

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ  
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros  
to the Parish of St. Ambelain  
on Sunday, January 22, 2017*

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Greetings, my brethren. The past couple of weeks we have been talking about baptism, an important subject, but unfortunately at the expense of an analysis of our Scriptural readings, which I hope that you have been contemplating and meditating upon nevertheless. Let us take some time today, then, to look at some of our recent readings.

Our first reading today from the 5th Ode of Solomon, does not need much explanation or analysis, but I do feel compelled to comment on its remarkable beauty. This Ode not only has the quality of poetic beauty, but may also be considered as a powerful prayer of protection, in the same vein as the 22nd (or 23rd) Psalm. It is a prayer of high theurgy that thanks and praises God, seeks His divine protection, but never descending into the realms of vengeance or retribution. This is how we know it to be of a theurgic character, and not of a demiurgic character.

Our Gospel readings, both today and last Sunday, although coming from two different sources - today's from Matthew and last Sunday's from John - have some characteristics worth taking note of, as much for their similarities as for their differences. In both passages we read about the early days of the ministry of Jesus, when he was yet gathering his principal disciples. So, before discussing it, let us look at what appears to be two very different accounts concerning the introduction of Andrew and Simon, or Peter, to the mission of Jesus. In today's reading from Matthew, we read that Jesus saw the brothers Andrew and Simon fishing and called out to them that he would make them fish for men, whereupon they promptly dropped their nets and hastened to Jesus' side. However, contrasted with this succinct conversion, last week we read in the Gospel according to St. John, that Andrew was in fact a disciple of John the Baptist. Andrew, along with another, unnamed follower of John, were standing with John when John pointed out Jesus to them as the "Lamb of God." At this point Andrew and the anonymous disciple of John go to spend the day with Jesus, after which Andrew becomes a follower of Jesus. Andrew then returns home to his brother Simon and tells him, "We have found the Messiah." Andrew brings Simon to Jesus who identifies him as "Simon, son of John" and then gives him the appellation of Cephas, or Peter.

Now, there is really more to unpack here than we have time for, but let us at least approach it. Some will notice right off that these seem to be two conflicting accounts. For the fundamentalist this may cause some anxiety, but for us poses no doctrinal concern. But, looking at it historically, an argument could be made for the supremacy of either account. On the one hand, Matthew is generally considered to be one of the oldest Gospel narratives; but on the other hand, John is ostensibly said to give us a first-hand account of one of the twelve. But as Gnostics, this sort of pseudo-academic debate misses the point entirely. We do, in fact, place a greater significance on the account in John, but it is for reasons more esoteric and related to tradition. First, depicting Andrew, and possibly Simon Peter, as disciples of John the Baptist, who had also just baptized Jesus, shows a continuity of tradition. We also see Simon referred to as "son of John," and all this within John's Gospel. We have no more time to discuss this, but please contemplate the implications of this.