

So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your victory?

"Where, O death, is your sting?"

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Source: 1 Corinthians 15:12–28, 35–57, from *The Holy Bible, New International Version*.

NONCANONICAL GOSPELS

INFANCY GOSPEL OF JAMES

Early Christians were interested in accounts of Jesus' childhood, which filled the gaps in the four Gospel narratives. Many childhood gospels circulated, but most of the information in these derive from two texts written about 150 C.E.: the Infancy Gospel of James and the Infancy Gospel of Thomas. The Infancy Gospel of James, also called the Protoevangelium, or first gospel, is pseudonomously ascribed to James, the brother of Jesus, and scholars believe that its author was a non-Jewish Christian from outside Palestine. The text presents the oldest account of the early life of Mary, including her espousal to Joseph, and describes the virgin birth of Jesus. The tradition of Mary's lifelong virginity runs counter to statements in the gospels referring to Jesus' brothers. The Infancy Gospel of James reconciles these two traditions by presenting Joseph as a widower with children from his previous marriage. The feast of Mary's presentation in the temple (November 21) in Catholic and Orthodox traditions is based on events in the following selection.

7. Many months passed, but when the child reached two years of age, Joachim said, "Let's take her up to the temple of the Lord, so that we can keep the promise we made, or else the Lord will be angry with us and our gift will be unacceptable."

And Anna said, "Let's wait until she is three, so she won't miss her father or mother."

And Joachim agreed: "Let's wait."

When the child turned three years of age, Joachim said, "Let's send for the undefiled Hebrew daughters. Let them each take a lamp and light it, so the child won't turn back and have her heart captivated by things outside the Lord's temple." And this is what they did until the time they ascended to the Lord's temple.

The priest welcomed her, kissed her, and blessed her: "The Lord God has exalted your name among all generations. In you the Lord will disclose his redemption to the people of Israel during the last days."

And he sat her down on the third step of the altar, and the Lord showered favor on her. And she danced, and the whole house of Israel loved her.

8. Her parents left for home marveling and praising and glorifying the Lord God because the child did not look back at them. And Mary lived in the temple of the Lord. She was fed there like a dove, receiving her food from the hand of a heavenly messenger.

When she turned twelve, however, there was a meeting of the priests. "Look," they said, "Mary has turned twelve in the temple of the Lord. What should we do with her so she won't pollute the sanctuary of the Lord our God?" And they said to the high priest, "You stand at the altar of the Lord. Enter and pray about her, and we'll do whatever the Lord God discloses to you."

And so the high priest took the vestment with the twelve bells, entered the Holy of Holies, and began to pray about her. And suddenly a messenger of the Lord appeared: "Zechariah, Zechariah, go out and assemble the widowers of the people and have them each bring a staff. She will become the wife of the one to whom the Lord God shows a sign." And so heralds covered the surrounding territory of Judea. The trumpet of the Lord sounded and all the widowers came running.

9. And Joseph, too, threw down his carpenter's axe and left for the meeting. When they had all gathered, they went to the high priest with their staffs. After the high priest had collected everyone's staff, he entered the temple and began to pray. When he had finished his prayer, he took the staffs and went out and began to give them back to each man. But there was no sign of any of them. Joseph got the last staff. Suddenly a dove came out of this staff and perched on Joseph's head. "Joseph, Joseph," the high priest said, "you've been chosen by lot to take the virgin of the Lord into your care and protection."

But Joseph objected: "I already have sons and I'm an old man; she's only a young woman. I'm afraid that I'll become the butt of jokes among the people of Israel." . . .

13. She was in her sixth month when one day Joseph came home from his building projects, entered the house, and found her pregnant. He struck himself in the face, threw himself to the ground on sackcloth, and began to cry bitterly: "What sort of face should I present to the

Lord God? What prayer can I say on her behalf since I received her as a virgin from the temple of the Lord God and didn't protect her? Who has set this trap for me? Who has done this evil deed in my house? Who has lured this virgin away from me and violated her? The story of Adam has been repeated in my case, hasn't it? For just as Adam was praying when the serpent came and found Eve alone, deceived her, and corrupted her, so the same thing has happened to me."

So Joseph got up from the sackcloth and summoned Mary and said to her, "God has taken a special interest in you—how could you have done this? Have you forgotten the Lord your God? Why have you brought shame on yourself, you who were raised in the Holy of Holies and fed by a heavenly messenger?"

But she began to cry bitter tears: "I'm innocent. I haven't had sex with any man."

And Joseph said to her, "Then where did the child you're carrying come from?"

And she replied, "As the Lord my God lives, I don't know where it came from."

14. And Joseph became very frightened and no longer spoke with her as he pondered what he was going to do with her. And Joseph said to himself, "If I try to cover up her sin, I'll end up going against the law of the Lord. And if I disclose her condition to the people of Israel, I'm afraid that the child inside her might be heaven-sent and I'll end up handing innocent blood over to a death sentence. So what should I do with her? [I know,] I'll divorce her quietly."

But when night came a messenger of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream and said: "Don't be afraid of this girl, because the child in her is the holy spirit's doing. She will have a son and you will name him Jesus—the name means 'he will save his people from their sins.'" And Joseph got up from his sleep and praised the God of Israel, who had given him this favor. And so he began to protect the girl.

15. Then Annas the scholar came to him and said to him, "Joseph, why haven't you attended our assembly?"

And he replied to him, "Because I was worn out from the trip and rested my first day home."

Then Annas turned and saw that Mary was pregnant.

He left in a hurry for the high priest and said to him, "You remember Joseph, don't you—the man you yourself vouched for? Well, he has committed a serious offense."

And the high priest asked, "In what way?"

"Joseph has violated the virgin he received from the temple of the Lord," he replied. "He had his way with her and hasn't disclosed his action to the people of Israel."

And the high priest asked him, "Has Joseph really done this?"

And he replied, "Send temple assistants and you'll find the virgin pregnant."

And so the temple assistants went and found her just as Annas had reported, and then they brought her, along with Joseph, to the court.

"Mary, why have you done this?" the high priest asked her. "Why have you humiliated yourself? Have you forgotten the Lord your God, you who were raised in the Holy of Holies and were fed by heavenly messengers? You of all people, who heard their hymns and danced for them—why have you done this?"

And she wept bitterly: "As the Lord God lives, I stand innocent before him. Believe me, I've not had sex with any man."

And the high priest said, "Joseph, why have you done this?"

And Joseph said, "As the Lord lives, I am innocent where she is concerned."

And the high priest said, "Don't perjure yourself, but tell the truth. You've had your way with her and haven't disclosed this action to the people of Israel. And you haven't humbled yourself under God's mighty hand, so that your offspring might be blessed."

But Joseph was silent.

16. Then the high priest said, "Return the virgin you received from the temple of the Lord."

And Joseph, bursting into tears . . . [said nothing].

And the high priest said, "I'm going to give you the Lord's drink test, and it will disclose your sin clearly to both of you."

And the high priest took the water and made Joseph drink it and sent him into the wilderness, but he returned unharmed. And he made the girl drink it, too, and sent her into the wilderness. She also came back unharmed. And everybody was surprised because their sin had not been revealed. And so the high priest said, "If the Lord God has not exposed your sin, then neither do I condemn you." And he dismissed them. Joseph took Mary and returned home celebrating and praising the God of Israel.

Source: Infancy Gospel of James 7–9, 13–16, from *The Complete Gospels*.

INFANCY GOSPEL OF THOMAS

Written about 150 C.E., the Infancy Gospel of Thomas was among the most popular apocryphal writings in the early Church. The text deals with Jesus' childhood up to his twelfth year. The youthful Jesus is presented as having deadly divine powers, which he angrily uses to get his way. As he grows, though, his sense of moral responsibility progressively develops, and he uses his powers to heal rather than harm. The story provides an interesting commentary on the divine and human natures of Jesus: His power and knowledge are fully divine, but his conscience and emotions are human and require maturing. The text is reconstructed from several surviving manuscripts that vary greatly; some scholars believe that the original included sayings, although only the story lines are preserved.

1. I, Thomas the Israelite, am reporting to you, all my non-Jewish brothers and sisters, to make known the extraordinary childhood deeds of our Lord Jesus Christ—what he did after his birth in my region. This is how it all started:
2. When this boy, Jesus, was five years old, he was playing at the ford of a rushing stream. He was collecting the flowing water into ponds and made the water instantly pure. He did this with a single command. He then made soft clay and shaped it into twelve sparrows. He did this on the sabbath day, and many other boys were playing with him.

But when a Jew saw what Jesus was doing while playing on the sabbath day, he immediately went off and told Joseph, Jesus' father: "See here, your boy is at the ford and has taken mud and fashioned twelve birds with it, and so has violated the sabbath."

So Joseph went there, and as soon as he spotted him he shouted, "Why are you doing what's not permitted on the sabbath?"

But Jesus simply clapped his hands and shouted to the sparrows: "Be off, fly away, and remember me, you who are now alive!" And the sparrows took off and flew away noisily.

The Jews watched with amazement, then left the scene to report to their leaders what they had seen Jesus doing.

3. The son of Annas the scholar, standing there with Jesus, took a willow branch and drained the water Jesus had collected. Jesus, however, saw what had happened and became angry, saying to him, "Damn you, you irreverent fool! What harm did the ponds of water do to you? From this moment you, too, will dry up like a tree, and you'll never produce leaves or root to bear fruit."

In an instant the boy had completely withered away. Then Jesus departed and left for the house of Joseph. The parents of the boy who had withered away picked him up and were carrying him out, sad because he was so young. And they came to Joseph and accused him: "It's your fault—your boy did all this."

4. Later he was going through the village again when a boy ran by and bumped him on the shoulder. Jesus got angry and said to him, "You won't continue your journey." And all of a sudden he fell down and died.

Some people saw what had happened and said, "Where has this boy come from? Everything he says happens instantly!"

The parents of the dead boy came to Joseph and blamed him, saying, "Because you have such a boy, you can't live with us in the village, or else teach him to bless and not curse. He's killing our children!" . . .

14. When Joseph saw the child's aptitude, and his great intelligence for his age, he again resolved that Jesus should not remain illiterate. So he took him and handed him over to another teacher. The teacher said to Joseph, "First I'll teach him Greek, then Hebrew." This teacher, of course, knew of the child's previous experience [with a teacher] and was afraid of him. Still, he wrote out the alphabet and instructed him for quite a while, though Jesus was unresponsive.

Then Jesus spoke: "If you're really a teacher, and if you know the letters well, tell me the meaning of the letter alpha, and I'll tell you the meaning of beta."

The teacher became exasperated and hit him on the head. Jesus got angry and cursed him, and the teacher immediately lost consciousness and fell face down on the ground.

The child returned to Joseph's house. But Joseph was upset and gave this instruction to his mother: "Don't let him go outside, because those who annoy him end up dead."

15. After some time another teacher, a close friend of Joseph, said to him "Send the child to my schoolroom. Perhaps with some flattery I can teach him his letters."

Joseph replied, "If you can muster the courage, brother, take him with you." And so he took him along with much fear and trepidation but the child was happy to go.

Jesus strode boldly into the schoolroom and found a book lying on the desk. He took the book but did not read the letters in it. Rather he opened his mouth and spoke by [the power of] the holy spirit and taught the law to those standing there.

A large crowd gathered and stood listening to him, and they marveled at the maturity of his teaching and his readiness of speech—a mere child able to say such things.

When Joseph heard about this he feared the worst and ran to the schoolroom, imagining that his teacher was having trouble with Jesus.

But the teacher said to Joseph, "Brother, please know that accepted this child as a student, but already he's full of grace and wisdom. So I'm asking you, brother, to take him back home."

When the child heard this, he immediately smiled at him and said, "Because you have spoken and testified rightly, that other teacher who was struck down will be healed." And right away he was. Joseph took his child and went home.

16. Joseph sent his son James to tie up some wood and carry it back to the house, and the child Jesus followed. While James was gathering the firewood, a viper bit his hand. And as he lay sprawled out on the ground dying, Jesus came and blew on the bite. Immediately the pain stopped the animal burst apart, and James got better on the spot.

17. After this incident an infant in Joseph's neighborhood became sick and died, and his mother grieved terribly. Jesus heard the loud wailing and the uproar that was going on and quickly ran there.

When he found the child dead, he touched its chest and said, "Say to you, infant, don't die but live, and be with your mother."

And immediately the infant looked up and laughed. Jesus then said to the woman, "Take it, give it your breast, and remember me."

The crowd of onlookers marveled at this: "Truly this child was god or a heavenly messenger of God—whatever he says instantly happens." But Jesus left and went on playing with the other children.

18. A year later, while a building was under construction, a man fell from the top of it and died. There was quite a commotion, so Jesus got up and went there. When he saw the man lying dead, he took his hand and said, "I say to you, sir, get up and go back to work." And he immediately got up and worshipped him.

The crowd saw this and marveled: "This child's from heaven—he must be, because he has saved many souls from death, and he can go on saving all his life."

Source: Infancy Gospel of Thomas 1–4, 14–18, from *The Complete Gospels*.

GNOSTIC GOSPEL OF THOMAS

The 1945 discovery of several dozen Gnostic texts has redefined the study of early Christianity. The jewel in the crown of these texts is the Gospel of Thomas, which broadens our understanding of the historical Jesus. The text is a sayings gospel insofar as it contains no story line and little dialog. The 114 sayings are organized around particular catchwords but do not systematically develop themes. Although the text was ultimately compiled in the second century, it may be based on an original core of short sayings as early as those in any other Gospel. These, in turn, come from orally transmitted accounts of Jesus' teachings. The challenge for scholars is to identify that core amid embellishments penned by later writers. A Gnostic component of the text suggests that these are secret teachings of Jesus, knowledge of which will free one's spirit from the material world. Many of the sayings parallel those found in the four canonical Gospels. Some of the parables in Thomas are more concise and thus, perhaps, earlier than their canonical counterparts (8, 9, 57, 63, 64, 65). A large group of sayings is unique to this text, although it probably did not originate with Jesus (15, 17, 18, 19). Most interesting, however, are two sayings that scholars believe originated with Jesus but that are absent from the canonical Gospels (97, 98).

Prologue. These are the secret sayings that the living Jesus spoke and Didymos Judas Thomas recorded.

1. And he said, "Whoever discovers the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death."
2. Jesus said, "Those who seek should not stop seeking until they find. When they find, they will be disturbed. When they are disturbed, they will marvel, and will rule overall."
3. Jesus said, "If your leaders say to you, 'Look, the [Father's] imperial rule is in the sky,' then the birds of the sky will precede you. If they say to you, 'It is in the sea,' then the fish will precede you. Rather, the [Father's] imperial rule is inside you and outside you. When you know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will understand that you are children of the living Father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you live in poverty, and you are the poverty."
4. Jesus said, "The person old in days won't hesitate to ask a little child seven days old about the place of life, and that person will live. For many of the first will be last, and will become a single one."

5. Jesus said, "Know what is in front of your face, and what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you. For there is nothing hidden that won't be revealed."
6. His disciples asked him and said to him, "Do you want us to fast? How should we pray? Should we give to charity? What diet should we observe?"

Jesus said, "Don't lie, and don't do what you hate, because all things are disclosed before heaven. After all, there is nothing hidden that won't be revealed, and there is nothing covered up that will remain undisclosed."

7. Jesus said, "Lucky is the lion that the human will eat, so that the lion becomes human. And foul is the human that the lion will eat, and the lion still will become human."
8. And he said, "The human one is like a wise fisherman who cast his net into the sea and drew it up from the sea full of little fish. Among them the wise fisherman discovered a fine large fish. He threw all the little fish back into the sea, and easily chose the large fish. Anyone here with two good ears had better listen!"
9. Jesus said,

Look, the sower went out, took a handful (of seeds), and scattered (them). Some fell on the road, and the birds came and gathered them. Others fell on rock, and they didn't take root in the soil and didn't produce heads of grain. Others fell on thorns, and they choked the seeds and worms ate them. And others fell on good soil, and it produced a good crop: it yielded sixty per measure and one hundred twenty per measure.

10. Jesus said, "I have cast fire upon the world, and look, I'm guarding it until it blazes."
 11. Jesus said, "This heaven will pass away, and the one above it will pass away. The dead are not alive, and the living will not die. During the days when you ate what is dead, you made it come alive. When you are in the light, what will you do? On the day when you were one, you became two. But when you become two, what will you do?"
 12. The disciples said to Jesus, "We know that you are going to leave us. Who will be our leader?"
- Jesus said to them, "No matter where you are, you are to go to James the Just, for whose sake heaven and earth came into being."
13. Jesus said to his disciples, "Compare me to something and tell me what I am like."

Simon Peter said to him, "You are like a just angel."

Matthew said to him, "You are like a wise philosopher."

Thomas said to him, "Teacher, my mouth is utterly unable to say what you are like."

Jesus said, "I am not your teacher. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring that I have tended."

And he took him, and withdrew, and spoke three sayings to him.

When Thomas came back to his friends, they asked him, "What did Jesus say to you?"

Thomas said to them, "If I tell you one of the sayings he spoke to me, you will pick up rocks and stone me, and fire will come from the rocks and devour you."

14. Jesus said to them, "If you fast, you will bring sin upon yourselves, and if you pray, you will be condemned, and if you give to charity, you will harm your spirits. When you go into any region and walk about in the countryside, when people take you in, eat what they serve you and heal the sick among them. After all, what goes into your mouth won't defile you; what comes out of your mouth will."
15. Jesus said, "When you see one who was not born of woman, fall on your faces and worship. That one is your Father."
16. Jesus said, "Perhaps people think that I have come to cast peace upon the world. They do not know that I have come to cast conflicts upon the earth: fire, sword, war. For there will be five in a house: there'll be three against two and two against three, father against son and son against father, and they will stand alone."
17. Jesus said, "I will give you what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, what no hand has touched, what has not arisen in the human heart."
18. The disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us, how will our end come?"
- Jesus said, "Have you found the beginning, then, that you are looking for the end? You see, the end will be where the beginning is. Congratulations to the one who stands at the beginning: that one will know the end and will not taste death."
19. Jesus said, "Congratulations to the one who came into being before coming into being. If you become my disciples and pay attention to my sayings, these stones will serve you. For there are five trees in Paradise for you; they do not change, summer or winter, and their leaves do not fall. Whoever knows them will not taste death."
20. The disciples said to Jesus, "Tell us what Heaven's imperial rule is like."

He said to them,

It's like a mustard seed. [It's] the smallest of all seeds, but when it falls on prepared soil, it produces a large branch and becomes a shelter for birds of the sky. . . .

57. Jesus said,

The Father's imperial rule is like a person who had [good] seed. His enemy came during the night and sowed weeds among the good seed. The person did not let the workers pull up the weeds, but said to them, "No, otherwise you might go to pull up the weeds and pull up the wheat along with them." For on the day of the harvest the weeds will be conspicuous, and will be pulled up and burned. . . .

63. Jesus said,

There was a rich man who had a great deal of money. He said, "I shall invest my money so that I may sow, reap, plant, and fill my storehouses with produce, that I may lack nothing." These were the things he was thinking in his heart, but that very night he died. Anyone here with two ears had better listen!

64. Jesus said,

Someone was receiving guests. When he had prepared the dinner, he sent his slave to invite the guests. The slave went to the first and said, "My master invites you." The first replied, "Some merchants owe me money; they are coming to me tonight. I have to go and give them instructions. Please excuse me for dinner." The slave went to another and said, "My master has invited you." The second said to the slave, "I have bought a house, and I have been called away for a day. I shall have no time." The slave went to another and said, "My master invites you." The third said to the slave, "My friend is to be married, and I am to arrange the banquet. I shall not be able to come. Please excuse me from dinner." The slave went to another and said, "My master invites you." The fourth said to the slave, "I have bought an estate, and I am going to collect the rent. I shall not be able to come. Please excuse me." The slave returned and said to his master, "Those whom you invited to dinner have asked to be excused." The master said to his slave, "Go out on the streets and bring back whomever you find to have dinner." Buyers and merchants [will] not enter the places of my Father.

65. He said,

A person owned a vineyard and rented it to some farmers, so they could work it and he could collect its crops from them. He sent his slave so the farmers would give him the vineyard's crop. They grabbed him, beat him, and almost killed him, and the slave returned and told his master. His master said, "Perhaps he didn't know them." He sent another slave, and the farmers beat that one as well. Then the master sent his son and said, "Perhaps they'll show my son some respect." Because the farmers knew that he was the heir to the vineyard, they grabbed him and killed him. Anyone here with two ears had better listen! . . .

97. Jesus said,

The [Father's] imperial rule is like a woman who was carrying a [jar] full of meal. While she was walking along [a] distant road, the handle of the jar broke and the meal spilled behind her [along] the road. She didn't know it; she hadn't noticed a problem. When she reached her house, she put the jar down and discovered that it was empty.

98. Jesus said,

The Father's imperial rule is like a person who wanted to kill someone powerful. While still at home he drew his sword and thrust it

into the wall to find out whether his hand would go in. Then he killed the powerful one.

Source: Gospel of Thomas 1–20, 57, 63–65, 97, 98, from *The Complete Gospels*.

GNOSTIC GOSPEL OF MARY

Gnostic writings contained feminine imagery typical of ancient mythology, which was ultimately removed from mainstream Christianity. Much of this imagery is cosmological, and it involves various layers of God's being and creative activity. Some Gnostic texts portray God as having both a male and a female quality: God is the primal father and the mother of all things. Others describe God as radiating divine beings or personalities, one of which is the female spirit of wisdom, the womb of everything. Finally, and most interestingly, several texts depict the divine Trinity as the father, mother, and son. In addition to their feminine theological themes, Gnostic texts defend the role of women as teachers of divine knowledge. This is most evident in the Gospel of Mary (named after Mary Magdalene), where, after Mary presents some private teachings of Jesus, her authority is first challenged by Peter and then defended by Levi. Much of the Gospel of Mary is lost; the surviving sections are presented below.

1. [Six manuscript pages are missing.]

2. [Jesus said] "... Will matter then be utterly destroyed or not?"

The Savior replied, "Every nature, every modeled form, every creature, exists in and with each other. They will dissolve again into their own proper root. For the nature of matter is dissolved into what belongs to its nature. Anyone with two ears capable of hearing should listen!"

3. Then Peter said to him, "You have been expounding every topic to us; tell us one further thing. What is the sin of the world?"

The Savior replied, "There is no such thing as sin; rather, you yourselves are what produces sin when you act according to the nature of adultery, which is called 'sin.' For this reason, the Good came among you approaching what belongs to every nature. It will set it within its root."

Then he continued. He said, "This is why you get sick and die, for [you love] what de[c]ei[ve]s you. Anyone with a mind should use it to think!

[Ma]tter gav[e bi]rth to a passion which has no [true] image because it derives from what is contrary to nature. Then a disturbing confusion occurred in the whole body. This is why I told you, 'Be content of heart.' And do not conform [to the body], but form yourselves in the presence of that other image of nature. Anyone with two ears capable of hearing should listen!"

4. When the Blessed One had said this, he greeted them all. "Peace be with you!" he said. "Acquire my peace within yourselves!"

"Be on your guard so that no one deceives you by saying, 'Look over here!' or 'Look over there!' For the seed of true humanity exists within you. Follow it! Those who search for it will find it.

"Go then, preach the good news of the domain. Do not lay down any rule beyond what I ordained for you, nor promulgate law like the lawgiver, or else it will dominate you."

After he said these things, he left them.

5. But they were distressed and wept greatly. "How are we going to go out to the rest of the world to preach the good news, about the domain of the seed of true humanity?" they said. "If they didn't spare him, how will they spare us?"

Then Mary stood up. She greeted them all and addressed her brothers: "Do not weep and be distressed nor let your hearts be irresolute. For his grace will be with you all and will shelter you. Rather we should praise his greatness, for he has joined us together and made us true human beings."

When Mary said these things, she turned their minds [to]ward the Good, and they began to [as]k about the wor[d]s of the Savi[or].

6. Peter said to Mary, "Sister, we know that the Savior loved you more than any other woman. Tell us the words of the Savior that you know, but which we haven't heard."

Mary responded, "I will rep[ort] to you as much as I remember that you don't know." And she began to speak these words to them.

7. She said, "I saw the Lord in a vision and I said to him, 'Lord, I saw you today in a vision.'

"He said to me, 'Congratulations to you for not wavering at seeing me. For where the mind is, there is the treasure.'

"I said to him, 'Lord, how does a person who sees a vision see it—[with] the soul [or] with the spirit?'"

"The Savior answered, 'The [visionary] does not see with the soul or with the spirit, but with the mind which exists between these two—that is [what] sees the vision and that is w[hat . . .]'"

8. [Four manuscript pages are missing.]

9. . . . "And Desire said, 'I did not see you go down, yet now I see you go up. So why do you lie since you belong to me?'"

"The soul answered, 'I saw you. You did not see me nor did you know me. You [mis]took the garment [I wore] for my [true] self. And you did not recognize me.'

"After it had said these things, [the soul] left rejoicing greatly.

"Again, it came to the third Power, which is called 'Ignorance.' [It] examined the soul closely, saying, 'Where are you going? You are bound by fornication. Indeed you are bound! Do not pass judgment!'"

"And the soul said, 'Why do you judge me, since I have not passed judgment? I am bound, but I have not bound. They did not recognize me, but I have recognized that the universe is to be dissolved, both the things of earth and those of heaven.'

"When the soul had overcome the third Power, it went upward and it saw the fourth Power. It had seven forms. The first form is Darkness; the second, Desire; the third, Ignorance; the fourth, Zeal o.

Death; the fifth, the Domain of the Flesh; the sixth, the Foolish Wisdom of the Flesh, and seventh is the Wisdom of the Wrathful Person. These are seven Powers of Wrath.

"They interrogated the soul, 'Where are you coming from, human-killer, and where are you going, space-conqueror?'"

"The soul replied, 'What binds me has been slain, and what surrounds me has been destroyed, and my desire has been brought to an end, and my ignorance has died. In a world, I was set loose from a world and in a type, from a type which is above, and [from] the chain of forgetfulness that exists in time. From now on, for the rest of the course of the [due] measure of the time of the age, I will rest i[n] silence.'"

When Mary said these things, she fell silent, since it was up to this point that the Savior had spoken to her.

10. Andrew sai[d, "B]rothers, what is your opinion of what was just said? I for one don't believe that the S[a]vior said these things, be[cause] these opinions seem to be so different from h[is th]ought."

After reflecting on these ma[tt]ers, [Peter said], "Has the Sa[vior] spoken secretly to a wo[m]an and [not] openly so that [we] would all hear? [Surely] he did [not wish to indicate] that [she] is more worthy than we are?"

Then Mary wept and said to Peter, "Peter, my brother, what are you imagining about this? Do you think that I've made all this up secretly by myself or that I am telling lies about the Savior?"

Levi said to Peter, "Peter, you have a constant inclination to anger and you are always ready to give way to it. And even now you are doing exactly that by questioning the woman as if you're her adversary. If the Savior considered her to be worthy, who are you to disregard her? For he knew her completely [and] loved her devotedly.

"Instead, we should be ashamed and, once we clothe ourselves with perfect humanity, we should do what we were commanded. We should announce the good news as the Savior ordered, and not be laying down any rules or making laws."

After he said these things, Levi left [and] began to announce the good news.

Source: Gnostic Gospel of Mary, from *The Complete Gospels*.

EARLY STATEMENTS OF FAITH

BAPTISM, PRAYER, AND THE EUCHARIST: DIDACHE

Discovered in 1873, the Didache is a manual of early Church doctrine from the Syrian Church of Antioch. Eusebius, a fourth-century bishop, notes the high value placed on the Didache by early churches. Although the original date of the work is disputed, scholars believe that some parts are of first-century origin and contemporaneous with

the Gospels. The brief work can be divided into four parts. The opening lists a series of moral injunctions culled from various parts of the Bible. Instructions concerning baptism, fasting, and prayer ritual follow. Next, instructions are given on receiving new prophets, apostles, and Christians. Finally, a warning is given concerning the return of Jesus. Following are the instructions on ritual from the second division.

7. *Concerning Baptism.* Concerning baptism, baptize in this way: Having first said everything in these Teachings, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. If you have not living water, baptize in other water; and if you cannot in cold, in warm. If you do not have either, pour out water three times upon the head in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Before the baptism let the baptizer fast, as well as the baptized, and whoever else can. But you shall order the baptized to fast for one or two days before.
8. *Concerning Fasting and Prayer.* But do not let your fasts be like those of the hypocrites; for they fast on the Monday and Thursday; instead, you should fast on the Wednesday and Friday. Also do not pray as the hypocrites do. Instead, pray in this way as the Lord commanded in His Gospel: "Our Father who are in heaven blessed be your name. May your kingdom come. May your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive our debt as we also forgive our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For yours is the power and the glory forever." Pray this way three times a day.
9. *The Thanksgiving (Eucharist).* Now concerning the thanksgiving, give thanks in this way. First, concerning the cup: "We thank you, our Father, for the holy vine of David your servant, which you made known to us through Jesus your servant; may you be glorified forever." And concerning the broken bread: "We thank you, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you made known to us though Jesus your servant; may you be glorified forever. Even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and was gathered together and became one, so let your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever." Let no one eat or drink of your Thanksgiving, except those who have been baptized to the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord has said, do not give that which is holy to the dogs.
10. *Prayer after Communion.* But after you are filled, give thanks in this way: "We thank you, holy Father, for your holy name which you caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality, which you made known to us through Jesus your Servant; may you be glorified forever. You, Master almighty, created all things for your name's sake; you gave food and drink to men for enjoyment, that they might give thanks to you. You freely gave to us spiritual food and drink and life eternal through your servant. Before all things we thank you, who are mighty. May you be exalted forever. Remember, Lord, your Church, to deliver it from all evil and to make

it perfect in your love, and gather it from the four winds, sanctified for your kingdom which you have prepared for it; may you be glorified forever. Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God (Son) of David! If anyone is holy, let him come; if anyone is not so, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen."

Source: *Didache* 7–10, adapted from *Ante-Nicene Father* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1867–1872), vol. 7.

APOSTLES' CREED

In the early Church, many controversies erupted over fine points of Christian theology. This often resulted in the creation of some creed that distinguished acceptable theological positions from unacceptable ones. Composed around 150 C.E., the Apostles' Creed is perhaps the first of these. The controversy was gnosticism, the view that we should free our spirits from the evil material world by acquiring special knowledge. Christian Gnostics believed that God was not really the creator of the world and that Jesus could not have suffered and died because he was a spiritual being. The Apostles' Creed opposes both of these contentions.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Source: Apostles' Creed, from *The Book of Common Prayer* (London: Bagster, 1885).

NICENE CREED

The Nicene Creed emerged in response to the Arian controversy, a dispute involving the claims of a Christian priest named Arius (c. 250–336) that Christ was created by God and hence was not God himself. The Council of Nicaea was called in 325 to resolve the issue, which was decided against Arius. The Nicene Creed's exact date of origin is a matter of dispute, and at least some components of it were added in later centuries. Nevertheless, its content reflects the Council's decision against Arianism. At a minor Church council in 589, the sentence "I believe in the Holy Ghost . . . who proceeds from the father" was expanded to read "who proceeds from the father and the son (filioque)." The issue involves whether the Holy Ghost originated from the father alone, or from both the father and the son. Known as the filioque clause, its inclusion provoked discord with the Eastern Orthodox churches and became their rallying cry in the Great Schism of 1054. The filioque clause was definitively added to the creed by

the Catholics at the Second Council of Lyons in 1274. Today, the Nicene Creed remains the most popular confession of faith in Catholic, Orthodox, and most Protestant liturgies, although Orthodox churches omit the filioque clause.

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the Prophets; and I believe one holy catholic and apostolic church; I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Source: Nicene Creed, from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1890–1900), series 2, vol. 7.

CHALCEDON CREED

In 451, the Council of Chalcedon was called to address two controversial theological positions. A position called Nestorianism denied the unity of Christ's divinity and humanity; in this view, Christ had two distinct personas. A contrasting position called Monophysitism held that Christ in fact had one nature, part of which was divine and the other part human. Against both of these positions, the Chalcedon council held that Christ has one substance but two natures: He is both fully human and fully God. This official view is reflected in the Chalcedon Creed.

Following, then, the holy fathers, we unite in teaching all men to confess the one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. This selfsame one is perfect both in deity and in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man, with a rational soul and a body. He is of the same reality as God as far as his deity is concerned and of the same reality as we ourselves as far as his humanness is concerned; thus like us in all respects, sin only excepted. Before time began he was begotten of the Father, in respect of his deity, and now in these "last days," for us and on behalf of our salvation, this selfsame one was born of Mary the virgin, who is God-bearer in respect of his humanness.

We also teach that we apprehend this one and only Christ-Son, Lord, only-begotten—in two natures; and we do this without confusing the two

natures, without transmuting one nature into the other, without dividing them into two separate categories, without contrasting them according to area or function. The distinctiveness of each nature is not nullified by the union. Instead, the "properties" of each nature are conserved and both natures concur in one "person" and in one reality. They are not divided or cut into two persons, but are together the one and only and only-begotten Word of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus have the prophets of old testified; thus the Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us; thus the Symbol of Fathers has handed down to us.

Source: Chalcedon Creed, from *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol. 7.

CHURCH FATHERS, SAINTS, AND MYSTICS

THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP

During the first three centuries C.E., several Roman rulers systematically persecuted Christians. Some victims were outspoken leaders, and others became conspicuous for not participating in pagan religious rituals. In either case they were barbarically executed, as were Jesus and the Apostles before them. Stories of religious martyrs became an important part of early Christian writing, both to commemorate the tragic events and to instill a sense of religious bravery in those who might experience a similar fate. The most popular of all early stories of martyrs is that of Polycarp (c. 69–c. 155), bishop of Smyrna, who was arrested during a pagan festival for failing to participate. He was burnt to death after refusing to renounce his faith.

9. As Polycarp was entering the stadium, there came to him a voice from heaven, saying, "Be strong, and show yourself a man, O Polycarp!" No one saw who it was that spoke to him; but those of our brethren who were present heard the voice. And as he was brought forward, the tumult became great when they heard that Polycarp was taken. When he came near, the proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp. On his confessing that he was, [the proconsul] sought to persuade him to deny [Christ], saying, "Have respect for your old age," and similar things, according to their custom, [such as], "Swear by the fortune of Caesar; repent, and say, Away with the Atheists." But Polycarp, gazing with a stern countenance on all the multitude of the wicked heathen then in the stadium, and waving his hand towards them, while with groans he looked up to heaven, said, "Away with the Atheists." Then the proconsul urged him, saying, "Swear, and I will set you at liberty; reproach Christ." Polycarp declared, "Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He never did me any injury. How then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?" . . .
12. While he spoke these and many other like things, he was filled with confidence and joy. His countenance was full of grace, so that not merely did it not fall as if troubled by the things said to him, but, on

the contrary, the proconsul was astonished. He sent his herald to proclaim in the middle of the stadium three times, "Polycarp has confessed that he is a Christian." This proclamation having been made by the herald, the whole multitude—both of the heathen and Jews who dwelt at Smyrna—cried out with uncontrollable fury, and in a loud voice, "This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, and the overthrower of our gods, he who has been teaching many not to sacrifice, or to worship the gods." Speaking this, they cried out, and besought Philip the Asiarch to let loose a lion upon Polycarp. But Philip answered that it was not lawful for him to do since the shows of wild beasts were already finished. Then it seemed good to them to cry out with one consent, that Polycarp should be burnt alive. . . .

13. This, then, was carried into effect with greater speed than it was spoken. The multitudes immediately gathering together wood and fagots out of the shops and baths; the Jews especially, according to custom, eagerly assisting them in it. . . .
15. When he had pronounced this *amen*, and finished his prayer, those who were appointed for the purpose kindled the fire. As the flame blazed in great fury, we, to whom it was given to witness it, saw a great miracle, and have been preserved that we might report to others what took place. For the fire, shaping itself into the form of an arch, like the sail of a ship when filled with the wind, encompassed the body of the martyr like a circle. And he appeared within not like flesh which is burnt, but as bread that is baked, or as gold and silver glowing in a furnace. Moreover, we perceived a sweet odor [coming from the pile], as if frankincense or some such precious spices had been smoking there.
16. Eventually, when those wicked men perceived that his body could not be consumed by the fire, they commanded an executioner to go near and pierce him through with a dagger. And on his doing this, there came forth a dove, and a great quantity of blood, so that the fire was extinguished; and all the people wondered that there should be such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect, of whom this most admirable Polycarp was one, having in our own times been an apostolic and prophetic teacher, and bishop of the Catholic Church which is in Smyrna. For every word that went out of his mouth either has been or shall yet be accomplished.

Source: *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, adapted from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1.

TERTULLIAN ON HERETICS

Early Christians were forced to defend their faith against attacks by both Jewish and Roman critics. Christianity was new and comparatively distinct from more ancient religious traditions and was thus frequently ridiculed by outsiders. Even within Christianity, theological disputes erupted between factions, resulting in defenses on