

Reincarnation in Christian Gnosticism

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My comments are written in the font Arial and in violet color.

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate that the reincarnation concept in no way is unchristian, but only “unclerical”, since it was known among the Gnostic *original* Christians. Were the Gnostic Christians really Christian? This has long been denied, almost until recent times, especially in German theology. To day they are, however, to a large extent rehabilitated, as is shown in the monumental German encyclopedia [Theologische Realenzyklopädie](#) (*TRE*), where two views are mentioned:

- The conventional German theological view is that the Gnostic Christianity evolved out of a pre-Christian gnosis and that it, therefore, would not be genuinely Christian.
- The Anglo-Saxon and French theological views, however, regard the allegation of an origin in a pre-Christian gnosis as subjective and speculative, since this has not been demonstrated. The position of that view is that none of the texts allows the assumption of a pre-Christian gnosis, not even in premature stages.

The German view has approached the latter one, especially through groundbreaking work by Carsten Colpe, so that the attitude in the history of religion now quite generally rather corresponds to the Anglo-Saxon and French views. One can (according to *TRE*) say that a hidden and limited sympathy of modern theologians favor Gnostic Christianity. (*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. XIII, ed. by Gerhard Müller, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1984, on Gnosticism see pp. 519-550.)

Hence, one can no more simply claim that the Gnostic Christians were no real Christians.

A later version of Gnostic Christianity was that of the Cathars, who were cruelly eradicated in the 13th century. On this form of Gnosticism *TRE* reports as follows:

“The christianism of their way of living and also of their belief can be confirmed in all points. ... Newer research results demand a revision of the conventional image of the Cathars. It can, especially, be established that the doctrine of the Cathars has in many ways, consciously or unconsciously, been distorted, be it through a-priori judgments, in the light of which source statements have been interpreted in a desired direction ... Above all later French research ... proves that *the consideration of the Cathars as ‘unchristian’ can no longer be maintained.*” (*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, vol. XVIII, ed. by Gerhard Müller, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin 1989, on the Cathars see pp. 21-30.) (Enhancement by me.)

The cruel genocide against this people, contrary to Jesus’ teachings, belongs to the worst crimes in the history of the Church.

PISTIS SOPHIA

Remarks to Pistis Sophia

This [Gnostic text](#) is a Coptic translation of a lost Greek text and was discovered 1773. It is dated to the period between the 3rd and 4th century AD ([others](#): the 2nd and 3rd century) and it does not belong to the Gnostic texts discovered 1945 in Nag Hammadi. According to it, Jesus taught his disciples during 11 years after his resurrection about the mysteries and spiritual cosmology. Among things stated that are remarkable to the reader, horrible punishments are mentioned for various sins. In the light of the love and reconciliation that Jesus taught, this appears quite alienating. One may, therefore, have the impression that – in this late version that may well be a copy (of a copy?) of an earlier text – intermediate writers may have edited it in a manner “more catholic than the pope.”

The horrible punishment – for example – of a thief – to be cast into a lame, halt and blind body does not agree with the modern empirical concept of karma, according to which he would rather in a new incarnation experience a painful loss through theft, and that the arrogant would end up in a lame and deformed body to be despised is not a very Christian idea – real Christians do not despise people. Such things would rather happen to those who cripple others.

Notions like “outer darkness”, “howling and grinding of teeth” and a consuming fire are, however, also to be found in the New Testament: Matt 8:12, 13:42, 13:50, 22:13, 24:51, 25:20 and Luke 13:28. Also such statements do not well agree with to-day’s empirical concept of reincarnation, as it evolves out of a vast number of memories from earlier existences – in spontaneous experiences, in many near-death experiences and in so called past-life regressions. There are quite a few persons with such experiences who could remember being perpetrators in cruel acts in a past life, and they are reincarnated again to day. They were not abandoned in an outer darkness to be destroyed there, but instead to day often experience a corresponding karmic fate (if the karma has not in the meantime been overcome in other lifetimes and converted to repentance and reversal). Furthermore, suffering in such a darkness without any hope for a return would be meaningless if it any way had to end in destruction. If the destruction would not follow right after death, such long and actually meaningless suffering would boil down to mere revenge, which does not agree with the goodness of God.

What is also remarkable is the contradiction of these “11 years” to another tradition, being that [Mary Magdalene](#) – who plays an important role in Pistis Sophia – would after Jesus’ death have escaped from possible persecutions to France (at that time Gallia), probably pregnant from Jesus, hence just a few months after the crucifixion. If that is so, she could not have been physically together with other disciples. But since Jesus then was himself no more in a physical body, one could consider the possibility of teaching on a higher level, in a spiritual realm. Should it not be possible for the probably more, or also less but still to some degree, enlightened disciples to in some manner gather extracorporeally with Jesus? Even though this is impossible to our official science and the “materialisticised” Church, it may well be possible according to spiritual sciences.

Official theology will, of course, claim that the text is an invention. But even if it was written some 100-150 years after Jesus’ death, this does not mean that there would not be an earlier tradition of its content, even if this is lost to day. The New Testament tells us that Jesus, after he was murdered, reappeared to his disciples. Few Christians will doubt that, especially not if they are enough spiritual to know that appearances of entities that are not in physical bodies are possible. But official theologians hardly belong to them... Hence, one must take the possibility into account that he might have been able to teach his disciples long after.

The text also gives some explanations to otherwise enigmatic Bible passages. “He who doth not abandon father and mother and come and follow after me, is not worthy of me” or “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.” Cf. Matt 10:37 and Luke 14:26. This is here declared to be misunderstood, since it would have to do with the Archons being “parents” of humanity, and one should turn away from them. It should be similar in other passages that mention that children turn against their parents or persons turn away from family members who (mostly unconsciously)

persist in being “children of the Archons”. Also the words about “paying the last farthing” in Matt 5:25-26 and Luke 12:58-59 find an explanation. One should reconcile with one’s enemies while in this life, since it would otherwise have to be done in a new incarnation. The text conforms what many consider controversial: that John the Baptist was a reincarnation of Elias (Elijah).

As concerns dragons, such a one is mentioned several times in the Revelation, a.o. Rev 12:7 and 12,9. In Rev 13:2 he is described in a rather similar way as is Yaldaboth in the Gnostic texts.

The following quotations are from the translation by George Robert Stow Mead (1863-1933), published in 1896, and it is freely available as a [PDF file](#) as well as a simple [text file](#). The former is not reliably searchable, since it is a photographic scan of the book (and the PDF reader could miss some occurrences of the word searched for). The latter is, of course, searchable in Notepad, but in a somewhat awkward format to handle. Therefore, I have reedited that text file into a PDF file myself, that I may send the reader upon request (not a breach of copyright, since the text file is free).

Chapter 7

“Moreover in place of the soul of the ruler which he was appointed to receive, I found **the soul of the prophet Elias** in the aeons of the sphere; and I took him thence, and took his soul and brought it to the Virgin of Light, and she gave it over to her receivers; they brought it to the sphere of the rulers **and cast it into the womb of Elizabeth**. So the power of the little Iao, who is in the Midst, **and the soul of the prophet Elias, they were bound into the body of John the Baptizer**. For this cause then were ye in doubt aforetime, I when I said unto you: ‘John said: I am not the Christ,’ and ye said unto me: ‘It standeth written in the scripture: When the Christ shall come, Elias cometh before him and maketh ready his way.’ But when ye said this unto me, I said unto you: ‘Elias verily is come and hath made ready all things, as it standeth written, and they have done unto him as they would.’ And when I knew that ye had not understood that I had discoursed with you concerning the soul of Elias which is bound into John the Baptizer, I answered you in the discourse in openness face to face: ‘If ye like to accept John the Baptizer: he is Elias, of whom I have said that he will come.’”

Chapter 98

“... I say unto you: **The man who hath come forth out of the body**, – if the name of this mystery is pronounced on his behalf, they will hasten quickly to bring him over and hand him over one to another, until they bring him before the Virgin of Light. And the Virgin of Light will seal him with a higher. seal, which is this [. . .?], and in that month will she **let him light down into the righteous body** which will find the godhead in truth and the higher mystery, so that he inherit the Light-kingdom. This, therefore, is the gift of the third mystery of the Ineffable.”

The “Ineffable” is, according to the Gnostic story of creation, the highest and primordial creator and will be the one who Jesus called “Father.” That he is not YHWH is explained in [Jesus’ Main Mission](#) and the discussion at the end of this section.

Chapter 100

“They indeed have not at all suffered and have not at all changed themselves in the regions, nor at all torn themselves asunder nor **poured themselves into bodies of different kinds and from one into another**, nor have they been in any affliction at all.”

“Ye then in particular are the refuse of the Treasury and ye are the refuse of the region of the Right and ye are the refuse of the region of those of the Midst and ye are the refuse of all the invisibles and of all the rulers; in a word, ye are the refuse of all these. And ye are in great sufferings and great afflictions in **your being poured from one into another of different kinds of bodies**. of the world. And after all these sufferings ye have struggled of your-selves and fought, having renounced the whole world and all the matter therein; and ye have not left off seeking, until ye found all the mysteries of the kingdom of the Light, which have purified you and made you into refined light, exceedingly purified, and ye have become purified light.” ...

“Now, therefore, Andrew and all thy brethren thy co-disciples, because of your renunciations and all your sufferings which ye have endured in every region, and because of your changes in every region and of **your being poured from one into another of different kinds of bodies** and because of all your afflictions, and after all this ye have received the purifying mysteries and are become refined light exceedingly purified, – for this cause, therefore, ye will go on high and penetrate into all the regions of all the great emanations of the Light and be kings in the Light-kingdom for ever.”

Metangismos (μεταγγισμός) = “pouring over” of the soul from one body to another is a specific word here used for reincarnation.

Chapter 102

“Say unto those who teach the doctrines of error and to every one who is instructed by them: Woe unto you, for, if ye do not repent and abandon your error, ye will go into the chastisements of the great dragon and of the **outer darkness**, which is exceedingly evil, and never will ye **be cast [up] into the world**, but will **be non-existent until the end**.”

“Say unto those who abandon the doctrines of truth of the First Mystery: Woe unto you, for your chastisement is sad compared with [that of] all men. For ye will abide in the great cold and ice and hail in the midst of the dragon and of the **outer darkness**, and ye will never from this hour on be **cast [up] into the world**, but ye shall be frozen up [?] in that region and at the dissolution of the universe ye will perish and **become non-existent eternally**.”

To be “cast up into the world” obviously refers to being reincarnated from the state in the “outer darkness”, which, however, to some souls in that region does not occur, since they due to wickedness have to stay there until at the end they cease to exist.

Chapter 103

“And again they take pity on it [*the soul*] quickly, and lead it up out of those regions of theirs and they do not bring it into the aeons, so that the rulers of the aeons do not carry it away ravishingly; they bring it on the way of the sun and bring it before the Virgin of Light. She proveth it and findeth that it is pure of sins, but letteth them not bring it to the Light, because the sign of the kingdom of the mystery is not with it. But she sealeth it with a higher seal and letteth it **be cast down into the body** into the aeons of righteousness, – that body which will be good to find the signs of the mysteries of the Light and inherit the Light-kingdom for ever.”

Chapter 105

“For, amen, I say unto you: Those three mysteries will be witnesses for his last repentance, and he hath not repentance from this moment onwards. For, amen, I say unto you: The soul of that man will not **be cast back into the world** above from this moment onwards, but will be in the abodes of the dragon of the **outer darkness**.”

Chapter 106

“Amen, I say unto you: The soul of that man cannot **be cast back into the world** from this moment onwards; but his habitation is in the midst of the jaws of the dragon of the **outer darkness**, the region of howling and grinding of teeth. And at the dissolution of the world his soul will be frozen up [?] and perish in the violent cold and exceedingly violent fire and will **be non-existent eternally**.”

Chapter 107

“And such men will **not be led back to the world** from this moment onwards; but amen, I say unto you: Their dwelling is in the midst of the jaws of the dragon of the **outer darkness**. And if they still at a time of repentance renounce the whole world and the whole matter therein and all the sins of the world, and they are in entire submission to the mysteries of the Light, no mystery can hearken unto them nor forgive their sins, save this same mystery of the Ineffable, which hath mercy on every one and forgiveth every one his sins.”

Chapter 108

“Now, therefore, all men, sinners or better who are no sinners, not only if ye desire that they be taken out of the judgments and violent chastisements, but that they be removed **into a righteous**

body which will find the mysteries of the godhead, so that it goeth on high and inheriteth the Light-kingdom, – then perform the third mystery of the Ineffable. and say: Carry ye the soul of this and this man of whom we think in our hearts, carry him out of all the chastisements of the rulers and haste ye quickly to lead him before the Virgin of Light; and in every month let the Virgin of Light seal him with a higher seal, and in every month let the Virgin of Light **cast him into a body** which will be righteous and good, so that it goeth on high and inheriteth the Light-kingdom.”

“And if ye say this, amen, I say unto you: All who serve in all the orders of the judgments of the rulers, hasten to hand over that soul from one to the other, until they lead it before the Virgin of Light. And the Virgin of Light sealeth it with the sign of the kingdom of the Ineffable and handeth it over unto her receivers, and the receivers will **cast it into a body**, which will be righteous and find the mysteries of the Light, so that it will be good and goeth on high and inheriteth the Light-kingdom. Lo, this is it on which ye question me.”

Chapter 111

“And amen, I say unto you: They will not discharge that soul from **the changes of the body** until it hath yielded its last **circuit** according to its merit. Of all these then will I tell you their type and **the type of the bodies into which it will be cast** according to the sins of each soul. All this will I tell you when I shall have told you the expansion of the universe.”

“Changes of the body” obviously refers to reincarnation, in a process going from one body to another.

Chapter 113

“The fourth thought on the other hand concerning the word which thou hast said: ‘If the **soul goeth forth out of the body** and travelleth on the way with the counterfeiting spirit, and if it hath not found the mystery of the undoing of all the bonds and the seals which are bound to the counterfeiting spirit, so that it may cease to haunt or be assigned to it, – if it then hath not found it, the counterfeiting spirit leadeth the soul to the Virgin of Light, the judge; and the judge, the Virgin of Light, proveth the soul and findeth. that it hath sinned and, as she also hath not found the mysteries of the Light with it, she handeth it over to one of her receivers, and her receiver leadeth it and **casteth it into the body**, and it cometh not out of **the changes of the body** before it hath yielded its last **circuit**,’ – concerning this word, then, my Lord, thou hast said unto us aforetime: ‘**Be reconciled with thy foe as long as thou art on the way with him, lest perchance thy foe hand thee over to the judge and the judge hand thee over to the servant and the servant cast thee into prison, and thou shalt not come forth out of that region till thou hast yielded the last farthing.**’”

“Because of this manifestly is thy word: Every soul which **cometh forth out of the body** and travelleth on the way with the counterfeiting spirit and findeth not the mystery of the undoing of all the seals and all the bonds, so that it may undo itself from the counterfeiting spirit which is bound to it, – that soul which hath not found mysteries of the Light and hath not found the mysteries of detachment from the counterfeiting spirit which is bound to it, – if then it hath not found it, the counterfeiting spirit leadeth that soul to the Virgin of Light, and the Virgin of Light, yea that judge, handeth over that soul. to one of her receivers, and her receiver casteth it into the sphere of the aeons, and it **cometh not out of the changes of the body** before it hath yielded the last **circuit** which is appointed for it. This then, my Lord, is the fourth thought.”

Cf. Matt 5:25-26 and Luke 12:58-59! The word “prison” was in Gnosticism not rarely used for the body as a “prison for the soul.” The “counterfeit spirit”, *ἀντίμιμον πνεῦμα* (*antimimon pneuma*), may make us think of the “conscience”, since this part participates in the confrontation of the soul with all wrong and unjust the person did in the incarnation, as a kind of double of him.

Chapter 119

And Mary answered again and said unto Jesus: “My Lord, those who shall receive the mysteries of the Ineffable, and have again turned, have transgressed and have ceased in their faith and are more-over **come out of the body** before they have repented, what will befall such?”

And the Saviour answered and said unto Mary: “Amen, amen, I say unto you: All men who shall receive the mysteries of the Ineffable, blessed indeed are the souls which shall receive of those mysteries; but if they turn and transgress and **come out of the body** before they have repented, the judgment of those men is sorer than all the judgments, and it is exceedingly violent, even if those souls are new and it is their first time for coming into the world. They will not return to the **changes of the bodies** from that hour onwards and will not be able to do anything, but they will be cast out into the **outer darkness** and perish and be **non-existent for ever.**”

Chapter 120

Mary answered. and said: “I have seized on the words which thou hast said. Now, therefore, my Lord, this is the word which thou hast said: ‘They who shall receive the mysteries of the Ineffable, – blessed indeed are those souls; but if they turn, transgress, and cease in their faith, and if they go forth **out of the body** without having repented, they are no more fit from this hour onwards to return to the **changes of the body**, nor for anything at all, but they are cast out into the **outer darkness**, they will perish in that region and be **non-existent for ever,**’ – concerning [this] word thou hast spoken unto us aforetime, saying: ‘Salt is good; but if the salt becometh sterile, with what are they to salt it? It is fit neither for the dunghill nor for the earth; but they throw it away,’ – that is: Blessed are all the souls which shall receive of the mysteries of the Ineffable; but if they once transgress, they are not fit to **return to the body** henceforth from this hour onwards nor for anything at all, but they are cast into the **outer darkness** and **perish** in that region.” ...

“If on the other hand those who shall receive mysteries of. the mystery of the Ineffable and of the mysteries of the First Mystery, turn and sin and **come out of the body** without having repented, then they will be even as those will be who have transgressed and not repented. Their dwelling also is in the midst of the jaws of the dragon of the **outer darkness** and they will **perish** and be **non-existent for ever.** For this cause have I said unto you: All men who shall receive the mysteries, if they knew the time when they **come out of the body**, would watch themselves and not sin, in order that they may inherit the Light-kingdom for ever.”

Chapter 125

“At that time then the faith will reveal itself still more and the mysteries in those days. And many souls will come by means of the **circuits of the changes of the body**, and coming back into the world are some of those in this present time who have hearkened unto me, how I taught, who at the completion of the number of the perfect souls will find the mysteries of the Light and receive them and come to the gates of the Light and find that the number of the perfect souls is complete, which is the completion of the First Mystery and the gnosis of the universe. And they will find that I have shut the gates of the Light and that it is impossible that any one should enter in or that any one should go forth from this hour.”

Chapter 128

Mary answered and said: “My Lord, if a good man hath accomplished all the mysteries and he hath a kinsman, in a word he hath a man, and that man is an impious [one] who hath committed all sins and is deserving of the **outer darkness**, and he hath not repented, or he hath completed his number of **circuits in the changes of the body**, and that man hath done nothing useful, and he hath **come out of the body**, and we have known certainly of him, that he hath sinned. and is deserving of the **outer darkness**, – what are we to do with him, to save him from the chastisements of the dragon of the **outer darkness**, and that he may be removed **into a righteous body** which shall find the mysteries of the Light-kingdom, in order that it may be good and go on high and inherit the Light-kingdom?”

The Saviour answered and said unto Mary: “If a sinner is deserving of the **outer darkness**, or hath sinned according to the chastisements of the rest of the chastisements and hath not repented, or a sinning man who hath completed **his number of circuits in the changes of the body** and hath not repented, – if then these men of whom I have spoken, shall come **out of the body** and be led into the **outer darkness**, now, therefore, if ye desire to remove them out of the chastisements of the

outer darkness and all the judgments and to remove them **into a righteous body** which shall find the mysteries of the Light, that it may go on high and inherit the Light-kingdom, – then perform this same mystery of the Ineffable which forgiveth sins at every time, and when ye have finished performing the mystery then say: ‘The soul of such or such a man of whom I think in my heart, – if it is in the region of the chastisements of the dungeons of the **outer darkness**, or if it is in the rest of the chastisements of the dungeons of the **outer darkness** and in the rest of the chastisements of the dragons, – then is it to be removed out of them all. And if it hath completed its number of its **circuits of the changes**, then is it to be led before the Virgin of Light, and the Virgin of Light is to seal it with the seal of the Ineffable and cast it down in whatever month **into a righteous body** which shall find the mysteries of the Light, so that it may be good, go on high and inherit the Light-kingdom. And moreover if it hath completed the **circuits of changes**, then is that soul to be led before the seven virgins of the Light who [are set] over the baptisms, and they are to apply them to the soul and seal it with the sign of the kingdom of the Ineffable and lead it into the orders of the Light.’ This then will ye say when ye perform the mystery.”

Chapter 129

“But if they are sinners and are **come out of the body** and have not repented, and if ye perform for them the mystery of the Ineffable, in order that they may be removed out of all the chastisements and be **cast into a righteous body**, which is good and inheriteth the Light-kingdom or is brought into the last order of the Light, then they will not be able to penetrate the regions, because they do not perform the mystery [themselves]. But the receivers of Melchisedec follow them and lead them before the Virgin of Light. And the servitors of the judges of the rulers make frequent haste to take those souls and hand them over from one to the other until they lead them before the Virgin of Light.”

Chapter 130

“And when the ruler casteth out souls, straight-way the angels of Yew, the First Man, who watch the dungeons of that region, hasten to snatch away those souls to lead them before Yew, the First Man, the Envoy of the First Commandment. And Yew, the First Man, seeth the souls and proveth them; he findeth that they have completed their **circuits** and that it is not lawful to **bring them anew into the world**, for it is not lawful to **bring anew into the world** all souls which are cast into the **outer darkness**. [But] if they have not yet completed their number of **circuits in the changes of the body**, the receivers of Yew keep them with them until they perform for them the mystery of the Ineffable, and remove them **into a good body** which shall find the mysteries of the Light and inherit the Light-kingdom.”

Chapter 131

“Hearken, therefore, that I may discourse with you concerning the soul according as I have said: The five great rulers of the great Fate of the aeons and the rulers of the disk of the sun and the rulers of the disk of the moon breathe into that soul, and there cometh out of them a portion of my power, as I have just said. And the portion of that power remaineth within the soul, so that the soul can stand. And they put the counterfeiting spirit outside the soul, watching it and assigned to it; and the rulers bind it to the soul with their seals and their bonds and seal it to it, that it may compel it always, so that it continually doeth its mischiefs and all its iniquities, in order that it may be their slave always and remain under their sway always in the **changes of the body**; and they seal it to it **that it may be in all the sin and all the desires of the world.**”

“For this cause, therefore, have I in this manner brought the mysteries into this world which undo all the bonds of the counterfeiting spirit and all the seals which are bound to the soul, – those which make the soul free and free it from its parents the rulers, and make it into refined light and lead it up into the kingdom of its father, the first Issue, the First Mystery, for ever. For this cause therefore, have I said unto you aforetime: ‘He who doth not abandon father and mother and come and follow after me, is not worthy of me.’ I have, therefore, said at that time: Ye are to abandon your parents the rulers, that I may make you sons of the First Mystery for ever.”

Free from whom? See [Jesus' Main Mission](#) and the discussion at the end of this section. The "great Fate" is *heimarmene* (εἰμαρμένη) in Greek and may be comparable to the concept of karma

Chapter 132

"Now, therefore, the rulers seal the counterfeiting spirit to the soul, [but] so that it doth not agitate it every hour, making it do all sins and all iniquities. And they give commandment moreover unto the counterfeiting spirit, saying: 'If the soul **cometh out of the body**, do not agitate it, being assigned to it and transferring it to all the regions of the judgments, region by region, on account of all the sins which thou hast made it do, in order that it may be chastized in all the regions of the judgments, **so that it may not be able to go on high to the Light and [instead has to] return into changes of the body.**'"

"In a word, they give commandment to the counterfeiting spirit, saying: 'Do not agitate it at all at any hour unless it doth not speak mysteries and undo all the seals and all the bonds with which we have bound thee to it. [But] if it sayeth the mysteries and undoeth all the seals and all the bonds and [sayeth] the apology of the region, and if it cometh, then let it go forth, for it belongeth to those of the Light of the Height and hath become a stranger unto us and unto thee, and **thou wilt not be able to seize it from this hour onwards [and return it into the changes of the body]**. If on the contrary it sayeth not the mysteries of the undoing of thy bonds and of thy seals and of the apologies of the region, then seize it and let it not out; thou shalt transfer it to the chastisements and all the regions of the judgments on account of all the sins which thou hast made it do. After this lead [such souls] before the Virgin of Light, who sendeth them **once more into the circuit.**'"

"The rulers of the great Fate of the aeons hand these over to the counterfeiting spirit; and the rulers summon the servitors of their aeons, to the number of three-hundred-and-sixty-and-five, and give them the soul and the counterfeiting spirit, which are bound to one another. The counterfeiting spirit is the without of the soul, and the compound of the power is the within of the soul, being within both of them, in order that they may be able to stand, for it is the power which keepeth the two upright. And the rulers give commandment to the servitors, saying unto them: This is the type which **ye are to put into the body of the matter of the world.**' They say unto them indeed: 'Put the compound of the power, the within of the soul, within them all, that they may be able to stand, for it is their up-rightness, and after the soul put the counterfeiting spirit.'" ...

"Now, therefore, when the servitors of the rulers **cast the one portion into the woman and the other into the man** in the fashion which I have told you, then the servitors secretly compel them, even if they are removed at very great distance from one another, so that they concert to be in a concert of the world. And the counterfeiting spirit which is in the man, cometh to the portion which is entrusted to the world in the matter of his body, and lifteth it **and casteth it down into the womb of the woman** [into the portion] which is entrusted to the seed of wickedness." ...

"If then after this the servitors shall have completed the whole body and all its members in seventy days, after this **the servitors summon into the body which they have built, – first indeed they summon the counterfeiting spirit; thereafter they summon the soul within them; and thereafter they summon the compound of the power into the soul;** and the destiny they put outside them all, as it is not blended with them, [but] following them and accompanying them."

"And after this the servitors seal them one to the other with all the seals which the rulers have given them. [And] they seal the day on which they have taken up their abode in the **womb of the woman**, – they seal [it] on the left hand of the plasm; and they seal the day on which they have completed the body, on the right hand; and they seal the day on which the rulers have handed it over to them, on the middle of the skull of the body of the plasm; and they seal the day on which the soul hath come forth out of the rulers, they seal it on the [left of] the skull of the plasm; and they seal the day on which they kneaded the members and separated them for a soul, they seal it on the right of the skull of the plasm; and the day on which they have bound the counterfeiting spirit to it [the soul], they seal on the back of the skull of the plasm; and the day on which the rulers have breathed the power into the body, they seal on the brain which is in the midst of the head of the plasm and also

on the inside [? the heart] of the plasm; and the number of years which the soul will spend in the body, they seal on the forehead which is on the plasm. And so they seal all those seals on the plasm. I will tell you the names of all these seals at the expansion of the universe; and after the expansion of the universe I will tell you wherefore all hath come to pass. And, if ye could understand it, I am that mystery.”

“Now, therefore, the servitors complete the whole man. And of all these seals with which they have sealed the body, the servitors carry the whole peculiarity and bring it to all the retributive rulers who [are] over all the chastisements of the judgments; and these hand it over to their receivers, in order that they may lead their souls out of the bodies, – they hand over to them the peculiarity of the seals, in order that they may know the time when they are to lead the souls out of the bodies, and in order that they may know the time when they **are to bring to birth the body**, so that they may send their servitors in order that they may draw near and follow the soul and bear witness of all the sins it shall do, – they and the counterfeiting spirit, – on account of the manner and way, how they shall chastize it in the judgment.”

“And when the servitors have given the peculiarity of the seals to the retributive rulers, they withdraw themselves to the economy of their occupations which is appointed unto them through the rulers of the great Fate. And when the number of months of the birth of the babe is completed, **the babe is born**. Small in it is the compound of the power, and small in it is the soul; and small in it is the counterfeiting spirit. The destiny on the contrary is large, as it is not mingled into the body for their economy, but followeth the soul and the body and the counterfeiting spirit, until the time when the **soul shall come forth out of the body**, on account of the type of death by which it shall slay it [the body] according to the death appointed for it by the rulers of the great Fate.”

“Is he to die by a wild beast, the destiny leadeth the wild beast against him until it slay him; or is he to die by a serpent, or is he to fall into a pit by mischance, or is he to hang himself, or is he to die in water, or through such [kinds of death], or through another death which is worse or better than this, – in a word, it is the destiny which forceth his death. upon him. This is the occupation of the destiny, and it hath no other occupation but this. And the destiny followeth every man until the day of his death.”

Chapter 135

The Saviour continued and said unto Mary: “Amen, amen, I say unto you: No prophet hath entered into the Light; but the rulers of the aeons have discoursed with them out of the aeons and given them the mystery of the aeons. And when I came to the regions of the aeons, **I have turned Elias and sent him into the body of John the Baptizer**, and the rest also I turned into righteous bodies, which will find the mysteries of the Light, go on high and inherit the Light-kingdom.”

Chapter 144

“And Yaluham, the receiver of Sabaoth, the Adamas, bringeth the cup of **forgetfulness** and handeth it to the soul, and it drinketh it and forgetteth all regions and all things and all the regions through which it hath gone. And they **deliver it unto a body** which will spend its time being afflicted. This is the chastisement of the slanderer.”

Chapter 145

“Thereafter they lead it unto the Virgin of Light, who judgeth the righteous and the sinners, that she may judge it. And when the sphere turneth itself, she commandeth that it shall be **cast into the outer darkness** until the time when the **darkness** of the midst shall be upraised; it [the soul] will be **destroyed and dissolved**. This is the chastisement of the murderer.”

Chapter 146

“Thereafter cometh Yaluham, the receiver of Sabaoth, the Adamas, bringeth the cup of **forgetfulness** and handeth it unto the soul; and it drinketh it and forgetteth all things and all the regions to which it had gone. And **they cast it into a lame, halt and blind body**. This is the chastisement of the thief.” ...

“And Yaluham, the receiver of Sabaoth, the Adamas, cometh and bringeth the cup with the water of **forgetfulness** and handeth it to the soul; and it drinketh and forgetteth all things and all the regions to which it had gone. And **they cast it up into a lame and deformed body**, so that all despise it persistently. This is the chastisement of the arrogant and overweening man.”

Chapter 147

Thomas said: “We have heard that there are some on the earth who take the male seed and the female monthly blood, and make it into a lentil porridge and eat it, saying: ‘We have faith in Esau and Jacob.’ Is this then seemly or not?”

Jesus was wroth with the world in that hour and said unto Thomas: “Amen, I say: This sin is more heinous than all sins and iniquities. Such men will straightway be taken into the **outer darkness and not be cast back anew** into the sphere, but they shall **perish**, be **destroyed** in the **outer darkness** in a region where there is neither pity nor light, but howling and grinding of teeth. And all the souls which shall be brought into the **outer darkness**, will **not be cast back anew**, but will be **destroyed and dissolved**.”

John answered [and said]: “A man who hath committed no sin, but done good persistently, but hath not found the mysteries to pass through the rulers, when he **cometh out of the body**, what will happen unto him?”

Jesus said: “If the time of such an one is completed through the sphere, the receivers of Bainchooch, who is one of the triple-powered gods, come after his soul and lead his soul with joy and exultation and spend three days circling round with it and instructing it concerning the creations of the world with joy and exultation.” ...

“Thereafter cometh Yaluham, the receiver of Sabaoth, the Adamas, who giveth the cup of **forgetfulness** unto the souls, and he bringeth the water of **forgetfulness** and handeth it to the soul; [and it drinketh it] and forgetteth all things and all the regions to which it had gone.”

“Thereafter there cometh a receiver of the little Sabaoth, the Good, him of the Midst. He himself bringeth a cup filled with thoughts and wisdom, and soberness is in it; [and] he handeth it to the soul. And they **cast it into a body which can neither sleep nor forget** because of the cup of soberness which hath been handed unto it; but it will whip its heart persistently to question about the mysteries of the Light until it find them, through the decision of the Virgin of Light, and inherit the Light for ever.”

A short and less strict SUMMARY of the in many cases rather extreme statements:

1. Most souls are after death returned in another body, after going through an intermediate state, in which they are confronted with what they did wrong in the previous incarnation.
2. A few souls are, however, not allowed to reincarnate and are cast in regions of the “outer darkness”, where they will at the end cease to exist.
3. When a soul reaches repentance, understanding of its wrongdoing, insight and regret, it can leave the circle of rebirth and go up into the realm of light.
4. The powers of the region, in which the soul reincarnates, strive to keep the soul in the cycle of rebirth by means of inspiring it to wrongdoings when in the body, so that it may not too soon get out of that cycle. They want to have the soul in their region.
5. Jesus came to help the souls out of that cycle by means of knowledge and understanding, if only they accept it, and thus liberate them from that region.

So which are the powers of that region? Yaldabaoth and his Archons! See [Yaldabaoth in the Gnostic texts](#), [A brief history of Christianity](#) and [Jesus' Main Mission](#). From Gnostic sources it is obvious, indeed, that Yaldabaoth is the Gnostic name for YHWH, and that he is the self-proclaimed “god” who rules over the region in which souls go through the “changes of the body”, from one to another.

Antonio Orbe on reincarnation and Gnosticism

An overview over the Gnostic reincarnation concept, quoted (and translated by me) from the book *Cristología Gnóstica* by Antonio Orbe (1917-2003), vol. II, chapter 34: *Ascensión y reincorporaciones* (p. 573-597), part 5: *Conclusión*, p. 596-597 (Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid, 1976):

“Christ did not take his seat to the right of Yahweh only to be honored by the heavens. As a reward for his services (his death on the cross, resp.) was established a new order – all along the NT –, opposite to the rule until then. It was not a matter of announcing the Gospel to the angels and the Archons. The revelation of the Father is connected with the person of the Son, the Savior. It was also not a matter of pushing Yahweh aside in his function as a demiurge. Strictly speaking, such a function continued under a new sign. The creator does not ‘fabricate’ new worlds, nor does he shape new humans.

What was the task for Christ to establish the order? Not all Gnostics answer in the same way. Most of them, however, agree in something essential. Christ puts an end to the ‘reincarnation.’ He weakens Yahweh, withdraws his rule over all who have believed in the Gospel of Jesus and liberates them from the ‘cycle of rebirth.’

During the OT, Yahweh came and took power, at the root of death, over all human beings (even the souls of the cryptopneumatics, resp.), pagans and Israelites, good or bad; and he obligated them to take a new body (at least human) on earth. In such a way, they go from one generation to another, without hope to break the chain of births. The subterranean hell was superfluous. It was useless to reunite the dead ones in one place for this. It was enough to obligate them to live again in another body and under other circumstances (of family and place), without leaving the earth. Even the good ones paid tribute to the demiurge and to the ‘circle of birth’ that he put them in. The soul of Phineas thus came back in the body of Elias (Elijah) and later in the one of John the Baptist. There were sometimes Gnostics who were tempted to find a history of the soul (or inner man, resp.) of Adam in his reappearances in re-embodiments. Something of that can be anticipated in the ‘incarnations’ of the pseudoclementine *verus propheta*.

The destruction of such a government announced itself in the arrival of Jesus in the world with the triumph over fate. ... But it was fulfilled after the journey of return, in Messiah taking his seat on the right side. Sitting on the right side of Yahweh, with power over him, Christ (as a spiritual entity) liberates all who are devoted to the Gospel of Truth. None of those who have professed for God the Father and for the Savior the Only-begotten Son, would fall into the fatal circle of births. All of them, in their journey after death, would make themselves free from the hands of Yahweh and go into the ones of Christ.

The non-believers, that is all who insist in the old beliefs and continue to pay cult to a Yahweh, as the only real god, would stay in the government of the OT. They would continue to reincarnate, in death passing from one body to another. Who refuses the benefit of health (and surrender) brought in the world by Jesus, would for punishment continue to be a slave of Yahweh; and, in the same way, to his arbitrariness, in this world feeding the masses of his devotees by means of *metempsychosis* [reincarnation]. The Christ’s (as a spiritual entity) sitting to the right, as an instrument of the Savior for the good of men, would not be experienced by them.”

It should be clear that reincarnation does not cease immediately, also not for the ones who confess to Christ, but it can only be that Jesus showed the path, but **we must walk it ourselves!** We will not without our own actions be carried to the goal.

The Apocryphon of John

And I said, “Lord, where will the souls of these go when they have **come out of their flesh**?” And he smiled and said to me, “The soul in which the power will become stronger than the counterfeit spirit, is strong and it flees from evil and, through the intervention of the incorruptible one, it is saved, and it is taken up to the rest of the aeons.”

And I said, “Lord, those, however, who have not known to whom they belong, where will their souls be?” And he said to me, “In those, the despicable spirit has gained strength when they went astray. And he burdens the soul and draws it to the works of evil, and he casts it down into forgetfulness. And after it **comes out of (the body)**, it is handed over to the authorities, who came into being through the archon, and they bind it with chains and **cast it into prison**, and consort with it **until it is liberated** from the forgetfulness and acquires knowledge. And if thus it becomes perfect, it is saved.”

And I said, “Lord, how can the soul become smaller and **return into the nature of its mother or into man**?” Then he rejoiced when I asked him this, and he said to me, “Truly, you are blessed, for you have understood! That soul is made to follow another one (fem.), since the Spirit of life is in it. It is saved through him. It is not again **cast into another flesh**.”

And I said, “Lord, these also who did not know, but have turned away, where will their souls go?” Then he said to me, “To that place where the angels of poverty go they will be taken, the place where there is no repentance. And they will be kept for the day on which those who have blasphemed the spirit will be tortured, and they will be punished with **eternal punishment**.”

As is already stated above: the Gnostics often called the body a “prison” for the soul.

Zostrianos

If he withdraws to himself alone many times, and if he comes into being with reference to the knowledge of the others, Mind and the immortal [Origin] will not understand. Then it has a shortage, [...] for he turns, has nothing and separates from it and stands [...] and **comes into being by an alien impulse ...I**, instead of becoming one. Therefore, he bears many forms. When he turns aside, he comes into being seeking those things that do not exist. When he falls down to them in thought and knows them in another way because he is powerless, unless perhaps he is enlightened, he becomes a product of nature. Thus he **comes down to birth** because of it and is speechless because of the pains and infiniteness of matter. Although he possesses an eternal and immortal power, **he is bound within the [movement] of the body**. He is [made] alive and is bound [always] within cruel, cutting bonds by every evil breath, until he [acts] again and begins again to come to his senses.

Therefore, **powers are appointed for their salvation**, and each one of them is in the world. Within the self-begotten ones corresponding to each of the [aeons] stand glories so that one who is in the [world] might be safe beside them. The glories are perfect thoughts appearing in powers. They do not perish because they [are] **models for salvation** [by] which each one is saved. He receives a model (and) strength from each of them, and with the glory as a helper he **will thus pass out from the world** [and the aeons ...].

Apocalypse of Paul

But I saw in the fourth heaven according to class – I saw the angels resembling gods, the angels **bringing a soul out of the land of the dead**. They placed it at the gate of the fourth heaven. And the angels were whipping it. The soul spoke, saying, “What sin was it that I committed in the world?” The toll-collector who dwells in the fourth heaven replied, saying, “It was not right to commit all those lawless deeds that are in the world of the dead”. The soul replied, saying, “Bring

witnesses! Let them show you in what body I committed lawless deeds. Do you wish to bring a book to read from?"

And the three witnesses came. The first spoke, saying, "Was I not in the body the second hour [...]? I rose up against you until you fell into anger and rage and envy." And the second spoke, saying, "Was I not in the world? And I entered at the fifth hour, and I saw you and desired you. And behold, then, now I charge you with the murders you committed." The third spoke, saying, "Did I not come to you at the twelfth hour of the day when the sun was about to set? I gave you darkness until you should accomplish your sins." **When the soul heard these things, it gazed downward in sorrow. And then it gazed upward. It was cast down. The soul that had been cast down went to a body which had been prepared for it.** And behold, its witnesses were finished.

The Gospel of Thomas

Jesus said, "Blessed is he who **came into being before he came into being.**" ...

Preexistence.

Jesus said, "If the **flesh came into being because of spirit**, it is a wonder. But if **spirit came into being because of the body**, it is a wonder of wonders. Indeed, I am amazed at how this great wealth has made its home in this poverty." ...

The body is there for the soul, and that is wondrous enough. If the soul would not have existed before and become formed in and by the body, this would be much more wondrous.

His disciples said to him, "When will the **repose of the dead** come about, and when will the **new world** come?" He said to them, "What you look forward to has already come, but you do not recognize it." ...

The *re*-pose of the dead already occurred through reincarnation and in a world that is newer than before, and is in the process of continuously changing.

Jesus said, "When you see your likeness, you rejoice. But when you see **your images which came into being before you**, and which neither die nor become manifest, how much you will have to bear!"

The images of the ones you were in the past and still carry inside as unconscious memories.

Thomas the Contender

Watch and pray that you not **come to be [again] in the flesh**, but rather that you come forth from the bondage of the bitterness of this life.

The Naassene Psalm

She labours at her task beneath Death's rule.
 Now, holding sway, she sees the Light;
 And now, cast into piteous plight, she weeps;
 Now she weeps, and now rejoices;
 Now she weeps, and now is judged;
 Now is judged, and **now she dieth**;
Now is born, with no way out for her; in misery
She enters in her wandering the labyrinth of ills.