

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Sunday, February 18, 2018*

YEAR B - FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

Greetings and welcome, my brethren. Today is the first Sunday in our Lenten Season. We are entering into a period that, within the Christian Church, is usually observed with ascetic practices. As Gnostics, that is to say as mystics and theurgists, ascetic practices are no stranger to us. There are a number of high theurgical operations that require greater or lesser periods of asceticism. For those who are not accustomed to the disciples of theurgy, however, this period of fasting and asceticism during Lent is crucial to their spiritual progress. Likewise, if it has been some time since one has prepared for major operations, the Lenten ascetic practices are a great time to do some spiritual maintenance. In short, nearly everyone may benefit greatly by exercising some form of disciplined regimen during this time.

Let us talk a little, now, about some of the things addressed in our readings today. Our Epistle reading from 1 Peter brings up a number of interesting ideas within these few short lines. It tells us that Jesus went, in his Spirit form, to make "a proclamation to the imprisoned spirits." Now, there are a number of approaches that could be taken here. For example, are these the spirits of the deceased, who have not been able to reintegrate into the Pleroma? Or, is this referring to those "imprisoned" in the flesh, i.e. Humanity at large? The simple answer is: yes, all of the above.

If we address this in the sense of "preaching to the souls in hell" as it has sometimes been referenced, then we can only be led to the Origenian conclusion of universal redemption - or at least the possibility thereof. That is, it seems very unlikely that Jesus would go making proclamations to the unredeemed souls solely to rub their noses in the fact that they were wrong. Jesus is not petty and spiteful; he is sincere and forgiving. The only reason for Jesus to visit the unredeemed souls would be to offer them a means of redemption.

If we look at this as Jesus speaking to the souls of those still on earth, we come to pretty much the same conclusion. Think of the words of our liturgy which tell us: "It is Christ who standeth at the door of every heart." This is possible because when Christ acted, he acted outside of time, in eternity. Thus, he spoke to the living, the dead, the not-yet-begotten, etc. The action of Christ outside of spacetime is sometimes referred to as the mystery of the eighth day - the "eighth" day being that which lies outside of the week, or standard time.

This principle is even subtly hinted at in this same reading when it mentions the "eight souls" saved from the flood. In some Gnostic and Hermetic works we see reference to the "eighth heavenly sphere," which refers to the realm beyond our cosmos, which is represented by the seven planets of tradition. This can be considered musically as well, where there are seven whole notes; the eighth, or octave, being a return to the first, but at a higher pitch, or plane. Contemplate these analogies.