

Pistis Sophia — Wisdom's Fall and Rescue

TLDR / 80-20

A Gnostic gospel in two halves: a story of Wisdom falling for a false light and climbing back, then a long manual on how souls escape.

Its lasting value is the method: every revelation is checked against scripture and interpreted aloud by a disciple.

The Keys

1. The story: Faith-Wisdom is fooled by a counterfeit light.

Pistis Sophia ("Faith-Wisdom") sees a light below her and, taking it for the true light above, follows it down into Chaos. It belongs to the Authades, "the Self-willed", whose lion-faced power drains her. She cries out in thirteen repentances; Jesus, with Michael and Gabriel, lifts her back out. That rescue fills Book I and half of Book II.

2. The format: revelation, then scripture, then interpretation.

The risen Jesus teaches his disciples. Each of Sophia's songs is interpreted by a disciple *citing a Psalm or an Ode of Solomon*, and Jesus confirms the reading. Mary Magdalene leads — by a rough count, over half of the disciples' turns to speak. Peter complains he cannot "*suffer this woman*"; later Mary says she fears him, since he "*hates our race*".

3. The teaching: the soul is sealed to a "spirit counterpart".

The rulers bind a counterfeit spirit to every soul that compels it to sin. Release comes through mysteries given by Jesus, the highest being "the mystery of the Ineffable", which forgives everyone. The instruction repeated most: "*renounce the whole world and all the matter in it.*"

4. The book is a compilation, and the editors say so.

Four books, two scribes. The central figure is called Jesus, the First Mystery and the Saviour in different parts, Mary is spelled two ways, and episodes repeat — the Introduction's evidence that separate documents were stitched together.

AI's Take

As a source it is strong on what it is: a rigorous 1978 critical edition with facing Coptic, of a text usually dated to the 3rd century. It is not scripture in any canon, and it is internally inconsistent by its editors' own account. Read it as a window on how early Christian groups argued, not as a record of what Jesus said.

What makes it worth your time is the method. **Claim** → **cited scripture** → **spoken interpretation** → **confirmation** is the Berean pattern, and the same one behind our KEGA lessons. And its central image — a soul captured by a false light it mistook for the real one — sits beside the Heart Sutra and Mo Jitsu's illusion chapter.

Source: *Pistis Sophia*, Coptic text ed. Carl Schmidt, translation and notes by Violet MacDermot (Nag Hammadi Studies IX, E. J. Brill, 1978, 826 pp.).