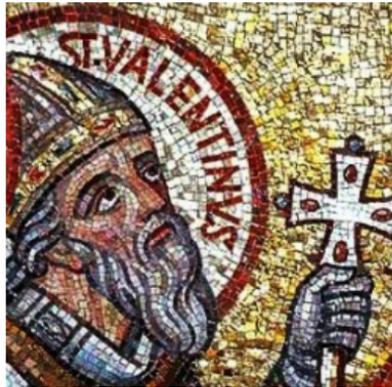


There are hints that Basilides may have been influenced by Pythagorean, Zoroastrian and possibly other Oriental schools of thought. He imposed a period of silence for five years for his students, as was the custom in the Pythagorean School.

The Basilidians held veneration for a certain being named Abraxas whom they claimed was the ruler of the first heaven of which heavens there were no less than 365. The number 365 related not only to the days of the year, but also held special significance since the numerical value of the Greek letters in the name Abraxas equaled 365 in their summation. There have been preserved for us many amulets and invocations of Abraxas from the early centuries of the Christian era, so it becomes obvious that this name was considered to hold much power. We cannot be certain how long this school may have survived, but we do know that Epiphanes, at the end of the fourth century found Basilidian Gnostics in the general area of Memphis in Egypt.

**Valentinus.** Perhaps the most well-known and popular of all Gnostic teachers would be Valentinus.



*Valentinus*

He was born during the first quarter of the second century in Carthage of Christian parents. He received his education in Alexandria possibly under the renowned Neo-Platonic philosopher AMMONIUS SACCAS, who was also the teacher of Clement of Alexandria. He also became a disciple of the Christian teacher Theudas who had been a disciple of Saint Paul. From Theudas he learned a secret tradition that Paul allegedly taught to his inner