

THE TEACHINGS OF PETER

also referred to as THE PREACHING OF PETER

The Preaching of Peter survives today only in fragments as quotations from Clement and Origen. The small amount of extant text makes it almost impossible to voice any conjectures about the structure of this work. One can probably demonstrate a connection in terms of content between individual fragments, but a coherent text cannot be reconstructed out of this. It is also scarcely possible to show the original sequence of the fragments. It is the more regrettable that so few fragments of this important document have survived. Here we produce the fragments, without the commentaries.

1 Know then that there is one God who made the beginning of all things and has power over their end. The invisible who sees all things, unconstrained, who contains all, having need of nothing, of whom all things stand in need and for whose sake they exist, incomprehensible, perpetual, incorruptible, uncreated, who made all things by the word of his power, that is, the son.

2 This God you worship, not after the manner of the Greeks, carried away by ignorance and not knowing God as we do, according to the perfect knowledge, but shaping those things over which he gave them power for their use, even wood and stones, brass and iron, gold and silver, forgetting their material and proper use, they set up things subservient to their existence and worship them. And what things God has given them for food, the fowls of the air and the creatures that swim in the sea and creep upon the earth, wild beasts and four-footed cattle of the field, weasels too and mice, cats and dogs and apes, yes, their own edibles do they sacrifice as offerings to edible gods, and in offering dead things to the dead as to gods they show ingratitude to God, by these practices denying that he exists. Neither worship him as do the Jews, for they, who suppose that they alone know God, do not know him, serving angels and archangels, the month and the moon, and if no moon be seen they do not celebrate what is called the first sabbath, nor keep the new moon, nor the days of unleavened bread, nor the feast, nor the great day.

3 So then do, learning in a holy and righteous way that which we deliver unto you; observe it, worshipping God through Christ in a new way. For we have found in the scriptures how the Lord says: Behold, I make with you a new covenant, not as the covenant with your fathers in mount Horeb. He has made a new one with us, for the ways of the Greeks and Jews are old, but we are they that worship him in a new way in a third race, even Christians.

4 The Lord said to the apostles: If anyone of Israel then wishes to repent and by my name to believe in God, his sins shall be forgiven him. After twelve years go forth into the world so that no one may say: We have not heard.

5 The Lord said to his disciples after the resurrection: I elected you twelve disciples, having judged you worthy of me, whom the Lord also wished to be apostles, having considered you to be faithful, sending you unto the world to evangelize the men on the inhabited earth, that they may know that there is one God, showing the things that were about to be

through the faith of Christ, that those who have heard and believed should be saved, but those who have not believed, after having heard, should testify, not having a defense to say: We did not hear.

6 As many things as any of you did in ignorance, not knowing God clearly, if he should recognize them and repent, all his sins shall be forgiven.

7 But we, unrolling the books of the prophets which we possess, who name Jesus Christ partly in parables, partly in riddles, partly expressly and in so many words, find his advent and death, and cross, and all the rest of the tortures which the Jews inflicted on him, and his resurrection and taking up into heaven previous to the capture of Jerusalem, thus written: These are all the things that he must suffer, and what should be after him. Recognizing them, therefore, we have believed in God in consequence of what is written respecting him.

8 For we know that God enjoined these things, and we say nothing apart from the scriptures.

9 For the afflicted soul is near to God and to every man who escapes a danger there is a greater relation concerning the one who preserved him.

10 One building and one destroying, they earn nothing but the labor.