

# Reality of the Rulers<sup>1</sup>

from *The Rulers' Rape of Eve* by Celene Lillie

Concerning the reality of the authorities, the great apostle, through the spirit of the Father of Truth, referred to the authorities of darkness<sup>2</sup> and told us “our struggle is not against flesh and [blood] but against the authorities of the world and the spirits of wickedness.”<sup>3</sup> I have sent you this writing because you have asked about the nature of the authorities. (86,20-27)

The leader/chief of the authorities is blind. Because of his power, ignorance, and arrogance he said, with [power], “I am God; there is no other [but me].”<sup>4</sup> When he said this, he sinned against [everything]. This boast rose up to Incorruptibility, and a voice answered from Incorruptibility and said, “You are wrong, Samael”—which means “blind god.” (86,27-87,4)

His thoughts were blind. He cast forth his power—that is, the blasphemy he had spoken—and pursued it down to chaos and his mother the abyss, by the hand of Faith Wisdom. She established each of his offspring according to its power, after the pattern of the eternal realms above. For the revealed came from the hidden. (87,4-11)

Incorruptibility looked down into the region of the waters. Her image appeared in the waters, and the authorities of darkness fell in love with her. But they could not grasp the image that appeared to them in the waters, for they were weak, and what is only of soul cannot grasp what is of spirit. For they were from below, but it was from above. This is why Incorruptibility

---

<sup>1</sup> This translation is my own in consultation with Roger Bullard, “Introduction,” and Bentley Layton, trans., “The Hypostasis of the Archons,” Bentley Layton, ed. *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2-7 together with III,2\**, *Brit. Lib. Or.4926(1), and P.Oxy. 1, 654, 655: With Contributions by Many Scholars*, vol. 1, NHS XX (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 220-259.

<sup>2</sup> Col. 1:13.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. 6:12.

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 45:5-6, 21; 46:9.

looked down into the region (of the waters), so that, by the Father's will, she might bring all things into union with the light. (87,11-23)

The rulers plotted and said, "Come, let's create a human of soil from the earth." They formed their creature as one wholly of the earth. Now the rulers... body... they have... female... is... with the face of a beast.<sup>5</sup> They took [soil] from the earth and formed their [human] after their body and [after the image] of God that had appeared [to them] in the waters. (87,23-33)

They said, "Come, [let's] grasp it by means of the form (we have shaped), [so that] it may see its male partner [and fall in love with it],<sup>6</sup> and we may seize it with the form (we have shaped)." They did not understand the power of God, because they are powerless. And he breathed into his face, and the human acquired a soul and stayed upon the ground for many days. But they could not make him arise, because they are powerless. Like storm winds they kept on [blowing], that they might try to capture ensnare the image that appeared to them in the water. And they did not know what its power was. All these things came to be by the will of the Father of all things. (87,33-88,11)

Later the Spirit saw the soul-ful human on the ground. And the Spirit came forth from the adamantine land. It descended and made its home within him, and that human became a living soul. It called his name Adam since he was found moving upon the ground. A voice came forth from Incorruptibility to help Adam. The rulers gathered all the animals of the earth and all the birds of the sky and brought them to Adam to see what Adam would call them, that he might give a name to each of the birds and all the animals. (88,11-88,24)

---

<sup>5</sup> NHC reconstructs as, "Now as for the rulers, it is [a] female body that they have, [and] a [visage] with the face of a beast." NHS reconstructs as, "'These archons have bodies that are both female [and male], and faces that are the faces of beasts,' based on SRJ II 11 and OnOrg 101-2."

<sup>6</sup> Reconstruction by both NHC and NHS. NHC also offers "[and come to it]" as an alternative.

They took Adam and put him in the garden, that he might work it and watch over it. And the rulers commanded him, saying, “You may eat from every tree in the garden, but do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Do not touch it, for the day you all eat from it, you will surely die.”<sup>7</sup> They...this.<sup>8</sup> But they did not understand what [they said] to him. Rather, by the Father’s will, they said this in such a way that he might eat, and that Adam might <not> see them as would a completely material person. (88,24-89,3)

The rulers plotted with one another and said, “Come, let’s make a deep sleep/forgetfulness fall upon Adam.”<sup>9</sup> And he slept. And the deep sleep/forgetfulness that they “caused to fall upon him and he slept” is ignorance. They opened his side like a living woman. And they built up his side with some flesh in place of her,<sup>10</sup> and Adam had only a soul. (89,3-11)

And the spiritual woman came to him and spoke with him saying, “Arise, Adam.” And when he saw her, he said, “You have given me life. You will be called mother of the living.<sup>11</sup> For she is my mother. She is the physician, and the woman, and she who has given birth.” (89,11-17)

Then the authorities approached their Adam. And when they saw his partner speaking with him, they became disturbed and lusted after her. They said to each other, “Come, let’s cast our seed in her,” and they chased her. But she laughed at them because of their foolishness and blindness. And in their grasp she became a tree, and left before them a shadow of herself that resembled her. And they defiled her abominably. And they defiled the seal of her voice, and so they convicted themselves through the form they had shaped in their own image. (89,17-30)

---

<sup>7</sup> Gen 2:17; 3:3.

<sup>8</sup> Reconstructions: NHC: “[tell him] this”; “[command to him] this”; “[are wrong in] this”; NHS: “They [said this to him].”

<sup>9</sup> Gen. 2:21.

<sup>10</sup> Gen. 2:21-22.

<sup>11</sup> Gen. 3:20.

Then the female spiritual presence came in the shape of the serpent, the instructor. And it taught them, saying, "What did he [say to] you all? Was it, 'You may eat from every tree in the garden, but do not eat from [the tree] of knowledge of evil and good?'"<sup>12</sup> (89,31-91,1)

The woman of flesh said, "Not only did he say, 'Do not eat,' but also, 'Do not touch it. For the day you all eat from it, with death you all will die.'"<sup>13</sup> (91,1-5)

And the serpent, the instructor, said, "With death you all shall not die, for he said this to you out of jealousy. Rather your eyes will open and you all will be like gods, knowing evil and good."<sup>14</sup> And the female instructor was taken away from the serpent, and she left it behind it as a thing of the earth. (91,6-12)

And the woman of flesh took from the tree and ate, and she gave to her husband as well as herself.<sup>15</sup> And thus these beings that possessed only a soul ate. And their imperfection became apparent in their ignorance. They knew that they were stripped of the spiritual, and they took fig leaves and bound them upon their loins.<sup>16</sup> (90,13-19)

Then the Chief Ruler came and he said, "Adam! Where are you?"<sup>17</sup> For he did not understand what had happened. (90,19-21)

And Adam said, "I heard your voice and was afraid because I was naked, and so I hid."<sup>18</sup> (90,19-23)

The Ruler said, "Why did you hide, unless it is because you have eaten from the only tree from which I commanded you not to eat? And you have eaten!"<sup>19</sup> (90,24-27)

---

<sup>12</sup> Gen. 3:1.

<sup>13</sup> Gen. 3:2-3.

<sup>14</sup> Gen. 3:4-5.

<sup>15</sup> Gen. 3:6.

<sup>16</sup> Gen 3:7.

<sup>17</sup> Gen. 3:9.

<sup>18</sup> Gen. 3:10.

Adam said, “The woman that you gave me [offered] to me and I ate.”<sup>20</sup> And the arrogant ruler cursed the woman.<sup>21</sup> (90,28-30)

The woman said, “It was the serpent that deceived me, and I ate.”<sup>22</sup> [They turned] to the serpent and cursed its shadow, [so that it was] powerless, not knowing (COOYN) that it was a form they themselves had shaped. From that day, the serpent was under the curse of the authorities. The curse was on the serpent until the perfect human was to come.<sup>23</sup> (90,30-91,3)

They turned to their Adam and took him and cast him from the garden along with his woman.<sup>24</sup> For they have no blessing, since they too are under the curse.<sup>25</sup> And they threw humanity into great distraction and a life of grief, so that their people might be devoted to worldly things necessary to stay alive and might not have the time to be occupied with the holy Spirit. (91,3-11)

After this, Eve gave birth to Cain, their son, and Cain worked the land. Then Adam knew his wife. She became pregnant again and gave birth to Abel, and Abel was a herder of sheep.<sup>26</sup> And Cain brought in the crops from his field, and Abel brought in an offering from his lambs. God looked upon the offering of Abel, but he not accept the offerings of Cain.<sup>27</sup> And Cain, of flesh, pursued Abel his brother.<sup>28</sup> (91,11-21)

And God said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”

---

<sup>19</sup> Gen. 3:11.

<sup>20</sup> Gen. 3:12.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Gen. 3:14-19.

<sup>22</sup> Gen. 3:13.

<sup>23</sup> Gen. 3:14-15.

<sup>24</sup> Gen. 3:23-24.

<sup>25</sup> Gen. 3:15-19.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Gen 4:1-2.

<sup>27</sup> Gen. 4:3-5.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Gen. 4:8.

He answered, saying, “Am I, then, my brother’s keeper?”<sup>29</sup>

God said to Cain, “Listen! The voice of your brother’s blood is crying out to me!<sup>30</sup> You have sinned with your mouth, and it will come back to you. Whoever kills Cain will release seven vengeancees, and you will live groaning and trembling upon the earth.”<sup>31</sup> (91,21-30)

12. And Adam [knew] his partner Eve, and she became pregnant and bore [Seth] to Adam. And she said, “I have given birth to [another] person through God, in place of Abel.”<sup>32</sup> (91,30-33)

Eve became pregnant again, and she gave birth to [Norea]. And she said, “He has borne for me a virgin to help many human generations.” She is the virgin whom the powers did not defile. Then humanity began to multiply and improve.<sup>33</sup> (91,34-92,4)

The rulers plotted with one another and said, “Come, let’s cause a flood with our hands and wipe out all flesh, from human to animal.”<sup>34</sup> But when the ruler of the forces learned of their plot, he said to Noah, “Make yourself an ark from some wood that will not rot and hide in it, you and your children and the animals and the birds of the sky, small and large, and set it on Mount Sir.”<sup>35</sup> Then Orea came to him wanting to board the ark. And when he would not let her, she blew on the ark and made it burn up. Again, he made the ark for a second time. (92,4-18)

The rulers went to meet her, desiring to seduce her and lead her astray. Their supreme chief said to her, “Your mother Eve came to us.” But Norea turned to them and said, “You are the rulers of darkness! You are accursed! And you did not know my mother, it was your female

---

<sup>29</sup> Gen. 4:9.

<sup>30</sup> Gen. 4:10.

<sup>31</sup> Gen. 4:15.

<sup>32</sup> Gen. 4:25. Cf. Gen 5:1-3, “This is the list of the descendants of Adam. When God created humankind he made them in the likeness of God. Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them ‘Humankind’ when they were created. When Adam had lived one hundred thirty years, he became the father of a son in his likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.” All the descendants subsequently listed come through Seth...

<sup>33</sup> Gen 6:1.

<sup>34</sup> Gen. 6:6-7.

<sup>35</sup> Gen. 6:14, 7:1-3.

counterpart that you knew! For I am not from you, rather I come from the world above!” (92,18-26)

The arrogant ruler turned with his power, and his face was like a blazing [fire]. He cruelly said to her, “You must be a slave to us, as your mother, Eve, was, for I have been given...” (92,27-31)

But Norea turned with the power of..., and in a loud voice cried out to the Holy One, the God of all things, “Rescue me from these unjust rulers and rescue me from their hands! Now!” (92,32-93,2)

An angel came down from heaven and said to her, “Why are you calling to God? Why are you so daring toward the holy Spirit?”

Norea said, “Who are you?”

The unjust rulers had left her. He said, “I am Eleleth, Understanding, the great angel who stands before the holy Spirit. I have been sent to speak with you and rescue you from the hands of the lawless ones. And I shall teach you about your root.” Now as for that angel, I cannot speak of its power. Its appearance is like fine gold and its garment is like snow. For truly, my mouth cannot bear to speak of its power (σοφία) and the appearance of its face. (93,2-17)

Eleleth, the great angel, spoke to me and said, “I am Understanding. I am one of the Four Light-Givers who stand before the great invisible Spirit. Do you think these rulers have power over you? None of them can overpower the root of truth, for because of it one has appeared in the final times, and these authorities will be ruled. And these authorities cannot defile you or that race, for your (pl.) home is with Incorruptibility where the virgin Spirit dwells, who is superior to the authorities of chaos and their world. (93,18-32)

I said, “Lord, teach me about the [power of] these authorities. [How] did they come into being? With what kind of nature? Of what material? Who created them and their power?” (93,32-94,2)

And the great angel Eleleth, who is understanding, said to me, “Incorruptibility dwells within limitless realms. Wisdom, who is called Faith, wanted to produce a work by herself, without her partner, and what she produced was from above. There is a curtain between the realms above and the realms below, and a shadow came into being beneath the curtain. And that shadow became matter, and that shadow was cast into a region. And what she produced came to be something material like an untimely birth. And it took shape from the shadow, and it became an arrogant beast resembling a lion. It was androgynous, as I already said, because it came from matter. (94,2-19)

“Opening his eyes like a newborn child, he saw a vast amount of matter without limit, and he became arrogant saying, ‘I am God, and there is none but me.’<sup>36</sup> When he said this, he sinned against all things. And a voice came from above the tyrannical realm and said, ‘You are wrong, Samael’—which means ‘blind god.’ (94,19-26)

“And he said, ‘If anything exists before me, let me see it!’

“And immediately Wisdom pointed her finger and brought light into matter, and she pursued it down to the region of chaos. When she returned up to her light, darkness once again [came upon] matter.”<sup>37</sup> (94,26-34)

This ruler was androgynous and made himself a vast realm, an expanse without limit. And he considered creating offspring for himself, and he created for himself seven offspring,

---

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 5:6-7; 32:39; Isaiah 45:5-6; 46:9; Joel 2:27; Ezek. 28:2, 9.

<sup>37</sup> NHC reconstruction, “once again darkness [became mixed] with matter.”

androgynous just like their parent. And he said to his offspring, 'I am God of all things.' (94,34-95,5)

"And Life, the daughter of Faith Wisdom, called out and said to him, 'You are wrong, Sakla!' whose name is understood as Yaltabaoth. She breathed into his face and her breath became a fiery angel for her, and that angel bound Yaldabaoth and cast him down into Tartaros, at the bottom of the abyss. (95,5-13)

"Now when his offspring Sabaoth saw the strength of that angel, he repented and condemned his father and his mother matter. He loathed her, and he sent songs of praise up to Wisdom and her daughter Life. And Wisdom and Life snatched him up and established him over the seventh heaven, below the curtain between above and below. And he is called 'god of the powers, Sabaoth,' because he is above the powers of chaos, for Wisdom established him. (95,13-26)

"Now when these things came to pass, he made himself a huge four-faced chariot of cherubim, and an infinity of angels as ministers, and also harps and lyres. And Wisdom took her daughter Life and made her sit at his right to teach him about the things that are in the eighth (heaven), and she placed the angel of wrath at his left. [Since] that day, [his right] has been called life, and the left has represented the injustice of the tyrannical realm above. These things happened before your time. (95,26-96,3)

"Now when Yaldabaoth saw him in such great glory and height, he envied him, and his envy became something androgynous. And this was the origin of envy. And envy produced death, and death produced offspring and put each in charge of a heaven. And all of the heavens of chaos were full of their masses. But all these things came to be by the will of the Father of all things, after the pattern of all the things above, so that the sum of chaos might be reached. (96,3-14)

“There, I have taught you about the form of the rulers and the matter in which the form was produced, their parent, and their world.”

But I said, “My lord, do I also belong to their matter?” (96,15-18)

“You and your offspring are from the Father, who was in the beginning. Their souls come from above, from the incorruptible light. So the authorities cannot approach them because of the spirit of truth within them, and all who know this way are deathless among dying humanity. But that seed will not be revealed now. Instead it will be revealed after three generations and free them from the bondage of the authorities’ error.” (96,19-31)

Then I said, “Lord, how much longer?”

He said to me, “Until the time when the true human in modeled form reveals the existence of [the spirit of] truth, which the Father has sent. Then he will teach them about every work and he will anoint them with the oil of eternal life, given from the race without a king/emperor. Then they will be freed of blind thought and they will trample death, which is of the authorities. And they will ascend into the limitless light where this seed belongs. (96,31-97,9)

“Then the authorities will abandon their ages/years. And their angels will weep over their destruction. And their demons will mourn over their death.<sup>38</sup> Then all the children of the light will know the truth and their root and the Father of all things and the holy Spirit. And they will all say with one voice, ‘The Father’s truth is just, and the child is over all things and with everyone, from the ages of ages. Holy, holy, holy! Amen.’” (97,10-23)

### The Reality of the Rulers

---

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Rev. 18:11, 15, 19.