

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Sunday, December 24, 2017*

YEAR B - FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Greetings and welcome everyone. Today is the fourth and final Sunday of our Advent Season, and also Christmas Eve. Our first reading today, called the Prayer of the Apostle Paul, is a great example of an ancient Gnostic prayer. Most of the surviving Gnostic writings that we have from antiquity are revelatory or exegetical works. We see many references to liturgical, baptismal, or other sacramental rites throughout several of the texts, but the actual practical materials are incredibly scarce. We must therefore cherish the precious remnants that we have, as they constitute a spiritual link to our ancient forebears, and remind us that they were not mere armchair theologians, but actively engaged in a life of prayer and sacrament.

Our Epistle reading from Romans is brief and a little enigmatic, with its reference to "the mystery that has been kept secret for time eternal." We won't dwell on this phrase, for it is much better to utilize it as a topic of contemplation and meditation. It does strike me, though, toward the end of this reading, that the appellation of "the only wise God" is rather reminiscent of Zoroastrian terminology, the designation of "Wise Lord" being applied to Ahura-Mazda.

The Gospel reading concerns the appearance of the archangel Gabriel to Mary, informing her of her forthcoming role as virgin mother of the messiah. This is a topic that we have discussed before, but that merits revisiting from time to time; as it concerns some fundamental points of our Gnostic doctrine. The so-called orthodox theology typically holds that Mary was impregnated by the Holy Spirit. But from the Gnostic point of view the Holy Spirit is feminine; and to paraphrase the Gospel of Philip, when has a woman ever made a woman pregnant? But if we examine this account closely, we see that it is not just the Holy Spirit that is to come to Mary, but also the "Power of the Most High." In this declaration that "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the Power of the Most High will overshadow you," we can see clearly a polarity of forces at work: the feminine Holy Spirit and the masculine Power of the Most High. From a Gnostic perspective, and from an esoteric point of view generally, it seems clear that the cooperation of these masculine and feminine agents have accomplished this miracle. In fact, we know that it is absolutely necessary. Just because we consider something as a "miracle" does not mean that it does not have to follow the same laws that govern all manifestation. The fact that Christ is "begotten" - not created - tells us definitively that a cooperation of masculine and feminine forces has occurred to bring him forth.

Always remember that the operation of the physical laws here below, though coarse and imperfect, have their ultimate source in the realm of Spirit, where they are perfect and sublime.