

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ  
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros  
to the Parish of St. Ambelain  
on Sunday, April 4, 2017*

YEAR A - FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Greetings brethren and welcome. We are quickly approaching the end of the Lenten Season, and this is reflected in the theme shared by our Epistle and Gospel readings, which is that of resurrection. In our reading from Paul's letter to the Romans, he makes a sharp distinction between the pneumatic, or spiritual mind, and the "mind of the flesh." In fact, not only does he state that "the mind of the flesh is death," and that "the pneumatic mind is life," but he goes even further by asserting that the mind of the flesh "is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be." This is a powerful statement with deep theological implications. If it is not subject to the law of God, that would necessarily mean that it is not of God. This line of reasoning leads inevitably, as many of Paul's writings, and as stated by the great Gnostic doctors of the Church, to the conclusion that this lower world is not the direct product of the Most High God, and that the laws governing this lower world of matter are not the laws of God, but of another source. Now, Paul does not name this source, for Paul does not dwell upon the things of this world, but upon the Spirit and upon the things of the Spirit, which are the things belonging to God. The Gnostics have borrowed a term from Greek philosophy, demiurge, to describe the lesser fashioner of the cosmos.

In Platonic philosophy, the demiurge is not an evil creator, it is merely not the Good - that is, the highest expression of Godhood. The Good resides in the realm of Ideals, and can therefore take no part in the lesser manifestations, except to the extent that it provides a "blueprint" of sorts for creation. The Gnostic view of the demiurge is similar, although views have differed throughout history and from sect to sect concerning whether the demiurge is merely imperfect or actually malicious. Among the Gnostic writings one may see this reflected, for example, in the Sethian writings as a being that, at best, is similar to a human with the basest of traits, or at worst as a being resembling an archdemon or the Devil himself. Whereas in Valentinian writings we find a much more mitigated view of the demiurge as a just but imperfect legislator and governor; a being that is strictly bound by the laws governing the lower worlds and unable to transcend them, but not necessarily willfully malign. Nevertheless, spiritual salvation is impossible through the lord of the cosmos, for as Paul tells us, his laws are not, and cannot be the laws of God.

But Paul goes on to state that the one who has the spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, within them, can bring to life even the dead matter. And this is played out graphically in our reading from John, wherein Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead. Lazarus here is a type of Jesus himself, as Jesus is a type of the Father who will likewise raise him from the dead. So may we all be raised.