

The Gnostic Hall of Infamy

Cerinthus, Ebionites, Nicolaitanes, Cerdo

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Cerinthus, like Basilides, was an Egyptian. He taught that the world was made by a power far inferior to, and ignorant of, the unbegotten Father. He taught that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary. Christ descended on Jesus at his baptism and departed from him before his crucifixion.

The Ebionites were similar in their doctrines to Cerinthus and Carpocrates, but had a distinctive Jewish flavor. They accepted the Old Testament Scriptures, allegorically interpreted, and the Gospel of Matthew only. They repudiated Paul as an apostate from the Law. They practiced circumcision and Jewish customs.

The Nicolaitanes followed Nicolas, who was one of the seven deacons in Acts 6. This Nicolas became an apostate and led away many disciples from the faith. They led lives of “unrestrained indulgence.”

Cerdo taught essentially the same things as Simon, Menander and others. He is noteworthy as living and teaching in Rome.