


# Irenaeus

Saint Irenaeus	
 <p style="text-align: center;">An engraving of St Irenaeus, Bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul (now Lyons, France)</p>	
Bishop and Martyr	
<b>Born</b>	130 Smyrna in Asia Minor (modern-day İzmir, Turkey)
<b>Died</b>	202 Lugdunum in Gaul (modern-day Lyons, France)
<b>Honored in</b>	Roman Catholic Church Eastern Orthodox Church Oriental Orthodox Church Lutheran Church Anglican Communion
<b>Feast</b>	June 28 (Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Communion); August 23 (Eastern Orthodox Church)

**St. Irenaeus** (<sup>ⓘ</sup> <sup>Ⓘ</sup> <sup>Ⓙ</sup> <sup>Ⓚ</sup> <sup>Ⓛ</sup> <sup>Ⓜ</sup> <sup>Ⓝ</sup> /aɪrəˈniːəs/; Greek: Εἰρηναῖος), (2nd century C.E. – c. 202) was Bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul, then a part of the Roman Empire (now Lyons, France). He was an early Church Father and apologist, and his writings were formative in the early development of Christian theology. He was a hearer of Polycarp,<sup>[1]</sup> who in turn was a disciple of John the Evangelist.

Irenaeus' best-known book, *Adversus Haereses* or *Against Heresies* (c. 180) is a detailed attack on Gnosticism, which was then a serious threat to the Church, and especially on the system of the Gnostic Valentinus.<sup>[2]</sup> As one of the first great Christian theologians, he emphasized the traditional elements in the Church, especially the episcopate, Scripture, and tradition.<sup>[2]</sup> Against the Gnostics, who said that they possessed a secret oral tradition from Jesus himself, Irenaeus maintained that the bishops in different cities are known as far back as the Apostles—and none of them was a Gnostic—and that the bishops provided the only safe guide to the interpretation of Scripture.<sup>[3]</sup> His writings, with those of Clement and Ignatius, are taken as among the earliest signs of the developing doctrine of the primacy of the Roman see.<sup>[2]</sup> Irenaeus is the earliest witness to recognition of the canonical character of all four gospels.<sup>[4]</sup>

Irenaeus is recognized as a saint by the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church. His feast day is on June 28 in the Roman Catholic calendar of saints, where it was inserted for the first time in 1920; in 1960 it was transferred to July 3, leaving June 28 for the Vigil of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, but in 1969 it was returned to June 28, the day of his death.<sup>[5]</sup> The Lutheran Church,<sup>[6][7]</sup> commemorates<sup>[8]</sup> Irenaeus on that same date for his life of exemplary Christian witness. In the Orthodox Church his feast day is 23 August.

## Biography

Irenaeus was born during the first half of the 2nd century (the exact date is disputed: between the years 115 and 125 according to some, or 130 and 142 according to others), Irenaeus is thought to have been a Greek from Polycarp's hometown of Smyrna in Asia Minor, now İzmir, Turkey. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he was brought up in a Christian family rather than converting as an adult.

During the persecution of Marcus Aurelius, the Roman Emperor from 161-180, Irenaeus was a priest of the Church of Lyons. The clergy of that city, many of whom were suffering imprisonment for the faith, sent him in 177 to Rome with a letter to Pope Eleuterus concerning the heresy Montanism, and that occasion bore emphatic testimony to his merits. While Irenaeus was in Rome, a massacre took place in Lyons. Returning to Gaul, Irenaeus succeeded the martyr Saint Pothinus and became the second Bishop of Lyons.

During the religious peace which followed the persecution of Marcus Aurelius, the new bishop divided his activities between the duties of a pastor and of a missionary (as to which we have but brief data, late and not very certain). Almost all his writings were directed against Gnosticism. The most famous of these writings is *Adversus haereses* (*Against Heresies*). In 190 or 191, he exerted influence on Pope Victor I not to excommunicate the Christian communities of Asia Minor which persevered in the practice of the Quartodeciman celebration of Easter. The Quartodeciman means the 14th and it refers to the date for Passover. Nothing is known of the date of his death, which must have occurred at the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 3rd century. The Roman Catholic Church celebrates him as a martyr. He was buried under the Church of Saint John in Lyons, which was later renamed St Irenaeus in his honour. The tomb and his remains were utterly destroyed in 1562 by the Huguenots.

## Writings

Irenaeus wrote a number of books, but the most important that survives is the "Against Heresies", normally referred to by its Latin title *Adversus Haereses* which is an important source regarding the Gospel according to the Hebrews. In Book I, Irenaeus talks about the Valentinian Gnostics and their predecessors, who go as far back as the magician Simon Magus. In Book II he attempts to provide proof that Valentinianism contains no merit in terms of its doctrines. In Book III Irenaeus purports to show that these doctrines are false, by providing counter-evidence gleaned from the Gospels. Book IV consists of Jesus' sayings, and here Irenaeus also stresses the unity of the Old Testament and the Gospel. In the final volume, Book V, Irenaeus focuses on more sayings of Jesus plus the letters of Paul the Apostle.<sup>[9]</sup>

The purpose of "Against Heresies" was to refute the teachings of various Gnostic groups; apparently, several Greek merchants had begun an oratorical campaign in Irenaeus' bishopric, teaching that the material world was the accidental creation of an evil god, from which we are to escape by the pursuit of *gnosis*. Irenaeus argued that the true gnosis is in fact knowledge of Christ, which redeems rather than escapes from bodily existence. Until the discovery of the Library of Nag Hammadi in 1945, *Against Heresies* was the best-surviving description of Gnosticism. According to some biblical scholars, the findings at Nag Hammadi have shown Irenaeus' description of Gnosticism to be largely inaccurate and polemic in nature.<sup>[10][11]</sup> Though correct in some details about the belief systems of various groups, Irenaeus' main purpose was to warn Christians against Gnosticism, rather than catalog those beliefs. He described Gnostic groups as sexual libertines, for example, when some of their own writings advocated chastity more strongly than did orthodox texts - yet the gnostic texts cannot be taken as guides to their actual practices, about which almost nothing is reliably known today.<sup>[12][13]</sup> However, at least one scholar, Rodney Stark, claims that it is the same Nag Hammadi library that proves Irenaeus right.<sup>[14]</sup>

It seemed that Irenaeus's critique against the gnostics were exaggerated, which led to his scholarly dismissal for a long time. For example, he wrote: "They declare that Judas the traitor was thoroughly acquainted with these things, and that he alone, knowing the truth as no other did, accomplished the mystery of betrayal; by him all things were thus thrown into confusion. They produce a fictitious history of this kind, which they style the Gospel of Judas."<sup>[15]</sup>

These claims turned out to be truly mentioned in the Gospel of Judas where Jesus asked Judas to betray him. In any case the gnostics were not a single group, but a wide array of sects. Some groups were indeed libertine because they considered bodily existence meaningless; others praise chastity, and strongly prohibited any sexual activity, even within marriage.<sup>[16]</sup>

Irenaeus also wrote *The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, an Armenian copy of which was discovered in 1904. This work seems to have been an instruction for recent Christian converts.<sup>[17]</sup> Various fragments of other works by Irenaeus have been found, and many lost works by him are attested by other ancient writers. These include "On the Subject of Knowledge," "On the Monarchy," or "How God is not the Cause of Evil", "On the Ogdoad," an untitled letter to Blastus regarding schism, and others. All these works are attested by Eusebius.<sup>[18][19]</sup>

Ireneus exercised wide influence on the immediately following generation. Both Hippolytus and Tertullian freely drew on his writings. But his literal hope of an earthly millennium made him uncongenial reading in the Greek East and it is only in the Latin translation that his work as a whole has been preserved.<sup>[20]</sup>

Irenaeus' works were first translated into English by John Keble and published in 1872 as part of the Library of the Fathers series.

## Scripture

Irenaeus pointed to Scripture as a proof of orthodox Christianity against heresies, classifying as Scripture not only the Old Testament but most of the books now known as the New Testament,<sup>[2]</sup> while excluding many works, a large number by Gnostics, that flourished in the 2nd century and claimed scriptural authority.<sup>[21]</sup>

Before Irenaeus, Christians differed as to which gospel they preferred. The Christians of Asia Minor preferred the Gospel of John. The Gospel of Matthew was the most popular overall.<sup>[22]</sup> Irenaeus asserted that four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were canonical scripture.<sup>[23]</sup> Thus Irenaeus provides the earliest witness to the assertion of the four canonical Gospels, possibly in reaction to Marcion's edited version of the Gospel of Luke, which Marcion asserted was the one and only true gospel.<sup>[4][17]</sup>

Based on the arguments Irenaeus made in support of only four authentic gospels, some interpreters deduce that the *fourfold Gospel* must have still been a novelty in Irenaeus' time.<sup>[24]</sup> *Against Heresies* 3.11.7 acknowledges that many heterodox Christians use only one gospel while 3.11.9 acknowledges that some use more than four.<sup>[25]</sup> The success of Tatian's Diatessaron in about the same time period is "...a powerful indication that the fourfold Gospel contemporaneously sponsored by Irenaeus was not broadly, let alone universally, recognized."<sup>[26]</sup>

Irenaeus is also our earliest attestation that the Gospel of John was written by John the apostle,<sup>[27]</sup> and that the Gospel of Luke was written by Luke, the companion of Paul.<sup>[28]</sup>

The apologist and ascetic Tatian had previously harmonized the four gospels into a single narrative, the *Diatessaron* (c 150-160).

Scholars contend that Irenaeus quotes from 21 of the 27 New Testament Texts:

Matthew (*Book 3, Chapter 16*)

Mark (*Book 3, Chapter 10*)

Luke (*Book 3, Chapter 14*)

John (*Book 3, Chapter 11*)

Acts of the Apostles (*Book 3, Chapter 14*)

Romans (*Book 3, Chapter 16*)

1 Corinthians (*Book 1, Chapter 3*)

2 Corinthians (*Book 3, Chapter 7*)

Galatians (*Book 3, Chapter 22*)

Ephesians (*Book 5, Chapter 2*)

Philippians (*Book 4, Chapter 18*)

Colossians (*Book 1, Chapter 3*)

1 Thessalonians (*Book 5, Chapter 6*)

2 Thessalonians (*Book 5, Chapter 25*)

1 Timothy (*Book 1, Preface*)

2 Timothy (*Book 3, Chapter 14*)

Titus (*Book 3, Chapter 3*)

1 Peter (*Book 4, Chapter 9*)

1 John (*Book 3, Chapter 16*)

2 John (*Book 1, Chapter 16*)

Revelation to John (*Book 4, Chapter 20*)

He may refer to Hebrews (*Book 2, Chapter 30*) and James (*Book 4, Chapter 16*) and maybe even 2 Peter (*Book 5, Chapter 28*) but does not cite Philemon, 3 John or Jude.

## Apostolic authority

In his writing against the Gnostics, who claimed to possess a secret oral tradition from Jesus himself, Irenaeus maintained that the bishops in different cities are known as far back as the Apostles — and none were Gnostic — and that the bishops provided the only safe guide to the interpretation of Scripture.<sup>[29]</sup> He emphasized the unique position of the bishop of Rome.<sup>[30][31]</sup>

With the lists of bishops to which Irenaeus referred, the later doctrine of the apostolic succession of the bishops could be linked.<sup>[30]</sup> This succession was important to establish a chain of custody for orthodoxy. He felt it important, however, to also speak of a succession of elders (presbyters).<sup>[32]</sup>

Irenaeus' point when refuting the Gnostics was that all of the Apostolic churches had preserved the same traditions and teachings in many independent streams. It was the unanimous agreement between these many independent streams of transmission that proved the orthodox Faith, current in those churches, to be true.<sup>[33]</sup> Had any error crept in, the agreement would be immediately destroyed. The Gnostics had no such succession, and no agreement amongst themselves.

## Irenaeus' theology and contrast with Gnosticism

The central point of Irenaeus' theology is the unity and the goodness of God, in opposition to the Gnostics' division of God into a number of divine "Aeons", and their distinction between the utterly transcendent "High God" and the inferior "Demiurge" who created the world. Irenaeus uses the Logos theology he inherited from Justin Martyr. Irenaeus was a student of Polycarp, who was said to have been tutored by John the Apostle.<sup>[27]</sup> (John had used Logos terminology in the Gospel of John and the letter of 1 John). Irenaeus prefers to speak of the Son and the Spirit as the "hands of God".

His emphasis on the unity of God is reflected in his corresponding emphasis on the unity of salvation history. Irenaeus repeatedly insists that God began the world and has been overseeing it ever since this creative act; everything that has happened is part of his plan for humanity. The essence of this plan is a process of maturation: Irenaeus believes that humanity was created immature, and God intended his creatures to take a long time to grow into or assume the divine likeness. Thus, Adam and Eve were created as children. Their Fall was thus not a full-blown rebellion but rather a childish spat, a desire to grow up before their time and have everything with immediacy.

Everything that has happened since has therefore been planned by God to help humanity overcome this initial mishap and achieve spiritual maturity. The world has been intentionally designed by God as a difficult place, where human beings are forced to make moral decisions, as only in this way can they mature as moral agents. Irenaeus likens death to the big fish that swallowed Jonah: it was only in the depths of the whale's belly that Jonah could turn

to God and act according to the divine will. Similarly, death and suffering appear as evils, but without them we could never come to know God.

According to Irenaeus, the high point in salvation history is the advent of Jesus. Irenaeus believed that Christ would always have been sent, even if humanity had never sinned; but the fact that they *did* sin determines his role as a savior. He sees Christ as the new Adam, who systematically *undoes* what Adam did: thus, where Adam was disobedient concerning God's edict concerning the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, Christ was obedient even to death on the wood of a tree. Irenaeus is the first to draw comparisons between Eve and Mary, contrasting the faithlessness of the former with the faithfulness of the latter. In addition to reversing the wrongs done by Adam, Irenaeus thinks of Christ as "recapitulating" or "summing up" human life.<sup>[34]</sup> This means that Christ goes through every stage of human life, from infancy to old age, and simply by living it, sanctifies it with his divinity. Although it is sometimes claimed that Irenaeus believed Christ did not die until he was older than is conventionally portrayed, the bishop of Lyons simply pointed out that because Jesus turned the permissible age for becoming a rabbi (30 years old and above), he recapitulated and sanctified the period between 30 and 50 years old, as per the Jewish custom of periodization of human life, and so touches the beginning of old age when one becomes 50 years old. (see *Adversus Haereses*, book II, chapter 22).

In the passage of *Adversus Haereses* under consideration, Irenaeus is clear that after receiving baptism at the age of thirty, citing Luke 3:23, Gnostics then falsely assert that "He [Jesus] preached only one year reckoning from His baptism," and also, "On completing His thirtieth year He [Jesus] suffered, being in fact still a young man, and who had by no means attained to advanced age." Irenaeus argues against the Gnostics by using scripture to show that Jesus lives at least several years after his baptism by referencing 3 distinctly separate visits to Jerusalem. The first is when Jesus makes wine out of water, He went up to the Paschal feast-day, after which He withdraws and is found in Samaria. The second is when Jesus goes up to Jerusalem for Passover and cures the paralytic, after which He withdraws over the sea of Tiberias. The third mention is when He travels to Jerusalem, eats the Passover, and suffers on the following day.<sup>[35]</sup>

Irenaeus quotes scripture, which we reference as John 8:57, to suggest that Jesus ministers while in his 40's. In this passage, Jesus' opponents want to argue that Jesus has not seen Abraham, because Jesus is too young. Jesus' opponents argue that Jesus is not yet 50 years old. Irenaeus argues that if Jesus was in his thirties, his opponents would've argued that He's not yet 40 years, since that would make Him even younger. Irenaeus' argument is that they would not weaken their own argument by adding years to Jesus' age. Irenaeus also writes that "The Elders witness to this, who in Asia conferred with John the Lord's disciple, to the effect that John had delivered these things unto them : for he abode with them until the times of Trajan. And some of them saw not only John, but others also of the Apostles, and had this same account from them, and witness to the aforesaid relation."<sup>[35]</sup>

In *Demonstration* (74) Irenaeus reinforced his view that Jesus was at least 45 with the statement "For Herod the king of the Jews and Pontius Pilate, the governor of Claudius Caesar, came together and condemned Him to be crucified."<sup>[36]</sup> This would place the crucifixion no earlier than AD 42.<sup>[37]</sup>

Irenaeus conceives of our salvation as essentially coming about through the incarnation of God as a man. He characterizes the penalty for sin as death and corruption. God, however, is immortal and incorruptible, and simply by becoming united to human nature in Christ he conveys those qualities to us: they spread, as it were, like a benign infection. Irenaeus therefore understands the atonement of Christ as happening through his incarnation rather than his crucifixion, although the latter event is an integral part of the former.

By comparison, according to the Gnostic view of Salvation, creation was perfect to begin with; it did not need time to grow and mature. For the Valentinians, the material world is the result of the loss of perfection which resulted from Sophia's desire to understand the Forefather. Therefore, one is ultimately redeemed, through secret knowledge, to enter the pleroma of which the Achamoth originally fell.

According to the Valentinian Gnostics, there are three classes of human beings. They are the material, who cannot attain salvation; the psychic, who are strengthened by works and faith (they are part of the church); and the spiritual,

who cannot decay or be harmed by material actions.<sup>[38]</sup> Essentially, ordinary humans—those who have faith but do not possess the special knowledge—will not attain salvation. Spirituals, on the other hand—those who obtain this great gift—are the only class that will eventually attain salvation.

In his article entitled "*The Demiurge*," J.P. Arendzen sums up the Valentinian view of the salvation of man. He writes, "The first, or carnal men, will return to the grossness of matter and finally be consumed by fire; the second, or psychic men, together with the Demiurge as their master, will enter a middle state, neither heaven (pleroma) nor hell (whyte); the purely spiritual men will be completely freed from the influence of the Demiurge and together with the Saviour and Achamoth, his spouse, will enter the pleroma divested of body (húle) and soul (psuché)."<sup>[39]</sup>

Irenaeus is also known as one of the first theologians to use the principle of apostolic succession to refute his opponents.

In his criticism of Gnosticism, Irenaeus made reference to a Gnostic gospel which portrayed Judas in a positive light, as having acted in accordance with Jesus' instructions. The recently discovered Gospel of Judas dates close to the period when Irenaeus lived (late 2nd century), and scholars typically regard this work as one of many Gnostic texts, showing one of many varieties of Gnostic beliefs of the period.<sup>[40]</sup>

## Irenaeus mariology

Irenaeus of Lyons is perhaps the earliest of the Church Fathers to develop a thorough mariology. It is certain that, while still very young, Irenaeus had seen and heard Bishop Polycarp (d. 155) at Smyrna.<sup>[41]</sup> Irenaeus sets out a forthright account of Mary's role in the economy of salvation.

- Even though Eve had Adam for a husband, she was still a virgin... By disobeying, Eve became the cause of death for herself and for the whole human race. In the same way Mary, though she had a husband, was still a virgin, and by obeying, she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race.<sup>[42]</sup>

According to Irenaeus, Christ, being born out of the Virgin Mary, created a totally new historical situation.<sup>[43]</sup> This view influences later Ambrose of Milan and Tertullian, who wrote about the virgin birth of the Mother of God. The donor of a new birth had to be born in a totally new way. The new birth being that what was lost through a woman, is now saved by a woman.<sup>[44]</sup>

## Prophetic Exegesis

The first four books of *Against Heresies* constitute a minute analysis and refutation of the Gnostic doctrines. The fifth is a statement of positive belief contrasting the constantly shifting and contradictory Gnostic opinions with the steadfast faith of the church. He appeals to the prophecies to demonstrate the truthfulness of Christianity.

## Rome and Ten Horns

Irenaeus shows the close relationship between the predicted events of Daniel 2 and 7. Rome, the fourth prophetic kingdom, would end in a tenfold partition. The ten divisions of the empire are the "ten horns" of Daniel 7 and the "ten horns" in Revelation 17. A "little horn," which is to supplant three of Rome's ten divisions, is also the still future "eighth" in Revelation. Irenaeus climaxes with the destruction of all kingdoms at the Second Advent, when Christ, the prophesied "stone," cut out of the mountain without hands, smites the image after Rome's division.<sup>[45][46]</sup>

## Antichrist

Irenaeus identified the Antichrist, another name of the apostate Man of Sin, with Daniel's Little Horn and John's Beast of Revelation 13. He sought to apply other expressions to the Antichrist, such as "the abomination of desolation," mentioned by Christ (Matt. 24:15) and the "king of a most fierce countenance," in Gabriel's explanation of the Little Horn of Daniel 8. But he is not very clear how "the sacrifice and the libation shall be taken away" during the "half-week," or three and one-half years of the Antichrist's reign.<sup>[47][48]</sup>

Under the notion that the Antichrist, as a single individual, might be of Jewish origin, he fancied that the mention of "Dan," in Jeremiah 8:16, and the omission of that name from those tribes listed in Revelation 7, might indicate the Antichrist's tribe. This surmise became the foundation of a series of subsequent interpretations by others.<sup>[49]</sup>

## Time, Times and Half a Time

Like the other early church fathers, Irenaeus interpreted the three and one-half "times" of the Little Horn of Daniel 7 as three and one-half literal years. Antichrist's three and a half years of sitting in the temple are placed immediately before the Second Coming of Christ.<sup>[50][51]</sup>

They are identified as the second half of the "one week" of Daniel 9. Irenaeus says nothing of the seventy weeks; we do not know whether he placed the "one week" at the end of the seventy or whether he had a gap

## 666

Irenaeus is the first of the church fathers to consider the mystic number 666. While Irenaeus did propose some solutions of this numerical riddle, his interpretation was quite reserved. Thus, he cautiously states:

But knowing the sure number declared by Scripture, that is six hundred sixty and six, let them await, in the first place, the division of the kingdom into ten; then, in the next place, when these kings are reigning, and beginning to set their affairs in order, and advance their kingdom, [let them learn] to acknowledge that he who shall come claiming the kingdom for himself, and shall terrify those men of whom we have been speaking, have a name containing the aforesaid number, is truly the abomination of desolation.<sup>[52]</sup>

Although Irenaeus did speculate upon three names to symbolize this mystical number, namely Euanthas, Teitan and Lateinos, nevertheless he was content to believe that the Antichrist would arise some time in the future after the fall of Rome and then the meaning of the number would be revealed.<sup>[53]</sup>

## Millennium

Irenaeus declares that the Antichrist's future three-and-a-half-year reign, when he sits in the temple at Jerusalem, will be terminated by the second advent, with the resurrection of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the millennial reign of the righteous. The general resurrection and the judgment follow the descent of the New Jerusalem at the end of the millennial kingdom.<sup>[51][54]</sup>

Irenaeus calls those "heretics" who maintain that the saved are immediately glorified in the kingdom to come after death, before their resurrection. He avers that the millennial kingdom and the resurrection are actualities, not allegories, the first resurrection introducing this promised kingdom in which the risen saints are described as ruling over the renewed earth during the millennium, between the two resurrections.<sup>[55][56]</sup>

Irenaeus held to the old Jewish tradition that the first six days of creation week were typical of the first six thousand years of human history, with Antichrist manifesting himself in the sixth period. And he expected the millennial kingdom to begin with the second coming of Christ to destroy the wicked and inaugurate, for the righteous, the reign of the kingdom of God during the seventh thousand years, the millennial Sabbath, as signified by the Sabbath of creation week.<sup>[51][57][58]</sup>

In common with many of the fathers, Irenaeus did not distinguish between the new earth re-created in its eternal state—the thousand years of Revelation 20—when the saints are with Christ after His second advent, and the Jewish

traditions of the Messianic kingdom. Hence, he applies Biblical and traditional ideas to his descriptions of this earth during the millennium, throughout the closing chapters of Book 5. This conception of the reign of resurrected and translated saints with Christ on this earth during the millennium—popularly known as chiliasm—was the increasingly prevailing belief of this time. Incipient distortions due to the admixture of current traditions, which figure in the extreme forms of chiliasm, caused a reaction against the earlier interpretations of Bible prophecies.<sup>[59]</sup>

Irenaeus was not looking for a Jewish kingdom. He interpreted Israel as the Christian church, the spiritual seed of Abraham.<sup>[60]</sup>

At times his expressions are highly fanciful. He tells, for instance, of a prodigious fertility of this earth during the millennium, after the resurrection of the righteous, "when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food." In this connection, he attributes to Christ the saying about the vine with ten thousand branches, and the ear of wheat with ten thousand grains, and so forth, which he quotes from Papias of Hierapolis.<sup>[61]</sup>

## Exegesis

Irenaeus' exegesis does not give complete coverage. On the seals, for example, he merely alludes to Christ as the rider on the white horse. He stresses five factors with greater clarity and emphasis than Justin:

1. the literal resurrection of the righteous at the second advent
2. the millennium bounded by the two resurrections
3. the Antichrist to come upon the heels of Rome's breakup
4. the symbolic prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse in their relation to the last times
5. the kingdom of God to be established by the second advent.

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- [22] Harris, Stephen L., *Understanding the Bible* (Palo Alto: Mayfield, 1985)
- [23] "But it is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the church has been scattered throughout the world, and since the 'pillar and ground' of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life, it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing incorruption on every side, and vivifying human afresh. From this fact, it is evident that the Logos, the fashioner *demiourgos* of all, he that sits on the cherubim and holds all things



- together, when he was manifested to humanity, gave us the gospel under four forms but bound together by one spirit." *Against Heresies* 3.11.8
- [24] McDonald & Sanders, *The Canon Debate*, 2002, p. 277
- [25] McDonald & Sanders, p. 280. Also p. 310, summarizing 3.11.7: the Ebionites use Matthew's Gospel, Marcion mutilates Luke's, the Docetists use Mark's, the Valentinians use John's
- [26] McDonald & Sanders, p. 280
- [27] McDonald & Sanders, p. 368
- [28] McDonald & Sanders, p. 267
- [29] "Wherefore we must obey the priests of the Church who have succession from the Apostles, as we have shown, who, together with succession in the episcopate, have received the certain mark of truth according to the will of the Father; all others, however, are to be suspected, who separated themselves from the principal succession." *Adversus Haereses* (Book IV, Chapter 26). read online (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103426.htm>).
- [30] Encyclopaedia Britannica (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-3559/Saint-Irenaeus>)
- [31] "Since, however, it would be very tedious, in such a volume as this, to reckon up the successions of all the Churches, we do put to confusion all those who, in whatever manner, whether by an evil self-pleasing, by vainglory, or by blindness and perverse opinion, assemble in unauthorized meetings; [we do this, I say,] by indicating that tradition derived from the apostles, of the very great, the very ancient, and universally known Church founded and organized at Rome by the two most glorious apostles, Peter and Paul; as also [by pointing out] the faith preached to men, which comes down to our time by means of the successions of the bishops. For it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its pre- eminent authority, that is, the faithful everywhere, inasmuch as the apostolical tradition has been preserved continuously by those [faithful men] who exist everywhere." read online *Adversus Haereses* (Book III, Chapter 3) (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103303.htm>)
- [32] *Against Heresies*, IV.26.2.
- [33] *Adversus Haereses* (Book V, Chapter 33:8) (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103533.htm>)
- [34] AH 3.18.7; 3.21.9-10; 3.22.3; 5.21.1; see also, Klager, Andrew P. "Retaining and Reclaiming the Divine: Identification and the Recapitulation of Peace in St. Irenaeus of Lyons' Atonement Narrative," *Stricken by God? Nonviolent Identification and the Victory of Christ*, eds. Brad Jersak and Michael Hardin. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), esp. p. 462 n. 158.
- [35] A.H. 2.22.5
- [36] Irenaeus (c180 CE) *Demonstration* (74) ([http://www.ccel.org/ccel/irenaeus/demonstr.preaching\\_the\\_demonstration\\_of\\_the\\_apostolic\\_preaching.html](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/irenaeus/demonstr.preaching_the_demonstration_of_the_apostolic_preaching.html))
- [37] See Robert M Price. "Jesus at the Vanishing Point," in James K. Beilby & Paul Rhodes Eddy (eds.) *The Historical Jesus: Five Views*. InterVarsity, 2009, p. 80-81.
- [38] Grant, Robert M., *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Routledge, 1997), p. 23.
- [39] Arendzen, J.P., "The Demiurge" [cited 2007]. Available from the World Wide Web @ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04707b.htm>.
- [40] A Spectators Guide to the Gospel of Judas ([http://www.sydneyanglicans.net/images/uploads/indepth/A\\_Spectators\\_Guide\\_to\\_the\\_Gospel\\_of\\_Judas.pdf](http://www.sydneyanglicans.net/images/uploads/indepth/A_Spectators_Guide_to_the_Gospel_of_Judas.pdf)) (PDF)– by Dr. John Dickson, Sydney Anglicans
- [41] <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08130b.htm>
- [42] Irenaeus of Lyons, *Adversus haereses* 3:22
- [43] Irenaeus, Book V, 19,3
- [44] Tertullian, *De Carne Christi*, 17
- [45] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 25 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103525.htm>)
- [46] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 26 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103526.htm>)
- [47] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 28 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103528.htm>)
- [48] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 25, sec. 2-4 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103525.htm>)
- [49] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 25, sec. 3 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103530.htm>)
- [50] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 25, sec. 3-4 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103525.htm>)
- [51] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 30, sec. 4 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103530.htm>)
- [52] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 30, sec. 2 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103528.htm>)
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- [54] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 35, sec. 1-2 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103535.htm>)
- [55] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 31 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103531.htm>)
- [56] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 35 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103535.htm>)
- [57] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 28, sec. 3 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103528.htm>)
- [58] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 33, sec. 2 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103533.htm>)
- [59] From, LeRoy, 1950, "The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers", Review and Herald Publishing Association, p. 250-252
- [60] *Against Heresies* Book 5 Chapter 32, sec. 2 (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0103532.htm>)
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## External links

- Early Christian Writings Irenaeus (<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/irenaeus.html>)
- Fragments from his lost works (<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0134.htm>)
- A nineteenth-century translation of Irenaeus' work (<http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/TOC.htm>)
  - Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/irenaeus/demonstr.toc.html>)
  - Book II, ch. 22 ([http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-59.htm#P7011\\_1802900](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-59.htm#P7011_1802900)), where Irenaeus argues his unconventional views about the age of Jesus and the length of his ministry.
- EarlyChurch.org.uk (<http://www.earlychurch.org.uk/irenaeus.php>) Extensive bibliography.
- Gregory S. Neal: "The Nature of Evil and the Irenaean Theodicy" *Grace Incarnate* (1988) (<http://www.revneal.org/Writings/evil.htm>)
- Critique of Irenaeus (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/story/emergence.html>), Elaine H. Pagels
- Critique of Pagel's article by Father Paul Mankowski (<http://www.cwnews.com/news/viewstory.cfm?recnum=43736>)
- Opera Omnia by Migne Patrologia Graeca with analytical indexes ([http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/20\\_30\\_0130-0202-\\_Iraeneus.html](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/20_30_0130-0202-_Iraeneus.html))
- "St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, Martyr" (<http://www.bartleby.com/210/6/281.html>), *Butler's Lives of the Saints*

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