The Wisdom of Jesus Christ (or the Sophia of Jesus Christ) is the fourth tractate of Nag Hammadi Codex III, where it occupies pages 90,14–119,18. Another version of the Wisdom of Jesus Christ has been preserved as the third text in Berlin Gnostic Codex 8502 (pages 77,8–127,12), a Coptic codex discovered in Upper Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century. The Berlin Gnostic Codex contains a total of four tractates: the Gospel of Mary, the Secret Book of John, also present in two versions within the Nag Hammadi library, the Wisdom of Jesus Christ, and the Act of Peter. Furthermore, a fragment of the Wisdom of Jesus Christ was found in a Greek papyrus (P. Oxy. 1081) from the beginning of the fourth century. This fragment was identified by Henri-Charles Puech as a part of the present text. As with most Nag Hammadi documents, the Wisdom of Jesus Christ was originally composed in Greek (the discovery of the Greek fragment strengthen this hypothesis) and then translated into Coptic.

The text of the Wisdom of Jesus Christ in Codex III is not complete. Pages 109, 110, 115, and 116 are missing, and various lacunae are to be noted on other pages as well. On the other hand, the text in the Berlin Gnostic Codex is very well preserved, and only a few small lacunae appear here and there. The Oxyrhynchus fragment of the Wisdom of Jesus Christ consists of fifty lines corresponding to pages 96,21–99,13 in Codex III and pages 87,15–91,17 in the Berlin Gnostic Codex. The two Coptic versions of the text along with the Greek fragment have been published by Douglas M. Parrott. These different versions show that the treatise had a wide diffusion and was read during the fourth century by people speaking Greek and Coptic in Egypt.

The Codex III version of the present tractate has the title (“The Wisdom of Jesus Christ”) inserted at the opening of the text; the final line of the tractate

reads simply “The Wisdom of Jesus.” The first line of the Berlin Gnostic Codex version reads “The Wisdom of Jesus Christ,” as does the concluding title. This title imitates such wisdom texts as the Wisdom of Solomon and the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach. The Wisdom of Jesus Christ is closely connected with the tractate Eugnostos the Blessed, which precedes it in Nag Hammadi Codex III (see the introduction to Eugnostos).

The content of the Wisdom of Jesus Christ can be summarized as follows. After the resurrection, the twelve disciples and the seven women who faithfully followed Jesus’s teaching go up on a mountain, in Galilee, called “Prophecy and Joy.” They are puzzled about cosmological and soteriological matters, and the Savior appears to them in a spiritual form, resembling “a great angel of light.” (This may be intended as a polemic against the concept of the resurrection of the body.) He greets them and laughs at their reaction of fear and surprise, and then he asks them why they are perplexed. Here begins a dialogue between the apostles and Christ that extends to the end of the tractate. The questions in the dialogue are short but the answers long. Most of what the author attributes to the Savior comes from the teachings found in Eugnostos the Blessed. The teachings are now presented in the form of a dialogue, after the manner of revelatory dialogues well known from Gnostic and apocryphal traditions in the first centuries of Christianity.

The first question raised by the Savior addresses the reasons for the perplexity of the disciples (III 92,1–3). Philip answers for them all, explaining that they are puzzled “about the nature of the universe and the plan of salvation” (III 92,3–5). To this comment the Savior gives a long response (III 92,6–93,24). Matthew asks the Savior to reveal truth to them (III 93,24–94,4; the Savior’s answer is given in III 94,4–95,18); Philip intervenes and asks how the One Who Is appears to the perfect ones (III 95,19–20; the Savior’s answer is given in III 95,21–96,13), and Thomas wants an explanation about the coming into being of the imperishable ones (III 96,14–16; the Savior’s answer is given in III 96,18–98,9). Then Mary also asks about what is perishable and imperishable (III 98,9–11; the Savior’s answer is given in III 98,12–100,16). Matthew asks a question concerning the manifestation of Humanity (III 100,17–19; the Savior’s answer is given in III 100,19–103,21). Bartholomew inquires about the name of Humanity and the Son of Humanity in the gospel (III 103,22–104,4; the Savior’s answer is given in III 104,4–105,2). The disciples as a whole interrogate Christ a first time about the Human (III 105,3–8; the Savior’s answer is given in III 105,8–106,8), then a second time about the coming into the mortal world of the entities of the immortal realm (III 106,9–14; the Savior’s answer is given in III 106,14–108,16). Thomas wants to know the number of aeons (III 108,16–19; the Savior’s answer is given in III 108,19 and following).

The next two pages (109 and 110) are missing in Codex III but may be supplied from the Berlin Gnostic Codex (106,14–107,13). The disciples ask again about the

3. See Michel Tardieu, Écrits gnostiques, 47.
aeons of the immortal entities (BG 107,14–16; the Savior's answer is given in BG 107,16–114,11; only a portion of this answer is preserved in III 111,1–112,19). The holy apostles (previously called the disciples) question the Savior again about the inhabitants of the aeons, the angels (III 112,19–24; the Savior's answer is given in III 112,25–114,8). Mary asks a question that recalls Excerpts from Theodotos 78: "Holy master, where did your disciples come from, where are they going, and what should they do here?" (III 114,8–12; the Savior's answer is given in III 114,12 and following). The next two pages (115 and 116) are missing in Codex III (only a part of the Savior's answer is given, in III 117,1–119,9; the remainder may be read in the Berlin Gnostic Codex 117,18–126,16). The Wisdom of Jesus Christ concludes with the joy of the disciples, who receive this instruction and go to preach the "gospel of God" (III 119,13–15).

Having composed the text as a revelatory dialogue, the author of the Wisdom of Jesus Christ has made substantial use of Eugnostos the Blessed. This dependence is variously understood by scholars. As Michel Tardieu suggests, the author of the tractate has utilized his source, Eugnostos, within an artificial framework borrowed from the New Testament and apocryphal literature emphasizing the revelation of Christ to his disciples after the resurrection.5 In so doing, the author has disrupted the literary and theological unity of Eugnostos, rewriting it and occasionally inserting other sources.6 The highly philosophical character of Eugnostos and its description of the heavenly realm are distorted. The questions of the disciples are not really answered in the responses of the Savior. Further, the doctrine of Eugnostos the Blessed is profoundly transformed in the Wisdom of Jesus Christ. For example, the understanding of the Child or Son of Humanity (the Son of Man) changes from an angelological interpretation in Eugnostos to a Christological interpretation in the Wisdom of Jesus Christ. The angelology of Eugnostos describes the entities of the highest God; in the Wisdom of Jesus Christ, the attention is focused upon the entities of the demiurge, described as beings of poverty.7

According to Douglas M. Parrott, the non-Christian Eugnostos has undergone a process of transformation into a Christian Gnostic text, as is shown by (1) the integration of the person of Christ, identified with the heavenly revealer; (2) the addition of the myth of Sophia; (3) the focus placed on the god of the world and his sidekicks who enslave those who come from the heavenly realm; (4) the power of sexuality as the best weapon of the wicked powers to trap humankind; and (5) Christ as the one who breaks the bonds of the powers.8 The approach of Catherine Barry is quite different from that of either Tardieu or Parrott. She considers the Wisdom of Jesus Christ a work to be evaluated on its own merits, not just as a Christian rewriting of Eugnostos the Blessed. The link between the two texts, to be sure, is strong, because the Wisdom of Jesus Christ develops points of the

5. Tardieu, Écrits gnostiques, 56.
6. See Anne Pasquier, Eugnosta, 1–2.
doctrine contained only implicitly in Eugnostos, especially in the version found in Nag Hammadi Codex III. Barry proposes that the Wisdom of Jesus Christ seeks to retrace the history of humankind from its preexistence in the unconceived or unbegotten One Who Is to the realization of salvation.9 The author of the text tries to establish a theology of history, and this new historical perspective leads him to modify here and there the doctrine he found in Eugnostos. If Michel Tardieu underlines the incoherence between the questions of the disciples and the answers given by Jesus Christ, Catherine Barry judges that there actually is no discrepancy. For Barry, the questions of the Wisdom of Jesus Christ have a didactic aim, because they allow the author to present the topics he is going to discuss.10 Other sources were also used in the composition of the text, including apocryphal gospels, the Gospel of John, and the Gnostic Secret Book of John; and Barry cites 1 Corinthians 15:45–47 as the point of departure of the anthropogonic myth on the creation and restoration of humanity given at the end of the tractate.11

What are the circumstances of the composition of this text? Douglas Parrott sees the presence of Sethian and Ophites traditions, as described by Irenaeus of Lyon in his work Against Heresies. Catherine Barry believes that Valentinian sources and Thomas traditions should also be acknowledged, even if “a Sethian hand has composed the original materials of the Wisdom of Jesus Christ.”12 Michel Tardieu considers this treatise “a catch-all and an all-purpose text”; its author “belongs to the milieu of plagiarists, not to the milieu of inventors, a milieu where there is not intellectual creation but copying and collecting.”13 Thus, the Wisdom of Jesus Christ can be dated in the middle of the third century, in Egypt. Parrott proposes, on the contrary, a date of composition in the second half of the first century, shortly after Egypt was Christianized.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


13. Tardieu, Écrits gnostiques, 60.
The Wisdom of Jesus Christ

The Wisdom of Jesus Christ

The Savior Appears to His Followers After the Resurrection
(90,14–93,24)

After he rose from the dead, his twelve disciples and seven women continued to be his followers. They went to Galilee, up on the mountain [91] called, "Prophecy and Joy." As they gathered together, they were confused about the true nature of the universe, and the plan of salvation, and divine forethought, and the strength of the authorities, and everything the Savior was doing with them in the secret plan of salvation. Then the Savior appeared, not in his previous form but in invisible spirit. He looked like a great angel of light, but I must not describe his appearance. Mortal flesh could not bear it, but only pure and perfect flesh, like what he taught us about, in Galilee, on the mountain called Olivet.

He said, "Peace be with you. My peace I give to you." They all marveled, and they were afraid.

The Savior [92] laughed and said to them, "What are you thinking about? Are you confused? What do you want to find out about?"

Philip said, "About the nature of the universe and the plan of salvation."

The Savior said to them, "I want you to know that all people born on earth from the foundation of the world until now are of dust, and though they have inquired about God, who he is and what he is like, they have not found him. The wisest of people have speculated on the basis of the order and movement of the universe, yet their speculation has missed the truth. It is said that philosophers

1. Coptic text: NHC III,4: 90,14-119,18; BG 8502,3: 77,8-127,12. Greek fragment: P. Oxy. 1081. Editions: The Facsimile Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices: Codex III, 88–113; Michel Tardieu, ed., Écrits gnostiques; Walter C. Till and Hans-Martin Schenke, eds., Die gnostischen Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Bерolinensis 8502; Catherine Barry, ed., La Sagrera de Jésus-Christ; Douglas M. Parrott, ed., Nag Hammadi Codices III,4 and V; Hans-Martin Schenke, Hans-Gebhard Bethge, and Ursula Ulrike Kaiser, eds., Nag Hammadi Deutsch, 1.353–79 (Judith Hartenstein). The title of the text is sometimes given as the Sophia of Jesus Christ. The present translation is based primarily on the Codex III version; when the BG 8502 version is used (mainly for pages missing in the Codex III version), this is indicated in the translation and notes. 2. The Savior. 3. Here the Coptic reads mantiē hi raxe, and mantiē may be read as a form of Greek manteia, "prophecy, divination." Mantiē could also be read as ma n tiē, "Place of Harvest," which would suggest "Place of Harvest and Joy" for the name of the mountain. Perhaps cf. John 4:34–38. 4. The geography is somewhat confused here, since Olivet—the Mount of Olives—is in Judea near Jerusalem.
voice three distinct opinions about the order of the universe, and they disagree with each other. Some of them say that the world governs itself, [93] others say that divine forethought governs it, still others that fate is in charge. All these opinions are wrong. Of the three opinions I have just mentioned, none of them comes close to the truth. They are mere human opinions.

"I have come from infinite light; I am here, and I can tell you exactly what the truth is. For any life that comes from itself is defiled, made by itself. Forethought lacks wisdom. Fate remains senseless."

"It is given to you, however, to know the truth. Whoever deserves knowledge will receive it, whoever has not been conceived by the semen of unclean sexual rubbing but by the first one who was sent, for that person is immortal among mortal people."7

The One Who Is (93.24–95.18)

Matthew said [94] to him, "Master,8 no one can find truth except through you. Teach us the truth."

The Savior said, "The One Who Is9 is ineffable. From the foundation of the world until now, no power, no authority, no creature, no nature has known the One Who Is. Only the One Who Is, and anyone to whom this One wishes to give revelation through the emissary from the first light, knows the One Who Is. Henceforth, I am the great Savior.

The One Who Is is immortal and eternal, and being eternal, is without birth, for whoever is born will die; unconceived,10 without a beginning, for whoever has a beginning has an end; undominated, without a name, for whoever has a name has been made by another; [84]11 unnamable, with no human form, for whoever has a human form has been made by another. The One Who Is has an appearance of its own, [95]12 not like anything you have seen and received, but an alien appearance that surpasses everything.

5. The text On the Origin of the World also opens with a consideration of various opinions about the origin and nature of the universe. 6. A similar image of sexual rubbing, here and below, is found throughout the Paraphrase of Shem. 7. On this expression, cf. Nature of the Rulers 96. 8. Or "Lord," here and below. 9. Cf. the description of the divine in the Septuagint of Exodus 3:14 as ho o n, "the One Who Is," for Ehyeh `asher ehyeh, "I am that I am" (or the like) in Hebrew. On account of these parallels with the Jewish scriptures, masculine personal pronouns may be preferred in the following lines. We employ gender neutral pronouns, however, because of the insistence in the text that the divine is infinite and transcends finite categories. 10. Or "unbegotten," "unengendered," "ungenerated" (agennetos), here and below. The language of conception is used more frequently in this translation because the text emphasizes creativity in both sexual and psychological terms. 11. The following section is added from BG 8502, 84. 12. Here the Codex III version resumes.
and is superior to the universe.
It looks everywhere and beholds itself in itself.

The One is infinite,
incomprehensible,
and constantly imperishable.
The One is unequalled,
immutably good,
without fault,
eternal,
blessed,
unknown,
yet it knows itself.
The One is immeasurable,
untraceable,
perfect,
without defect.
The One is blessed,
imperishably,
and is called the Father of all.”

The Beginning of the Manifestation of the One Who Is
(95,19-98,9)

Philip said, “Master, then how did the One Who Is appear to those who are perfect?”

The perfect Savior said, “Before anything becomes visible of visible things, the majesty and the authority are [96] in him, since he grasps everything while nothing grasps him. He is all mind; he is thought, consideration, reflection, reason, and power, and all are equally powerful. These are the sources of all that is, and the entire generation, from first to last, was in the foreknowledge of the infinite unconceived Father.”

Thomas said to him, “Master, Savior, why did these come to be, and why were they revealed?”

The perfect Savior said to him, “I have come from the infinite to tell you everything. The Spirit who is was the one who conceives, the one who has the power of conception and can give form, so that the abundant wealth within might be revealed. In mercy and love the Spirit wished to produce fruit independently, that the Spirit might not enjoy goodness alone but that other spirits

13. Cf. Secret Book of John II, 2–4. The phrase “Father of all” (and similar phrases) may also be translated “Father of the All,” here and below, perhaps referring to the divine realm of Fullness. 14. These characteristics of mind are presented as mental powers in Manichaean texts. See also below, Wisdom of Jesus Christ 102–3. 15. Lit., “he” or “it,” here and below. 16. The word “enjoy” is emended in the Codex III version on the basis of the reading in the BG 8502 version.
of the unshakable generation might produce bodies and fruit, glory and honor, in imperishability and the infinite grace of the Spirit. In this way the goodness of the Spirit could be revealed by the self-conceived God, the Father of all imperishability and those who were to come later. But nothing had become visible yet. “There are many differences among the imperishable beings.”

He spoke out and said, “Whoever has ears to hear about infinite things should hear. It is to those who are awake that I speak.”

He went on [98] and said, “Everything from the perishable will perish, since it is from the perishable. But everything from the imperishable does not perish but becomes imperishable, since it is from the imperishable. Many people have gone astray because they did not know about this distinction, and they have died.”

The Father and the Kingless Generation (98,9–100,16)

Mary said to him, “Master, then how can we know this?”

The perfect Savior said, “Bring yourselves from what is invisible to the end of those who are visible, and the emanation of thought itself will reveal to you how faith in what is invisible can be found in those who are visible, who belong to the unconceived Father. Whoever has ears to hear should hear.

“The Lord of the universe is addressed not as Father but as Forefather. The Father is> the beginning of those who will appear, but the Lord is the Forefather without a beginning. When the Forefather saw himself within himself in a mirror, his resemblance appeared there, but his image appeared as the divine Father by himself and the reflection above reflections and the first-existing unconceived Father. He is as old as the light before him but not as powerful. Afterward there was revealed a multitude of beings, just as old and powerful, who are self-conceived and reflective. Glorious and without number, their generation is designated the generation over whom there is no kingdom. You yourselves have appeared from the people of this generation. And the whole multitude of beings with no kingdom over them is designated the children of the unconceived Father, God, Savior, Son of God, whose likeness is among you. This is the unknowable one, who is full of imperishable glory and ineffable joy, and all these beings are at rest in him, constantly rejoicing in ineffable joy in the Father’s un-fading glory and unending praise that was never heard or known among the aeons and their worlds until now.”

17. In Sethian texts, the people of Seth are commonly referred to as the unshakable generation. Cf., e.g., the Secret Book of John. 18. This injunction (with variations) to pay attention to the meaning of what is being said also occurs elsewhere in this text and throughout early Christian literature. 19. This clause is added from the BC 850a version. 20. Lit., “he,” here and below. 21. Cf. Secret Book of John II, 4, on the Father gazing at his reflection in the luminous water. 22. In Sethian texts, the people of Seth are often referred to as the generation without a king, or the kingless generation. Cf., e.g., The Nature of the Rulers, the Revelation of Adam, and the Gospel of Judas.
Immortal Humanity and Sophia Appear (100,16–103,21)

Matthew said to him, "Master, Savior, how was Humanity revealed?"

The perfect Savior said, "I want you to know that the being who appeared before the universe in infinity is the one who grows by himself, [101] the self-made Father. He is full of bright light and ineffable. In the beginning, when he decided to turn his likeness into a great power, at once the strength of that light appeared as an immortal androgynous Human, so that through that immortal Human, people might come to salvation and wake up from forgetfulness, through the interpreter who was sent, who is with you until the end of the time of poverty of those who are robbers."

"The companion of the immortal Human is great Sophia, who from the beginning was destined to be united with him, by the self-conceived Father, through the immortal Human who appeared as the first one and as divinity and kingdom. The Father, [102] called the Human, Father by himself, revealed this. He created an exalted aeon, named the Eight, for his own majesty, and he was given great authority. He rules over the impoverished creation, and he created gods and angels and archangels, myriads without number, to serve him, through that light, and the triple-male Spirit, which is of his companion Sophia.

"Through this God came divinity and kingdom. For that reason this God was called God of gods and King of kings. The first Human has a mind of his own within, and thought, appropriate to him, and consideration, reflection, reason, [103] and power.

"All these attributes are perfect and immortal. They are equally imperishable but not equally powerful. They are different, like the difference between father and son, and thought, and thought and the rest.

"As I said before, about what was produced, the One is first. After everything, all that was revealed came from his power. From what was created came what was fashioned. From what was fashioned came what was formed. From what was formed came what was named. This is how differences came to be among what was unconceived, from beginning to end."


Then Bartholomew said to him, "How is it that this being was called [104] a human being and the Son of Humanity in the gospel? To which of these figures is the Son related?"

The Holy One said to him, "I want you to know that the first Human is referred to as the one who conceives, the self-perfected mind. He reflected with his

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23. On the present world as poverty, cf. Gospel of Thomas 3:5. 24. On the interpreter, cf. Eugnostos the Blessed 90. 25. Or "self-fathering Father" (autopatōr). 26. Or "the Ogload." The eighth realm, or Ogload, is often understood to be the sphere of the fixed stars, and even the abode of the creator of this world. 27. Or "Son of Man," here and below.
companion great Sophia and disclosed his first-begotten androgynous child. Its male name is first-begotten Son of God, its female name first-begotten Sophia, Mother of the universe. Some call her love, and the first-begotten is called Christ. With authority from his Father, he created a host of angels [105] without number to serve him, from spirit and light.

His disciples said to him, “Master, tell us about the one called the Human, so that we also might have a precise understanding of his glory.”

The perfect Savior said, “Whoever has ears to hear should hear. The first-conceiving father is called Adam, eye of light, because he came from shining light, and his holy angels, ineffable and with no shadow, constantly rejoice in their reflections, received from their father. The entire kingdom of the Child of Humanity, who is called the Son of God, is full of ineffable joy, with no shadow, and eternal praise. They rejoice over his imperishable [106] glory, which until now has never been heard and never been revealed in the aeons that came later and their worlds.

“I have come from the self-conceived one and the first infinite light, to reveal everything to you.”

The Savior, Pistis Sophia, and Other Powers Appear (106,9–108,16)

His disciples said again, “Tell us exactly how they have come down from what is invisible, from the immortal realm to the world of mortality.”

The perfect Savior said, “The Child, the Son of Humanity, came together with his companion Sophia and disclosed a bright androgynous light. The male name of the light is Savior, the one who conceives all, and the female name is all-conceiving Sophia. Some call her Pistis, Faith.

“All who come into the world, like [107] a droplet from the light, are sent by him into the world of the ruler of the universe, [29] to be guarded by him. The fetter of his forgetfulness [30] has kept the light bound, by the will of Sophia, so that the reality of the circumstance might be <revealed> through the light to the whole impoverished world, on account of the arrogance and blindness of the ruler of the universe and the name of ignorance he was given.

“I have come from the places above by the will of the bright light, and I have escaped from that fetter. I have smashed the work of those who are robbers. I have awakened the droplet sent from Sophia, that it might produce an abundance of fruit through me, and be made perfect and never again be defective. Then the droplet from the light may be <made whole> [31] through me, the great Savior, and its glory may be revealed, and Sophia also may be vindicated of what

28. On Pistis Sophia, cf. the Nature of the Rulers, On the Origin of the World, and the text entitled Pistis Sophia. 29. The text reads pantokratir, here and below. 30. On this phrase, cf. Gospel of Mary 17. 31. Here the text of the Codex III is emended to read eunano<bs>of, on the basis of the BG 8502 version. This Coptic word may also be translated, more literally, “joined” or “integrated,” or, by extension, “liberated.”
was defective, and her [108] children may never again be defective, but may attain glory and honor and go up to their Father and know the words of the light of maleness.

“You in turn were sent by the Son, who was sent that you might receive light and escape the forgetfulness of the authorities. In this way the unclean sexual rubbing from the fierce fire of the flesh of the authorities may never again come to expression through you. Trample on their evil intentions.”

Eternal Realms and Aeons Appear (108,16–111,11)

Then Thomas said to [him], “Master, Savior, how many realms are there of those who surpass the heavens?”

The perfect Savior said, “I congratulate you for asking about the exalted realms, for your roots are in infinite places. [107]32 When those whom I have already discussed were revealed, the self-conceiving Father moved to create twelve eternal realms to serve twelve angels. They all are perfect and good. This is the way in which the defect of femaleness became apparent.”33

They said to him, “How many realms are there for the immortals, starting with those that are infinite?”

The perfect Savior said, “Whoever has ears to hear should [108] hear. The first eternal realm is that of the Child of Humanity, who is called the first to conceive, and the Savior, who has appeared. The second eternal realm is that of the Human called Adam, eye of light. What holds these is the realm over which there is no kingdom, the realm of the eternal infinite God, the self-conceived aeon of the aeons in it, the eternal aeon of the immortals, whom I have already described. [109] This is the aeon above the seventh realm that appeared from Sophia, which is the first realm.

“The immortal Human has revealed realms, powers, and kingdoms, and has given authority to all who come through him, that they might do what they want until the last things above chaos. They came together with each other and disclosed every majesty, even from spirit, and a multitude of lights, glorious and without number. The first, the second, and the third eternal realms [110] were named in the beginning. The first is called unity and rest. Each has its own name, and the third realm was called assembly, after the great multitude that appeared.34 A multitude of beings revealed themselves in One. Because the many [111] gather and experience unity, <they> are called the assembly, from the assembly that surpasses heaven. [111]35 We call them the assembly of the eighth realm. It appeared in an androgynous form and was given male and female names. The male part was called the assembly and the female part life, to indicate that from a female came life for all the realms.

32. Pp. 109–10 are missing from the Codex III version. The following pages are added from BG 8p2, 107–11. 33. The defect of femaleness refers to the fallen state of the world below, often described as being due to Sophia’s mistake. The story of Sophia is recounted in Wisdom of Jesus Christ (BG 8p2), 118–21. 34. Several minor emendations of numbers and other features of the preceding sentences have been made on the basis of the text of Eunostos the Blessed. 35. Here the Codex III version resumes.
The Names of the Eternal Realms All Come from Above  
(111,11—112,19)

"All the names came from the original source. That is the one who united with thought, and at once powers appeared, called gods. From their wisdom the gods of gods revealed gods, and from their wisdom <the gods> revealed lords, and from their thoughts the lords of lords revealed lords, and from their power the lords revealed archangels, and from their words the archangels revealed angels, [112] and from them came ideas, with structure and form and names for all the aeons and their worlds.

"The immortals whom I have described, all of them, have authority from the immortal Human, who is called silence, because by reflecting without speaking the entire majesty of silence36 was perfected. For the imperishable beings had authority, and each created a great kingdom in the eighth realm, and thrones and temples and firmaments for their own majesties. All these came to be by the will of the Mother of all."

The Eternal Realms Are Completed  
(112,19—114,8)

Then the holy apostles said to him, "Master, Savior, tell us about those who are in the eternal realms, for we must ask about them."

The perfect [113] Savior said, "Whatever you ask about I shall tell you. These beings created hosts of angels, myriads without number, to serve and glorify them. They created virgin spirits, ineffable and unchangeable lights, and they are free of sickness and weakness. There is will, and they come to be at once.37

"Thus the eternal realms were completed, quickly, with the heavens and firmaments, in the glory of the immortal Human and his companion Sophia. This is where every realm and the world and those that were to follow got their ideas for their creation of patterns in the heavens of chaos and their worlds. All natures, beginning with the revelation of chaos, are in the light that shines with no shadow but with indescribable joy and unspeakable praise. They continue to rejoice over their unfading glory [114] and immeasurable rest, which cannot be described among all the realms that came to be later and all their powers. I have said all this to you so that you might shine in light even more brightly than these."

36. Here the Codex III version reads "her" (Sophia or silence) and the BG 8502 version "him" (the Human). In the Wisdom of Jesus Christ silence is an epithet of the immortal Human; in Eugnostos the Blessed silence is an epithet of the companion of the immortal Human, Sophia, who has disappeared from this section in the Wisdom of Jesus Christ. Hence the problem—which the BG 8502 version resolves with masculine pronouns. 37. This clause is added from the BG 8502 version. On the whole paragraph, cf. Gospel of Judas 49—50.
The Story of Sophia and Yaldabaoth
(III 114,8–BG 8502 119,16)

Mary said to him, “Holy master, where did your disciples come from, where are
they going, and what should they do here?”

The perfect Savior said to them, “I want you to know that Sophia, the Mother
of all and the companion, desired all by herself to bring these creatures into being
without her male companion. By the will of the Father of all, that his unimagin-
able goodness might be released, he created a curtain between the immortals and
those who were to come later, so that this might follow [118] every realm and
chaos, that what is defective from the female might appear, and error might con-
tend with her. These constituted [119] the curtain of the spirit.

“From the eternal realms above the emanations of light, as I said before, a
droplet from light and spirit came down to the lower regions of the ruler of the
universe, in chaos, so that the forms they shaped might appear from that droplet.
This is judgment against the chief creator, called Yaldabaoth.

The Story of Earthly Adam (BG 8502 119,17–121,13)

“That droplet revealed the forms they shaped, through breath, as a living
soul. This was withered and asleep in the ignorance of the soul. When this being
was warmed by the breath of the bright light of the male, he formulated a
thought, and names were given to everything in the world of chaos, through the
immortal one, when breath blew into him. This happened by the will of
Mother Sophia, so that the immortal Human might reassemble the garments there as judgment against those who are robbers. Then <he> wel-
comed the breath that was blown, but he was like soul and could not assume that
power until the number of chaos and the time set by the great angel could be
complete.

The Restoration and Unification of Humanity
(BG 8502 121,13–III 119,8)

“I have taught you about the immortal Human, and I have freed him from the
fetters of the robbers. I have broken the gates of those without pity, right in

38. The story of Sophia, Yaldabaoth, Adam, and the restoration of humanity in the Wisdom of Jesus Christ
expands upon the account in Eusenostos the Blessed.
39. Pp. 115–16 are missing in the Codex III version. The following pages are added from BG 8502, 118–22.
40. On the nature of error, sometimes personified, cf. the Gospel of Truth. 41. A curtain or veil also sepa-
rates the realm of the divine from the world below in other Gnostic texts, e.g., Valentinian texts.
42. The text reads arthigethen, here and below. 43. On the story of Sophia and Yaldabaoth, cf. Secret Book of John
front of them. I have humiliated their evil intentions, and they all have been put
to shame and have emerged from their ignorance. 46

“For this reason I have come here, that these may be united with spirit and
breath, [117] 47 and two may become one, as in the beginning. 48 Then you may
produce an abundance of fruit and go up to the one who is from the beginning,
in ineffable joy and glory and [honor and] grace of [the Father of all].

“Whoever knows [the Father in pure] knowledge [will depart] to the Father
[and be at rest in] the unconceived [Father. Whoever knows him in a defective
way] will depart [to what is defective] and experience the rest [that the eighth
realm provides]. Let whoever knows the immortal [spirit] of light in silence,
through reflection and agreement in truth, bring me signs of the invisible one,
and such a person will become a light in the spirit of silence. Let whoever knows
the Child of Humanity in knowledge and love bring me a sign [118] of the Child
of Humanity, so that such a person may depart to the dwelling places with those
in the eighth realm.

“Look, I have revealed to you the name of the perfect one, all the will of
the mother of the holy angels, in order that the male [multitude] may be made com-
plete here. 49 Then there [may appear, in the realms, the infinite beings and] those who [have come to be in the] untraceable [wealth of the great] invisible
[Spirit, 50 and] all may receive from his goodness, even the wealth [of their rest]
with no [kingdom over it].

“I have come [from the first] who was sent to reveal to you the one who is from
the beginning, because of the arrogance of the chief creator and his angels, for
they claim to be gods. I have come to eradicate their blindness, that I might tel
everyone about the God who is above all. [119]

“So trample on their graves, humiliate their wicked intentions, break their
yoke, and raise up those who are mine. I have given you authority over everything
as children of light, to trample on their power with your feet.”

_The Savior Departs from His Followers (119,8–18)_

This is what the blessed Savior [said, and then he disappeared] from them. [All
the disciples] remained in [great, ineffable joy] in [the spirit from] that day on.
[And his disciples] began to preach the gospel of God, the eternal, imperishable
Spirit. Amen.

_The Wisdom of Jesus_ 51

46. On the claims of the Savior, in first-person state-
ments, cf. the hymn of the Savior in Secret Book of
John II, 30–31. 47. Here the Codex III version re-
sumes. 48. Cf., e.g., Gospel of Thomas 22; 106; Gospel
of Philip 70. 49. On the defect of femineness and the
salvation of maleness in the Wisdom of Jesus Christ, cf.
Gospel of Thomas 114 and the notes. 50. Such Sethian
texts as the Secret Book of John refer to the transcen-
dent deity as the Great Invisible Spirit. 51. The Codex
IV version concludes with the title “The Wisdom of
Jesus Christ.”