

La Lettre de Pierre à Philippe

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Addressed by Peter to the apostle Philip, this nine page document presents itself as a letter, like *Eugnostos*, the *Apocryphon of James*, and the *Treatise on the Resurrection*. Its form and its content, however, parallel Gnostic revelatory dialogues like the *Dialogue of the Saviour*, which put typically Gnostic teachings into the mouth of the resurrected Saviour. As much as it is a letter attributed to Peter, this document is connected to the Petrine tradition, a tradition which includes the first part of the canonical *Acts of the Apostles*, the letters of the *New Testament* attributed to Peter, as well as some other documents, such as the Apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* and, from Nag Hammadi, the *Apocalypse of Peter*. On the other hand, in addition to being a revelatory dialogue between the resurrected Saviour and his disciples, the text also testifies to the productivity of stories about Resurrection appearances during the first Christian centuries. Thus, undoubtedly, we are faced with a document produced in a Christian environment and which seeks to situate itself within Christian traditions.

The doctrinal content of the teachings attributed to the Saviour and reported by Peter, assuming typically Valentinian formulations, concerns the deficiency that occurred in the Pleroma and the combat let by the spirituals against the powers.

The form of the creed reported at 139,15-21 is remarkably orthodox:

Our illuminator, Jesus, has descended
and he has been crucified,
and he wore a crown of thorns,
and he was dressed in a purple garment,
and he has been nailed to a tree
and he has been buried in a tomb
and he has risen from the dead.

This creed, however, is immediately followed by a docetic interpretation: "My brothers, Jesus was a stranger to this suffering, but it is us who have suffered by the transgression of the Mother," an interpretation which recalls the teachings regarding the passion contained in the *Second Treatise of the Great Seth*, the *Apocalypse of Peter* of codex VII and in the *Apocryphal Gospel of Peter*.

Thanks to the discovery and publication of Codex Tchacos, we now possess a second Coptic version of the *Letter of Peter to Philip*—although this version is, sadly, is very badly preserved.