

and I will turn their heart and make Manasseh, and the princes of Judah, and the people, and all Jerusalem worship you." \*And Isaiah answered and said, "If it is within my power to say, 'Condemned and cursed be you, and all your hosts, and all your house!'" \*For there is nothing further that you can take except the skin of my body." \*And they seized Isaiah the son of Amoz and sawed him in half with a wood saw. \*And Manasseh, and Belkira,<sup>a</sup> and the false prophets, and the princes, and the people, and all stood by looking on. \*And to the prophets who (were) with him he said before he was sawed in half, "Go to the district of Tyre and Sidon,<sup>b</sup> because for me alone the LORD has mixed the cup."<sup>c</sup> \*And while Isaiah was being sawed in half, he did not cry out, or weep, but his mouth spoke with the Holy Spirit until he was sawed in two. \*Beliar did this to Isaiah through Belkira<sup>d</sup> and through Manasseh, for Sammael was very angry with Isaiah from the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah, because of the things which he had seen concerning the Beloved, \*and because of the destruction of Sammael which he had seen through the LORD, while Hezekiah his father was king. And he did as Satan wished.<sup>e</sup>

## 2. THE VISION WHICH ISAIAH THE SON OF AMOZ SAW<sup>f</sup>

### Isaiah visits Hezekiah and has a vision<sup>g</sup>

1 **6** In the twentieth year of the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, Isaiah the son of Amoz and Josab the son of Isaiah came to Hezekiah in Jerusalem from Gilgal.<sup>h</sup>  
 2 And he sat on the couch of the king, and they brought a seat for him, but he would not sit (on it). \*And when Isaiah began to speak with Hezekiah the king the words of faith and righteousness, all the princes of Israel were sitting (there), and the eunuchs and the king's counselors. And there were there forty<sup>i</sup> prophets and sons of the prophets; they had come from the neighboring districts, and from the mountains, and from the country, when they had heard that Isaiah was coming from Gilgal<sup>d</sup> to Hezekiah. \*They came that they might greet him, and that they might hear his words, \*and that he might lay his hand on them, and that they might prophesy, and that he might hear their prophecy; and they were all in the presence of Isaiah.<sup>e</sup> \*And when Isaiah<sup>f</sup> spoke with Hezekiah the words of righteousness and faith, they all heard a door being opened<sup>g</sup> and the voice of the Spirit.<sup>h</sup> \*And the king summoned all the prophets and all the people who were to

j. There are some similarities with the temptation of Jesus, cf. Mt 4:8-10; Lk 4:5-8.

k. C D add "to him."

l. A C D "If (it is) within my power, 'Cursed, that is to say, you.'"

m. In vs. 9 Belkira is presented as the devil in human form, with his "hosts" of spirits at his disposal (cf. 2:2). What is implicit in Ascens is made explicit in the parallel passage in the Greek Legend (3:18), "Accused be you, O Melchias the false prophet, O devil."

n. B C "Balkira"; A "Melakira"; D "Melkira."

o. It is not clear why this particular region should be mentioned; it has been suggested that the tradition of Elijah's association with Sidon (1Kgs 17:7-24) may have inspired the author at this point.

p. "cup": a symbolic term for the vocation to which Isaiah was called, cf. Mk 10:38f.; 14:36.

q. A B C "Balkira"; D "Malkira."

r. I.e. Manasseh.

s. Vss. 15 and 16 are an editorial addition which serves to link 3:13-4:22 with the narrative of the martyrdom.

a. The heading (apart from "2") is given in Eth, Lat2, Slav, but Lat2 has "Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz" and Slav "the holy Isaiah, the prophet, the son of Amoz."

6 a. The VisIs (chs. 6-11) is a Christian work which was originally quite independent of the Jewish MartIs (the basic narrative of chs. 1-5); cf. Intro.

b. A B D "from Galilee," cf. vs. 3; Lat2, Slav omit. It is not clear why Gilgal should be mentioned.

c. It is not clear why there should be forty prophets; the figure is given in Eth and Greek Legend 1:3, but is absent from Lat2, Slav.

d. A "from Galilee," cf. vs. 1; Lat2 "from Gaigatha."

e. Lat2, Slav are much shorter than Eth in vss. 3-5.

f. C D, Lat2, Slav "he."

g. Lit. "a door which (someone) opened."

h. "they all . . . the Spirit [C "the Holy Spirit"]": so Eth; Lat2, Slav "the Holy Spirit came upon him, and they all saw and heard the words of the Holy Spirit." Eth seems to be dependent on the corrupt Eth. text of vs. 9 and is probably secondary.

be found there, and they came. And Micah, and the aged Ananias, and Joel, and Josab were sitting on his right.<sup>i</sup> \*And when they all heard the voice of the Holy Spirit, they all worshiped on their knees, and they praised the God of righteousness, the Most High, the One who (dwells) in the upper world and who sits on high, the Holy One, the One who rests among the holy ones,<sup>j</sup> \*and they ascribed glory to the One who had thus graciously given a door in an alien world, had graciously given it to a man.<sup>k</sup> \*And while he was speaking with the Holy Spirit in the hearing of them all, he became silent, and his mind was taken up from him,<sup>l</sup> and he did not see the men who were standing before him. \*His eyes indeed were open, but his mouth was silent, and the mind in his body was taken up from him.<sup>m</sup> \*But his breath was (still) in him,<sup>n</sup> for he was seeing a vision. \*And the angel who was sent to show him (the vision) was not of this firmament, nor was he from the angels of glory of this world, but he came from the seventh heaven. \*And the people who were standing by, apart from the circle of prophets, did [not]<sup>o</sup> think that the holy Isaiah had been taken up. \*And the vision which he saw was not from this world, but from the world which is hidden from the flesh.<sup>p</sup> \*And after Isaiah had seen this vision he recounted it to Hezekiah, and to Josab his son,<sup>q</sup> and to the other prophets who had come. \*But the officials, and the eunuchs, and the people did not hear, apart from Sammas the secretary, and Jehoiakim,<sup>r</sup> and Asaph the recorder,<sup>s</sup> for they (were) doers of righteousness, and the fragrance of the Spirit was in them; but the people did not hear, for Micah and Josab his son had sent them out when the wisdom of this world was taken from him as if he were dead.<sup>t</sup>

### Isaiah's journey through the seven heavens

1 **7** The vision which Isaiah saw he told to Hezekiah, and to Josab his son, and to Micah, and to the other prophets; \*it was as follows. When I prophesied in accordance with the message which you have heard, I saw a glorious angel; his glory<sup>u</sup> was not like the glory of the angels which I always used to see, but he had great glory, and an office,<sup>v</sup> such that I cannot describe the glory of this angel. \*And I saw when he took hold of me by my hand,<sup>w</sup> and I said to him, "Who are you? And what is your name? And where are you taking me up?" For strength had been given to me that I might speak with him. \*And he said to me, "When I have taken you up through (all) the stages and have shown you the vision on account of which I was sent, then you will understand who I am; but my name you will not know, \*for you have to return into this body. But where<sup>x</sup> I take you up, you will see, because for this purpose I was sent."<sup>y</sup> \*And I rejoiced because

i. Lat2, Slav add "and on his left."

j. The description of God, and particularly the phrase "the One who rests among the holy ones," reflects the LXX text of Isa 57:15, cf. n. h on 10:6. Lat2, Slav have a shorter text in vs. 8.

k. "who . . . a man": so Eth, but probably corrupt; Lat2 (and similarly Slav) "who had given such a power of words in the world."

l. "and his mind . . . from him": so Eth, supported by Greek Legend 2:1; Lat2, Slav omit.

m. "and the mind . . . from him": so Eth; Lat2, Slav omit.

n. "But his breath . . . him": so Eth, supported by Greek Legend 2:2; Lat2, Slav "But the inspiration of the Spirit [Lat2 "Holy Spirit"] was with him." Lat2, Slav omit the rest of vs. 12 and vs. 13.

o. Restoration based on Lat2, Slav.

p. So D; Lat2, Slav "from all flesh"; A C which was hidden from his flesh," and similarly

q. Lat2, Slav omit the remainder of vs. 16, vs. 17 and the beginning of 7:1 by homeoteleuton.

r. No person with this name is mentioned in the OT as living during the reign of Hezekiah. We might have expected the name "Eliakim" (cf. 2Kgs 18:18; Isa 36:3), but it is also possible (cf. Charles, *Ascension*, p. 46) that the text is corrupt for "and Joah son of Asaph, the recorder." in the OT Asaph is not the recorder himself, but the father of the person who is.

s. "the recorder": in Eth the same expression that is used in the Eth. version of Isa 36:3, 22; it corresponds to what JB translates as "the herald."

7 a. So B; A C D "he."

b. "and an office": so Eth, cf. 3:23; Lat1, Slav "but he had a great and holy glory"; Lat2 corrupt.

c. So Eth, but the text seems corrupt; Lat1 "And he approached and held my hand"; Lat2, Slav "And he took me by (my) hand and led me on high."

d. Lat1, Lat2, Slav "when."

e. "because for this . . . was sent": Lat2, Slav omit.

1:8; 3:13; 5:1

14

22

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4:2; 7:9-12;  
10:29; 11:23  
3:13; 4:14, 16;  
9:6

1:5

8:11, 23; 9:5

7 he spoke to me with kindness. •And he said to me, "Do you rejoice because I have spoken kindly to you?" And he said, "You will see one greater than me, how he will speak kindly and gently with you; •and the Father of the one who is greater<sup>f</sup> you will also see, because for this purpose I was sent from the seventh heaven, that I might make all this clear to you."

10:29-31

**The firmament**

9 And we went up into the firmament,<sup>g</sup> I and he, and there I saw Sammael<sup>h</sup> and his hosts; and there was a great struggle in it, and the words of Satan, and they were envying one another.<sup>i</sup> •And as above, so also on earth, for the likeness of what (is) in the firmament is here on earth. •And I said to the angel, "What is this envying?" •And he said to me, "So it has been ever since this world existed until now,<sup>k</sup> and this struggle (will last) until the one comes whom you are to see, and he will destroy him."

4:2

10:12

10:27

**The first heaven**

13 And after this he took me up above the firmament; this is the [first]<sup>l</sup> heaven. 14 There I saw a throne in the middle,<sup>m</sup> and on the right and on the left of it there were angels. •And [the angels on the left]<sup>n</sup> were not like the angels who stood on the right, but those who stood on the right had more glory, and they all sang praises with one voice. And the throne was in the middle,<sup>o</sup> and it they praised, and those on the left after them;<sup>p</sup> but their voice was not like the voice of those on the right, nor their praise like the praise of those (on the right). •And I asked the angel who led me and said to him, "To whom is this praise directed?" •And he said to me, "To the praise of [the One who sits in] the seventh heaven, the One who rests in the holy world,<sup>q</sup> and to his Beloved, from where I was sent to you. To there it is directed."

10:25f.

**The second heaven**

18 And again, he took me up into the second heaven, and the height of that heaven is like that from heaven to earth and to the firmament.<sup>r</sup> •And [I saw there, as] in the first heaven, angels on the right and on the left,<sup>s</sup> and a throne in the middle, and the praise of the angels who (were) in the second heaven; and the one who sat on the throne in the second heaven had more glory than all (the rest). •And

7:28

f. Lat1 "and One more eminent than the greater one himself"; Lat2, Slav differ.

g. "the firmament": the vault of the sky (cf. Gen 1:6-8), here thought of as separating the earth from the seven heavens.

h. Lat2, Slav, and Greek Legend 2:9 "Satan."

i. So Eth, but corrupt; read with Lat1 "and the angels of Satan were envying one another"; Lat2, Slav differ.

j. Lat1 "What is this war, and what is this envying?"; Lat2, Slav "What is this war and envying and struggle?" Cf. 10:29.

k. "So . . . now"; so Eth, Lat1; Lat2, Slav "That war is of the devil."

l. Supplied from Lat2, Slav. In Ascenss heaven is thought of as being divided into seven layers, each one more glorious than the one below. For the idea of gradations within heaven, and particularly for the idea of seven heavens, cf. TLevi 2:7-3:10; cf. also 3Bar; 2Cor 12:2; Eph 4:10; Heb 4:14; 7:26.

m. Lat2, Slav. add "and on it there sat an angel in great glory." A comparable statement occurs in the Eth. version of vs. 19, 24, 27, 29, 31 (also

in Lat2, Slav), 33, 35, 37. In Col 1:16; TLevi 3:8 the word "thrones" is used absolutely as the name of a class of angels, and a similar usage is to be found in Ascenss in 7:21, and in the Eth. version of 7:15, 27; 8:8; 11:25 (cf. Greek Legend 2:40).

n. Supplied from Lat1.

o. "And the throne was in the middle"; so Eth, Lat1; Lat2, Slav omit, cf. n. m on vs. 14.

p. "and it they praised, and those on the left after them"; so Eth; Lat1 "and (those) on the left blessed afterwards"; Lat2 (partially corrupt), Slav "and those who were on the left sang praises after them."

q. Lit. "sent."

r. Supplied from Lat1; Lat2, Slav "of God who is above the seventh heaven."

s. "the One who rests in the holy world [B 'among the holy ones of the world']"; so Eth (cf. 6:8), but the text appears corrupt; Lat1 "who belongs to the everlasting age"; Lat2, Slav omit.

t. A "from earth to heaven and to the firmament"; Lat2, Slav "from the first heaven to earth."

u. Supplied from Lat1, Lat2, Slav.

v. Lat2, Slav omit the rest of the vs.

there was great glory in the second heaven, and their praise was not like the praise of those who (were) in the first heaven. •And I fell on my face to worship him,<sup>w</sup> and the angel who led me would not let me, but said to me, "Worship neither throne,<sup>x</sup> nor angel from the six heavens,<sup>y</sup> from where<sup>z</sup> I was sent to lead you, before I tell you in the seventh heaven.<sup>z2</sup> •For above all the heavens and their angels is placed your throne, and also your robes and your crown<sup>z2</sup> which you are to see." •And I rejoiced very much that those who love the Most High and his Beloved will at their end go up there through the angel of the Holy Spirit.

Rev 19:10;  
22:8f.;  
Col 2:18  
8:14; 9:2;  
Rev 4:4

3:15

**The third heaven**

24 And he took me up into the third heaven, and in the same way I saw those who (were) on the right and on the left, and there also (there was) a throne in the middle and one who sat (on it),<sup>z2</sup> but no mention of this world was made<sup>z2</sup> there. 25 And I said to the angel who (was) with me, for the glory of my face<sup>z2</sup> was being transformed as I went up from heaven to heaven, "Nothing of the vanity of that world is named here." •And he answered me, saying, "Nothing is named because of its weakness, but nothing is hidden which is done there."<sup>z2</sup> •And I wished to find out how it is known; and he answered me, saying, "When I have taken you up into the seventh heaven, from where I was sent, to the One which (is) above these, then you will know that nothing is hidden from the thrones<sup>z2</sup> and those who dwell in the heavens, nor from the angels." And the praises which they sang and the glory of the one who sat on the throne were great, and the angels who (were) on the right and on the left had more glory than (those in) the heaven which (was) below them.<sup>z2</sup>

10:23f.

9:19-23

**The fourth heaven**

28 And again he took me up into the fourth heaven, and the height from the third to the fourth heaven was greater than (from) earth to the firmament.<sup>z2</sup> •And there I again saw those who (were) on the right and those who (were) on the left, and the one who sat on the throne was in the middle,<sup>z2</sup> and there also they were singing praises. •And the praise and glory of the angels on the right was greater than that of those on the left. •And again the glory of the one who sat on the throne was greater than that of the angels who (were) on the right, but their glory (was) greater than that of those below.

10:21f.

7:18

**The fifth heaven**

32.33 And he took me up into the fifth heaven. •And again I saw those who (were) on the right and the left, and the one who sat on the throne had more glory than those of the fourth heaven. •And the glory of those who (were) on the right was greater than that of those who (were) on the left . . .<sup>z2</sup> •The glory of the one on the throne was greater than that of the angels who (were) on the right, •but their

10:20

w. i.e. the one sitting on the throne, vs. 19.

x. See n. m on vs. 14.

y. Lat2 "of that heaven"; Slav "from heaven."

z. "from where"; so Eth, but elsewhere the

angel is specifically said to come from the seventh heaven (cf. 6:13; 7:8); Lat2 "for this purpose"; Slav "because this purpose." Lat2, Slav do not make any better sense, but may go back to the same Ok. original as Eth. Possibly the whole clause was misplaced from the end of the vs. at an early stage in the transmission of the text.

a2. Lat2 (similarly Slav) "but only the one whom I shall tell you."

b2. Traditional Christian symbols of the glorious and transformed state of the righteous in heaven, see n. p on 1:5 and notes i-k on 9:9f.

c2. "and one who sat (on it)"; so Eth (B

defective); Lat2, Slav omit.

d2. Lit. "named."

e2. Lat2, Slav "spirit."

f2. So (C) D and similarly Slav; B (and similarly Lat2) "there which is done"; A "which is done here."

g2. Cf. n. m on vs. 14.

h2. Lat2, Slav have a much shorter text in vs. 27.

i2. "than (from) earth . . . firmament": Lat2, Slav omit.

j2. "and the one . . . middle": Lat2, Slav omit. Lat2 also omits the rest of vs. 29 and vs. 30.

k2. All Eth. MSS add "from the third to the fourth." These words make no sense in their context, but are perhaps a fragment of a sentence comparable to vs. 28.

37 praise was more glorious than that of the fourth heaven.<sup>12</sup> • And I praised the One who is not named<sup>m2</sup> and is unique, who dwells in the heavens, whose name is unknown to all flesh, the One who has given such glory to the different heavens,<sup>m2</sup> who makes the glory of the angels great and the glory of the one who sits on the throne (even) greater.<sup>o2</sup>

#### The air of the sixth heaven

1 **8** And again, he took me up into the air of the sixth heaven, and I saw a splendor  
2 such as I had not seen in the five heavens as I went up; • the angels possessed  
3 great glory, • and the praise there was holy and wonderful.<sup>a</sup> • And I said to the  
4 angel who led me, "What (is) this which I see, my lord?" • And he said to me,<sup>b</sup>  
5 "I am not your lord, but your companion." • And again I asked him, and I said  
6 to him, "Why (are there) not corresponding groups of angels?"<sup>c</sup> • And he said to  
7 me,<sup>d</sup> "From the sixth heaven and upwards there are no longer those on the left,<sup>e</sup>  
8 nor is there a throne placed in the middle, but [they are directed] by the power of  
9 the seventh heaven, where the One who is not named dwells, and his Chosen  
10 One,<sup>f</sup> whose name is unknown, and no heaven can learn his name,<sup>g</sup> for he is  
11 alone, (he) whose voice all the heavens and thrones answer.<sup>h</sup> I, therefore, have  
12 been empowered and sent to bring you up here that you may see this glory, • and  
13 (that) you may see the LORD of all these heavens and of these thrones<sup>i</sup> • being  
14 transformed until he resembles your appearance and your likeness.<sup>j</sup> • But I say to  
15 you, Isaiah, that no man who has to return into a body of that world [has come  
16 up, or seen],<sup>k</sup> or understood what you have seen<sup>l</sup> • and what you are to see, for  
17 you are destined in the lot of the LORD, the lot of the tree,<sup>m</sup> to come here, and  
18 from there is the power of the sixth heaven and of the air."<sup>n</sup> • And I proclaimed  
19 the greatness of my LORD with praise, that through his lot I should come here.  
20 And he said to me,<sup>o</sup> "Hear then this also from your companion: [when from the  
21 body by the will of God you have come up here],<sup>p</sup> then you will receive the robe<sup>q</sup>  
22 which you will see, and also other numbered robes placed (there) you will see,  
23 and then you will be equal to the angels who (are) in the seventh heaven."<sup>r</sup>

Rev 19:10;  
22:8f.

7:37

Isa 42:1;  
Lk 9:35; 23:35;  
IEth 45:3f.

10:8-10

7:5; 8:23; 9:5

11:34

7:22; 9:2

9:24f.

12. Vss. 33-36 are considerably abbreviated in Lat2, Slav.

m2. The thought is that the name of God is too sacred to be uttered by men.

n2. Lit. "from heaven to heaven."

o2. Lat2, Slav differ considerably in vs. 37; in particular, Isaiah does not himself praise God, but marvels at the sight of the angels praising him.

8 a. "wonderful": so D, Lat2, Slav; A B C corrupt.

b. "to me": so B D, Lat2, Slav; A C omit.

c. Lit. "companions of angels." The meaning of the question is clarified by the following vs.: why is there no longer one group of angels on the left and one on the right? Lat2, Slav omit vs. 6.

d. "to me": so C (corrected reading) D, Lat2, Slav; A B C (original reading) omit.

e. D adds "or right."

f. Supplied from Lat2, Slav.

g. "where the One . . . and his [B C D "the"] Chosen One": so Eth; Lat2, Slav corrupt; Lat2 "where the bounteous [7] son of God is"; Slav "where that famous one is and his only begotten son."

h. "whose name . . . his name": Lat2, Slav omit, cf. 7:37. If genuine, these clauses perhaps refer to a secret name of the Chosen One, cf. 9:5;

Rev 19:12. [Also see PrJac, introduced and translated elsewhere in this collection. —J.H.C.]

i. Lat2, Slav "And all the heavens and his angels hear him."

j. A "those"; B "the."

k. Lat2, Slav "of all the heavens, and his [Lat2 "the"] angels and powers."

l. Lat2, Slav omit vs. 10.

m. Correction based on Greek Legend 2:29; Eth "has seen this, or come up."

n. B "see"; A "have understood."

o. "the lot of the tree [i.e. the cross]": lacking in Lat2, Slav, and probably a gloss making explicit the link between the martyrdom of Isaiah and the crucifixion of Jesus which is indicated in the phrase "the lot of the Lord," cf. 1:13.

p. "and from there . . . the air": a gloss based on a misunderstanding of vs. 7, lacking in Lat2, Slav.

q. "to me": so D, Lat2, Slav; A B C omit.

r. "when . . . here": correction based on Lat2, Slav; A (and virtually C) "when from (your) alien body by the angel of the spirit you have come up here" (cf. 7:23); B "when in an alien body the God of the spirit has brought you up here"; D "when from (your) alien body the God of the spirit you have come up here."

s. Lat2, Slav omit the rest of vs. 14.

#### The sixth heaven

16 And he took me up into the sixth heaven, and there were none on the left,<sup>1</sup> nor a  
17 throne in the middle, but all (were) of one appearance, and their praise (was)  
18 equal. • And (strength) was given to me, and I also sang praises with them, and  
19 that angel also, and our praise was like theirs. • And there they all named the  
20 primal<sup>2</sup> Father and his<sup>3</sup> Beloved, Christ, and the Holy Spirit,<sup>4</sup> all with one voice,  
21 but it was not like the voice of the angels who (were) in the five heavens, • nor  
22 (was it) like their speech, but there was a different voice there, and there was  
23 much light there. • And then, when I was in the sixth heaven, I thought that light  
24 which I had seen in the five heavens darkness. • And I rejoiced and praised the  
25 One who has graciously given such light to those who await his promise.<sup>5</sup> • And  
26 I entreated the angel who led me that from then on I should not return to the  
27 world of flesh. • Indeed I say to you, Hezekiah and Josab, my son, and Micah,<sup>6</sup>  
28 that there is much darkness here. • And the angel who led me knew what I thought  
29 and said to me, "If you rejoice over this light, how much more (will you rejoice)  
30 in the seventh heaven when you see the light where the LORD is and his Beloved<sup>7</sup>—  
31 from where I was sent—who is to be called in the world the Son!<sup>8</sup> • He who is to  
32 be in the corruptible world has not (yet) been revealed,<sup>9</sup> nor the robes, nor the  
33 thrones, nor the crowns which are placed (there) for the righteous, for those who  
34 believe in that LORD who will descend in your form. For the light which (is) there  
35 (is) great and wonderful.<sup>10</sup> • But as regards your not returning into the body, your  
36 days are not yet complete for coming here."<sup>11</sup> • And when I heard (this), I was sad;  
37 and he said to me,<sup>12</sup> "Do not be sad."

10:17-19

Acts 1:4

7:5; 8:11; 9:5

7:22; 9:9f.

11:35

#### The air of the seventh heaven

1 **9** And he led me into the air of the seventh heaven, and moreover I heard a voice  
2 saying, "How far is he who dwells among aliens<sup>a</sup> to go up?" And I was afraid  
3 and was trembling. • And he said to me when I was trembling, "Behold! From  
4 there another voice which was sent out has come, and it says,<sup>b</sup> "The holy Isaiah  
5 is permitted to come up here, for his robe is here."<sup>c</sup> • And I asked the angel who  
6 (was) with me and said, "Who is the one who prevented me, and who is this one  
7 who turned to me that I might go up?"<sup>d</sup> • And he said to me, "The one who  
8 prevented you, (this is) the one [who (is) in charge of] the praise of the sixth  
9 heaven. • And the one who turned to you,<sup>e</sup> this is your LORD, the LORD, the LORD

7:22; 8:14

i. D adds "or the right"; Lat2, Slav "no angels on the right or left."

u. "primal": C omits.

v. B C D "the."

w. Lat2, Slav "they praised the Father of all and his [Slav "the"] Beloved Son and the Holy Spirit." Lat2, Slav do not mention the name "Christ" (cf. 9:5, 13, 17; 10:7) or "Jesus" (cf. 9:5; 10:7). But Greek Legend 2:37 supports Eth in 10:7.

x. Lat2, Slav "such joy [Slav "such things"] to those who receive his mercy."

y. "Hezekiah . . . Micah": Lat2, Slav omit.

z. "to me": so D, Lat2, Slav; A B C omit.

a2. Lat2, Slav "the heavenly Father sits and his only begotten Son."

b2. "from where I was sent . . . been revealed": Lat2, Slav omit, and the whole (or at least the beginning of vs. 26) is probably an interpolation; if it has all been interpolated, the passage would have originally read, "where the Lord is and his Beloved, and also the robes and the thrones and the crowns which . . ." For "who is to be called . . . the Son" cf. 9:5, 13; 10:7; in all these passages

Lat2, Slav do not have the clause, cf. n. w on vs. 18.

c2. "for those . . . wonderful": Lat2, Slav omit.

d2. "to me": so C D, Slav; A B omit; Lat2 defective.

9 a. Lat2, Slav, and Greek Legend 2:23 "in the flesh."

b. Lat2, Slav (and similarly Greek Legend 2:23) "And again I heard another voice saying." In Eth "he said to me" is awkward and probably an addition; this suggests that Eth originally read "And when I was trembling, behold from there another voice . . . came, and it said." D adds "to me" after "has come/come," which points to such a text.

c. So Eth, but a misunderstanding of the underlying Gk., which ought to have been rendered "who permitted me to go up" (cf. Greek Legend 2:24).

d. Correction based on Lat2, Slav, and Greek Legend 2:25; Eth "on whom (is)."

e. See n. c on vs. 3.

Christ, who is to be called in the world Jesus,<sup>f</sup> but you cannot hear his name<sup>g</sup> until you have come up from this body.”

7:5; 8:11, 23

### The seventh heaven

6 And he took me up into the seventh heaven, and there I saw a wonderful light,  
7 and also angels without number. •And there I saw all the righteous from the time  
8,9 of Adam onwards. •And there I saw the holy Abel and all the righteous. •And  
there I saw (Enoch) and all who (were) with him,<sup>h</sup> stripped of (their) robes of the  
flesh; and I saw them in their robes of above,<sup>i</sup> and they were like the angels who  
10 stand there in great glory. •But they were not sitting on their thrones,<sup>j</sup> nor were  
11 their crowns of glory<sup>k</sup> on them. •And I asked the angel who (was) with me,<sup>l</sup>  
“How is it that they have received these robes, but are not on (their) thrones nor  
12 in (their) crowns?” •And he said to me, “They do not receive the crowns and  
thrones of glory—nevertheless, they do see and know whose (will be) the thrones  
and whose the crowns—until the Beloved descends in the form in which you will  
13 see him descend. •The LORD will indeed descend into the world<sup>m</sup> in the last days,  
(he) who is to be called Christ after he has descended and become like you in  
14 form,<sup>n</sup> and they will think that he is flesh and a man.<sup>o</sup> •And the god of that world  
will stretch out [his hand against the Son],<sup>p</sup> and they will lay their hands upon  
15 him and hang him upon a tree,<sup>q</sup> not knowing who he is. •And thus his descent,  
as you will see, will be concealed even from the heavens so that it will not be  
16 known who he is.<sup>r</sup> •And when he has plundered the angel<sup>s</sup> of death, he will rise<sup>t</sup>  
on the third day<sup>u</sup> and will remain in that world for five hundred and forty-five  
17 days.<sup>v</sup> •And then many of the righteous will ascend with him, whose spirits do  
not receive (their) robes until the LORD Christ ascends and they ascend with him.<sup>w</sup>  
18 Then indeed they will receive their robes and<sup>x</sup> their thrones and their crowns,  
when he has ascended into the seventh heaven.”

7:22; 8:26; 9:18,  
24f.; 11:4010:8, 10, 14;  
11:19;  
1Pet 3:18–20;  
Mt 27:52f.

f. “this is your Lord . . . Jesus”: Lat2, Slav “this is the Son of God,” cf. n. w on 8:18 and n. b2 on 8:25f.

g. Apparently a reference to a secret name of Jesus, cf. 8:7; Rev 19:12. If not, it is necessary to assume that all the references to “Jesus” and “Christ” in chs. 6–11 are secondary.

h. For vs. 7–9a Lat2, Slav have only “And I saw certain righteous men,” but Greek Legend 2:27 supports Eth.

i. The heavenly robes of the righteous symbolize their transformed state; they are mentioned elsewhere in 1:5; 3:25; 4:16f.; 7:22; 8:14, 26; 9:2, 17f., 24–26; 11:40. Cf. Rev 3:4f.; 6:11; 7:9, 13f.; 4Ezra 2:39, 44f.; 2Cor 5:1–4.

j. The thrones symbolize that the righteous dead in heaven share in the reign of the Lord, cf. Rev 3:21; 4:4; Mt 19:28; Lk 22:30.

k. In the ancient world victorious athletes were crowned. In a Christian context crowns are symbols of the reward which Christians who are faithful are to enjoy in heaven, cf. Rev 2:10; 3:11; 4:4; 1Cor 9:25; 2Tim 4:7f.; Jas 1:12; 1Pet 5:4; 4Ezra 2:43–45; ShepHerm Similitudes 8:2, 1 and 3, 6.

l. “who (was) with me”: so Eth, but D adds “and I said to him”; Lat2, Slav “and I said.”

m. “into the world”: B C D omit.

n. Lit. “like your form.”

o. For vs. 12f. Slav (and similarly the corrupt Lat2) reads “And he said to me, ‘They do not receive these until this Son of God first descends; nevertheless, they know whose will be [lit. “are”] the thrones and whose the crowns when he descends and is like you in form [lit. “like your form”].”

p. “into the world”: B C D omit.  
q. For “who is to be called Christ” cf. n. b2 on

8:25f.

p. Correction based on Lat2 (which adds “of God”); Eth “by the hand of his son”; Slav corrupt.

q. “and they will lay . . . a tree”: Lat2, Slav “and he will hang him upon a tree and kill him” (Slav “and they will hang . . . and he will kill him”).

r. Lat2 (and similarly Slav) “And he will descend into hell and make it and all the phantoms of hell desolate.” Lat2, Slav differ considerably from Eth in vs. 15–17.

s. Or “prince.”

t. Lit. “ascend.”

u. Lat2 (and similarly Slav) “And he will seize the prince of death, and will plunder him, and will crush all his powers, and will rise on the third day.”

v. “and will remain . . . days”: Lat2, Slav omit and the words may be an addition to the text. The belief that Jesus remained on the earth after the resurrection for 545 days is apparently taken from gnostic sources; Irenaeus (*Adversus haereses* 1.3:2; 30:14 [PG, vol. 7, cols. 469f., 703]) states that both the Valentinians and the Ophites believed that Jesus remained with the disciples after the resurrection for eighteen months (i.e. approximately 545 days).

w. Lat2 (and similarly Slav) “having certain righteous men with him, and will send his preachers into the whole world [cf. 3:17f.; 11:22], and will ascend into heaven.” For the reference in Eth to Christ cf. n. w on 8:18.

x. “their robes and”: Lat2, Slav omit. Mention of the robes is unexpected in what is intended as an answer to the question of vs. 11; it was included

### The record of men's deeds

19,20 And I said to him what I had asked him in the third heaven, •[“Show me how  
21 everything]” which is done in that world is known here.” •And while I was still  
speaking to him, behold one of the angels who were standing by, more glorious  
22 than that angel<sup>a</sup> who had brought me up from the world, •showed me (some)  
books,<sup>a2</sup> but not like the books of this world;<sup>b2</sup> and he opened them, and the books  
had writing in them, but not like the books of this world. And they were given  
to me, and I read them, and behold the deeds of the children of Israel<sup>c2</sup> were  
23 written there, their deeds which you know, my son Josab.<sup>a2</sup> •And I said, “Truly,  
nothing which is done in this world is hidden in the seventh heaven.”<sup>a2</sup>

7:27

Dan 7:10;  
Rev 20:12;  
4Ezra 6:20;  
1En 89:61–64;  
98:6–8

### The robes and thrones and crowns

24,25 And I saw many robes placed there, and many thrones and many crowns, •and I  
said to the angel who led me, “Whose (are) these robes and thrones and crowns?”  
26 And he said to me, “As for these robes, there are many from that world who  
will receive (them)<sup>d2</sup> through believing in the words of that one who will be named  
as I have told you,<sup>d2</sup> and they will keep them, and believe in them,<sup>d2</sup> and believe  
in his cross; [for them (are) these]<sup>d2</sup> placed (here).”

7:22; 9:9f.

3:18

### The worship of the Lord

27 And I saw one standing (there) whose glory surpassed that of all,<sup>j2</sup> and his glory  
28 was great and wonderful. •And when they<sup>k2</sup> saw him, all the righteous whom I  
had seen and the angels<sup>l2</sup> came to him. And Adam and Abel and Seth and all the  
righteous approached first and worshiped him, and they all praised him with one  
voice, and I also was singing praises with them, and my praise was like theirs.<sup>m2</sup>  
29,30 And then all the angels approached, and<sup>n2</sup> worshiped, and sang praises. •And he  
31 was transformed and became like an angel.<sup>o2</sup> •And then the angel who led me  
32 said to me, “Worship this one,” and I worshiped and sang praises. •And the  
angel said to me, “This is the LORD of all the praise which you have seen.”

because both the righteous who are already in heaven (vs. 7–12) and the righteous who ascend with Christ (vs. 17) are in mind in Eth.

y. Correction based on Lat2, Slav; Eth “and he said to me, ‘Everything.’”

z. Lit. “more glorious than the glory of that angel.”

a2. Lat2, Slav “a book” (and consequently singular for plural in the rest of the vs).

b2. “but not . . . this world”: lacking in Lat2, Slav, and probably a doublet.

c2. “of the children of Israel”: Lat2, Slav “of Jerusalem.”

d2. “and their deeds . . . Josab”: so Eth; Slav “and I saw the deeds of men whom I did not know”; Lat2 corrupt, but refers to “the deeds of all men.”

e2. Lat2, Slav add “And I asked the angel, ‘Who is that person who is pre-eminent over all [Slav omits “all”] the angels in his glory?’ And he answered and said to me, ‘That [Slav “That pre-eminent angel”] is the great angel [Slav “archangel”] Michael, ever praying on behalf of humanity.’” Cf. Lat2, Slav in vs. 29, 42.

f2. Lat2 (and similarly Slav) “These robes many from that world will lose.” On this text the one in whose words they believe is presumably meant to be the Antichrist, but there is then nothing in chs.

6–11 to which this statement might refer, and vs. 26 is no longer an answer to vs. 25.

g2. “who will . . . told you”: so Eth, cf. vs. 5; Lat2, Slav “about whom I told you.” Lat2, Slav omit the rest of vs. 26.

h2. B C D “him.”

i2. Correction; A C “but for them (they are)”; B D “for whom (they are).”

j2. “one standing . . . of all”: Lat2, Slav “the Lord in great glory.”

k2. A “I.”

l2. A adds “whom I had seen”; D “all the righteous and the angels whom [I] had seen.”

m2. Lat2, Slav are much shorter than Eth in vs. 27f. and omit mention of Adam, Abel, and Seth; cf. n. h on vs. 9.

n2. Lat2, Slav “And then [Lat2 omits “then”] Michael approached and worshiped, and with him all the angels”; cf. n. e2 on vs. 23.

o2. The meaning seems to be that the appearance of Jesus was transformed for the sake of Isaiah (cf. vs. 33, 37). Lat2, Slav (preferred by some commentators) read “And again I was transformed and became like an angel [Lat2 “the angels”].” But the transformation of Isaiah took place progressively as he ascended from heaven to heaven (7:25), and mention of it here comes too late; in any case, the easier reading “I” is unlikely to be original.

### The worship of the angel of the Holy Spirit

33 And while I was still speaking,<sup>p2</sup> I saw another glorious (person) who was like him, and the righteous approached him, and worshiped, and sang praises, and I also sang praises with them; but his glory<sup>q2</sup> was not transformed to accord with<sup>q2</sup> their form. •And then the angels approached and worshiped him.<sup>q2</sup> •And I saw 36 the LORD and the second angel, and they were standing, •and the second one whom I saw (was) on the left of my LORD. And I asked the angel who led me and I said to him,<sup>q2</sup> "Who is this one?" And he said to me, "Worship him, for this is the angel of the Holy Spirit who has spoken<sup>q2</sup> in you and also in the other righteous."<sup>q2</sup>

### The worship of God

37 And I saw the Great Glory while the eyes of my spirit were open, but I could not thereafter see,<sup>q2</sup> nor the angel who (was) with me, nor any of the angels whom I had seen worship my LORD. •But I saw the righteous as they beheld with great 39 power<sup>q2</sup> the glory of that one. •And my<sup>q2</sup> LORD approached me, and the angel of the Spirit, and said,<sup>q2</sup> "See how it has been given to you to see the LORD,<sup>q3</sup> and (how) because of you power has been given to the angel who (is) with you."<sup>q3</sup> 40 And I saw how my LORD and the angel of the Holy Spirit worshiped and <sup>b3</sup> both together praised the LORD.<sup>q3</sup> •And then all the righteous approached and worshiped,<sup>q3</sup> 42 and the angels<sup>q3</sup> approached and worshiped, and all the angels sang praises.

### The worship of the Father by the six lower heavens

1 **10** And then I heard the voices and the hymns of praise which I had heard in 2 each of the six heavens—which I had heard as I ascended<sup>a</sup> there;<sup>b</sup> and all (the voices and hymns of praise) were directed to that Glorious One<sup>c</sup> whose glory I 3 could not see.<sup>d</sup> •And I also heard and saw the praise (which was directed to) him, 4 and the LORD and the angel of the Spirit heard everything and saw everything.<sup>e</sup> 5 And all the praise which was sent (up) from the six heavens was not only heard,

p2. Slav "while he was still speaking"; Lat2 omits.

q2. "his glory"; so Eth; Lat2, Slav "he." The glory of the Holy Spirit was not such that it needed transformation for the sake of Isaiah; contrast vs. 30. However, some commentators would emend the text to read "my glory."

r2. Lit. "according to."

s2. "him"; so B, Lat2, Slav; A C D omit. Slav adds "And the angel said to me, 'Worship him and sing praises.' And I worshiped him and sang praises." Lat2 adds the second sentence.

t2. "the angel . . . to him"; so D; A B omit; C "him." For vs. 35, 36a Lat2, Slav read "And again I saw the other one in great glory. And I asked the angel who was walking [Lat2 "And walking, I asked the angel"]."

u2. Lat2, Slav "speaks."

v2. Vss. 35f. were used by the heretic Hieracas according to Epiphanius (*AdvHaer* 67:3), who quotes them. The text of Epiphanius is fuller than that of Eth and of Lat2, Slav, and contains elements which only occur separately in the two textual traditions. See "Composite Character of the Ascension," and n. 29.

w2. Lat2, Slav "And after these things another indescribable glory was revealed which, although the eyes of my spirit were open, I could not see."

x2. Lat2, Slav "in great glory." The righteous

dead, but not the angels, can look at the glory of God, cf. Rev. 22:4; for the privileged position of the righteous cf. also vs. 28, 33, 41.

y2. B C D "the."

z2. C D add "to me."

a3. Apparently an allusion to the momentary vision of God which, according to Eth in vs. 37, Isaiah was granted.

b3. B C D "how he worshiped my Lord and the angel of the Spirit, and they."

c3. For vs. 39f. Lat2 (similarly Slav) has only "And first my Lord approached, and the spiritual angel, and they worshiped him and [both] together sang praises."

d3. A C D add by mistake "and all the righteous" (C without "and"); B omits these words by homoeoteleuton together with the preceding "approached and worshiped."

e3. Lat2, Slav include a reference to Michael, cf. n. e2 on vs. 23.

10 a. "as I ascended"; B "ascending."

b. Lat2, Slav corrupt, but Lat2 points to a text "which I had heard in the six heavens, ascending and being heard in the seventh heaven."

c. Lat2, Slav "And all praised that One"; D "and all praised that Glorious One."

d. D adds "to him (the praise) was directed."

e. Lat2, Slav omit vs. 3f.

10:16; 11:32;  
1En 14:20  
1En 14:21

8:8

7:16f.

9:37

6 but seen. •And I heard the angel who led me, and he said to me,<sup>f</sup> "This is the Most High of the high ones, who dwells in the holy world,<sup>g</sup> who rests among the holy ones,<sup>h</sup> who will be called<sup>i</sup> by the Holy Spirit in the mouth of the righteous the Father of the LORD."

### The Lord Christ is commissioned by the Father

7 And I heard the voice of the Most High, the Father of my LORD, as he said to 8 my LORD Christ, who will be called Jesus,<sup>j</sup> "Go out and descend through all the heavens. You shall descend through the firmament and through that world as far 9 as the angel who (is) in Sheol,<sup>k</sup> but you shall not go as far as Perdition.<sup>l</sup> •And 10 you shall make your likeness like that of all who (are) in the five heavens,<sup>m</sup> •and you shall take care to make your form like that of the angels of the firmament 11 and also (like that) of the angels who (are) in Sheol.<sup>n</sup> •And none of the angels<sup>o</sup> of that world shall know that you (are) LORD with me of the seven heavens and 12 of their angels. And they shall not know that you (are) with me •when<sup>p</sup> with the voice of the heavens<sup>q</sup> I summon you,<sup>r</sup> and their angels and their lights,<sup>s</sup> and when I lift up (my voice)<sup>t</sup> to the sixth heaven, that you may judge and destroy the 13 princes and the angels and the gods of that world, and the world which is ruled by them,<sup>u</sup> •for they have denied me and said, 'We alone are, and there is no one 14 besides us.'<sup>v</sup> •And afterwards you shall ascend from the gods of death to your place,<sup>w</sup> and you shall not be transformed in each of the heavens, but in glory you 15 shall ascend and sit at my right hand, •and then the princes and the powers of 16 that world<sup>x</sup> will worship you."<sup>y</sup> •This command I heard the Great Glory giving to my LORD.

9:16; 10:10, 14;  
11:19

1Cor 2:8

Ps 50:4

7:12

4:6  
10:8

11:32  
Phil 2:10  
9:37

### The descent of the Lord through the seven heavens

17 And thus<sup>a</sup> I saw when my LORD went out from the seventh heaven into the sixth 18 heaven. •And the angel who had led me from this<sup>b</sup> world was with me, and he said to me, "Understand, Isaiah, and look, that you may see the transformation

(. . . "to me": A B omit.

g. Lat2, Slav "This is the one eternal (being), who dwells in the high world."

h. The description of God is based on the LXX text of Isa 57:15, cf. n. j on 6:8. Lat2, Slav add "whose name and appearance we cannot endure."

i. Lat2, Slav "who is praised" and omit "the Father of the Lord."

j. Lat2, Slav "the voice of the Eternal One saying to the Lord, the Son," but Greek Legend 2:37 supports Eth; cf. n. w on 8:18 and n. b2 on 8:25f.

k. B C D add "you shall descend."

l. The Eth. word *haguel*, which means "perdition," "destruction" is probably intended here as the name of the final place of punishment for the wicked; cf. Job 26:6; 28:22; Ps 88:11; Prov 15:11, where the word rendered in JB as "Perdition" is the Heb. *haddon*, i.e. "(place of) destruction." "Abaddon" occurs as the name of the angel of the Abyss in Rev 9:11. "You shall descend . . . Perdition"; Lat2, Slav "You shall be in the world, and go as far as the angel who is in hell."

m. I.e. in the five lower heavens; in the sixth heaven he retains his divine form, cf. vs. 19.

n. Lat2, Slav abbreviate vs. 9 and omit vs. 10.

o. Or "rulers."

p. "And they shall . . . when"; so A B D. Jesus will only be recognized by the angels of this world when he has actually ascended to heaven to sit at the right hand of God, cf. vs. 14f. It is thus possible to make sense of the text. However, some

commentators have thought the text unintelligible and have emended it to read "And they shall not know that you (are) with me until"; a simpler alternative would be to omit the negative: "But they shall know that you (are) with me when."

For Lat2, Slav see n. u. C has "then" for "when" in both places in vs. 12.

q. I.e. with thunder.

r. "you": A omits (hence "summon both their angels and . . .").

s. The angels and lights of heaven are meant.

t. "and when I lift up (my voice)": probable interpretation, text obscure. The sixth heaven is singled out for mention because, in association with the seventh, it enjoys a special status; thus e.g. the Lord does not change his appearance in the sixth heaven, cf. vs. 19.

u. For vs. 11f. Lat2, Slav have only "And they will not recognize you, nor will the angels and the princes of that world; and you will judge the prince of that world [Slav omits "of that world"] and his angels, and the world ruled by them [Lat2 "and the rulers of the world"]."

v. B "And after you have died and risen, you shall ascend to your place"; Lat2 omits; Slav "And when you have been raised from the earth, afterwards."

w. Lat2 (similarly Slav) "the princes and the powers and all the angels and all the rulers of heaven and earth and hell."

x. Lat2, Slav "then."

y. B "that."

19 and descent of the LORD." •And I looked, and when the angels who (were) in the sixth heaven saw him, they praised him and glorified him, for he had not been transformed into the form of the angels there; and they praised him, and I also sang praises with them. •And I saw when he descended into the fifth heaven, that in the fifth heaven he made his form like that of the angels there, and they did not praise him, for his form was like theirs. •And then he descended into the fourth heaven and made his form like that of the angels there; •and when they saw him, they did not praise him or glorify him, for his form (was) like their form. 23 And again I saw when he descended into the third heaven, that he made his form like that of the angels who (were) in the third heaven. •And those who kept the gate of the (third) heaven demanded the password, and the LORD gave (it) to them in order that he should not be recognized;<sup>z</sup> and when they saw him, they did not praise him or glorify him, for his form (was) like their form. •And again I saw when he descended into the second heaven, that there again he gave the password, for those who kept the gates demanded (it), and the LORD gave (it). •And I saw when he made his form like that of the angels who (were) in the second heaven, that they saw him, but did not praise him, for his form (was) like their form. 27 And again I saw when he descended into the first heaven, that there he gave the password to those who kept the gates. And he made his form like that of the angels who (were) on the left of that throne, and they did not praise him or glorify him, for his form (was) like their form. •And as for me, no one questioned me because of the angel who led me. •And again he descended into the firmament where the prince of this world dwells, and he gave the password to those who (were) on the left, and his form (was) like theirs, and they did not praise him there; but in envy they were fighting one another, for there is there a power of evil<sup>a2</sup> and envying about trifles.<sup>b2</sup> •And I saw when he descended and made himself like the angels of the air, that he was like one of them. •And he did not give the password, for they were plundering and doing violence to one another.<sup>c2</sup>

### The miraculous birth of the Lord

1 **11** And after this I looked, and the angel who spoke to me and led me said to me, "Understand, Isaiah son of Amoz, because for this purpose I was sent from the LORD."<sup>a</sup> •And I saw a woman of the family of David the prophet whose name (was) Mary, and she (was) a virgin and was betrothed to a man whose name (was) Joseph, a carpenter, and he also (was) of the seed and family of the righteous David of Bethlehem in Judah. •And he came into his lot.<sup>b</sup> And when she was betrothed, she was found to be pregnant, and Joseph the carpenter wished to divorce her. •But the angel of the Spirit appeared in this world,<sup>c</sup> and after this Joseph did not divorce Mary;<sup>d</sup> but he did not reveal this matter to anyone. •And he did not approach Mary, but kept her as a holy virgin, although she was pregnant. •And he did not live with her for two months. •And after two months of days, while Joseph was in his house, and Mary<sup>e</sup> his wife,<sup>f</sup> but both alone, •it came about, when they were alone, that Mary then looked with her eyes and saw a small infant, and she was astounded. •And after her astonishment had worn

z. "And those . . . recognized": B omits.  
a2. B C D "an evil power there."  
b2. "but . . . trifles": Lat2, Slav omit.  
c2. "for they . . . another": Lat2 "and they did not sing praises"; Slav "and they did not question him."

11 a. Lat2, Slav add "to show you all things. For no one before you has seen, nor after you will be able to see, what you have seen and heard. And I saw one like a son of man, and he dwelt with men in the world, and they did not recognize him." Lat2, Slav thereafter omit the whole of vs. 2-22.

b. The fate decreed him by God; it was God's plan that Joseph should marry Mary; cf. vs. 10 and ProJames 9:1, "And the priest said to Joseph, 'It has fallen to your lot to receive the virgin of the Lord.'" Cf. ProJames 19:1.  
c. "in this world": B "to him."  
d. B C "did not divorce her, but kept Mary"; after "divorce" in A D a word has been erased.  
e. B C "in the house, and Mary"; D "in the house of Mary."  
f. "his wife": so C; B "his betrothed wife"; A D have an erasure.

Acts 2:30;  
11Qp<sup>a</sup> 27.11

Mt 1:18-21

10 off,<sup>a</sup> her womb was found as (it was) at first, before she had conceived. •And when her husband,<sup>b</sup> Joseph, said to her, "What has made you astounded?" his eyes were opened, and he saw the infant and praised the LORD, because the LORD had come in his lot.<sup>c</sup> •And a voice came to them, "Do not tell this vision to anyone."<sup>d</sup> •But the story about the infant was spread abroad in Bethlehem. •Some said, "The virgin Mary has given birth before she has been married<sup>d</sup> two months."<sup>e</sup> But many said, "She did not give birth; the midwife did not go up (to her), and we did not hear (any) cries of pain."<sup>f</sup> And they were all blinded concerning him; they all knew about him, but<sup>g</sup> they did not know from where he was. •And they took him and went to Nazareth in Galilee. •And I saw, O Hezekiah and Josab my son, and say to the other prophets also who are standing by, that it was hidden from all the heavens and all the princes and every god of this world.

### The infancy and life of the Lord

17 And I saw (that) in Nazareth he sucked the breast like an infant, as was customary, that he might not be recognized. •And when he had grown up, he performed great signs and miracles in the land of Israel and (in) Jerusalem.

### The crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord

19 And after this the adversary envied him and roused the children of Israel, who did not know who he was, against him. And they handed him to the ruler,<sup>h</sup> and crucified him, and he descended<sup>i</sup> to the angel<sup>h</sup> who (is) in Sheol.<sup>o</sup> •In Jerusalem, indeed, I saw how they crucified him on a tree, •and likewise (how) after the third day he rose and remained (many) days.<sup>p</sup>

### The ascension of the Lord through the seven heavens

22 And the angel who led me said to me, "Understand, Isaiah." And I saw when he<sup>q</sup> sent out the twelve disciples and ascended. •And I saw him,<sup>r</sup> and he was in the firmament,<sup>s</sup> but was not transformed into their form. And all the angels of the firmament, and Satan, saw him and worshiped. •And there was much sorrow there as they said, "How did our LORD descend upon us, and we did not notice the glory which was upon him," which we (now) see was<sup>t</sup> upon him from the sixth heaven?<sup>u</sup> •And he ascended into the second heaven,<sup>v</sup> and he was not transformed, but all the angels who (were) on the right and on the left, and the throne in the middle, •worshiped him, and praised him, and said, "How did our LORD remain hidden from us as he descended, and we did not notice?" •And in the same way

g. Lit. "after she had been astounded."  
h. "her husband": so C; omitted by B, erased in A and (apparently) D.  
i. "his lot": cf. n. b on vs. 3.  
j. "she has been married": so C; D (over an erasure) "she has been betrothed"; in A B the word has been erased.  
k. C "they all believed in him, but"; B D "no one believed in him, and." Vs. 14 is apparently quoted in the Acts of Peter 24.  
l. "ruler": a word normally translated "king," but it is presumably Pilate who is meant (cf. Mt 27:2).  
m. B C D "and caused him to descend."  
n. B C "angels."  
o. "who (is) in Sheol": so D, cf. Greek Legend 2:39 "the angel of Hades"; A B C omit.  
p. A B D have only "days," with the sense "many days"; C "forty days" (cf. Acts 1:3). It has been suggested that originally Eth read "five hundred and forty-five days," as in 9:16.  
q. "the Lord."

r. "him": B C D omit.  
s. Lat2, Slav "And I saw him ascending into the firmament."  
t. B C "the."  
u. "which was upon him": possibly a doublet of the following clause.  
v. Lit. "was found."  
w. As he descended Christ retained the glory which he possessed in the seventh and sixth heavens (cf. 10:19), but kept it concealed; as he ascended Christ's proper glory (cf. vs. 29) was recognized by all. For vs. 24 Slav reads, "They said, 'How was the Lord concealed from us in (our) midst, and we did not recognize the king of glory?'" Lat2 corrupt. The text appears to be defective at this point in Eth and Lat2, Slav, for we expect a reference to the ascent of the Lord into the first heaven.  
x. Lat2, Slav "And from the first heaven he ascended more glorious."  
y. B C D "the."

Ignatius, Epistle  
to the Ephesians  
19

3:20

9:16; 10:8, 10,  
14

3:17f.;  
Mt 28:18-20;  
Acts 1:8f.  
2:2

he ascended into the third (heaven), and in the same way they praised him and  
 28 spoke. •And in the fourth heaven and also in the fifth they spoke in exactly the  
 29,30 same way. •But there was one glory, and from it he was not transformed. •And  
 I saw when he ascended into the sixth heaven, that they worshiped him and praised  
 31,32 him; •but in all the heavens the praise grew louder. •And I saw how he ascended  
 into the seventh heaven, and all the righteous and all the angels praised him. And  
 then I saw that he sat down at the right hand of that Great Glory, whose glory I  
 33 told you I could not behold. •And also I saw that the angel of the Holy Spirit sat  
 on the left.

10:14  
 9:37  
 9:36

### The conclusion of the vision

34 This angel said to me, "Isaiah, son of Amoz, [it is enough for you],<sup>a2</sup> for these  
 (are) great things, for you have observed what no one born of flesh has observed."<sup>b1</sup>  
 35 And you shall return into your robe until your days are complete; then you shall  
 come here." These things I saw.

8:11  
 8:27

### Isaiah's instructions to Hezekiah

36 And Isaiah told (them)<sup>a2</sup> to all those who were standing before him, and they sang  
 praises. And he spoke to Hezekiah the king and said, "These things I have spoken.  
 37,38 And the end of this world •and all this vision will be brought about in the last  
 39 generation." •And Isaiah made him<sup>a2</sup> swear that he would not tell this<sup>a2</sup> to the  
 people of Israel, and that he would not allow any man to copy these words.<sup>b2</sup>  
 40 And then<sup>a2</sup> they<sup>b2</sup> shall read them.<sup>b2</sup> But as for you, be<sup>b2</sup> in the Holy Spirit that  
 you may receive your robes, and the thrones and crowns of glory, which are  
 41 placed in the seventh heaven. •Because of these visions and prophecies Sammael  
 Satan sawed Isaiah the son of Amoz, the prophet, in half by the hand of Manasseh.  
 42 And Hezekiah gave all these things to Manasseh in the twenty-sixth year of his  
 43 reign.<sup>b2</sup> •But Manasseh did not remember these things, nor place them in his  
 heart, but he became the servant of Satan and was destroyed.<sup>b2</sup>

7:22; 9:9f.  
 5:1; 15f.  
 1:8; 2:2  
 1:1  
 2:1  
 1:8

Here ends (the book) of Isaiah the prophet with his ascension.<sup>m2</sup>

z. For vs. 27–30 Lat2, Slav have a shorter text.  
 a2. Correction based on Lat2, Slav; Eth "I have saved you."  
 b2. Lat2, Slav add "what eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, how great things God has prepared for all [Slav omits "all"] those who love him [Lat2 "you"]"; cf. Isa 64:4; 1Cor 2:9. Jerome (*Commentary on Isaiah* 64:4 [PL, vol. 24, col. 622]) states that Ascens has this passage and thus indicates that here at least the text of Ascens he knew is the one given in Lat2, Slav. For the title "the Ascension of Isaiah" in Jerome, see "Composite Character of the Ascension."  
 c2. "These things . . . told (them)": Lat2, Slav "These things Isaiah saw and told."  
 d2. D "Hezekiah."  
 e2. "this": A B D, Lat2, Slav omit.  
 f2. This statement is part of the apocalyptic fiction which was intended to explain how the account of Isaiah's vision had remained unknown from the time of its supposed composition in the

reign of Hezekiah to the time of its actual composition in the early Christian era. Cf. 6:17.  
 g2. "then": apparently "in the last generation" (vs. 38), cf. Dan 12:4, 9. But the sequence of thought is not very clear, and Eth may be defective; see n. i2.  
 h2. B C D "you."  
 i2. "And then . . . read them": so Eth; Slav "But as far as you understand what is said by the king in the prophets, understand such things, all of you"; Lat2 corrupt.  
 j2. Slav "watch."  
 k2. "of his reign": A C omit.  
 l2. Vss. 41–43 are an editorial conclusion which serves to link Visis (chs. 6–11) with Martls (chs. 1–5). For these vs. Lat2, Slav have "And he ceased speaking and went out from (the presence of) Hezekiah the king."  
 m2. B, Slav omit; C "Here ends the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, with his ascension"; D "Here ends the ascension of Isaiah the prophet"; Lat2 "The vision of Isaiah is ended."

## JOSEPH AND ASENETH

(First Century B.C.—Second Century A.D.)

### A NEW TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION

BY C. BURCHARD

The Old Testament records that Pharaoh gave to Joseph Aseneth, the daughter of Potiphara, priest of On, for his wife (Gen 41:45). How could Joseph—the model of chastity, piety, and statesmanship—marry a foreign Hamitic girl, daughter of an idolatrous priest? Jewish theology and lore found many answers to this intriguing question and expanded some into narratives. Joseph and Aseneth, the longest of these stories, is a full-fledged romance by an anonymous author; it is nearly twice as long as Esther, and a little longer than the Gospel of Mark.

Aseneth is a beautiful virgin of eighteen years and the daughter of Pentephres,<sup>2</sup> priest of Heliopolis and Pharaoh's chief counselor. Many princes, including Pharaoh's firstborn son, ask for her hand in marriage. She despises them all and prefers to live in her ornate penthouse above Pentephres' palace, where she worships countless idols. One day Joseph, touring Egypt to collect corn, announces his visit to her father. Pentephres tells Aseneth he is going to give her to Joseph in marriage. She refuses flatly, only to fall in love with Joseph when she sees him entering her father's house in royal attire. Now it is her time to be repudiated. A Jew who worships God and lives on the bread of life will not kiss a heathen woman who eats food offered to idols. Still Joseph is charitable enough to say a prayer for her conversion, then boards his chariot in order to gather more corn, promising to be back a week later. Utterly shaken, Aseneth destroys her idols, engages in a week of fasting and crying, and repents for both her conceit and idolatry. On the morning of the eighth day, the chief of God's angels comes to see her, declares her reborn, tells her that she is to be a mother city for all who would repent like her, feeds her a piece of honeycomb, which he says is the bread of life, and promises her that Joseph will come to marry her. He does, and the wedding ensues, performed and presided over by Pharaoh himself.

Eight years later, Pharaoh's firstborn son happens to see Aseneth by chance and his old infatuation is revived. He fails to persuade Joseph's brothers, Simeon and Levi, to help him kidnap Aseneth and assume power in Egypt by killing Pharaoh and Joseph. He then tries Dan and Gad and achieves more success. He gives them troops; and the three set up an ambush for Aseneth, who is driving to her vineyard. However, Benjamin, who is sitting beside her in the carriage, wounds Pharaoh's son with a stone and kills his escorts. Levi, being a prophet, divines what is going on and comes running with his brothers—Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun—to slay Dan and Gad's men. These two attempt to kill Aseneth, but miraculously their swords fall from their hands. Aseneth pardons them and intercedes for them with her in-laws. Three days later Pharaoh's son dies, closely followed by his grief-stricken father. Joseph then reigns over Egypt for forty-eight years.

<sup>1</sup> Aptowitzer, "Aseneth, the Wife of Joseph: A Haggadic Literary-Historical Study," *HUCA* 1 (1924) 239–306; Ginsberg, *Legends*, vol. 2, pp. 170–78; also see esp. vol. 5, pp. 336–39, 374f.  
<sup>2</sup> As to the name form, see note on 1:3.