

Acts of Kefa and the Twelve Apostles

[Vero Essene Yahad](#)

The Acts of Kefa and the Twelve is one of the texts from the New Testament apocrypha which was found in the Nag Hammadi library. The text contains two parts, an initial allegory, and a subsequent gnostic exposition of its meaning. The allegory is thought to have been originally a work in its own right, and to have dated in that form from around the 2nd century. The allegory describes the tale, similar to the Parable of the Pearl in the Gospel of Matthew, of a pearl merchant who is selling a pearl at a great price (note – this text is not to be confused with the Mormon scripture The Pearl of Great Price). The merchant is shunned by the rich but the poor attend him in droves, and learn that the pearl is kept at the home city of the merchant, "Nine Gates", rather than being carried on him. As such those who desire it must trek the arduous journey to Nine Gates. The name of the merchant is Lithargoel, which the text translates as being "lightweight, glistening stone", i.e. the merchant himself is the "pearl". Ultimately the merchant reveals himself to be Ιησοῦς. (wiki)

And I, Kefa, inquired about the name of this city from residents who were standing on the dock. A man among them answered, saying, "The name of this city is Habitation¹, that is, Foundation, *a rock of endurance*." And the leader among them holding the palm² branch at the edge of the dock. And after we had gone ashore with the baggage, I went into the city, to seek advice about lodging.

A man came out wearing a cloth bound around his waist, with a gold belt girded *round it*. Also a shroud³ was tied over his chest, extending over his shoulders and covering his head and his hands.

I was staring at the man, because he was beautiful in his form and stature. There were four parts of his body that I saw: the soles of his feet and a part of his chest and the palms of his hands and his visage. These things I was able to see. A book cover like *those of my books* was in his left hand. A staff of styrax⁴ wood was in his right hand. His voice was resounding as he slowly spoke, crying out in the city, "Pearls! Pearls!"

Indeed, I thought he was a man of that city. I said to him, "My brother and my friend!" He answered me, then, saying, "Rightly did you say, 'My brother and my friend.' What is it you seek from me?" I said to him, "I ask you about lodging for me and the brothers also, because we are strangers here." He said to me, "For this reason have I myself just said, 'My brother and my friend,' because I also am a fellow stranger like you."

1 Ps 107:7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

2 Palm

3 Parrot & Wilson say 'napkin'

4 Styrax or Storax or Japonica -

And having said these things, he cried out, "Pearls! Pearls!" The rich men of that city heard his voice. They came out of their hidden stores. And some were looking out from the stores of their houses. Others looked out from their upper windows. And they didn't see *that they could get* anything from him, because there was no pouch on his back nor bundle inside his cloth and napkin. And because of their disdain they didn't even acknowledge him. He, for his part, didn't reveal himself to them. They returned to their stores, saying, "This man is mocking us."

And the poor of that city heard his voice, and they came to the man who sells this pearl. They said, "Please take the trouble to show us the pearl so that we may, then, see it with our eyes. For we are the poor. And we don't have this *kind of price* to pay for it. But show us so we might tell our friends that we saw a pearl with our eyes." He answered, saying to them, "If it's possible, come to my city, so that I may not only show it before your eyes, but give it to you for nothing *in exchange*."

And indeed they, the poor of that city, heard *all this* and said, "Since we are beggars, we surely know that a man doesn't give a pearl to a beggar, but bread and money is usually received. Now then, the kindness that we want to receive from you is *for you* show us the pearl before our eyes. And we will say to our friends proudly that we saw a pearl with our eyes" - because such is not found among the poor, especially such beggars *as us*. He answered, saying to them, "If it's possible, you yourselves come to my city, so that I may not only show you it, but give it to you for nothing *in exchange*." The poor and the beggars rejoiced because of the man who gives for nothing *in return*.

The men asked Kefa about *all* the hardships. Kefa answered and told those things that he had heard about: *all* the hardships of the Way. *They did so* because they are interpreters of the hardships in their ministry.

He said to the man who sells this pearl, "I want to know your name and the hardships of the Way to your city, because we are strangers and servants of God. it's necessary for us to spread the word of God. *As for the hardships of the Way to the city*, which you asked me about, I will tell you about it. No one is able to go on that Way, except one who has forsaken everything that he has and has fasted daily from stage to stage. For many are the robbers and wild beasts on that Way. The one who carries bread with him on the Way, the black dogs

kill because of the bread. The one who carries an expensive garment of the world with him, the robbers kill because of the garment. The one who carries water with him, the wolves kill because of the water, since they were thirsty for it. The one who is anxious about meat and green vegetables, the lions eat because of the meat. If he evades the lions, the bulls devour him eat of the green vegetables."

When he had said these things to me, I sighed within myself, saying, "Great hardships are on the Way! If only Ιησους would give us power to walk it!" He looked at me since my face was sad, and I sighed. He said to me, "Why do you sigh, if you, indeed, know this name "Ιησους" and believe him? He is a great power for giving strength. For I too believe in the Father who sent him." I replied, asking him, "What is the name of the place to which you go, your city?" He said to me, "This is the name of my city, 'Nine Gates.' Let us praise God as we are mindful that the tenth is the head." After this I went away from him in peace.

As I was about to go and call my friends, I saw waves and large high walls surrounding the bounds of the city. I marveled at the great things I saw. I saw an old man sitting *there* and I asked him if the name of the city was really Habitation. [...], "Habitation [...]." He said to me. "You speak truly, for we inhabit here because we endure."

I responded, saying, "Justly [...] have men named it *habitation*, because (by) everyone who endures his trials, cities are inhabited, and a precious kingdom comes from them, because they endure in the midst of the apostasies and the difficulties of the storms. So that in this way, the city of everyone who endures the burden of his yoke of faith will be inhabited, and he will be included in the reign of the sky."

I hurried and went and called my friends so that we might go to the city that he, Lithargoel⁵, appointed for us. In a bond of faith we forsook everything as he had said *to do*. We evaded the robbers, because they didn't find their garments with us. We evaded the wolves, because they didn't find the water with us for which they thirsted. We evaded the lions, because they didn't find the desire for meat with us. We evaded the bulls *for* they didn't find green vegetables.

5 See article "Was Lithargoel" below.

A great joy came upon us and a peaceful carelessness like that of our Master. We rested ourselves in front of the gate, and we talked with each other about that which is not a distraction of this world. Rather we continued in contemplation of the faith.

As we discussed the robbers on the Way, whom we evaded, behold Lithargoel, having changed, came out to us. He had the appearance of a physician, since an unguent box was under his arm, and a young disciple was following him carrying a pouch full of medicine. We didn't recognize him.

Kefa responded and said to him, "We want you to do us a favor, because we are strangers, and take us to the house of Lithargoel before evening comes." He said, "In uprightness of heart I will show it to you. But I am amazed at how you knew this good man. For he doesn't reveal himself to every man, because he himself is the son of a great king. Rest yourselves a little so that I may go and heal this man and come *back*." He hurried and came *back* quickly.

He said to Kefa, "Kefa!" And Kefa was frightened, for how did he know that his name was Kefa? Kefa responded to the Savior, "How do you know me, for you called my name?" Lithargoel answered, "I want to ask you who gave the name Kefa to you?" He said to him, "It was Ἰησοῦς the Χριστός, the son of the living God. He gave this name to me." He answered and said, "It is I! Recognize me, Kefa." He loosened the garment, which clothed him - the one into which he had changed himself because of us - revealing to us in truth that it was he.

We bowed ourselves on the ground and paid homage to him. We comprised eleven disciples. He stretched forth his hand and caused us to stand. We spoke with him humbly. Our heads were bowed down in unworthiness as we said, "What you wish we'll do. But - give us power to do what you wish at all times."

He gave them the unguent box and the pouch that was in the hand of the young disciple. He commanded them like this, saying, "Go into the city from which you came, which is called Habitation. Continue in endurance as you teach all those who have believed in my name, because I have endured in hardships of the faith. I will give you your reward. To the poor of that city give what they need in order to live until I give them what is better, which I told you that I will give you for nothing *in return*."

Kefa answered and said to him, "Master, you have taught us to forsake the

world and everything in it. We have renounced them for your sake. What we are concerned about *now* is *getting* food for a single day. Where will we be able to find the needs that you ask us to provide for the poor?"

The Master answered and said, "O Kefa, it was necessary that you understand the parable that I told you! Do you not understand that my name, which you teach, surpasses all riches, and the wisdom of God surpasses gold, and silver and precious stone?"

He gave them the pouch of medicine and said, "Heal all the sick of the city who believe in my name." Kefa was afraid to reply to him for the second time. He signaled to the one who was beside him, who was John: "You talk this time." John answered and said, "Master, before you we are afraid to say many words. But it's you who asks us to practice this skill. We have not been taught to be physicians. How then will we know how to heal bodies as you have told us?" He answered them, "Rightly have you spoken, John, for I know that the doctors of this world heal what belongs to the world. The doctors of souls, however, heal the heart. Heal the bodies first, therefore, so that through the real powers of healing for their bodies, without medicine of the world, they may believe in you, that you have power to heal the illnesses of the heart also.

"The rich men of the city, however, those who didn't see fit even to acknowledge me, but who reveled in their wealth and pride - with such as these, therefore, don't dine in their houses nor be friends with them, lest their partiality influence you. For many in the assemblies have shown partiality to the rich, because they also are sinful, and they give occasion for others to sin. But judge them with uprightness, so that your ministry may be spoken well of, and that my name also, may be spoken well of in the assemblies." The disciples answered and said, "Yes, truly this is what is fitting to do."

They bowed themselves on the ground and paid obeisance to him. He caused them to stand and departed from them in peace. Amen.

This translation was made by Douglas M. Parrott and R. McL. Wilson, with my modifications or corrections here and there. -Jackson Snyder

Was Lithargoel supposed to be Jesus in NHC 6.1 - "The Acts of Kefa and the 12 Apostles"

- Posted by [Kookaburra Jack](#) on June 13, 2010 at 2:12pm in [Sacred Texts](#)

The Nag Hammadi Codex 6 opens with "The Acts of Kefa and the 12 Apostles" (TAOPATTA). I have done some background research on this text, and the academic opinion that has been written about it. The index to my notes are available here:

<http://www.mountainman.com.au/essenese/taopatta.htm>

Within this index you will find an article which collates a fair amount of academic opinion on this text, plus various analyses that I have drafted on this text C14 dated to 348 CE (+/- 60 years).

Every single academic that I have read so far is making the assumption that the figure of Lithargoel is to be interpreted as the figure of Jesus on the basis that the author of the story states that the apostles identified him as a such and "prostrated themselves (twice) before him" (in the oriental fashion that was promoted by Constantine).

My analysis sees Lithargoel as associated with the one of the priests of the Therapeutae of Asclepius who were the temple servants and assistants in the ubiquitous network of shrines and temples to this Graeco-Roman healing god that were scattered throughout the Roman Empire and beyond. There is a vast abundance of archaeological historical evidence for these people.

See for example:

http://www.mountainman.com.au/essenese/Therapeutae_of_Asclepius.htm

This hypothesis (that the main character in this story Lithargoel is NOT to be identified as Jesus) is not as controversial as others I have recently posted to this forum, so I thought I'd just ask the question in order to make the attempt at trying to ascertain just what manner of responses I get from the same bunch of pro-orthodox-christian-history detractors. I see this text as both a *Non-Christian Ascetic Allegory* and an *Hellenic Satire against the Apostles*.

Constantine had destroyed the temple network of the ancient Greeks and prohibited their use with effect from c.324 CE. He particularly targetted the temples to Asclepius in the eastern empire according to the sources. Therefore I am conjecturing that this text has been written by an author who had been once part of the Graeco-Roman priesthood (perhaps of Asclepius) who - like everyone else at that time - had found themselves (and their ancient religious customs) made redundant by their "Pontifex Maximus", and write against the Christian religion with this text TAOPATTA.