the chief priests have given thee up to me. What hast thou done? Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world; for if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight in order that I should not

be given up to the Jews: but now my kingdom is not from thence. Pilate said to Him: Art thou then a king? Jesus answered him: Thou sayest that I am a king. Because for this have I been born, and have I come, in order that every one who is of the truth might hear my voice. Pilate says to him: What is truth? Jesus says to him: Truth is from heaven. Pilate says: Is truth not upon earth? Jesus says to Pilate: Thou seest how those who speak the truth are judged by those that have the power upon earth.

CHAP. 4.--And leaving Jesus within the praetorium, Pilate went out to the Jews, and said to them: I find no fault in him. The Jews say to him: He said, I can destroy this temple, and in three days build it. Pilate says: What temple? The Jews say: The one that Solomon (6) built in forty-six years, and this man speaks of pulling it down and building it in three days. Pilate says to them: I am innocent of the blood of this just man. See you to it. The Jews say: His blood be upon us, and upon our children.

And Pilate having summoned the elders and priests and Levites, said to them privately: Do not act thus, because no charge that you bring against him is worthy of death; for your charge is about curing and Sabbath profanation. The elders and the priests and the Levites say: If any one speak evil against Caesar, is he worthy of death or not? Pilate says: He is worthy of death. The Jews say to Pilate: If any one speak evil against Caesar, he is worthy of death; but this man has spoken evil against God.

And the procurator ordered the Jews to go outside of the praetorium; and summoning Jesus, he says to Him: What shall I do to thee? Jesus says to Pilate: As it has been given to thee. Pilate says: How given? Jesus says: Moses and the prophets have proclaimed beforehand of my death and resurrection. And the Jews noticing this, and hearing it, say to Pilate: What more wilt thou hear of this blasphemy? Pilate says to the Jews: If these words be blasphemous, do you take him for the blasphemy, and lead him away to your synagogue, and judge him according to your law. The Jews say to Pilate: Our law bears that a man who wrongs his fellow-men is worthy to receive forty save one; but he that blasphemeth God is to be stoned with stones.

Pilate says to them: Do you take him, and punish him in whatever way you please. The Jews say to Pilate: we wish that he be crucified. Pilate says: He is not deserving of crucifixion.

And the procurator, looking round upon the crowds of the Jews standing by, sees many of the Jews weeping, and says: All the multitude do not wish him to die. The elders of the Jews say: For this reason all the multitude of us have come, that he should die. Pilate says to the Jews: Why should he die? The Jews say: Because he called himself Son of God, and King.

CHAP. 5.--And one Nicodemus, a Jew, stood before the procurator, and said: I beseech your honour, let me say a few words. Pilate says: Say on. Nicodemus says: I said to the elders and the priests and Levites, and to all the multitude of the Jews in the synagogue, What do you seek to do with this man? This man many miracles and strange things, which no one has done or will do. Let him go, and do not wish any evil against him. If the miracles which he does are of God, they will stand; but if man, they will come to nothing. For assuredly Moses, being sent by God into Egypt, did many miracles, which the Lord commanded him to do before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And there were there Jannes and Jambres, servants of Pharaoh, and they also did not a few of the miracles which Moses did; and the Egyptians took them to be gods--this Jannes and this Jambres. But, since the miracles which they did were not of God, both they and those who believed in them were destroyed. And now release this man, for he is not deserving of death.

The Jews say to Nicodemus: Thou hast become his disciple, and therefore thou defendest him. Nicodemus says to them: Perhaps, too, the procurator has become his disciple, because he defends him. Has the emperor not appointed him to this place of dignity? And the Jews were vehemently enraged, and gnashed their teeth against Nicodemus. Pilate says to them: Why do you gnash your teeth against him when you hear the truth? The Jews say to Nicodemus: Mayst thou receive his truth and his portion. Nicodemus says: Amen, amen; may I receive it, as you have said.

CHAP. 6.--One of the Jews, stepping up, asked leave of the procurator to say a word. The procurator says: If thou wishest to say any thing, say on. And the Jew said: Thirty-eight years I lay in my bed in great agony. And when Jesus came, many demoniacs, and many lying ill of various diseases, were cured by him. And some young men, taking pity on me, carried me, bed and all, and took me to him. And when Jesus saw me, he had compassion on me, and said to me: Take up thy couch and walk. And I took up my couch, and walked. The Jews say to Pilate: Ask him on what day it was that he was cured. He that had been cured says: On a Sabbath. The Jews say: Is not this the very thing that we said, that on a Sabbath he cures and casts out demons?

And another Jew stepped up and said: I was born blind; I heard sounds, but saw not a face. And as Jesus passed by, I cried out with a loud voice, Pity me, O son of David. And he pitied me, and put his hands upon my eyes, and I instantly received my sight. And another Jew stepped up and said: I was crooked, and he straightened me with a word. And another said: I was a leper, and he cured me with a word.

CHAP. 7.--And a woman cried out from a distance, and said: I had an issue of blood, and I touched the hem of his garment, and the issue of blood which I had had for twelve years was stopped. The Jews say: we have a law, that a woman's evidence is not to be received.

CHAP. 8.--And others, a multitude both of men and women, cried out, saying: This man is a prophet, and the demons are subject to him. Pilate says to them who said that the demons were subject to Him: Why, then, were not your teachers also subject to him? They say to Pilate: We do not know. And others said: He raised Lazarus from the tomb after he had been dead four days. And the procurator trembled, and said to all the multitude of the Jews: Why do you wish to pour out innocent blood?

**CHAP. 9--**And having summoned Nicodemus and the twelve men that said He was not born of fornication, he says to them: What shall I do, because there is an insurrection among the people? They say to him: We know not; let them see to it. Again Pilate, having summoned all the multitude of the Jews, says: You know that it is customary, at the feast of unleavened bread, to release one prisoner to you. I have one condemned prisoner in the prison, a murderer named Barabbas, and this man standing in your presence, Jesus, in whom I find no fault. Which of them do you wish me to release to you? And they cry out: Barabbas. Pilate says: What, then, shall we do to Jesus who is called Christ? The Jews say: Let him be crucified. And others said: Thou art no friend of Caesar's if thou release this man, because he called himself Son of God and king. You wish, then, this man to be king, and not Caesar?

And Pilate, in a rage, says to the Jews: Always has your nation been rebellious, and you always speak against your benefactors. The Jews say: What benefactors? He says to them: Your God led you out of the land of Egypt from bitter slavery, and brought you safe through the sea as through dry land, and in the desert fed you with manna, and gave you quails, and quenched your thirst with water from a rock, and gave you a law; and in all these things you provoked your God

to anger, and sought a molten calf. And you exasperated your God, and He sought to slay you. And Moses prayed for you, and you were not put to death. And now you charge me with hating the emperor.

And rising up from the tribunal, he sought to go out. And the Jews cry out, and say: We know that Caesar is king, and not Jesus. For assuredly the magi brought gifts to him as to a king. And when Herod heard from the magi that a king had been born, he sought to slay him; and his father Joseph, knowing this, took him and his mother, and they fled into Egypt. And Herod hearing of it, destroyed the children of the Hebrews that had been born in Bethlehem. And when Pilate heard these words, he was afraid; and ordering the crowd to keep silence, because they were crying out, he said to them: So this is he whom Herod sought? The Jews say: Yes, it is he. And, taking water, Pilate washed his hands in the face of the sun, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man; see you to it. Again the Jews cry out: His blood be upon us, and upon our children.

Then Pilate ordered the curtain of the tribunal where he was sitting to be drawn, and says to Jesus: Thy nation has charged thee with being a king. On this account I sentence thee, first to be scourged, according to the enactment of venerable kings, and then to be fastened on the cross in the garden where thou wast seized. And let Dysmas and Gestas, the two malefactors, be crucified with thee.

CHAP. 10.--And Jesus went forth out of the praetorium, and the two malefactors with Him. And when they came to the place, they stripped Him of his clothes, and girded Him with a towel, and put a crown of thorns on Him round His head. And they crucified Him; and at the same time also they hung up the two malefactors along with Him. And Jesus said: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. And the soldiers parted His clothes among them; and the people stood looking at Him. And the chief priests, and the rulers with them, mocked Him, saying: He saved others; let him save himself. If he be the Son of God, let him come down from the cross. And the soldiers made sport of Him, coming near and offering Him vinegar mixed with gall, and said: Thou art the king of the Jews; save thyself. And Pilate, after the sentence, ordered the charge made against Him to be inscribed as a superscription in Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, according to what the Jews had said: He is king of the Jews. And one of the malefactors hanging up spoke to Him, saying: If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. And Dysmas answering, reproved him, saying: Dost thou not fear God, because thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the fit punishment of our deeds; but this man has done no evil. And he said to Jesus: Remember me, Lord, in Thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him: Amen, amen; I say to thee, Today shall thou be with me in Paradise.

CHAP. 11.--And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the earth until the ninth hour, the sun being darkened; and the curtain of the temple was split in the middle. And crying out with a loud voice, Jesus said: Father, BADDACH EPHKID RUEL, which is, interpreted: Into Thy hands I commit my spirit. And having said this, He gave up the ghost. And the centurion, seeing what had happened, glorified God, and said: This was a just man. And all the crowds that were present at this spectacle, when they saw what had happened, beat their breasts and went away.

And the centurion reported what had happened to the procurator. And when the procurator and his wife heard it, they were exceedingly grieved, and neither ate nor drank that day. And Pilate sent for the Jews, and said to them: Have you seen what has happened? And they say: There has been an eclipse of the sun in the usual way.

And His acquaintances were standing at a distance, and the women who came with Him from Galilee, seeing these things. And a man named Joseph, a councilor from the city of Arimathaea, who also waited for the kingdom of God, went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. And he took it down, and wrapped it in clean linen, and placed it in a tomb hewn out of the rock, in which no one had ever lain.

CHAP. 12.--And the Jews, hearing that Joseph had begged the body of Jesus, sought him and the twelve who said that Jesus was not born of fornication, and Nicodemus, and many others who had stepped up before Pilate and declared His good works. And of all these that were hid, Nicodemus alone was seen by them, because he was a ruler of the Jews. And Nicodemus says to them: How have you come into the synagogue? The Jews say to him: How hast thou come into the synagogue? for thou art a confederate of his, and his portion is with thee in the world to come. Nicodemus says: Amen, amen. And likewise Joseph also stepped out and said to them: Why are you angry against me because I begged the body of Jesus? Behold, I have put him in my new tomb, wrapping him in clean linen; and I have rolled a stone to the door of the tomb. And you have acted not well against the just man, because you have not repented of crucifying him, but also have pierced him with a spear. And the Jews seized Joseph, and ordered him to be secured until the first day of the week, and said to him: Know that the time does not allow us to do anything against thee, because the Sabbath is dawning; and know that thou shall not be deemed worthy of burial, but we shall give thy flesh to the birds of the air. Joseph says to them: These are the words of the arrogant Goliath, who reproached the living God and holy David. For God has said by the prophet, Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord. And now he that is uncircumcised in flesh, but circumcised in heart, has taken water, and washed his hands in the face of the sun, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just man; see ye to it. And you answered and said to Pilate, His blood be upon us, and upon our children. And now I am afraid lest the wrath of God come upon you, and upon your children, as you have said. And the Jews, hearing these words, were embittered in their souls, and seized Joseph, and locked him into a room where there was no window; and guards were stationed at the door, and they sealed the door where Joseph was locked in.

And on the Sabbath, the rulers of the synagogue, and the priests and the Levites, made a decree that all should be found in the synagogue on the first day of the week. And rising up early, all the multitude in the synagogue consulted by what death they should slay him. And when the Sanhedrin was sitting, they ordered him to be brought with much indignity. And having opened the door, they found him not. And all the people were surprised, and struck with dismay, because they found the seals unbroken. and because Caiaphas had the key. And they no longer dared to lay hands upon those who had spoken before Pilate in Jesus' behalf.

CHAP.13.--And while they were still sitting in the synagogue, and wondering about Joseph, there come some of the guard whom the Jews had begged of Pilate to guard the tomb of Jesus, that His disciples might not come and steal Him. And they reported to the rulers of the synagogue, and the priests and the Levites, what had happened: how there had been a great earthquake; and we saw an angel coming down from heaven, and he rolled away the stone from the mouth of the tomb, and sat upon it; and he shone like snow, and like lightning. And we were very much afraid, and lay like dead men; and we heard the voice of the angel saying to the women who remained beside the tomb, Be not afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here: He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay: and go quickly, and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and is in Galilee. The Jews say: To what women did he speak? The men of the guard say: We do not know who they were. The Jews say: At what time was this? The men of the guard say: At midnight. The Jews say: And wherefore did you not lay hold of

them? The men of the guard say: We were like dead men from fear, not expecting to see the light of day, and how could we lay hold of them? The Jews say: As the Lord liveth, we do not believe you. The men of the guard say to the Jews: You have seen so great miracles in the case of this man, and have not believed; and how can you believe us? And assuredly you have done well to swear that the Lord liveth, for indeed He does live. Again the men of the guard say: We have heard that you have locked up the man that begged the body of Jesus, and put a seal on the door; and that you have opened it, and not found him. Do you then give us the man whom you were guarding, and we shall give you Jesus. The Jews say: Joseph has gone away to his own city. The men of the guard say to the Jews: And Jesus has risen, as we heard from the angel, and is in Galilee.

And when the Jews heard these words, they were very much afraid, and said: We must take care lest this story be heard, and all incline to Jesus. And the Jews called a council, and paid down a considerable sum of money, and gave it to the soldiers, saying: Say, while we slept, his disciples came by night and stole him; and if this come to the ears of the procurator, we shall persuade him, and keep you out of trouble. And they took it, and said as they had been instructed.

CHAP. 14.--And Phinees a priest, and Adas a teacher, and Haggai a Levite, came down from Galilee to Jerusalem, and said to the rulers of the synagogue, and the priests and the Levites: We saw Jesus and his disciples sitting on the mountain called Mamilch; and he said to his disciples, Go into all the world, and preach to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned. And these signs shall attend those who have believed: in my name they shall cast out demons, speak new tongues, take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall by no means hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall be well. And while Jesus was speaking to his disciples, we saw him taken up to heaven.

The elders and the priests and Levites say: Give glory to the God of Israel, and confess to Him whether you have heard and seen those things of which you have given us an account. And those who had given the account said: As the Lord liveth, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we heard these things, and saw him taken up into heaven. The elders and the priests and the Levites say to them: Have you come to give us this announcement, or to offer prayer to God? And they say: To offer prayer to God. The elders and the chief priests and the Levites say to them: If you have come to offer prayer to God, why then have you told these idle tales in the presence of all the people? Says Phinees the priest, and Adas the teacher, and Haggai the Levite to the rulers of the synagogues, and the priests and the Levites: If what we have said and seen be sinful, behold, we are before you; do to us as seems good in your eyes. And they took the law, and made them swear upon it, not to give any more an account of these matters to any one. And they gave them to eat and drink, and sent them out of the city, having given them also money, and three men with them; and they sent them away to Galilee.

And these men having gone into Galilee, the chief priests, and the rulers of the synagogue, and the elders, came together into the synagogue, and locked the door, and lamented with a great lamentation, saying: Is this a miracle that has happened in Israel? And Annas and Caiaphas said: Why are you so much moved? Why do you weep? Do you not know that his disciples have given a sum of gold to the guards of the tomb, and have instructed them to say that an angel came down and rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb? And the priests and the elders said: Be it that his disciples have stolen his body; how is it that the life has come into his body, and that he is going, about in Galilee? And they being unable to give an answer to these things, said, after great hesitation: It is not lawful for us to believe the uncircumcised.

CHAP. 15.--And Nicodemus stood up, and stood before the Sanhedrin, saying: You say well; you are not ignorant, you people of the Lord, of these men that come down from Galilee, that they fear God, and are men of substance, haters of covetousness, men of peace; and they have declared with an oath. We saw Jesus upon the mountain Mamilch with his disciples, and he taught what we heard from him, and we saw him taken up into heaven. And no one asked them in what form he went up. For assuredly, as the book of the Holy Scriptures taught us, Helias also was taken up into heaven, and Elissaeus cried out with a loud voice, and Helias threw his sheepskin upon Elissaeus, and Elissaeus threw his sheepskin upon the Jordan, and crossed, and came into Jericho. And the children of the prophets met him, and said, O Elissaeus, where is thy master Helias? And he said, He has been taken up into heaven. And they said to Elissaeus, Has not a spirit seized him, and thrown him upon one of the mountains? But let us take our servants (with us, and seek him. And they persuaded Elissaeus, and he went away with them. And they sought him three days, and did not find him; and they knew he had been taken up. And now listen to me, and let us send into every district of Israel, and see lest perchance Christ has been taken up by a spirit, and thrown upon one of the mountains? And this proposal pleased all. And they sent into every district of Israel, and sought Jesus, and did not find Him; but they found Joseph in Arimathaea, and no one dared to lay hands on him.

And they reported to the elders, and the priests, and the Levites: We have gone round to every district of Israel, and have not found Jesus; but Joseph we have found in Arimathaea. And hearing about Joseph, they were glad, and gave glory to the God of Israel. And the rulers of the synagogue, and the priests and the Levites, having held a council as to the manner in which they should meet with Joseph, took a piece of paper, and wrote to Joseph as follows:--

Peace to thee! We know that we have sinned against God, and against thee; and we have prayed to the God of Israel, that thou shouldst deign to come to thy fathers, and to thy children, because we have all been grieved. For having opened the door, we did not find thee. And we know that we have counselled evil counsel against thee; but the Lord has defended thee, and the Lord Himself has scattered to the winds our counsel against thee, O honourable father Joseph.

And they chose from all Israel seven men, friends of Joseph, whom also Joseph himself was acquainted with; and the rulers of the synagogue, and the priests and the Levites, say to them: Take notice: if, after receiving our letter, he read it, know that he will come with you to us; but if he do not read it, know that he is ill-disposed towards us. And having saluted him in peace, return to us. And having blessed the men, they dismissed them. And the men came to Joseph, and did reverence to him, and said to him: Peace to thee! And he said: Peace to you, and to all the people of Israel! And they gave him the roll of the letter. And Joseph having received it, read the letter and rolled it up, and blessed God, and said: Blessed be the Lord God, who has delivered Israel, that they should not shed innocent blood; and blessed be the Lord, who sent out His angel, and covered me under his wings. And he set a table for them; and they ate and drank, and slept there. And they rose up early, and prayed. And Joseph saddled his ass, and set out with the men; and they came to the holy city Jerusalem. And all the people met Joseph, and cried out: Peace to thee in thy coming in! And he said to all the people: Peace to you! and he kissed them. And the people prayed with Joseph, and they were astonished at the sight of him. And Nicodemus received him into his house, and made a great feast, and called Annas and Caiaphas, and the elders, and the priests, and the Levites to his house. And they rejoiced, eating and drinking with Joseph; and after singing hymns, each proceeded to his own house. But Joseph remained in the house of Nicodemus. And on the following day, which was the preparation, the rulers of the synagogue and the priests and the Levites went early to the house of Nicodemus; and Nicodemus met them, and said: Peace to you! And they said: Peace to thee, and to Joseph, and to all thy house, and to

all the house of Joseph! And he brought them into his house. And all the Sanhedrin sat down, and Joseph sat down between Annas and Caiaphas: and no one dared to say a word to him. And Joseph said: Why have you called me? And they signaled to Nicodemus to speak to Joseph. And Nicodemus, opening his mouth, said to Joseph: Father, thou knowest that the honourable teachers, and the priests and the Levites, see to learn a word from thee. And Joseph said: Ask. And Annas and Caiaphas having taken the law, made Joseph swear, saying: Give glory to the God of Israel, and give Him confession; for Achar being made to swear by the prophet Jesus, did not forswear himself, but declared unto him all, and did not hide a word from him. Do thou also accordingly not hide from us to the extent of a word. And Joseph said: I shall not hide from you one word. And they said to him: With grief were we grieved because thou didst beg the body of Jesus, and wrap it in clean linen, and lay it in a tomb. And on account of this we secured thee in a room where there was no windows: and we put locks and seals upon the doors and guards kept watching where thou wast locked in And on the first day of the week we opened, and found thee not, and were grieved exceedingly; and astonishment fell upon all the people of the Lord until yesterday. And now relate to us what has happened to thee.

And Joseph said: On the preparation, about the tenth hour, you locked me up, and I remained all the Sabbath. And at midnight, as I was standing and praying, the room where you locked me in was hung up by the four corners, and I saw a light like lightning into my eyes. And I was afraid, and fell to the ground. And some one took me by the hand, and removed me from the place where I had fallen; and moisture of water was poured from my head even to my feet, and a smell of perfumes came about my nostrils. And he wiped my face, and kissed me, and said to me, Fear not, Joseph; open thine eyes, and see who it is that speaks to thee. And looking up, I saw Jesus. And I trembled and thought it was a phantom; and I said the commandments, and he said them with me. Even so you are not ignorant that a phantom, if it meet anybody, and hear the commandments, takes to flight. And seeing that he said them with the, I said to him, Rabbi Helias. And he said to me, I am not Helias. And I said to him, Who art thou, my lord? And he said to me, I am Jesus, whose body thou didst beg from Pilate; and thou didst clothe me with clean, linen. and didst put a napkin on my face, and didst lay me in thy new tomb, and didst roll a great stone to the door of the tomb. And I said to him that was speaking to me, Show me the place where I laid thee. And he carried me away, and showed me the place where I laid him; and the linen cloth was lying in it, and the napkin for his face. And I knew that it was Jesus. And he took me by the hand, and placed me, though the doors were locked, in the middle of my house, and led me away to my bed, and said to me, Peace to thee! And he kissed me, and said to me, For forty days go not forth out of thy house; for, behold, I go to my brethren into Galilee.

CHAP. 16.--And the rulers of the synagogue, and the priests and the Levites, when they heard these words from Joseph, became as dead, and fell to the ground, and fasted until the ninth hour. And Nicodemus, along with Joseph, exhorted Annas and Caiaphas, the priests and the Levites, saying: Rise up and stand upon your feet, and taste bread, and strengthen your souls, because tomorrow is the Sabbath of the Lord. And they rose up, and prayed to God, and ate and drank, and departed every man to his own house.

And on the Sabbath our teachers and the priests and Levites sat questioning each other, and saying: What is this wrath that has come upon us? for we know his father and mother. Levi, a teacher, says: I know that his parents fear God, and do not withdraw themselves from the prayers, and give the tithes thrice a year. And when Jesus was born, his parents brought him to this place, and gave sacrifices and burnt-offerings to God. And when the great teacher Symeon took him into his arms, he said, Now Thou sendest away Thy servant, Lord, according to Thy word, in peace; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all the

peoples: a light for the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. And Symeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother, I give thee good news about this child. And Mary said, It is well, my lord. And Symeon said to her, It is well; behold, he lies for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign spoken against; anti of thee thyself a sword shall go through the soul, in order that the reasoning of many hearts may be revealed.

They say to the teacher Levi: How knowest thou these things? Levi says to them: Do you not know that from him I learned the law? The Sanhedrin say to him: We wish to see thy father. And they sent for his father. And they asked him; anti he said to them: Why have you not believed my son? The blessed and just Symeon himself taught him the law. The Sanhedrin says to Rabbi Levi: Is the word that you have said true? And he said: It is true. And the rulers of the synagogue, and the priests and the Levites, said to themselves: Come, let us send into Galilee to the three men that came and told about his teaching and his taking up, and let them tell us how they saw him taken up. And this saying pleased all. And they sent away the three men who had already gone away into Galilee with them; and they say to them: Say to Rabbi Adas, and Rabbi Phinees, and Rabbi Haggai: Peace to you, and all who are with you! A great inquiry having taken place in tile Sanhedrin, we have been sent to you to call you to this holy place, Jerusalem.

And the men set out into Galilee, and found them sitting and considering the law; and they saluted them in peace. And the men who were in Galilee said to those who had come to them: Peace upon all Israel! And they said: Peace to you! And they again said to them: Why have you come? And those who had been sent said: The Sanhedrin call you to the holy city Jerusalem. And when the men heard that they were sought by the Sanhedrin, they prayed to God, and reclined with the men, and ate and drank, and rose up, and set out in peace to Jerusalem.

And on the following day the Sanhedrin sat in the synagogue, and asked them, saying: Did you really see Jesus sitting on the mountain Mamilch teaching his eleven disciples, and did you see him taken up? And the men answered them, and said: As we saw him taken up, so also we said.

Annas says: Take them away from one another, and let us see whether their account agrees. And they took them away from one another. And first they call Adas, and say to him: How didst thou see Jesus taken up? Adas says: While he was yet sitting on the mountain Mamilch, and teaching his disciples, we saw a cloud overshadowing both him and his disciples. And the cloud took him up into heaven, and his disciples lay upon their face upon the earth. And they call Phinees the priest, and ask him also, saying: How didst thou see Jesus taken up? And he spoke in like manner. And they again asked Haggai, and he spoke in like manner. And the Sanhedrin said: The law of Moses holds: At the mouth of two or three every word shall be established. Buthem, a teacher, says: It is written in the law, And Enoch walked with God, and is not, because God took him. Jairus, a readier, said: And the death of holy Moses we have heard of, and have not seen it; for it is written in the law of the Lord, And Moses died from the mouth of the Lord, and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Rabbi Levi said: Why did Rabbi Symeon say, when he saw Jesus, "Behold, he lies for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign spoken against?" And Rabbi Isaac said: It is written in the law, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall go before thee to keep thee in every good way, because my name has been called upon him.

Then Annas and Caiaphas said: Rightly have you said what is written in the law of Moses, that no one saw the death of Enoch, and no one has named the death of Moses; hut Jesus was tried before Pilate, and we saw him receiving blows and spittings on his face, and the soldiers put about him a crown of thorns, and he was scourged, and received sentence from Pilate, and was crucified upon

the Cranium, and two robbers with him; and they gave him to drink vinegar with gall, and Longinus the soldier pierced his side with a spear; and Joseph our honourable father begged his body, and, as he says, he is risen; and as the three teachers say, We saw him taken up into heaven; and Rabbi Levi has given evidence of what was said by Rabbi Symeon, and that he said, Behold, he lies for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign spoken against. And all the teachers said to all the people of the Lord: If this was from the Lord, and is wonderful in your eyes, knowing you shall know, O house of Jacob, that it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth upon a tree. And another Scripture teaches: The gods which have not made the heaven and the earth shall be destroyed. And the priests and the Levites said to each other: If his memorial be until the year that is called Jobel, know that it shall endure for ever, and he hath raised for himself a new people. Then the rulers of the synagogue, and the priests and the Levites, announced to all Israel, saying: Cursed is that man who shall worship the work of man's hand, and cursed is the man who shall worship the creatures more than the Creator. And all the people said, Amen, amen.

And all the people praised the Lord, and said: Blessed is the Lord, who hath given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He hath spoken; there hath not fallen one word of every good word of His that He spoke to Moses His servant. May the Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers: let Him not destroy us. And let Him not destroy us, that we may incline our hearts to Him, that we may walk in all His ways, that we may keep His commandments and His judgments which He commanded to our fathers. And the Lord shall be for a king over all the earth in that day; and there shall be one Lord, and His name one. The Lord is our king: He shall save us. There is none like Thee, O Lord. Great art Thou, O Lord, and great is Thy name. By Thy power heal us. O Lord, and we shall be healed: save us, O Lord, and we shall be saved; because we are Thy lot and heritage. And the Lord will not leave His people, for His great name's sake; for the Lord has begun to make us into His people.

And all, having sung praises, went away each man to his own house, glorifying God; for His is the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

## **THE GOSPEL OF NICODEMUS**

Part II.--The Descent of Christ Into Hell.

Greek Form.

Chap. I.--Joseph says: And why do you wonder that Jesus has risen? But it is wonderful that He has not risen alone, but that He has also raised many others of the dead who have appeared in Jerusalem to many. And if you do not know the others, Symeon at least, who received Jesus, and his two sons whom He has raised up--them at least you know. For we buried them not long ago; but now their tombs are seen open and empty, and they are alive, and dwelling in Arimathaea. They therefore sent men, and they found their tombs open and empty. Joseph says: Let us go to Arimathaea and find them.

Then rose up the chief priests Annas and Caiaphas, and Joseph, and Nicodemus, and Gamaliel, and others with them, and went away to Arimathaea, and found those whom Joseph spoke of. They made prayer, therefore, and saluted each other. Then they came with them to Jerusalem, and brought them into the synagogue, and secured the doors, and placed in the midst the old covenant of the Jews; and the chief priests said to them: We wish you to swear by the God of Israel and Adonai, and so that you tell the truth, how you have risen, and who has raised you from the dead.

The men who had risen having heard this, said to the chief priests: Give us paper and ink and pen. These therefore they brought. And sitting down, they wrote thus:--

Chap. 2 .--O Lord Jesus Christ, the resurrection and the life of the world, grant us grace that we may give an account of Thy resurrection, and Thy miracles which Thou didst in Hades. We then were in Hades, with all who had fallen asleep since the beginning of the world. And at the hour of midnight there rose a light as if of the sun, and shone into these dark regions; and we were all lighted up, and saw each other. And straightway our father Abraham was united with the patriarchs and the prophets, and at the same time they were filled with joy, and said to each other: This light is from a great source of light. The prophet Hesaias, who was there present, said: This light is from the Father, and from the Son, and from the Holy Spirit; about whom I prophesied when yet alive, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephtholim, the people that sat in darkness, have seen a great light.

Then there came into the midst another, an ascetic from the desert; and the patriarchs said to him: Who art thou? And he said: I am John, the last of the prophets, who made the paths of the Son of God straight, and proclaimed to the people repentance for the remission of sins. And the Son of God came to me; and I, seeing Him a long way off, said to the people: Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. And with my hand I baptized Him in the river Jordan, and I saw like a dove also the Holy Spirit coming upon Him; and I heard also the voice of God, even the Father, thus saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And on this account He sent me also to you, to proclaim how the only begotten Son of God is coming here, that whosoever shall believe in Him shall be saved, and whosoever shall not believe in Him shall be condemned. On this account I say to you all, in order that when you see Him you all may adore Him, that now only is for you the time of repentance for having adored idols in the vain upper world, and for the sins you have committed, and that this is impossible at any other time.

Chap. 3 .--While John, therefore, was thus teaching those in Hades, the first created and forefather Adam heard, and said to his son Seth: My son, I wish thee to tell the forefathers of the race of men and the prophets where I sent thee, when it fell to my lot to die. And Seth said: Prophets and patriarchs, hear. When my father Adam, the first created, was about to fall once upon a time into death, he sent me to make entreaty to God very close by the gate of paradise, that He would guide me by an angel to the tree of compassion and that I might take oil and anoint my father, and that he might rise up from his sickness: which thing, therefore, I also did. And after the prayer an angel of the Lord came, and said to me: What, Seth, dost thou ask? Dost thou ask oil which raiseth up the sick, or the tree from which this oil flows, on account of the sickness of thy father? This is not to be found now. Go, therefore, and tell thy father, that after the accomplishing of five thousand five hundred years from the creation of the world, thou shall come into the earth the only begotten Son of God, being made man; and He shall anoint him with this oil, and shall raise him up; and shall wash clean, with water and with the Holy Spirit, both him and those out of him, and then shall he be healed of every disease; but now this is impossible. When the patriarchs and the prophets heard these words, they rejoiced greatly.

Chap. 4 .--And when all were in such joy, came Satan the heir of darkness, and said to Hades: O all-devouring and insatiable, hear my words. There is of the race of the Jews one named Jesus, calling himself the Son of God; and being a man, by our working with them the Jews have crucified him: and now when he is dead, be ready that we may secure him here. For I know that he is a man, and I heard him also saying, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. He has also done me many evils when living with mortals in the upper world. For wherever he found my servants, he persecuted them; and whatever men I made crooked, blind, lame, lepers, or any

such thing, by a single word he healed them; and many whom I had got ready to be buried, even these through a single word he brought to life again.

Hades says: And is this man so powerful as to do such things by a single word? or if he be so, canst thou withstand him? It seems to me that, if he be so, no one will be able to withstand him. And if thou sayest that thou didst hear him dreading death, he said this mocking thee, and laughing, wishing to seize thee with the strong hand; and woe, woe to thee, to all eternity!

Satan says: O all-devouring and insatiable Hades, art thou so afraid at hearing of our common enemy? I was not afraid of him, but worked in the Jews, and they crucified him, and gave him also to drink gall with vinegar. Make ready, then, in order that you may lay fast hold of him when he comes. Hades answered: Heir of darkness, son of destruction, devil, thou hast just now told me that many whom thou hadst made ready to be buried, be brought to life again by a single word. And if he has delivered others from the tomb, how and with what power shall he be laid hold of by us? For I not long ago swallowed down one dead, Lazarus by name; and not long after, one of the living by a single word dragged him up by force out of my bowels: and I think that it was he of whom thou speakest. If, therefore, we receive him here, I am afraid lest perchance we be in danger even about the rest. For, lo, all those that I have swallowed from eternity I perceive to be in commotion, and I am pained in my belly. And the snatching away of Lazarus beforehand seems to me to be no good sign: for not like a dead body, but like an eagle, he flew out of me; for so suddenly did the earth throw him out. Wherefore also I adjure even thee, for thy benefit and for mine, not to bring him here; for I think that he is coming here to raise all the dead. And this I tell thee: by the darkness in which we live, if thou bring him here, not one of the dead will be left behind in it to me.

Chap. 5.--While Satan and Hades were thus speaking to each other, there was a great voice like thunder, saying: Lift up your gates, O ye rulers; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting gates; and the King of glory shall come in. When Hades heard, he said to Satan: Go forth, if thou art able, and withstand him. Satan therefore went forth to the outside. Then Hades says to his demons: Secure well and strongly the gates of brass and the bars of iron, and attend to my bolts, and stand in order, and see to everything; for if he come in here, woe will seize us.

The forefathers having heard this, began all to revile him, saying: O all-devouring and insatiable! open, that the King of glory may come in. David the prophet says: Dost thou not know, O blind, that I when living in the world prophesied this saying: Lift up your gates, O ye rulers? Hesaias said: I, foreseeing this by the Holy Spirit, wrote: The dead shall rise up, and those in their tombs shall be raised, and those in the earth shall rejoice. And where, O death, is thy sting? where, O Hades, is thy victory? There came, then, again a voice saying: Lift up the gates. Hades, hearing the voice the second time, answered as if forsooth he did not know, and says: Who is this King of glory? The angels of the Lord say: The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. And immediately with these words the brazen gates were shattered, and the iron bars broken, and all the dead who had been bound came out of the prisons, and we with the n And the King of glory came in in the form of a man, and all the dark places of Hades were lighted up.

Chap. 6.--Immediately Hades cried out: We have been conquered: woe to us! But who art thou, that hast such power and might? and what art thou, who comest here without sin who art seen to be small and yet of great power, lowly and exalted, the slave and the master, the soldier and the king, who hast power over the dead and the living? Thou wast nailed on the cross, and placed in the tomb; and now thou art free, and hast destroyed all our power. Art thou then the Jesus about

whom the chief satrap Satan told us, that through cross and death thou art to inherit the whole world?

Then the King of glory seized the chief satrap Satan by the head, and delivered him to His angels, and said: With iron chains bind his hands and his feet, and his neck, and his mouth. Then He delivered him to Hades, and said: Take him, and keep him secure till my second appearing.

Chap. 7 .--And Hades receiving Satan, said to him: Beelzebul, heir of fire and punishment, enemy of the saints, through what necessity didst thou bring about that the King of glory should be crucified, so that he should come here and deprive us of our power? Turn and see that not one of the dead has been left in me, but all that thou hast gained through the tree of knowledge, all hast thou lost through the tree of the cross: and all thy joy has been turned into grief; and wishing to put to death the King of glory, thou hast put thyself to death. For, since i have received thee to keep thee safe, by experience shall thou learn how many evils I shall do unto thee. O arch-devil, the beginning of death, root of sin, end of all evil, what evil didst thou find in Jesus, that thou shouldst compass his destruction? how hast thou dared to do such evil? how hast thou busied thyself to bring down such a man into this darkness, through whom thou hast been deprived of all who have died from eternity?

Chap. 8 .--While Hades was thus discoursing to Satan, the King of glory stretched out His right hand, and took hold of our forefather Adam, and raised him. Then turning also to the rest, He said: Come all with me, as many as have died through the tree which he touched: for, behold, I again raise you all up through the tree of the cross. Thereupon He brought them all out, and our forefather Adam seemed to be filled with joy, and said: I thank Thy majesty, O Lord, that Thou hast brought me up out of the lowest Hades. Likewise also all the prophets and the saints said: We thank Thee, O Christ, Saviour of the world, that Thou hast brought our life up out of destruction.

And after they had thus spoken, the Saviour blessed Adam with the sign of the cross on his forehead, and did this also to tire patriarchs, and prophets, and martyrs, and forefathers; and He took them, and sprang up out of Hades. And while He was going, the holy fathers accompanying Him sang praises, saying: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: Alleluia; to Him be the glory of oil the saints.

Chap. 9 .--And setting out to paradise, He took hold of our forefather Adam by the hand, and delivered him, and all the just, to the archangel Michael. And as they were going into the door of paradise, there met them two old men, to whom the holy fathers said: Who are you, who have not seen death, and have not come down into Hades, but who dwell in paradise in your bodies and your souls? One of them answered, and said: I am Enoch, who was well-pleasing to God, and who was translated hither by Him; and this is Helias the Thesbite; and we are also to live until the end of the world; and then we are to be sent by God to withstand Antichrist, and to be slain by him, and after three days to rise again, and to be snatched up in clouds to meet the Lord.

Chap. 10 .--While they were thus speaking, there came another lowly man, carrying also upon his shoulders a cross, to whom the holy fathers said: Who art thou, who hast the look of a robber; and what is the cross which thou bearest upon thy shoulders? He answered: I, as you say, was a robber and a thief in the world, and for these things the Jews laid hold of me, and delivered me to the death of the cross, along with our Lord Jesus Christ. While, then, He was hanging upon the cross, I, seeing the miracles that were done, believed in Him, and entreated Him, and said, Lord, when Thou shall be King, do not forget me. And immediately He said to me, Amen, amen: to-

day, I say unto thee, shall thou be with me in paradise. Therefore I came to paradise carrying my cross; and finding the archangel Michael, I said to him, Our Lord Jesus, who has been crucified, has sent me here; bring me, therefore, to the gate of Eden. And the flaming sword, seeing the sign of the cross, opened to me, and I went in. Then the archangel says to me, Wait a little, for there cometh also the forefather of the race of men, Adam, with the just, that they too may come in. And now, seeing you, I came to meet you. The saints hearing these things, all cried out with a loud voice: Great is our Lord, and great is His strength.

Chap. 11 .--All these things we saw and heard; we, the two brothers, who also have been sent by Michael the archangel, and have been ordered to proclaim the resurrection of the Lord, but first to go away to the Jordan and to be baptized. Thither also we have gone, and have been baptized with the rest of the dead who have risen. Thereafter also we came to Jerusalem, and celebrated the passover of the resurrection. But now we are going away, being unable to stay here. And the love of God, even the Father, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

Having written these things, and secured the rolls, they gave the half to the chief priests, and the half to Joseph and Nicodemus. And they immediately disappeared: to the glory of our Lord Jesus