

3,1 And at first, as I said, Ebion declared that Christ is the offspring of a man, that is, of Joseph. For a while now, however, various of his followers have been giving conflicting accounts of Christ, as though they have decided on something untenable and impossible themselves. (2) But I think it may be since they were joined by Elxai—the false prophet <I mentioned earlier> in the tracts called “Sampsaeans,” “Ossenes” and “Elkasaites”—that they tell an imaginary story about Christ and the Holy Spirit as he did.

3,3¹¹ For some of them even say that Adam is Christ—the man who was formed first and infused with God’s breath.¹² (4) But others among them say that he is from above; created before all things, a spirit, both higher than the angels and Lord of all; and that he is called Christ, the heir of the world there.¹³ But he comes here when he chooses,¹⁴ as he came in Adam and appeared to the patriarchs clothed with Adam’s body. And in the last days the same Christ who had come to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, came and donned Adam’s body, and appeared to men, was crucified, rose and ascended. (6) But again, when they choose to, they say, “No! The Spirit—that is, the Christ—came to him and put on the man called Jesus.”¹⁵ And they get all giddy from making different suppositions about him at different times.

3,7 They too accept the Gospel according to Matthew. Like the Cerinthians and Merinthians, they too use it alone. They call it, “According to the Hebrews,” and it is true to say that only Matthew expounded and preached the Gospel in the Hebrew language and alphabet¹⁶ in the New Testament.

3,8 But some may already have replied that the Gospel of John too, translated from Greek to Hebrew, is in the Jewish treasuries, I mean the treasuries at Tiberias, and is stored there secretly, as certain Jewish converts have described to me in detail. (9) And not only that, but it is said that the book of the Acts of the Apostles, also translated from Greek to Hebrew, is there in the treasuries, so that the Jews who have read it, the ones who told me about it, have been converted to Christ from this.

4,1 One of them was Josephus—not the ancient Josephus, the author and chronicler, but Josephus of Tiberias, <born> during the old age of

¹¹ With 3,3-5 cf. Hipp. Refut. 9.14.1.

¹² Adam has the Spirit of Christ and is therefore the first appearance in the world of the true prophet: Clem. Hom. 3.20-21; Rec. 1.45.4.

¹³ Clem. Hom. 3.20.2.

¹⁴ Loc. cit.

¹⁵ See p. 119 n. 14.

¹⁶ Cf. Iren. 1.26.2; 3.11.7; Eus. H. E. 3.27.4; Jer. C. Pelag 3.2; Vir. Ill. 3 (Richardson p. 8).