3 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John
A translation and introduction

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3 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John (3 Apocr. Apoc. John; =BHG 922k) is a revelatory dialogue between John the Theologian and Abraham that focuses primarily on the fate of the soul in the afterlife. In the available manuscripts, the text is simply titled "Apocalypse of holy John the Theologian"; it is designated the third apocryphal apocalypse to distinguish it from other noncanonical Johannine apocalypses, including the Questions of James to John, which some have called 3 Apocalypse of John.¹ The variations in titles given to the Johannine apocalypses have also led to the identification of 3 Apoc. Apoc. John as 4 Apocalypse of John. While this apocalypse stands out from the others for having Abraham as John's divine interlocutor rather than Jesus, the structure of the dialogue and citation of Scripture make 3 Apoc. Apoc. John at home among other Johannine apocalypses. The text is frequently confused with another dialogue text, the Questions of John to Abraham (Quest. John Ab.), extant only in Church Slavonic. It is included here as an appendix.

Contents
3 Apocr. Apoc. John opens with an incipit that lays out the main characters of the text, John the Theologian and Abraham, as well as the primary content of their dialogue: where souls go after death. The narrative proceeds with a post-Easter Jesus speaking to his disciples and Abraham, describing how souls are divided into two groups: the righteous and the sinners, bound for heaven and Hades, respectively. At this point, Jesus gives Abraham authority over those passing from this life (chap. 1). Peter interjects in the scene to ask Jesus about the end of the world and the resurrection, to which Jesus responds with some signs of the end of times derived from the Synoptic apocalypse (chap. 2). Then Jesus ascends to heaven, the body of Mary is taken to paradise (2:5)—an allusion to Dormition traditions—and John begins his questioning of Abraham. John's questions vary broadly: Will the Jews find mercy in the afterlife (3:1–2)? What will happen to the impious on Judgment Day (3:3–5)? Will the righteous be separated from family and friends (4:1–2)? Do deceased children go to heaven (4:5–6)? What is the relationship between the soul and the body (4:7–8)? What do people eat or look like in the afterlife (9:1–5; 10:1–2; 13:1–4)? Will there be marriage (7:1–2)? Will a baptized sinner receive mercy (11:1–4, 8–10)? Some questions also deal with the conduct of priests and other church officials, with a particular interest in their interrelationships and who will speak for whom on Judgment Day (chaps. 5–6; 12:1–4). Throughout the dialogue, Abraham responds with a formulaic “did you not listen to

¹ See the entry on Quest. James by Kathleen Gibbons and Tony Burke elsewhere in this volume.
what the prophet was saying?" and follows this rhetorical question with quotations from the Hebrew Bible, such as the Psalms and Isaiah. 3 Apocr. Apoc. John never strays from the question-and-answer structure and ends abruptly with Abraham's response to John's final question.

The related text, Quest. John Ab., provides no setting for the dialogue and features a response from Abraham to a single question from John: "What are the righteous fed in paradise?" (1:1). The answer (1:2–5) draws upon material from 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 9:2–5, particularly from the Church Slavonic version. Abraham then expounds upon memorials for the dead, discussed in brief in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 8:4–6. Abraham describes the Eastern Orthodox practice of holding memorial services on the third, ninth, twentieth, and fortieth days after death, each of these related to Jesus' post-resurrection activities (2:1–7). At the end of these services, the soul is judged, and if found worthy, it is taken to paradise "Abraham's and Isaac's and Jacob's lap to eternal life" (3:1–6); if not, the soul is handed over to demons for eternal torment (3:7–11).

Manuscripts and Editions

3 Apocr. Apoc. John is preserved in two Greek manuscripts: Athens, Ethniki Bibliotheketès Hellados, gr. 1007, fols. 171r–176r (17th cent.; =A) and Mount Athos, Monë Koutloumousiou, 176 (Lambros 3249), fols. 179v–183r (1438/1439 CE; =L).

The Athens manuscript also contains several other apocryphal texts: 1 Apocr. Apoc. John (CANT 331), the Martyrdom of Zechariah (CANT 181.1/4), the Epistle of the Presbyters and Deacons of Achaia (CANT 226), and the Passion of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul (Ps.-Marcellus) (CANT 193.3), along with works by Chrysostom, Cyril, Daniel of Scetis, and other hagiographical texts. The Mount Athos manuscript contains various hagiographical works along with Proclus of Constantinople's fifth-century Dialysis de oratione dominica and Ps.-Eusebius of Alexandria's fifteenth sermon. While the text is fairly well preserved in both manuscripts, a folio seems to be missing from A between fols. 173 and 174, covering 8:4–10:4. The Greek text of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John has not been published previously; the only acknowledgment of its existence, outside of catalog and clavis descriptions, is a brief mention by Jean-Daniel Kaestli and Jean-Claude Picard in the introduction to their translation of 1 Apocr. Apoc. John from 2005.

The sources for 3 Apocr. Apoc. John in Church Slavonic are more plentiful and the scholarship more robust. Information on these sources, however, is difficult to assess. Some of the scholars who have worked on the materials have relied only on catalog listings for their information, leading to confusion between the various Johannine apocalypistica, particularly 3 Apocr. Apoc. John and Quest. John Ab. Both texts first appeared in editions by N. S. Tichonravov in 1863 based on manuscripts of the sixteenth century housed at the Russian State Library in Moscow. Quest. John Ab. is based on cod. 166 (535), fols. 115r–118v (=Otero 27), with readings from cod. 323 (826), fols.

2. Miltenova (Apocalypsis Johannis, 686–87) includes details about the two manuscripts based on descriptions provided to her by Evelina Mineva, who prefers a date of composition for A in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Miltenova also states that the beginning of the text of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John in A "is repeated twice by later hand (sic), and a part of it is illegible" (p. 687). The text is indeed written in several different hands, but there is no repetition at the beginning and very little of the text is illegible (a few words in the bottom left corner of fols. 174 and 175).

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823v–825v (=Otero 33) provided in the notes. Four separate editions are given for 3 Apocr. Apoc. John based on cod. 157 (521), fols. 69r–75v (16th cent.; =Otero 26); cod. 96, fols. 91r–95v (16th cent.; =Otero 31); and cod. 183 (566), fols. 273v–275v (16th cent.; =Otero 28/61). Tichonravov published a third Quest. John Ab. manuscript—Moscow, State Historical Museum, N. S. Tichonravov 6, fols. 140–142 (17th cent.; =Otero 36)—in 1894. The range of sources is considerably expanded in V. Močuškić's 1893 study of erotapokriseis (question and answer) literature. He lists seventeen manuscripts of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, with the text of one (Zagreb, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, II.a.43, fols. 176v–186v [16th cent.; =Otero 56]) given in an appendix, and six of Quest. John Ab. The overview of all Slavonic Johannine apocryphica provided by Aurelio de Santos Otero, which shows no awareness of Močuškić's work, is often unclear or incorrect about its identification of the texts, but he does include at least six manuscripts of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John and at least seven of Quest. John Ab. not known to Močuškić. A review of de Santos Otero's study by Francis J. Thomson includes some adjustments, but even Thomson's list has errors. A further five manuscripts of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John are mentioned in Tomislav Jovanović's 2005 apocrypha collection in Serbian translation; three of these supply variants to Jovanović's translation of Močuškić's edition. Julian Petkov's 2012 study of Church Slavonic apocryphases correlates Močuškić's list with de Santos Otero's and adds a number of new sources to yield a total of twenty manuscripts of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John and fifteen of Quest. John Ab. These lists, too, have their problems: they neglect the additions made in the second volume of de Santos Otero and the new sources given in Jovanović, and may have misidentified two 3 Apocr. Apoc. John manuscripts as Quest. John Ab. Finally, a

10. Thomson, Review of Aurelio de Santos Otero, HUAA 1, Slavonic and East European Review 58, no. 2 (1980): 256–68 at 267. Of the still unconfirmed manuscripts listed in n. 8, Thomson identifies Otero 9 as 1 Apocr. Apoc. John; 10, 12, 14, 24, 40, and 43 as 3 Apocr. Apoc. John; and 13, 38, and 44 as Quest. John Ab. (he was not yet aware of 59–62, which are listed in HUAA 2, and does not mention 3, 18, 19, and 41). Otero 57 (confirmed as 3 Apocr. Apoc. John by Miltenova) he calls "a Croatian translation of an unidentified Western work; very mutilated," and reveals that it was published by Rudolf Strohal (Stare hrvatske apokrifne priče i legende [Bjelovar: Tisaki i naklada lav. Weiss-a, 1917], 90–97), but the only Abraham text in the volume appears on pp. 57–60 and it is neither Quest. John Ab. nor 3 Apocr. Apoc. John. Of the sources for 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, Thomson says, "Most of these codices contain later redactions with various omissions, interpolations, etc. The original translation is in nos. 5 and 26 at least."
12. Petkov, Altslawische Eschatologie, 178–79. Petkov admits that his identification of the texts, like those of de Santos Otero, are based only on the information provided in catalogs and previously published works. He does not include the manuscripts that de Santos Otero could not identify (nos. 9, 14, 18, 19, 43, 59, 60) and retains de Santos Otero's identification of no. 46 (Petkov A1) and 57 (Petkov A8)

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new study of the 3 Apocr. Apoc. John tradition in South Slavic by Anissava Miltenova lists nineteen manuscripts,\(^\text{13}\) eight of which are correlated with de Santos Otero (1, 5, 46, 48, 49, 51, 56, and 57) and three are known to Jovanović, though she appears not to be aware of his work, nor of Petkov's; seven of Miltenova's sources are entirely new.\(^\text{14}\) Miltenova includes in her study an edition of and translation of Sofia, SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library, slav. 433 (Panagjuristi Miscellany), fols. 117r–125v (16th cent.; =Otero 48);\(^\text{15}\) no explanation is given for the selection of this particular manuscript, though it does have a high degree of correspondence with the Greek text. The apocalypse has also circulated in a Bulgarian vernacular translation. Two manuscripts—Sofia, SS. Cyril and Methodius National Library, slav. 1070, fols. 54r–62v (1789) and slav. 1338, fols. 9r–15v (beginning of the 19th cent.)—are used in Tadeusz Szymański's 1995 edition and Olga Mladenova adds to these another seven for her study that traces the origins of this tradition to the seventeenth century.\(^\text{16}\)

**Literary and Theological Considerations**

Given the use of Abraham as a mediating figure in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, the text fits well into the definition of apocalypse established by John Collins as "a genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another supernatural world."\(^\text{17}\) Much like 1 Apocr. Apoc. John and such apocalyptic texts as Revelation, Shepherd of Hermes, the (Second) Revelation of James, and Nature of the Rulers, 3 Apocr. Apoc. John fits into Collins's Type Ib: "Apocalypses with Cosmic and/or Political Eschatology (which have neither historical review nor otherworldly journey)."\(^\text{18}\)

Abraham's circumstances are somewhat vague in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John—it is unclear whether he is among those "brought out" from Hades alongside Adam and others (1:1), or if Abraham is corresponding with Jesus and John from a supernatural realm. The Slavonic version makes clear what the Greek does not, namely, that John is raised to Abraham's side in order to begin his series of questions (Slav II 3:1). Throughout the text, as Quest. John Ab.; however, Miltenova, who certainly appears to have seen these manuscripts, says they are both 3 Apocr. Apoc. John. In addition, Petkov reveals that one of de Santos Otero's 1 Apocr. Apoc. John manuscripts (Otero 33) also contains Quest. John Ab. (Petkov A2) and identifies the still-unconfirmed Otero 12 (Petkov A5) and 40 (Petkov A14) as Quest. John Ab., whereas Thomson says they are 3 Apocr. Apoc. John.

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14. One of these—Bijelo Polje (Montenegro), Nikoljav Monastery, 52, fols. 153r–157v (1485/1495)—is listed, apparently erroneously, by Petkov as 1 Apocr. Apoc. John.


16. Szymański, Studium, 333–41; Mladenova, "Early Modern Bulgarian." We are grateful to Dr. Mladenova for providing us with a copy of her work prior to publication, for her assistance with the Church Slavonic scholarship, and for her suggestions on solving lingering problems in deciphering the Greek text.


Abraham functions as an otherworldly representative who reveals certain truths about the afterlife to John after Jesus' ascension, with a particular focus on the fate of souls in heaven and Hades and how one's actions on earth impact that fate. This may be related to the ancient Jewish and Christian tradition of the "bosom of Abraham," a concept that first appears in the Second Temple Jewish and early Christian periods—for example, in 4 Maccabees 13:17, Luke 16:19–31, the Apocalypse of Zephaniah 9:4; 11:4–6, and Genesis Rabbah 48.7–8. According to the tradition, after death the righteous are separated from the unrighteous and then cross over to an area of Hades where Abraham dwells.

In 3 Apoc. Apoc. John, Abraham is given the task of separating the righteous, who go to heaven, from the sinners, who go to Hades (1:3). When John asks "Where does the soul go?," Abraham says that the righteous "rest in my bosom" (8:1–3).

As Anca Bratu-Minott notes, the motif of the "bosom of Abraham" thrives in the medieval period, especially in the twelfth century, as Christians developed a full-fledged theory of Purgatory and the purification of souls. This depiction of Abraham also may be indebted to the patriarch's function in early Jewish texts (such as the Apocalypse of Abraham) as one who knows the secrets of God, salvation, and judgment. Abraham's answers to John's questions in 3 Apoc. Apoc. John, however, focus on scriptural interpretation as a key to understanding the nature of souls and the afterlife. Rather than providing John with visionary experiences as an explanatory tool, Abraham consistently responds with scriptural citations and proper exegetical practices. For 3 Apoc. Apoc. John, one's ability to interpret Scripture determines one's ability to understand the fate of souls. One may look to the Exposition on the Content of Virgil according to Moral Philosophy (Expositio continentiae Virgilianae secundum philosophos moralis) by Fulgentius (late 5th–early 6th cent.) as a Hellenic comparandum of dialogue with a deceased figure regarding a tradition associated with them. In the Exposition, Virgil is summoned from the dead to elucidate the truth of the Aeneid for the author's benefit, particularly regarding allegorical readings of the text. But in 3 Apoc. Apoc. John, Abraham is summoned not to explain a text with which he is associated, but to fulfill his role as an intermediary between the living and the dead, between heaven and hell for souls passing on to the afterlife.

Jesus appears only briefly in the text, in his typical post-resurrection location, teaching the apostles on the Mount of Olives before the ascension. However, the name Jesus is not used (indeed, it appears nowhere in the text); instead he is called God and

19. One might also consider Ignatius, Phil. 9.1, in which Christ is the "door" through which Abraham and many others enter heaven. This bears some similarity to Abraham's sudden appearance in 3 Apoc. Apoc. John.

20. For more on the role of Abraham in early Christian thought, see Cooper, ""In the Bosom of Abraham"; and van der Lof, "Abraham's Bosom." On the primary literature, see particularly Apoc. Zeph. 11:6 where Abraham intercedes with God on behalf of those being tormented in the afterlife. On more recent sources, note Thomas Aquinas, ST III.69.4 regarding the relationship between Abraham's bosom and limbo.


22. See Williams, "Abraham in the Christian Tradition."

Lord. The teaching focuses entirely on signs of the end (2:2–3), given in response to a question posed by Peter, the only apostle who appears in the text other than John. The content is drawn from the “little apocalypse” from the Synoptics (Mark 13:5–37 par.), where it is occasioned by a question from multiple apostles (explicitly named in Mark as Peter, James, John, and Andrew). Notably absent is any forecasting of future kings, including the legendary figure of the Last Emperor, and discussion of the Son of Man, as is seen in other late antique apocalypses particularly after the Arabic conquest (e.g., the Apocalypse of Ps.-Methodius). However, 3 Apocr. Apoc. John does contain, however briefly, the figure of the Antichrist (13:5), which is well represented in Byzantine apocalyptic literature and certainly connected to a “John” in the New Testament (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7).

3 Apocr. Apoc. John shows particular interest in dates and events marked in the liturgical calendar of the Eastern church. The resurrection is situated “6530 years from the time of Adam, on March 27” (1:11). Later, Abraham states that Mary’s conception occurred on March 25, which led to Jesus’ birth on December 25 (9:8). Such dates for the conception—that is, the Annunciation—and Jesus’ birth were common in late antiquity, especially in Western Christian circles. An early mention of Jesus being born on December 25 appears in the fourth-century Roman Philocalian Calendar.

Slightly earlier, Tertullian recounts that Jesus was crucified on March 25, based on a tradition of placing Mary’s conception and Jesus’ crucifixion on the same calendrical date. The ascension of Jesus is said, in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, to take place “at the seventh hour of the fifth day” (2:4); in the Eastern church, the ascension is celebrated on the sixth Thursday after Easter. The introduction also makes mention of two other events in the liturgical calendar: the Harrowing of Hell and the Dormition/Assumption of Mary. Hints of the Harrowing of Hell, or the Descensus ad inferos, narrative, in which Jesus descends and liberates some of those withering away in Sheol/Hades, can be found in such texts as the Odes of Solomon 42, the Acts of Pilate/Gospel of Nicodemus, the Questions of Bartholomew 1:9–27, the Acts of Thomas 10, and the Teaching of Silvanus 103,28–104,14. In 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, Jesus is introduced as the figure who

28. See Tertullian, Adv. Jud. 8.17; Ps.-Hippolytus, Comm. Dan. 4.23; Ps.-John Chrysostom, On Solstices and Equinoxes (De solsticia et aequinoctia conceptionis et nativitatis domini nostri Iesu christi et iohannis baptistae); Augustine, Trin. 4.5; Serm. 201; Dionysius Exiguus, Argumenta Paschalia 15.
29. For more on this tradition, see James H. Charlesworth, “Exploring the Origins of the descensus
resurrects Adam, Eve, David, Solomon, and various prophets on Easter Sunday. Near the end of the apocalypse, the figure of Adam appears once more when John asks about how the soul encounters its own sins in Hades. Abraham responds not only regarding the inevitability of seeing one's own sins, but that souls coming to Hades are questioned by Adam regarding current affairs on earth (12:7). In the Dormition traditions, Jesus' mother is transported to paradise some years after Jesus' death, after some of the apostles have also perished. Here, however, the "immaculate Lady, the Theotokos" (2:5) and "ever-virgin" (9:8) mother of Jesus journeys to paradise before Jesus' ascension (3:1).

Throughout 3 Apoc. Apoc. John, John and Abraham's discussion of souls takes many twists and turns. Early on in their dialogue, John asks when souls come to earth and inhabit bodies (4:7)—an image familiar to many late ancient Christians from Origen's discussion of souls in which souls "cool" (psychesthai) and gain varieties of bodily forms (Princ. 2.8–9). Abraham's response, however, takes a different direction. He quotes Ps 102:15–16 (LXX) and asserts that the "soul never comes into the body" (4:8). Abraham may be conflating the spirit/wind (pneuma) of the psalm with the soul (psyche), since the spirit/wind passes by the flower-like human. For Abraham, the soul is the same; it does not participate in the body, but seemingly passes through it. Perhaps this assertion regarding the soul reveals some underlying reaction to Origenist claims regarding the soul. It may also relate to conversations regarding the soul by Irenaeus and Tertullian, both of whom discuss the soul in relation to the "bosom of Abraham" narrative of Luke 16, questioning the physical characteristics of the soul and its location in the afterlife. Irenaeus (Haer. 2.34.1–2) argues that after death, the soul does not pass from body to body; rather, it retains the form of the body that it currently inhabits. As proof, Irenaeus uses the Lazarus narrative to show that Abraham was able to recognize Lazarus in the afterlife because his soul retained Lazarus's appearance. Tertullian (De anima 8–9, 55) argues that the soul has physical characteristics, pointing to the "bosom" of Abraham and the "finger" of Lazarus in Luke 16. Such discussion on the form of the body in the afterlife continues among Byzantine writers who debated whether the dead will be able to recognize each other, a question posed also in 3 Apoc. Apoc. John 4:1–2, and is related to questions about the age of souls (10:1–2 and 13:1–4). Opinions vary among Byzantine writers on "kindred recognition" (koinos anagnorismos), with Michael Glykas (Kephalaia 11) perhaps approaching closest to what is found in 3 Apoc. Apoc. John. He argues that the pre-fallen "angelic" state to which we return is genderless; so recognition comes from a form of spiritual insight. 3 Apoc. Apoc. John discusses other aspects of the afterlife, such as what types of food the just and the sinners eat in paradise (9:1–4), and how souls inquire about current affairs from those who have newly arrived (12:7).

Another aspect of Byzantine views on the afterlife represented in the apocalypse is the practice of memorials for the dead. Prayers for the departed, or Panikhida (see

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30. For a survey of views on the form of the soul in the afterlife beginning with Irenaeus and running through to Michael Glykas, see Constanas, "To Sleep, Perchance to Dream," 95–99; on Origen in particular, see Louth, "Eastern Orthodox Eschatology," 244–45.


9:4–7), are performed by the deceased's family principally on the third, ninth, and fortieth days after death—33—the same schema given in 3 Apoc. Apoc. John 8:4–6, though with the addition of a twentieth day, and expanded upon in Quest. John Ab. Opinions differ on the origins and meaning of this schema, with some considering the Book of the Dead, Poimandres, Visio Pauli, or the Apocalypse of Paul as literary antecedents. 34 Some Byzantine writers associated the memorials with certain days in the life of Christ, as in Quest. John Ab. Others, Nicholas Constas writes, "believed that the soul, like a bird seeking its nest, remained on earth for three days, hovering about the place of its death, sorrowful at the prospect of leaving the world and the body. Still others understood these services to mark the gradual dissolution of the body, in what was essentially a reversal of the body's original formation in the womb." 35 The Panikhida services involve also lit candles and the serving of kollyva (Slavonic: kutia), a meal of boiled wheat, spices, and honey; these practices are not mentioned in the Greek manuscripts of 3 Apoc. Apoc. John, but they do appear in the Church Slavonic text (Slav I at 9:3–5; Slav II 6:3–4). Another aspect of thought on the afterlife, mentioned only in Quest. John Ab. (1:3), is the tollhouses that the soul must visit on its path to salvation or damnation; the tollhouses are inhabited by demons and in each, the soul is accused of a particular sin, angels come to its defense, and prayers of the living decide the fate of the soul. 36 The Panikhida serves a similar function, so that the prayers for the dead have an intercessory force (see, again, 3 Apoc. Apoc. John 8:4–6; Quest. John Ab. 31–6). The righteoues are able to bypass the tollhouses completely and go directly to the bosom of Abraham.

John and Abraham spend a significant amount of time discussing church officials. John first asks about the order of the priests (5:1–4) and Abraham responds in difficult Greek regarding the blasphemies of the prototypical priests (Melchizedek, Zechariah, and Simeon, chosen presumably because of their importance in Christian tradition) and their ability to curse. Abraham clarifies that God appointed shepherds and teachers over the church that must follow a certain standard set by God (5:7–8). John and Abraham go on to discuss the fate of laity who dishonor priests (6:1–2), as well as the importance of monks' relationships and physical proximity to their hegumens (6:3–6). Near the end of 3 Apoc. Apoc. John, John asks about who will speak on behalf of whom on Judgment Day—will priests speak for the people? Will hegumens speak for monks? Abraham clarifies the order of responsibility on this day: the bishop speaks on behalf of priests, the priest for the people, and the hegumen for the monks (12:1–3). Perhaps this concern over who stands for whom in the afterlife is reflected.

33. Constas, "'To Sleep, Perchance to Dream'," 103–4 (see esp. n. 41 for discussion in Byzantine literature). See also Marinis, "He Who Is at the Point of Death," esp. 67–70; and Louth, "Eastern Orthodox Eschatology," 239–40.
34. See Stephanov, "Between Heaven and Hell," 84. The tollhouse schema is also evident in Ireneaeus, Haer. 1.21.5; Epiphanius, Pan. 26.13.2; Athanasius, Vit. Ant. 65; John Chrysostom, Paenit. 1; and Orphic gold tablets.
36. Constas, "'To Sleep, Perchance to Dream'," 107–9; and Louth, "Eastern Orthodox Eschatology," 2340. On this motif, see also 1 Apoc. Jas. 35.2–36.1. Stephanov ("Between Heaven and Hell," 83–94) suggests that this tradition grows out of the works of Origen, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, and Ephrem. He also provides an exemplar in the tenth-century Life of St. Basil the Younger written by Gregory the monk (PG 109:654–65), in which Basil's soul ascends through twenty tollhouses for forty days and is tested at tollhouses assigned to particular sins.
in late ancient monastic thought; for example, Shenoute's *Canons* speak of the father/mother superior (*hⅰⅰ; hⅰⅰ*) and house leaders (*prⅰⅰⅰⅰ; tⅰⅰⅰⅰ*) acting as representatives of the cenobitic community before God in judgment and being responsible for the monks' salvation. The interest in priests and monastic orders seems peculiar for a conversation said to have taken place in the first century between an apostle and a patriarch, but, as noted below, such matters are routine for Johannine apocalypic and topical for whoever wrote the text, likely a monk, and those who copied and read it within monastery scriptoria throughout the medieval period.

**Relationship to Johannine Apocalyptica**


Of all the Johannine apocalyptica, *3 Apocr. Apoc. John* has the most affinities with *1 Apocr. Apoc. John*, which appears to be the progenitor of the entire corpus. The two texts have a shared understanding that Psalms are prophetic and can be quoted as such, as well as shared conceptions of the resurrected body. Both *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* and *3 Apocr. Apoc. John* portray John “the Theologian” as asking the interlocutor—whether the voice of the Savior or Abraham—how people will appear in the moment of resurrection. In both cases, the interlocutor responds by saying that humanity will be resurrected as thirty-year-olds, thus putting them at their peak maturity (*1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 11:1–2; *3 Apocr. Apoc. John* 13:1–2). Additionally, *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* goes into more detail than *3 Apocr. Apoc. John* regarding what it means that all will be raised “in one appearance” (*3 Apocr. Apoc. John* 13:2; cf. *1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 11:2), explaining that they will not have diverse ages, genders, skin colors, or bodily features. Both texts also share language of race (*genos*) in reference to Christians resurrected and questioned together (*1 Apocr. Apoc. John* 23:2; *3 Apocr. Apoc. John* 10:11), a term frequently used to describe Christians,

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38. On *erōtapokriseis* literature, see the scholarship cited in the entry on the *Dialogue of the Revealer and John* by Phillip Tite elsewhere in this volume (p. 360).


40. Tóth, “New Wine,” 84.

41. Noted in Constas, “‘To Sleep, Perchance to Dream.’” 102 n. 37.

42. Court, *Book of Revelation*, 25. This prophetic use of the Psalms complicates Dimitri E. Conomo’s claim (*The Late Byzantine and Slavonic Communion Cycle: Liturgy and Music* [Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1985], 3–4) that such use was relegated only to “primitive Christianity” and stands in contrast to the Byzantine and Slavonic liturgical use of Psalms.

among other people, in antiquity and beyond. In 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, races are gathered like sheep in the resurrection and Christians are recognized as distinct from Jews or unbelievers (3:4: 10:11; 13:4–5).

As for the other Johannine apocalypses, 3 Apocr. Apoc. John shares with Quest. Jas. an interest in the fate of soul—particularly the separation of the righteous and the wicked, with the first destined for paradise and the second for Hades (see 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 8:1–2; Quest. Jas. 1:2; 2:1), whether the repentant can achieve salvation (3 Apocr. Apoc. John 11; Quest. Jas. 3–5; note also both texts’ application of the Parable of the Lost Sheep in 3 Apocr. Apoc. John 6; Quest. Jas. 3), and with storing up riches (3 Apocr. Apoc. John 10:3–4, 7–9; Quest. Jas. 6). Both 3 Apocr. Apoc. John and 2 Apocr. Apoc. John are concerned about the honor due to priests (3 Apocr. Apoc. John 6:1–2; 2 Apocr. Apoc. John 5:8); otherwise the two texts overlap only in a shared reference to Christ’s descent to Hades and resurrection from the dead (3 Apocr. Apoc. John 11; 2 Apocr. Apoc. John 3:9). Finally, in the Coptic Mysteries of John, Jesus dialogues with John on the Mount of Olives after his resurrection (1:1) and then provides him with a cherubim-guided tour of heaven. All of these parallels entail motifs and theological concepts that cut across Christian literature of multiple periods; none are indicative of dependence of one text upon another.

Language, Date, and Provenance

Both extant Greek manuscripts of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John rely on the LXX and Greek New Testament and indicate that the apocalypse originated in a Greek textual milieu. Greek ecclesiastical terminology—such as, “Theotokos” (2:5), “hegumen” (6:3–5; 12:1–2; 13:4), the “Great Fifth” (8:8), and Apokreo (11:9)—add evidence to this argument. Regarding the date of the autograph of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John, it is difficult to narrow the possibilities to anything more than a window of multiple centuries. As noted in this volume by Draughon, Sellick, and Spittler regarding 2 Apocr. Apoc. John, the Johannine apocalypistica are fluid texts that do not lend themselves to an easy pinpointing of an “original” text, especially given the plasticity of the erotapokriseis structure. 3 Apocr. Apoc. John is no exception. The Mount Athos manuscript (L) is dated to 1438/1439 CE, but two of the Church Slavonic manuscripts are dated a century earlier, giving us a terminus ante quem of the fourteenth century for the production of the text. While the text is not mentioned explicitly in commentaries or scholia of late antiquity or the early medieval period, the ninth-century scholia of the Grammar of Dionysius Thrax and its mention of an “Apocalypse of the Theologian” could conceivably just as well be a reference to 3 Apocr. Apoc. John as 1 Apocr. Apoc. John. The writer of the scholia simply states that there is “another so-called apocalypse of the Theologian” without any defining features, other than that it is supposedly “pseudonymous and spurious.” Earlier scholars like John Court have not had access to an edition of 3 Apocr. Apoc. John and have previously been able to assume that the scholia refers exclusively to 1 Apocr. Apoc. John.


45. See above pp. 403–4.

46. These are nos. 5 and 46 in de Santos Otero, HUAA, 1:200 and 207.

47. Mentioned by Rick Brannan in his introduction to 1 Apocr. Apoc. John; see above p. 378.
Regarding a *terminus post quern*, we might look to the text's use of the dates for the annunciation, birth of Jesus, crucifixion, and *Descensus*, as well as its brief mention of the Dormition of Mary and its discussion of monks and abbots, which might point us to the fifth century at the earliest, but likely even later. Following the work of Alice Whealey, who suggests that production of apocalyptic texts increased throughout the seventh to ninth centuries, this may be a potential time period within which to place 3 Apocr. *Apoc. John* alongside other apocalyptic texts—however, we need not be restricted to this suggestion. Julian Petkov believes that 3 Apocr. *Apoc. John* was written in the twelfth century, under the impression that the apocalypse was composed solely in Slavonic and that it used *Quest. John Ab.* as a source. However, the presence of a Greek textual tradition and the unclear direction(s) of textual borrowing make such a date suspect. Simply put, this text could originate from any point in the late antique period and should be examined in the context(s) of Byzantine Christianity and early Islam.

**Translation**

In the interest of "new philological" approaches to manuscripts in early Christian studies, and given the significant differences between the sources, translations of both L and A, made by Tony Burke and Chance Bonar, are provided separately in a synopsis. While the two manuscripts are legible and largely free of damage, they both present orthographical challenges; emendations, where necessary, are indicated in the notes. The text has been divided into chapters and verses; at times the verses are further divided into smaller units (e.g., 4:2a, 4b) to aid in presenting both manuscripts in parallel without favoring the structure of one over the other. Also included in the notes are variant readings and references to Miltenova's translation of the Church Slavonic manuscript from Sofia (=Slav I); this Slavonic text follows the Greek very closely and is helpful in understanding difficult portions of the Greek text. Another Church Slavonic text (=Slav II) is included as an appendix, translated by Slavomir Čeploš from Tichonravov's edition of Moscow 157 (521); this version has numerous omissions and transpositions and is offered here as an illustration of the diversity observable in the Church Slavonic tradition. Finally, we have included also Slavomir Čeploš's translation of Tichonravov's first edition of *Quest. John Ab.*—the first in any modern language.

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3 Apocryphal Apocalypse of John

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The apocalypse of holy John the Theologian, how he asked Abraham about souls, how they welcome the souls\(^8\) from the world, and how the souls come to be recognized.

**Abraham and the patriarchs are released from Hades**

**ATHENS GR. 1007**

1 God went up onto the Mount of Olives, having risen from the dead 6530 years from the time of Adam, on March 27. He brought out Adam and Eve and the prophets David and Solomon. 2 And he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection from the dead, the Lord spent forty days with them eating and drinking. And the Lord said to them, "Rise, lead on into the kingdom of heaven." 3 He said to Abraham, "Behold! Today I hand over to you the ones departed from the world, so that you might divide them into two: the righteous (go) to heaven, but the sinners to Hades. But I raised up Adam and I came out with him and he alone I will lead into paradise."

**ATHOS KOUTLOUMOUSIOU 176**

1 God went up onto the Mount of Olives, having risen from the dead 6530 years from the time of Adam, on March 27. He brought out Adam and the prophets. 2 And he appeared to his disciples and said to them, "Receive now the kingdom of heaven.”

3 He said to Abraham, “Behold! Today I hand over to you the ones departed from the world, so that you might divide them into two: the righteous (go) to heaven, but the sinners to Hades. But I raised up Adam and I came out with him and he alone I will lead into paradise.”

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\(^8\) Slav I and II lack much of vv. 1–2, reading only: “Jesus (Slav I: ‘the Lord’) climbed up to the Mount of Olives with his disciples and said to them, ‘I am leaving you for heaven and I will take Adam with me and will be (there) with him.’”
Peter asks for signs of the end of the age

1 Answering, Peter said, “Lord, tell us, when will the end occur?”

And the Lord ordained, “Listen, apostle Peter, the end will occur when hate is born in the midst of humanity—nation against nation, jealousy, envy, earthquake, destruction, famines, and wars—brother with brother will betray the other to death, kingdom will rise against kingdom, and people against people. Earthquakes and groans will occur.”

4 After saying these things, the Lord was taken up into heaven at the seventh hour of the fifth day. After this, again, when the body of our immaculate Lady, the Theotokos, was brought into paradise, the apostles welcomed all of the righteous and Abraham.

On the judgment of nonbelievers

1 Holy John the Theologian asked Abraham, saying, “Father, tell me so that Abraham may divide the departed ones.”

2 Answering, Peter said, “Lord, tell us, when will the end of the world occur? Or when will you raise the dead from of old?”

And the Lord said, “Listen, Peter, the end will occur when hate is born in the midst of humanity: nation against nation, jealousy, earthquake, destruction, famine, and war, and many wars. Brother will be against brother and betray one another to death, for kingdom will rise against kingdom with violent tongues and many groans.”

4 After saying these things, the Lord was taken up into heaven at the seventh hour of the fifth day. After this, again, when the body of our immaculate Lady, the Theotokos, was brought into paradise, the apostles welcomed all of the righteous and Abraham.

3 <Holy John the Theologian asked Abraham, saying,> “Father, tell me

a. Slav I and II lack v. 4.

b. Slav I adds “And many will forego baptism and the holy books of the church.”

c. Slav I and II lack vv. 4–5. In their place Slav I has “And when the Lord told all this to them, Adam and Abraham and everyone who had been with him in the netherworld fell dead.”

d. A lacks an introduction to the first question; it is supplied here from L. Slav I and II specify that John has been raised to heaven where he enters into his dialogue with Abraham. However, Slav II lacks the questions of chap. 3 and begins instead with the question in 4:1.
about the Jews. Are they going to find mercy?"

2 Answering, Abraham said to him, "John, child, did you not listen to what the prophet was saying? 'The sheep have abandoned the pasture and the cows will not be at the mangers.' The race of the Jews are sheep, the pasture is the luxury of paradise."

3 John said, "Father, will the impious be judged with the Christians?"

4 Abraham answered, "Even more, did you not listen to what the prophet was saying? 'Not so the impious, not so! Rather, they are like the dust that the wind flings from the land. Therefore the impious will not rise up in judgment, nor sinners in the council of the righteous.'

5 And again, the prophet said, let the sheep be placed in Hades. They shall be dead forever and ever, unable to make any defense on account of them not knowing God." a

On being with family in the afterlife

4 And again John said to Abraham, "Father, who is going to recognize their father and their mother, brothers or sisters or foster-sibling or neighbor in the resurrection?"

2a Abraham said, "Listen, child, how can the enemy hide? Or an adulterer? Or a sorcerer? But they about the Jews. Are they going to find mercy?"

2 Answering, Abraham said, "John, child, did you not listen to what the prophet was saying? 'The sheep have abandoned the pasture and the cows will not be at the mangers.' Child, the race of the Jews are sheep, <the pasture> b is the luxury of paradise."

3 Father, will the impious be judged with the Christians? c

4 Abraham answered, "Did you not listen to what the prophet was saying? 'Not so the impious, not so! Rather, they are like the dust that the wind flings from the land. Therefore the impious will not rise up in judgment, nor sinners in the council of the righteous.'

5 And again, the prophet said, let the sheep be placed in Hades. They shall be dead forever and ever, unable to make any defense on account of them not going in to God."

4 John said to Abraham, "Father, who is going to recognize their father and their mother, brothers or sisters or foster-sibling or neighbor in the resurrection?"

2a Abraham said, "Listen, child, when the Lord resurrected us with Adam, we were seized with a joy

a. Slav I (against A) also has "not knowing God."

b. In Slav I, the question is twofold: "will there be mercy for the Jew and [will there be] heavenly food [for them]?” The interpretation of Habakkuk in v. 2 thus becomes, "the sheep were the Hebrews and the stalls were the heavenly food."

c. In Slav I the question is: "Can the pagan stand next to the Christian at the resurrection?"
are entwined with each other and in the coming judgment they will stand in awe and gnash against their opponents. And they will hand them over to eternal punishment."

3John said, "Does he hear the petition of a dead person?"

4Abraham said, "Did you not listen to what the prophet was saying? 'I shall not die, but I shall live and recount the deeds of the Lord.' And again, 'my soul will live and be present.' Thus the person is going to live, but without the body."

5John said, "Father, are deceased infants recognized here?"

6Abraham said, "Just as they wanted to grow upon the earth and be recognized, likewise they will grow here and recognized."

greater than for our own children. With a great joy we were seized."a

Abraham said, "Listen, child, how can the enemy hide?b Or an adulterer? Or a sorcerer? But entwined with each other (at) the neck and in the coming judgment they will stand in awe and gnash against his opponent. And they will hand them over to eternal punishment."c

3John said to father Abraham, "Father Abraham, does he hear the dead person?"d

4Abraham said, "Did you not listen to what the prophet was saying? 'I shall not die, but I shall live and recount the deeds of the Lord' and again 'my soul will live and be present.' Indeed, child, the person is going to live, but without the body."e

5Again John asked, "And children: are deceased infants recognized here?"f

6Abraham answered and said, "Just as they wanted to grow, their souls also will be recognized there."

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a. Verse 2a is present also in Slav I, though it states instead: "when the Lord resurrected Adam and many others with him, they knew each other with joy and embraced, celebrating with their children." Slav II has only: "They know each other very well, just as you know pleasures (when) kissing your children" (3:2).

b. A has "not hide."

c. Slav I has "They will hold each other by the throat and drag each other to the Judgment to throw the enemy, not themselves into eternal darkness." Slav II lacks 4:2b-4.

d. Slav I has "Do the dead hear each other?"

e. Slav I and II (3:3-4) insert another question and answer: "Do the souls there know each other?—My son, they know each as they do here."

f. Slav I has "know each other"; Slav II (3:5) has "are they remembered there?"
John said, “Father, does the soul ever come on the earth to its own body?”

Abraham said, “Did you not listen to what the prophet was saying? ‘As for man, his days like grass, like a flower of the field, so it will bloom, since a breath passed through it, and it will be gone, and it will no longer recognize its place.’ Now, child, the soul never comes to the body.”

On the order of the priests

John said, “What is the order of the priests?”

Abraham said, “First of all, the priest Melchizedek (then) Zechariah and Simeon. For they were cleansed beforehand because of his own wife through prayer and fasting and they did not know meat and did not drink wine nor hard drink nor cooked food. One time they came to the altar to worship in the Holy of Holies. And with their prayers the blind regained sight, lepers (were) cleansed, and those punished by an unclean spirit were cured. Great is the order of the priests. But the blasphemies of the priest were not cast aside, and when he would be ignited with anger and led astray by some-

John asked, “Father, does the soul ever come on the earth to its own body? Just as the apostle Peter came to his own body with the same soul.”

Did you not listen to what the prophet was saying? ‘As for man, his days like grass, like a flower of the field, so it will bloom, since a breath passed through it, and it will be gone, and it will no longer recognize its place.’ Listen, child, the soul never comes to the body.”

Again John asked, “What is the order of the priests?”

Abraham said, “Child, first of all, the priest Melchizedek (then) Zechariah and Simeon. For they were cleansed beforehand because of his own wife and they did not know meat and did not drink wine nor hard drink nor cooked food. One time they came to the holy altar to worship in the Holy of Holies. And with their prayers the blind regained sight, lepers were cleansed, and those punished by an unclean spirit were cured. Great is the order of the priests. And their blasphemies were not cast aside, and when the priest would curse with anger, which is thus from his entire soul,

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a. This reference to the apparent resurrection of Peter is without parallel in other literature. It is absent also in Slav I and II.

b. Slav II inserts here a question and answer about marriage in the afterlife (see 3:8–9).


d. Slav I has “They cleansed themselves of all evil with fast and prayer, without knowing temptation.”
On the honor due to hegumens and monks

6 1 John said, "Father, also, those who do not honor the priest, but rather treat him disgracefully and despise the order, what are they going to pay in the punishment?"

the death curse of that man comes to him by force.  

5a You heard, child, what the Lord ordained to Peter, and all you apostles: 'Whatever you bind on earth will be bound also in heaven, and again, whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'  

6And again: if you forgive people their trespasses, your sins will be forgiven. But if you do not forgive their trespasses, the Lord will not forgive yours.  

7For this reason, God appointed over the church in every time and every place holy shepherds and teachers in order that joyfully they present people before the Lord.  

8But if they did not teach others correctly the Lord will pass judgment on the teachers."

6 1 John said, "And similarly, father, those who do not honor the priest, but treat disgracefully and despise their order, what are they going to pay in this world and in God's punishment?"

2 Apoc. Apoc. John

a. Slav I has "The order of the priests is great and its damnation is not absolved, because he who blasphemes with all his heart had better not been born." Slav II begins here with the question "Can you show me, Father, what is the order of the priest?" to which Abraham responds: "Child, great is the order of the priest. His curse will not cease, so if he curses someone in anger, they will die of this" (9:6-7).

b. Slav I has "for if they do evil, then the priests themselves shall be judged" (see also Slav II 9:11).

c. In Slav I, this verse continues from the previous verse in Abraham's voice, reading, "If some people do not honor the priests and offend their rank, those shall be lawless." Slav II (9:12-13) follows the Greek text.
Abraham said, “Do you not know what the Jews did to the Lord? Because of this, it would be better that those who dishonor the priests not to have been born.”

John said, “Father, of what kind is the honor of the hegumens and the monks?”

Abraham said, “Just as fish out of water die, so too also the monks who are not fulfilling the commandments of God and being neglectful and not listening and speaking superfluously, let them be destroyed utterly. For this reason it is not proper for a monk a house apart from the hegumen. Just as a sheep that has been lost on a mountain and the thief has stolen him, so also a monk without a hegumen will not benefit.”

Abraham said, “Did you not listen? Do you alone not know what the Jews did to the Lord? Look, because of this, it would be better that those who dishonor the priests not to have been born from their fathers.”

John said, “Tell me, father Abraham, of what kind is the honor of the hegumens and the monks?”

Abraham said, “Just as a fish without water dies, so too also the monks who are not fulfilling the commandments of God and the things he renounces before the holy altar and the cropping of their hair at the hands of the priests. And those who are drunk and neglectful and not ashamed and seeing, not listening and speaking superfluously against their hegumen, let these also be destroyed utterly like fish in a waterless place. For he is the shepherd of the monks, and for this reason it is not proper for a monk to have a house apart from the hegumen. For after searching widely for one sheep, the thief snatched it away and stole it. Thus, also it is not proper to have a house...”

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a. In Slav I, the question is “did you not hear what the Lord said about the Hebrews, those who did him evil?”

b. Slav II lacks vv. 3–6.

c. Slav I, which follows A with this longer reading, continues after “altar” with: “Those whose hair has been cut by the hands of the priest shall receive an imperishable crown before the holy witnesses and archangels.”

d. Slav I inserts another question here: “is it good for the monk to live with no other but his abbot?” Abraham answers with: “My son, if a lone sheep strays from its shepherd, what will happen to it? Will not a wolf come and eat it? Or shall a robber come and steal it?”

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a. Hegumen is the title for the head of a monastery in the Eastern churches. The Western church counterpart is the abbot.
b. “To have” is absent in L and is supplied from comparison with A.
On marriage, gluttony, theft, and adultery

7 John said, “Father, are they going to be married in the resurrection?”

Abraham responded, “Therefore, know this, child, that just as Adam and his wife Eve were one flesh and the Lord resurrected the two together and brought the two into paradise, thus they will be married to the first wife, not the second and the third, because it is not lawful.”

John said, “Father, some baptized people conduct themselves like beasts, eating and drinking without doing the cross at their faces, and not blessing what they are eating. Of what sort are they?”

Abraham said, “You heard, child, what Isaiah was saying: ‘Let the ungodly one be taken away so that he may not see the glory of the Lord,’ and let those doing these things be destroyed.”

John said, “And thieves and perjurers, what will they receive here?”

Abraham said, “David says, ‘May sinners fail from the face of the earth, and the lawless, so that they be no more.’”

John said, “Is a man sinful if his wife sins with another man?”

7 John said, “Father, are we going to be married in the resurrection?”

Abraham responded and said, “Know, child, Adam and his wife Eve, how they were one flesh. And the Lord resurrected the two together and brought the two together into paradise. Thus they will be married to the first wife not the second and the third. For, the second and third ones are not lawful.”

John said, “Father, some baptized people conduct themselves like beasts, eating and drinking without doing the cross at their faces, and not blessing what they are eating. Of what sort are they?”

Abraham said, “You heard, child, what Isaiah was saying: ‘Let the ungodly one be taken away so that he may not see the glory of the Lord,’ and let those doing these things be destroyed.”

And thieves and perjurers, what will they receive here?”

Abraham said, “David says, ‘May sinners fail from the earth, and the lawless, so that they be no more.’”

7 Again, John the apostle asked, “Is there sin in a man if his wife is with another man?”

a. In Slav II the series of questions in this chapter (=53–8) are preceded by the question “Can a woman cause a man to sin?” (see 5:1–2). This question and answer appear in the Greek at 7:7–8.

b. In Slav I they are “those who have not been christened.”
8 Abraham said, “Great are the sins, child. For Eve fell first and thus Adam was cast out of paradise. God united the man with his own wife. And he received a crown. And he blessed them.”

9 John said, “What is the crown?”

10 Abraham said, “The acclamation of God. And when, at the fearful judgment, they will stand before the Lord, they may gather their children and enter into eternal life with them.”

On the souls of the righteous resting in the bosom of Abraham

8 1 John said, “Father, where do the souls of the righteous go?”

2 Abraham said, “Child, did you not listen to what the prophet was saying? ‘His soul will abide in prosperity, and his offspring shall inherit land.’ 3 The souls of the righteous, child, rest in my bosom and they go into heaven, but the souls of the sinners to Hades, as the prophet David said, ‘Let sinners be turned away to Hades, all the ones that keep forgetting God.’

8 1 John said, “Father, where does the soul go?”

2 Abraham said, “Child, did you not listen to what the prophet was saying? ‘His soul will abide in prosperity, and his offspring shall inherit land.’ 3 The souls of the righteous rest in my bosom and they go into heaven to the Lord, but the soul of the sinner to Hades, as David said, ‘Let sinners be turned away to Hades . . .”

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a. Slav I and II lack these last two sentences.

b. Slav I has “What is matrimony to the spouses?” Slav II lacks vv. 9–10.

c. For “their children,” Slav I has “just as Adam will stand there with his children.”

d. Slav I and II (49) insert another question: “And where will the sinful soul go?”

e. A folio is missing in A; the text continues at the end of 10:4.
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4And when the soul of the sinner turns away to Hades, child, then I will keep ita until the ninthb day so that they may perform for it hymns or a worship service, and if they will not endure,c they may watch over it for twenty. And again, if they do not perform, guard itd for forty days, saying perhaps they do not perform a worship service on behalf of this soul. They did not feed some-one hungry, give drink to the thirsty, or clothe the naked. Nor did the priest praying make an offering for it. And when the forty days pass by and they do not think upon it, say to it, f "Depart, sinful and poor soul' and thus it is carried away to punishment."

7John said, "The souls of the sinners, father, how longg are they in Hades?"
8Abraham said, "From the Great Fifthh until Pentecost they are in paradise with the saints."

On the food for the righteous
9 1John said, "Father, of what sort is the food of the righteous?"
2Abraham said, "Child, the prophet said, 'bread of angels man ate.'"
3Again John says, "And the souls of the sinners, what are they fed when they are led into paradise?"
4Abraham said, "They are fed also from the food of the righteous. And whenever they complete a memorial for someone, whoever of his parents completes the Panikhida and they complete the divine worship for its sake, if indeed it is a sinful soul, 5the Lord commands <and> the soul itself emerges

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a. For "then I will keep it," A is corrupt but has been reconstructed with some certainty with the aid of Slav I. In Slav II, it is the angels who keep watch over the soul (see also the note to 8:5).
b. For "the ninth (enmea) day," L has "the first (hena) day." Ninth finds support in Slav I but in Slav II (4:2) angels keep the soul for four days, and in Quest. John Ab. 2:2, the first memorial service takes place on the third day after death, but this is followed by the ninth in 3:1. The memorial service for the dead (or Panikhida, see 9:4-8 below) traditionally takes place on the third day after death, followed by the ninth and fortieth days (as here), as well as after three months, six months, and on the first and third anniversaries of the death.
c. Perhaps meaning "if they cannot endure (forty days)."
d. Slav II (4:1) begins this verse with a question: "And when a sinful soul comes, what will happen to it there?" Slav I has "My son, I keep the sinful soul with myself for nine days, so that someone may mention it in his prayers."
e. Slav I has "I keep it"; Slav II has "they (the angels) keep it."
f. Slav I has "And when forty days have passed, I will say to that soul."
g. For "how long" (poson chronon=how much time), the manuscript has poson koron (a cor is a unit of measurement).
h. The Great Fifth is Maundy Thursday, a celebration of the foot-washing of Jesus before the Last Supper. In Orthodox practice, there are no memorial services for the dead between Maundy Thursday and Pentecost, a span of fifty days. In 3 Apoc. Apoc. John, souls of the damned spend this period in paradise. Several other apocalyptic texts feature a respite from punishment for sinners. The closest parallel here is to Apoc. Vir., which grants sinners a fifty-day reprieve from the Resurrection to Pentecost.
i. In Slav I, the souls are in darkness from "the Roussali days (i.e., Pentecost) unto Maundy Thursday" and then "in the light until Pentecost." The response in Slav II (4:6) is simply, "Child, since Great Thursday until Pentecost."
from Hades, and they bring it into paradise. And it rests in my bosom and it feeds from the food of the righteous."

**On the memorial for the dead**

6 John said, “Will the souls find mercy through the Panikhida?"

7 Abraham said, “Great mercy and great good will that person find who makes the memorial for his dead. And great joy and gladness <fill> their souls through the prayer of the Panikhida.

8 “For when God was merciful upon Adam, he sent his Word and only-begotten Son. And he was made flesh from the ever-virgin Mary on March 25, and again he was born on December 25, and he lived among people, and was crucified, and he was buried, and he rose again on the third day. He rose with Adam and all the prophets, and was overwhelmed with joy on account of Adam.”

**On age, baptism, and wealth**

10 John said, “Father, where people die, is one young and another old?”

2 Abraham said, “The year has 365 days and 4380 hours. If a man is born in the hour of full-grown age and he dies, if in the second hour, he dies as a youth, and if he is born in the middle hour, he dies a young lad.

3 John said, “If they are going to an oracle and they become rich from it, what do they have?”

4 Abraham said, “Child, the prophet says that their houses will be desolate and their land will by no means be in everlasting life and will be wiped from the earth

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a. For vv. 3–5, Slav I has “And what about those who light candles and make kutia?—My son, memorial is great and prayer is great—they are for [every] soul, and great is the rejoicing of these souls; it is great for [every] soul. Just as God who commemorated Adam and led him out of darkness and celebrated him, so these souls shall enjoy the kutia and shall rejoice in their kutia and enjoy their celebration” (see also Slav II 6:3–4).

b. Slav I and II have no counterpart to vv. 6–8.

c. The manuscript has poiei (it does, makes, performs); either a complementary noun is missing (e.g., it is made full) or the word is corrupt.

d. Perhaps “when (hopote)” (as in Slav I) is intended.

e. L appears to be corrupt here. The meaning is apparent in Slav I, which has “If a man is born in the first hour, then he will grow old and die in that hour”; Slav II has “If a child is born in those days, the woman (will be) well and the child will die in old age” (7:11).

f. Slav I and II have “between hours.”

g. The parallel in Apoc. Sedr. refers to three stages of life: “I made man in three stages: when he is young. I overlook his mistakes because of his youth; again, when he is a man I watch over his mind; again, when he grows old I preserve him so that he may repent” (trans. Savas Agourides in Old Testament Pseudepigrapha [ed. James Charlesworth; 2 vols.; ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985], 1:604–13).

h. L reads “in folly (eis maten).” The corrected reading is supported by Slav I and II.
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their memory;"

5a And the unbaptized who die, what sort are they?

6a Abraham said, "God honors and baptizes all tongues except for only the Jews who denied Christ; they will be destroyed forever. For the unbaptized are under the authority of the Jews and the ones who denied have come to an end. They will not receive mercy on the Day of Judgment."

7 John said, "What about the poor person on the earth?"

8 Abraham said, "Just as the prophet David said, 'Do not totally forget your needy.' And again he said, 'The endurance of the needy will not totally perish.' Great is the reward to the needy, child, because upon the earth, they were in need. 9a And just as Paul said, 'The Lord disciplines those whom he loves thoroughly.'"

On honor and imprisonment

9b John said, "If a certain man receives a crown of honor and grows old after it, and after this, another takes his

Ps 33:17; 108:15 LXX
Ps 6:11 LXX
Ps 73:19; 9:18 LXX
Ps 9:18 LXX
Heb 12:6 [Prov 3:12]
10 John said, "If ever a Christian is amongst (unbelieving) people, and grows old and dies amongst them, is he raised up with the Christians in the resurrection or not?"

11 Abraham said, "He is going to be gathered with his own race, just as David says, 'the Lord will gather the scattered sheep.'"

On forgiveness and confession

11 1 John said, "Father, the one who comes to the holy church and comes to God and sins again each and every day and hour, does he receive mercy or not?"

2 Abraham said, "In constraints and tribulations he will redeem them. If he genuinely turns around and repents, he will receive great mercy from the Lord and God will forgive his trespasses."

3 John said, "Father, a person having confessed his sins to a priest and the priest orders him to fast, will his sins be forgiven or not?"

4 Abraham said, "Did you not listen to David saying, 'Happy are those whose sins were forgiven?' The honor and he seems more honorable than the first one, what about him?"

9c Abraham said, "David says, this one (is) humble and this one (is) exalted. And the Lord said to me, 'the humble one exalts himself, and the exalted one humbles himself.'"

10 John said, "If ever a Christian is a prisoner amongst (unbelieving) people, and grows old and dies, is he raised up with the Christians?"

11 Abraham said, "David says, 'the Lord will gather those who have been scattered.' Our Lord magnified his chosen ones." And he said to him, "Child, they are going to be gathered with the Christians and their race."

11 1 John said, "Father, the person who comes to the church and prays before God and sins each and every <day>, is he going to receive mercy before God?"

2 Abraham said, "Child, David said, 'in constraints and tribulation he will redeem them.' And when he sins again, he will by no means receive mercy. If he turns around and repents, he will receive great mercy from the Lord and God will forgive his trespasses."

3 John said, "Father, a person having confessed his sins to a priest, and the priest asks him to fast, will his sins be forgiven?"

4 Abraham said, "Did you not listen to David saying, 'Happy are those whose lawless behavior was

a. In Slav I the question reads "And those who are elders, or who become lords, or sometimes accept a crown, or are exalted, what will happen to them?" Slav II lacks vv. 9b–9c.

b. This longer reading is found also in Slav I and II.

c. Slav II lacks vv. 1–2.
Lord will forgive all of their trespasses, child."

5 John said, "Is the priest righteous (enough) to receive the sins of his spiritual son?"

6 Abraham said, "Child, just as the prophet David said, 'With the devout you will be devout, and with the select (you will be) select and with the crooked you will pervert.'"

7 "If the son (is) a thief on the earth, they come and catch both him and the father. First they bind the father, child, and in the same way, the son. And in this, for the two of them, it is a new sin. For the priest is a guarantor in his sins, child."

8 John said, "If someone repents what would happen if he sins again?"

9 Abraham said, "His earlier sins will be forgiven, which were confessed. But those which he will do after the confession, on account of this God made forty days within which Moses the prophetfasted and the Lord himself, and the person for as much as the sins he will commit from Easter to Apokreo. 10 During these days of fasting, his sins will be cleansed. If hefasts cleanly from the whole soul, indeed the person's sins will be forgiven, insofar as he did forgiven and whose sins were covered over? The Lord will forgive all of their trespasses, child."

5 John said, "Is the priest righteous (enough) to receive the sins of his spiritual son?"

6 Abraham said, "David says, 'With the devout you will be devout and with the <select> (you will be) select and with the crooked you will pervert.'"

7 "Child, if the son (is) a thief on the earth, they come and restrain both him and the father. So, first they bind the father, child. For the two of them it is a new sin. For the priest is a guarantor in his sins."

8 John said, "What if someone repents and sins again?"

9 Abraham said, "His first sins will be forgiven, which were confessed and repented from. But those which he will do after the confession, on account of this God made forty days, within which Moses the prophet fasted and the Lord himself, and the person for as much as the sins he will commit from Easter to Apokreo. 10 During these days, this fast clears the sins of the people. If they fast cleanly from the entire soul with faith of God, <the sins> of the person will be forgiven, whichever sin he did the

a. Apokreo (lit., meatless) marks the first week of Lent in Greek orthodox tradition. From this point on meat is not eaten until the end of Lent.

Ps 3:11 LXX
Matt 6:14//Mark 11:25;
Quest. Isa. 3
Ps 17:26–27 LXX
Exod 24:18
Mark 1:12–13 par.
it entirely through Christ. But if he commits impure deeds, his sins will not be forgiven."  

Ps 104:1 LXX

Ps 20:7 LXX

Ps 113:25-26 LXX

On clergy making a defense for the righteous

12 1John said, "Will the priest make a defense on behalf of the people and the hegumen on behalf of the monks for their sins on the Day of Judgment?"

2Abraham said, "Young man, the bishop will give every word on behalf of the priests, and the priest on behalf of the people, and the hegumen on behalf of the monks. For they will stand and say: 'Look! I and the children God gave to me.'"

3John said, "The bishops and the priests who hold themselves in high esteem, and the conceited and chatterboxes, just like also the worldly ones, will they be destroyed there?"

12 1John said, "Will the priest make a defense on behalf of the people and the hegumen stand on behalf of the monks regarding their sins on the Day of Judgment?"

2Abraham said, "Child, the bishop will give a word on behalf of the priests, and the priest on behalf of the people, and the hegumen on behalf of the monks. For they will stand and say: 'Look! I and the children God gave to me.'"

3John said, "Father, the bishops and the priests who hold themselves in high esteem, just like also the worldly people, will they be destroyed?"

a. Slav I and II lack this verse.
b. Verses 11–13 are supported in Slav I and II (8:9–10).
4 Abraham said, "As the Lord said, 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.' For this reason, the tax collector humbled himself, but the Pharisee exalted himself and was destroyed. Just as David says, 'A garrulous man will not succeed before the Lord.'"

On reports from the newly dead to the departed
5 John said, "Does the soul, dying and departing to Hades, pray here, seeing its sin?"
6 Abraham said, "Just as he said, 'Where do we sinners flee?' In heaven, he is there. If we descend into Hades, he is there. Child, the soul sees its own deeds, whether good or wicked. And what it saw upon the earth, it tells the souls sitting there in Hades, so that they might know also in Hades what is occurring in the world. For Adam also, when he was sitting with us in Hades, asked the departing souls and came to know things occurring in the world."

5 <John said.> "Does the soul, dying and departing to Hades, pray here to see their sins?"

6 "Where do we sinners flee? In heaven, he is there. If we descend to Hades, he is there. Child, the soul sees its own deeds, whether good or bad. And what it saw upon the earth it tells the souls sitting there in Hades, so that they might know in Hades what is occurring upon the earth. And thus Adam, when he was sitting with us in the underworld of Hades, asked the souls coming into Hades. And Adam came to know things occurring upon the earth by humans."

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a. Something is missing here, though perhaps the whole sentence fragment is a dittographic error.
b. Slav I and II (9:4) remark that the Pharisee was destroyed like Judas.
c. In place of the proof text, Slav II has "It is therefore proper for a priest to be meek, to be conciliatory, to be quiet and to be loving towards everyone" (9:4).
d. In Slav I, the question is "the souls that died here, do they leave divided in two?" Slav II lacks vv. 5–7.
e. Slav I has "Whatever it has seen on earth and lived through, it will say. That the souls know about mortality, about what they have done here on earth, so Adam heard, sitting before the doors."
On the appearance of the dead

13 1 John said, "Father, how are those brought going to appear at the resurrection if they are children—are some young and others old?"

2 Abraham said, "Listen, child, to what Paul is saying: not all will die, but all will be resurrected, and they will be as one according to likeness, like thirty-year-olds in one age, all considered also as if in one appearance."

3 John said, "How will bodies be created? If being dust, how will they be resurrected and become like before?"

4 Abraham said, "Child, just as the prophet David says, 'You will send forth your spirit and they will be created.' For the angels of God will sound the trumpet and the righteous will be resurrected and stand at the right hand of God and the sinners on the left.

13 1 John said, "<How> are those brought going to appear in the hour of judgment at the resurrection if they are children—are some young and others old?"  

2 Abraham said, "Listen, child, to what Paul is saying: 'not all will die, but all will be resurrected' according to the image of God, and they will be as one according to likeness, like thirty-year-olds wholly in one age, all considered also as if in one appearance."

3 John said, "But again explain to me, how are the dead going to be? And how will bodies be created like dust but be resurrected and become like before?"

4 Abraham said, "Child, David says, 'You will send forth your spirit and they will be created and you will renew the face of the earth.' For the archangels of God will sound the trumpet and the hegumen and the monk of monks, one by one in order, will be resurrected at the right hand of God."

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a. Slav II lacks vv. 1-2.
b. Slav I adds "the same as Adam and Eve."
c. "Monk of monks" is uncertain; cf. Slav II "monks and monks" (10:7).
d. Slav I reads "My son, a trumpet will sound at midnight, and the bodies [will awaken in their graves], they will be born as from a spider's net; and again [another trumpet will sound], the bodies will be complete before the first cock crows, and they will be immortal, and every soul will enter its body; and a third trumpet will sound at dawn, and the dead will rise for Christ, and joyfully go on their way on earth" (see also Slav II 10:3-5). Slav I continues with another question and answer: "Then what will this joy at the resurrection be?—My son, it will be more than [the sweetness] of honey can bring. The bishops and priests, and deacons, and abbots, each..."
5a. And the Jews who crucified Christ with much anger (will be) on the left. They were saying, 'His blood be on us and on our children.' And they will go away into eternal punishment with the Antichrist, as the prophet David said, 'The memory of him perished resoundingly.' The day of resurrection, child, will occur on Easter Sunday, and thus we will all be with the Lord, simultaneously glorifying his all-holy name now and always and forever and ever. Amen.”

5b. And those Jews who pierced Christ with a spear with much anger (will be) on the left. For they said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.' And these will go away into punishment with the Antichrist, as the prophet David said, 'The memory of him perished resoundingly.' The day of resurrection, child, will occur on Easter Sunday. And thus we will all be with the Lord, simultaneously glorifying our God, to whom be the glory, forever and ever. Amen.”

in his own order, will stand there” (see also Slav II 10:6-7).

a. Slav I inserts a question: “And the Hebrews who crucified the Lord, will they stand there?” Then Abraham responds. Slav II continues Abraham’s response from v. 4 with “This is when Jews (will be sent) to the left side with God’s anger,” and then John asks, “What will they say?” Abraham responds, “Child, this is what they will say, ‘Lord, why are you condemning us, when we are your chosen people?’ And Jesus replies, ‘Did you not say ‘His blood be on us and on our children?” (10:8-10).

b. Slav I agrees with L, reading “crucified” but without reference to anger; Slav II simply has “Jews.”

c. Slav I has “Then they too shall be judged” (see also Slav II 10:11).