

“When a shining image appeared from the Supreme Power above, which they were not able to detain, he says, because it immediately sped back upwards, they exhorted one another, saying, ‘Let us make a man after the image and likeness.’ When this was done, he says, and their creation could not stand erect because of the powerlessness of the angels, but crept like a worm, then the power above took pity on him because he had been made in his likeness and sent a spark of life which raised the man up, equipped him with limbs and made him live.”

Saturninus describes one of the seven creator angels as the God of the Jews or the Demiurge and gives him an elevated status over the other angels. Irenaeus summarizes Saturninus’ doctrine thus, “Christ came into the world for the destruction of the God of the Jews and for the salvation of those who believe in him (Jesus).” So it is clear that he considers the God of the Jews as not only the leader of the creator angels, but also as the principal creator. The distinction is therefore made that Yahweh is not to be identified as the one true Unknowable God. With this being said, we must take into account that the reliability of the heresiologists may be questionable and that this supposed view of Saturninus toward the Old Testament God might very well be over exaggerated.

**Basilides.** As for the Alexandrian Gnostic teacher Basilides, we have two varying accounts from the heresiologists, one from Irenaeus, the other from Hippolytus. Although we cannot be certain as to which may be more reliable, the consensus among modern scholars would tend to lean more in the direction of Irenaeus, even though fragments of Basilides as quoted by Clement of Alexandria are often at variance with Irenaeus.

Basilides lived in the first half of the second century and was said to have received his teaching from either the Apostle Matthew or from Glaucias, a disciple of Paul. He attempted to legitimize his teachings by relating them to accounts of the life of Jesus, in a time frame in which oral tradition still retained its prestige. Basilides’ doctrine included the theory of karma and reincarnation, from which he taught that, “For just as the babe, although it has done no wrong previously, or practically committed any sin, and yet has the capacity of sin in it (from its former lives), men suffer, from their deeds in former lives; the elect soul suffers honorably through martyrdom, but souls of another nature by other appropriate punishments.”