

Christian Mysteries

A Study Guidebook



By Andrew Linnell



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Contents

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|----|
| Why is there a Christian Creed?..... | 4 |
| Christmas Symbolism: Ox and Ass | 7 |
| The Scapegoat and the Blood of Christ..... | 10 |
| What is blood? | 10 |
| Codex Argenteus..... | 21 |

Why is There a Christian Creed?

I am not one who feels that a statement of what Christians can agree upon is necessary. When Constantine became emperor of Rome, there were multiple Christianities, at least twelve! He had a goal to unite them into one universal Catholic religion. In 325 CE, he requested an ecumenical council out of which came the Nicene Creed as a profession of faith to unite all Christians into one church. It is called Nicene because it was originally adopted in the city of Nicaea (today within Turkey). This creed states:



We believe

1. In one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.
2. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; By whom all things were made. Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; He suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
3. And in the Holy Ghost.

Early Christianity, before Constantine, never claimed Christian teachings were unique or new. What came down through the Ancient Mysteries was present in various forms in the world. What early Christianity claimed is that into a dying world something new, something that gave



new life, had happened. All the ancient mystery knowledge looked back to times when humans had direct contact with spiritual beings and looked ahead to a fulfillment of their expectation. This picture is what is known as the Janus head. Early Christians claimed that Christ was that fulfillment. But more so, the deed done on Golgotha was unique. Christ repeated during his life what had been done before by earlier founders of a religion. Up to his Transfiguration, one can find parallels elsewhere. For example, the Transfiguration corresponded to the moment at the end of Buddha's life. And

the entry of Christ on what became known as Palm Sunday into Jerusalem was foreshadowed with the god Hephaestus' return to Olympus riding on the back of a donkey.



Christ did not copy this; rather he fulfilled the myths and the prophecies. What does this riding into Jerusalem or onto Olympus truly mean?

The weeklong events after Christ enters Jerusalem brought something entirely new to human evolution as Christ went on to go through what no God had ever experienced: death. Christ fully allows for the free will of humanity to be exercised.

His death and resurrection were enacted not for himself, but for humanity as the second Adam to create a new path, not back to God, but forward to become something new. Humanity could only become the tenth hierarchy without this loving and free deed by Christ. The gods, who did not know about death prior to Golgotha, could, with Christ's blood within the earth, henceforth work upon it to make the earth into the seed of the future planetary/solar system. This was the Turning Point in Time.

Of the many changes that resulted from the enactment of this mystery upon Golgotha, the most meaningful for humanity was the new expression of love. This was not as a teaching, rather it was love fully expressed upon earth. The 'new commandment' might not sound so different from "love your neighbor as your-self" [Leviticus 19:18] but when one reads the new commandment one can see an evolution in the evolved expression, "Love one another as I have loved you." In Hellenism, there were three words for "love", each with its own "level".¹

¹ The Greek words are: *eros*, *philos*, and *agape*. Some claim *storgē* (affection for those in one's bloodline) could also be translated into love. A few make similar claims for the words *ludus* and *pragma*.



Note that in chapter 21 of John's gospel, after Peter had been confronted three times about his association with this "criminal". With each accusation, fearing for his life, he had, as predicted, denied the association with Christ. Now the Risen Christ, as the divine expression of love, therefore asks him, when translated into English, three times "Do you love me"? In the first two of these questions, Christ uses the Greek word "agape" and Peter, in this

presence of Christ, responds "Yea, Lord, *you know* that I love [philos] you". Christ does know that, at this time, Peter's heart is not yet capable of agape, but only of philos. He challenges Peter to grow in love for he also knows that, "upon this rock (Peter) I build my church." With the English translation, we lose an incredible story here. We must see this rock as the expression of the element earth, that Christ's church will be built, not in the clouds, but upon the firm ground of the physical Earth.

For many early Christians, there was no question that the Father God created all that was spiritual, but what about the physical? Did the physical come into existence only as a result of the Fall of Man? The Gnostic Christians used a name that Plato also used, the Demiurge, for the creator of the physical. For them, Christ had even entered the physical. Yet, He clearly stated that "my kingdom is not of this world." Such issues led to intense theological debates. What was the Trinity? Did the Father God create the Son and Holy Spirit? What did John mean by "In the beginning, the Logos was, and the Logos was with God"? Did John mean into the physical when he said, "and the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us"? Did God die on the cross or did He leave just prior to death causing Jesus to cry out, "Why have Thou forsaken me?" To settle these raucous debates, Emperor Constantine called for Christian theologians to come together and agree upon a creed.

Unfortunately, millions of Christians were to die when they did not agree to the Nicene creed. After the institution of the Nicene creed, all Christians under Constantine's rule were required to take an oath confessing their faith in the creed. Many of these knew this scene in the story of Peter and choose to die rather than to deny Him. Centuries later, the Cathars of southern France would not take oaths. Their genocide for this was unusually brutal.

All this background raises the question, should statements of faith be allowed to evolve? Do conditions, knowledge, and even our humanity evolve? Does Christianity evolve too? Does Christ evolve? Where and how does one find the Christ today?

Christmas Symbolism: Ox and Ass

During the Age of Taurus (roughly from 3000 BCE to 800 BCE), the bull and the calf were venerated. As this Age transitioned to Aries, the Mithraic Mysteries arose the focus shifted to



overcoming the bull within and honoring the Lamb. In this age, one finds the cosmic Christ was sought as hero who helped one to overcome their bull within. Note in this statue the symbols of the snake, the scorpion, and dog. Mithraism apparently grew out of Persia and became popular throughout much of the Roman empire just before the spread of Christianity.

Many of the Old Testament books have the expression **ox and ass**. For example, in Job 1:14 it says, “and there came a messenger unto Job and said, “The **oxen** were plowing and the **asses** feeding beside them,”

Andrew Graham-Dixon of the Independent writes in his Arts column from December 1992, “The first reference to the **ox** and **ass** at the Nativity comes several centuries after the fact, in a book that is not much read these days: the *Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, written [down] sometime in the eighth century [most researchers date this to 600 AD]. The author of this apocryphal text is unlikely to have invented this detail on his own. It seems probable that the early church fathers had also placed the **ox** and the **ass** at the Nativity because of what seemed a suggestive



reference to the two animals in the Book of Isaiah: ‘The **ox** knows its owner and the **ass** its master’s stall; but Israel, my own people, has no knowledge, no discernment.’” The Adelphia Sarcophagus relief (above) is from roughly 330 AD. Note the **ox** and **ass** in its nativity scene. Lippi’s nativity (below, left) depicts both animals watching over with their breath warming the infant. Giotto



(right) also places the **ox** and **ass** in his nativity scene. In his Escape to Egypt (below) and the triumphant entry of Christ Jesus to Jerusalem includes an **ass** for travel (next page). In Luke 13:15 we read “The Lord then answered him, and said, thou hypocrite, doth not each



one of you on the sabbath loose his **ox** or his **ass** from the stall, and lead him away to watering?”

A bit later in Luke, 14:5, it says “And answered them, saying, which of you shall have an **ass** or an **ox** fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?”

Many more references in the Bible and other related ancient texts could be listed.

I have had a question about the symbolic or mystical purpose of these two beasts. In reading David Ovason’s book *The Two Children*, I found a treasure! “The ox was intended as a reference to the bull of Mithras, and perhaps even to the bull of the Egyptian god Apis – both important cults still offered initiation practices at the time of the birth of Jesus. David writes, “... Just as the bull would have been familiar to the early Christians as being emblematic of the Mithraic cult, so the ass would have been familiar to them through the writing of the 2nd century AD African writer Lucius Apulcius.” Apulcius’ esoteric book *The Golden Ass*, is the story of a “human who had been metamorphosed into the body of an ass” but finds liberation through the “initiation rites of



Isis". David goes on to say that Gnostic deities were depicted with the head of an ass. Perhaps Shakespeare was inspired by this when he wrote the character Nick Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



that road today.

The gospel books are full of passages where the event could be happening in the physical or in the spiritual world or both (typically both). I find it plausible that both the bull (ox) and the ass each represent a stream of the ancient mysteries. Linking the bull to Mithras and Egyptian Apis mysteries makes sense. One might further argue that the ass represents the Osiris-Isis mysteries of Egypt but lacking sufficient insights, I'll not now venture down

The Scapegoat and the Blood of Christ

What is blood?

What requirements were there in Jewish traditions for a blood sacrifice? What does it mean that Christ's blood was shed? Where did this blood go? What did Joseph of Arimathea collect in the Grail? How does this affect us today? To begin this study, we will go to Leviticus 16 [thanks to BibleGateway for the text] where it discusses how the high priest, in this case Aaron, must perform his duties.

6 "Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household.

7 Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

8 He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat.

9 Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the Lord and sacrifice it for a sin offering.

10 But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat.

[comment: John the Baptist says of himself I am a voice crying in the wilderness and after the baptism, Christ goes out into the wilderness to be tempted. The wilderness is the uncivilized part of our soul, the untransformed part where animalistic desires exist].

11 "Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering.

12 He is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the Lord and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain.

13 He is to put the incense on the fire before the Lord, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the tablets of the covenant law, so that he will not die.

14 He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover.

15 "He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it.

16 In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do

the same for the tent of meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

17 No one is to be in the tent of meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out, having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel.

18 “Then he shall come out to the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it. He shall take some of the bull’s blood and some of the goat’s blood and put it on all the horns of the altar.

19 He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites.

20 “When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat.

21 He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat’s head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task.

22 The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness.

Now we can approach Hebrews 9 [NIV] with background understanding. As we read this passage, bear in mind the concept of a blood sacrifice and the two goats. Now the first covenant had regulations for both the worship practice and for the earthly sanctuary.

2 A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place.

3 Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place,

4 which had the golden altar of incense and the gold covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron’s staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant.

5 Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

6 When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry.

7 But only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.

8 The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning.

9 This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.

10 They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings — external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

11 But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle [comment: that is the body of Jesus of Nazareth] that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation.

12 He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all [comment: this is also the innermost sanctuary of the human constitution where, in Jesus of Nazareth, Christ enters] by his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.

13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean.

14 How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

15 For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

16 In the case of a covenant, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, 17 because a covenant is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living.

18 This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood.

19 When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool [comment: note on the next page the color of Christ's robe – scarlet!] and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people.

20 He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep."

21 In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies.

22 In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness [comment: so, to attain forgiveness for our (karma) sins, Christ allowed himself to be the sacrifice, to have his blood shed].

23 It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one [Christ entered the sanctuary within the constitution of Jesus of Nazareth

and then through the resurrection permeated, transformed this body into a purified body that could participate in heaven]; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

25 Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own [comment: Christ will not come in the physical again – this deed was accomplished!].

26 Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages [comment: culmination of what the Mysteries anticipated – thereby becoming the Turning Point in Time] to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself [comment: before this event, karma required repeated earth lives; now this was atoned].

27 Just as people are *destined to die once*, and after that to face judgment [comment: a literal translation is And according to the extent men were put away, died (he) with them, on the other hand this sentence:],

28 so *Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation* to those awaiting him [comment: where must we await Him? Can we yet experience Him by “looking up” to the next level of consciousness, into the clouds, into the realm of Life?]. [Bold and italic text is my emphasis].

Clearly, Christ will NOT enter the physical again – “he has appeared once for all.”² His next appearance is “not to bear sin but to bring salvation.” It is a progression, an advancement for the sake of humanity's salvation. In Acts 1:9 we read, “After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.’” This will not be a physical body. For *the stone* has already been removed. Death has already been overcome. This is the body of the resurrection.

Now back to the theme of sacrifice and again to Hebrews, now in 13:12 we read:

11 The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp.

12 And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.

13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore.

² See Rudolf Steiner, *The True Nature of the Second Coming*, [lecture 2](#), 6Mar1910, GA 118

So, if Christ becomes the slaughtered goat, who is the scapegoat? According to Berenson Maclean, “although Hebrews does not mention the pair of goats, the implication is that Christ’s blood corresponds to that of the immolated goat.” She goes on to conclude that “Jesus’ death must have been modeled on the goat’s sacrifice in the purgation ritual.” [Berenson Maclean, “Barabbas, the Scapegoat Ritual, and the Development of the Passion Narrative,” pg. 319] Christ clearly is the sacrifice.

This was first mentioned at the raising of Lazarus [John 11] when some present went and told the high priests what had happened [that an initiation had taken place in public].

46 But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done.

47 Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. “What are we

accomplishing?” they asked. “Here is this man performing many signs.

48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation.”

49 Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, “You know nothing at all!

50 You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish.”

51 He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation,

52 and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one.

53 So from that day on they plotted to take his life.



The scene with Pontius Pilate and Barabbas is, in my mind, when the high priest, enacted by Pilate, brings forth the two goats and reverses the cult by having the (unclean) people select. Thus, Barabbas becomes the scapegoat and Christ the sacrifice. Both are named Jesus – making them alike. I wonder if Pilate was a lower initiate. Just as one goat would be sacrificed and one let go, so this cult was enacted by Pontius Pilate! The two goats? Jesus Christ and Jesus Barabbas. The crowd decides which to release. [For more on this see Andrei Orlov’s paper *Jesus as the Scapegoat*].

So, Jesus Christ becomes the sacrifice which takes place on Golgotha. What once took place within the Holy of the Holies now is enacted in public.

Here His blood is sprinkled not in front of and onto the atonement cover but onto the earth and into the Grail. That which the Heavenly Hierarchies could not know, Death, was to be overcome by this sacrifice. Humanity now could become free of the Temporal where death rules and enter the Eternal with a purified, transformed soul and body.

With the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD, the Most Holy Place, the Holy of the Holies, was gone from the physical world. Without this physical temple, it was impossible to perform a blood sacrifice. When we consider Christ's words "destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it" we come to realize the mystical depth of His act on Golgotha. The rebuilt body is indeed the Third Temple. Christ was (and is) the last blood sacrifice. And the blood entered the Earth. What can this mean? And the blood was caught in the Grail. What can this mean?



The greatness of this act is that each of us can reenact it within our soul. The "camp" or "tabernacle" refers to the temporal body we have between birth and death. The spirit is, of course, the eternal. The human being consists of, according to St. Paul, body (soma), soul (psyche), and spirit (pneuma). Within our soul we have our lower ego. When we can allow this lower ego to go through "the disgrace" and the stages of the cross, we experience the Rosicrucian saying "In Christos Morimor" [in Christ we die]. Through this death process our soul becomes part of the soul of Christ whose ego becomes our higher ego. Only after such a death process, can one truly say, as Paul did, "No longer I but Christ in me [Galatians 2:20]!"

Ages ago people could be initiated into a Mystery whereby they could experience the spiritual world. To develop Freedom, the spiritual world had to withdraw. One had to stand alone upon the physical earth for this sense of freedom to develop. The experience of spiritual beings outside of one, dimmed to darkness while the place for experiences entered within the individual, into their soul. The experience of I and of Not-I became what all humans experienced. Within this all-one, alone, space could self-consciousness develop as the foundation for free moral deeds.

With access now to human free will, we can, once again, have spiritual experiences. A spiritual event occurred in 1879 that ended the lesser Kali Yuga, an age when access to the spiritual world was denied to common human senses and thinking. Like Prometheus chained to the rocks, materialism had chained our thinking to the Lifeless, the mineral kingdom. Because of the ending of the dark age for access to the spiritual world known as Kali Yuga to Hindus, we can now lift our consciousness to higher levels in the Spiritual Hierarchies. But only through Christ can we come to experience the Father [John 14:6].

Note the reverse direction is found in John's prologue [1:3] where it says, "Through Him [Christ] all things became." The things of the physical world belong to the Temporal and thus succumb to Death. Through Him, we can come to our Eternal. To do this, we must go outside of our body, our camp/tabernacle that is part of the physical world. This is the goal of meditation. We must learn how to experience without (or beyond) the senses and without (or beyond) our normal thinking, our normal mental picturing. Only through Him can we today come to the experience of the Father.



Calling the Disciples

Each of the gospels expresses deep mysteries. Even the calling of the disciples is wrapped in mysteries. Let's look, for example, at John 1:35-48. The scene is where John the Baptist has been baptizing in the Jordan River. John has remarked, "**Behold** ($\iota\delta\epsilon$), the Lamb of God" (see also Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; and Luke 3:21-22). John is not only the baptizer but also the witness; a witness, as we shall see, of both the physical and the spiritual. But John does not become one of the disciples. After the baptism of Jesus, his earthly role is complete. John will soon be beheaded. Who is called to be a disciple? What qualities were required? Had you been there, might you have been called?



What is a calling? The word has been used when a person finds their lifework, where work is happily pursued. Implied is a voice that is heard, a voice that your inner being, your self can hear. Once heard, the self redirects one's life for it has found meaning. For those who accept the notion of reincarnation, this meaning is expressed as one's karma. "In the Beginning was

the Word," the Logos, the meaning of human life and evolution. The Word calls out to each human being.

John was a "**voice** crying out in the wilderness." John represented the pinnacle of what mankind from the first Adam could achieve. John "**beheld**" (Greek: Τεθέαμαι *tetheamai*) the spirit descend and remain upon this man, Jesus. For John to have seen in this way, hence the use of the word "tetheamai", shows what kind of special witness he was able to see both the earthly and the spiritual. Nowhere else does this Greek word *tetheamai* appear; use of *theasamenoi* does occur in some passages) except here where John describes how he beheld the spirit. What word can be used to describe such a seeing of a spiritual event? When Mary, in John 20:1 comes to the tomb she "**sees** the stone having been taken out of the tomb." The verb "**sees**" is the Greek word "βλεπεν". Here is esoteric writing indeed! The meaning can be read both from the physical reality and from the spiritual reality. The stone has been taken away! The mineral element of His body was gone. Mary at this point could only see with her physical eyes and thus could only see the mineral part of His body. But His body was not there - the stone had been taken away or more exactly "taken out of the tomb"!

John 20:5-6 has the disciple whom the Lord loved and Peter first **see** outside the tomb using βλεπεν (*blepei*) but once inside their **seeing** becomes θεωρει (*theōrei* is the root word for 'theory'). Next these disciples enter the tomb and now, at a third level, their **seeing** becomes ειδεν which, according to Strong's Concordance, means "to **see** with the mind" (i.e. spiritually **see**), to perceive with inward spiritual perception. Later, Thomas the Twin doubting the reports and claiming that "unless I **see** (ἰδω - this is the same word as ειδεν) the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." When the resurrected Jesus later appears, he has Thomas touch his wounds and then says to Thomas "Because you have **seen** (εωρακας - *heōrakas*) me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not **seen** (ἰδωντες - *idontes* - the same root word used by John when he says "**Behold**, the Lamb of God") and yet have believed."

Two of John's disciples hear his proclamation and so they follow Jesus. Thus, Jesus turns around and asks them, "what do you **seek**?" They answer, oddly, "where are you staying?" Jesus' answer is a mere poetic "Come and **See**! - *Erchesthe kai Opsesthe*!" Often, *opsesthe* is translated as "you will see" implying a process towards a deeper **seeing**. Andrew was one of these two disciples of John the Baptist. Andrew, or Andreas, is from the Ancient Greek word ἀνδρός *andros* which literally means "strong man". Andrew calls his brother, Simon, to join them. Jesus names this brother, *Cephas* or Petros, the Rock. This naming mystery calls upon the myth of Prometheus who was chained to the rock, to the mineral kingdom.

The next day, Philip, which means "friend of horses," is found (*heuriskei*). At this time, the name Philip likely was given in honor of Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great. Jesus merely says

to Philip, "Follow (*akolouthei*) me" and Philip does! Philip then finds (*heuriskei*) Nathanael. When Nathanael questions whether anything good can come out of Nazareth, Philip replies "Come and **See!** (*Erchou kai Ide!*)" When spoken by Jesus, Greek *opsesthe* was used for **see**, but now *ide* is spoken by Philip for "see".

When Jesus **sees** (*eiden*) Nathanael, he says, "Behold (*Ide*), truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit." Nathanael, impressed, asks Jesus how he knew this about him. Jesus answers, "Before Philip called you, I **saw** (*eiden*) you being under the fig tree." With this reply, Nathanael is able to say "Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel." Jesus explains to the others present, "Because I **saw** (*eiden*) you under the fig tree, you believed. Greater things than these you will **see** (*opse* as in *opsesthe*)." What does Jesus mean when he calls Nathanael an "Israelite"? In the times of the Ancient Mysteries, many, such as the Mithraic cult, had seven degrees with the fifth being the rank of one who had attained oneness with the god of the folk spirit.

Rudolf Steiner describes these seven levels, "The initiate first became a 'Raven'; that is, he observed the outer world and, being the servant of those who were in the spiritual world, he bore tidings to that world from the physical world. Hence the symbol of the raven as the messenger between the physical and the spiritual worlds, from the ravens of Elijah to the ravens of Barbarossa. The initiate of the second degree [called the Bridegroom] is fully within the spiritual world. The third degree is yet further advanced; here the initiate is called upon to enter the lists on behalf of the truth of occultism; he becomes a 'Warrior'; an initiate of the second degree was not allowed to contend on behalf of the truths of the spiritual world. In the fourth degree [called a Lion] the initiate becomes firmly established in the truths of the spiritual world. The initiate of the fifth degree was one of those who, as I explained, learnt to control the forces which were transmitted in the female element of reproduction and in the blood of the generations. What name then must have been given to one who had been initiated within the Jewish people? He was called an 'Israelite', just as he would have been called a 'Persian' in Persia."³

"He who had reached this point is said to have sat under the Tree of Life. Thus Buddha sat under the Bodhi Tree and Nathanael under the Fig Tree. These are terms for the picture on the astral plane. What is seen are reflections of inner — even bodily inner things. The Bodhi Tree is but the astral mirror image of the human nervous system. He who through initiation is able to direct his gaze inward, sees his inner life, even his bodily inner life, projected, reflected into the outer astral world."⁴

³ Rudolf Steiner, The Gospel of St. John, Lecture 10, 3Jul1909, Cassel, GA 112

⁴ Rudolf Steiner, The Gospel of St. John, Lecture 3, 5Mar1906, Berlin, GA 94

The sixth level was called 'Sun Hero' and the seventh a 'Father'.

We understand how the Ancient Mysteries were ending, they would be thoroughly destroyed in the 4th century, with Jesus' words about Nathanael, "in whom there is no deceit." For there were, at that time, Israelites, initiates of the fifth level, who succumbed to lies. "The closing of the Eleusinian Mysteries in the 4th century is reported by Eunapios, a historian and biographer of the Greek philosophers. Eunapios had been initiated by the last legitimate Hierophant, who had been commissioned by the emperor Julian to restore the Mysteries, which had fallen into decay. The very last Hierophant was a usurper, 'the man from Thespias who held the rank of Father in the mysteries of Mithras' Eunapios calls him."⁵ The era when the Ancient Mysteries could flourish was before the rise of egoism that began, according to Rudolf Steiner, with the development of the Intellectual Soul beginning in the 8th century BC. As the I Am arose offering a transition from tribe to individual, so too arose egoism that fell for temptations, for expressing lies to gain advantage, thereby causing these mystery centers to become corrupted.

Here in John's Gospel, the calling of only five disciples is described. These are the two disciples of John, of which one is Andrew, who follow Jesus on their own initiative but inspired by their teacher, John, who had identified Jesus as the Lamb of God. Andrew calls his brother, Peter. Then Philip is called with a "follow me" statement. Philip then calls Nathanael. Seven more will be called.

I wonder if I were present at that time and some 30-year-old man walking by said to me, "Follow me" what would I have done. It seems to me that Philip and the others felt something special here, or they could **see** more than we **see** today. We have explored different Greek words used in John's Gospel that reveal different levels of seeing.

| Greek | Greek | English | Comment |
|-----------------|------------------|----------|----------------------------|
| βλεπειν | <i>blepei</i> | See | With one's eyes |
| θεωρει | <i>theōrei</i> | See | Platonic seeing ideas |
| ειδεν | <i>eiden</i> | See | With the mind, inner sight |
| ὄψεσθε | <i>opsesthe</i> | Will see | A process to a deep seeing |
| Τεθέαμαι | <i>tetheamai</i> | Behold | Spiritual seeing |

⁵ Ellie Crystal, from <http://www.crystalinks.com/eleusinian.html>

Conversion of the 'barbaric' Tribes of the North by Wulfila the Initiate

Ulfilas (Wulfila in Germanic), A.D. 311–383, missionary to the West-Goths in the Balkan region; founder of Arianic-Germanic Christendom, who translated the Bible into Gothic.



Codex Argenteus

Location: [Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek](#) [Sign. DG. 1]

Size: 187 leaves (originally 336 leaves)

Content: Parts of the Gospels in the order Matthew, John, Luke, Mark.

This manuscript was written in silver and gold ink on purple parchment, giving it the name *The Silver Bible* (Swedish *Silverbibeln*). Presumably, it was written in Italy in the early 6th century. In the 16th century it was found in the monastery of Werden in today's Germany. Subsequently, it was taken to Prague by Rudolf II from where it was captured by the Swedes in 1648. They took

it to Stockholm and, finally, it was taken by Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie who donated the manuscript to the University of Uppsala (1669).

With the spread of Eastern Christianity and especially Arianism, a Mithraic element spreads with it albeit in an already weakened form. Any translation of the Ulfilas-Bible into modern languages remains imperfect if one is unaware that Mithraic elements still play into the terminology of Ulfilas (or Wulfila).

As late as in the fourth century, there were philosophers in Greece who worked on bringing the ancient etheric astronomy into harmony with Christianity. From this effort there arose the true Gnosis, which was thoroughly eradicated by later Christianity so that only a few fragments of the literary samples of this Gnosis have remained.

What do people really know today about the Gnosis? Some scholars are familiar with those parts of the Gnosis that are found in the critical, Occidental-Christian texts dealing with the Gnosis. They know the quotes from Gnostic texts left behind **by the opponents** of the Gnosis. There is hardly anything left of the Gnosis.

In Athens, a school of wisdom existed well into the fourth century, and indeed even longer, that endeavored to bring the ancient etheric astronomy into harmony with Christianity. The last remnants of this view — man's entering from higher worlds through the planetary sphere into the earth sphere — still illuminated the writings of Origen. They even shine through the texts of the Greek Church Fathers. Everywhere one can see it shimmer through the sacred, original texts until the third century. It shines through particularly in the writings of the genuine Dionysius the Areopagite. This Dionysius left behind a teaching that was a pure synthesis of the etheric astronomy and the element dwelling in Christianity. He taught that the forces localized, as it were, astronomically and cosmically in the sun entered into the earth sphere in Christ through the man Jesus of Nazareth and that thereby a certain previously nonexistent relationship came into being between the earth and all the higher hierarchies, the hierarchies of the Angels, of Wisdom, the hierarchies of the Thrones and the Seraphim, and so on. It was a penetration of this teaching of the hierarchies with etheric astronomy that could be found in the original Dionysius the Areopagite.

Ancient culture was still alive in Augustine's environment, but it was already decadent, and was well into its period of decline. Augustine struggled bitterly, but to no purpose, with the last remnants of this culture that survived in Manichæism and Neoplatonism. His mind was steeped in what this wisdom, even in its decadence, had to offer, and, to begin with, he could not accept Christianity. He stood there, an eminent rhetorician and Neoplatonist, but torn with gnawing doubt.

What happened to Augustine described the condition of the human soul in his era. Just when he had reached the point of doubting truth itself, of losing his bearings altogether along the tortuous paths of the decadent learning of antiquity in the fourth century of our era, when innumerable questions are hurtling through his mind, he thought he heard the voice of a child calling to him from the next garden: 'Take and read! Take and read!' And he turned to the New Testament, to the Epistles of St. Paul, and was led through the voice of the child to Roman Catholicism!

The mind of Augustine was laden with the oriental wisdom which had now become decadent in the West. He was a typical representative of this learning and then, suddenly, through the voice of a child, he became the paramount influence in subsequent centuries. No actual break occurs until the fifteenth century and it may truly be said that the ultimate outcome of this break appeared as the change that took place in the life of thought in the middle of the nineteenth century.

And so, in this fourth century of our era, we find the human mind involved in the complicated network of Western culture but also in an element which constitutes the starting-point of a new impulse. It is an impulse that mingles with what has come over from the East and from the

seemingly barbarian peoples by whom Roman civilization was gradually superseded, but whose instructors, after they had mingled with the peasantry and the landowning classes, were the priests of the Roman Church. In the depths, however, there is something else at work. Out of the raw, unpolished soul of these peoples, there emerged an element of lofty, archaic spirituality. There could be no more striking example of this than the book that has remained as a memorial of the ancient Goths — Wulfila's translation of the Bible. We must try to unfold a sensitive understanding of the language used in this translation of the Bible. The Lord's Prayer, to take one example, is built up, fragment by fragment, out of the confusion of thought of which Augustine was so typical a representative. Wulfila's translation of the Bible is the offspring of an archaic form of thought, of Arian Christianity as opposed to the Athanasian Christianity of Augustine.

"Perhaps more strongly than anywhere else, we can feel in Wulfila's translation of the Bible how deeply the pagan thought of antiquity is permeated with Arian Christianity. Something that is pregnant with inner life echoed down to us from these barbarian peoples and their culture, to which the civilization of ancient Rome was giving place. The Lord's Prayer rendered by Wulfila, is as follows:

*Atta unsar thu in himinam,
Veihnai namo thein;
Quimai thiudinassus theins.
Vairthai vilja theins, sve in himina, jah ana aerthai.
Hlaif unsarana thana sinteinan, gif uns himma daga.
Jah aflet uns, thatei skulans sijaima, svasve jah veis afletam thaim skulam unsaraim.
Jah ni briggais uns in fraistubnjai, ak lausei uns af thamma ubilin.
Unte theina ist thiu dangardi, jah mahts, jah vulthus in aivius. Amen.*

Atta unsar thu in himinam, veihnai namo thein; Quimai thiudinassus theins. Vairthai vilja theins, sve in himina, jah ana aerthai. — The words of this wonderful prayer cannot really be translated literally into our modern language, but they may be rendered thus:

*We feel Thee above in the Spirit-Heights, All Father of men.
May Thy Name be hallowed.
May Thy Kingdom come to us.
May Thy Will be supreme, on the Earth even as it is in Heaven.*

— We must be able to feel what these words express. Men were aware of the existence of a primordial Being, of the All-sustaining Father of humanity in the heights of spiritual existence. They pictured Him with their faculties of ancient clairvoyance as the invisible, super-sensible

King who ruled His Kingdom as no earthly King. Among the Goths this Being was venerated as King and their veneration was proclaimed in the words: *Atta unsar thu in himinam.*

This primordial Being was venerated in His three aspects:

1. May Thy Name be hallowed. 'Name' — as a study of Sanskrit will show — implied the outer manifestation or revelation of the Being, as a man reveals himself in his body.
2. 'Kingdom' was the supreme Power: *Veihnai namo thein; Quimai thiudinassus theins, Vairthai vilja theins, sve in himina, jah ana aerthai.*
3. 'Will' indicated the Spirit shining through the Power and the Name.

Thus, as they gazed upwards, men beheld the Spirit of the super-sensible worlds in His three-fold aspect. To this Spirit they paid veneration in the words:

Jah ana aerthai.

Hlaif unsarana thana sinteinan, gif uns himma daga.

So, may it be on Earth. Even as Thy Name, the form in which Thou art outwardly manifest, shall be holy, so may that which in us becomes outwardly manifest and must daily be renewed, be radiant with spiritual light. We must try to understand the meaning of the Gothic word *Hlaif*, from which *Leib* (*Leib*=body) is derived. In saying the words, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' we have no feeling for what the word *Hlaif* denoted here: — Even as Thy 'Name' denotes thy body, so too may our body be spiritualized, subsisting as it does through the food which it receives and transmutes.

The prayer speaks then of the 'Kingdom' that is to reign supreme from the super-sensible worlds, and so leads on to the social order among men. In this super-sensible 'Kingdom' men are not debtors one of another. The word debt among the Goths means debt in the moral as well as in the physical, social life.

And so, the prayer passes from the 'Name' to the 'Kingdom', from the bodily manifestation in the Spirit, to the 'Kingdom'. And then from the outer, physical nature of the body to the element of soul in the social life and thence to the Spiritual.

*Jah aflet uns, thatai skulans sijaima, svasve jah
veis afletam thaim skulam unsaraim.*

— May we not succumb to those forces which, proceeding from the body, lead the Spirit into darkness; deliver us from the evils by which the Spirit is cast into darkness. *Jah ni briggais uns in fraistubnjai, ak lausei uns af thamma ubilin.* — Deliver us from the evils arising when the Spirit sinks too deeply into the bodily nature.

Thus, the second part of the prayer declares that the order reigning in the spiritual heights must be implicit in the social life upon Earth. And this is confirmed in the words: We will recognize this spiritual Order upon Earth.

Unte theina ist thiu dangardi, jah mahts, jah vulthus in aivius. Amen.

— All-Father, whose Name betokens the outer manifestation of the Spirit, whose Kingdom we will recognize, whose Will shall reign: May earthly nature too be full of Thee, and our body daily renewed through earthly nourishment. In our social life may we not be debtors one of another, but live as equals. May we stand firm in spirit and in body, and may the trinity in the social life of Earth be linked with the super-earthly Trinity. For the Supersensible shall reign, shall be Emperor and King. The Supersensible — not the material, not the personal — shall reign.

Unte theina ist thiu dangardi, jah mahts, jah vulthus in aivius. Amen.

— For on Earth there is no thing, no being over which the rulership is not Thine. — Thine is the Power and the Light and the Glory, and the all-supreme Love between men in the social life.

The Trinity in the super-sensible world is thus to penetrate into and find expression in the social order of the Material world. And again, at the end, there is the confirmation: Yea, verily, we desire that this threefold order shall reign in the social life as it reigns with Thee in the heights: For Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the revealed Glory. — Theina ist thiu dangardi, jah mahts, jah vulthus in aivius. Amen.

Such was the impulse living among the Goths. It mingled with those peasant peoples whose mental life is regarded by history as being almost negligible. But this impulse unfolded with increasing rapidity as we reach the time of the nineteenth century. It finally came to a climax and led on then to the fundamental change in thought and outlook.”⁶

⁶ Rudolf Steiner, *European Spiritual Life in the 19th Century*, Lecture 1, 15May1921, Dornach, GA 325

The Rock of Easter

"Dear friends, we've wasted our time. We forgot there is a huge rock rolled in front of the tomb. How are we three women going to get to his body?"

The three stopped. They looked at each other wanting to think someone should have realized this before they got up so early and walked so far. "How could I have been so unconscious of this" each thought quietly.

Then, one looked ahead at where the tomb had been carved into a small hillside. "Oh," she cried out, "the rock has been removed!"

What does it mean to have the rock removed? What does "rock" symbolize?

The symbol of 'rock' also woven into some Greek Myths such as the story of Prometheus. Here, this god is chained to the 'rock' by the command of Zeus. Before Zeus seized the throne from his father Chronos, Prometheus was a god known in mythology as a titan. His name means, 'to think ahead' and he has a brother, Epimetheus, whose name means 'to think back, to reflect'. These two were the only titans to survive the battle between Zeus and Chronos because they sided with Zeus.

These Greek gods should be considered as aspects of our inner life of soul. Through Prometheus, according to the myth, humanity acquired the arts and sciences and above all, fire, inner fire. Zeus, as ruler of the soul life, found this gift from Prometheus gave too much too soon to humanity. Thus, the Prometheus of our human soul had to have these gifts chained to the rock, that is, to the mineral kingdom.

Prometheus can only be freed from his chains by another impulse from within our soul, namely Heracles who must perform twelve labors, one for each sign of the zodiac. In so doing, the Heracleian soul becomes god-like. But this is still not enough. Finally, we must sacrifice our animality. This is Chiron, the Centaur, who offers to be this sacrifice of the Human Soul. Now the chains can be removed.

While on the cross, a Roman soldier is asked to see if Christ Jesus is dead. He thrusts a spear into the body poking into the liver. Out flows both blood and water. It is Prometheus' liver that each day is gnawed by a vulture.

And what about the chains that held Prometheus' attention to the mineral kingdom? They were built by the god of technology, Hephaestus. Later, Hephaestus, who was thrown off of Olympus by his own mother, was invited to return. He, like Jesus, elects to ride into the city on a donkey.

Now we can see how these myths were a foretelling and that the story of Christ Jesus fulfills the ancient myths as well as the prophets. And now we can grasp what is meant by Christ's words to Peter, "Upon this rock I build my church."

We can come to feel the Easter festival when we can first realize how we are chained to the rock, how our sense of ego, of who I am, is embedded in our intellect that lies in the tomb that is our body and whose entrance is blocked by the hugeness of the mineral kingdom. But then, with an inner Heracleian effort, we can roll away the rock to step out of our tomb.

An Easter Mystery Revealed

John's Gospel was revered by early Christian fathers and mystics alike. Not only is its structure deeply esoteric, so is each scene. Let's examine one such scene of Chapter 20, the Easter scene.



Matthias Grunewald, Colmar

The chapter begins with Mary Magdalene coming, "on the first day of the week", i.e. Sunday, to the tomb where the body of Jesus Christ had been laid. The tomb was owned by Joseph of Arimathea. This Joseph had asked Pilate for the dead body. When he took the body down from the cross, Joseph was accompanied by Nicodemus as secret disciples. They prepared the body according to Jewish customs and placed it in the tomb. This all was accomplished before sunset on Friday as, in these times, the new day began with the day's darkness.

Although John's gospel does not state this, we learn from Mark and Matthew that Joseph had a large stone rolled to seal the entrance to the tomb. That too happened before sundown on Friday. The next morning, Matthew [27:62] writes that the Pharisees petitioned Pilate to place an armed guard at the tomb so that no one would be deceived by grave robbers that Jesus had risen from the dead as Jesus had predicated. John's gospel does tell us that Mary "seeth the stone taken away from the sepulcher." [John 20:1, KJV]. Using a Zondervan Interlinear Bible, the sentence reads "sees the stone having been taken out of the tomb." The verb "sees" is the Greek word "βλεπειν".

Here is esoteric writing! The meaning can be read both from the physical reality and from the spiritual reality. The stone has been taken away! The mineral element of His body was gone. Mary at this point could only see with her physical eyes and thus could only see the mineral part of His body. But His body was not there - the stone had been taken away!

Now I want to reference a deeply moving paper by Jos Verhulst entitled *The Esoteric Content of Descent from the Cross (P.P. Rubens 1612)*.⁷ Jos explains John 20:5-6 as a mystery. Here we find the disciple whom the Lord loved sees "lying flat on the ground the pieces of linen" while Peter when he looks, he sees "the pieces of linen lying flat on the ground." Like other esoteric writers, the writer of this gospel embeds esoteric content directly into the story by using not only imagery but in this case reversing the order. What has changed from the disciple's viewing to Peter's? Is the wording reversal just literary technique? Jos makes clear the esoteric quality herein.

First is the description of the Peter and the disciple, upon hearing Mary say that the rock at the tomb is gone, running to the tomb. The first to arrive is the disciple. He stands outside the tomb and peers in seeing (βλεπειν) "lying flat on the ground the pieces of linen". Then Peter arrives and with stronger will

⁷ Jos Verhulst,
https://www.academia.edu/11734939/The_esoteric_content_of_The_Descent_from_the_Cross_P.P.Rubens_1612_our_ladys_cathedral_Antwerp_Part_II_relationships_with_Johns_gospel

is able to enter the tomb. Here is first the reversal where the disciple arrived first but Peter enters the tomb first. Now within, Peter sees the same things but from a different perspective namely from within. To make this clear, the verb to see changes from βλέπειν to θεωρεῖ (this is the root word for theory). My Greek Interlinear uses the verb "beholds" for the translation. At this moment, Peter is witnessing what appears as a reversal of the physical. This is the next higher level called prana or chi or etheric in spiritual science. It is described in these traditions as reversed in sequence from the physical, as though one should read what is written left to right in the physical, here one reads right to left.

Then the disciple also enters the tomb. In the Mystery schools of old, to go through initiation, one was put into a death like state. At first one's perception was of the nether-world, the world of the dead. Later the neophyte would, through the guidance of the hierophant, rise into spiritual heights and be changed forever. The disciple "saw and believed". Here is a third verb that again is translated to "see"; the Greek in this case is εἶδεν.

Now the two men leave (my Interlinear says they "went away to themselves") but Mary remains. She is crying at the tomb when she "stooped into the tomb" (according to the Interlinear) and now comes her spiritual awakening as she sees (ὀράν) "two angels in white". One angel is where the feet of Jesus had been while the other was at the head. Jos Velhurst brilliantly compares this to the image on the Shroud of Turin! (I was so excited to read this.) Now Mary performs a reversal! She reverses her gaze to behold (θεωρεῖ) Jesus standing there. At this point she cannot understand her perception until her hierophant calls to awaken her to a higher consciousness by using, as all hierophants did, her name. Mary's initiation is complete. She now can understand what it is she is experiencing.

This chapter closes with Thomas the Twin doubting the reports and claiming that "Unless I see (ἴδω) the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." When Jesus later appears, he has Thomas touch his wounds and then says to Thomas "Because you have seen (ὀράν) me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen (ἴδω) and yet have believed."

In this one chapter, we have four different verbs all translated in English to "see". Impoverished is English in this case to reveal the progression of sight, of spiritual sight in this chapter. John's Gospel moved from the sight of sensory perception to sight of the etheric realm to sight in the soul realm to finally sight of a spiritual being.

In the next chapter, John's Epilogue, we again have differentiating Greek words translated to a singular English word. In this case "love" applies to "eros", "philia", and "agape" (only the latter two appear in Chapter 21). Here Karma redemption is

instantly bestowed upon Peter for his three denials. Christ asks him "do you love me?" three times. The first two questions use the word "agape". Peter responds with "yea Lord, you know that I love (philia)



you." After each answer Christ makes a request. First Christ asks him to "feed my lambs". Next Christ requests Peter "take care of my sheep." Now a third time Christ questions Peter thereby offering redemption for his third denial. Apparently, Peter, unaware, bemoans being questioned like this. In this third question, Christ no longer uses the word "agape" but now uses "philia". Peter's reply tells of the level of love Peter is capable of: Philia, when he says " Lord, you know all things; you know that I love (philia) you." Peter cannot stretch the truth and he knows Christ knows the truth even of the level of love in one's soul. Peter, the rock on which Christ was to build his church, honestly knows, at this time, that Philia, love as in the lover of Sophia, the philosopher, is the heights of his love. The disciple whom the Lord loved, however, was capable of agape. But the world was not. So, the church must begin with Peter and must wait for a future time for the Christianity of Agape. Has that time arrived?