

Yaldabaoth in the Gnostic texts

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The name is also written Yaltabaoth, Ialdabaoth or Jaldabaoth, and he is also called Sakla(s) and Samael. In [The Gospel of Truth](#) he is also called “Error” and the reason is explained below. In [The Gospel of Judas](#) he is also called Nebro, and an explanation of this name is given below.

These texts, in comparison with the Old Testament’s story of the creation of humans and a few other things, leave no doubt that what the Gnostic Christians meant by the name Yaldabaoth is actually **YHWH**! And when in *Pistis Sophia* Jesus talks about being *saved from Yaldabaoth*, he, therefore, actually means being saved from **YHWH**... This confirms the hypothesis that his main mission was to show us a way out of the rule of **YHWH** and become *free*! No wonder, then, that **YHWH** wanted him “nailed to a cross” (see [The Gospel of Truth](#)) and then did whatever he could to eradicate the knowledge of the Gnostic Christians and replace it with a manipulated Paulinian Christianity, twisted to serve his interests as a “Christianity light” that lacks the deeper truths taught by Jesus in the *inner circle* and instead introduces modified teachings that fit **YHWH**’s desire for *control*.

Enhancements in the quotations are mine and I have added a few comments in square brackets [...].

From the following texts:

[Pistis Sophia](#)

[The Apokryphon of John](#)

[The Gospel of the Egyptians](#)

[The Hypostasis of the Archons](#)

[Trimorphic Protennoia](#)

[On the Origin of the World](#)

[The Gospel of Truth](#)

[The Gospel of Judas](#)

[Remarks about Pistis Sophia](#)

Overview: [Two Synopses of The Apokryphon Of John](#)

PISTIS SOPHIA

<http://archive.org/details/pistissophia003016mbp>

<http://archive.org/details/pistissophia00mead>

CHAPTER 30

It came to pass then, when Jesus has said this unto his disciples, that Mary [Magdalene] came forward and said; “My Lord, I have heard thee say aforetime; “Pistis Sophia is herself one of the four-and-twenty emanations, – how then is she not in their region? But thou hast said: I found her below the thirteenth aeon.”

And **Jesus answered** and said unto his disciples: “It came to pass, when Pistis Sophia was in the thirteenth aeon, in the region of all her brethren the invisibles, that is the four-and-twenty emanations of the great Invisible, – it came to pass then by command of the First Mystery that Pistis Sophia gazed into the height. She saw the light of the veil of the Treasury of the Light [the divine light world], and she longed to reach to that region, and she could not reach to that region. But she ceased to perform the mystery of the thirteenth aeon, and sang praises to the light of the height, which she had seen in the light of the veil of the Treasury of the Light.”

“It came to pass then, when she sang praises to the region of the height, that all the rulers in the twelve Aeons, who are below, hated her, because she had ceased from their mysteries, and because she had desired to go into the height and be above them all. For this cause then they were enraged against her and hated her, as did the great triple-powered [divine] Self-willed, that is the third triple-power, who is in the thirteenth aeon, he who had become disobedient, in as much as he had not

emanated the whole purification of his power in him, and had not given the purification of his light at the time when the rulers gave their purification, in that he desired to rule over the whole thirteenth aeon and those who are below it.”

“It came to pass then, when the rulers of the twelve Aeons were enraged against Pistis Sophia, who is above them, and hated her exceedingly, that the great triple-powered [divine] Self-willed, of whom I have just now told you, joined himself to the rulers of the twelve Aeons, and also was enraged against Pistis Sophia and hated her exceedingly, because she had thought to go to the light which is higher than her. And he emanated out of himself a great lion-faced power, and out of his matter in him he emanated a host of other very violent material emanations, and sent them into regions below, to the parts of the chaos, in order that they might there lie in wait for Pistis Sophia and take away her power out of her, because she thought to go to the height which is above them all, and moreover she had ceased to perform their mystery, and lamented continuously and sought after the light which she had seen. And the rulers who abide, or persist, in performing the mystery, hated her, and all the guards who are at the gates of the Aeons, hated her also.”

“It came to pass then thereafter by command of the First Commandment that the great triple-powered [divine] Self-willed, who is one of the three triple-powers, pursued Sophia in the thirteenth aeon, in order that she should look toward the parts below, so that she might see in that region his lion-faced light-power and long after it and go to that region, so that her light might be taken from her.”

CHAPTER 31

“It came to pass then thereafter that she [Pistis Sophia] looked below and saw his light-power in the parts below; and she knew not that it is that of the triple-powered Self-willed, but she thought that it came out of the light which she had seen from the beginning in the height, which came out of the veil of the Treasury of the Light [the divine light world]. And she thought to herself I will go into that region without my pair and take the light and thereout fashion for myself light-aeons, so that I may go to the Light of lights, which is in the Height of heights.”

“This then thinking, she went forth from her own region, the thirteenth aeon, and went down to the twelve Aeons. The rulers of the Aeons pursued her and were enraged against her, because she had thought of grandeur. And she went forth also from the twelve Aeons, and came into the regions of the chaos and drew nigh to that lion-faced light-power to devour it.”

“But all the material emanations of Self-willed surrounded her, and the great lion-faced light-power devoured all the light-powers in Sophia and cleaned out her light and devoured it, and her matter was thrust into the chaos; it became a lion-faced ruler in the chaos, of which one half is fire and the other is darkness, – that is **Yaldabaoth**, of whom I [Jesus] have spoken unto you many times. When this befell, Sophia became very greatly exhausted, and that lion-faced light-power set to work to take away from Sophia all her light-powers, and all the material powers of Self-willed surrounded Sophia at the Same time and pressed her sore.”

CHAPTER 32

And Pistis Sophia cried out most exceedingly, she cried to the Light of lights which she had seen from the beginning, in which she had had faith, and uttered this repentance, saying thus:

“O Light of lights, in whom I have had faith from the beginning, hearken now then O light, unto my repentance. Save me, O Light, for evil thoughts have entered into me. ... Let the souls and the matters praise the Lord of all Aeons, and [let] the matters and all that is in them [praise him]. For God shall save their soul from all matters, and a city shall be prepared in the Light, and all the souls who are saved, will dwell in that city and will inherit it. And the soul of them who shall receive mysteries will abide in that region, and they who have received mysteries in its name will abide therein.”

CHAPTER 102

Jesus continued again in the discourse and said unto his disciples: “When I shall have gone into the Light, then herald it unto the whole world and say unto them: ‘Cease not to seek day and night and remit not yourselves until ye find the mysteries of the Light kingdom, which will purify you and

make you into refined light and lead you into the Light- kingdom.’ Say unto them: ‘Renounce the whole world and the whole matter therein and all its cares and all its sins, in a word all its associations which are in it, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the Light and be saved from all the chastisements which are in the judgments.’ ... Say unto them [robbers]: ‘Renounce robbery, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the Light and **be saved from Yaldabaoth.**’ Say unto them [slanders]: ‘Renounce slandering, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the Light and be saved from the fire-rivers of the lion-faced [one].’ Say unto them: ‘Renounce fighting and strife, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the Light and **be saved from the seething rivers of Yaldabaoth.**’ Say unto them [ignorants]: ‘Renounce all unknowing, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the Light and **be saved from the servitors of Yaldabaoth** and the fire-seas.’ Say unto them [evil-doers]: ‘Renounce evil doing, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the Light and **be saved from all the demons of Yaldabaoth and all his judgments.**’ Say unto them [slothful ones]: ‘Renounce sloth, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the Light and **be saved from the seething pitch-seas of Yaldabaoth.**’ Say unto them [adulterers]: ‘Renounce adultery, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the Lightkingdom and **be saved from the sulphur and pitch-seas of the lion-faced [one].**’ Say unto them [murderers]: ‘Renounce murder, that ye may be worthy of the mysteries of the Light and be saved from the crocodile-faced ruler, – this one who is in the cold, is the first chamber of the outer darkness.’”

CHAPTER 144

[8 sheets missing.]

“Thereafter they lead it into the chaos before **Yaldabaoth** and his forty-and-nine demons, and every one of his demons fall upon it another eleven months and twenty-and-one days, scourging it with fiery whips.”

CHAPTER 145

Salome answered and said: “My Lord Jesus, a murderer who hath never committed any sin but murdering, if he cometh out of the body, what is his chastisement?”

Jesus answered and said. “A murderer who hath never committed any sin but murdering, if his time is completed through the sphere, that he cometh out of the body, the receivers of **Yaldabaoth** come and lead his soul out of the body and bind it by its feet to a great demon with a horse’s face, and he spendeth three days circling round with it in the world. . Thereafter they lead it down into the chaos before **Yaldabaoth** and his forty-and-nine demons, ...”

CHAPTER 146

Peter answered and said: “My Lord, a robber and thief whose sin is this persistently, when he cometh out of the body, what is his chastisement?”

Jesus said: “If the time of such an one is completed through the sphere, the receivers of Adonis come after him, and lead his soul out of the body, and they spend three days circling round with it and instructing it concerning the creatures of the world. Thereafter they lead it into the chaos before **Yaldabaoth** and his forty-and-nine demons, and every one of his demons taketh vengeance on it another three months, eight days and two hours.”

Thomas said “A persistent blasphemer, what is his chastisement?”

Jesus said. “If the time of such an one is completed through the sphere, the receivers of **Yaldabaoth** come after him and bind him by his tongue to a great demon with a horse’s face; they spend three days travelling round with him in the world, and take vengeance on him. Thereafter they lead him down into the chaos before **Yaldabaoth** and his forty-and-nine demons, and every one of his demons taketh vengeance on him another eleven years.”

CHAPTER 147

Bartholomew said. “A man who hath intercourse with a male what is his vengeance?”

Jesus said: “The measure of the man who hath intercourse with males and of the man with whom he lieth, is the same as that of the blasphemer. When then the time is completed through the sphere, the receivers of **Yaldabaoth** come after their soul, and he with his forty-and-nine demons taketh vengeance on it eleven years.”

THE APOKRYPHON OF JOHN

also called “The Secret Book/Revelation of John”

<http://gnosis.org/naghamm/apocjn.html>

“And the Sophia of the Epinoia, being an aeon, conceived a thought from herself and the conception of the invisible Spirit and foreknowledge. She wanted to bring forth a likeness out of herself without the consent of the Spirit, – he had not approved – and without her consort, and without his consideration. And though the person of her maleness had not approved, and she had not found her agreement, and she had thought without the consent of the Spirit and the knowledge of her agreement, (yet) she brought forth. And because of the invincible power which is in her, her thought did not remain idle, and something came out of her which was imperfect and different from her appearance, because she had created it without her consort. And it was dissimilar to the likeness of its mother, for it has another form.”

“And when she saw (the consequences of) her desire, it changed into a form of a lion-faced serpent. And its eyes were like lightning fires which flash. She cast it away from her, outside that place, that no one of the immortal ones might see it, for she had created it in ignorance. And she surrounded it with a luminous cloud, and she placed a throne in the middle of the cloud that no one might see it except the holy Spirit who is called the mother of the living. And she called his name **Yaltabaoth**.”

“This is the first archon who took a great power from his mother. And he removed himself from her and moved away from the places in which he was born. He became strong and created for himself other aeons with a flame of luminous fire which (still) exists now. And he joined with his arrogance which is in him and begot authorities for himself. The name of the first one is Athoth, whom the generations call the reaper. The second one is Harmas, who is the eye of envy. The third one is Kalila-Oumbri. The fourth one is Yabel. The fifth one is Adonaïou, who is called Sabaoth. The sixth one is Cain, whom the generations of men call the sun. The seventh is Abel. The eighth is Abrisene. The ninth is Yobel. The tenth is Armoupieel. The eleventh is Melceir-Adonein. The twelfth is Belias, it is he who is over the depth of Hades. And he placed seven kings – each corresponding to the firmaments of heaven – over the seven heavens, and five over the depth of the abyss, that they may reign. And he shared his fire with them, but he did not send forth from the power of the light which he had taken from his mother, for he is ignorant darkness.”

“And when the light had mixed with the darkness, it caused the darkness to shine. And when the darkness had mixed with the light, it darkened the light and it became neither light nor dark, but it became dim.”

“Now the archon who is weak has three names. The first name is **Yaltabaoth**, the second is **Saklas**, and the third is **Samael**. And he is impious in his arrogance which is in him. For he said, ‘I am God and there is no other God beside me,’ for he is ignorant of his strength, the place from which he had come.”

“And the archons created seven powers for themselves, and the powers created for themselves six angels for each one until they became 365 angels. And these are the bodies belonging with the names: the first is Athoth, a he has a sheep’s face; the second is Eloaiou, he has a donkey’s face; the third is Astaphaios, he has a hyena’s face; the fourth is Yao, he has a serpent’s face with seven heads; the fifth is Sabaoth, he has a dragon’s face; the sixth is Adonin, he had a monkey’s face; the seventh is Sabbede, he has a shining fire-face. This is the sevenness of the week.”

“But **Yaltabaoth** had a multitude of faces, more than all of them, so that he could put a face before all of them, according to his desire, when he is in the midst of seraphs. He shared his fire with them; therefore he became lord over them. Because of the power of the glory he possessed of his mother’s light, he called himself God. And he did not obey the place from which he came. And he united the seven powers in his thought with the authorities which were with him. And when he spoke it happened. And he named each power beginning with the highest: the first is goodness with the first (authority), Athoth; the second is foreknowledge with the second one, Eloaio; and the third is divinity with the third one, Astraphaio; the fourth is lordship with the fourth one, Yao; the fifth is kingdom with the fifth one, Sabaoth; the sixth is envy with the sixth one, Adonein; the seventh is understanding with the seventh one, Sabbateon. And these have a firmament corresponding to each aeon-heaven. They were given names according to the glory which belongs to heaven for the destruction of the powers. And in the names which were given to them by their Originator there was power. But the names which were given them according to the glory which belongs to heaven mean for them destruction and powerlessness. Thus they have two names.”

“And having created [...] everything, he organized according to the model of the first aeons which had come into being, so that he might create them like the indestructible ones. Not because he had seen the indestructible ones, but the power in him, which he had taken from his mother, produced in him the likeness of the cosmos. And when he saw the creation which surrounds him, and the multitude of the angels around him which had come forth from him, he said to them, ‘I am a jealous God, and there is no other God beside me.’ But by announcing this he indicated to the angels who attended him that there exists another God. For if there were no other one, of whom would he be jealous?”

“Then the mother began to move to and fro. She became aware of the deficiency when the brightness of her light diminished. And she became dark because her consort had not agreed with her.”

And I said, “Lord, what does it mean that she moved to and fro?” But he smiled and said, “Do not think it is, as Moses said, ‘above the waters.’ No, but when she had seen the wickedness which had happened, and the theft which her son had committed, she repented. And she was overcome by forgetfulness in the darkness of ignorance and she began to be ashamed. And she did not dare to return, but she was moving about. And the moving is the going to and fro.”

“And the arrogant one took a power from his mother. For he was ignorant, thinking that there existed no other except his mother alone. And when he saw the multitude of the angels which he had created, then he exalted himself above them.”

“And when the mother recognized that the garment of darkness was imperfect, then she knew that her consort had not agreed with her. She repented with much weeping. And the whole pleroma heard the prayer of her repentance, and they praised on her behalf the invisible, virginal Spirit. And he consented; and when the invisible Spirit had consented, the holy Spirit poured over her from their whole pleroma. For it was not her consort who came to her, but he came to her through the pleroma in order that he might correct her deficiency. And she was taken up not to her own aeon but above her son, that she might be in the ninth until she has corrected her deficiency.”

“And a voice came forth from the exalted aeon-heaven: ‘The Man exists and the son of Man.’ And the chief archon, Yaltabaoth, heard (it) and thought that the voice had come from his mother. And he did not know from where it came. And he taught them, the holy and perfect Mother-Father, the complete foreknowledge, the image of the invisible one who is the Father of the all (and) through whom everything came into being, the first Man. For he revealed his likeness in a human form.

“And the whole aeon of the chief archon trembled, and the foundations of the abyss shook. And of the waters which are above matter, the underside was illuminated by the appearance of his image which had been revealed. And when all the authorities and the chief archon looked, they saw the whole region of the underside which was illuminated. And through the light they saw the form of the image in the water.”

“And he said to the authorities which attend him, ‘Come, let us create a man according to the image of God and according to our likeness, that his image may become a light for us.’ And they created by means of their respective powers in correspondence with the characteristics which were given. And each authority supplied a characteristic in the form of the image which he had seen in its natural (form). He created a being according to the likeness of the first, perfect Man. And they said, ‘Let us call him Adam, that his name may become a power of light for us.’” ...

“And when the mother wanted to retrieve the power which she had given to the chief archon, she petitioned the Mother-Father of the All, who is most merciful. He sent, by means of the holy decree, the five lights down upon the place of the angels of the chief archon. They advised him that they should bring forth the power of the mother. And they said to **Yaltabaoth**, ‘Blow into his face something of your spirit and his body will arise.’ And he blew into his face the spirit which is the power of his mother; he did not know (this), for he exists in ignorance. And the power of the mother went out of **Yaltabaoth** into the natural body, which they had fashioned after the image of the one who exists from the beginning. The body moved and gained strength, and it was luminous.”

“And in that moment the rest of the powers became jealous, because he had come into being through all of them and they had given their power to the man, and his intelligence was greater than that of those who had made him, and greater than that of the chief archon. And when they recognized that he was luminous, and that he could think better than they, and that he was free from wickedness, they took him and threw him into the lowest region of all matter.”

“But the blessed One, the Mother-Father, the beneficent and merciful One, had mercy on the power of the mother which had been brought forth out of the chief archon, for they (the archons) might gain power over the natural and perceptible body. And he sent, through his beneficent Spirit and his great mercy, a helper to Adam, luminous Epinoia which comes out of him, who is called Life. And she assists the whole creature, by toiling with him and by restoring him to his fullness and by teaching him about the descent of his seed (and) by teaching him about the way of ascent, (which is) the way he came down. And the luminous Epinoia was hidden in Adam, in order that the archons might not know her, but that the Epinoia might be a correction of the deficiency of the mother.”

“And the man came forth because of the shadow of the light which is in him. And his thinking was superior to all those who had made him. When they looked up, they saw that his thinking was superior. And they took counsel with the whole array of archons and angels. They took fire and earth and water and mixed them together with the four fiery winds. And they wrought them together and caused a great disturbance. And they brought him (Adam) into the shadow of death, in order that they might form (him) again from earth and water and fire and the spirit which originates in matter, which is the ignorance of darkness and desire, and their counterfeit spirit. This is the tomb of the newly-formed body with which the robbers had clothed the man, the bond of forgetfulness; and he became a mortal man. This is the first one who came down, and the first separation. But the Epinoia of the light which was in him, she is the one who was to awaken his thinking.”

“And the archons took him and placed him in paradise. And they said to him, ‘Eat, that is at leisure,’ for their luxury is bitter and their beauty is depraved. And their luxury is deception and their trees are godlessness and their fruit is deadly poison and their promise is death. And the tree of their life they had placed in the midst of paradise.”

“And I shall teach you (pl.) what is the mystery of their life, which is the plan which they made together, which is the likeness of their spirit. The root of this (tree) is bitter and its branches are death, its shadow is hate and deception is in its leaves, and its blossom is the ointment of evil, and its fruit is death and desire is its seed, and it sprouts in darkness. The dwelling place of those who taste from it is Hades, and the darkness is their place of rest.”

“But what they call the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which is the Epinoia of the light, they stayed in front of it in order that he (Adam) might not look up to his fullness and recognize the nakedness of his shamefulness. But it was I who brought about that they ate.”

And to I said to the savior, “Lord, was it not the serpent that taught Adam to eat?” The savior smiled and said, “The serpent taught them to eat from wickedness of begetting, lust, (and) destruction, that he (Adam) might be useful to him. And he (Adam) knew that he was disobedient to him (the chief archon) due to light of the Epinoia which is in him, which made him more correct in his thinking than the chief archon. And (the latter) wanted to bring about the power which he himself had given him. And he brought a forgetfulness over Adam.”

And I said to the savior, “What is the forgetfulness?” And he said “It is not the way Moses wrote (and) you heard. For he said in his first book, ‘He put him to sleep’ (Gn 2:21), but (it was) in his perception. For also he said through the prophet, ‘I will make their hearts heavy, that they may not pay attention and may not see’ (Is 6:10).”

“Then the Epinoia of the light hid herself in him (Adam). And the chief archon wanted to bring her out of his rib. But the Epinoia of the light cannot be grasped. Although darkness pursued her, it did not catch her. And he brought a part of his power out of him. And he made another creature, in the form of a woman, according to the likeness of the Epinoia which had appeared to him. And he brought the part which he had taken from the power of the man into the female creature, and not as Moses said, ‘his rib-bone.’”

“And he (Adam) saw the woman beside him. And in that moment the luminous Epinoia appeared, and she lifted the veil which lay over his mind. And he became sober from the drunkenness of darkness. And he recognized his counter-image, and he said, ‘This is indeed bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.’ Therefore the man will leave his father and his mother, and he will cleave to his wife, and they will both be one flesh. For they will send him his consort, and he will leave his father and his mother ...” (3 lines unreadable)

“And our sister Sophia (is) she who came down in innocence in order to rectify her deficiency. Therefore she was called Life, which is the mother of the living, by the foreknowledge of the sovereignty of heaven. And through her they have tasted the perfect Knowledge. I appeared in the form of an eagle on the tree of knowledge, which is the Epinoia from the foreknowledge of the pure light, that I might teach them and awaken them out of the depth of sleep. For they were both in a fallen state, and they recognized their nakedness. The Epinoia appeared to them as a light; she awakened their thinking.”

“And when **Yaltabaoth** noticed that they withdrew from him, he cursed his earth. He found the woman as she was preparing herself for her husband. He was lord over her, though he did not know the mystery which had come to pass through the holy decree. And they were afraid to blame him. And he showed his angels his ignorance which is in him. And he cast them out of paradise and he clothed them in gloomy darkness. And the chief archon saw the virgin who stood by Adam, and that the luminous Epinoia of life had appeared in her. And **Yaltabaoth** was full of ignorance. And when the foreknowledge of the All noticed (it), she sent some and they snatched life out of Eve.

“And the chief archon seduced her and he begot in her two sons; the first and the second (are) Eloim and Yave. Eloim has a bear-face and Yave has a cat-face. The one is righteous but the other is unrighteous. ([IV 38,4--6:] Yave is righteous but Eloim is unrighteous. [This parenthetic insertion by the *translator* from another text will in the view of other texts in this overview appear as quite doubtful!]) Yave he set over the fire and the wind, and Eloim he set over the water and the earth. And these he called with the names Cain and Abel with a view to deceive.”

“Now up to the present day, sexual intercourse continued due to the chief archon. And he planted sexual desire in her who belongs to Adam. And he produced through intercourse the copies of the bodies, and he inspired them with his counterfeit spirit.”

THE GOSPEL OF THE EGYPTIANS

<http://gnosis.org/naghamm/gosegypt.html>

After five thousand years, the great light Eleleth spoke: "Let someone reign over the chaos and Hades." And there appeared a cloud whose name is hylic Sophia [...] She looked out on the parts of the chaos, her face being like [...] in her form [...] blood. And the great angel Gamaliel spoke to the great Gabriel, the minister of the great light Oroiael; he said, "Let an angel come forth, in order that he may reign over the chaos and Hades." Then the cloud, being agreeable, came forth in the two monads, each one of which had light. [...] the throne, which she had placed in the cloud above. Then **Sakla**, the great angel, saw the great demon who is with him, **Nebruel**. And they became together a begetting spirit of the earth. They begot assisting angels. **Sakla** said to the great demon **Nebruel**, "Let the twelve aeons come into being in the [...] aeon, worlds [...]" [...] the great angel **Sakla** said by the will of the Autogenes, "There shall be the [...] of the number of seven [...]" And he said to the great angels, "Go and let each of you reign over his world." Each one of these twelve angels went forth. The first angel is Athoth. He is the one whom the great generations of men call [...]. The second is Harmas, who is the eye of the fire. The third is Galila. The fourth is Yobel. The fifth is Adonaios, who is called 'Sabaoth'. The sixth is Cain, whom the great generations of men call the sun. The seventh is Abel; the eighth Akiressina; the ninth Yubel. The tenth is Harmupiael. The eleventh is Archir-Adonin. The twelfth is Belias. These are the ones who preside over Hades and the chaos.

And after the founding of the world, **Sakla** said to his angels, "I, I am a jealous god, and apart from me nothing has come into being," since he trusted in his nature.

THE HYPOSTASIS OF THE ARCHONS

or "The Reality of the Rulers"

<http://gnosis.org/naghamm/hypostas.html>

And the great angel Eleleth, understanding, spoke to me: "Within limitless realms dwells incorruptibility. Sophia, who is called Pistis, wanted to create something, alone without her consort; and her product was a celestial thing. A veil exists between the world above and the realms that are below; and shadow came into being beneath the veil; and that shadow became matter; and that shadow was projected apart. And what she had created became a product in the matter, like an aborted fetus. And it assumed a plastic form molded out of shadow, and became an arrogant beast resembling a lion. It was androgynous, as I have already said, because it was from matter that it derived.

Opening his eyes, he saw a vast quantity of matter without limit; and he became arrogant, saying, "It is I who am God, and there is none other apart from me". When he said this, he sinned against the entirety. And a voice came forth from above the realm of absolute power, saying, "You are mistaken, **Samael**" – which is, 'god of the blind'.

And he said, "If any other thing exists before me, let it become visible to me!" And immediately Sophia stretched forth her finger and introduced light into matter; and she pursued it down to the region of chaos. And she returned up to her light; once again darkness [...] matter.

This ruler, by being androgynous, made himself a vast realm, an extent without limit. And he contemplated creating offspring for himself, and created for himself seven offspring, androgynous just like their parent. And he said to his offspring, "It is I who am god of the entirety."

And Zoe (Life), the daughter of Pistis Sophia, cried out and said to him, "You are mistaken, **Sakla**!" – for which the alternative name is **Yaltabaoth**. She breathed into his face, and her breath became a fiery angel for her; and that angel bound **Yaldabaoth** and cast him down into Tartaros below the abyss.

Now when his offspring Sabaoth saw the force of that angel, he repented and condemned his father and his mother, matter. He loathed her, but he sang songs of praise up to Sophia and her daughter Zoe. And Sophia and Zoe caught him up and gave him charge of the seventh heaven, below the veil

between above and below. And he is called ‘God of the forces, Sabaoth’, since he is up above the forces of chaos, for Sophia established him.

Now when these (events) had come to pass, he made himself a huge four-faced chariot of cherubim, and infinitely many angels to act as ministers, and also harps and lyres. And Sophia took her daughter Zoe and had her sit upon his right to teach him about the things that exist in the eighth (heaven); and the angel of wrath she placed upon his left. Since that day, his right has been called ‘life’; and the left has come to represent the unrighteousness of the realm of absolute power above. It was before your time that they came into being.

Now when **Yaldabaoth** saw him (Sabaoth) in this great splendor and at this height, he envied him; and the envy became an androgynous product, and this was the origin of envy. And envy engendered death; and death engendered his offspring and gave each of them charge of its heaven; and all the heavens of chaos became full of their multitudes. But it was by the will of the father of the entirety that they all came into being – after the pattern of all the things above – so that the sum of chaos might be attained.

TRIMORPHIC PROTENNOIA

<http://gnosis.org/naghamm/trimorph.html>

Then there came forth a word from the great Light Eleleth, and said, “I am king! Who belongs to Chaos and who belongs to the underworld?” And at that instant, his Light appeared, radiant, endowed with the Epinoia. The Powers of the Powers did not entreat him, and likewise immediately there appeared the great Demon who rules over the lowest part of the underworld and Chaos. He has neither form nor perfection, but, on the contrary, possesses the form of the glory of those begotten in the darkness. Now he is called ‘**Saklas**’, that is, ‘**Samael**’, ‘**Yaltabaoth**’, he who had taken power; who had snatched it away from the innocent one (Sophia); who had earlier overpowered her who is the Light’s Epinoia who had descended, her from whom he had come forth from originally.

Now when the Epinoia of the Light realized that he (**Yaltabaoth**) had begged him (the Light) for another order, even though he was lower than she, she said, “Give me another order, so that you may become for me a dwelling place, lest I dwell in disorder forever.” And the order of the entire house of glory was agreed upon her word. A blessing was brought for her and the higher order released it to her.

And the great Demon began to produce aeons in the likeness of the real Aeons, except that he produced them out of his own power.

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD

also called “The untitled text”

<http://gnosis.org/naghamm/origin.html>

And when these things had come to pass, then Pistis came and appeared over the matter of chaos, which had been expelled like an aborted fetus – since there was no spirit in it. For all of it (chaos) was limitless darkness and bottomless water. Now when Pistis saw what had resulted from her defect, she became disturbed. And the disturbance appeared, as a fearful product; it rushed to her in the chaos. She turned to it and blew into its face in the abyss, which is below all the heavens.

And when Pistis Sophia desired to cause the thing that had no spirit to be formed into a likeness and to rule over matter and over all her forces, there appeared for the first time a ruler, out of the waters, lion-like in appearance, androgynous, having great authority within him, and ignorant of whence he had come into being. Now when Pistis Sophia saw him moving about in the depth of the waters, she said to him, “Child, pass through to here,” whose equivalent is ‘*yalda baoth*’.

Since that day, there appeared the principle of verbal expression, which reached the gods and the angels and mankind. And what came into being as a result of verbal expression, the gods and the angels and mankind finished. Now as for the ruler **Yaltabaoth**, he is ignorant of the force of Pistis: he did not see her face, rather he saw in the water the likeness that spoke with him. And because of that voice, he called himself '**Yaldabaoth**'. But 'Ariael' is what the perfect call him, for he was like a lion. Now when he had come to have authority over matter, Pistis Sophia withdrew up to her light.

When the ruler saw his magnitude – and it was only himself that he saw: he saw nothing else, except for water and darkness – then he supposed that it was he alone who existed. His [...] was completed by verbal expression: it appeared as a spirit moving to and fro upon the waters. And when that spirit appeared, the ruler set apart the watery substance. And what was dry was divided into another place. And from matter, he made for himself an abode, and he called it 'heaven'. And from matter, the ruler made a footstool, and he called it 'earth'.

Next, the ruler had a thought – consistent with his nature – and by means of verbal expression he created an androgyne. He opened his mouth and cooed to him. When his eyes had been opened, he looked at his father, and he said to him, "Eee!" Then his father called him Eee-a-o ('Yao'). Next he created the second son. He cooed to him. And he opened his eyes and said to his father, "Eh!" His father called him 'Eloai'. Next, he created the third son. He cooed to him. And he opened his eyes and said to his father, "Asss!" His father called him 'Astaphaios'. These are the three sons of their father.

Seven appeared in chaos, androgynous. They have their masculine names and their feminine names. The feminine name is Pronoia (Forethought) Sambathas, which is 'week'. And his son is called Yao: his feminine name is Lordship. Sabaoth: his feminine name is Deity. Adonaios: his feminine name is Kingship. Elaios: his feminine name is Jealousy. Oraios: his feminine name is Wealth. And Astaphaios: his feminine name is Sophia (Wisdom).

These are the seven forces of the seven heavens of chaos. And they were born androgynous, consistent with the immortal pattern that existed before them, according to the wish of Pistis: so that the likeness of what had existed since the beginning might reign to the end. You will find the effect of these names and the force of the male entities in the *Archangelic (Book) of the Prophet Moses*, and the names of the female entities in the first *Book of Noraia*.

Now the prime parent **Yaldabaoth**, since he possessed great authorities, created heavens for each of his offspring through verbal expression – created them beautiful, as dwelling places – and in each heaven he created great glories, seven times excellent. Thrones and mansions and temples, and also chariots and virgin spirits up to an invisible one and their glories, each one has these in his heaven; mighty armies of gods and lords and angels and archangels – countless myriads – so that they might serve. The account of these matters you will find in a precise manner in the first *Account of Oraia*.

And they were completed from this heaven to as far up as the sixth heaven, namely that of Sophia. The heaven and his earth were destroyed by the troublemaker that was below them all. And the six heavens shook violently; for the forces of chaos knew who it was that had destroyed the heaven that was below them. And when Pistis knew about the breakage resulting from the disturbance, she sent forth her breath and bound him and cast him down into Tartaros. Since that day, the heaven, along with its earth, has consolidated itself through Sophia the daughter of **Yaldabaoth**, she who is below them all.

Now when the heavens had consolidated themselves along with their forces and all their administration, the prime parent became insolent. And he was honored by all the army of angels. And all the gods and their angels gave blessing and honor to him. And for his part, he was delighted and continually boasted, saying to them, "I have no need of anyone." He said, "It is I who am God, and there is no other one that exists apart from me." And when he said this, he sinned against all the immortal beings who give answer. And they laid it to his charge.

Then when Pistis saw the impiety of the chief ruler, she was filled with anger. She was invisible. She said, "You are mistaken, **Samael**," (that is, "blind god"). "There is an immortal man of light

who has been in existence before you, and who will appear among your modelled forms; he will trample you to scorn, just as potter's clay is pounded. And you will descend to your mother, the abyss, along with those that belong to you. For at the consummation of your (pl.) works, the entire defect that has become visible out of the truth will be abolished, and it will cease to be, and will be like what has never been." Saying this, Pistis revealed her likeness of her greatness in the waters. And so doing, she withdrew up to her light.

Now when Sabaoth, the son of **Yaldabaoth**, heard the voice of Pistis, he sang praises to her, and he condemned the father [...] at the word of Pistis; and he praised her because she had instructed them about the immortal man and his light. Then Pistis Sophia stretched out her finger and poured upon him some light from her light, to be a condemnation of his father. Then when Sabaoth was illumined, he received great authority against all the forces of chaos. Since that day he has been called "Lord of the Forces".

He hated his father, the darkness, and his mother, the abyss, and loathed his sister, the thought of the prime parent, which moved to and fro upon the waters. And because of his light, all the authorities of chaos were jealous of him. And when they had become disturbed, they made a great war in the seven heavens. Then when Pistis Sophia had seen the war, she dispatched seven archangels to Sabaoth from her light. They snatched him up to the seventh heaven. They stood before him as attendants. Furthermore, she sent him three more archangels, and established the kingdom for him over everyone, so that he might dwell above the twelve gods of chaos.

Now when Sabaoth had taken up the place of repose in return for his repentance, Pistis also gave him her daughter Zoe (Life), together with great authority, so that she might instruct him about all things that exist in the eighth heaven. And as he had authority, he made himself first of all a mansion. It is huge, magnificent, seven times as great as all those that exist in the seven heavens.

THE GOSPEL OF TRUTH

<http://gnosis.org/naghamm/got.html>

Comment: In this Gospel, Yaldabaoth is called "Error". The reason is quite obvious from the above. Yaldabaoth actually was an "error" in the creation... (and how else would one explain that the "Error" was angry at Jesus and had him nailed at a cross?). Now one may, of course, dispute how the Highest God, the original Creator, could allow such an "error" to occur. But it could well be that he wanted this to happen to have a region formed in which certain entities and souls could live out their negativity, until at the end they finally learn from the experience and repent.

This ignorance of the Father brought about terror and fear. And terror became dense like a fog, that no one was able to see. Because of this, **error** became strong. But it worked on its hylic substance vainly, because it did not know the truth. It was in a fashioned form while it was preparing, in power and in beauty, the equivalent of truth. This then, was not a humiliation for him, that illimitable, inconceivable one. For they were as nothing, this terror and this forgetfulness and this figure of falsehood, whereas this established truth is unchanging, unperturbed and completely beautiful.

For this reason, do not take **error** too seriously. Thus, since it had no root, it was in a fog as regards the Father, engaged in preparing works and forgetfulnesses and fears in order, by these means, to beguile those of the middle and to make them captive. The forgetfulness of **error** was not revealed. It did not become light beside the Father. Forgetfulness did not exist with the Father, although it existed because of him. What exists in him is knowledge, which was revealed so that forgetfulness might be destroyed and that they might know the Father, Since forgetfulness existed because they did not know the Father, if they then come to know the Father, from that moment on forgetfulness will cease to exist.

That is the gospel of him whom they seek, which he has revealed to the perfect through the mercies of the Father as the hidden mystery, Jesus the Christ. Through him he enlightened those who were in darkness because of forgetfulness. He enlightened them and gave them a path. And that path is

the truth which he taught them. For this reason **error** was angry with him, so it persecuted him. It was distressed by him, so it made him powerless. He was nailed to a cross. He became a fruit of the knowledge of the Father. He did not, however, destroy them because they ate of it. He rather caused those who ate of it to be joyful because of this discovery.

And as for him, them he found in himself, and him they found in themselves, that illimitable, inconceivable one, that perfect Father who made the all, in whom the All is, and whom the All lacks, since he retained in himself their perfection, which he had not given to the all. The Father was not jealous. What jealousy, indeed, is there between him and his members? For, even if the Aeon had received their perfection, they would not have been able to approach the perfection of the Father, because he retained their perfection in himself, giving it to them as a way to return to him and as a knowledge unique in perfection. He is the one who set the All in order and in whom the All existed and whom the All lacked. As one of whom some have no knowledge, he desires that they know him and that they love him. For what is it that the All lacked, if not the knowledge of the Father?

He became a guide, quiet and in leisure. In the middle of a school he came and spoke the Word, as a teacher. Those who were wise in their own estimation came to put him to the test. But he discredited them as empty-headed people. They hated him because they really were not wise men. After all these came also the little children, those who possess the knowledge of the Father. When they became strong they were taught the aspects of the Father's face. They came to know and they were known. They were glorified and they gave glory. In their heart, the living book of the Living was manifest, the book which was written in the thought and in the mind of the Father and, from before the foundation of the All, is in that incomprehensible part of him.

This is the book which no one found possible to take, since it was reserved for him who will take it and be slain. No one was able to be manifest from those who believed in salvation as long as that book had not appeared. For this reason, the compassionate, faithful Jesus was patient in his sufferings until he took that book, since he knew that his death meant life for many. Just as in the case of a will which has not yet been opened, for the fortune of the deceased master of the house is hidden, so also in the case of the All which had been hidden as long as the Father of the All was invisible and unique in himself, in whom every space has its source. For this reason Jesus appeared. He took that book as his own. He was nailed to a cross. He affixed the edict of the Father to the cross.

Oh, such great teaching! He abases himself even unto death, though he is clothed in eternal life. Having divested himself of these perishable rags, he clothed himself in incorruptibility, which no one could possibly take from him. Having entered into the empty territory of fears, he passed before those who were stripped by forgetfulness, being both knowledge and perfection, proclaiming the things that are in the heart of the Father, so that he became the wisdom of those who have received instruction. But those who are to be taught, the living who are inscribed in the book of the living, learn for themselves, receiving instructions from the Father, turning to him again.

Since the perfection of the All is in the Father, it is necessary for the All to ascend to him. Therefore, if one has knowledge, he gets what belongs to him and draws it to himself. For he who is ignorant, is deficient, and it is a great deficiency, since he lacks that which will make him perfect. Since the perfection of the All is in the Father, it is necessary for the All to ascend to him and for each one to get the things which are his. He registered them first, having prepared them to be given to those who came from him.

Those whose name he knew first were called last, so that the one who has knowledge is he whose name the Father has pronounced. For he whose name has not been spoken is ignorant. Indeed, how shall one hear if his name has not been uttered? For he who remains ignorant until the end is a creature of forgetfulness and will perish with it. If this is not so, why have these wretches no name, why do they have no sound? Hence, if one has knowledge, he is from above. If he is called, he hears, he replies, and he turns toward him who called him and he ascends to him and he knows what he is called. Since he has knowledge, he does the will of him who called him. He desires to please him and he finds rest. He receives a certain name. He who thus is going to have knowledge knows

whence he came and whither he is going. He knows it as a person who, having become intoxicated, has turned from his drunkenness and having come to himself, has restored what is his own.

He has turned many from **error**. He went before them to their own places, from which they departed when they erred because of the depth of him who surrounds every place, whereas there is nothing which surrounds him. It was a great wonder that they were in the Father without knowing him and that they were able to leave on their own, since they were not able to contain him and know him in whom they were, for indeed his will had not come forth from him. For he revealed it as a knowledge with which all its emanations agree, namely, the knowledge of the living book which he revealed to the Aeons at last as his letters, displaying to them that these are not merely vowels nor consonants, so that one may read them and think of something void of meaning; on the contrary, they are letters which convey the truth. They are pronounced only when they are known. Each letter is a perfect truth like a perfect book, for they are letters written by the hand of the unity, since the Father wrote them for the Aeons, so that they by means of his letters might come to know the Father.

While his wisdom mediates on the logos, and since his teaching expresses it, his knowledge has been revealed. His honor is a crown upon it. Since his joy agrees with it, his glory exalted it. It has revealed his image. It has obtained his rest. His love took bodily form around it. His trust embraced it. Thus the logos of the Father goes forth into the All, being the fruit of his heart and expression of his will. It supports the All. It chooses and also takes the form of the All, purifying it, and causing it to return to the Father and to the Mother, Jesus of the utmost sweetness. The Father opens his bosom, but his bosom is the Holy Spirit. He reveals his hidden self which is his son, so that through the compassion of the Father the Aeons may know him, end their wearying search for the Father and rest themselves in him, knowing that this is rest. After he had filled what was incomplete, he did away with form. The form of it is the world, that which it served. For where there is envy and strife, there is an incompleteness; but where there is unity, there is completeness. Since this incompleteness came about because they did not know the Father, so when they know the Father, incompleteness, from that moment on, will cease to exist. As one's ignorance disappears when he gains knowledge, and as darkness disappears when light appears, so also incompleteness is eliminated by completeness. Certainly, from that moment on, form is no longer manifest, but will be dissolved in fusion with unity. For now their works lie scattered. In time unity will make the spaces complete. By means of unity each one will understand itself. By means of knowledge it will purify itself of diversity with a view towards unity, devouring matter within itself like fire and darkness by light, death by life.

Certainly, if these things have happened to each one of us, it is fitting for us, surely, to think about the All so that the house may be holy and silent for unity. Like people who have moved from a neighborhood, if they have some dishes around which are not good, they usually break them. Nevertheless the householder does not suffer a loss, but rejoices, for in the place of these defective dishes there are those which are completely perfect. For this is the judgement which has come from above and which has judged every person, a drawn two-edged sword cutting on this side and that. When it appeared, I mean, the Logos, who is in the heart of those who pronounce it – it was not merely a sound but it has become a body – a great disturbance occurred among the dishes, for some were emptied, others filled: some were provided for, others were removed; some were purified, still others were broken. All the spaces were shaken and disturbed for they had no composure nor stability. **Error** was disturbed not knowing what it should do. It was troubled; it lamented, it was beside itself because it did not know anything. When knowledge, which is its abolishment, approached it with all its emanations, error is empty, since there is nothing in it. Truth appeared; all its emanations recognized it. They actually greeted the Father with a power which is complete and which joins them with the Father. For each one loves truth because truth is the mouth of the Father. His tongue is the Holy Spirit, who joins him to truth attaching him to the mouth of the Father by his tongue at the time he shall receive the Holy Spirit.

THE GOSPEL OF JUDAS

http://www.nationalgeographic.com/lostgospel/_pdf/GospelofJudas.pdf

“The multitude of those immortals is called the cosmos – that is, perdition – by the Father and the seventy-two luminaries who are with the Self-Generated and his seventy-two aeons. In him the first human appeared with his incorruptible powers. And the aeon that appeared with his generation, the aeon in whom are the cloud of knowledge and the angel, is called [51] El. [...] aeon [...] after that [...] said, ‘Let twelve angels come into being [to] rule over chaos and the [underworld].’ And look, from the cloud there appeared an [angel] whose face flashed with fire and whose appearance was defiled with blood. His name was **Nebro**, which means ‘rebel’; others call him **Yaldabaoth**. Another angel, **Saklas**, also came from the cloud. So **Nebro** created six angels – as well as **Saklas** – to be assistants, and these produced twelve angels in the heavens, with each one receiving a portion in the heavens.”

“Then **Saklas** said to his angels, ‘Let us create a human being after the likeness and after the image.’ They fashioned Adam and his wife Eve, who is called, in the cloud, Zoe. For by this name all the generations seek the man, and each of them calls the woman by these names. Now, **Sakla** did not [53] com[mand ...] except [...] the gene[rations ...] this [...]. And the [ruler] said to Adam, ‘You shall live long, with your children.’”

Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, for all of them the stars bring matters to completion. When **Saklas** completes the span of time assigned for him, their first star will appear with the generations, and they will finish what they said they would do. Then they will fornicate in my name and slay their children [55] and they will [...] and [– about six and a half lines missing –] my name, and he will [...] your star over the [thir]teenth aeon.”

“Truly I say [to you], this baptism [56] [...] my name [– about nine lines missing –] to me. Truly [I] say to you, Judas, [those who] offer sacrifices to **Saklas** [...] God [– three lines missing –] everything that is evil.”

What about the Name “Nebro”? In [A Dictionary of Gnosticism](#) by Andrew Phillip Smith is stated:

“**Nebroel/Nebruel**: A demiurgic demon who in Manichaean myth, along with Sakla, created the population of the world through masturbation and abortion. The spilled semen produced plants when it fell onto earth, but a sea monster when it fell into the sea. The aborted embryos became demons, which then ate the plants and turned into animals. Nebruel is also a great demon in the *Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit* who along with Sakla begot angels.”

Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit = *The Gospel of the Egyptians* (see above).

Remarks about 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.”

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.

TWO SYNOPSES OF THE APOKRYPHON OF JOHN

A synopsis of *The Secret Book of John = The Apokryphon of John* quoted from *The Secret Book of John*, translation & annotation by Stevan Davies, Skylight Paths Publishing, 2005, pp ix-xiv

The Secret Book of John begins with a brief narrative passage telling us that what we are reading is a revelation of the ascended Jesus Christ to his disciple John, son of Zebedee. The revelation itself occupies the text until the end, when Jesus and John appear once again to bring the book to its conclusion. Because of these beginning and concluding passages, the whole text presents itself as Christian: a revelation by Jesus to one of his disciples. However, these sections were added to a preexisting mythological book that was not Christian at all. It was mythologized Middle Platonism combined with a Jewish inversion of the Genesis story and a Gnostic theory of fall and salvation. Whether this non-Christian version of the Secret Book of John was chronologically pre-Christian is debatable; many scholars think it probably came into being toward the end of the first century CE, but it is possible that it was in writing, in one form or another, a century or more before that.

Because the Secret Book of John was so important to the Gnostics, over the centuries many scribes added clarifying comments to it. Because the Gnostics valued change and creativity, which the orthodox condemned as the matrix of heresy, the Secret Book of John went through many copies, versions, and editions. Accordingly, the copies we have today contain wide variations of comments and vocabulary blended into the main text. It does not flow smoothly, but when you get used to it, it's not so confusing.

The Secret Book of John tells the history of God, beginning with passages that stress God's incomprehensible nature. At first we hear that God, "the One," cannot be discussed in words, but as we move along in the myth, the One becomes increasingly comprehensible. Soon we hear that the Godhead apprehends itself in the surrounding supernal light and twoness emerges: God and God Aware of God or God and the self-consciousness of God.

As the myth continues, the self-consciousness of God asks for and receives a set of mental faculties that appear to be structured in the manner of mandalas, circular diagrams with four different quadrants surrounding a more important central element. These mental faculties are described as if they constitute the royal court of heaven. We are reading about the gradual emergence of God's mind, a set of interacting capacities that come into being below, as it were, the ultimate level of the Incomprehensible One. This is a developmental psychology, a descriptive Middle-Platonic philosophy, and most importantly, a cosmic mythology all rolled into one.

After the full development of the mind of God – a fullness called *pleroma* in Greek – has been outlined, a crisis occurs. One aspect of God's mind, its wisdom – Sophia in Greek – seeks to know an image of herself apart from the fullness. Sophia's individual effort has disastrous results.

She discovers an image that is not the full mind of God at all, but a monster named **Yaldabaoth** who appears to exist outside of God. This is a mistake on God's part (for God's wisdom is part of God at all times) and is perhaps even God going insane and imagining reality outside of God that cannot be. The consequences of this mistake occupy the rest of the Secret Book of John.

We hear that **Yaldabaoth**, the being brought into existence by Sophia, begins to construct a world based on his inadequate, half-witted knowledge of the higher realms of God's mind. This is an artificial world, a bad imitation of the real world, a world that becomes our world. **Yaldabaoth** brings beings into existence who are his subordinate rulers: demons who dominate this lower, artificial world. The divine powers of the wisdom of God, without whom nothing could exist, also act within this lower world.

To return Wisdom's stolen power to God, a plan comes down from the whole fullness of the mind of God. **Yaldabaoth** will be deceived so that he blows his power into a creature who will in turn restore that power to the higher realms. The divine realms are clearly revealed to **Yaldabaoth** and his demons, and they decide to construct a being modeled on that revelation. That being is Adam; he gains life and mobility only after **Yaldabaoth's** power is blown into him.

The higher realms of God send down mental power symbolized as Eve to assist Adam; both are, of course, symbolic beings and not real people. **Yaldabaoth** and his demons scheme to imprison Adam and Eve in matter in this world, but the higher realms send down revelation to assist them. The book concludes with a three-part hymn wherein revelation, called Providence, comes into the world to release us from bondage, for we all are Adam and Eve.

A synopsis of *The Secret Book of John = The Apokryphon of John* quoted from *The Secret Revelation of John*, by Karen King, Harvard University Press, 2006, pp 1-9.

As the story opens, the Savior's disciple John is going up to the temple. He encounters a Pharisee named Arimanios who taunts him, charging that John's teacher has led him astray from the traditions of his fathers and now has abandoned him. John is so deeply disturbed by the Pharisee's charges that he goes out alone into a mountainous place in the desert, feeling lost and perplexed.

Suddenly the heavens open, a heavenly light shines, and the Savior appears to him in multiple forms. The Savior comforts him and reveals to him the entire nature of the universe. He discloses the completely perfect and utterly transcendent nature of God the Father and describes the appearance of a multitude of divine beings who derive from Him. He explains that first of all appeared Pronoia-Barbelo, the Mother. From her came forth the Son, the divine self-generated Christ (Autogenes). He brought forth four great Lights, each with three androgynous (male and female) pairs of eternal Aeons. The last of the eternal Aeons to appear is called Sophia, whose name in Greek means "wisdom."

She desired to produce a likeness of herself, but acted without the consent of the Father or her male partner (the male side of her aeonic pair). Although her intention was good, she acted in ignorance and as a result her product was an ignorant and evil being, a lion-faced serpent with eyes that flashed fire. This is the creator God of *Genesis*; his true name is **Yaldabaoth** and he is called "the Chief Ruler." Possessing only a soul but not the higher power of the Spirit, Sophia's offspring is arrogant and ignorant of his own mother. His first act is to steal some of her Spirit in order to create seven minions to serve him along with a host of angels and archangels. **Yaldabaoth** then shapes the world below. Although he uses the Divine Realm as a pattern, the lower world is deficient like its creator.

The Chief Ruler demonstrates his profound ignorance by boasting to his minions, "I am a jealous God and there is none except me." When Sophia hears this lie, she realizes her error and repents. In an attempt to comfort her, Autogenes-Christ descends to instruct the lower creation. His luminous image is revealed in the form of a human being in the waters below, and immediately **Yaldabaoth** and his minions seek to possess it. They now create a human likeness according to the image that they have seen in the waters, but their molded form cannot move because it has no life in it. Surprisingly the divine Lights persuade **Yaldabaoth** to breathe into the human form, and Adam becomes a living being, for the breath that **Yaldabaoth** breathes into Adam is the Spirit he had stolen from his mother, Sophia. Left again with only soul substance, the spiritually bereft world rulers immediately see that their creation is superior to them, and they imprison Adam in a body of flesh in order to strengthen their faltering hold over him. As a result, humanity comes to be composed of Spirit from the mother, Sophia, soul from the psychic substance of **Yaldabaoth** and his angels, and flesh from the four elements of the earth. Humanity is thus made in the image of the Divine, but formed in the likeness of the lower world rulers. Enclosed in matter, Adam is temporarily ignorant of his true nature and origin, and becomes subject to passion, suffering, and death.

In order to save humanity from this fate, the divine Mother Pronoia sends down a female savior, the Epinoia of Light, to instruct Adam, enlightening him about his true nature and the existence of the Divine Realm above. The world rulers dimly perceive her presence within Adam, but they do not understand exactly who and what she is. They foolishly attempt to remove the female savior from Adam surgically, which results in the birth of Eve, who is "bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh." Taking the form of an eagle on the Tree of Knowledge, Epinoia continues to instruct them both in the true knowledge. But now the world rulers try a new strategy to maintain their domination over the humans; they invent food, wealth, and labor. They rape Eve and attempt to trap humanity with sexual lust. But again they fail, for Adam recognizes his own spiritual essence in Eve and their sexual union produces Seth, a child in the image of the true Human. In contrast to the sexual violence and lust of the false world rulers, true sexuality consists in spiritual generation following the pattern of the Divine Realm.

At last Pronoia sends down her own Spirit of Life to instruct humanity. Those souls who receive her Spirit reject the things of this world and cultivate the Spirit within them; those who do not become subject to the counterfeit spirit which binds humanity to the power of the wicked world rulers. They chain people to fate in order to blind them further and lead them into sin and suffering. Rather than despair, however, the *Secret Revelation of John* offers hope, for in the end all humanity will be saved and brought into the eternal light. After a period of instruction and purification, each soul will ascend up to the Divine Realm, taking its rightful place in the Aeons of the great Lights. The situation of alienation in the world does not signal hopelessness and nihilism, because salvation awaits all those who recognize the true Spirit within, renounce evil, and grasp the living hope.

When Christ has completed this revelation, he commands John to write it down and pass it on to his fellow spirits. No longer in doubt or sorrow, John immediately goes forth to his fellow disciples and tells them everything the Savior had revealed. With this happy ending, the book closes.