

# The Gnostic Hall of Infamy

## Simon Magus and Menander

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We have mentioned several times that there were numerous Gnostic teachers, each of whom produced his own version of the Gnostic mythology. This next series of articles will briefly describe the most important Gnostic personalities and their contributions to the heresy.

Simon the Samaritan (also known as “Simon the Sorcerer” or “Simon Magus”) was the original source of Gnosticism. Many of the concepts within Gnosticism had previously existed in paganism for millennia, but Simon is the one who produced Gnosticism as a heretical, pseudo-Christian sect. Essentially, he adapted Christian terminology and Scripture to fit pagan concepts. This was his innovation, and as such, he is the father of all pseudo-Christian cultists.

Simon was a magician. His encounter with the Apostles is mentioned in Acts 8. According to Irenaeus, Simon “feigned faith, supposing that the apostles themselves performed their cures by the art of magic...; and with respect to their filling with the Holy Ghost, through the imposition of hands... that even this was done through a kind of greater knowledge of magic.”

After he was rebuked by Peter, Simon still failed to put faith in God but “set himself eagerly to contend against the apostles, in order that he himself might seem to be a wonder being, and applied himself with still greater zeal to the study of the whole magic art, that he might the better bewilder and overpower multitudes of men.”

Irenaeus goes on to describe how Simon was believed by many to be a god. Simon taught that it was himself who appeared among the Jews as the Son of God, that he descended in Samaria as God the Father, and that he came to other nations as the Holy Spirit. He called himself the loftiest of all powers and “the Father over all.”

Simon went on to purchase a female slave named Helena. He taught that he had created her through the power of Thought (Ennoea). He represented her as the mother of all and taught that in the beginning, he conceived in his mind, through her, angels and archangels, producing these by the creative power of Thought. These angels in turn created the

physical world. The angels became jealous of the Ennoea (Helena) and detained her and subjected her to all kinds of suffering and humiliation. As the greatest degradation, they imprisoned her in a human body and for ages she passed in succession from one female body to another until finally she was manifested as a common prostitute. Simon taught that she was the subject of the Parable of the Lost Sheep. Simon was the good shepherd of that parable.

Simon taught that the Old Testament prophets uttered their prophecies under the inspiration of the evil angels who formed the world. For this reason, his followers reject the writings of the prophets.

Simon, and those who followed his sect, were known for the use of magical arts. They also used exorcisms, incantations, love-potions, charms, familiar spirits, dream-sending demons and whatever else of an occult nature that could be adapted to their purposes. His followers were called "Simonians," and in the words of Irenaeus, "and from them '*knowledge, falsely so called,*' received its beginning."

Simon's successor was another Samaritan by the name of Menander. Menander was also known for his skillful use of magic. He taught that Bythus continues to be unknown and that he himself had been sent by from the Pleroma to be a savior and deliverer of men. He taught that the world was created by angels. Through the use of magic, he taught knowledge that would enable one to overcome these angels. He allegorized the term "resurrection" teaching that his disciples, by being baptized into him, could die no more, but possessed immortal youth.