

CARPOCRATES

A Christian **Gnostic** teacher active in **Alexandria** in the early second century. His teachings are summarized by Irenaeus and other Church Fathers. According to them, he taught a typical Gnostic [cosmogony](#) according to which the world was created and is governed by inferior creator angels. The [soul](#) of Jesus was able to escape their clutches. Carpocrates is reported to have taught a “libertine” ethic according to which [salvation](#) is achieved by engaging in all manner of forbidden licentious acts.

The souls of those not having sufficient experience of forbidden acts are condemned to be reincarnated. No writings of Carpocrates are known. Among his disciples was his son Epiphanes, who wrote a book *On Righteousness*, in which he taught that wives should be had in common. Fragments of this writing are quoted by [Clement](#) of Alexandria. Irenaeus mentions that a Carpocratian female teacher named Marcellina came to Rome and taught there.

GAWDAT GABRA

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