

Coptic Text and Translation of

The Apocalypse of Elijah

Based on P. Chester Beatty 2018

Edited and Translated by

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With Harold A. Attridge

1.

The word of the Lord addressed me as follows: "Say to this people, 'Why do you sin and multiply sin, (5) provoking to anger the Lord God who made you? Do not love the world nor what is in the world for the world's pride and its destruction are the devil's.'" Remember that the Lord (10) who created everything had compassion on you, in order that he might rescue us from the captivity of this age. For often the devil has desired to prevent the sun from rising over the earth and (15) to prevent the earth from giving produce, wishing to devour men like fire racing through straw, wishing to swallow them up like water. And, because of this, the glorious God had compassion on us. He will send his son to (20) the world in order that he might rescue us from the captivity. For he did not inform angel nor archangel when he came to us, but he changed himself into a man, when he came to us in order that he might rescue us

2.

from the flesh, and that you might indeed become his children (and) he your father. Remember that he has prepared for you thrones and crowns in heaven. For everyone who will (5) obey his voice will receive thrones and crowns. "As for those who are mine," says the Lord, "I will write my name upon their foreheads and set a seal on their right hands." They will not neither be hungry nor thirsty, nor will the lawless (10) one prevail over them, nor will the powers any longer hinder them; but they will walk with the angels to my city. Sinners, however, will not outstrip the powers, but the powers (15) of death will seize them and have dominion over them because the angels do not obey them, and they have made themselves strangers to his dwelling places. Hear now, you wise of the earth, concerning

the deceivers who will multiply
(20) at the end time, because they will adopt teachings which are not
God's: they will

3.

set aside God's law - people whose god is their own belly, who
say, "Fasting has no validity, nor did God institute it." (Thereby) they
(5) estrange themselves from God's covenant and deprive themselves
of precious promises; they are at no time rooted in firm faith. Do not
let those people deceive
(10) you. Remember that the Lord instituted fasting from his creation
of the heavens, as a benefit to mankind on account of the passions and
the changing lusts which oppose you, so that the evil one
would not
(15) deceive you. But holy fasting is what he has instituted. The Lord
says, "He who fasts will never sin, even though there be in him envy
and quarrelsomeness. " But let him who is holy
(20) fast. He who fasts, however, without being holy

4.

angers the Lord as well as the angels, and he harms his own
soul; furthermore, he accumulates against himself wrath for the day of
wrath. Holy fasting
(5) is what the Lord instituted with pure intent and holy hands. For
holy fasting forgives sin, heals diseases, casts out demons, exerts power
up to the
(10) throne of God, as an ointment, as a fragrance, as a remission of
sin through holy prayer. For who among you would go out to the field,
take pride in his skill but fail to take a tool in his hand? Or who
would
(15) go to war without being equipped with armour? If he be
discovered, will he not be killed, because he disregarded his duty toward
the king? In the same way, it is impossible for anyone to enter the
holy place in a state of doubt.
(20) He who doubts in prayer is darkness to himself, and the angels

5.

do not obey him. If, however, you are always single-minded in the
Lord, be wise to the times, in order that you may discern all things
regarding the kings of the
(5) Assyrians and the destruction of heaven and earth. "Those who
belong to me will not be overpowered," says the Lord, "nor will they be
afraid in battle." And when they see a king who has arisen
(10) in the north, they will name him the king of Assyrians and the
unrighteous king. He will increase his wars and disturbances against

Egypt. The land will groan with one accord. Your children will be seized.

(15) Many will long for death at that time. Then a king will arise in the west, whom they will name the king of peace. He will run on the sea like a roaring lion.

(20) He will kill the unrighteous king. Vengeance will be taken on Egypt by war and there will be much bloodshed.

6.

At that time he will decree peace throughout Egypt and a worthless gift. He will grant peace to the saints. He will undertake to say, "The name of

(5) God is one." He will bestow honor on the priests of God. He will exalt the holy places. He will give worthless gifts to God's house. He will circulate among the cities of Egypt by deceit, without their knowledge.

(10) He will enumerate the holy places. He will weigh the heathen idols. He will count their wealth. He will appoint priests for them. He will command that the wise men of the land be seized along with the eminent ones of the

(15) people, and that they be taken to a metropolis by the sea, saying, "There is but one language." But when you hear, "Peace and joy exist," I will. . . .

7.

For here are his signs. I will tell them to you in order that you may recognize him. For he has two sons, one on his right and one on his left. Now, the one on the right

(5) will assume a diabolical appearances. He will abandon the name of God. For four kings come from that king. And in his thirtieth year when he comes to Memphis he will construct a

(10) temple in Memphis at that time. His own son will rebel against him and kill him. The whole land will tremble. At that time he will issue a decree throughout

(15) the entire land that the priests of the land be seized along with all the saints, saying, "Every gift which my father gave you and all benefits

8.

You shall return tow-fold." He will close the holy places. He will seize their homes. He will take their sons into captivity. He will

(5) command that they perform sacrifices, abominations, and galling acts upon the land. He will appear beneath the sun and the moon at that time. As for the priests of the land - they will tear their garments. Woe to you

(10) at that time, rulers of Egypt, because your day has passed! The

violence of the poor will turn against you and they will seize your sons as plunder. The cities of Egypt

(15) will groan at that time, and no more will be heard the voice of buyer and seller in the markets of the cities of Egypt. They will collect dust. The inhabitants of Egypt will weep

9.

with one accord. They will desire death but death will flee from them. They will climb onto rocks and jump down on them, and
(5) say, "Fall on us!" And they will not die but death runs away from them, while double affliction again increases throughout the whole land at that time. At that time

(10) the king will command that every nursing woman be seized and be brought to him in fetters and that they suckle dragons and that their blood be sucked from their

(15) breasts and made poisonous. Because of the stress of wars which will take place, he will command that every boy, twelve years and under, be seized and be taught to shoot arrows.

(20) The midwife of the land will mourn

10.

Then, and she who has given birth will look heavenward and say, "Why did I sit on the birthstool to bring a child into the world?" The barren one and the virgin will

(5) rejoice and say, "It is time for us to rejoice, because we have no children on the earth; rather our children are in heaven." At that time three kings will arise in Persia

(10) who will capture the Jews who are in Egypt and bring them to Jerusalem and settle it with them once again. Then, if you should hear that there is dissension and <no> security in Jerusalem, rend

(15) your garments, you priests of the land, because the destroyer will not be long in coming. Straightway the lawless one will make his appearance in the holy places, at that time. The Persian kings

(20) will withdraw at that time.

11.

. with the kings of the Assyrians; and four kings will do battle with three. They will spend three years there, until they have removed the wealth in that place.

(5) Blood will flow from Aus to Memphis. The river of Egypt will turn into blood so that no one can drink from it for three days. Woe to Egypt and to those in Egypt! At that time, a king will arise in the city which is

(10) called "the city of the sun." At that time the whole land will

tremble. He will hasten to Memphis in the sixth year of the kings of the Persians. He will lay an ambush in Memphis. He will kill the Assyrian kings. The Persians

(15) will take vengeance on the land. He will command that all the heathen and lawless be killed. He will command that the pagan temples be plundered and their priests be annihilated. He will command that the holy places of the saints be rebuilt. He will give double gifts (20) to the house of God. He will say, "The name of God is one." The whole land will worship the Persian. And the remnant, which did not die under the blows will say, "A righteous king it is whom the Lord

12.

Has sent us, that the land might not be devastated." He will command that no king be given them for three years and six months. The land will be full of prosperity and great plenty.

(5) The living will go to meet the dead (and say), "Rise up and remain with us in this state of bliss." In the fourth year of that king there will appear one who says,

(10) "I am the Christ," but he is not. Do not believe him. But when the Christ comes, he comes in the manner of a bevy of doves with his crown of doves encircling him, as he walks

(15) on the vaults of heaven, with the sign of the cross preceding him, while the whole world sees him like the sun which shines from east to west. This is the way in which

(20) the Christ comes, with all his angels surrounding him. The lawless one, however,

13.

will proceed to take his stand in the holy place. He will say to the sun, "Fall," and it falls, "Be dark," and it complies, "Shine," and it does. He will accompany them through

(5) the sky and say, "Walk upon the sea and upon the rivers as though they were dry land." He will make the lame walk. He will make the deaf hear. He will make the dumb speak. He will make the blind see. Lepers he will

(10) heal. The sick he will cure. The demon-possessed he will exorcize. He will multiply his signs and wonders in everyone's presence. He will do the things which the Christ did,

(15) with the sole exception of raising the dead. By this you will know that he is the lawless one: he has no power to give souls. Now his signs I will tell you in order that you may recognize him.

(20) He is a little pelec', tall (?) thin legged, with a tuft of grey hair on his forehead

14.

like one who is bald. His eyelids extend to his ears. He has leprosy on his hands. He will change himself before you. At one time he will be an old man; at another,

(5) he will be a young child. He will change himself with every sign, but the aspect of his head he will not be able to change. By this you will know that he is the lawless one. The young woman whose name is Tabitha

(10) will hear that the shameless one has made his appearance in the holy places. She will dress in her linen clothes and hurry to Judaea and reprove him as far as Jerusalem, and say

(15) to him, "O you shameless one, O you lawless one, O you enemy of all the saints!" Then the shameless one will become angry with the young woman. He will pursue her to the region of the setting sun. He will

(20) suck her blood in the evening and toss her onto

15.

The temple, and she will become salvation for the people. At dawn she will rise up alive and rebuke him saying, "You shameless one, you have no power over my soul, nor over my body,

(5) because I live in the Lord always, and even my blood which you spilled on the temple became salvation for the people." Then, when Elijah and Enoch hear that the shameless one has appeared

(10) in the holy places, they will come down and wage war against him saying, "Are you not ashamed seeing that you are estranged constantly?

You became an enemy of heavenly beings, now you have acted against those on earth as well. You became an enemy

(15) of angels and powers. You are an enemy for all time. You fell from heaven like the morning stars. You have changed. Your substance (?) has been darkened. Are you not now ashamed, you who hurl yourself against

(20) God? You are the devil." The shameless one will hear, become angry and wage war

16.

Against them in the market place of the great city. He will spend seven days fighting with them and kill them. For three and a half days they will lie dead in

(5) the market place in full view of all the people. But on the fourth day they will arise again and rebuke him, saying to him, "O you shameless one, are you not ashamed, you who deceive God's people,

(10) for whom you have not suffered: Do you not know that we live in the Lord, in order that we may rebuke you whenever you say, 'I have

overpowered them?' We will lay aside the flesh of
(15) this body and kill you without your being able to utter a sound at
that time, because we live in the Lord always, whereas you are a
perpetual enemy." The shameless one will listen
(20) in anger and wage war against them. The whole city will
surround them. At

17.

that time they will raise cries of joy towards heaven, shining forth
as the whole world watches them. The lawless one will not prevail
against them. He will become angry with the land and
(5) try to sin against the people. He will command that their eyes be
burnt out with an iron rod. He will tear off their nails one by one. He will
command that vinegar and lye be poured into their nostrils. And
those who are unable to
(10) endure that king's torture will take their gold and flee by the
ferries saying, "Ferry us across the desert." They will pass away like one
asleep, as the Lord takes to himself their spirits and
(15) their souls. Their flesh will be like ham. No wild animal will eat
them until the final day of the great judgement. They will rise and
receive a place of rest, but they will not be part of the kingdom of the
Christ
(20) like those who endured. "But as for those who endured," says the
Lord, "I will direct them to sit on my right." They will be victorious over
the lawless

18.

one. They will see the destruction of heaven and earth. They will
receive the thrones of glory and the crowns. Sixty righteous ones,
prepared for that moment, will hear at that time.
(5) They will don the armour of God. They will hasten to Jerusalem in
their battle with the shameless one, saying, "Every feat which the
prophets performed, you have performed, but you were in truth
unable to raise a
(10) dead person, because you lack the power. By this did we
recognize you as the lawless one." The shameless one will hear,
become angry and command that the righteous be bound, be placed
on altars and be burnt.
(15) And at that time they will win the affection of many. They will
leave him saying, "This one is not the Christ, for the Christ does not kill
righteous people nor does he pursue men. He will
(20) not try to convince them by signs and wonders." At that time the
Christ will have compassion

19.

on those who are his. He will send his angels from heaven, sixty-four thousand in number, each having six wings. Their voices will move heaven and

(5) earth, when they praise and give glory. Those upon whose forehead is written the name of the Christ, upon whose right hand is the seal, both small and great, they will be taken on their wings and removed from the wrath.

(10) Then Gabriel and Uriel will be a column of light and go before them until they bring them to the holy land, and they will permit them to eat from the tree of life and to wear white

(15) garments, while the angels keep watch over them. They will neither hunger nor thirst, nor will the lawless one have power over them. And at that time the whole earth will tremble. The sun will be darkened. Peace

(20) will be removed from upon the earth and from under heaven. the trees will be uprooted and topple. Wild animals and domestic animals will die in confusion. Birds will fall on the ground dead

20.

And the waters of the sea will evaporate. The sinners will cry out on the earth, saying, "What have you done to us, lawless one, by saying, (5) 'I am the Christ,' when you are the lawless one? And you have no power to save yourself, much less to save us. You performed vain marvels before us until you had made us strangers to the Christ who

(10) created each one of us. Woe to us, because we listened to you! See, we are about to die in an evil manner and in affliction. Where now is the footprint of a righteous person, that we should worship you, or where is our teacher

(15) that we might appeal to him? Now we will be destroyed by wrath, because we disobeyed God. We went to the depths of the sea but found no water. We dug in the riverbeds sixteen cubits, but failed to

(20) find water." Then the shameless one will weep. at that time, saying "Woe is me as well, because my time has passed!"

Sa 13,23

I said, "My time (25) shall not pass away. My years have become months. My days have passed like dust that passes by. Indeed now (30) I shall perish with you! Now then hasten to the desert. Seize the brigands and kill them. Fetch the saints (35) for on their account does

Sa 14.1

the earth give produce; for on their account does the sun shine upon the earth; for on their account does the dew
(5) settle on the ground.” The sinners will weep saying, “You have made us enemies of God. If you have the power arise
(10) and pursue them!” Then he will spread his fiery wings and fly away in pursuit of the saints. He will wage war on them.
(15) The angels will hear, come down and wage war against him, a war of many swords. At that time
(20) the Lord will hear and command in great anger that heaven and earth spew forth fire. And the fire
(25) reach out over the earth seventy two cubits. It will consume the sinners and the devils like straw.
(30) A just judgement will take place at that time. The mountains of the earth will make their voices heard. At (that) time

Ach 41,1

.....
.....
The roads? (see Rosenstiehl) will say to each other, “Did you hear today
(5) the sound of a man who makes his way to the judgement of the son of God? The sins of each will oppose him the the place where they were committed, whether by day or by night
(10) . . . The just and the [. . .] will see the sinners in their punishment, as well as those who persecuted them, and those who delivered them to death. Then the sinners . . .
(15) . . . will see the abode of the righteous and the manner in which grace will ensue. At that time, that wick the righteous

Ach 42,1

will often request will be given to them. At that time the Lord will judge heaven and earth. He will judge those
(5) who have transgressed in heaven and those who have done so on earth. He will judge the shepherds of the people. He will ask them concerning the flock, and they will hand them over to him without deadly guile.
(10) After that Elijah and Enoch descend. They lay aside the flesh of the world and put on the flesh of the spirit. They pursue the lawless one and kill
(15) him without his being able to utter a sound. At that time he will melt before them like

Ach 43,1

ice which melts through fire. He will perish like a dragon which is without breath. He will be told, "Your time is up.

(5) Now you will perish with those who believed in you." They will be thrown into the deep pit, and it will be shut over them. At that time the Christ comes from heaven,

(10) the king together with all the saints. He burns the earth and spends a thousand years on it, because the sinners held sway over it. He will create a new heaven and earth. No devil

(15) or death (see Rosenstiehl) exists in them. With the saints he will rule, descending and ascending. They will be with the

Ach 44,1

angels always. They will be with the Christ a thousand years.

**** The Apocalypse of Elijah ****

This text is copied directly from the 1981 edition of the Apocalypse of Elijah, based on P. Chester Beatty 2018 translation. It was edited by Albert Pietersma and Susan Turner Comstock. The document is dated at the end of the fourth century C.E. or the beginning of the fifth century C.E. It is said to constitute a separate, independent work. This particular manuscript provides thirty-four lines of text which previously were unknown. It appears that the original text was carelessly written because the copyist missed a number of errors. Facsimiles of the manuscript are included.

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Information on Apocalypse of Elijah

James Charlesworth writes (*The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research*, pp. 95-97) :

Two works bear this name and should be distinguished as 1 Elijah and 2 Elijah. The first is extant in Coptic fragments which were edited by

G. Steindorff (*Die Apokalypse des Elias* [TU 17] Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899) and translated into English by H. P. Houghton ("The Coptic Apocalypse. Part III, Akhmimice: 'The Apocalypse of Elias,'" *Aegyptus* 39 [1959] 179-210). There are also a few minor excerpts and fragments in Greek which are reprinted by A.-M. Denis (no. 23, pp. 103f.).

In its present form the pseudepigraphon is Christian and dates from the third century. Most scholars concur that it derives from an earlier Jewish work, and J.-M. Rosenstiehl (no. 706, pp. 9, 75f.) concludes that the *Grundschrift* was composed in Egypt during the first century B.C.

The work consists of three large chapters: a parenetic section (1:1-26); an apocalyptic timetable (2:1-44); and legends about the Antichrist (3:1-99).

The second, 2 Elijah, is extant in rabbinic Hebrew; this was edited and translated into German by M. Buttenwieser (*Die hebräische Elias-Apokalypse*. Leipzig: Pfeiffer, 1897). As far as I know an English translation has not yet been published. Scholars have generally rejected Buttenwieser's claim that this work is as early as A.D. 260, although there are earlier Jewish traditions preserved in it.

2 Elijah purports to be a revelation by Michael to Elijah on Mt. Carmel. Elijah receives a description of Antichrist, perceives how punishment is suffered according to the sin, and sees a revelation concerning the end.

Regarding the common origin of these two apocalypses, little advance has been achieved beyond the position of M. R. James: "But neither of the extant Apocalypses can be supposed to represent the old book faithfully. The Coptic has been Christianized, the Hebrew abridged, and additions made to both." (*LAOT*, p. 61). Such an early Jewish apocryphon existed, since it is mentioned as the source of 1 Corinthians 2:9 by Origen (*Comm. Mt.* 27.9); and is listed in the Apostolic Constitutions, the List of Sixty Books, the Synopsis of Pseudo-Athanasius, the Stichometry of Nicephorus, and the Armenian list by Mechithar. Clement of Rome and Clement of Alexandria may have quoted from the early Jewish composition (see the Greek texts reprinted in Denis, no. 23, p. 103).

A Latin apocryphal text entitled *Epistula Titi Discipuli Pauli* contains a vision of punishments in Gehenna which is attributed to the prophet Elijah. This quotation was edited by D. de Bruyne ("Nouveaux fragments des Actes de Pierre, de Paul, de Jean, d'André, et de

l'Apocalypse d'Elie," *RBen* 25 [1908] 149-60), and translated into English by M. R. James (*LAOT*, p. 55). De Bruyne (pp. 153-55), James (p. 54), and F. Maass (no. 702) contend that the excerpt comes from the original Apocalypse of Elijah. It is wise to be hesitant in identifying this quotation with the Apocalypse of Elijah since it is not found in the Coptic or Hebrew texts, and because there were other compositions pseudonymously attributed to Elijah, although some are now lost.

Some of these still extant, at least partially, are a Sahidic fragment in the British Museum (Or. 3581B[6]), which preserves a story on the assumption of Elijah (see W. E. Crum, *Catalogue of the Coptic Manuscripts in the British Museum*. London: British Museum, 1905; p. 128, no. 291); a late medieval Armenian text entitled "A Short History of the Prophet Elias" (see J. Issaverdens, *UWOT*, pp. 149-61); and a Falasha composition named "Abba Elijah" (see Leslau's *Falasha Anthology*, pp. 40-49). Also note the numerous rabbinic legends about Elijah that are mentioned by L. Ginzberg (*Legends*, vol. 4, pp. 195-235; vol. 6, pp. 316-42).

Emil Schürer writes: "The prophet Elijah has this in common with Enoch, that like him he was taken up to heaven without dying. Consequently in the legends of the saints he is often associated with Enoch, and like this latter could not fail to be regarded as a peculiarly suitable medium through which to communicate heavenly revelations. A writing bearing his name is mentioned in the *Constitut. apostol.* vi. 16, and in the patristic quotations simply as an Apocryphum. According to the more exact titles given in the lists of the Apocrypha (Ἡλία προφητου in Nicephorus, ἩΛΙΟΥ ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ in the anonymous list) and in Jerome, this book was a somewhat short apocalyptic work consisting, according to the Stichometry of Nicephorus, of 316 verses. It is often mentioned by Origen and subsequent ecclesiastical writers as being the source of a quotation made by Paul, and which cannot be traced to any part of the Old Testament (1 Cor. ii. 9: καθως γεγραπται: α οφθαλμος ουκ ειδεν και ους ουκ ηκουσεν και επι καρδιαν ανθρωπου ουκ ανεβη κ.τ.λ.). No doubt Jerome strongly protests against the notion that Paul is here quoting an apocryphal work. But the thing is not at all incredible, for do we not find that the Book of Enoch has also been undoubtedly quoted by the author of the Epistle of Jude? If that be so, then this circumstance serves at the same time to prove the early existence and Jewish origin of the Apocalypse of Elijah. This same passage that is quoted in First Corinthians is likewise quoted by Clemens Romanus, chap. xxxiv. *fin*. Now as non-canonical quotations occur

elsewhere in Clement, it is just possible that he, in like manner, has made use of the Apocalypse of Elijah. At the same time it is more likely that he has borrowed the quotation from the First Epistle to the Corinthians. According to Epiphanius, the passage Eph. v. 14 (ΕΓΧΕΙΡΕ Ο ΚΑΘΕΥΔΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΣΤΑ ΕΚ ΤΩΝ ΝΕΚΡΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΕΠΙΦΑΥΣΕΙ ΣΟΙ Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ) was also taken from our Apocryphum. But seeing that Origen makes no mention of this in his collations of passages of this sort, that statement is of a very questionable character, and probably rests upon some confusion or other. According to Euthalius, Eph. v. 14 was taken from an apocryphal work that bore the name of Jeremiah." (*The Literature of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, pp. 129-130)

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