

## Pistis Sophia and Demons of the Afterlife

### Introduction

Pistis Sophia is documented in a single extant manuscript preserved in the Codex Askewianus. It was originally composed in Greek but survives only in its Sahidic Coptic translation. The Coptic text appears to be a compositum of various text traditions and may not faithfully reflect the Greek Vorlage. The Coptic translation is commonly dated to between the third and fourth centuries, but the original Greek text may be dated to different earlier redaction periods. The work originated in Egypt as the numerous references to Egyptian locales, deities and lore indicate.

Pistis Sophia is fashioned as a post-resurrection revelatory discourse by Jesus to his gathered disciples. It is a long and complex narrative in which Jesus discloses heavenly and cosmic mysteries offering rich mythological details complemented by elaborate ritual instructions.

The work is divided into four books. These demonstrate important differences in the mythological and cosmological descriptions. Accordingly, the work does not show a coherent character but seems to have been a compilation of various traditions and even separate narratives. Pistis Sophia demonstrates a specific eschatological perspective, based upon contemporary cosmological and astrological beliefs and ideas.

Demonic entities and their functions are mentioned in several parts of the text and illustrate the belief in the power of the demonic in all cosmic and earthly realms.

Present discussion will particularly focus on those demonic entities that may be understood as “demons of the afterlife”, described in detail in the third and fourth books of the work.<sup>i</sup> These demonic figures are assigned with the punishment of the various categories of sinners in an “infernal” or “hellish” cosmic realm.

### Demons and the topography of afterlife

Pistis Sophia is probably one of the earliest books of late antiquity to develop a cosmography of afterlife, as elaborated in the third book. Afterlife chastisements take place in different locations, which correspond to compartments of an intensifying

severity of punishment. Accordingly, there exists a hierarchical order of punishment realms, Amente, the Chaos, the Midst, and the harshest of all, the Outer Darkness (III.126).

The demonology is structured around these places of punishments. The demonic universe which is established in the heavenly realm is described as an exact and detailed hierarchical structure. Demons are each allocated their respective special places for punishment.

This cosmic afterlife landscape is actually described as an animalesque, monstrous entity in the shape of a dragon, whose tail is in its mouth.<sup>ii</sup> The sinners are taken through the mouth of the dragon into the chamber of outer darkness and are enclosed there by its tail.

The outer darkness is reserved for the banishment for those souls who have no hope for restitution and will not enter the realm of light. This is a place of punishment for specific categories of severe sins, i.e. slander, erroneous or false teaching, pederasty, impiety, murder, adultery, and sorcery (III.127). It is the most painful and most extreme of all punishments, in which souls perish in the frost, hail and very fierce fire. It is located outside the world and it surrounds the world entirely.

It encompasses twelve mighty chastisement-dungeons. Their number, twelve, suggests an astrological association.<sup>iii</sup> Each dungeon has its own ruler, and each ruler has a distinctive name and a different face of a beastly appearance. The syncretistic character of the text reflects traditional Egyptian imagery, as in the description of these animal-faced demons (for example, as a crocodile or cat- and dog or boar-faced), who bear very characteristic convoluted nomina barbara (i.e. Characher, or Lamchamor; III.126).<sup>iv</sup>

More generally, the adversary powers in the world are here envisioned as beastly forces stressing thus their inherent vicious nature, which is related to the evil matter of this world. Each one of them has a name for every hour and change their face every hour, too.<sup>v</sup>

The text implies that there exist persons of a certain “type”, who are able to receive the mystery of one of the twelve names of the dungeons of the outer darkness. Accordingly, as common in late antique magic, the knowledge of the names of the dragons/demons may exercise an exorcising power and be used in order to overcome and even subdue and manipulate the demons (III.130).

The idea that the hell or place of chastisement is a huge space inside the ouroboros “dragon” divided into compartments is particularly interesting and might relate to later Christian ideas about the various circles of hell. This imagery envisions the demonic realm as an ‘underworld’ (or rather ‘upperworld’), which is imprisoned inside matter. At the same time this is a space which is very clearly separated from the heavenly world of Light.

In the description of these places and punishments, the text makes use of well-known, popular motifs, such as rivers of fire or the weeping and gnashing of teeth. Moreover, Jesus here reveals a list of moral transgressions, such as the love of world or the love of the belly, bearing false witness, slander, sorcery, etc., which are punished in the bubbling sea of fire or with garments of pitch of the “dog-face”, etc.

This list of demonic entities corresponds to a list of transgressions outlined previously in the same book as part of an exhortatory sermon delivered by Jesus, admonishing the renunciation of the world for the people in order to be worthy of the mysteries of Light (III.102). Thus, in this sermon, the description of the demonic orders is complemented by details outlining the topography and purposefulness of the dungeons and their respective rulers.

### The five great rulers

Pistis Sophia includes two distinct expositions on afterlife. In the fourth book, we encounter a new and to a great extent different and more extensive description of the demonic chastisements. The text explains in detail the names, functions, and hierarchical positions of the so-called five great rulers and their demonic entourage.<sup>vi</sup> The nomenclature includes names and combinations of names from various traditions (IV.139). The hierarchical model described in the text is related to specific demonic orders and demonstrates astrological associations. This demonic structure refers to specific sinful behaviours according to beliefs about the harmful influence of the demonic powers in the world.<sup>vii</sup>

There are five great punishing so-called “orders” or great demons, who rule upon a variable number of arch-demons, who again have under their authority a multitude of other demonic powers. Interestingly, three out of the five great demonic orders

are described as female. Gendered or other physical characteristics, such as unnaturally long hair or blackness are introduced in the imagining of the demonic.

These demons enter men and seduce them into inappropriate behaviour, such as raging, cursing, and slandering. Furthermore, they carry off the souls to their chastisements in the “dark smoke” and “wicked fire”. There the souls are tormented for a specific amount of years in the “fire of their wickedness” (i.e. of the demonic orders). There is further mention of fire-rivers and fire-seas, whereas finally, the souls are brought up to a figure, called, the Virgin of Light, to be judged.

Again, in this section, Jesus lists several sins, which are divided into broader categories, such as slander (i.e. sins of speech), murder, or adultery and more.

As can be observed there is a system in the categorisation of sins, the punishments and the number and character of demons who oversee the respective punishments.

The hierarchy of the demonic punitive realm categorises the sins punished by the different ranks according to a precise system of sin classification. The first rank punishes sins related to speech (cursing, slander) and anger. The second rank punishes sins related to fight and murder and anger, the third rank punishes sins related to lying and false oaths, the fourth rank is about sins regarding sexuality (adultery, fornication, desire)<sup>viii</sup>, whereas the fifth order relates to sins involving partiality and generally unfair behavior (wronging the poor, etc.).<sup>ix</sup>

This punitive system managed by demonic rulers in Pistis Sophia resembles the Ophite diagram discussed by Celsus and Origen, which describes seven major theriomorphic demons.<sup>x</sup> The connection with the Ophite system known to Origen is not surprising. However, it is intriguing to note that the demonology of Pistis Sophia seems at places close to the demonology of the Testament of Solomon.<sup>xi</sup> The Testament of Solomon, the most significant demonological manual of Late Antiquity, provides a detailed list of demons, their names, appearance and functions, linked with specific planets and stars and notably, -as in Pistis Sophia too – associated with specific sins or transgressions to which these demons incite the people. The similarity between the descriptions of demons found in the Testament of Solomon and the descriptions of certain demons in Pistis Sophia is compelling.

## Sin and Redemption

Pistis Sophia develops an elaborate and complex universe of punishment and correction, which refers to a long and detailed list of common moral transgressions. As observed, the various levels or circles of punishment are described as the realm of the dragons and their demonic rulers.

This grotesque mechanism of moral correction functions according to a “standard” system of worldly values. The text condemns certain sins, such as cursing or slander but categorises them as sins which can receive a corrective punishment. In comparison, other, allegedly “graver” sins, such as blasphemy or sexual immorality lead to the dissolution of the soul in the outer darkness.

This categorisation and hierarchisation of sins are associated with elaborate reincarnation ideas. According to Pistis Sophia, the soul needs to pass through various stages of chastisement before it finally reaches purification. Interestingly, it seems that according to this system, the demonic tortures are ultimately beneficial for the sinful souls since they enable their ascent to the Virgin of Light – a judge figure- and final salvation.

Thus, the reincarnation system outlined here performs a fundamentally redeeming function for the souls of the “sinners”. The souls are purified and saved after they have completed the circuit (“their number of circuits in the changes of the body”, according to the text), so that they can be received in the Treasury of Light. The Treasury of Light seems to correspond to some idea of a final heavenly rest.

## Sin and punishment

As observed, the demonic chastisements are described and explained in various parts of the work but differently. Sins and their punishments are ruled by specific demonic powers and souls and need to be chastised for a certain time in regions full of “dark smoke” and evil. However, the catalogue of sins listed in the various parts of the work are largely identical. The punishments and the punishers for the various categories of sinners are precisely described and reflect a compact and well-organised afterlife universe. Notably, the punishments are organised topographically, cosmologically, and chronologically. Specific demons are named, who are assigned with various tasks, such as to fetch the souls out of the body, or in other cases, to

lead the soul around the world and to instruct it concerning the creatures of the world.<sup>xii</sup>

Different sins are punished following a standard pattern with some variations depending on the perceived severity of the sin.<sup>xiii</sup> For example, Jaldabaoth, the lion-faced archon of the chaos and his 49 demons scourge the soul, which they are punishing, with fiery whips, (IV.14).<sup>xiv</sup> Thus, Jaldabaoth is one of the demonic rulers, overseeing the punishments of grave sinners here.<sup>xv</sup>

Significantly, sins like pride or theft are chastised by being cast into a lame, and blind or deformed or ugly body. This physical description indicates that bodily deformity or weakness are perceived as a punishment for previous transgressions and hinders the souls from reaching the Light.

Interestingly, the punishment of the blasphemer is also particularly harsh and appears to be based on some idea of *jus talionis* (IV.146). According to the text, the receivers (“*paralemptai*”) of Jaldabaoth bind him by his tongue to a great horse-faced demon and so travel with him for three days around the world, before he is led to the regions of cold and snow. The soul is led into the outer darkness until the day when the great ruler with the dragon’s face who encircled the darkness will be judged.<sup>xvi</sup> The soul then becomes frozen up and is fully destroyed.

A similarly harsh punishment is reserved for pederasty and male homosexuality (IV 147). This soul is carried to the fire-rivers and seething pitch-seas full of demons with pig faces. The demons eat into them and then the soul is carried into the outer darkness until the day of judgment (“when the great judgment is judged”), where it is then destroyed.

Finally, the disciple, Thomas, wonders about a special category of transgression.

“Thomas said; ‘We have heard that there are some upon the earth who take male sperm and female menstrual blood and make a dish of lentils and eat it, saying: ‘We believe in Esau and Jacob’. It is then a seemly thing or not?’

Jesus, however, was angry with the world at that time. And he said to Thomas: ‘Truly, I say that this sin surpasses every sin and every iniquity. (Men) of this kind will be taken immediately to the outer darkness, and will not be returned again into the sphere. But they will be consumed and perish in the outer darkness, the place in which there is no pity and nor is there light. And every

soul which is taken to the outer darkness is not returned again, but is destroyed and dissolves". (IV. 147. 5-20).

As observed, the severity of the punishments corresponds to the respective estimated severity of the sins. The text suggests that worldly sins depending on their severity influence the re-incarnation cycle of the soul until its final salvation, that is, its ascent to the Higher Heavens or alternatively, its ultimate destruction in the outer darkness.

### Demonic Eschatology

The afterlife punitive system illustrated in Pistis Sophia outlines a very methodical structure which enables, through punishment and judgment, the purification of the souls, and finally, their ultimate liberation from the material world.

There is no doubt that this is a text which is deeply indebted to its Egyptian mythological context. David Frankfurter regards Pistis Sophia as „a (more) compelling example of Egyptian afterlife“ (...) „teaching on world-renunciation to avoid the „judgements of Amente“, the „fire of the Dog-Face“, the „demons of Jaldabaoth“ and other afterlife dangers.“ He further argues for „the resemblance to the imagery of the Book of the Dead“ both iconographically in the description of „the animal- headed „rulers““ and functionally in the use of „the secret names by which the rulers might be known and appeased.“<sup>xvii</sup>

However, a related imagery of theriomorphic punishers in afterlife may also be found in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature – possibly also under Egyptian influence.<sup>xviii</sup> Similarly, Pistis Sophia envisions the “hellish regions” as places full of smoke, darkness, and fire; thus, projecting images evidenced in the Jewish and Christian apocalyptic visions as well.

In spite of somewhat general and vague descriptions of torments, Pistis Sophia seems to be among the earliest late antique texts to introduce an extensive and systematic demonic punitive system in afterlife. The list of sins mentioned in this text may be compared to similar lists found in early Christian visions of hell. Furthermore, it offers a detailed and systematic description of afterlife punishments for sinners which is as such unique in the Coptic-Gnostic literature.

The listing and classification of specific sins, such as slander, strife, lust, etc., that appear to involve an innerworldly moral codex, suggests a community which is deeply concerned with correct moral social behavior in society. Significantly, the sins correspond to similar lists of sins documented mostly in Christian texts that may have originated in the monastic milieu and possibly, in Egypt. The emphasis on sexual transgressions and the condemning attitude towards sexuality or general concern for correct sexual behaviour is particularly striking in the given context. Sexual sins are a common feature in all early Christian descriptions of hell related to an ascetic milieu.<sup>xix</sup> Interestingly, however, contrary to early Christian visions of hell, gendered punishments do not appear to be an issue here. The hellish torments remain minimally physical but for a couple of exceptions. The torment of the soul is more pronounced than the actual torment of the physical body and significantly, the return to a physical body during the cycle of reincarnation is understood as a major stage in the punishment process of the soul.

These differences in the view and treatment of the afterlife body are indicative for the fundamental differences in the anthropological -and theological- understandings of the various communities of the time.

It is also interesting to note that the text does not contain any so-called pure “environmental” punishments, but all punishments are personalised and personified by demonic tormentors.<sup>xx</sup>

Pistis Sophia shares with other contemporary apocalypses several common afterlife motifs and imagery but also a general conceptual framework which allows for the construction of a systematic universe of punishment for the sinners in afterlife. This framework would reflect common values that must have also functioned as a social control mechanism for the moral behaviour of an actual community.

The demonological system elaborated in Pistis Sophia attests to developments related to a formation of an afterlife imagery taking place in Egypt probably around the third century between various contemporary groups. Importantly, Pistis Sophia also serves as a demonological compendium and guidebook through the afterlife torments and a demonic cosmography. Shared elements and traditions with a magical handbook, like the Testament of Solomon, illustrate intriguing aspects and intertwined trajectories of the complex literary landscape of the time to which Pistis Sophia also belongs.



Furthermore, Pistis Sophia develops an idiosyncratic vision of afterlife, which, although indebted to Egyptian traditions, shows several common important motifs attested to and developed in Jewish and Christian visions of hell. The prevalence of these narrative elements in a text as complex and as strange as Pistis Sophia, suggests the emergence and development of an eschatological *Zeitgeist* that produced visions of afterlife with specific environmental features, protagonists, locations, etc., which came to dominate apocalyptic imagination in the long Late Antiquity.

<sup>i</sup> See Schmidt, *Pistis Sophia*, xxiii. On the different approaches regarding the dating of this text, see Mead, *Pistis Sophia*, xxix.

<sup>ii</sup> See Leviathan in LXX Jesajah 27.1. Leviathan is called ophis and drakon: the world-encompassing snake. see Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered*, 89-91. Evans associates the Ouroboros of the outer darkness with the evil serpent, Apep (*The 2 Books of Jeu*, 167). According to Fauth the great archon with the face of a dragon who is situated in the place of the outer darkness, is not only identical with the figure mentioned in Epiphanius about the snake-looking archon of this world, who devours the fallen souls and renders them as swine or other animals in the sphere of his dominion (Pan. 26.10.8) but he also reminds of the lion-/or dragon faced Jaldabaoth identified with the chaotic realm of darkness in the 2. Book of Jeu (Seth-Typhon, 108).

<sup>iii</sup> See van den Vliet: "The number twelve also suggests that the world of the aeons has been modelled on the zodiac and that an intrinsic link connects both. It is common practice in Gnostic writings to use the structural and numerological principles of traditional astrology and calendrical lore as a model for the organization of the archontic world. Cf. Thrimorphic Protennoia (NH XIII.1)", (Fate, Magic and Astrology, 526)

<sup>iv</sup> As Evans suggests the author "had access to and interest in names and verbal formulae found primarily in practical ritual or "magical" texts of Greco-Egyptian provenance" (*The 2 Books of Jeu*, 119); cf. Grypeou, *Die Dämonologie*, 601-602.

<sup>v</sup> Cf. Fauth: „Gemäß dem für die ophitischen Kreise charakteristischen astrologischen Einschlag in der Pistis Sophia sind die nach Teukros von Babylon konzipierten, aber mit ägyptisierenden Anteilen durchsetzten zwölf Phasen der sogenannten Dodekaoros (d.h. des Zwölfstundenkreises der Mondstationen innerhalb des Zodiakos) als 'Strafzimmer' (kolaseis, tameia) gedacht, wo Unholde mit Gesichtern von Tieren, die Seele mit schlimmen Strafen heimsuchen" (Seth-Typhon, 108).

<sup>vi</sup> The first punishing order is called Paraplex; (cf. Testament of Solomon §4: it is the demon Onoskolis, who is portrayed both physically and character-wise like the demon Paraplex. According to Fauth, the female archon of the sub-sphere of the underworld, Paraplex, reminds of Lilith, or an the female hairy Sabaoth of the Phibionites (Seth-Typhon, 107). This demon has the shape of a woman whose hair reaches down to her feet). Under her authority stand 25 archdemons, which rule over the multitude of other demons. The second order is called Ariouth (IV.140). This demon also a female but an Ethiopian demon and is described as entirely black (On the motif of the black/Ethiopian demon, see Brakke, *Demons*, 157-182). She has 14 archdemons under her authority and then again, a multitude of lesser demons. These enter into strife-seekers, in order to stir up wars and murder and they harden the hearts. As in the previous order, they torment the souls through "dark smoke" and "wicked fire". The third order is called Triple-faced Hecate (On Hecate as nefarious deity, see Johnston, *Hecate Soteira*). She orders 27 archdemons. These enter into men to seduce them to perjuries and lies and to covet what doesnot belong to them. The souls are tormented here in a similar way by demons as above. The fourth order is called Parhedron Typhon, a mighty ruler with authority over 32 demons, who seduce people into lusting, fornicating and adultery and the continual practice of intercourse (Typhon was associated with the Egyptian god of the underworld. Typhon is significantly depicted as a monstrous serpentine giant having snake heads. See Nonnus, *Dionysiaka* I.145-534; II.1-630. On Typhon's association with the underworld, see Ogden, *Drakon*, 247; 257). The fifth order is called Yachtanabas who is also a mighty ruler over a multitude of demons that cause feelings and deeds of injustice and unfairness to the people (Fauth suggests that Yachtanabas is a Greek or grecising theonymy of Jaldabaoth (Seth-Typhon, 107).

<sup>vii</sup> According to Evans: "The five evil realms associated with the way of the Midst (MHTE) may be tied to the Manichaean idea of the five worlds of darkness. The 5 manichaean worlds of darkness associated with a dark (?) element: smoke, fire, wind, water, and darkness." (*The 2 Books of Jeu*, 122.). I find this suggestion not entirely convincing.

<sup>viii</sup> As Evans remarks there is a connection between "highlighting sexual sins as requiring particular forgiveness, in accordance with the prominence given to the wicked archons' persistence in sexual transgression earlier" (*The 2Books of Jeu*, 131).

<sup>ix</sup> However, a specific hierachisation of sins according to their perceived severity is not evident in this part of the text.

<sup>x</sup> The diagram knows of seven ruling demons in an order that is similar to the order documented in Pistis Sophia. Leviathan (a dragon) is at its circumference and centre. The seven orders are: Michael the Lion-like – the second order is a bull (=Suriel) – third order: serpent-like (=Raphael); fourth order: eagle (=Gabriel); fifth order: a bear (=Thauthabaoth); sixth order: has the face of a dog (=Erataoth); seventh order: an ass

(=Onoel or Thatharaoth); Origen points out that they borrow the names from magic and the Hebrew Scriptures. Furthermore, the diagram indicates knowledge of “seals” used as assistance for the dying souls during their heavenly ascent; cf. Rasimus, *Paradise Reconsidered* 66-68.; cf. the Ophite archontic system described by Irenaeus, I. *Adversus Haereses* 30.5; cf. the discussion in: Fauth, Seth-Typhon, 99.

<sup>xi</sup> The connections to the Testament of Solomon, albeit not direct, attests to the links of Pistis Sophia with the magical, demonological and astrological ideas of its time. Among other demons, the Testament also knows a dragon-shaped demon, whose role is to seduce women. (TestSal §60); On the Testament of Solomon, see Cown, *The Testament of Solomon*; cf. Johnston, *The Testament of Solomon*.

<sup>xii</sup> These references strongly remind of texts, such as the Testament of Abraham § 10, where archangel, Michael, guides Abraham around the world and reveals to him the cosmic secrets.

<sup>xiii</sup> The murderer is being punished in the regions of cold and the snow, which reminds of Enochic descriptions (cf. 2 Enoch 10.10).

<sup>xiv</sup> According to Bauckham, “Jaldabaoth plays the role of the head of Chaos, where he punishes wicked souls along with his 49 demons. Jaldabaoth’s realms are also called Chaos elsewhere (HypArch 93,31; 96,11; TrimProt 39,21; 21-27). The 49 demons associated with him suggest a connection with the seven planets, with an equal number of demons per planet and him as their head.” (*The Fate of the Dead*, 329).

<sup>xv</sup> Cf. Fauth: „Der durch den ’großen Archon mit dem Drachengesicht‘ (Uroboros) umschlossene kosmische Raum der planetatischen Sphären (c. 126) ist unter diesem enkratistischen Aspekt als Höllenbezirk des Jaldabaoth, des Herrschers über das Chaos, ausgemalt, die negativen Züge der diesseitigen Welt sind also extrem betont“ (Seth-Typhon, 108).

<sup>xvi</sup> This is probably a reference to the Last Judgment; cf. Rev 20.

<sup>xvii</sup> Amente Demons, 86; moreover, Frankfurter suggests that the author of Pistis Sophia demonstrates a „learned adherence in this section of the text to the Egyptian demonological/cosmological system of the Book of the Dead, when taken in the context of Pistis Sophia’s comparatively early composition suggests the author’s direct acquaintance with some traditions of Egyptian mortuary literature, whether through priestly training or familiarity with the scribes who maintained that literature through the early Roman period. This is a special model of Egyptian literary influence“ (Amente Demons, 87); This is an intriguing observation, but Frankfurter seems to downplay several other possible influences as well as the Gnostic character of the work.

<sup>xviii</sup> Early Jewish apocalyptic tradition, as evidenced in texts, such as the fragmentary Apocalypse of Zephaniah, which is also preserved only in Coptic, describe the figure of a theriomorphic, serpent-like accuser emerging from Amente. His similarly theriomorphic beastly angels hold fiery scourges and take the souls of the ungodly men to cast them into their eternal punishment (§5). Cf. 2 Enoch 42:42; Testament of Levi 3:2-3; Testament of Abraham 12-13. Cf. Apocalypse of Peter (§25); Apocalypse of Paul (§40); winged or two-headed beasts or dragons with three fiery heads torturing sinners also appear in the later apocalyptic text, the Apocalypse of the Virgin, Mary (§XVII). Cf. the Acts of Thomas 1.32 in which a great black dragon is identified as the devil that inhabits “the deep of hell Tartarus”; in the Questions of Bartholomew, Satan in the form of Beliar is the ‘*drakōn* of the abyss’. Interestingly, in Coptic texts, such as, the Life of Pisentius know of animal shaped tormentors in hell for the idolaters, such as serpents with seven heads and scorpions. In the Coptic Testament of Isaac the tormentors look monstrous and/or have faces of beasts (VIII.8-10; cf. Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*, 119; Grypeou, *Demons of the Underworld*, *passim*; similarly, punishing angels and evil spirits in a fiery hell are common in Christian apocalyptic literature; See the Sibyllines Oracles (II.350-355); Apocalypse of Peter (§20); (§21), (§27); The Latin Vision of of Ezra (§2). Devils administer the hell fire or strike the sinners with a club of fire (§13). Cf. the fat three-headed snake and monstrous animals to eat up the souls in the darkness and the abyss of Hades in the First Apocalypse of John (Tischendorf, 94)

<sup>xix</sup> See Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell*; table 2

<sup>xx</sup> Similar personified tormentors may be encountered in the Apocalypse of Zephaniah, the See the Sibyllines Oracles (II.350-355); Apocalypse of Peter (§20); (§21), (§27); The Latin Vision of of Ezra (§2). Devils administer the hell fire or strike the sinners with a club of fire (§13). Cf. the fat three-headed snake and monstrous animals to eat up the souls in the darkness and the abyss of Hades in the First Apocalypse of John (Tischendorf, 94) Apocalypse of Peter, the Apocalypse of Paul and its ‘family’ (Apocalypse of Mary), Apocalypse of Ezra and the Testament of Isaac.

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