

Simon Magus, the father of Christian Gnosticism was a disciple of Dositheus who was clearly an Essene. Dositheus was known as a “Son of Zadok,” a term used by the Essenes, and lived near Damascus which was considered a habitation of exiled Essenes. He was an ascetic and had known John the Baptist. Simon later left Dositheus to form his own sect, which became a radical expression of Essene dualism.



Scrolls being examined

Simon Magus. The actual events of the life and teachings of Simon Magus are surrounded by mystery, especially in light of the fact that most of the information concerning him is derived from the writings of the heresiologists. These early Church Fathers were extremely biased and at times unreliable in their anti-Gnostic writings. It is unfortunate that we do not possess a history of Gnosticism written by the Gnostics themselves. Simon was said to be an accomplished magician from Samaria and claimed for himself to be an incarnation of the “Great Power.” Hippolytus assigns to Simon a work entitled, “The Great Revelation or the Great Announcement.” In this document, Simon set the stage for the future development of Christian Gnosticism. His account describes the doctrine of the demiurge and his archons and their role in the creation of the world, the Unknowable God, the