

CAVE OF TREASURES (OCCIDENTAL RECENSION)¹

§2

Regarding the making of Adam.

During the first week, on Friday, while stillness ruled over all the hosts of heaven, God the Father said to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: 'Come, let Us make humanity in Our image and in accordance with Our likeness.' When the heavenly hosts heard this sound, they grew agitated and said to one another: 'Presently we will behold a great marvel—the form of our God and our Creator!'

They watched God's right hand as it reached out and spread open beyond the entire world, and gathered into the palm of His hand every created thing which He had created. They observed that He took from the whole earth (only) a particle of dirt, and from all the fluid substances (only) a drop of water, and from the entire upper atmosphere (only the) 'living soul,'² and from the element of fire (only some) heat. The angels watched while those scant parts of the four elements were compounded, (and) God made Adam. [Why did God construct Adam from the elements?]³ Only to indicate through these (elements) that everything which is in him will be subject to him: the particle of dirt (indicates) that all substances originating from earth will be subject to him; the drop of water (indicates) that everything in the seas and rivers will belong to him; the breath of air (indicates) that all the beings who fly through the air will be his; and the heat from fire (indicates) that the angels and powers exist for his benefit.

And God formed Adam with His (own) holy hands, in His (own) image and in His (own) likeness. And when the angels beheld the image and glorious appearance of Adam, they trembled before the splendor of his form, for they noticed that the form of his face when lit with the splendor of glory resembled (that of) the solar disk, and that the light of his eyes (was as bright) as the rays of the sun, and that the form of his body shone like gleaming crystal. When he stretched himself out and stood up at the

¹ Translated from the edition published by Su-Min Ri, *La caverne des trésors: Les deux recensions syriaques* (CSCO 486, scrip. syri t. 207; Louvain: E. Peeters, 1987), 13-27.

² Cf. Gen 2:7.

³ Such an insertion is required by the context; compare the Oriental recension.

center of the earth,⁴ he positioned his feet at the very spot where the Cross of Our Savior will be erected. There he donned royal garments, and had placed on his head a crown of glory, and was appointed king, priest, and prophet. There also God set him upon the throne of kingship.⁵ All the wild animals and winged creatures and cattle were gathered together (in order to) pass before Adam, and Adam designated their names, and they bowed their heads (before him) and worshiped him.

The angels and powers of heaven heard the voice of God when He spoke to him: ‘Adam, I have appointed you (to be) king, priest, prophet, lord, chief, and governor over all (those things) that have been made and created. To you alone I have given them, and to you I grant authority over everything that I have created.’ When the angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, cherubim, seraphim, and all the powers of heaven heard [this declaration, all of the celestial ranks praised and worshiped him (i.e., Adam)].⁶

§3

However, when the leader of the lowest celestial rank saw that awesome power had been given to Adam, he became jealous of him and refused to worship him alongside the angels. He said to his powers: ‘Do not worship him, and do not praise (him) in company with the (other) angels! Rather, it is more fitting that he should worship me, since I (was created from) fire and spirit; I shall not worship dirt (or) that which was formed from dust!’ While he thought these things, he became rebellious and disobedient, and thus of his own free will voluntarily separated himself from God, (and) was cast down and fell (from heaven), he and the whole of his company.⁷ On the sixth day; i.e., Friday, at the second hour, they were stripped of their glory. Hence his name (i.e., their leader) is called ‘Satan’ because he ‘turned away’ (from God),⁸

⁴ For Jerusalem or Mt. Zion as the ‘center of the earth,’ see Ezek 5:5; *1 En.* 90:26; *Jub.* 8:19; *b. Yoma* 54b. These references are taken from A. J. Wensinck, *The Ideas of the Western Semites Concerning the Navel of the Earth* (Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, 1916), 21-23, 27-28.

⁵ The exegetical background for the royal office of Adam is Ps 8:6-7.

⁶ Compare *Gen. Rab.* 8.10 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, 63-64), although this source views angelic worship of Adam to be an error. David Halperin suggests it is a polemic against views like the one found in the *Cave of Treasures* text (*Faces*, 102).

⁷ Cf. *Vita Adae et Evae* 12-17; *Berešit Rabbati* (ed. Albeck), 24-25; Q 2:34-36; 7:11-18; 15:28-38; 17:61; 18:50; 20:116; 38:71-78; Heinrich Speyer, *Die biblischen Erzählungen im Qoran* (repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1988), 54-58.

⁸ See Ephrem, *Carmina Nisibena* 54.9; idem, *Hymnen contra Haereses* 26.4.10; Kronholm, *Motifs*, 92 n.20.

‘Demon’ because he ‘was cast down,’ and ‘Devil’ because he ‘lost’ his garment of glory.⁹ And from that time forth they (the satanic rank) became naked and of hideous appearance. After Satan was expelled from heaven, Adam was elevated to ascend to Paradise in a chariot of fire while the angels sang praises before him and the seraphim chanted the *Qedušah* and the cherubim praised him, and with trumpet-blasts and hymns Adam entered Paradise.¹⁰

At the third hour on Friday he was commanded by God not to eat from the tree which was in the middle of Paradise. Then God cast a state of sleep upon Adam, and he slept. He removed the tenth rib from his right side, and fashioned Eve from it. When Adam awoke and beheld her, he rejoiced in her. And Adam and Eve were in Paradise, gloriously clothed and radiating splendor, for three hours.

Now Paradise was elevated three spans above all the tallest mountains¹¹—according to¹² the measure of the spirit¹³—and it surrounded the entire earth.¹⁴ For the blessed Moses said: ‘God planted a garden in the midst of Eden, and placed there the man whom He had made.’¹⁵ Eden is (actually) the Holy Church, that congregation by which the mercy of God will eventually be dispersed throughout the whole of humanity. Since God knew—due to his foreknowledge—what Satan plotted against Adam, the matter was foreordained, as the blessed David said in the Psalter: ‘Lord, You are an abode for us that is eternal,’¹⁶ for this (means) in Your mercy [You have acted for us].¹⁷ And when he (David?) petitions God, he said: ‘Remember Your congregation which You created long ago,’¹⁸ for this (means) that mercy which You

⁹ Note *Acta Archelai* 36(32).4: *ex hoc enim et appellatus est diabolus, eo quod transitum fecerit de caelestibus et quod in terris mandato dei obtrectator existeret*. ‘For this reason also has he obtained the name of *devil*, because he has passed over from the heavenly places, and appeared on earth as the disparager of God’s commandment.’ Text quoted from Hegemonius, *Acta Archelai* (GCS 16; ed. Charles Henry Beeson; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1906), 51; translation is from *ANF* 6:205.

¹⁰ See Reeves, *Heralds*, 75-76 and the pertinent notes.

¹¹ Note the tradition attributed to Ben Zoma in *Gen. Rab.* 2.4 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, 17) that ‘about two or three fingers’ (כשתים ושלש אצבעות) was the distance between the cosmological upper and lower waters; cf. also *b. Hag.* 15a; *y. Hag.* 77a-b; and compare *t. Hag.* 2.6. According to *m. Yoma* 5.2, the stone upon which the ark was installed (the אבן השתיה) was elevated ‘three fingers’ above ground level (גבוהה מן הארץ שלשה אצבעות).

¹² Significance of אצבע?

¹³ This unusual standard presumably relies upon Ephrem’s notion that Paradise was not a material realm, and thus terrestrial measurements are irrelevant for determining its cosmic locale. See Kronholm, *Motifs*, 68-69.

¹⁴ Compare Ephrem, *Hymnen de Paradiso* 1.4.2; 1.8.4; 2.6.4ff.

¹⁵ Paraphrase of Gen 2:8 (Peshitta).

¹⁶ Ps 90:1. Note that this psalm is ascribed to Moses, not David!

¹⁷ Some such restoration is required. Compare the Oriental recension.

¹⁸ Ps 74:2.

intend to spread over our fallible race. Eden being the Holy Church, the Paradise in its midst (represents) the portion of rest and the place of life which God has prepared for His saints.¹⁹

¹⁹ For the *topos* of Eden as a prefiguration of the Christian Church, see the discussion of Robert Murray, *Symbols of Church and Kingdom: A Study in Early Syriac Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 257-62.