

An Overview of Non-Canonical Jewish and Early Christian Literature

NON-BIBLICAL ANCIENT JEWISH LITERATURE:

Old Testament Apocrypha

Seven complete books and various additions to existing books are *not* considered biblical or “canonical” by Jews or Protestants (who call them “Old Testament Apocrypha”); but these *are* considered part of the Old Testament canon by Catholic and Orthodox Christians (who call them “Deuterocanonical Books”):

- **Judith**
- **Tobit**
- **1 Maccabees**
- **2 Maccabees**
- **Wisdom of Solomon**
- **Ecclesiasticus (a.k.a. Sirach)**
- **Baruch**
- **Additions to Daniel:**
 - Prayer of Azariah & Song of Three Jews (Dan 3:24-90)
 - Susanna (Dan 13)
 - Bel & the Dragon (Dan 14)
- **Additions to Esther**
- **Letter of Jeremiah (Baruch 6)**

Some Orthodox Churches include in their Bibles a few other writings that are not accepted as canonical by Catholics:

- **1 Esdras**
- **2 Esdras (a.k.a. 4 Ezra)**
- **3 Maccabees**
- **4 Maccabees**
- **Prayer of Manasseh**
- **Psalm 151**

Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

Several ancient Jewish writings are attributed to various biblical figures, although they were almost certainly not written by the purported authors, but rather by anonymous writers several centuries later:

- *1 Enoch* (Ethiopic Apocalypse of Enoch)
- *2 Enoch* (Slavonic Book of the Secrets of Enoch)
- *4 Baruch* (a.k.a. Paraleipomena Jeremioi)
- Apocalypse of *Abraham*
- Apocalypse of *Adam*
- Apocalypse of *Moses*
- Book of *Jubilees*
- Books of *Adam and Eve* (Latin version)
- Life of *Adam and Eve* (Greek & Slavonic versions)
- Letter of *Aristeas*
- Martyrdom of *Isaiah*
- *Joseph and Aseneth*
- Psalms of *Solomon*
- Pseudo-*Phocilides*
- Revelation of *Esdras*
- Second Treatise of the Great *Seth*
- *Sibylline Oracles*
- Story of *Ahikar*
- Testament of *Abraham*
- Testament of *Solomon*
- Testaments of the *Twelve Patriarchs*

Other Ancient Jewish Literature:

- *Dead Sea Scrolls* – biblical and sectarian texts, especially but not only from Qumran (ca. 200 BC – 68 AD)
- *Philo of Alexandria* – Jewish philosopher and exegete (ca. 20 BC – ca. 50 AD); hundreds of important works
- *Flavius Josephus* – Jewish general and historian (ca. 37 – ca. 100 AD): Jewish War; Antiquities of the Jews; etc.
- *Rabbinic Literature* – Mishnah, Tosefta, Midrashim, Targumim, Talmudim, etc. (ca. 200 – 1000 AD)

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- *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*. 2 vols. R. H. Charles, ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978.
- *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. Geza Vermes, transl. & ed. New York: Penguin, 1997.
- *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English*. 2nd edition. Florentino García Martínez, ed.; Wilfred G. E. Watson, transl. Leiden/New York: E. J. Brill; Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1996.
- *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*. Transl. by C. D. Yonge. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1993.
- *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*. Transl. by W. Whiston. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987.
- **Online:** <http://wesley.nnu.edu/sermons-essays-books/noncanonical-literature/>

NON-BIBLICAL EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE (*not* a complete list):

Apocryphal Gospels

The Infancy Gospel of Thomas [Greek & Latin versions]
An Arabic Infancy Gospel
The Gospel of James
The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary
The Gospel of Mary [Magdalene]
The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew
The Gospel of Matthias
The Gospel of Nicodemus [a.k.a. The Acts of Pilate]
The Gospel of Bartholomew
The Gospel of Peter
The Gospel of Thomas [Coptic Sayings Gospel]
The Gospel of Philip
The Gospel of the Lord [by Marcion]
The Gospel of the Twelve Apostles [various versions]
The Gospel of the Nazareans
The Gospel of the Ebionites
The Gospel of the Hebrews
The Gospel of the Egyptians
The Secret Gospel of Mark
The Gospel of Judas

Apocryphal Acts

The Acts of Andrew
The Acts and Martyrdom of Andrew
The Acts of Andrew and Matthew
The Acts of Barnabas
The Martyrdom of Bartholomew
The Acts of John
The Mystery of the Cross [excerpt from Acts of John]
The Acts of John the Theologian
The History of Joseph the Carpenter
The Book of John Concerning the Death of Mary
The Passing of Mary
The Acts and Martyrdom of Matthew
The Martyrdom of Matthew
The Acts of Paul
The Acts of Paul and Thecla
The Acts of Peter
The Acts of Peter and Andrew
The Acts of Peter and Paul
The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles
The Acts of Philip
The Report of Pontius Pilate to Tiberius
The Giving Up of Pontius Pilate
The Death of Pilate
The Acts of Thaddaeus
The Acts of Thomas
The Book of Thomas the Contender
The Consummation of Thomas

Other Pseudepigraphic Early Christian Writings:

The Teachings of Addeus the Apostle
The Epistle of the Apostles
Community Rule
The Correspondence of Jesus and Abgar
John the Evangelist
The Narrative of Joseph of Arimathea
The Epistle to the Laodiceans
The Correspondence of Paul and Seneca
The Letter of Pontius Pilate to the Roman Emperor
The Report of Pilate to Caesar
The Report of Pilate to Tiberius
Excerpts from Pistis Sophia
The Avenging of the Savior

Apocryphal Apocalypses:

The Ascension of Isaiah
The Apocalypse of Adam
The Revelation of Esdras
The First Apocalypse of James
The Second Apocalypse of James
The Revelation of John the Theologian
The Revelation of Moses
The Apocalypse of Paul
The Revelation of Paul
The Apocalypse of Peter
The Vision of Paul
The Revelation of Peter
Christian Sibylline Oracles

The Nag Hammadi Library (*full list*):

The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles
Allogenes
The Apocalypse of Adam
The (First) Apocalypse of James
The (Second) Apocalypse of James
The Apocalypse of Paul
The Apocalypse of Peter
The Apocryphon of James:
The Apocryphon of John
Asclepius 21-29
Authoritative Teaching
The Book of Thomas the Contender
The Concept of Our Great Power
The Dialogue of the Savior
The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth
Eugnostos the Blessed
The Exegesis on the Soul
The Gospel of the Egyptians
The Gospel of Philip
The Gospel of Thomas:
The Gospel of Truth:
The Hypostasis of the Archons
Hypsiphron
The Interpretation of Knowledge
The Letter of Peter to Philip
Marsanes
Melchizedek
On the Anointing
On the Baptism A; On the Baptism B
On the Eucharist A; On the Eucharist B
On the Origin of the World
The Paraphrase of Shem (fragmentary)
Plato, Republic 588A-589B
The Prayer of the Apostle Paul
The Prayer of Thanksgiving
The Second Treatise of the Great Seth
The Sentences of Sextus
The Sophia of Jesus Christ
The Teachings of Silvanus
The Testimony of Truth
The Thought of Norea
The Three Steles of Seth
The Thunder, Perfect Mind
The Treatise on the Resurrection
Trimorphic Protennoia
The Tripartite Tractate
A Valentinian Exposition
Zostriano

NON-BIBLICAL EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE (cont.):

“**The Apostolic Fathers**” (refers to the first few generations of Christian leaders *after* the Apostles themselves):

Anonymous or Pseudonymous:

The Didache (“Teaching of the Twelve Apostles”)
The Epistle of Barnabas (ca. 130, pseudonymous)
The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus (2nd Cent.?)
The Shepherd of Hermas (Rome, ca.150)

Clement, Bishop of Rome

First Clement (Epistle to the Corinthians, ca. 96)
Second Clement (ca. 150, pseudonymous)

Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis (ca. 60-130):

Fragments (quoted by Eusebius)

Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna (ca. 69-155):

The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians (ca.130)
The Martyrdom of Polycarp (ca. 155)
Miscellaneous Writings of Polycarp

Justin Martyr (ca. 100-165):

First Apology
Second Apology
Discourse to the Greeks
On the Sole Government of God
On the Resurrection; etc.

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch (ca. 35-108):

Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians
Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians
Epistle of Ignatius to the Magnesians
Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans
Epistle of Ignatius to the Smyrnaeans
Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians
Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp

writings attributed to Ignatius, but spurious:

Epistle of Ignatius to Mary at Neapolis
Epistle of Maria the Proselyte to Ignatius
Epistle of Ignatius to St. John the Apostle
Second Epistle of Ignatius to St. John the Apostle
Epistle of Ignatius to Hero, a deacon of Antioch
Epistle of Ignatius to the Antiochians
Third Epistle of Ignatius
Epistle of Ignatius to the Tarsians
Second Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians
Epistle of Ignatius to the Philippians
Another Version of Ignatius to Polycarp
Epistle of Ignatius to the Virgin Mary
Reply of the Virgin Mary to Ignatius

Pseudonymous Writings, attributed to non-Christians in defense of Christianity:

The Epistle of Adrian in behalf of the Christians
The Epistle of Antoninus
The Epistle of Marcus Aurelius to the Senate

Ante-Nicene Fathers (Writings of Church Leaders down to A.D. 325)

from the Second Century: Irenaeus of Lyons (ca., 130-200), Tatian, Theophilus, Athenagoras, Clement of Alexandria; Tertullian of Carthage (ca.150-212)

from the Third & early Fourth Centuries: Minucius Felix; Commodian; Origen; Hippolytus; Cyprian; Caius; Novatian; Gregory Thaumaturgus; Dionysius the Great; Julius Africanus; Anatolius; Methodius; Arnobius; Lactantius; Venantius; Asterius; Victorinus; Dionysius; etc.

Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers (active during and after the Council of Nicaea, 325 AD)

Athanasius of Alexandria; Basil the Great; Jerome; Theodore of Studium; Methodius of Olympus; Gregory of Nazianzen; Augustine of Hippo; John Chrysostom; Eusebius of Caesarea; Gregory of Nyssa; Cyril of Jerusalem; Ambrose of Milan; Leo the Great; Gregory the Great; etc.

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- *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*. Revised edition. James M. Robinson, ed. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.
- *The Apostolic Fathers* (several different editions from different publishers; see also *Early Christian Writings*)
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Some Samples of Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Apocalypses

Gospel of James (*dated circa 150 A.D., this gospel is concerned mainly with Mary as mother of Israel's salvation*)

V.2 And her months were fulfilled, and in the ninth month Anna brought forth. And she said to the midwife: what have I brought forth? And she said: A female. And Anna said: My soul is magnified this day, and she laid herself down. *And when the days were fulfilled, Anna purified herself and gave suck to the child and called her name Mary.*

VII.2 And the priest received her and kissed her and blessed her and said: The Lord has magnified your name among all generations: in you in the latter days shall the Lord make manifest his redemption to the children of Israel. And he made her to sit upon the third step of the altar. And the Lord put grace upon her and she danced with her feet and all the house of Israel loved her.

XVII. 1 Now there went out a decree from Augustus the king that all who were in Bethlehem of Judaea should be recorded. And Joseph said: I will record my sons: but this child, what shall I do with her? How shall I record her? As my wife? No, I am ashamed. Or as my daughter? But all the children of Israel know that she is not my daughter. This day of the Lord shall do as the Lord wills. 2 And he saddled the she-ass, and set her upon it, and his son led it and Joseph followed after. And they drew near (to Bethlehem)...

XVIII. I And he found a cave there and brought her into it, and set his sons by her: and he went forth and sought for a midwife of the Hebrews in the country of Bethlehem.

XIX.2 And they stood in the place of the cave: and behold a bright cloud overshadowing the cave. And the midwife said: My soul is magnified this day, because mine eyes have seen marvelous things: for salvation is born to Israel. And immediately the cloud withdrew itself out of the cave, and a great light appeared in the cave so that our eyes could not endure it. And by little and little that light withdrew itself until the young child appeared: and it went and took the breast of its mother Mary.

XXII. 1 But when Herod perceived that he was mocked by the wise men, he was angry, and sent murderers, saying to them: Slay the children from two years old and under. 2 And when Mary heard that the children were being slain, she was afraid, and took the young child and wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid him in an ox-manger. 3 But Elizabeth when she heard that they sought for John, took him and went up into the hill-country and looked about her where she should hide him: and there was no hiding-place. And Elizabeth groaned and said with a loud voice: O mountain of God, receive a mother with a child. For Elizabeth was not able to go up. And immediately the mountain split apart and took her in. And there was a light shining always for them: for an angel of the Lord was with them, keeping watch over them.

Infancy Narrative of Thomas (*ca. end of 2nd Century, it contains strange accounts of Jesus' childhood to age 12*)

III. 1 Now Jesus made of that clay twelve sparrows: and it was the Sabbath day. And a child ran and told Joseph, saying: Behold, your child plays about the brook, and has made sparrows of the clay, which is not lawful. 2 And he when he heard it went and said to the child: Why do you this and profane the Sabbath? But Jesus did not answer him, but looked upon the sparrows and said: Go, take your flight, and remember me in your life. And at the word they took flight and went up into the air. And when Joseph saw it he was astonished.

IV. 1 And after certain days, as Jesus passed through the midst of the city, a certain child cast a stone at him and smote his shoulder. And Jesus said to him: You shall not finish your course. And right way he also fell down and died. And those who were there were amazed, saying: Where is this child from, that every word which he speaks becomes a perfect work? 2 But they also departed and accused Joseph, saying: You will not be able to dwell with us in this city: but if you will, teach your child to bless and not to curse: for he slays our children, and everything that he says becomes a perfect work.

IX. 1 And a few days later one of the neighbors was splitting wood and cut off the sole of his foot with the axe, and by loss of blood was at the point to die. 2 And many people ran together and Jesus came there with them. 3 And he took hold on the foot of the young man who was smitten, and healed him immediately, and said to him: Arise, split your wood. And he arose and worshipped him, giving thanks, and split the wood. Likewise also all those who were there marveled and gave thanks to him.

Gospel of Thomas (*a collection of 114 sayings and parables, many similar to the Synoptic Gospels*)

18 The disciples said to Jesus, “Tell us, how will our end come?” Jesus said, “Have you found the beginning, then, that you are looking for the end? You see, the end will be where the beginning is. Congratulations to the one who stands at the beginning: that one will know the end and will not taste death.”

48 Jesus said, “If two make peace with each other in a single house, they will say to the mountain, ‘Move from here!’ and it will move.”

56 Jesus said, “Whoever has come to know the world has discovered a carcass, and whoever has discovered a carcass, of that person the world is not worthy.”

77 Jesus said, “I am the light that is over all things. I am all: from me all came forth, and to me all attained. Split a piece of wood; I am there. Lift up the stone, and you will find me there.”

79 A woman in the crowd said to him, “Happy are the womb that bore you and the breasts that fed you.” He said to [her], “Happy are those who have heard the word of the Father and have truly kept it. For there will be days when you will say, ‘Happy are the womb that has not conceived and the breasts that have not given milk.’”

91 They said to him, “Tell us who you are so that we may believe in you.” He said to them, “You examine the face of heaven and earth, but you have not come to know the one who is in your presence, and you do not know how to examine the present moment.”

114 Simon Peter said to them, “Make Mary leave us, for females do not deserve life.” Jesus said, “Look, I will guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of Heaven.”

Gospel of Peter (*IX.34 – X.42; ca. 190 A.D., earliest non-canonical account of Christ’s Passion and Resurrection*)

Now in the night whereon the Lord’s day dawned, as the soldiers were keeping guard two by two in every watch, there came a great sound in the heaven, and they saw the heavens opened and two men descend from there, shining with a great light, and drawing near to the tomb. And the stone which had been set on the door rolled away of itself and went back to the side, and the tomb was opened and both of the young men entered in. When therefore those soldiers saw that, they awoke the centurion and the elders (for they also were there keeping watch); and while they were yet telling them the things which they had seen, they saw again three men come out of the tomb, and two of them sustaining the other, and a cross following, after them. And of the two, they saw that their heads reached up to heaven, but of him who was led by them, that it passed over the heavens. And they heard a voice out of the heavens saying: Have you (or You have) preached to those who sleep? *And an answer was heard from the cross, saying: Yes.*

Acts of Peter (*ca. 180-190 A.D. contains miracles by Peter and an account of his crucifixion*)

And one of the multitude ventured to say to Peter: “Lo, Peter, in our presence you have made many blind to see and the deaf to hear and the lame to walk, and have succored the weak and given them strength: but why have you not succored your daughter, the virgin, who grew up beautiful and has believed in the name of God? For behold, her one side is wholly palsied, and she lies there stretched out in the corner helpless. We see those that have been healed by you: your own daughter you have neglected... But Peter said to them: As the Lord lives, this is expedient for her and for me. For on the day when she was born to me I saw a vision, and the Lord said to me: Peter, this day is a great temptation born to you, for this daughter will bring hurt to many souls if her body continue whole. But I thought that the vision mocked me... Now when the girl was ten years old, a stumbling-block was prepared for many by reason of her. And an exceeding rich man, by name Ptolemaeus, when he had seen the girl with her mother bathing, sent to her to take her to wife; but her mother did not consent. And he sent often to her, and could not wait... [*Here a leaf is lost: the sense, however, is not hard to supply. Augustine speaks (quoting Apocryphal Acts) of a daughter of Peter struck with palsy at the prayer of her father. Ptolemaeus, unable to win the maiden by fair means, comes and carries her off. Peter hears of it and prays God to protect her. His prayer is heard. She is struck with palsy on one side of her body. Then the text resumes*]... Thereafter Ptolemaeus died, departing out of this life, and went to his Lord: and when he made his will he bequeathed a piece of land in the name of my daughter, because through her he had believed in God and was made whole.

XXXVII. And having approached and standing by the cross he began to say: O name of the cross, you hidden mystery! O grace ineffable that is pronounced in the name of the cross! O nature of man, who cannot be separated from God! O love (friendship) unspeakable and inseparable, that cannot be shown forth by unclean lips! I seize you now, I who am at the end of my delivery hence (or, of my coming hither). I will declare you, what you are: I will not keep silence of the mystery of the cross which of old was shut and hidden from my soul. Let not the cross be to you who hope in Christ, this which appears: for it is another thing, different from that which appears, even this passion which is according to that of Christ. And now above all, because you who can hear are able to hear it of me, who am at the last and final hour of my life, hearken: Separate your souls from everything that is of the senses, from everything that appears, and does not exist in truth. Blind these eyes of yours, close these ears of yours, put away your doings that are seen; and you shall perceive what concerns Christ, and the whole mystery of your salvation: and let this much be said to you who hear, as if it had not been spoken. But now it is time for you, Peter, to deliver up your body to those who take it. Receive it then, you to whom it belongs. I beseech you, the executioners, crucify me thus, with the head downward and not otherwise: and the reason that I will tell to those who hear.

XXXVIII...This thought, therefore, have I declared to you; and the figure wherein you now see me hanging is the representation of the man who first came to birth. You therefore, my beloved, and you who hear me and who shall hear, ought to cease from your former error and return back again. For it is right to mount upon the cross of Christ, who is the word stretched out, the one and only, of whom the spirit says: For what else is Christ, but the word, the sound of God? So that the word is the upright beam whereon I am crucified. And the sound is that which crosses it, the nature of man. And the nail which holds the cross-tree to the upright in the midst thereof is the conversion and repentance of man.

Acts of Paul and Thecla (2nd-3rd century the account of the virgin Thecla, a martyred follower of Paul)

While Paul was thus speaking in the midst of the church in the house of Onesiphorus, a certain virgin Thecla, the daughter of Theocleia, betrothed to a man named Thamyris, sitting at the window close by, listened night and day to the discourse of virginity and prayer, and did not look away from the window, but paid earnest heed to the faith, rejoicing exceedingly. When she still saw many women going in beside Paul, she also had an eager desire to be deemed worthy to stand in the presence of Paul, and to hear the word of Christ; for never had she seen his figure, but heard his word only.

Thamyris, hearing these things, being filled with anger and rage, rising up early, went to the house of Onesiphorus with archons and public officers, and a great crowd with batons, saying: You have corrupted the city of the Iconians, and her that was betrothed to me, so that she will not have me: let us go to the governor Castelios. All the multitude said: Away with the magician; for he has corrupted all our wives, and the multitudes have been persuaded to change their opinions.

Thecla, having been taken out of the hand of Tryphaena, was stripped, and received a girdle, and was thrown into the arena, and lions and bears and a fierce lioness were let loose upon her; and the lioness having run up to her feet, lay down; and the multitude of the women cried aloud. A bear ran upon her; but the lioness, meeting the bear, tore her to pieces. Again a lion that had been trained against men, which belonged to Alexander, ran upon her; and she, the lioness, encountering the lion, was killed along with him. The women made great lamentation, since also the lioness, her protector, was dead.

The governor summoned Thecla out of the midst of the wild beasts, and said to her: Who are you? And what is there about you, that not one of the wild beasts touches you? She said: I indeed am a servant of the living God; and as to what there is about me, I have believed in the Son of God, in whom He is well pleased; therefore not one of the beasts has touched me. For He alone is the end of salvation, and the basis of immortal life; for He is a refuge to the tempest-tossed, a solace to the afflicted, a shelter to the despairing; and, once for all, whoever shall not believe on Him, shall not live for ever. The governor having heard this, ordered her garments to be brought and to be put on.

Revelation of Paul (ca. late 4th/early 5th century of a later author's imaging of 2 Corinthians 12:1-2)

And I was in the Holy Spirit, and an angel says to me: Come, follow me, that I may show you the place of the just, where they go after their end. And I went along with the angel, and he brought me up into the heavens under the firmament; and I perceived and saw powers great and dreadful, full of wrath, and through the mouth of them a flame of fire coming out, and clothed in garments of fire. And I asked the angel: Who are these? And he said to me: These are they who are sent away to the souls of the sinners in the hour of necessity; for they have not believed that there is

judgment and retribution. And I looked up into the heaven, and saw angels, whose faces shone like the sun, girded with golden girdles, having in their hands prizes, on which the name of the Lord was inscribed, full of all meekness and compassion. And I asked the angel: Who are these? And he answered and said to me: These are they who are sent forth in the day of the resurrection to bring the souls of the righteous, who intrepidly walk according to God. And I said to the angel: I wish to see the souls of the righteous and of the sinners, how they go out of the world. And the angel said to me: Look to the earth. And I looked, and saw the whole world as nothing disappearing before me. And I said to the angel: is this the greatness of men? And he said to me: Yes; for thus every unjust man disappears. And I looked, and saw a cloud of fire wrapped over all the world; and I said: What is this, my lord? And he said to me: This is the unrighteousness mingled with the destruction of the sinners. And I wept...

And the angel said to me: Look down to the earth, and behold the soul of the impious, how it goes forth from its tabernacle, which has provoked God to anger, saying, Let us eat and drink; for who has gone down to Hades, and come up and announced that there is judgment and retribution? And take heed, and see all his works which he has done standing before him. And the evil angels came and the good. The good therefore found no place of rest in it, but the evil took possession of it, saying: O wretched soul, pay heed to your flesh; take note of where you are coming forth, for you must return into your flesh in the day of the resurrection, that you may receive the recompense of your sins. And when it had gone forth from its tabernacle, the angel who had lived along with it ran up to it, saying to it: O wretched soul, where are you going? I am he who each day wrote down your sins. You have destroyed the time of repentance; be exceedingly ashamed. And when it came, all the angels saw it, and cried out with one voice, saying: Woe to you, wretched soul! What excuse have you come to give to God? And the angel of that soul said: Weep for it, all of you, along with me. And the angel came up, and worshipped the Lord, saying: Lord, behold the soul which has dwelt in wickedness in its time, and in its temporary life; do to it according to your decision. And there came a voice to that soul, saying: Where is the fruit of your righteousness? And it was silent, not being able to give an answer. And again there came a voice to it: He who has shown mercy will have mercy shown to him; he who has not shown mercy will not have mercy shown to him. Let this soul be delivered to the merciless angel Temeluch, and let it be cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Apocalypse of Adam (*1st to 4th century, part of the OT Pseudepigrapha, an example of "secret" Gnostic revelation*)

The revelation which Adam taught his son Seth in the seven hundredth year, saying, Listen to my words, my son Seth. When God had created me out of the earth along with Eve, your mother, I went about with her in a glory which she had seen in the Aeon from which we had come forth. She taught me a word of knowledge of the eternal God. We resembled the great angels, for we were higher than the God who had created us and the powers with him, whom we did not know.

Then God, the ruler of the Aeons and the powers, divided us in wrath. Then we became two Aeons. And the glory in our hearts left us, me and your mother Eve, along with the first knowledge that breathed within us. And glory fled from us; not from this Aeon from which we had come forth, I and Eve your mother. But knowledge entered into the seed of great Aeons. For this reason I myself have called you by the name of that man who is the seed of the great generation or from whom it comes. After those days the eternal knowledge of the God of truth withdrew from me and your mother Eve. Since that time we learned about dead things, like men. Then we recognized the God who had created us. For we were not strangers to his powers. And we served him in fear and slavery. And after these events we became darkened in our hearts. Now I slept in the thought of my heart.

The illuminator will come. And he will perform signs and wonders in order to scorn the powers and their ruler.

Then the God of the powers will be disturbed, saying, "What is the power of this man who is higher than we?" Then he will arouse a great wrath against that man. And the glory will withdraw and dwell in holy houses which it has chosen for itself. And the powers will not see it with their eyes, nor will they see the illuminator either. Then they will punish the flesh of the man upon whom the Holy Spirit has come.

Now the first kingdom says of him. . . . He was nourished in the heavens. He received the glory of that one and the power. He came to the bosom of his mother. And thus he came to the water.

And the second kingdom says about him that he came from a great prophet. And a bird came, took the child who was born and brought him onto a high mountain. And he was nourished by the bird of Heaven. An Angel came forth there. He said to him "Arise! God has given glory to you" He received glory and strength. And thus he came to the water.

The third kingdom says of him that he came from a virgin womb. He was cast out of his city, he and his mother; he was brought to a desert place. He was nourished there. And thus he came to the water.

EXCERPTS FROM NON-BIBLICAL EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

The Didaché (“The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles”):

1:1 There are two paths, one of life and one of death, and the difference is great between the two paths. 2 Now the path of life is this -- first, you shall love the God who made you, your neighbor as yourself, and all things that you do not wish be done to you, do not to another. 3 And the doctrine of these maxims is as follows. Bless those who curse you, and pray for your enemies. Fast on behalf of those who persecute you; for what thank is there if you love those who love you? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? But love those who hate you, and you will not have an enemy.

7:1 But concerning baptism, thus should you baptize: having first recited all these precepts, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in running water; 2 but if you do not have running water, baptize in some other water, and if you cannot baptize in cold, in warm water; 3 but if you have neither, pour water three times on the head, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. 4 But before the baptism, let him who baptizes and him who is baptized fast previously, and any others who may be able. And you shall command him who is baptized to fast one or two days before.

8:1 But as for your fasts, let them not be with the hypocrites, for they fast on the second and fifth days of the week, but you must fast on the fourth and sixth days. 2 Neither pray as the hypocrites, but pray as the Lord has commanded in his gospel: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done as in heaven so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debt, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil: for thine is the power, and the glory, for ever. 3 Pray in this manner three times a day.

9:1 But concerning the Eucharist, give thanks in this manner. 2 First, concerning the cup. We thank you, our Father, for the holy vine, David your Son, which you have made known to us through Jesus Christ your Son; to you be the glory for ever. 3 And concerning the broken bread. We thank you, our Father, for the life and knowledge which you have made known to us through Jesus your Son; to you be the glory for ever. 4 *As this broken bread was once scattered on the mountains, and after it had been brought together became one, so may your Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth to your kingdom;* for yours is the glory, and the power, through Jesus Christ, for ever. 5 And let none eat or drink of your Eucharist but those who have been baptized into the name of the Lord, for truly the Lord has said concerning this: Give not what is holy to dogs.

10:1 But after it has been completed, pray in this way. 2 We thank you, holy Father, for your holy name, which you have caused to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you have made known to us through Jesus your Son; to you be the glory forever... 6 Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the Son of David. If anyone is holy let him come (to the Eucharist); if anyone is not, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen. 7 But charge the prophets to give thanks, so far as they are willing to do so.

14:1 But on the Lord's day, after you have assembled together, break bread and give thanks, having in addition confessed your sins, that your sacrifice may be pure. 2 But let not anyone who has a quarrel with his companion join with you, until they be reconciled, that your sacrifice may not be polluted, 3 for this is what was spoken of by the Lord. In every place and time offer to me a pure sacrifice, for I am a great King, says the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the Gentiles.

15:1 Elect, therefore, for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men who are meek and not covetous, who are true and approved, for they perform for you the service of prophets and teachers. 2 Do not, therefore, despise them, for they are those who are honored among you, together with the prophets and teachers. 3 Rebuke one another, not in wrath but peaceably, as you have a commandment in the Gospel; and let no one speak to anyone who walks disorderly with regard to his neighbor, neither let him be heard by you until he repents. 4 But do your prayers and your almsgivings and all your deeds, as you have commandments in the Gospel of our Lord.

The Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch:

Ignatius to the Ephesians:

CHAPTER V -- THE PRAISE OF UNITY

For if I in this brief space of time, have enjoyed such fellowship with your bishop--I mean not of a mere human, but of a spiritual nature--how much more do I reckon you happy who are so joined to him as the Church is to Jesus Christ, and as Jesus Christ is to the Father, that so all things may agree in unity! Let no one deceive himself: if anyone be not within the altar, he is deprived of the bread of God. For if the prayer of one or two possesses such power, how much more that of the bishop and the whole Church! Therefore, whoever does not assemble with the Church, has even by this manifested his pride, and condemned himself. For it is written, "God resists the proud." Let us be careful, then, not to set ourselves in opposition to the bishop, in order that we may be subject to God.

Ignatius to the Trallians:

CHAPTER III -- HONOR THE DEACONS, THE BISHOP, THE PRESBYTERS, ETC.

In like manner, let all reverence the deacons as an appointment of Jesus Christ, and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the Father, and the presbyters as the Sanhedrin of God, and assembly of the apostles. Apart from these, there is no Church. Concerning all this, I am persuaded that you are of the same opinion. For I have received the manifestations of your love, and still have it with me, in your bishop, whose very appearance is highly instructive, and his meekness of itself a power; whom I imagine even the ungodly must reverence, seeing they are also pleased that I do not spare myself. But shall I, when permitted to write on this point, reach such a height of self-esteem, that though being a condemned man, I should issue commands to you as if I were an apostle?

Ignatius to the Romans:

CHAPTER IV -- ALLOW ME TO FALL A PREY TO THE WILD BEASTS

I write to all the Churches, and impress on them all, that I shall willingly die for God, unless you hinder me. I beseech you not to show an unseasonable goodwill toward me. Allow me to become food for the wild beasts, through whose actions it will be granted me to attain to God. I am the wheat of God, and am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of God. Rather entice the wild beasts, that they may become my tomb, and may leave nothing of my body; so that when I have fallen asleep [in death], I may not be found troublesome to anyone. Then shall I be a true disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not see so much as my body. Entreat the Lord for me, that by these instruments I may be found a sacrifice to God. I do not, as Peter and Paul, issue commandments to you. They were apostles of Jesus Christ, but I am the very least [of believers]: they were free, as the servants of God; while I am, even until now, a servant...

CHAPTER V -- I DESIRE TO DIE

From Syria even to Rome I fight with beasts, both by land and sea, both by night and day, being bound to ten leopards, I mean a band of soldiers, who, even when they receive benefits, show themselves all the worse. But I am the more instructed by their injuries [to act as a disciple of Christ]; "yet am I not thereby justified." May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me; and I pray that they may be found eager to rush upon me, which also I will entice to devour me speedily, and not deal with me as with some, whom, out of fear, they have not touched. But if they be unwilling to assail me, I will compel them to do so. Pardon me [in this] I know what is for my benefit. *Now I begin to be a disciple. And let no one, of things visible or invisible, envy me that I should attain to Jesus Christ. Let fire and the cross; let the crowds of wild beasts; let tearings, breakings, and dislocations of bones; let cutting off of members; let shatterings of the whole body; and let all the dreadful torments of the devil come upon me: only let me attain to Jesus Christ.*

Ignatius to the Philadelphians:

CHAPTER IX -- THE OLD TESTAMENT IS GOOD; THE NEW TESTAMENT IS BETTER

The priests indeed are good, but the High Priest is better; to whom the holy of holies has been committed, and who alone has been trusted with the secrets of God. He is the door of the Father, by which enter in Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the prophets, and the apostles, and the Church. All these have for their object the attaining to the unity of God. But the Gospel possesses something transcendent [above the former dispensation], viz., the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, His passion and resurrection. For the beloved prophets announced Him, but the Gospel is the perfection of immortality. All these things are good together, if you believe in love.

The Martyrdom of Polycarp (*Epistle of the Church at Smyrna, about the Martyrdom of St. Polycarp*)

The Church of God which sojourns at Smyrna, to the Church of God sojourning in Philomelium, and to all the congregations of the Holy and Catholic Church in every place: Mercy, peace, and love from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER I -- SUBJECT OF WHICH WE WRITE

We have written to you, brothers and sisters, what relates to the martyrs, and especially to the blessed Polycarp, who put an end to the persecution, having, as it were, set a seal upon it by his martyrdom. For almost all the events that happened previously [to this one], took place that the Lord might show us from above a martyrdom becoming the Gospel. For he waited to be delivered up, even as the Lord had done, that we also might become his followers, while we look not merely at what concerns ourselves but have regard also to our neighbors. For it is the part of a true and well-founded love, not only to wish one's self to be saved, but also all the believers.

CHAPTER IX -- POLYCARP REFUSES TO REVILE CHRIST

Now, as Polycarp was entering into the stadium, there came to him a voice from heaven, saying, "Be strong, and show yourself a man, O Polycarp!" No one saw who it was that spoke to him; but those of our brethren who were present heard the voice. And as he was brought forward, the tumult became great when they heard that Polycarp was taken. And when he came near, the proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp. On his confessing that he was, [the proconsul] sought to persuade him to deny [Christ], saying, "Have respect to your old age," and other similar things, according to their custom... Then, the proconsul urging him, and saying, "Swear, and I will set you at liberty, reproach Christ"; Polycarp declared, "Eighty-six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?"

CHAPTER X -- POLYCARP CONFESSES HIMSELF A CHRISTIAN

And when the proconsul yet again pressed him, and said, "Swear by the fortune of Caesar," he answered, "Since you are vainly urgent that, as you say, I should swear by the fortune of Caesar, and pretend not to know who and what I am, hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian. And if you wish to learn what the doctrines of Christianity are, appoint me a day, and you shall hear them." The proconsul replied, "Persuade the people." But Polycarp said, "To you I have thought it right to offer an account [of my faith]; for we are taught to give all due honor (which entails no injury upon ourselves) to the powers and authorities which are ordained of God. But as for these, I do not deem them worthy of receiving any account from me."

CHAPTER XIV -- THE PRAYER OF POLYCARP

They did not nail him then, but simply bound him. And he, placing his hands behind him, and being bound like a distinguished ram [taken] out of a great flock for sacrifice, and prepared to be an acceptable burnt-offering to God, looked up to heaven, and said, "O Lord God Almighty, the Father of your beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of You, the God of angels and powers, and of every creature, and of the whole race of the righteous who live before you, I give You thanks that You have counted me, worthy of this day and this hour, that I should have a part in the number of Your martyrs, in the cup of your Christ, to the resurrection of eternal life, both of soul and body... Wherefore also I praise You for all things, I bless You, I glorify You, along with the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, with whom, to You and the Holy Spirit, be glory both now and to all coming ages. Amen."

CHAPTER XV -- POLYCARP IS NOT INJURED BY THE FIRE

When he had pronounced this Amen, and so finished his prayer, those who were appointed for the purpose kindled the fire. And as the flame blazed forth in great fury, we, to whom it was given to witness it, beheld a great miracle, and have been preserved that we might report to others what then took place. For the fire, shaping itself into the form of an arch, like the sail of a ship when filled with the wind, encompassed as by a circle the body of the martyr. And he appeared within not like flesh which is burnt, but as bread that is baked, or as gold and silver glowing in a furnace. Moreover, we perceived such a sweet odor [coming from the pile], as if frankincense or some such precious spices had been smoking there.

CHAPTER XVI -- POLYCARP IS PIERCED BY A DAGGER

At length, when those wicked men perceived that his body could not be consumed by the fire, they commanded an executioner to go near and pierce him through with a dagger. And on his doing this, there came forth a dove, and a great quantity of blood, so that the fire was extinguished; and all the people wondered that there should be such a difference between the unbelievers and the elect, of whom this most admirable Polycarp was one, having in our own times been an apostolic and prophetic teacher, and bishop of the Catholic Church which is in Smyrna. For every word that went out of his mouth either has been or shall yet be accomplished.

CHAPTER XIX -- PRAISE OF THE MARTYR POLYCARP

This, then, is the account of the blessed Polycarp... He was not merely an illustrious teacher, but also a pre-eminent martyr, whose martyrdom all desire to imitate, as having been altogether consistent with the Gospel of Christ. For, having through patience overcome the unjust governor, and thus acquired the crown of immortality, he now, with the apostles and all the righteous [in heaven], rejoicingly glorifies God, even the Father, and blesses our Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of our souls, the Governor of our bodies, and the Shepherd of the Catholic Church throughout the world.