

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Sunday, January 29, 2017*

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Greetings, and welcome! Last week we began a very interesting conversation based upon our readings from the Gospels according to Sts. John and Matthew. Unfortunately, we ran out of time after giving but the barest introduction. So, I want to spend just a little time this week considering this further. Let me briefly, then, summarize our discussion from last Sunday.

The Gospels of Matthew and John give two rather different accounts of how Andrew and Simon/Peter came to be followers of Jesus. In the former, Jesus merely happens upon them while they're fishing and tells them to follow him. In John's account, Andrew is indicated as a disciple of John the Baptist. And it is the Baptist who points out Jesus as the "Lamb of God" to Andrew, who goes then to meet him and ultimately follow him. Andrew then rushes home to tell his brother Simon, telling him, "We have found the Messiah." When Simon is brought before Jesus, the latter identifies him as "Simon, son of John," and gives him the appellation of Cephas or Peter.

Now, as Gnostics, and as inheritors of the secret Johannine tradition, this account has a ring of truth to it. In depicting Andrew as a disciple of John, from whom Jesus himself had received the initiatic sacrament of Baptism, we see a succession and a continuity of a certain tradition represented by John. We know that John was a chief representative of a Gnostic school, of which the Mandaean are a surviving portion. This helps explain why John and his followers recognized Jesus as the Messiah, while the orthodoxy did not see at all the great military leader they expected. It is because only the Gnostics understood the true nature and role of a Messiah. The Messiah was to be a bringer of Gnosis, a representative of the pleomorphic realms, that is to say of the Kingdom of God, not of worldly powers, or demiurgic forces. Both the ruling Jewish orthodoxy and their Roman overlords represented the latter, demiurgic powers. Thus, they could not recognize the Messiah, who could be known, at least initially, only to the pneumatics, that is, the Gnostics.

It is interesting that Jesus identifies Simon as "son of John." It makes us question whether that was merely his father's name, a common enough name, to be sure; or, if it is a reference to having received initiation from John the Baptist; or, is there some other significance in the very name of John itself that ties Simon and John the Baptist and John the disciple of Jesus to a much older tradition, mythology, and mystical doctrine? Initiates of a certain grade will want to consider what they've learned about "the God John" and its permutations.

Given John's account, we may begin to see Simon Peter in a new light - or at least the Johannine Simon Peter. In this light, I would even suggest to consider placing works such as 2 Peter - an analysis of which we offer in our essay "Theosis through Gnosis" - among the Johannine corpus, as it does indeed read as from a "son of John." There is much concerning the historical record of these personages that may never be unraveled, but the golden thread of the Tradition could not shine brighter.