# Fragments of Papias - PIE

Papias of Hierapolis (c. AD 60–130)

SermonIndex.net / Church Fathers

# Fragments of Papias - PIE

PATRISTICS IN ENGLISH HOMEPAGE PAPIAS OF HIERAPOLIS FRAGMENTS OF PAPIAS Translated By J. B. Lightfoot & J. R. Harmer Edited By Rev. Daniel R. Jennings

Fragment 1 (Preserved in Irenaeus' Against All Heresies, 5:33:3-4) 1 The blessing thus foretold belongs undoubtedly to the times of the Kingdom, when the righteous shall rise from the dead and reign, when too creation renewed and freed from bondage shall produce a wealth of food of all kinds from the dew of heaven and from the fatness of the earth;_ as the elders, who saw John the disciple of the Lord, relate, that they had heard from him, how the Lord used to teach concerning those times, and to say, 2 "The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand branches, and on each branch again ten thousand twigs, and on each twig ten thousand clusters, and on each cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed shall yield five-and-twenty measures of wine. 3 And when any of the saints shall have taken hold of one of their clusters, another shall cry, I am a better cluster; take me, bless the Lord through me. Likewise also a grain of wheat shall produce ten thousand heads, and every head shall have ten thousand grains, and every grain ten pounds of fine flour, bright and clean, and the other fruits, seeds and the grass shall produce in similar proportions, and all the animals, using these fruits which are products of the soil, shall become in their turn peaceable and harmonious, obedient to man in all subjection." 4 These thing Papias, who was a hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp, an ancient worthy, witnesseth in writing in the fourth of his books, for there are five books composed by him. And he added, saying, 5 "But these things are credible to them that believe. And when Judas the traitor did not believe, and asked, How shall such growths be accomplished by the Lord? he relates that the Lord said, They shall see, who shall come to these (times)."

Fragment 2 (Preserved in Eusebius of Caesarea's Church History 3:39:1-17) 1 Five books of Papias are extant, which bear the title Expositions of Oracles of the Lord. Of these Irenaeus also makes mention as the only works written by him, in the following words: 'These things Papias, who was a hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp, an ancient worthy, witnesseth in writing in the fourth of his books. For there are five books composed by him.' So far Irenaeus. 2 Yet Papias himself, in the preface to his discourses, certainly does not declare that he himself was a hearer and eye-witness of the holy Apostles, but he

shows, by the language which he uses, that he received the matters of the faith from those who were their friends: 3 "But I will not scruple also to give a place for you along with my interpretations to everything that I learnt carefully and remembered carefully in time past from the elders, guaranteeing its truth. For, unlike the many, I did not take pleasure in those who have so very much to say, but in those who teach the truth;

nor in those who relate foreign commandments, but in those (who record) such as were given from the Lord to the Faith, and are derived from the Truth itself." 4 "And again, on any occasion when a person came (in my way) who had been a follower of the Elders, I would inquire about the discourses of the elders -- what was said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip, or by Thomas or James, or by John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples, and what Aristion and the Elder John, the disciples of the Lord, say. For I did not think that I could get so much profit from the contents of books as from the utterances of a living and abiding voice." 5 Here it is worth while to observe that he twice enumerates the name of John. The first he mentions in connexion with Peter and James and Matthew and the rest of the Apostles, evidently meaning the Evangelist, but the other John he mentions after an interval and classes with others outside the number of the Apostles, placing Aristion before him, and he distinctly calls him an Elder. 6 So that he hereby makes it quite evident that their statement is true who say that there were two persons of that name in Asia, and that there are two tombs in Ephesus, each of which even now is called (the tomb) of John. And it is important to notice this;

for it is probable that it was the second, if one will not admit that it was the first, who saw the Revelation which is ascribed by name to John. 7 And Papias, of whom we are now speaking, confesses that he had received the words of the Apostles from those who had followed them, but says that he was himself a hearer of Aristion and the Elder John. At all events he mentions them frequently by name, and besides records their traditions in his writings. So much for these points which I trust have not been uselessly adduced. 8 It is worth while however to add to the words of Papias given above other passages from him, in which he records some other wonderful events likewise, as having come down to him by tradition. 9 That Philip the Apostle resided in Hierapolis with his daughters has been already stated; but how Papias, their contemporary, relates that he had heard a marvellous tale from the daughters of Philip, must be noted here. For he relates that in his time a man rose from the dead, and again he gives another wonderful story about Justus who was surnamed Barsabas, how that he drank a deadly poison, and yet, by the grace of the Lord, suffered no inconvenience. 10 Of this Justus the Book of the Acts records that after the ascension of the Saviour the holy Apostles put him forward with Matthias, and prayed for the (right) choice, in place of the traitor Judas, that should make their number complete.

The passage is somewhat as follows; _'And they put forward two, Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias; and they prayed, and said.'_ 11 The same writer has recorded other notices as having come down to him from oral tradition, certain strange parables of the Saviour and teachings of His, and some other statements of a rather mythical

character. 12 Among which he says that there will be a period of some ten thousand years after the resurrection, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this earth. These ideas I suppose he got through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not perceiving that the things recorded there in figures were spoken by them mystically. 13 For he evidently was a man of very mean capacity, as one may say judging from his own statements: yet it was owing to him that so many church fathers after him adopted a like opinion, urging in their own support the antiquity of the man, as for instance Irenaeus and whoever else they were who declared that they held like views. 14 Papias also gives in his own work other accounts of the words of the Lord on the authority of Aristion who has been mentioned above, and traditions of the Elder John.

To these we refer the curious, and for our present purpose we will merely add to his words, which have been quoted above, a tradition, which has been set forth through these sources concerning Mark who wrote the Gospel: -- 15 ”And the Elder said this also: Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately everything that he remembered, without however recording in order what was either said or done by Christ. For neither did he hear the Lord, nor did he follow Him; but afterwards, as I said, (attended) Peter, who adapted his instructions to the needs (of his hearers) but had no design of giving a connected account of the Lord’s oracles. So then Mark made no mistake, while he thus wrote down some things as he remembered them; for he made it his one care not to omit anything that he heard, or to set down any false statement therein.” 16 Such then is the account given by Papias concerning Mark. But concerning Matthew, the following statement is made (by him): 17 ”So then Matthew composed the oracles in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as he could.” 18 The same writer employed testimonies from the First Epistle of John, and likewise from that of Peter. And he has related another story about a woman accused of many sins before the Lord, whichthe Gospel according to the Hebrews contains.

Fragment 3 (Preserved in Cramer’s Catena ad Acta SS. Apost. [1838]) 1 From Apollinarius of Laodicea. ‘Judas did not die by hanging, but lived on, having been cut down before he was suffocated. And the Acts of the Apostles show this, that _falling headlong he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out._ This fact is related more clearly by Papias, the disciple of John, in the fourth (book) of the Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord as follows: -- 2 ”Judas walked about in this world a terrible example of impiety; his flesh swollen to such an extent that, where a waggon can pass with ease, he was not able to pass, no, not even the mass of his head merely. They say that his eyelids swelled to such an extent that he could not see the light at all, while as for his eyes they were not visible even by a physician looking through an instrument, so far had they sunk from the surface. His genital was larger and presented a more repugnant sight than has ever been seen; and through it there seeped from every part of the body a procession of pus and worms to his shame, even as he relieved himself.”’ 3 After suffering an agony of pain and punishment, he finally went, as they say it, to his own place; and because of the horrible smell the area has been deserted and no one has lived there up until now; in fact, even to the present no one can go by that place without

holding his nose. This was because the discharge from his body was so great and spread so far over the ground.'"

Fragment 4 (Preserved in Andrew of Caesarea's On the Apocalypse 34:12 [PG 106:325]) 1 But thus says Papias, (I quote him) word for word: -- "To some of them," clearly the angels which at first were holy, "He gave dominion also over the arrangement of the universe, and He commissioned them to exercise their dominion well." 2 And he says next: -- "But it so befel that their array came to nought; for the great dragon, the old serpent, who is also called Satan and the devil, was cast down, yea, and was cast down to the earth, he and his angels." Fragment 5 (Preserved in Andrew of Caesarea's On the Apocalypse, preface [PG 106:217 B]) 1 With regard however to the inspiration of the book (i.e. the Apocalypse) we hold it superfluous to speak at length; since the blessed Gregory (I mean, the Divine) and Cyril, and men of an older generation as well, Papias, Irenaeus, Methodius and Hippolytus, bear testimony to its genuineness.

Fragment 6 (Preserved in Anastasius of Sinai's Contempl. Anagog. In Hexaemeron. 1 [PG 89:860]) 1 Taking their start from Papias the great, of Hierapolis, the disciple of the Apostle who leaned on Christ's bosom, and Clement, Pantaenus the priest of the Alexandrians and Ammonius, the great scholar, those ancient and first expositors who agree with each other in understanding all the work of the six days (as referring) to Christ and His Church. Fragment 7 (Preserved in Anastasius of Sinai, _Contempl. Anagog. In Hexaemeron. 7 [PG 89:961-962]) 1 So then the more ancient expositors of the churches, I mean Philo, the philosopher, and contemporary of the Apostles, and the famous Papias of Hierapolis, the disciple of John the Evangelist...and their associates, interpreted the sayings about Paradise spiritually, and referred them to the Church of Christ. Fragment 8 (Preserved in Maximus the Confessor's Scholia on Dionysius the Areopagite's On The Celestial Hierarchy 2:5 [PG 4: 48-49]) 1 Those who practised guilelessness towards God they used to call children, as Papias also shows in the first book of the Expositions of the Lord, and Clement of Alexandria in the Paedagogue.

Fragment 9 (Preserved in Maximus the Confessor, Scholia on Dionysius the Areopagite's On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy 7:2 [PG 4:176]) 1 This he says, darkly indicating, I suppose, Papias of Hierapolis in Asia, who was a bishop at that time and flourished in the days of the holy Evangelist John. For this Papias in the fourth book of his Dominical Expositions mentioned viands among the sources of delights in the resurrection. 2 And Irenaeus of Lyons says the same thing in his fifth book against heresies, and produces in support of his statement the aforesaid Papias. Fragment 10 (Preserved in Photius of Constantinople's Bibliothecae Codices # 232, on Stephan Gobarus) 1 Nor again (does Stephanus follow) Papias, the bishop and martyr of Hierapolis, nor Irenaeus, the holy bishop of Lyons, when they say that the kingdom of heaven will consist in enjoyment of certain material foods.

Fragment 11 (Preserved in Philip of Side's History of Christianity) 1 Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, who was a disciple of John the Divine, and a companion of Polycarp, wrote five books of Oracles of the Lord, wherein, when giving a list of the Apostles, after Peter and

John, Philip and Thomas and Matthew he included among the disciples of the Lord Aristion and a second John, whom also he called 'The Elder.' [He says] that some think that this John is the author of the two short and catholic Epistles, which are published in the name of John; and he gives as the reason that the primitive (fathers) only accept the first epistle. Some too have wrongly considered the Apocalypse also to be his (i.e. the Elder John's) work. Papias too is in error about the Millennium, and from him Irenaeus also. 2 Papias in his second book says that John the Divine and James his brother were killed by the Jews. The aforesaid Papias stated on the authority of the daughters of Philip that Barsabas, who is also called Justus, when challenged by the unbelievers drank serpent's poison in the name of the Lord, and was shielded from all harm. He makes also other marvelous statements, and particularly about the mother of Manaim who was raised from the dead. As for those who were raised from the dead by Christ, (he states) that they survived till the time of Hadrian.

Fragment 12 (Preserved in Gregory Hamartolus' Chronicon, Codex Coislinianus 305 [PG 110:19]) 1 After Domitian, Nerva reigned one year, who recalled John from the island (i.e. Patmos), and allowed him to dwell in Ephesus. He was at that time the sole survivor of the twelve Apostles, and after writing his Gospel received the honour of martyrdom. 2 For Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, who was an eye-witness of him, in the second book of the Oracles of the Lord says that he was killed by the Jews, and thereby evidently fulfilled, together with his brother, Christ's prophecy concerning them, and their own confession and undertaking on His behalf. For when the Lord said to them; Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of?, and they readily assented and agreed, He said; My cup shall ye drink, and with the baptism that I am baptized shall ye be baptized. And reasonably so, for it is impossible for God to lie. 3 So too the learned Origen affirms in his interpretation of S. Matthew's Gospel that John was martyred, declaring that he had learnt the fact from the successors of the Apostles. And indeed the well-informed Eusebius also in his Ecclesiastical History says; 'Thomas received by lot Parthia, but John, Asia, where also he made his residence and died at Ephesus.'

Fragment 13 (Preserved in Eusebius of Caesarea's Church History 3:36:1-2) 1 At this time flourished in Asia Polycarp, a disciple of the Apostles, who had received the bishopric of the church in Smyrna at the hands of _the eye-witnesses and ministers_ of the Lord. At which time Papias, who was himself also bishop of the diocese of Hierapolis, became distinguished. Fragment 14 (Preserved in Eusebius of Caesarea's Chronicon, entry for 100AD) 1 Irenaeus and others record that John the Divine and Apostle survived until the times of Trajan; after which time Papias of Hierapolis and Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, his hearers, became well known.

Fragment 15 (Preserved in Jerome's Illustrious Men 18) 1 Papias, a hearer of John, (and) bishop of Hierapolis in Asia, wrote only five books, which he entitled An Exposition of Discourses of the Lord. Wherein, when he asserts in his preface that he is not following promiscuous statements, but has the Apostles as his authorities, he says: -- 2 "I used to inquire

what had been said by Andrew, or by Peter, or by Philip, or by Thomas or James, or by John or Matthew or any other of the Lord's disciples, and what Aristion and the Elder John, the disciples of the Lord, were saying. For books to read do not profit me so much as the living voice clearly sounding up to the present day in (the persons of) their authors." 3 From which it is clear that in his list of names itself there is one John who is reckoned among the Apostles, and another the Elder John, whom he enumerates after Aristion. We have mentioned this fact on account of the statement made above, which we have recorded on the authority of very many, that the two later epistles of John are not (the work) of the Apostle, but of the Elder. This (Papias) is said to have promulgated the Jewish tradition of a Millennium, and he is followed by Irenaeus, Apollinarius and the others, who say that after the resurrection the Lord will reign in the flesh with the saints.

Fragment 16 (Preserved in Jerome's Epistle 71:5, To Lucinius) 1 Further a false rumour has reached me that the books of Josephus and the writings of Papias and Polycarp have been translated by me; but I have neither leisure nor strength to render such works as these with corresponding elegance into another tongue. Fragment 17 (Preserved in Jerome's Epistle 75:3, To Thoedora) 1 Irenaeus, a disciple of Papias who was a hearer of John the Evangelist, relates. Fragment 18 (Preserved in Codex Vaticanus Alexandrinus 14) 1 Here beginneth the argument to the Gospel according to John. The Gospel of John was made known and given to the Churches by John, while he yet remained in the body; as (one) Papias by name, of Hierapolis, a beloved disciple of John, has related in his five exoteric (exegetical?) books; 2 but he wrote down the Gospel at the dictation of John, correctly. Of course, Marcion the heretic who had been censured by John because he taught a different doctrine than the apostles, was rejected by Papias. He had writings or letters delivered to him from the brethren who lived in Pontus.

Fragment 19 (Preserved in Greek Patristics Catena on Saint John, Preface) 1 For, last of these, John, surnamed the Son of Thunder, when he was now a very old man, as Irenaeus and Eusebius and a succession of trustworthy historians have handed down to us, about the time when terrible heresies had cropped up, dictated the Gospel to his own disciple, the virtuous Papias of Hierapolis, to fill up what was lacking in those who before him had proclaimed the word to the nations throughout all the earth.

---

**Source.** English translation: an older public-domain translation as collected in the Writings-Database (HistoricalChristianFaith), mostly from the Ante-Nicene, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers and similar nineteenth-century editions. SermonIndex has only divided it into chapters and short sections; the wording is the translator's own. Square brackets, Greek or Latin words and footnote-free text are as the source file prints them, and a transcription error may remain. No Greek or Latin text is shown beside it yet, and no modern English version has been made.