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The Questions of James to John
A new translation and introduction
by Kathleen Gibbons and Tony Burke

The Questions and Answers of James, the Brother of the Lord, to Saint John the Theologian (Quest. Jas.; CANT 279) comprises a series of questions from James to John about what happens to the soul after death, with a particular emphasis on the possibility of repentance. While the work has also appeared in scholarship under the name 3 Apocalypse of John, neither an angelic being nor the risen Christ is the bearer of the revelation as in other Johannine apocalyptica. Other apocalyptic motifs in the text, however, do raise questions about Quest. Jas.’s relationship to the apocalyptic genre, and to the tours of hell tradition.

Contents

Quest. Jas. is a dialogue between James, identified as the “brother of the Lord,” and John “the Theologian”—a title frequently given to the author of the canonical Book of Revelation and to the interlocutor in other Johannine apocalyptica (1–3 Apoc. Apoc. John). The first section of the text (chaps. 1–2) provides an account of the futures that await the sinful and the righteous. James begins by asking what will happen to the soul between death and the second coming of Christ (1:1). John responds by providing an account of the different fates that await the soul, depending on whether it is righteous or unrepentantly sinful (1:2–2:14). The sinful soul, upon death, is to be accompanied by the archangel Michael, the person’s “companion angel,” and four others (1:2), first to its grave (1:3) and then, after an encounter with a group of demons (1:8–10), into the fiery river (1:11–12). There, the soul is led to the sleepless worm, which will consume the damned after the second coming of Christ (1:13–14). The angels then take the soul to prostrate before the Son of God on his throne before it is led to the place of chastisements where it sees the punishments that it will receive after the return of Christ (1:18–25). James then inquires about the fate of the righteous (2:1). According to John, the righteous, upon separation from the body, follow the same path as the sinners, but only to view the torments of others and give thanks to God for sparing them (2:2–10). Then the righteous are led to paradise by the angels and archangels so that they can see their eventual destination (2:11–13). In the meantime, both the sinful and the righteous wait in a great chasm for their separation at the coming of the Lord (2:14).

The second portion of the text (chaps. 3–5) begins with a question from James about how anyone can be saved when no one is without sin (3:1). John here introduces the theme of repentance, which will dominate the remainder of the text. He uses the parable of the lost sheep (3:2–5) to illustrate that the Lord will take pity on the repentant person (3:6–10). He then goes on to provide several models of repentance (4:3–13). These models are scriptural—Peter (4:3), Manasseh (4:5), the repentant thief on the cross (4:7), and King David (4:9)—and traditional—Mary of Egypt (4:4), Andrew of Crete (4:11), and Cyprian of Antioch (4:12–13). After describing the sins committed by each of these
figures, John explains how, through their repentance, they were forgiven, and details the rewards given to them in paradise. Those who do not repent, however, will be given over to the devil and then punished in Hades with the demons (5:1–2). The section concludes with a discussion of two types of sinners who are singled out, it seems, as undeserving of forgiveness: those who make a sacrifice despite continuing to sin, and the unrepentant who commit adultery in the later years of their lives—their sin is likened to incest with their son or daughter (5:3–6). Further warning about the consequences of remaining unrepentant is given in the retelling of the parable of the fig tree (from Luke 13:6–9)—the sinner who does not yield good fruit is “led to the eternal fire” (5:7–10).

The final chapter (6) varies in the available manuscripts. One version concludes with a warning of the consequences of refusing to repent before it is too late and an imagining of the remorse of the damned, and another recommends charitable giving for the penitent.

Manuscripts and Editions

Quest. Jas. was published in 1893 by Athanasius Vassiliev from a single manuscript: Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. II 87.¹ Little interest has been paid to the text in the decades since, save for John Court's reproduction of Vassiliev's edition with an English translation in 2010.² Additional manuscripts of the text are listed on Pinakes, the online manuscript database of the IRHT (Institut de recherche et d’histoire des textes). Those employed in the present work are:

A: London, Lambeth Palace Library, 1197, fols. 11r–16v (15th/16th cent.)
E: Athens, Ethniké Bibliothékē tēs Hellados, Metochion tou Panagiou Taphou 594, pp. 1–27 (15th/16th cent.)
M: Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. II 87 (coll. 1258), fols. 255r–262v (14th/15th cent.)
N: Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. II 99 (coll. 1261), fols. 53r–55r (16th cent.); contains 1:1–21 only
S: Sofia, C'rkovno-istoričeskija i archiven Institut, 881, fols. 107v–116v (17th cent.); lacking 1:12–24 perhaps due to a missing folio in the exemplar
T: Athens, Historikon Museion tou Neou Hellenismou, 39, fols. 41r–48v (16th cent.); lacking 3:8–4:5 due to a folio missing between 45 and 46

Unevaluated manuscripts:

London, Highgate School, II.29, fols. 36v–43r (15th cent.)³
Mount Athos, Monē Ibēron, 689 (Lampros 4809), fols. 198v–204v (17th cent.)⁴

4. This last manuscript is not listed on Pinakes.
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Court's introduction to the translation calls attention to some apparent problems in the text: "It is clear that there are several lacunae in the sense of the text, besides which this may well be a truncated version of a substantially longer original." Examination of the other available manuscripts indicates that Court was correct in his view that Vassiliev's manuscript is deficient (it lacks brief portions of text in 1:4, 7, 8, 11, 12; 3:9; and 4:12), though there is no reason to believe, as yet, that Quest. Jas. was once a much longer text. As for relationships between, the manuscripts AEMN preserve essentially the same text, though N contains only 1:1-2:1, and ST form a group of their own. However, MST include an ending distinctly different from that found in AE. Note too that S continues without transition into material drawn from a version of the Apocalypse of Paul.

Literary Context

Quest. Jas. raises significant questions about the limits of the apocalyptic genre. Court identifies this text as 3 Apocalypse of John, though Jean-Daniel Kaestli and Jean-Claude Picard have taken issue with this appellation and have assigned that name to another "Apocalypse of John the Theologian" included in this volume. While Quest. Jas. contains a number of literary features characteristic of apocalyptic — particularly its tours of heaven and hell and its question-and-answer structure, both of which are particularly popular in Byzantine apocalypses — the revelation of the end-times that it describes is not given by a heavenly mediator, either angelic or messianic, nor are either of the characters presented as the recipients of a revelatory vision or as embarking on an otherworldly journey. Instead, it is John the Theologian himself who describes, in response to James's questioning, the respective fates of the sinful and righteous souls. While a significant portion of this short work describes the end-times, it does not do so by way of the devices usually taken as constitutive features of an apocalypse.

This absence of a heavenly mediating figure raises at least two possibilities about how Quest Jas. can be understood as an apocalypse. On the one hand, it may be the case that the presence of certain generic motifs notwithstanding, this text is simply not a representative of the apocalyptic genre. On the other hand, it might be possible to think of this text as deliberately making use of these motifs, as well as the "question-and-answer" structure, in order to subvert expectations about who can impart apocalyptic revelation, by placing John in the role usually inhabited by a heavenly messenger. In this case, asking whether the text is or is not an apocalypse may be the wrong way to approach this particular work; instead, we might consider asking what this text is doing with particular conventional features of the apocalyptic genre, and for what purpose. It is on this basis that it seems legitimate to consider how certain features characteristic of apocalypses and tours of hell appear and function in this work.

5. Court, Book of Revelation, 104.
6. The text is followed by a fragment of the Revelation on the Lord's Prayer without title, leading the catalogers to believe Quest. Jas. continued in the manuscript until fol. 56v.
7. Court, Book of Revelation, 104.
Taking this latter approach raises some potentially intriguing questions about how *Quest. Jas.* represents both the relationship between human beings and angels and, relatedly, the relationship between human beings and divine revelation. Having John as the authority either demotes divine revelation so that it becomes accessible to human beings or elevates human beings, or at least John, to a divine status.\(^{10}\) Alternatively, one might here take the text as deliberately ambiguous in calling the reader’s attention to the boundary between these two classes of being, and asking the reader to explore its limitations. While other apocalyptic texts play with this boundary, *Quest. Jas* does so by attributing to John knowledge of future events and the supernatural while otherwise leaving out the fantastic experiences by which such knowledge is acquired.\(^{11}\) If John is presented as elevated here, he is so in virtue of his knowledge of things to come, not because he is described as having been taken out of human history, like Enoch in the *Book of the Watchers* or Paul in the *Apocalypse of Paul*. The implication here seems to be that the revelation he imparts to James can be communicated to other human beings and is not necessarily restricted to unique or particularly privileged individuals; instead, it is theoretically available to anyone willing to repent of their sins.

The first two chapters of *Quest. James* present the reader with descriptions of heaven and hell, a common feature of apocryphal apocalypses.\(^{12}\) The sequence of events in the soul’s journey through Hades, as told by John, does not seem to proceed in an entirely straightforward fashion. In chap. 1, the sinful soul repeatedly moves back and forth between the different punishments and variously described thrones before which it prostrates. It is not clear at first if the “fourfold throne” (1:13), the “fire-shaped throne” (1:18), and the “throne of the Lord” (1:21b) are the same throne or not. Only in the next chapter, which describes the journey of the righteous soul, does it become more apparent that these three thrones are one and the same (2:6, 10, 12). This initial lack of clarity about the identity of the thrones, and the repeated back-and-forth motion of the souls, might remind the reader of how narratival obfuscation is often used in texts of the apocalyptic genre as an expression of the ultimate incommunicability of the fullness of the mystery of the end-times to human beings.\(^{13}\) In this case, however, the fact that the topography of Hades becomes somewhat clearer as we move from the journey of the sinful soul to that of the righteous soul is perhaps an indication that it is not human finitude as such, but human sinfulness, that provides the primary obstacle to the acquisition of knowledge of the Final Judgment.

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\(^{12}\) On the tour of hell genre see Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*; and Bremmer, “Descents to Hell.”

One crucial difference between Quest. James and other tour apocalypses, however, is that John does not actually take James to these locations. While one might on this basis reject this text as a possible candidate for a "tour of hell," it may be more fruitful to consider whether and how the work experiments with the motifs that characterize representatives from that tradition. In the first place, the dialogue between James and John employs a question-and-answer structure, where John functions as the angelus interpres, much like Michael in the Apocalypse of the Virgin or Jesus in the Apocalypse of Peter. Moreover, there are similarities between the punishments found in tours of hell and those found in Quest. Jas. As Martha Himmelfarb has observed, punishments in tours of hell generally fit into two broad categories—measure-for-measure and environmental punishments—with individual texts generally preferring one form of punishment to the other. While there are no measure-for-measure punishments in Quest. Jas, it does include a number of environmental punishments, including a fiery river (1:11–13; 2:5; cf. Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14; 21:8; Plato, Phaed. 111d7), a fiery chasm (2:14), "chastisers" who are most likely angels of torment (1:19; 1:24), and a "sleepless worm" accompanied by several other worms (1:13–14; 2:7). These elements suggest the influence of the Apocalypse of Paul, the late antique tour of hell that shaped the development of the genre into the Middle Ages, and perhaps indicate that we might locate this text in what Himmelfarb describes as the "Apocalypse of Paul family."15

The second half of the text addresses James's question, "How indeed is every soul going to be saved, for none is without sin?" (3:1). Here the text transitions from a "tour of hell" apocalypse to an erotapokriseis (question-and-answer) text in the style of the other Johannine apocalypses. Péter Tóth, in his study of these texts, places Quest. Jas. with 1 Apocr. Apoc. John and 3 Apocr. Apoc. John in a subgroup of apocalypses he calls "Byzantine revelations with eschatological scope." He draws upon the work of earlier scholars who found parallels in content between 1 Apocr. Apoc. John and other Byzantine apocalypses, on the one hand, and nonapocalyptic erotapokriseis texts attributed to such figures as Athanasius of Alexandria, on the other. No such parallels have been found in Quest. Jas., and the text gets little mention in Tóth's study, but perhaps as the text becomes more widely known, some connections may be discovered. Certainly the copyists of Quest. Jas. see the association. Manuscript N, for example, includes the word "answer (a)pokr[i]sis" after James's first question, reminiscent of erotapokriseis texts that introduce each element of the dialogue with the tags "question" and "answer," and places the Revelation of the Lord's Prayer, another revelatory question-and-answer text, immediately after Quest. Jas. Note also that manuscript M includes three other erotapokriseis texts.

John's answer to James includes several biblical and postbiblical figures who are presented as models of repentance. The author's goal is to show that despite the severity of sins committed by these examples, they repented and were forgiven for their

15. Himmelfarb, Tours of Hell, 68–105.
17. Himmelfarb, Tours of Hell, 121.
19. On erotapokriseis literature, see the scholarship cited in the entry on the Dialogue of the Revealer and John by Philip Tite elsewhere in this volume (pp. 360–65).
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sins, and thus so too would the "casual" sinner of Quest. Jas.'s audience. The biblical figures are fairly standard—Peter, Manasseh, the Good Thief, and David—and their careers all predate or overlap with the lives of James and John. The postbiblical figures—Cyprian of Antioch, Mary of Egypt, and Andrew of Crete—are far more recent. The fact that John includes these figures among his models is an indication that Quest. Jas. takes an approach to temporality that, like the other elements discussed here, resonates with works of the apocalyptic genre, where divine revelation can include not only knowledge of the supernatural world but also of past and future human history. In describing the various models of repentance, John demonstrates knowledge of the future both with regard to the historical world of humanity before the Final Judgment and with regard to the rewards that await these individuals in the world to come. Details about the careers of the postbiblical figures may help to understand more about the concerns and origins of Quest. Jas.

Cyprian of Antioch was a fictional figure of the third century, a magician who, according to legend, attempted to sexually assault the Christian virgin Justa on behalf of a man named Aglaidas through demonic assistance. Versions of the myth survive both in prose and in the hexameter verse of Aelia Eudocia, poet and wife of Theodosius II. After Justa defeats the demons by making the sign of the cross, Cyprian is so impressed with the power of Christ that he repents of his former life and becomes a Christian. As the legend has it, both Justa and Cyprian are subsequently martyred together under Diocletian. The various sources of the Cyprian legend present different details regarding the sins he committed prior to his repentance; other than the claim that he either committed or was implicated in murder, none of the sources provide the particular details preserved in Quest. Jas. (4:12–13).

Andrew of Crete (660–740), the archbishop of Gortyna, was involved in both the Monothelite and the Iconoclasm controversies. In the aftermath of the Sixth Ecumenical Council in 680, which affirmed the two natures and wills of Christ, Philip-


22. According to Aelia Eudocia's version, before he meets Aglaidas, Cyprian uses his knowledge of the magical arts to provide poison in addition to cures for love, jealousy, and rivalry (Confession II. 298–300). In the Acts of St. Cyprian and St. Justina (edited by Bahn), after smashing his idols, Cyprian admits to destroying holy men and commanding impure demons (10.9–13, p. 151). In Cyprian and Justina, edited by Gibson, Cyprian says, "And I was darkened by the philosophy of the Greeks, and I killed many, and I enslaved many in fornication" (p. 73).

picus Bardanes became the Byzantine emperor in 711 and endorsed Monothelitism until he was deposed in 713 and replaced by Anastasius II. During this time, Andrew appears to have endorsed Philippicus's views and then to have recanted after he was no longer in power. He also defended the use of icons in worship during the Iconoclastic Controversy of the early eighth century under the reign of Leo III, which may have led to his exile prior to his death. In addition, Andrew was also influential on the tradition of Byzantine hymnography and was the author of numerous hymns, including his *Great Canon*, used in the liturgy of the Orthodox church. And Andrew was the subject of a folktale that attributed to him a backstory reminiscent of the life of Oedipus. Before his birth, his parents are warned by an oracle that Andrew would grow up to kill his father. They arrange to have him killed, but Andrew survives the attempted infanticide and grows up to become his father's gardener, ignorant of his parentage. One day he kills his father by mistake and subsequently marries his former employer's widow, only to later discover that she is his mother. This legend is alluded to in *Quest. Jas.* (4:11), a fact that has consequences for how we date this text (see Date and Provenance below).

Mary of Egypt (ca. 344–ca. 421) is the “prostitute” who “sinned with 3303 men” (4:4). Seeing the description of Mary sandwiched between the biblical Peter and Manasheh led Court, naturally, to assume the woman was Mary Magdalene, but the Greek church does not consider Magdalene a reformed prostitute. Note too that the Sofia manuscript (S) specifically identifies her as “Mary the Egyptian.” While earlier stories about Mary exist, the most extensive version of her life is the seventh-century *Life of St. Mary of Egypt*, possibly composed by Sophronius, the patriarch of Jerusalem (634–638). Sophronius tells of a monk named Zosimas who meets Mary at a monastery in the Jordan. She tells him that prior to her arrival in the desert, she lived in Alexandria, where she had sex with numerous men, not for payment but out of her insatiable lust. One day she meets a group of pilgrims about to embark to Jerusalem, and boards one of the boats in order to have sex with the men onboard. Having arrived in Jerusalem, she continues to seek out lovers until the day of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, when she follows a crowd to a church. She alone is unable to enter the church, however, until she sees the icon of the Virgin Mary. Offering a prayer of repentance to the Virgin, she is finally able to enter. There she prays to the Virgin and hears a voice saying that the one who crosses the Jordan will find “a fine place of repose” (*Life* 25). She then goes into the desert, where she remains for forty-seven years until her encounter with Zosimas. The Greek *Life* does not give the detail from *Quest. Jas.* about the number of Mary’s sexual partners; either this comes from another tradition or is the invention of our writer.

The selection of these figures as examples of redemption are curious. Certainly the author thinks of them as sufficiently well known to suit his purposes. Both Mary and

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24. A longer summary of this legend, from which the following derives, is found in Ksana Blank, *Dostoevsky's Dialectics and the Problem of Sin* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 32–33.

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Andrew appears several times in the Great Canon, so there may be some influence here from the Orthodox liturgy, but the legendary Cyprian is an odd choice. The otherwise-unattested salacious details in each figure's story may have been invented by the author to enhance the theme of repentance, illustrating that salvation is open to anyone who repents, regardless of the extent of their sin.

Quest. Jas. takes certain features characteristic of apocalypses in general and tours of hell more specifically and renders them more mundane, conveying its revelation through the dialogue between James and John without heavenly mediators, visions, and otherworldly journeys. The absence of these features perhaps detracts from what Collins describes as an emphasis on "human helplessness in the face of the supernatural" generally evident in texts of the apocalyptic genre. Yet the particular use of the generic motifs discussed here offers a different portrayal of divine revelation than that often found in texts more straightforwardly identified as "apocalypses," in which revelation is depicted as mysterious, available to a spiritually privileged few, or, in its fullness, discursively incommunicable. By locating the communication of revelation in a setting more representative of everyday human experience, Quest. Jas. makes revelation more quotidian, or (perhaps and) the setting of the revelation and the people who populate its world become infused with something of the miraculous. The difficulties and limitations of classifying Quest Jas. as an apocalypse provide us with the occasion to ask how the text thwarts the conventions of this genre in presenting its vision of epistemology, cosmology, and the relationship of human beings to the supernatural world.

Language, Date, and Provenance

Quest. Jas. is known only in Greek and, for its quotations from Scripture, draws upon the Greek New Testament and the LXX. Likely, then, it was composed in Greek, somewhere in the Greek East. The earliest-known manuscript of Quest. Jas. is M, copied in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, but perhaps the date of composition can be narrowed further from examination of the text's mention of Andrew of Crete. Court suggests that because Andrew of Crete is the most recent of the examples of repentance given by John, the text should be dated to a time soon after his death, sometime in the late eighth or early ninth century. Yet while the historical Andrew of Crete was, like the Andrew of Quest. Jas., an important hymnographer, the adultery that Quest. Jas. attributes to him is a later fiction. Exactly when that fiction emerged, however, is difficult to establish precisely. Andrew's adultery with his mother, mentioned in AM and T (though T states only that he committed adultery), is part of a Russian folklore tradition. Alexander Krappe, a folklorist working in the first half of the twentieth century, claimed that the Russian tale was originally Yugoslav and reflected "relatively recent medieval borrowings from the Byzantines by the Slavs established in these regions." Krappe does not offer details about what these borrowings were.

Was the Andrew story received from the Byzantines as an Oedipal tale already? Were these elements synthesized by the Slavs? If it is possible that the story has a Byzantine origin that has not been preserved, then without more evidence about exactly when this story emerged, it is difficult to specify a date for our text. But it is possible that *Quest. Jas.* is a much later work than Court proposes, possibly dating to sometime around the High Middle Ages.

**Translation**

The following translation uses manuscript A (London, Lambeth Palace Library, 1197) for its base text as it seems to suffer from fewer errors and omissions. Manuscript E became available shortly before this volume went to press, so its readings could not be incorporated into the text. In brief, E follows A closely but features a longer reading in 1:14 and shorter readings in 1:25; 2:5, 12; 3:8; 4:12; 5:2, 11; 6:2–4, and lacks entirely 3:9; 5:6; 6:5–7, 9. Readings from the other witnesses are given in the notes, though occasionally readings are incorporated into the text where A is deficient. The final chapter is given from both A and MST. New chapter and verse divisions have been supplied, with Court's chapter divisions provided in parentheses for ease of comparison.

**Bibliography**

**EDITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS**


Vassiliev, Athanasius. *Anecdota graeco-byzantina, pars prior*. Moscow: Imperial University, 1893. (*Editio princeps* based on M, pp. 317–22.)

**STUDIES**


Kaestli, Jean-Daniel, and Jean-Claude Picard. "Première Apocalypse Apocryphe de Jean." Pages 983–90 in EAC vol. 2. (Brief discussion pp. 989–90.)


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*Dialectics,* 32) claims that this text was written at the end of the sixteenth century; Vladimir Propp ("Oedipus in the Light of Folklore," in Edmunds and Dundes, eds., *Oedipus,* 76–121 at 80 [translated by Polly Coote from Učene i zapiski Leningradskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta, Serija filologiceskikh, no. 72, 9 (1944): 138–75] mentions knowledge of the story "among the Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians."
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Questions and answers of James the Brother of the Lord to Saint John the Theologian.ª

On the departure of the soul from the body
(1) ¹Saint James, the brother of the Lord, said to Saint John the Theologian, b "Tell us," c John the Theologian, concerning the last days of human beings. How does the soul depart from the body, and where is it going to dwell until the second coming of our Lord?"f

(2) ²John says to him, g "Listen, James. If a command comes from our invisible God to separate the soul from the body, then comes the angel who was with the person from the beginning, i as does the first angel Michaelk with the

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a. The title is here given from A and S, though reversing the order of speakers, which is correct in M. T has "Account of Saint John the Theologian to Saint James, the brother of the Lord, concerning the journey of the soul." And N has simply "Of James to his brother John the Theologian," thus making James the son of Zebedee, not the brother of Jesus.
b. This introductory statement is found only in S, though T combines it with the second sentence to read, "Saint James, the brother of God, spoke to Saint John the Theologian concerning the last days of human beings."
c. N has "tell me."
d. S begins "a person's soul departs."
e. A has "how."
f. M adds "Jesus Christ." N adds also [a]pokr[isis] ("answer").
g. ST have "And answering, John the Theologian said."
h. ST have "when."
i. "Our invisible God to separate" is struck out in S, perhaps to correct a case of haplography, and then the manuscript continues with "to us to separate the soul."
j. As Muehlberger (Angels, 89–147) notes, this idea that all Christians were born with a guardian angel began in late antiquity, when it "dominated the conversations among those outside the ascetic world" (p. 118). It is perhaps worth noting that authors working in the ascetic tradition developed an alternative theory of the "companion angel" as contingent on merit. This angel would assist an ascetic who had demonstrated sufficient commitment to their practice, as long as the ascetic's dedication and moral standing continued. For early discussion of the guardian concept, see Origen, Princ. 2.10.7; Eusebius, Dem. ev. 4.6; Clement of Alexandria, Strom. 6.17.
k. For "the first angel (M: first archangel) Michael," NT have "the leader of the heavenly powers, the archangel Michael." S conflates the first two angels, reading "the angel who existed from the beginning, of the heavenly powers, the archangel."
fiery swords, and with these two four others.\(^a\) And they receive the soul from the body and they accompany the body with the soul\(^b\) to the grave,\(^c\) and they are present at the grave\(^d\) until the tomb\(^e\) is sealed by the priests.\(^f\)

(3) "Then the sinful soul laments greatly and says,\(^g\)

'Woe is me, woe is me!\(^h\) That I left the light, fading and again illuminating,\(^i\) and am departing to the darkness that never becomes light.\(^j\)

'Woe is me! I left my friends and I am departing to a land that I have never seen.\(^k\)

'Woe is me, woe is me! I left my body [which] is entirely dust.

'But with it I had a temporary joy, and I am going to where there is no joy nor glory for sinners.\(^l\)

**The sinful soul is taken to Hades**

(4) "After these things,\(^m\) the angels take it up and ascend\(^n\) into the air, and then the ranks of the demons go to meet it,\(^o\) like a cloud and like black crows,\(^p\) embracing the sinful soul.\(^q\) And they say, 'This one, at its baptism\(^r\) by the priest, denied us,\(^s\) and in turn having denied his seal, he did our wills until this hour of the separation of the soul from his body."\(^t\) And then there is the shout of the archangel Michael, and myriads\(^u\) of angels gather together with fiery swords and\(^w\) the precious and life-giving cross, and the ranks of the demons are driven away to the pit of Hades.

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\(^a\) S has "and with him two other angels."
\(^b\) T has "the soul and the body"; H lacks "with the soul."
\(^c\) N lacks "until the memorial."
\(^d\) MST have "and they remain (S adds 'there')."
\(^e\) A has "the body."
\(^f\) MST have "priest." Here N reads "until the priest seals the tomb."
\(^g\) N has "because the sinful soul saying."
\(^h\) N adds "the sinner."
\(^i\) M lacks "illuminating"; N lacks "fading and illuminating"; ST read "the fading light of the world."
\(^j\) A and M are corrupt here, due largely to the omission of "light."
\(^k\) S places this verse after v. 7.
\(^l\) For vv. 6–7 S has "Woe is me! That I left my relatives and my body which formerly we were celebrating, and I had temporary (S has 'public?') joy with it and I leave there where there is no joy for sinners." M has "I go from the great tribunal where we are going to be put in charge <...> all the sinners and the glory of the sinners in burning."
\(^m\) ST lack "after these things."
\(^n\) S has "leave."
\(^o\) M is corrupt here, reading *apanton autôn* (all of them) for *apantousin* (they meet). N, also corrupt, reads *met' autôn* (with them).
\(^p\) ST have "like a cloud of crows."
\(^q\) A lacks "soul."
\(^r\) M adds "to it"; ST add "to the angels."
\(^s\) S has "its birth"; M has "their baptism."
\(^t\) S has "me."
\(^u\) M lacks "this hour of the separation of the soul." ST have "until today."
\(^v\) M has "myriads of myriads"; ST have "ranks."
\(^w\) N adds "carrying."
11. "And they lead the sinful soul to the fiery river, and the fiery river receives the soul and the soul is ignited by the fire and then the soul will know the power of the chastisements. 12. And when the soul traverses the river, it will be blackened and say, 'Woe is me, woe is me!' The one who strays on account of sin is also subjected to this torment, but Lord, Lord! May I never know this chastisement.' (6) 13. And the soul waits there three days and sees the gnashing of the river and the power of the torments, and then the soul departs at the hands of the angels and prostrates before the fourfold throne. 14. And the angels lead it to the sleepless worm and leave the soul, as the worm does not have the authority to consume it until the second coming of the Lord.

(7) 15. "And the sinful soul says with tears, 'Woe to me,' the unrepentant and sinful one, that I was subjected to this very torment. 16. Woe to me, the unthinking one, that I heard the holy Gospel, laughing at the priests witnessing to us, heard the prophets and lived as one not hearing them.

a. ST have "the angels lead."
b. N lacks "the sinful soul." ST have only "soul."
c. Before "the fiery river" S has struck out "the pit of Hades."
d. NS lack "and the fiery river receives the soul," perhaps due to homoeoteleuton.
e. S lacks "the soul."
f. ST have "power."
g. M has only "the soul is ignited by the fire of the powers of the chastisements." N finishes short with "will know the power."
h. N has "it is blackened black." S stops here and resumes at v. 25.
i. M lacks these woes; N has "woe to you (pl.)"
j. N has "much sin."
k. M has "these torments."
l. M lacks "soul."
m. N adds "and three nights."
N. NT have "the teeth."
o. T lacks "and the power of the torments"; N has "power of the chastisements."
p. NT have "worms."
q. A is shortened here to "sleepless worm and they consume it until the second coming of Christ." T lacks "of the Lord."
r. N has "to us."
s. MT have "sinful and unrepentant"; N has "sinful" and then resumes in v. 16 with "and unthinking."
t. MT have "torments."
u. M has "sinful and unthinking." T lacks both.
v. M lacks "holy."
w. T has "and laughed at it and the priests."
x. T has "to me."
y. A has "like the prophet." T finishes the verse here with "on behalf of the prophets." N has "heard the prophets and the priests.
z. After "Gospel." M continues with "laughing at the priest. Thus I heard the one witnessing to us the prophecy and the hymns of the priests and I lived with idols."
17 Woe is me, the unrepentant one, because I was not receiving relief for a year. But Lord, Lord, may I never know these other torments."

18 And it waits there for nine days, and then departs with the angels. And it prostrates before the fire-shaped throne, and they lead it to all the chastisements. And he is humiliated by them, and the chastisers shout to him, "Come, you who are deserving of our chastisements. You who did not desire the light, receive darkness. You who did not desire the joy of paradise, receive the affliction of the chastisements." (8) Then the soul wails with tears, saying, 'Woe is me, the sinful one who went astray in sins and is unrepentant!' And the soul waits there for forty days and is brought up by the angels and prostrates before the throne. Then it sees the Son of God, and the angels and archangels will be grieved that it goes to eternal chastisement with the wicked angels. (9) For indeed there are no wicked angels, by no means, but indeed the angels will become wicked on account of the deeds of the sinners. And they bring it before the chastisers, where it will be chastised for all of eternity. And it sees the torments where it is going to be chastised and says, 'Lord, Lord, Maker of the World and He who judges the living and the dead,' it says, 'My Lord, what is the affliction of this soul?' And it says, "What is the sin of this soul?"

The Questions of James to John

a. N has "to us."
b. MT have "sinful"; N has "sinful and unrepentant."
c. Only A contains this clause, and its reading is uncertain.
d. MNT lack "other."
e. MT have "this chastisement."
f. N has "the soul."
g. N lacks "and then departs with the angels."
h. NT have "fourfold."
i. N has "and returns again (or perhaps "frequently") from all the chastisements."
j. M has "because of all (of them)."
k. M has "the other chastisements"; T has simply "the chastisements."
l. NT lack "you who did not desire the light, receive darkness." T also lacks the remainder of the verse.
m. N has "desire to receive paradise but receive."

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l. NT lack "you who did not desire the light, receive darkness." T also lacks the remainder of the verse.
m. N has "desire to receive paradise but receive."n. M lacks "affliction of"; N has "the affliction of the chastisement."
o. N has "stera"—perhaps a partial comparative. See, e.g., Ps.-Cassianus Bassus, Geoponica 15.3.3 (kollódeiseta meta tón daktuón=gluttonous with tears).
p. N adds "unthinking"; T has only "the one having gone astray."
q. T finished the verse here.
r. A has "nights."
s. M adds "of the Lord."
t. MN add "and the archangels."
u. MN have "the soul."
v. The entire verse in T is "then it goes with the good angels and the wicked angels into the crushing."
w. N erroneously has "many (polloi)" for "wicked (ponéron)."
x. T has "deeds of us sinners"; N has "wicked deeds of humans."
y. N has "and after this the soul is going to sit"; T has "and they bring it where it will be chastised."
z. NST lack this opening.
aa. S has "Woe is me, Lord, Lord."
of heaven and earth, may your second coming not come, and may I not be subjected to its torments."

(10) "But I say this, James, friend of God, God does not hear the unrepentant sinners."

On the fate of the righteous

(11) "James says to him, "John the Theologian, tell me also concerning the righteous.""

(12) "And John says to him, "Listen too, James, concerning the righteous."

When the soul is separated from his body, it says, 'I give thanks to you, my God, noble heavenly King, that I was separated from my body made of clay and appeared radiant, and it lies in the earth, being torn asunder, as was fitting. For indeed I depart to the light of paradise, as I did not transgress the commandment of the priests nor the word of the holy Gospel."

(13) "Then the angels bring it into the air and, seeing it, the demons hide themselves, as they are not worthy to be face-to-face with the righteous (soul), but instead seeing it from afar and lamenting without measure they indeed say, "Woe is us, that we are not worthy merely to look at it!" Then the angels bring it to the fiery river and it traverses like a dove on the wing, and the soul waits there for three days and three nights and says thus, "I give thanks to you, Lord," that I crossed over these torments spotless and free from chastisement."

And it prostrates before the fourfold throne, and the angels accom-

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a. MNST lack "your."
b. N has "never come" and then the verse concludes.
c. S has "its eternal torments"; T has "such torments."
d. NST add "to you."
e. S has "he said."
f. In N, "John the Theologian" is the object of "says to." The name is entirely absent from ST.
g. N has "righteous souls," but no answer is given to James's query as the text concludes here.
h. AM lack this introduction from T (S has "and he says again.").
i. This sentence is absent in M and S. T has "Listen James."
j. ST have "Lord."
k. M has "noble heavenly king."
l. ST read "... torn asunder. For it was fitting and I depart..." Following "I depart," A adds "as was fitting," crossed out by a corrector.
m. T adds "of the Lord."
n. ST have "the priest."
o. ST lack "the word of."
p. A lacks "holy;" S lacks "Gospel."
q. A lacks "then."
r. A repeats this opening clause in a case of dittography.
s. ST have "... not worthy to see it. But instead they see it (T adds 'from afar') and say."
t. ST lack "merely."
u. AM lack "then."
v. ST have "it waits."
w. M lacks "three nights."
x. ST lack "thus."
y. ST add "Jesus Christ."
z. ST have "that I was found spotless."

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pany it and lead it to the sleepless worm, and then the chastisers shout. Go away from us, radiant soul. Do not approach us, for we are unworthy.

(14) And then the soul says, ‘I give thanks to you, Lord, that I am alien to these torments,’ and the soul waits there for nine days and nights. And then it is led by the angels and prostrates before the fourfold throne, and the angels accompany it rejoicing and being glad, saying to it, ‘You are not deserving of these chastisements, so you only see them.’ These await the unrepentant and sinful.

(15) And the soul waits there forty days and nights and then is brought again and it prostrates before the fourfold throne, and it sees the Son of God, and then the Father rejoices with the Son and the Holy Spirit. And all the angels and archangels, with lamps and much glory, also bring it in front of paradise. And it sees its glory, which it is going to receive, and says ‘Lord, Lord, may your second coming come readily so that I may receive my glory.’

(16) And there is a great chasm filled with the sinful and the righteous, and in the chasm there is a fire burning the sinful, but for the righteous a dew and it covers them.”

On repentance

(17) 3 And James says to him, “Tell us, blessed slave of God, John the Theologian, how indeed is every soul going to be saved, for none is without sin?”

(18) 3 And John says to him, “Listen James, the word that you ask me is hard. The holy Gospel witnesses that the one who has a hundred sheep, and

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a. S has “to the worm and to the sleepless worm.”
b. ST have “the worms.”
c. ST add “to look at you.”
d. ST have “this chastisement.”
e. MS lack “and nights.”
f. ST lack “by the angels.”
g. AM lack “saying to it.”
h. ST lack this sentence.
i. ST have “it waits.”
j. MST lack “and nights.”
k. A lacks “then.”
l. ST have “they bring it.”
m. ST have “before the (S adds ‘thrones of the’) highest.”
n. M adds “then.”
o. ST reverse Father and Son.
p. ST lack “readily.”
q. M has “between.”
r. ST have “righteous and the sinful.”
s. Lit.: “bedews.” ST have “… a fire comes out and it covers (i.e., ‘bedews’) the sinful and the righteous.”
t. ST have “Then the righteous James says.”
u. A has “slave of the blessed God”; S has “blessed slave of our God.” The entire sentence is truncated in T as, “Tell us, slave of John.”
v. ST have “human soul.”
w. T has simply “he said.”
x. M has “Listen, O James”; T has no parallel.
y. M adds “to me.”
one of them has gone astray, does he not abandon the ninety-nine on the moun-
tains?3 Journeying, he searches for the lost one, and when he has found it, he
carries it on his shoulders and goes to his friends and brothers, saying 'Rejoice
with me, for I found my sheep that was lost.' (19) 'Thus also if someone wanders
in sins' and is again changed and comes out from the temple, confessing all
his sins, then the devil flees from the door of the church to Hades and says,
'Woe is me, because I lost my friend.'

(20) 'When our Lord Jesus Christ receives him in his right hand, he
also says to his angels, 'Rejoice with me, for I found my sheep that was lost.'
And there is great joy in heaven and on the earth on account of one repen-
tant sinner.7 And if he is going to make a confession tomorrow and refrains
from sin today, the Holy Spirit dwells in him.8 For a person sins, the Holy
Spirit shuns him and stands by him like a shadow of night and day, and awaits
repentance so that our Lord may dwell in him.9 And the Lord takes pity
on him as a son, not as a creation.10 As the prophet testifies, 'As a father has
compassion for his sons, the Lord has had compassion for those who fear him.'
(21) 'And the prophet again testifies,' Younger I used to be; indeed, I have
grown old, and I did not see a righteous person once forsaken or his offspring
begging bread.'

Models of repentance
(22) 'And I, John, say that the Lord Jesus Christ will have compassion in
his second coming; he has compassion and also saves the soul.' (23) 'I will
show you a model, and may you not despair of the philanthropy of God.

a. M has "on the mountain."
b. ST end the verse here.
c. M has "sin."
d. ST lack "and is again changed."
e. A has "goes into."
f. ST have "and."
g. M has "his devil."
h. ST lack "when."
i. ST add "invisible."
j. ST have "I called for and found."
k. ST have "for I called and found my lost sheep and."
l. S lacks "and on earth."
m. ST read "If someone is going to confess a sin tomorrow, the Holy Spirit dwells (S adds
'in him today')." T breaks off here and resumes at 4:5.
n. S has "And when."
o. A lacks "Spirit."
p. M has "woes."
q. A has "it may dwell."
r. S has "our God." M has "he (the Lord)" and after "has pity" resumes at v. 10.
s. S has "takes pity on him as his own creation."
t. A lacks this first portion of the quotation.

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34*"If someone makes a denial and repents, let him have the model of Peter, for he denied our Lord Jesus Christ\(^a\) three times\(^b\) and through his fervent tears was again forgiven immediately, and became the key-holder of heaven through his fervent repentance.\(^d\)

(24) "If one is a fornicator,\(^c\) behold Mary the prostitute, for she sinned with 3303 men\(^d\) and did not know whether one was a stranger or relation, but through her fainthearted tears\(^e\) she wiped out all her sins.\(^b\)

35*If one is a murderer and repents fervently, behold Manasseh, for he made his son a sacrifice to idols,\(^i\) and murdered forty elders and sawed Isaiah (in two).\(^j\) "But through his fervent conversion, the sea was filled with both sighs and tears for forty days and he was forgiven for many sins.\(^k\) \(^l\) Behold also the robber—since thieves (are) also murderers—he committed also ninety-nine murders.\(^\) \(b\) But it was in fervent faith and with a great shout that he said on the cross,\(^l\) ‘Remember me, Lord, in your kingdom,’ and he received paradise.

(25) \(^s\) If one is an adulterer, behold David the prophet, insofar as he took the wife of Uriah, Bathsheba, and married also ninety-nine others.\(^m\) \(^n\) But he confessed wholeheartedly\(^o\) to Nathan the prophet, and the fiery\(^o\) sword was turned away from him, and he sits as an ancestor of God.\(^p\)

(26) “And again I will show you Andrew of Crete, for he also committed adultery with his mother,\(^q\) but in pure repentance he became a singer of hymns and a spokesman of the divine writings, and received the throne of the episcopacy.

(27) \(^r\) If one is a magician and murderer,\(^s\) behold Cyprian, and that he was born from the race\(^t\) of demons, and killed\(^u\) 1033\(^v\) babies, and made another

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\(a\) M has "so that one does not fail."
\(b\) S lacks "Jesus Christ."
\(c\) S lacks "three times."
\(d\) S has "and again through his zealous tears God accepted his repentance."
\(e\) S makes the identification of this Mary with Mary of Egypt clear by beginning the example with "Behold, Mary the Egyptian." See also n. h below.
\(f\) M has "1703 men"; S has "many men."
\(g\) M has "fainthearted, through her tears."
\(h\) S adds "and having been prayed for by the angels, she was carried through the air and crossed over the water."
\(i\) S begins with "Behold the king Manasseh, how he gave up his son as a sacrifice to idols."
\(j\) Court erroneously translates as "put Isaiah to flames."
\(k\) ST have "But through repentance and (T resumes here) forty days of groans (and) sighs, the anger was quenched."
\(l\) ST have "in a great voice he shouted on the cross."
\(m\) ST have "because he fell in with ninety-nine women and took the wife of Uriah committed adultery and murder."
\(n\) ST add "in fervent (S adds 'dignified') repentance."
\(o\) ST lack "fiery."
\(p\) T lacks "as an ancestor of God."
\(q\) T lacks "with his mother."
\(r\) The entire verse is lacking in S.
\(s\) Court translates phoneus as "sorcerer."
\(t\) T has "children of the race."
\(u\) M has "consumed."
\(v\) MTS have "1030"; Court erroneously translates M as "1300."

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\(\text{Matt } 16:19\)
\(\text{Mark } 14:66-72 \text{ par.}\)
\(\text{John } 18:15-18, 25-27\)

1 Kgs 21:6, 16; 24:4;
2 Chr 35:6
Heb 11:37; Ascen. Isa. 5
2 Chr 33:12–13

Luke 23:42

2 Sam 11–12

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hundred increase on the plain, and he blew up a city, and tormented the virgins in blood, and turned many from the way of Christ. But through his fervent conversion and confession, he conquered the powers of the demons, and he became enthroned [on the throne of] the episcopacy and a minister of God. 

**Damnation for the unrepentant**

(28) 5 "And I say this to you: woe to those who do not repent, for the one who has died in lawlessness does not see the resurrection of Christ, but is chastised with the demons in Hades, just as the holy Gospel says, for everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin and 'sin is the child of the devil.' The devil receives the unrepentant ones and leads them to his father the devil."

(29) 4 "And if the sinner makes a sacrifice before he repents, he angers the Lord, just as the prophet says, 'The sacrifice of the sinner is an abomination to the Lord,' and his prayer will be in sin."

"And an unrepentant sinner fifty years of age is cursed, for the hair of his head is white. And if the old man sins without his wife, he is called thus, because he has committed adultery with his own daughter, for he is called the father of all. And likewise the wife, if the hair of her head is white and she commits fornication, she is called thus because she committed adultery with her own child."

(30) 4 "But the Lord will heed all those who repent, and he says, 'I do not wish the death of the sinful, so that he might turn back and live.' For the holy..."

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a. Perhaps "increase in breadth" as a reference to stretching of the body as a form of torture. ST have only "another hundred." A is corrupt, reading estaton (make stand) for ekaston.
b. M lacks these two elements; T lacks the first. S has "blew up many, and burned and tormented the virgins."
c. M has "right conversion and zealous confession"; ST has "(S adds 'right') conversion and confession."
d. M has "he became enthroned with the bishops and a servant of God"; ST have "he became enthroned with God."
e. ST lack this woe.
f. T has "in sin."
g. S has "with the Jews."
h. AM have "just as the Gospel says." T has "For the holy Gospel says."
i. T has "everyone who commits sin is a slave of the devil," an error due to homoeoteleuton.
j. ST lack "and leads them to his father the devil."
k. ST have "If the unrepentant one makes a sacrifice to the Lord it is an abomination, just as the prophet says that 'The sacrifice of the impious is an abomination to the Lord.'" The quotation here is closer to what is found in Proverbs.
l. The sentence is lacking in ST.
m. A has "say thus."
n. M has "he is thus said to have committed fornication."
o. The entire sentence in ST is "If a fifty-year-old (S has 'if a man') sins without his wife he is accursed on account of the fact that he is called the father of all."
p. ST have "And the wife, if her hair is white and she sins without her husband like a prostitute, she sins through her child."
q. ST have "God (T has 'Christ') receives (S adds 'all') those who repent, on account of which he says."
r. AT lack "holy."
Gospel says, 'Refrain from cutting down' the fig tree, so that I may dig [and] enrich (the ground) three times. And if it does not bear fruit, I will cut it down, so that it may not also further exhaust the earth.' (31) And I will say to you concerning this, the fig tree is the sinner, the digging is the word of the priest, and the orchard is the world. And if one is not transformed and does not bear good fruit, he is led to the eternal fire. (32) Woe to the unrepentant priests and those who in no way fervently shepherd the people, for they are going to answer for their sins."

Conclusion in manuscript A

Lament of the unrepentant

6 "And the people who do not heed the priests will themselves be chastised by the fire of gehenna. But the priests who teach the people wisely: Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Then the righteous with joy and gladness will be crowned with glory in the perpetual kingdom of the invisible Father. But the sinners mourn bitterly and say, 'Woe, what we have suffered, the miserable and wretched ones, because we have been separated from our own friends and relatives and alone were struck down. And they received the glory of the good deeds, and living they rejoice forever. But we, having done evil and hateful things, were separated from them, and our wicked deeds also lead us to eternal chastisement.'

5"And the angels, seeing them mourning and becoming gloomy at (their) moment of life [ask], 6"How did you not mourn for one hour? You who carelessly spent the moment of repentance, for you do not get another moment of repentance. The one who is concerned with repentance, is the one (concerned with) defense. The one (who is concerned with) the sowing, is also the one (concerned with) the reaping. If you acted well, you go with the righteous, or else you go to chastisement [for that] in which you took pleasure. And you transgressed the law and the commandments of God, as you were accused by the angels of these things and were sent into prison, where you will lack joy."

To whom be the glory and the power now and always, forever and ever. Amen.

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a. S has "do not cut down"; T has "refrain, do not cut down."
b. ST have "so that I may enrich it for three years and put manure (on it)."
c. T has "curse."
d. MST lack this introduction.
e. MST have "the tree."
f. ST have "the cutting."
g. T lacks "one is not transformed and."
h. S has "put back."
i. ST add "behold."
j. M has "Woe to the sinful and unrepentant priests!" ST lack this verse.
Conclusion in manuscripts MST

On the value of charity

(33) 6 James says to him, a "Tell us, John, about the things stored up in the churches and the sheep and among the poor. b What is given in exchange?"

b (34) The apostle John says to him, "The Lord loves a cheerful giver." d If a person gives something, he receives back a hundred. e If he is ill, [his load] is made light, f and he receives ninety. g And if a person is dying and says to his servant, h 'Give away my possessions;' h the steward gets one, i and one part (is) for the one dead.

(35) "Be convinced, my listening brothers. After a person dies there is no repentance, nor is there forgiveness for those who repent. But again I say to you, do not despair of the philanthropy of our God, who himself says, 'Anyone who comes to me I will never drive away.'"

To whom be the glory and the power, forever and ever. Amen. j

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a. ST have "And again James."
b. Court translates as "about those who store up treasures, whether in churches or desert places or poverty." ST have "about the treasure that the church handed down through the needy."
c. Court translates as "What is the exchange rate in heaven?"
d. T simply has "And he said." S lacks the entire verse.
e. T has "If a needy person gives a lepton by the authority of his master, something he gave to you, he receives back a hundred"; S shortens to "he gives a coin by the authority of his master, which he receives back a hundred."
f. ST have "If he is ill and he gives a hundred coins (T adds 'the obol'), ten are subtracted."
g. ST have "steward."
h. ST have "to the beggars."
i. ST have "nine" (S adds "parts").
j. ST replace v. 6 with "And the prayer and supplication and sacrifice made as a request to the angels and the saints happens so that the souls are not tormented, rather they are found at rest until the (T adds 'hour of') judgment. For in this hour every faithful one will be judged by his deeds. For the one who strays and (his) wife are received in Hades." S then continues into an excerpt from Apoc. Paul and T finishes with "for this reason I say to you (the MS has 'for this reason to me I say to me'), the reckless, 'Anyone who comes to me I will never drive away.' To whom is the glory and the power together with the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, now and always and forever and ever. Amen."