

The Three Steles of Seth

Translated by James R. Robinson

The revelation of Dositheos about the three steles of Seth, the Father of the living and unshakable race, which he (Dositheos) saw and understood. And after he had read them, he remembered them. And he gave them to the elect, just as they were inscribed there. Many times I joined in giving glory with the powers, and I became worthy of the immeasurable majesties. Now they (the steles) are as follows:

The First Stele of Seth

I bless thee, Father Geradama(s), I, as thine (own) Son, Emmacha Seth, whom thou didst beget without begetting, as a blessing of our God; for I am thine (own) Son. And thou art my mind, O my Father. And I, I sowed and begot; but thou hast seen the majesties. Thou hast stood imperishable. I bless thee, Father. Bless me, Father. It is because of thee that I exist; it is because of God that thou dost exist. Because of thee I am with that very one. Thou art light, since thou beholdest light. Thou hast revealed light. Thou art Mirotheas; thou art my Mirotheos. I bless thee as God; I bless thy divinity. Great is the good Self-begotten who stood, the God who had already stood. Thou didst come in goodness; thou hast appeared, and thou hast revealed goodness. I shall utter thy name, for thou art a first name. Thou art unbegotten. Thou hast appeared in order that thou mightest reveal the eternal ones. Thou art he who is. Therefore thou hast revealed those who really are. Thou art he who is uttered by a voice, but by mind art thou glorified, thou who hast dominion everywhere. Therefore the perceptible world too knows thee because of thee and thy seed. Thou art merciful.

And thou art from another race, and its place is over another race. And now thou art from another race, and its place is over another race. Thou art from another race, for thou art not similar. And thou art merciful, for thou art eternal. And thy place is over a race, for thou hast caused all these to increase; and for the sake of my seed. For it is thou who knows it, that its place is in begetting. But they are from other races, for they are not similar. But their place is over other races, for their place is in life. Thou art Mirotheos.

I bless his power which was given to me, who caused the malenesses that really are to become male three times; he who was divided into the pentad, the one who was given to us in triple power, the one who was begotten without begetting, the one who came from that which is elect; because of what is humble, he went forth from the midst.

Thou art a Father through a Father, a word from a command. We bless thee, Thrice Male, for thou didst unite all through them all, for thou hast empowered us. Thou hast arisen from one; from one thou hast gone forth; thou hast come to one. Thou hast saved, thou hast saved, thou hast saved us, O crown-bearer, crown-giver! We bless thee eternally. We bless thee, once we have been saved, as the perfect individuals, perfect on account of thee, those who became perfect with thee who is complete, who completes, the one perfect through all these, who is similar everywhere.

Thrice Male, thou hast stood. Thou hast already stood. Thou wast divided everywhere. Thou didst continue being one. And those whom thou hast willed, thou hast saved. But thou dost will to be saved all who are worthy.

Thou art Perfect! Thou art Perfect! Thou art Perfect!

The First
Stele of Seth

The Second Stele
of Seth

Great is the first aeon, male virginal Barbelo, the first glory of the invisible Father, she who is called "perfect".

Thou (fem.) hast seen first the one who truly pre-exists because he is non-being. And from him and through him thou hast pre-existed eternally, the non-being from one indivisible, triple power, thou a triple power, thou a great monad from a pure monad, thou an elect monad, the first shadow of the holy Father, light from light.

We bless thee, producer (fem.) of perfection, aeon-giver (fem.). Thou hast seen the eternal ones because they are from a shadow. And thou hast become numerable. And thou didst find, thou didst continue being one (fem.); yet becoming numerable in division, thou art three-fold. Thou art truly thrice, thou one (fem.) of the one (masc.). And thou art from a shadow of him, thou a Hidden One, thou a world of understanding, knowing those of the one, that they are from a shadow. And these are thine in the heart.

For their sake thou hast empowered the eternal ones in being; thou hast empowered divinity in living; thou hast empowered knowledge in goodness; in blessedness thou hast empowered the shadows which pour from the one. Thou hast empowered this (one) in knowledge; thou hast empowered another one in creation. Thou hast empowered him who is equal and him who is not equal, him who is similar and him who is not similar. Thou hast empowered in begetting, and (provided) forms in that which exists to others. [...] Thou hast empowered these. - He is that One Hidden in the heart. - And thou hast come forth to these and from these. Thou art divided among them. And thou dost become a great male noetic First-Appearer.

Fatherly God, divine child, begetter of multiplicity according to a division of all who really are, thou (masc.) hast appeared to them all in a word. And thou (masc.) dost possess them all without begetting and eternally indestructible on account of thee (fem.).

Salvation has come to us; from thee is salvation. Thou art wisdom, thou knowledge; thou art truthfulness. On account of thee is life; from thee is life. On account of thee is mind; from thee is mind. Thou art mind, thou a world of truthfulness, thou a triple power, thou threefold. Truly thou art thrice, the aeon of aeons. It is thou only who sees purely the first eternal ones and the unbegotten ones.

But the first divisions are as thou wast divided. Unite us as thou has been united. Teach us those things which thou dost see. Empower us that we may be saved to eternal life. For we are each a shadow of thee as thou art a shadow of that first pre-existent one. Hear us first. We are eternal ones. Hear us as the perfect individuals. Thou art the aeon of aeons, the all-perfect one who is established.

Thou hast heard! Thou hast heard!

Thou hast saved! Thou hast saved!

We give thanks! We bless thee always! We shall glorify thee!

The Second Stele
of Seth

The Third Stele

We rejoice! We rejoice! We rejoice!

We have seen! We have seen! We have seen the really pre-existent one, that he really exists, that he is the first eternal one.

O Unconceived, from thee are the eternal ones and the aeons, the all-perfect ones who are established, and the perfect individuals.

We bless thee, non-being, existence which is before existences, first being which is before beings, Father of divinity and life, creator of mind, giver of good, giver of blessedness!

We all bless thee, knower, in a glorifying blessing, (thou) because of whom [all these are. ... really, ...], who knows thee, through thee alone. For there is no one who is active before thee. Thou art an only and living spirit. And thou knowest one, for this one who belongs to thee is on every side. We are not able to express him. For thy light shines upon us.

Present a command to us to see thee, so that we may be saved. Knowledge of thee, it is the salvation of us all. Present a command! When thou dost command, we have been saved! Truly we have been saved! We have seen thee by mind! Thou art them all, for thou dost save them all, he who was not saved, nor was he saved through them. For thou, thou hast commanded us.

Thou art one. Thou art one, just as there is one (who) will say to thee: Thou art one, thou art a single living spirit. How shall we give thee a name? We do not have it, For thou art the existence of them all. Thou art the life of them all. Thou art the mind of them all. For thou art he in whom they all rejoice.

Thou hast commanded all these to be saved through thy word [...] glory who is before him, Hidden One, blessed Senaon, he who begat himself, Asineu(s), [...]ephneu(s), Optaon, Elemaon the great power, Emouniar, Nibareu(s), Kandephor(os), Aphredon, Deiphaneus, thou who art Armedon to me, power-begetter, Thalanatheu(s), Antitheus, thou who existeth within thyself, thou who art before thyself - and after thee no one entered into activity.

As what shall we bless thee? We are not empowered. But we give thanks, as being humble toward thee. For thou hast commanded us, as he who is elect, to glorify thee to the extent we are able. We bless thee because we were saved. Always we glorify thee. For this reason we shall glorify thee, that we may be saved to eternal salvation. We have blessed thee, for we are empowered. We have been saved, for thou hast willed always, that we all do this.

We all did this. [...] not through [... aeon ...], the one who was [...], we and those who [...]. He who will remember these and give glory always will become perfect among those who are perfect and impassable beyond all things. For they all bless these individually and together. And afterwards they shall be silent. And just as they were ordained, they ascend. After the silence, they descend from the third. They bless the second; after these the first. The way of ascent is the way of descent.

Know therefore, as those who live, that you have attained. And you taught yourselves the infinite things. Marvel at the truth which is within them, and (at) the revelation.

This translation was made by James R. Robinson, excerpted from *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* edited by James M. Robinson, and transcribed for online publication originally at the Gnostic Society Library (gnosis.org).
