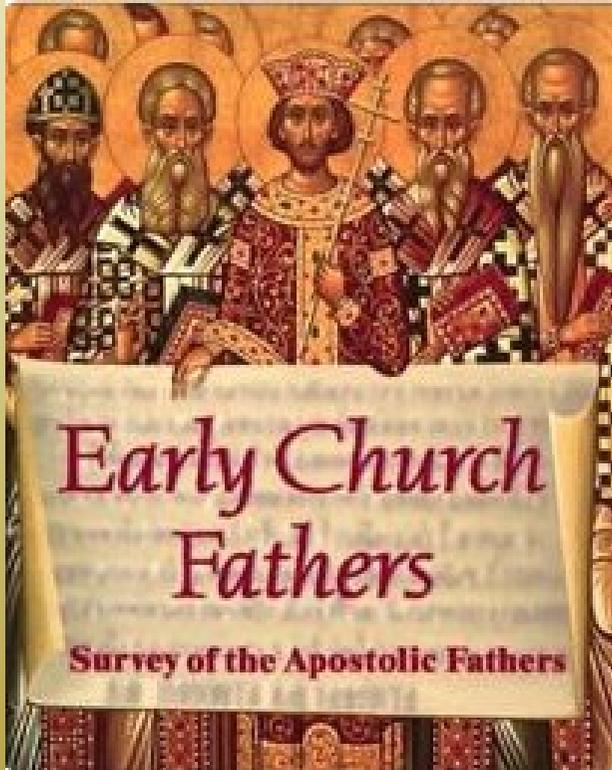


Gospel of Peter



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**From-The Apocryphal New Testament
M. R. James-Translation and Notes
Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924**

Introduction

THE EARLY TESTIMONIES ABOUT THIS BOOK HAVE BEEN SET FORTH ALREADY. The present fragment was discovered in 1884 in a tomb at Akhmimin Egypt. The manuscript in which it is a little book containing a portion of the Book of Enoch in Greek, this fragment on the Passion and another, a description of Heaven and Hell, which is either (as I now think) a second fragment of the Gospel, or a piece of the Apocalypse of Peter. It will be given later under that head.

We have seen that the Gospel of Peter is quoted by writers of the latter end of the second century. It has been contended that Justin Martyr also used it soon after the middle of that century, but the evidence is not demonstrative. I believe it is not safe to date the book much earlier than A. D. 150.

It uses all four canonical Gospels, and is the earliest uncanonical account of the Passion that exists. It is not wholly orthodox: for it throws doubt on the reality of the Lord's sufferings, and by consequence upon the reality of his human body. In other words it is, as Serapion of Antioch indicated, of a Docetic character.

Another characteristic of it is its extremely anti-Jewish attitude. Blame is thrown on the Jews wherever possible, and Pilate is white-washed .

In this case I give, in Roman and Arabic figures respectively, a double division into sections and verses. The first is that of Armitage Robinson, the second that of Harnack.

FRAGMENT I

I. 1 But of the Jews no man washed his hands, neither did Herod nor any one of his judges: and whereas they would not

2 wash, Pilate rose up. And then Herod the king commanded that the Lord should be taken into their hands, saying unto them: All that I commanded you to do unto him, do ye

II. 3 Now there stood there Joseph the friend of Pilate and of the Lord, and he, knowing that they were about to crucify him, came unto Pilate and begged the body of Jesus for burial. And Pilate sending unto Herod, begged his body.

5 And Herod said: Brother Pilate, even if none had begged for him, we should have buried him, since also the Sabbath dawneth; for it is written in the law that the sun should not set upon one that hath been slain (murdered).

III. 6 And he delivered him unto the people before the first day of (or on the day before the) unleavened bread, even their feast. And they having taken the Lord pushed him as they ran, and said: Let us hale the Son of God, now that

7 we have gotten authority over him. And they put on him a purple robe, and made him sit upon the seat of judgement,

8 saying: Give righteous judgement, thou King of Israel. And one of them brought a crown of thorns and set it upon the —

9 Lord's head; and others stood and did spit in his eyes, and others buffeted his cheeks; and others did prick him with a reed, and some of them scourged him, saying With this honour let us honour (or at this price let us value) the son of God.

IV. 10 And they brought two malefactors, and crucified the—

11 Lord between them. But he kept silence, as one feeling no pain. And when they set the cross upright, they wrote

12 thereon: This is the King of Israel. And they laid his garments before him, and divided them among themselves and

13 cast the lot upon them. But one of those malefactors reproached them, saying: We have thus suffered for the evils which we have done; but this man which hath become the

14 saviour of men, wherein hath he injured you? And they were wroth with him, and commanded that his legs should not be broken, that so he might die in torment.

V. 15 Now it was noonday, and darkness prevailed over all Judaea: and they were troubled and in an agony lest the sun should have set, for that he yet lived: for it is written for them that the sun should not set upon him that hath been

16 slain (murdered). And one of them said: Give ye him to drink gall with vinegar: and they mingled it and gave him

17 to drink: and they fulfilled all things and accomplished

18 their sins upon their own heads. And many went about with

19 lamps, supposing that it was night: and some fell. And the Lord cried out aloud saying: My power, my power, thou hast forsaken me. And when he had so said, he was taken up.

20 And in the same hour was the veil of the temple of Jerusalem rent in two.

VI. 21 And then they plucked the nails from the hands of the Lord and laid him upon the earth: and the whole earth was shaken, and there came a great fear on all.

22 Then the sun shone forth, and it was found to be the ninth

23 hour. And the Jews rejoiced, and gave his body unto Joseph to bury it, because he had beheld all the good things which

24 he did. And he took the Lord and washed him and wrapped him in linen and brought him unto his own sepulchre, which is called the Garden of Joseph.

VII. 25 Then the Jews and the elders and the priests, when they perceived how great evil they had done themselves, began to lament and to say: Woe unto our sins: the judgement and the end of Jerusalem is drawn nigh.

26 But I with my fellows was in grief, and we were wounded in our minds and would have hid ourselves; for we were sought after by them as malefactors, and as thinking to set

27 the temple on fire. And beside all these things we were fasting, and we sat mourning and weeping night and day until the Sabbath.

VIII. 28 But the scribes and Pharisees and elders gathered one with another, for they had heard that all the people were murmuring and beating their breasts, saying: If these very great signs have come to pass at his death, behold how

29 righteous he was. And the elders were afraid and came unto

30 Pilate, entreating him and saying: Give us soldiers that we (or they) may watch his sepulchre for three days, lest his disciples come and steal him away and the people suppose

31 that he is risen from the dead, and do us hurt. And Pilate gave them Petronius the centurion with soldiers to watch the sepulchre; and the elders and scribes came with them unto

32 the tomb, and when they had rolled a great stone to keep out (al. together with) the centurion and the soldiers, then all

33 that were there together set it upon the door of the tomb; and plastered thereon seven seals; and they pitched a tent there and kept watch.

IX. 34 And early in the morning as the Sabbath dawned, there came a multitude from Jerusalem and the region roundabout to see the sepulchre that had been sealed.

35 Now in the night whereon the Lord's day dawned, as the soldiers were keeping guard two by two in every watch,

36 there came a great sound in the heaven, and they saw the heavens opened and two men descend thence, shining with (lit. having) a great light, and drawing near unto the sepulchre.

37 And that stone which had been set on the door rolled away of itself and went back to the side, and the sepulchre was

X. 38 opened and both of the young men entered in. When therefore those soldiers saw that, they waked up the centurion and the elders (for they also were there keeping

39 watch); and while they were yet telling them the things which they had seen, they saw again three men come out of the sepulchre, and two of them sustaining the other (lit. the **40** one), and a cross following, after them. And of the two they saw that their heads reached unto heaven, but of him that

41 was led by them that it overpassed the heavens. And they

42 heard a voice out of the heavens saying: Hast thou (or Thou hast) preached unto them that sleep? And an answer was heard from the cross, saying: Yea.

XI. 43 Those men therefore took counsel one with another to go and report these things unto Pilate. And while they yet thought thereabout, again the heavens were opened and a

45 man descended and entered into the tomb. And they that were with the centurion (or the centurion and they that were with him) when they saw that, hastened to go by night unto Pilate and left the sepulchre whereon they were keeping watch, and told all that they had seen, and were in great agony, saying: Of a truth he was the son of God.

46 Pilate answered and said: I am clear from the blood of

47 the son of God, but thus it seemed good unto you. Then all they came and besought him and exhorted him to charge the centurion and the soldiers to tell nothing of that they had

48 seen: For, said they, it is expedient for us to incur the greatest sin before God, rather than to (and not to) fall into

49 the hands of the people of the Jews and to be stoned. Pilate therefore charged the centurion and the soldiers that they should say nothing.

XII. 50 Now early on the Lord's day Mary Magdalene, a disciple (fem.) of the Lord-which, being afraid because of the Jews, for they were inflamed with anger, had not performed at the sepulchre of the Lord those things which women are accustomed to do unto them that die and are

51 beloved of them-took with her the women her friends and

52 came unto the tomb where he was laid. And they feared lest the Jews should see them, and said: Even if we were not able to weep and lament him on that day whereon he was

53 crucified, yet let us now do so at his tomb. But who will roll away for us the stone also that is set upon the door of the tomb, that we may enter in and sit beside him and perform

54 that which is due? for the stone was great, and we fear lest any man see us. And if we cannot do so, yet let us cast down at the door these things which we bring for a memorial of him, and we will weep and lament until we come unto our house.

XIII. 55 And they went and found the sepulchre open : and they drew near and looked in there, and saw there a young man sitting in the midst of the sepulchre, of a fair countenance and clad in very bright raiment, which said unto them:

56 Wherefore are ye come? whom seek ye? not him that was crucified? He is risen and is departed; but if ye believe it not, look in and see the place where he lay, that he is not here: for he is risen and is departed thither whence he was sent. **57** Then the women were affrighted and fled.

XV. 58 Now it was the last day of unleavened bread, and many were coming forth of the city and returning unto their

59 own homes because the feast was at an end. But we, the twelve disciples of the Lord, were weeping and were in sorrow, and each one being grieved for that which had befallen

60 departed unto his own house. But I, Simon Peter, and Andrew my brother, took our nets and went unto the sea: and there was with us Levi the son of Alphaeus, whom the Lord (For Fragment II see Apocalypse of Peter.)



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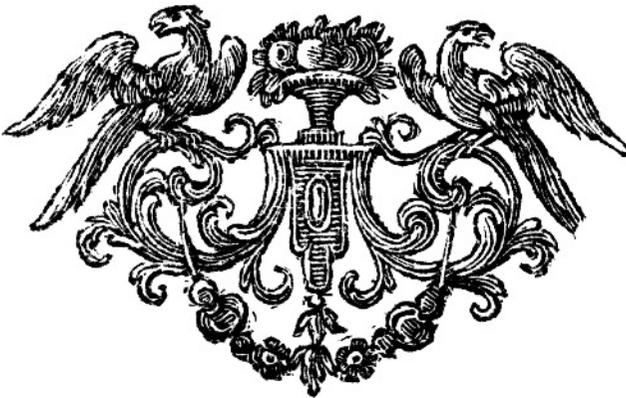
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