

Some interesting references with regard to the Hebrew verb shawah (in italics), "to make even, flat, lay out smoothly, to equal:"

-Psalm 16.8: "I *keep* the Lord always before me," that is, God can be made "smooth" or shawah to the psalmist. Here the verb implies a bringing-to-consciousness of his presence. God of course cannot be shawah to anything in his essence; however, by shawah or by keeping God before him, the psalmist realizes God's complete transcendence within his own divine *likeness* or tselem.

-Proverbs 3.15 says of wisdom that "nothing you desire can *compare* with her." Anything a person may *desire* or chaphats is not on the same plane (shawah) as wisdom. The word chaphats is quite strong, signifying everything we may desire, so that wisdom not being on the same plane as this chaphats means that it is indeed fully transcendent. In light of Psalm 16.8, what the psalmist sets before him (shawah) is the transcendent God. Note too that God is "before me" and as verse 8 continues, "at my right hand" as well. A good example of this level-ness signified by shawah in a concrete sense is Isaiah 28.25: "When (the plowman) has *made plain* (shawah) the face therefore." This verse continues with the plowman sowing seeds after he had first made it shawah.

-Psalm 131.2: "But I have *calmed* and quieted my soul." In light of Isaiah 28.25 above, the psalmist's soul (nephesh) is made like...shawah...the plowman who *makes level* (shawah) his field. To extend this image, once his *soul* is shawah, he can receive the good seed of Matthew 13.23.

-Psalm 119.30: "I have chosen the way of faithfulness, I *set* your ordinances before me." This "way of faithfulness" is God "before me" of Psalm 16.8. The psalmist in Psalm 119 shawah God's judgments or his decisions for him. Here he puts the judgment before him, but shawah also indicates that the psalmist is actually like such judgments and therefore like God.

-Psalm 89.29: "I have *set* the help (the Revised Standard Version reads 'crown') upon one who is mighty." Here the object of shawah is help, assistance. A similar verse to this is Psalm 21.5, "splendor and majesty you *bestowed* upon him," that is, God makes the king of Psalm 21 his equal. A negative aspect of shawah is Hosea 10.1: "The more his fruit *increased* the more altars he built." Here a person prefers self aggrandizement instead of God. Finally, Psalm 18.33: "He made my feet *like* hinds' feet" which denotes swiftness of ascent to God where he is "secure on the heights (of heaven)."

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From Pentecost Sunday, the descent of the Holy Spirit, until the last day of the liturgical year, that is, the Saturday at the threshold of the first Sunday of Advent, the Church may be said to exhale or *to breathe out*. This process consumes one half of the liturgical cycle. For the first Sunday of Advent until the day before Pentecost (the time of Christ being incarnate), the Church inhales or *breathes in*. This equals the second half of the liturgical cycle. Thus the entire cycle of liturgy, the celebration of the mystery of Jesus Christ in all his aspects, is a type of breathing process effected year after year.

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Matthew 6.4: "Your Father who sees *in secret*." This verse is in reference to almsgiving; it is also used with regard to fasting, verse 18. Compare this Greek phrase en krupto with the Hebrew verb shaqaph, "to look down upon, lean over, look upon." (NB: the Syriac has shaqypha, 'rocky pinnacle'). Shaqaph has a somewhat humorous tone to it; the image suggested is one of God looking out from his "window" in heaven, as it were, resting his arms on the ledge and peering out. For example, consider Psalm 14.2: "The Lord *looks down* from heaven on the sons of men." God shaqaph from heaven "in secret" into one's soul. Wisdom shaqaph from her "window" or chalon in Proverbs 7.6. Another reference is Psalm 102.19: "that he *looked down* from his holy height."

The important point in all these verses is a sense of humor they evoke. God does this shaqaph not with evil intent, let alone intrusively; when you realize this, one cannot help but smile by the image of God peeping out from a window. This height from which God "looks down" is the same one Jesus Christ ascends and from which he too shaqaph. Consider Psalm 47.5: "God has gone up with a *shout*, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." This "shout" is a battle cry, a sound of triumph and joy. It is one of great delight because Christ has ascended into heaven that he may shaqaph from that window (chalon) mentioned in Proverbs 7.6. It should be noted that this use of chalon derives from the verb chall, "to bore, pierce." It may be applied to Christ's glorified wounds by means of which he "looks down" or shaqaph "on the sons of men" from his cross.

The identification of Christ with shaqaph/chalon calls to mind Revelation 5.6: "I saw a lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth." The slain lamb bears its *wounds* (in the sense of chalon) which send the seven spirits to earth much like Joshua send spies to spy the land (Joshua 2.1). Since the Lamb's wounds are *windows* (chalon), they serve as vehicles to illumine the earth by the "watching" or shaqaph. For example, consider Revelation 21.23: "for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb." Verse 24 adds, "By its light shall the nations walk," that is, by the light emanating through the "windows" or chalon.

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Acts 1.21-2: "So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, *beginning* from the baptism of John *until* the day when he was taken up from us--one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." Note the time reference which qualifies a candidate to become an Apostle: "beginning"..."until." Christ's ministry began with a *descent* of the Holy Spirit at his baptism. In a sense, this descent is a criterion for the apostolic witness. Christ's ministry ended with his *ascent*, but before the Holy Spirit was given. Therefore, technically speaking, the Apostles' witness lies in between a descent and an ascent yet before a further descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

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Ephesians 1.19-23 can be applied to the Ascension, for example, verse 22: "and he has put all things under his feet, and has made him the head over all things for the church." Paul applies this to the risen and ascended Christ which comes right from Psalm 8.7: "He has put all things under his feet." Actually Psalm Eight refers to man, not God. With this in mind, it is interesting to apply verse 7 to Christ in Ephesians 1.22 above. In other words, Paul sees the ascended Christ as being fully God and man. This view enables us to switch Psalm Eight around as referring to Christ. The act of putting "all things under his feet" is a necessary act prior to the Holy Spirit's descent ten days later at Pentecost. The awareness of Christ as "the fullness of him who fills all in all" (verse 23) consists in a combination of "under his feet" and the Spirit's act of "filling" in Acts 2. Since the Holy Spirit's act of filling proceeds from under Christ's feet, and Christ has assumed our human nature, we may say that the same Spirit proceeds from out under our feet. Hence the Holy Spirit *descends* at Pentecost only from the *ascended* human and divine Christ.

Gregory of Nyssa composed an essay (cited elsewhere in this Home Page) entitled **A Treatise on I Corinthians 15.28** which expands the notion of Christ "putting all things under his feet" through the Greek word hupotage, "subjection," as noted by the following sentence: "With regard to salvation's goal it is said that the Only-Begotten (Son) of God is *subjected* to the Father in the same way salvation from God is procured for mankind." PG#44.1308a. As this sentence sums it up, subjection is related intimately with salvation, the mission of Jesus Christ who has "already performed" this mission, in other words, it is an action existing in the past. Now it is the Holy Spirit, equally "subject" to the Father and Son who effects salvation. Only the Spirit exists in our realm of space and time within the present; he is the one bringing about this drama of redemption already perfected by

Christ in the past.

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Several times in Psalm 119 the Hebrew verb shyach is used in conjunction with meditation on the Law or Torah as well as its precepts; its fundamental meaning is "to produce, bring forth shoots" This verb is related to the Syriac soach which suggests the blossoming of fruit flowers. Thus each verse of Psalm 119 can be read in light of this Syriac meaning with its Hebrew equivalent:

- verse 15: I will *meditate* on your precepts.
- verse 23: Your servant will *meditate* on your statutes.
- verse 27: And I will *meditate* on your wondrous works.
- verse 48: And I will *meditate* on your statutes.
- verse 78: As for me, I will *meditate* on your precepts.
- verse 97: It is my *meditation* all the day.
- verse 99: For your testimonies are my *meditation*.
- verse 148: That I will *meditate* upon your promise.

Note the object of shyach in each verse; all the guidelines communicated to us by God are contained in the Torah as a whole. The object of shyach is not God directly; in light of the New Testament, we would say that it is God's Logos or Word. The function of shyach "bears fruit" as implied by the Syriac. Note Psalm 77.6 where shyach blossoms in the heart: "I *commune* with my heart in the night." Contrary to our usual understanding of the day hours being the time for blossoming, it is at *night* that this fruit appears within our hearts.

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In Ephesians 5.29-33 Paul uses marital imagery to show the relationship between Christ and his Church and uses Genesis 2.14 as a focal point to demonstrate the attraction between a man and a woman. We get the idea that Christ "leaves behind" his Father in heaven and "clings" to the Church, his wife. Paul calls it a "great mystery" and indeed it is. Note in verse 31 the double use of the Greek preposition pros: proskollethesetai ("cling") and pros his wife." This serves to enhance the direction or movement, "the two shall become one" (literally, "into one flesh") which resolves this double use of pros.

Paul continues in verse 32 with (literally), "into Christ and into the Church," where eis translates as "into." The notion of pros/eis regarding man and woman is applied one-on-one between Christ and the Church; both are eis each other which is the "great mystery." No small wonder Paul says in 2Timothy 1.14, "Guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy spirit who dwells within us." Note the double use of the preposition eis: "dwelling (enoikountos) within (en) you."

Consider Christ's reference to Noah and the flood which he applies to the revelation of the Son of Man at the end of time: "They married, they were given in marriage until the day when Noah entered the ark" (Luke 17.27). In other words, people engaged in normal human activity until "the end." Noah is depicted as entering the ark, traditionally taken as an image of the Church. Noah *enters* it (cf. the eis references above); that is, he becomes the Church to which Christ is espoused.

Just before this reference to Noah Christ says that "the kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed...the kingdom of God is *within* (entos, also 'in the midst of') you (20-1)." Noah's building of the ark certainly must have been considered as a sign: who would build a huge vessel (450' x 75' x 45') without drawing attention? Yet this construction seems not to have attracted notice among his neighbors going about their normal activity. It is as though such activity, despite its normalcy, blinded them to Noah's construction much after the cry of Isaiah, "Hear and hear, but do not understand; see and see, but do not perceive" (6.10).

God orders Noah (Genesis 7.1-3) to take seven pairs of clean animals, male and female, into the ark. Note the symbolism here: seven equals the seven sacraments, male and female equals the union of the two sexes "into one body" of Ephesians above. Also, the ark traditionally has been equated with Christ's cross.

It should be noted further that with regard to Christ's words in Luke 17.31-6, he alludes to the taking of one person and the leaving of another. That is, he obliquely suggests to entering the ark with "*into one flesh*;" one enters and the other stays behind to be destroyed in the flood. Instead of seven pairs of clean animals in the ark, *vultures* will be gathered around (in) the body (of Christ, the ark). The word *aetos* means both eagle and vulture. Eagles do not approach carrion; with their sharp eyesight the view or contemplate the body/ark.

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Hebrews 4.12 refers to the word of God as a two-edged sword, and verse 13 says of its capacity, "before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and *laid bare* to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." The past participle *tetrachelismena* is from *trachelizomai*, "to be laid bare, be exposed" from which comes *trachelos*. The implication is bending or exposing the throat for slaughter.

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September 8 is the birthday of the Virgin Mary and its octave, the 15th, is the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows. This one week summarizes Mary's life as though she were born for this purpose as symbolized by the latter feast, at the foot of Christ's cross. It is also interesting to realize that the Triumph of the Cross occurs six months after Passion Time which is usually in the second half of March. It is as if the beams of Christ's cross stretch mightily from one end to the other, opposite to opposite, of time or the calendar. It is also interesting to observe that Our Lady of Sorrows occurs one month after Mary's Assumption, August 15.

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A quote from **Erasmus of Christendom** by Roland Bainton (New York, 1969), pp. 49-50:

"Should no marriage be honored above all the sacraments because it was the first to be instituted by God himself? The other sacraments were established on earth, this one in paradise; the others as a remedy, this one as fellowship in felicity. The others were ordained for fallen nature, but this one for nature unspoiled...The excitation of Venus, which is necessary for marriage, is from nature and whatever is of nature is pure and holy...Why restrain from that which God instituted, nature sanctions, reason persuades, divine and human laws approve, the consent of all nations endorses and to which the highest examples exhort? What is more sweet than to live with her with whom you are united in body and soul, who talks with you in secret affection, to whom you have committed all your faith and your fortune?...Friends flit like swallows...but a wife is faithful and only death dissolves marriage, if indeed it does. if you suffer adversity, you have one who will console you and try to make your trouble her own. If you stay at home you have a respite from the tedium of solitude. If you are away you long for a kiss. Absent you desire, returning you rejoice. By marriage the number of your loved ones is increased. You acquire another father and mother. What more charming than to have a little Aeneas who will cherish you in your old age and in whom you are reborn!"

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1Corinthians 1.30: "He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption." Note the four elements which are equated with our "boast" (kauchesis):

- God our wisdom
- righteousness
- sanctification
- redemption

These objects are preceded by the words "*from* him (Father) you are *in* Christ Jesus." Thus they are *in* Christ and are *from* the Father." Furthermore, these objects may be paralleled with their opposites in Jeremiah 9.23: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches."

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Psalm 119.103: "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" The Hebrew word for "sweet," malats, more properly means "to be smooth." A cognate with similar meaning is malat which translates as "to escape, deliver." Applied to Psalm 119.103 (the only Old Testament reference), God's words seem to connote a certain slipperiness or difficulty to grasp in their mouths. It is as though the words leave a certain sweet taste but due to their divine origin, are not able to be grasped or manipulated by us.

Another cognate of malats is malach with the same meaning. Refer to Isaiah 51.6: "For the heavens shall *vanish away* (nimlachu) like smoke...but my salvation (yeshuhaty) shall be forever." By meditating upon God's words in the manner of Psalm 119.103, let alone the entire psalm, we can prepare for meeting Christ in the manner of Revelation 20.11: "Earth and heaven fled from his presence and no place was found for them." The most familiar reality of our existence, gravity, flees...malats/malat...at Christ's presence. Only his words, the slippery words of Psalm 119, will remain: "heaven and earth will pass away but my words will not pass away" (Luke 21.33). This verse testifies to the "slipperiness" of words which cannot be grasped by our familiar surroundings, our sense of up and down, heaven and earth.

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Genesis 2.18: "It is not good for man to be alone." Because of this God created woman. Compare the Genesis text with Pentecost, the giving of the Holy Spirit, the Ruach, which is feminine in Hebrew. It is not good for the Apostles to be alone, so Christ gave them a *wife* for continuous friendship.

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The Greek preposition para is significant in that it connotes a sense of "being with, along side." In brief, para is often used in situations where human and divine relationships are important. The following is a sample of some "para references" from John's Gospel which demonstrate the significance of these relationships. For the most part they also are concerning with a coming-from, a concern with sources. Note that para occasionally is used as a prefix in verbs:

- 1.6: There was a man sent *from* God
- 1.11: his own people *received* him not
- 8.26: I declare to the world what I have heard *from* him

1.14: the only Son *from* the Father
14.3: I will *take* you to myself
14.23: we will come *to* him
15.15: for all that I have heard *from* my Father
15.26: when the *Counselor* comes...*from* the Father...who proceeds *from* the Father
16.27: you have believed that I came *from* the Father
17.5: the glory which I had *with* you
17.7: everything which you have given me is *from* you
17.8: I came *from* you

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It is interesting to note that Luke's account of Jesus' ancestry begins with his parents and works all the way back to the origins of the human race to "the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God" (3.38). Luke then begins chapter four with Jesus' temptation by the devil. This juxtaposition of lineage and temptation reveals that Luke wishes to posit Christ back in the garden of Eden or paradise ("Adam, the son of God") in order to be tempted there like Adam. By so being in the garden, Christ may amend Adam's transgression.

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Compare the feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple (February 2) with that of Pentecost. The former has Christ entering the Temple forty days after his birth; Pentecost has the Holy Spirit entering the disciples after fifty days (consider the triple "filling" of Acts 2.14). The latter feast implies that the Apostles became the new Temple whose foundation is the New Jerusalem of Revelation. In the former Temple, Mary and Joseph marveled at Simeon's words (Luke 2.33) which Mary must have done later at Pentecost. No doubt Joseph, like his Old Testament prototype Joseph the dreamer, told her all about this.

The Temple is sacred and its outer parameters are *pro-fanus*, that is, "before" the temple." Christ as man-God enters the sacred; rather, he as God is the Temple himself, so what lies outside him is *pro-fanus* or "profane" in the literal sense of the word.

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Compare John 14.2 with Genesis 6.14:

- "In my Father's house are many *mansions* (*monai*)."
- "Make an ark of gopher wood; *rooms* (*qinyim*) shall you make in the ark."

Christ's words were uttered at the Last Supper prior to his crucifixion. By digressing upon the kingdom of heaven with his disciples, he, like Noah, was preparing to elevate them with him on the cross, the new ark, which was about to save the world.

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Deuteronomy 34.1-4 describes God bidding Moses to ascend Mt. Nebo opposite Jericho. Moses could not enter the promised land but was allowed a glimpse of it. Once his request was granted, Moses died, and the Lord himself buried him. One can only speculate what type of burial this was, but insight into its meaning can be intuited by engaging in contemplative prayer, a direct result from *lectio divina*, when one's vision becomes purer. Although Moses was great in God's sight, he was not deemed to ascend bodily into heaven like Enoch (Genesis 5.24) and Elijah (2Kings 2.11). In light of this, note Matthew 4.8-11 when Satan tempted Jesus upon a high mountain similar to Mt.

Nebo.; Jesus saw all the earth's kingdoms but did not succumb to the devil's temptation.

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John 1.5: "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." A better translation for "overcome" is "grasp," katalambano, which implies a selfish type of appropriation or a total acquisition. On the other hand, this verb can signify an ardent longing or desire; applied to Jesus Christ, it refers to a possession of him as well as being possessed by him. For this latter meaning, refer to three references with katalambano, italicized words:

1Corinthians 9.24: "Do you know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may *obtain* it."

Ephesians 3.18: "That you may have power to *comprehend* with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth."

Philippians 3.12: "Not that I have already *obtain* this or am already perfect."

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An outline to 1Corinthians 15.22-8 which consists of eight stages:

For *as* in *Adam* all die, *so* also in *Christ* shall all be made alive but each in his own *order*

Christ the *first fruits*, then at his *coming* those who belong to Christ then comes the *end* when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father he must reign until he has put all his enemies *under his feet* when all things are *subjected* to him

then the Son himself will also be *subjected* to him who put all things under him that God may be *all in all*.

Refer to references in this Home Page cited from **A Treatise on First Corinthians 15.28** by Gregory of Nyssa where the theme of "subjection" and "first fruits" is discussed as well as the text itself in the Gregory of Nyssa Home Page.

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Genesis 1.2: "and the Spirit of God *was moving* over the face of the waters." In Hebrew the verb rachaph means "to cherish, brood over, to be affected," implying that something has just been born and is in a crucial phase of development and in need of care. It thus does not pertain to the act of giving birth but the period immediately following birth.

Psalm 45.1: "My heart *overflows* with a goodly theme." The psalmist's heart engages in this rachash; the Hebrew verbal root means to boil, bubble up as a fountain, and can apply to boiling water. Compare this verb with rachaph of Genesis 1.2; it is as though the Spirit were in the psalmist causing his "goodly theme" to rachaph. In both instances, the element of *water* is implied, not the act of creating it but of making it develop and mature.

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"It is well known that before the fifth century almost all vocations were adult and a second career, as they were in the times of the Gospels, the Acts and the Epistles. The same pattern applied uniformly to all Founders and early members of Religious Societies in any age of Church History. This indeed is the pattern to be expected from Christ's own words in extending the invitation ('vocation') to follow Him in a special manner: 'Leave wife and children; leave accumulated possessions; leave one's

established life also.' This is surely an invitation to adult and second career vocations. It is likewise clear that after the nineteenth century, 'vocation' had become synonymous with 'youth.' By the middle of the twentieth century, two things had happened: The youth-vocation field suddenly began to vanish in a spectacular fashion; and the youth-only mindset had become so strong and so universal that it could not recognize what was happening and doggedly held its ground, while a universal 'vocation crisis' built up throughout the world." From a pamphlet of the Society of the Missionaries of the Holy Apostles, Cromwall, Connecticut.

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2Kings 5.17: "Then Naaman said 'If not, I pray you, let there be given to your servant two mules' burden of earth ('adamah); for henceforth your servant will not offer burnt offerings or sacrifice to any god but the Lord.'" Naaman uttered these words after having been cured of leprosy at the prophet Elisha's command. The idea here is that God cannot be worshipped apart from his own land. 'Erets quite often signifies the sacred territory of Israel over and against other lands. To take some of it as Naaman did was to bring this 'erets back to his own home and therefore to extend its sacredness there. Once 'erets is transferred to a spot other than its own, it becomes a maqom, a *place* more specific than 'erets. For example, refer to Genesis 28.6: "Surely the Lord is in this place (maqom) and I did not know it." Although the text does not say so, we can imagine that Naaman built a temple to the Lord on the transported 'erets.

Later in the New Testament we have the Magi coming to worship the Christ child, Matthew, chapter 2. Perhaps one of these wise men came from Syria, the land which contained the 'adamah originally transported there by Naaman. That country might have had a tradition in some circles of worshipping the Lord of Israel due to the soil brought to that land. Once such wise man could have been influenced by the mystic qualities of this 'adamah and dreamed, like Jacob, of the Christ child's birth.

The Magi saw a star in the east to guide them westwards which "went before them until it came to rest over the *place* (in other words, the maqom) where the child was" (verse 9). We may say that this star was originally located above Naaman's 'adamah and moved from that sacred maqom to the maqom of Christ. According to tradition, there were three Magi, but Luke's account gives no number. The number three perhaps arises from the three gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. These are elements used in divine worship and also could have been used at Naaman's original 'erets.

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"We need, therefore, to be exceedingly circumspect about tampering with our basic (Christian) symbols, for we may be altering far more than we realize...the maleness of the Christian priesthood is part of the God-given, revealed symbolism that we verify by our lived experience, even though it cannot be justified by logical proofs. This symbolism involves the deepest intuitive roots of our relationship with the Eternal. We prefer to leave it as it is." Bishop Kallistos Ware, **The Tablet**, quoted from the edition of 26 November 1983, p.1150.

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Isaiah 11.2 contains four references which pertain to spirit, ruach: wisdom, understanding, counsel and might. Verse 3 continues using the verbal form: "and shall make him of *quick* (hawaychu...scent, smell) understanding in the fear of the Lord." Later in verse 10 we have "There shall be a root of Jesse, which shall *stand* (homed) for a sign of the people." This sign stands...

hamad...from which is derived hamod, “column, pillar,” as in Exodus 33:9: “the *pillar* of cloud...stood (hamad).”

The Syriac rendition of hamad is similar in form and means “to baptize, immerse in water;” Hamod in Syriac means “pillar, column,” and John the Baptist is called the Mahmada’ who might be termed a “pillar” baptizing in the Jordan River. John says, “He who is coming after me is mightier than I...he will baptize (hamad) you with the Holy Spirit and with fire” (Matthew 3:11). That is, Christ will “pillar” you into the Spirit and fire of Exodus 33:9 and 10. This pillar or hamod is thus set up as a kind of ladder into which we are inserted. Fire and cloud are opposites yet share similar characteristics. Christ was *baptized*...hamad...in the Jordan where Joshua (Jesus) set up twelve memorial stones (Joshua 4:9), although the word hamod is not used here. However, Christ who *baptized* in both fire and Spirit gathers up these twelve memorial stones and transforms them at Pentecost into twelve disciples. After all, God can make stones into men, Matthew 3:9.

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Song 2:9: “Behold, he stands behind our wall, he looks forth at the window, showing himself through the lattices.” This verse may be applied to John the Baptist in prison, Luke 7:18-35, when he sent messengers to inquire about Jesus. Jesus responds by quoting parts of Isaiah such as the blind seeing, and so forth (Isaiah 35:5, 61:1). This parallels Song 2:12, “The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.” The “wall” between John and Jesus, prefigured by being in their mothers’ wombs, is broken down, even though John remains in prison; his “joy is now complete,” John 3:29-30.

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The birth of Jesus Christ is a hidden one, occurring in winter (December) when days are shortest. The “birth” of the Holy Spirit becomes manifest to the Church, occurring as it does in middle to late spring when the days are lengthening. To fathom the Christian mystery even further, it is interesting to read the Pentecost account both at Christmas and on June 21, the longest day of the year, when we are in the process of moving from the “high point” of the calendar year to the “lowest.”

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When Christ ascended the Jordan River after having been baptized we read, “Behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a *dove*” (Matthew 3:16). The Syriac for “dove” here is yona’ which parallels the Hebrew word. It is also the name of the prophet Jonah. The sailors threw Jonah overboard to appease God, an act which caused the sea to become calm (Jonah 1:11-15). Jonah or the Dove not only hovers over the water as the Spirit in Genesis, but actually descends to Sheol (2:3), a figure of Christ both at the Jordan (baptism) and in the tomb. Christ quotes Jonah 1:17 with reference to his impending death and resurrection. It might be noted that Jonah was reluctant to go to Nineveh, foreshadowing Christ’s human reluctance to complete his mission.

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When Christianity first developed, the Apostles passed on what they received first hand from Christ, eventually giving rise to the New Testament. In other words, we have an *unfolding* process which occurs in time. For us almost two thousand years later, in order to reach Christ through the practice of lectio divina, we *reverse* the process: we go through the Church and scripture, the Apostles and then finally attain Jesus Christ.

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Odoremus saltem et a longe salutemur eam: “Let us now inhale its (our heavenly homeland) perfume and greet it from afar.” Note the play on words odoremus which alludes to adoremus, “let us adore.” This is the concluding sentence to Sermon Two of **De Diversis** by Bernard of Clairvaux. It refers to Hebrews 11.13-14: “But having seen it (‘what was promised’) and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.” Such Old Testament witness to faith in God may constitute the genealogy of Jesus Christ by faith. They, like the bride say, “Draw me after you, let us make haste” (Song 1.4), that is, in the bridegroom’s “good ointments” which diffuse the New Testament as well as the Old.

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Genesis 3.8: “The voice of the Lord *walking* (mitchalk) in the garden.” Also, refer to verse 24: “A flaming sword which *turned* (hamithapheketh) every way.” Both Hebrew verbs are in the hithpael, that is, they are intransitive, and this form often has a reflexive or reciprocal meaning (for example, “to hide *oneself*”). In other words, the meaning implies something like a turning upon an axis around one’s center of gravity. In verse 8 God does not walk in a straight line; he revolves like a whirlwind (refer to Ezekiel 1.4, etc).

Note that Adam and his wife *hide themselves*, yitechabe’, in response to God’s walking. In verse 24 God *drives out* “the man,” garash, a linear movement in response to God’s “walking.” We may say that movement within the garden is circular, that is, it is self contained and not having need for spacial-temporal extension, whereas outside the garden movement assumes a linear form. The circular movement of the flaming sword guards “the way of the tree of life.” Adam and Eve discovered that this tree gave them a type of hithpael movement like God which is why they were banished. They could *reflect back upon themselves* (in other words, see their nakedness) much like God can reflect upon himself. The hithpael movement of the sword guards this tree so no one can imitate God’s movement. The “tree of life” traditionally is symbolic of Christ’s cross. God says in verse 22, “the man has become as one of us,” that is, his hithpael movement prefigured a seeing-into God, his self-reflectiveness, or Jesus Christ.

It is interesting to observe that the Genesis text does not mention a specific place name to which Adam and Eve were “driven” from the garden. Such a place is not found until 8.4 when Noah’s ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat. A mountain, like the garden of Eden, represents a sacred spot, a maqom (refer to the remarks above regarding Naaman). Noah built an ark before the flood, an enclosed sacred space, again reminiscent of Eden. It was here with the ark that the banishment of our first parents came to a halt. When Cain slew Abel, God made him a wanderer who dwelt in the land of Nod, Hebrew for “wandering,” east of Eden (4.16). Cain then bore children in Nod, that is, the original place of banishment of Adam and Eve was maintained until it stopped with the resting of Noah’s ark. This ark was constructed from gopher wood, 6.14. The Septuagint has “of square timber” (ek xulon tetragonon), which imitates the four-sided constitution of Eden. Noah in Hebrew means “rest,” a symbol of cessation of that banishment from paradise. Therefore the ark is the first mirror-image of Eden to appear. It has a door which equals the location of the fiery sword as well as a window to equal the tree of life; furthermore, every animal is in Eden and as well as in the ark.

When Christ was led into the desert to be tempted by the devil, the Holy Spirit guided him there (Matthew 4.1). Observe that Mark 1.12 reads, “The Spirit immediately *drove him out* into the wilderness” thereby imitating the banishment of Adam. Christ did this in order to cure the banishment of Adam (again, we have no mention in Genesis of Eve) from Eden. When in the Jordan River, the Holy Spirit descends and rests upon Christ instead of making him run away and hide as Adam and Eve had done. Instead, the baptism scene is an immediate prelude to Christ entering the desert as we see with the sentence quoted above from Mark 1.12. After being there forty days and

nights, a correspondence to the forty days during which the flood lasted in Noah's time, chapter eleven begins with "Now the whole earth had one language and few words," that is, we have here a foretaste of Pentecost. The destruction of the tower of Babel is an attempt to recreate Noah's ark, "a city and a tower with its tower in the heavens" (11.4) to rise above the waters.

With the banishment of both Adam and Christ in mind, we can better appreciate the reconciliation mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15.22: "For *as in* Adam all die, *so also in* Christ shall all be made alive." In these words we have a one-to-one correspondence between the First and Second Adams in light of the banishment from Eden. Christ takes Adam's "linear" or horizontal banishment and makes it vertical by his cross. This was foretold by Noah's ark which rose up on the waters: "and it rose high above the earth" (Genesis 7.17).

Human language was undivided prior to the tower of Babel but it became splintered (Genesis 11.9) once this tower rose up to heaven. To counter this rising up (the opposite of the ark's rising on the water which covered all mountains), the Holy Spirit's *descent* at Pentecost unified the multiple languages. That is to say, the unity springing *up* from the earth is confused, whereas unity descending *from* heaven brings unification: "And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language" (Acts 2.8)?

Note that Matthew begins his genealogy of Christ with Abraham (1.2) and works forward from there to Christ's birth. This descending order corresponds to Abraham's linear movement or departure from his own land (Genesis 12) until the two realities signified by these two lines, horizontal and vertical, intersect in the Incarnation. Luke's genealogy omits Abraham (3.23-38) altogether as if to say Christ's descent blotted out Abraham's linear movement. The genealogy occurs prior to the temptation scene or before the descent into the wilderness, chapter four. The genealogy ends with "son of Adam, the son of God" (3.8); thus the downward (vertical) genealogy serves to dissolve the banishment of Adam. In a certain sense, the two genealogies of Matthew and Luke may be combined in this light.

Perhaps the angel's ascent and descent upon the Son of Man (John 1.51) signifies unity of the two genealogies of Jesus Christ: both descending and ascending movements of the genealogies are reconciled in Christ. Matthew wished to stress Christ's banishment vis-a-vis Abraham's, whereas Luke stressed the one with regard to Adam. It is from Abraham that Christ took the "good" banishment, being a summons from God, and from Adam that Christ took a "bad" banishment being one from paradise. Abraham's horizontal banishment sought to cure Adam's, but both retained the horizontal dimension. It took the vertical dimension of Christ to cure both.

* * *

John 1.9 speaks of Christ as the Logos who enlightens every person; 8.12 reads, "but will have the light of life" for a realized person who is awake to the Logos enlightening him. The verses that follow have Christ testifying not about himself but of the Father where the Father may be taken as the light of the Son. Hence, a parallel exists between Logos, light, man and Father/Logos.

John 15.4: "*Remain* in me as I in you." This remaining or abiding is a permanent state, not a transitory one. Such remaining can be connected with the Son's role of enlightening in 1.9 above. Christ continues in chapter 15 to use the image of himself as "the true vine" and the Father as "vine dresser" and a believer as "branch." The branch is not aware *of* the Logos through normal subject-object relationships; rather, its mode of perception is from within—by reason of being made in God's image or eikon—via the "sap" flowing through the vine which is the Holy Spirit.

While both Logos and the Holy Spirit are internal to the branch, the Father is completely external; he is the vine dresser who has a cleansing or pruning function (verse 2). It seems that 1.12 makes the "sap" or Spirit flow in a person, that is, arouse it: "But to all who received him, who

believed in (eis) his name, he gave power to become children of God” (1.12). Note the use of eis, the preposition “into” with regard to “name,” a presence-in just like in the vine by the klema. In view of this, klema may be seen as another term for adoption, literally “son placing,” huithesia Ephesians 1.5).

* * *

The Hebrew verb shaqaph means “to lay upon, cover with planks (not generally used), to lie out over, look out” as in Psalm 14.2: “The Lord *looked down* (shaqaph) from heaven on the sons of men.” The image we have here is one of God leaning out a window watching the activity below. Perhaps God intended Noah to do this when he was commanded to put a window in the ark (Genesis 6.16, tsohar, literally, “light;” 8.6 has chalon through which Noah sent a dove which is derived from chalal, “to pierce.” Here the action takes place from inside the ark to outside, whereas with regard to tsahar, it is above for God to shaqaph. As noted elsewhere within this home page, this latter verb offers a somewhat humorous image, that of a person idly looking out a window.

John 11.20: “Mary sat in the house” while Martha went out to meet Jesus. Mary resembles Noah (whose name means “rest”) remaining within her house or ark, whereas her sister Martha hastened to Jesus like the raven and dove Noah sent out (Genesis 8.6-8). Martha received an important revelation about Christ being the resurrection and life (John 11.25). This is akin to the raven and dove which signaled the flood’s end, “resurrecting” the world to new life. Even though Martha engages Christ in an important conversation, Mary, a type of Noah, embodies that shaqaph or looking out the window of her ark like God from heaven upon Christ. It was only upon Mary’s arrival (verse 32) to Christ that he restored Lazarus to life; it was her request that was instrumental in bringing him to life.

* * *

Proverbs 9.6: “Forsake the foolish and live; and go in the way of understanding (‘ishru bederek).” The Hebrew verb for “go” here is ‘ashar meaning “to be straight, right, prosper” and is related to yashar, “to be straight, righteous.” From ‘ashar we derive ‘asher, the relative pronoun, “who, which, that,” the use of which is demonstrated in Psalm 1.1: “Happy the man *who*...” or in Hebrew, ‘ashrey ha’ysh ‘asher. Note the play on all three words; the notion of happiness here means an onward progression which is emphasized by inclusion of the relative pronoun. A pronoun serves as a vehicle (in other words, is representative of movement) between two nouns, so a dynamic activity is implied. Hence, “to go in the way of understanding” is to be “happy” or ‘ashrey.

* * *

Ephesians 1.17: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him.” This verse implies one’s interior perception of Christ. Note how it is related to an exterior event Christ’s resurrection and ascension, verse 20: “which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places.” Such is the “working (energeia) of his great might” (verse 19) perceived by faith which can unite the interior with the exterior or the present with a past event. To include a further dimension of exteriority, verse 22 says that Jesus Christ is “head over all things for the church,” that is, those cosmic or physical realities for the church which consists of those in whom the interiority of verse 17 is realized.

The notion of “subjection,” hupotage, in verse 22 shows the subordination of the exterior to the interior as if everything external depended upon the “spirit of wisdom and revelation” of verse 17. We find a reference to Psalm 8.6 in 1Corinthians 15.27, “You have given him dominion over the works of your hands” where the notion of Christ as “first fruits,” aparche, is developed. NB: the Hebrew for hupotasso is mashal. The balance between interior and exterior is comprised of union of head and body.

Compare Ephesians 1.23 with 1Corinthians 15.28:

-which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

-then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to everyone.

The activity of hupotasso or of subjecting spoken of here and referred by Paul through his use of Psalm 8.6 hearkens back to Genesis 1.26, "Let them have dominion..." The Hebrew equivalent to hupotasso here is radah, "to rule, tread," the latter word used in the sense of treading a wine press. This verb also occurs in Psalm 110.2: "*rule* in the midst of your foes." It is interesting that this radah occurs in the same psalm which says in verse 1, "sit at my right hand" or in the "place" where Christ is located from where he effects subjection, the perfect harmony between ourselves and all aspects of reality, physical, psychological and spiritual. It is Christ as "first fruits" who resembles a seed as we observe in Ephesians 2.21-2: "*in* whom the structure *is joined together* and *grows into* a holy temple *in* the Lord; *in* whom you also are built *into* it *for* (or 'into') a dwelling place of God *in* the Spirit." Notice how the last word here, "Spirit" or Pneuma, ties in with pneuma as the take-off point in Ephesians 1.17. The union or balance between interior and exterior is heightened by seven uses of "in" and "into" (italicized).

* * *

Christ sent the Holy Spirit after his ascension as fully God and fully man. That is, his humanity ascended into heaven from where the Holy Spirit was sent nine days later at Pentecost. Christ as Second Adam effects this according to 1Corinthians 15.22: "For *as* in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." The "pause" between the Ascension and Pentecost was required as a period of reflection for the Apostles to realize this fact; we might intimate that they were instructed by Mary about what Christ had told her about this coming event. The pause made them realize what 1Corinthians 15.45 reveals as later written by Paul: "The first man Adam became a living being (psuche); the last Adam was a life giving spirit (pneuma)." Although Christ is seated as man and God at the Father's side, the Holy Spirit is seated at man's side, so we have here a mutual exchange.

* * *

In his book **The Church of God**, (Chicago, 1961), p.161-2, Louis Bouyer speaks of three types of fullness (pleroma) connected with the developments of *mystery* concerning the Church, that is, the transformation of her members into a living reality:

-Time: "but when the *fullness* of time had come" (Galatians 4.4) and "as a plan for the *fullness* of time" (Ephesians 1.10).

-God: "For in him all the *fullness* of God was pleased to dwell" (Colossians 1.19).

-Perfect stature: "which is his body, the *fullness* of him who *fills* all in all" (Ephesians 1.23).

* * *

Matthew 13-14 contain several parables which describe the kingdom of heaven in terms of things normally concealed from our sight such as pearls, yeast, a net in the sea and fish. The disciples ask Jesus (13.36) for an explanation of the parables. In order to do this, note that Christ "left the crowd and entered the house." Here is a two-fold action: leaving the crowds and going into a house. Even the house, like the hidden elements of the parables, is a concealed place where we must pray to the Father in secret and "groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons" (Romans 8.23).

* * *

Romans 8.23: "We who have the first fruits of the Spirit." This concept of "first fruits" (in Greek, aparche) is important for Gregory of Nyssa, which refers to Christ as the prototype of the new man in his resurrection which we now share in a seminal fashion:

"Paul said that the pure and undefiled divinity of the Only-Begotten Son assumed man's mortal and perishable nature. However, from the entirety of human nature to which the divinity is mixed, the man constituted according to Christ is a kind of *first fruits* (aparche) of the common dough. It is through this divinized man that all mankind is joined to the divinity." **A Treatise on 1Corinthians 15.28**, PG#44.1313A-B.

In the verse from Romans, note the opposition between "first fruits" present in faith and its not-yet realized presence in our bodies or material creation ("awaiting the redemption of our body"). "Body" is singular whereas "our" is plural. This can mean the final growth or fullness of Christ's body we await, not simply the restoration of our physical (resurrected) bodies.

2Corinthians 5.2-4 develops this notion of "first fruits" further: "Here indeed we groan, and long to put on our heavenly dwelling...not that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." Revelation 3.14 also deals with the theme of "first fruits" but with the word arche, "the beginning of God's creation." This notion of aparche-arche has roots in Proverbs 8.22: "The Lord created me at the *beginning* of his work." Notice that this "beginning" (r'esh) was present with God before creation whose special characteristic is joy (verse 30): "then I was beside him, like a master workman; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always." This word amon for "workman" derives from the verbal root aman, "to prop, stay up, support, confide." Thus one who shares the "first fruits" as in Romans 8.23 is an amon, an interpretation of "faith" which shares the same verbal root.

* * *

Ex 15.25: "...and the Lord showed him (Moses) a tree (hets) which when he cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet." The Hebrew verb arah means "to cast, lay foundations, instruct," from which derives torah, "law." "Tree" (hets) resembles hetsah, "counsel," and can refer here to Christ's cross. When God shows (arah) Moses the tree, he simply does not point it out but instructs him about it as in the Torah. Thus we may see hets of Christ as fulfillment of the Old Testament Torah. You could say that by showing (arah) Moses this hets, the Lord was preparing him to receive the Torah on Mt. Sinai in light of Christ's cross and what it signifies.

* * *

Exodus 18.7: "And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and did obeisance and kissed him. And they asked each other of their welfare (shalom), and they came into the *tent*." Note the importance of shalom in union with three elements of meeting, doing obeisance and kissing. Relate this verse to John 1.14: "and the Word became flesh and *tented* within us."

* * *

"Only the great masters of style ever succeeded in being obscure." Oscar Wilde (I do not recall the source, yet this sentence can be applied to all spiritual teachers from the beginning of time until the present).

* * *

Exodus 32.15: "And Moses turned (yiphen) and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the testimony were in his hand." This incident occurred when God told Moses that the

Israelites made a golden calf. Before Moses descended the mountain, the text says that he turned, yiphen: he left the awareness of God's presence or made a complete one-hundred and eighty degree turn from being upon the mountain's summit. The tablets of testimony were with Moses and had writing on both sides, that is, they acted as God's eyes after Moses gesture of "turning," yaphan. These "eyes" of the testimony call to mind Ezekiel's vision (Ezekiel 1) of God's chariot which John develops, Revelation 4.6: "and before the throne there is as it were a sea of glass like crystal" which symbolize unceasing watchfulness. The four creatures (lion, bull, eagle, man) St. Irenaeus later saw as the four evangelists, so we could say Moses' testimony prefigured the Gospel's four books. Revelation 5.1 says that only the Lamb can open the seven seals of the book, that is, to make the writing on both sides intelligible.

Exodus 32.19 has Moses breaking the tablets at the mountain's base upon seeing the golden calf which prefigures Christ driving the money changers from the Temple (John 2.15).

* * *

Proverbs 31.10-31 praises a good wife whose watchfulness extends to her entire household. We have here mention of "night" (verse 15: "She rises while it is yet night and provides food for her household") which has a certain parallel to the five wise and five foolish virgins of Matthew 25.1-12, especially when Christ the bridegroom suddenly comes at night (verses 15 and 18).

* * *

Matthew 25.14-30 contains the parable of the talents. Each servant is given a talent: five, two and one respectively in order to increase them. A talent equals more than fifteen years' wages for a laborer, so it seems ironic for the master to say "you have been faithful over a little" (verse 23)! The first two servants double their talents while the third hides it and later returns it without investment. The industrious servants follow Gregory of Nyssa's doctrine of going "from glory to glory," that is, of advancing from one stage to another with each succeeding stage being beyond (doubled) the earlier one. They are also like the Virgin Mary who says, "my soul magnifies the Lord" (Luke 1.46), that is, she continuously "doubles" her soul or talent. The servant who hides his talent fails to "magnify the Lord" and is therefore rejected.

* * *

Psalms 117.5: "From the midst of distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me with enlargement" (bamerechav Yah). Note that the Hebrew ends with Yah, "Lord," as if to say "in enlargement the Lord." The verb rachav means "broad, wide," also includes the concept of "height, depth" much like the Latin word amplus. Refer to Ephesians 3.18: "to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth." These four cardinal points of the compass form a cross into whose center-axis is inserted the psalmist's "enlargement." Psalm 119.96: "I have seen that all perfection has an end; your commandment is exceedingly broad" (mitswatka me'od). The "enlargement" with God answers is his "commandment" which is me'od, so the psalmist can meditate on it "all day" as verse 98 states.

* * *

Definition of a *chiastic structure*: events being picked up and recapitulated in inverse order such as the Greek word for "manger," phatne. "Manger" is thus a deeper cleft in the rock (of a cave) at a height convenient to feed animals. At the end of Luke's Gospel Christ is put in the "rock-hewn tomb" (23.53). Thus at the beginning and end of this Gospel Christ—first as a baby, then as a dead man—is wrapped round and laid in a rock-crevice. Such is the "sign" the shepherds are given, an anticipation of Christ's passion.

Also in Luke's Gospel, a parallel can be drawn between Caesar's census and the multitude of angels at Christ's birth (2.1-5 and 9-14). The great number of spiritual beings forms a parody of the census!

* * *

Compare the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15) with that of the Pharisee and publican (Luke 18). Both take place within the Father's home or temple. The prodigal can turn into his brother the Pharisee who never left home (temple), the two being different aspects of a single person. Once reconciled to the Father, the prodigal son looks on others, like his brother, as other prodigals. This is where he is akin to the Pharisee in the temple. It is the prodigal's challenge to remain like the Pharisee "who would not lift so much his eyes to heaven" (verse 13) once he is transformed into the son who never left home. The challenge seems to remain in the house-temple: "but Mary sat in the house" John 11.20). She went out, unlike Martha, only when "the Master calls for you" (verse 28). The prodigal-publican thus has changed into Mary and sees his brother-Pharisee as Martha. Here is where she must not judge him, otherwise he will revert back to his former role of brother-Pharisee.

Perhaps Mary's "one thing necessary" is related to her position in the house-temple and to anoint Christ's feet, filling the house with the ointment's odor (12.3). Compare this anointing with Luke's account of Christ's visit: "And she (Martha) had a sister called Mary who sat at (*parakathestheisa pros*) Lord's feet and listened to his teaching (*logos*...in other words, from the *Logos* himself, 10.42)." It is interesting that the teaching of the Lord's Prayer occurs in chapter 11 right after this "one thing necessary" of 10.42.

* * *

Just before his death, Joseph he ordered his brothers to bring his bones out of Egypt when the Lord "will visit his people" (Genesis 50.25), a clear reference to the Exodus. Exodus 13.19 has the Genesis 50.25 quote of Joseph, "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him; for Joseph had solemnly sworn the people of Israel, saying, 'God will visit you; then you must carry my bones with you from here.'" In verse 21 the Lord precedes the Israelites in a column of cloud and fire on their way from Egypt. It seems as if a condition for such a divine manifestation is the transferal of Joseph's bones from Egypt in a coffin or ark (*'aron*), the same word for the holy ark in which the Law's two tablets were kept. It is more specifically called "ark of testimony" (Exodus 25.22). We might say that Joseph's *'aron* prefigured this latter one of the Sinai covenant. Note too that *Aaron* acted as Moses' spokesman (Exodus 4.14) or was the "ark" of his utterances much like the tablets were the voice of God later given at Mount Sinai.

In the New Testament, Joseph does not speak yet is responsible for bringing up Jesus. Joseph fades into the background much like the Old Testament Joseph's *'aron* or ark before the pillar of fire and smoke and later in the presence of the new *'aron* or Law received at Sinai.

* * *

Mark 8.32: "And he said this *plainly* (*parresia*). Christ speaks openly or plainly, using the word *parresia* about his impending passion and death to the disciples. Peter then rebukes Christ because he did not understand his words.

Luke 24.26: "Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" Here Christ interprets his passion and death in light of the Old Testament as well as with that *parresia* just mentioned although the word is not used here. Despite the *parresia* in Mark (before the resurrection), the disciples did not comprehend his words but only afterwards. Next we have, "Did not our hearts *burn* within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us

the scriptures" (verse 32)? This "burning" was recognized by them only after Christ vanished from their midst. Still they failed to recognize Christ as in Mark's account, but the resurrection left them with this "burning." Their parresia, however, became in tune with the "burning" after Pentecost with the Holy Spirit's descent as noted by the Jewish elders: "seeing the parresia of Peter and John" (Acts 4.13).

Later the disciples' friends ask for this same parresia (verse 29) which repeats Mark's observation of Christ himself speaking with parresia. After this, these people, like the disciples, "were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with parresia." Now they are like Christ in Mark because he had the Holy Spirit while the disciples did not at the time. This request is similar to the parresia of Elisha who asked his master Elijah "to inherit a double share of your spirit" (2Kings 2.9).

To recapitulate, note the relationship between parresia (boldness), kaiomene (burning) and pleroo (to fill).

* * *

"As we find ourselves approaching the metaphorical gates of eternal life, we find in ourselves an even greater need than before to transcend intellectual knowledge by a more poetic sense of Christ's presence." **The Embrace of the Soul** by Charles Rich, (Petersham, Massachusetts, 1984), p.7.

* * *

Psalm 38.12 (Septuagint): "I am a passing guest in the land and a *sojourner*" (parepidemos). This word is found in Hebrews 11.13: "confessing that they were strangers and *sojourners* on the earth." Both find roots in Abraham's wandering through Canaan as recounted in Genesis 23.4: "I am a stranger and *sojourner* with you." This noun is composed of two prepositions, para (besides) and epi (upon); para signifies the act of exile, of wandering, whereas epi discloses a certain transcendence or realization that this wandering is temporary.

* * *

Psalm 31.19: "How abundant is your goodness which you have *laid up* for those who fear you, and wrought for those who take refuge in you in the sight of the sons of men!" This verse contains two opposing elements, hiddenness ("laid up") of the Christian life where God works in secret before or *in the sight of* (neged) other persons. The trick here is to balance the two elements of "hiding" and "before" in one action; they are a way of seeing and participating in the process of salvation history. The condition for such a balancing act is *fearing* with its connotation of respect *before* "the sons of men."

A parallel may be drawn between the Greek word for "sojourner" (parepidemos) cited just above with regard to Psalm 38.12: para ("besides") is equivalent to "in the sight of" other persons; epi ("upon") is comparable with "hiding" or the secrecy of transcendence present with the created realm.

* * *

Matthew 6.4: "so that your alms may be *in secret*; and your Father who sees *in secret* will reward you." Two references of "secret" are in this verse, one for the person involved in almsgiving and the other for God the Father who bears witness to this. Some manuscripts have for "in secret" just the opposite, that is to say, "manifestly," enphanero, which is in the Syriac version is begalya' (refer to the footnote to verse 4 in **The Greek New Testament**, New York, 1966, p.17). Following this lead, we may say that the Father rewards by *manifestation*, though not necessarily in outward form.

Rather, it can be *awareness* of his action as opposed to ignorance of it, despite the fact that such action has been accomplished without our fully knowing what has transpired.

We have a similar occurrence of begalya' in verse 6 with regard to our praying "in your room" (eis to tameion) as well as in verse 18 concerning fasting. These verses regarding the apparent contradictory element of manifestation through enphanero and begalya' make sense in light of verses 19-21, "treasure in heaven." This "treasure" is to be laid up "in heaven," for "there is your heart" (verse 21). The act of laying up treasure is done en krupto, "in secret," where the Father sees, yet he also sees begalya', "in manifestation." For lack of better terms, we may say that such manifestation lies on the other side of hiddenness. We see harmony between both elements in the "there-ness" of verse 21, the location of our heart; "there" represents that begalya' while "heart" represents "in secret."

Luke 2.35: "and a sword (romphaia) shall pierce your soul that the thoughts of many will be revealed (apokaluphthosin...dialogismoi)." The Syriac for apokalupto is gala', the same root as in Matthew 6.5 above.

It should be noted that the Gospel containing Luke 2.35 is that of the Presentation, February 2, which is forty days after Christmas and often occurs shortly before the beginning of Lent. Thus this Gospel and the one frequently used for Ash Wednesday (Matthew 6.4+) are relatively proximate in the Church's liturgical year.

* * *

The word apokatastasis occurs in Acts 3.21: "whom heaven must receive until the time for *establishing* all that God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old." This restoration is linked with "the Christ appointed for you, Jesus" of verse 20. It is an incorrect apokatastasis which the Apostles expected in 1.6: "Lord, will you restore (apokathistaneis) the kingdom to Israel?" Relate this question to Matthew 17.11: "Elijah does come and is to *restore* (apokatastesei) all things," that is, referring to John the Baptist. This statement was made right after the Transfiguration, a preview of apokatastasis.

We have the verb apokathistemi referring to healing as in Mark 3.5: "and his hand was *restored*." Such an occasion refers to the "time for establishing" of Acts 3.20 already mentioned. As Christ himself uses this term, it refers to John the Baptist, so he is the figure to whom we must pay close attention. Nevertheless, apokatastasis in this sense means the perfection or fulfillment of events up to the appearance of Christ, that is, not himself nor after him.

Note that Acts 3.20 has kairoi anapsuxeos, "*times* of refreshment." The use of kairos here in the sense of a special event or visitation in an incipient or not fully revealed manner, which is why it is in the plural form. In verse 21 we have chronos, a word meaning extension of time which implies consistency: here the kairoi smooth out, as it were, or become constant. When associated with apokatastasis, chronos in the plural form means that individual, extended events and things will achieve the same status as kairoi, unextended time. We find an example of the two concepts in verse 24: "all the prophets *from* Samuel and those who came *afterward* (apo-kathexes)." The individual moments of prophecy are various "kairoi of refreshment." Then verse 24 continues: "also proclaimed these days (hemeras)." Such "days" equal the apokatastasis when Christ is fully revealed. In other words, we are seeing an interpenetration of both modes of time.

* * *

Philippians 3.21: "(Christ) who will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power which enables him even to subject all things to himself." This is a rich sentence in the context of the Easter season. Just before it verse 20 reads "our citizenship exists in the heavens."

Thus the emphasis is on *above-ness* or heaven presented as the true reality governing everything else. We could outline the principal parts of Philippians to show the *downward* movement from "in the heavens" to "our lowly body:"

**our citizenship
Christ
like his glorious body**

will change

^
|

WE WILL RECEIVE

**to be like
(according to the power...to subject all things)**

^
|

our lowly body...and all things

Observe that a separation exists between "our citizenship" and "we will receive;" they are on two different planes yet form a single entity. The latter is faith which has certainty with regard to its origin and destination. It enables us to await Christ's power of "change" (metaschematizo), that is, the same Christ who exists on the identical plane as our "citizenship." It is this power of "change" which will, by faith, bring our "expectation" up to our place of "citizenship" by its power of "subjecting all things to himself." Basically we have here a question of alignment or of keeping "our lowly body" *conformed* to Christ's glorious body in heaven, our place of "citizenship." This is effected with the pivotal role of "we will receive" which keeps the parts above and below in line.

By the action of faith expressed in the verb "we will receive," we are in Christ through the Father as Ephesians 2.6 says: "and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places."

* * *

"That is the beauty of analog (time, as opposed to digital). Because--like its linguistic companion, the analogy--it tries to reproduce the contour of reality. It lives in context. There is a before and after. The digital watch gives you precision, but leaves you wondering where you are. Analog is a return to a certain harmony that the digital world chops away...Digital arbitrarily cuts up the continuum of information into bite-size bits, selects pieces and presents them back glued together to simulate the original continuum...The digital watch tells you the time. It does not represent it...Analog devices represent reality as a continuum on which things (seconds, degrees, sound waves) are assigned a location. Romantic, but not quite as practical as digital devices." An Article entitled, *The Joy of Analog* by Charles

Krauthammer, *Time* (New York, May 26, 1986), p.84.

* * *

-Colossians 2.20: "If with Christ you died to the *elemental* spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world?"

-Colossians 3.3: "For you have died, and your life is *hid with Christ in God.*"

There is a correlation between these two passages: stoicheion ("elemental") means the physical elements from which all things have sprung and form the kosmos, the human or creaturely way of behaving. The "dying" is a cutting-off at the source of these elements which can be characterized by various types of addictive behavior. The "hiding" is a refuge from the stoicheia which do not have existence in Christ. That is to say, this hiding is free from the addictive nature of stoicheia or more precisely, our tendency to abuse them. The use of the prepositions "with" and "in" of Colossians 3.3 is indicative of such freedom.

The dying referred to in Colossians 3.3 pertains to the stoicheia. Paul advises in verse 2 "set your minds on things that are *above*, not on things that are on *earth.*" Such "setting" or phroneite occurs after dying ("for you have died") and is accomplished "in secret" from the stoicheia. Also note the parallel between our life hidden "with Christ" and his manifestation, "your life." It seems that the activity of phroneo occurs only in secret and comes to an end with Christ's appearance.

Paul has in mind Christ's death on the cross where he is stretched out in the four cardinal directions in opposition to the four stoicheia of fire, earth, air and water. The "first principles of God's word" in Hebrews 5.12 correspond to these four creative elements and form the basis of the heavenly Jerusalem at the "fullness of time" in contrast to the "elemental spirits" also mentioned in Galatians 4.3. As verse 4 continues this theme, the Holy Spirit animates the new stoicheia by their transformation through Christ's birth by Mary; here is a renewal of the stoicheia by being infused with the divine presence.

Romans 4.12 continues the theme by mentioning the verbal form of stoicheia (stoichein): "but also *follow* the example of the faith which our father Abraham had before he was circumcised." Or Galatians 5.25: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also *walk* by the Spirit" and Philippians 3.16: "Only let us hold true to what we have *attained.*"

* * *

An outline of Matthew 13.1-9, parable of the sower with four results from his sowing:

- 1) seed devoured by birds
- 2) seed on rocky ground
- 3) seed in thorns
- 4) seed on good soil

This fourth seed is refined even further in verse 23 by its yield: thirty, sixty and one-hundred fold. Despite the liberality of sowing, only one out of four seeds yields fruit, and of this only one out of three yields one-hundred fold. Christ's later quotation of Isaiah 6.9-10 makes sense, especially verses 14-15, when considering the usual insensibility of people. He contrasts them, or the first three seeds, with the "prophets and righteous" of the fourth seed who had "*longed* to see what you see and did not see it" (verse 17). They are spoken of in 1Peter 1.10: "things into which angels *long* to look," or the same angels of Luke 2.14, "glory to God in the highest."

* * *

Revelation 20.11: "Then I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it; from his presence earth and sky fled away, and no *place* was found for them." It is interesting to consider this verse in terms of a *singularity* discovered by modern physics and which may be defined as an infinite amount of matter compressed into an infinitely small space. On the other hand, chapter 21 begins with "I saw a *new* heaven and a *new* earth" or that which occurs on the "other side" of this singularity.

* * *

The psalmist says "Bless the Lord in all the places (maqom) of his dominion" (Psalm 103.22), that is, in all those sacred or special places where he rules. To rule implies having a sense of someone being in charge of any and all situations which humanly speaking, is impossible. Although faith tells us that God permeates creation, nevertheless, for the most part we cannot perceive him in all circumstances. It seems as though the psalmist is narrowing down those "places" of God's "dominion" which are more obvious to us with the eyes of faith (awareness) to accommodate our fragility. He, like St. Peter urging his flock, *waits* in faith for Christ's manifestation (cf. 2Peter 3.12, 13, 14). Such waiting (prosdokao) can incorporate varying degrees of faith or awareness into the present moment, the sacred maqom of Psalm 103.22. At the parousia or full revelation of God, all the various maqom will flee in the sense of Revelation 20.11 above. Hence, the forward-looking direction of "waiting" (prosdokao) which is aimed *towards* Christ.

Matthew 24.50 uses this verb with regard to Christ's sudden appearance; here we see that the spacial imagery evoked by the word maqom fosters waiting. Psalm 24.3 asks, "Who shall stand in his holy place?", that is, in this localized singularity after stating in verse 1 that the earth is God's and its fullness.

The other aspect to be considered is time (in Hebrew heth) which is equivalent to kairos, for space and time compose a single continuum. Psalm 34.1 says, "I will bless the Lord at *all times* (bekal-heth), his praise shall continually (tamyd, continuous action) be in my mouth." This verse is a foretaste of that dissolution mentioned in Revelation 20.11 on the level of time which in its present unfulfilled state can substitute for maqom. It is a matter of focus, for heth is more convenient when pre-occupied or dealing with persons whereas maqom is more suited for solitude or silent reflection.

* * *

Psalm 66.6: "He turned the sea into dry (land); they went through the flood; there did we rejoice in him (sham nismechah bu)." This, of course, refers to the Exodus event. Note the specific locality signified by sham, "there, in that place." "There" represents the very middle of difficulties as signified by the sea. Compare this with Jonah's experience in the whale, Jonah 2.9, *where* he gives thanks to God: "But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Deliverance belongs to the Lord!"

* * *

During Advent we may compare the Holy Spirit's overshadowing of Mary (Luke 1.35, two references) with the same Spirit's descent at Pentecost (Acts 2.1-4 which has three "fillings"):

- "The Holy Spirit *will come upon you*, and the power of the Most High *will overshadow you*."

- "When the days of Pentecost *fulfilled*; and it *filled* all the house; they were all *filled* with the Holy Spirit."

The Incarnation occurred once and for all, whereas Pentecost is an ongoing reality. The former event has the Holy Spirit "on top" of Mary: "will come *upon you*," epeleusetai and epe se and

"will overshadow you," *episkiasei soi* while Christ was about to take human form within her. The latter event has the Holy Spirit *fill* the insides, as it were, of the Apostles while Christ was "outside" them by reason of his ascension *up* into heaven.

* * *

Christ -> Incarnation -> Human Nature <-Resurrection <-Human Race

Gregory of Nyssa develops this brief outline contained in 1Corinthians 15.20 which deals with the resurrection and our relationship to Jesus Christ in this condition, that is, Christ as "first fruits," (*aparche*). In short, Gregory claims that Christ assumed human nature *as a whole*, not as an individual person. At the resurrection we will lose our individuality and assume divinized human nature, the same one which Christ has assumed. Hence the significance of the above outline.

There is a parallel here-- inverse, if you will--between the Incarnation into human nature and our resurrection into (of) this same human nature. Both are realized through what Gregory calls "subjection" (*hupotage*, from 1Corinthians 15.27) or the establishment of divine authority in all created. Two passages from Gregory of Nyssa will help illustrate:

"Because the nature of creation subsists from its very beginning by the divine power, the end of each created being is simultaneously linked with its beginning: each thing as created from nothing passes into existence, with its perfection following as simultaneous with its beginning. Human nature is also created but does not, like other created beings, advance towards its perfection; right from the very beginning it is created in perfection. 'Let us make man according to our image and likeness' (Genesis 1.26). Here is shown the very summit and perfection of goodness...Thus in the first creation of man its end is simultaneous with its beginning, and human nature originated in perfection." **Commentary on the Song of Songs**, Fifteenth Homily.

"Subjection to God is complete alienation from evil. When we are removed from evil in imitation of the first fruits (Christ), our entire nature is mixed with this selfsame fruit. One body has been formed with the good as predominant; our body's entire nature is united to the divine, pure nature. This is what we mean by the Son's subjection: when, in his body, Christ rightly has the subjection brought to him, and he effects in us the grace of subjection." **Treatise on First Corinthians 15.20**, PG#44.1316A-B.

These two excerpts reveal that our human nature is a synthesis, so to speak, of individual persons and the divine nature of Jesus Christ. Paul refers to it as a "new creation," Galatians 6.15, according to which we *stoicheo* or "walk," which is better rendered as *to proceed in a row*. Note that the word *stoicheion* is any first thing from which the others belonging to the same series or composite whole take their rise; the material causes of the universe.

* * *

Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, July 22: Mary was devoted to Jesus Christ as the resurrection scene depicts (John 20.11-18). Perhaps after the Virgin Mary, no other New Testament character was closer to Christ. St. John, whom the Christian Orthodox tradition regards an example of the contemplative dimension of life, interestingly includes her in his Gospel. Because Mary Magdalene clung so closely to Christ, we may say that she has transferred this attachment to the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. She was in a good position to shift her devotion from one divine Person to another, namely, the Spirit who would soon animate the Church. Christ said "do not touch me" (verse 17) because he had not yet ascended to the Father; by these words we may infer that he was attempting

to shift Mary's allegiance to the Holy Spirit. He repeats this ascent in verse 17, for such an ascent implies the future descent of Pentecost.

* * *

We often hear of Jesus Christ as the *Word* (Logos) of God who reveals himself through the scriptures which is of course true. It should be remembered that this concept of "word" was developed in a culture which was primarily *oral*, that is, whose traditions were handed down from word to mouth, generation after generation, with more weight put on this process than upon the written word. Despite the fact that the Gospels were written down soon after the death and resurrection of Jesus and that the Hellenistic culture of the time was quite literate, the great majority of people could not read and relied upon *recitation* of songs, stories and rites to maintain their identity and traditions.

In his book, **Orality and Literacy** (London, 1982), Walter J. Ong develops this distinction between oral and literate cultures. After reading this book, one gets the insight that when we think of Christ as "Word," this image arises in a primarily literate way. That is, coming from a highly literate society such as ours with so much emphasis upon written texts, we tend to perceive the notion of "word" as essentially written as opposed to an utterance. Any uttered is directly traceable back to the person who vocalized it as opposed to a text. Ong makes the following remarks on p.72:

"When I hear, however, I gather sound simultaneously from every direction at once; I am at the center of my auditory world, which envelopes me, establishing me at a kind of core of sensation and existence...You can immerse yourself in hearing, in sound. There is no way to immerse yourself similarly in sight (in other words, the text).

"Interiority and harmony are characteristics of human consciousness. The consciousness of each human person is totally interiorized, known to the person from the inside and inaccessible to any other person directly from the inside. Everyone who says 'I' means something different by it from what every other person means...Knowledge is ultimately not a fractioning but a unifying phenomenon, a striving for harmony. Without harmony, an interior condition, the psyche is in bad health."

* * *

The system of *reward and punishment* is based upon what may be called the notion of *begetting*. Reward for a job well done (recognition, applause, promotion or whatever) takes the form of begetting, that is, of empowering a person to freely "propagate" him or herself. This may assume the form of ideas, policies or raising a family. In other words, it we are dealing with various forms of human endeavor whether it be biological, social, intellectual or spiritual. And so begetting is related to *power*. If a person fails in any one of these areas of begetting, he or she is punished, that is, withheld from propagating his or her ideas, and any material efforts are stifled. Power or control plays a subtle role here for it creates dependency: it can withdraw the capacity to beget any time by implying every so often the notion of guilt.

Begetting by its very nature belongs to this *earth*. Being concerned with propagation or self-renewal (that is, a making anew of the self or ego), it shifts from one pole to another, linear-like, without the gracefulness of a curve, arc or spiral. It therefore is *reflective*, literally, turning-back-on-itself in this linear fashion instead of assuming the upward spiral motion of what may be termed *non-begetting*.

The task of freeing oneself...and it is only a task by way of illusion...lies in standing apart

from such earthly begetting or any of its manifestations as already suggested. One realizes that there is another mode of existence ("from above," as Christ says) independent of begetting. It often manifests itself by *humor* or perceiving the inherent seriousness in begetting's reward-punishment scheme. Such a scheme cannot lay hold of this new mode of existence, for its rules do not apply here. The state of begetting poses no threat to that of non-begetting, but the situation can be reversed: begetting is threatened by the mode of non-begetting.

* * *

Psalm 84 contains three references of "blessed" or "happy," 'ashrey:

- verse 5: *Blessed* are they who dwell in your house.
- verse 6: *Blessed* is the man whose strength is in you.
- verse 12: *Blessed* is the man who trusts in you.

'Ashrey means to be straight, right, happy; it is also a relative pronoun showing a connection or passage from one object to another. Hence this verbal root is one of action, of being constantly in motion or perhaps more accurately, in a state of transition. Psalm eighty-four therefore contains a blend of motion and stability.

Verse 5 speaks of the motion of 'ashrey related to the stability of "dwelling in your house" whose result is praise; verse 6 relates 'ashrey to a person's strength which lies in God. Located within his "heart" are the "roads to Zion" which are related to 'ashrey. It is as though these ascents or upward movements belonged to the very nature of 'ashrey. Hence 'ashrey assumes an upward journey (the verbal root of "roads," mesloth is salal, "to lift up, raise"). Then verse 7 says that such a person passes through a valley, but verse 6 implies ascent while verse 7 implies a descent in conjunction with a valley. Note that verse 6 concludes with selah, "pause." Just before this is the phrase "they will continuously praise you," that is continuation of praise comes to an abrupt halt.

With regard to this notion of selah or pause, in his **Commentary on the Inscriptions of the Psalms** (J.109), Gregory of Nyssa offers the following remarks on the Greek translation of this word, diapsalma:

"Diapsalma is a sudden pause in the midst of psalmody for introducing an inspiration as a hidden teaching of the Spirit given to the soul, the frequent interruptions in the psalms' chanting makes us attentive to his instruction. To prevent many persons from understanding the meaning of the silence (of the term diapsalma) as a failure of the Holy Spirit to prophesy, certain interpreters insert the term 'always' for these pauses in place of diapsalma, that we may learn of the Holy Spirit's teaching which is always present in the soul."

* * *

Philippians 3.14: "I press on (dioko) toward (kata) the goal for (eis) the prize of the upward (ano) call of God in Christ Jesus." The preposition kata implies pressing *down* upon a goal; eis is a movement *inwards*; ano is an *upward* movement:

dioko

kata -> eis <- ano

The word Paul uses in conjunction with "downward" motion is dioko which also means "to persecute." Paul persecuted the first Christians as he omits in 1Corinthians 15.9. That is to say, he uses the same intense energy only now applied to following Jesus Christ, Philippians 3.14. Dioko is

used in verse 12 with another forceful verb, katalambano, which Paul employs in an active sense. Then he uses it passively with reference to Christ: "Christ Jesus *has made* me his *own*." The active katalambano is akin to kata skopon ("towards the goal"), whereas the passive katalambano refers to eis to brabeion and ano kleseos. There is a point where both active and passive modes unite in the diagram above. It seems that the downward kata automatically gives rise to be assumed...taken over...by the active motion of eis where katelempththen comes to dominate.

* * *

1Corinthians 15.22: "For *as* (hosper) in Adam all die, *so* (houtos) also in Christ shall all be made alive." We have here two parallel movements, the death of persons "in" Adam and the quickening of persons "in" Christ. In order to better understand the resurrection, it is important to see its opposite, death, from which it had emerged. Note the two words hosper and houtos. In other words, one is built or modeled upon the other. Due to this similarity, we must study closely the "dying" in Adam with which we are so familiar, that is, his sin and thus see in its pattern or movement (as opposed to its essence) an outline for the future bringing to life, zoopoieo. Verse 23 provides a hint: "But each in his own order: Christ the *first fruits*, then at his coming those who belong to Christ." The "order" or tagma signifies a sequence of events. First comes Adam (present tense of apothnesko, "to die"), second is Christ (future of zoopoieo, "to make alive") and third is the human race (future of zoopoieo). Note that Adam preceded Christ historically but his action belongs to the present tense. Then notice how the past tense of Christ is the future as "first fruits," aparche. Our normal conception of time may be outlined as follows:

Adam -> us -> Christ
 past -> present -> future

However, Paul changes this pattern to:

Christ -> Adam -> us
 past -> present -> future

The first line represents Christ's coming which has been altered in order to show that he has liberated us from the tyranny of time's linear movement. In other words, our capacity for hope (first section of outline) is altered to an event in the past to give us in germ the fullness of this hope. And yet the notion of aparche or "first fruits" implies beginning, but a beginning with the end already in sight. It ends from beginning through present (Adam) into the future. That is, Christ as "first fruits" dissolves our concept of past and future and transforms them into the present. Such is the development of the pattern originally laid out by "as" and "so." We are required to "get into" this "as-so" pattern or to align the two movements. This is done by pretending to be the first one. You might say the aparche nullifies past and future as follows:

Normal Time (chronos)

past -> present -> future

Time related to "first fruits" (aparche)

present -> past -> present

That is to say, aparche has its roots in the past as a beginning. It then extends into the present and makes it as a thing already of the past by reason of its hope for the future. In this way we obtain a *revelation* or apokalupsis of which St. John writes into the future as existing in the

present moment. That is an *uncovering* of what is already present.

We find a parallel to the 1Corinthians text in Romans 5.18: "Then *as* one man's trespass led to condemnation for all me, *so* one acquittal and life for all men." Paul also has several other "as-so" examples:

-verse 15: "For if many died through one man's trespass, *much more* have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many."

-verse 19: "For *as* by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, *so* by one man's obedience many will be made righteous."

-verse 21: "*as* sin reigned in death, grace *also* might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

A bit later Paul transforms this dialectic between Adam and Christ to between Christ and us (6.4): "*so that* as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father we *too* might walk in newness of life." This "walking" implies total freedom from strictures of the dialectical process between Adam and Christ. Our "walking" resembles God's in Eden: "the voice of the Lord *walking* (the Septuagint has the same verb as Romans 6.5, peripateo) in the garden" (Genesis 3.8).

It is the "break" which Christ effects between Adam and ourselves by the "as" of 6.4 which enables us to be free of the memory...guilt...of Adam's transgression.to take its place, we have the aparche or "first fruits" of Christ.

* * *

Notice the four instances in Mark 13.35 with regard to the *times* when Christ will come: evening, midnight, cockcrow morning. Each one pertains to night, neither to the day, nor to the four watches of the night. Christ says that we are ignorant of the *time* (kairos, verse 33) of his arrival, but the four watches suggest it will take place some time during the night hours. Each period is a time of quiet and inactivity when people are at rest and have finished with the day's activity. When we emerge from these four watches or after daybreak, a certain nostalgia for those kairoi lingers on (Such is the common experience of monks who rise well before dawn). Note that the parable addresses the doorkeeper alone with being "on the watch" (verse 34). His place at the entrance provides the best view of that kairos of the preceding verse; this is because he is charged with *observing*, a passive activity.

The last weeks of the Church's liturgical year contain readings from Gospels dealing with watchfulness. This in turn is related to "the last things." It is interesting to observe that the same theme is carried over to the beginning of the liturgical cycle as well. It is almost as though no difference or time gap between beginning and end existed.

The coming of Christ at various night watches may be related to Isaiah's words mentioned earlier (24-6). Here the theme is one of darkness of natural light sources, a preparation for Christ as light of the world. As verse 27 relates, Christ will gather his elect "from the four corners of the earth to the ends of heaven." The "in-haling" motion is opposed to commissioning of the Gospel to be preached, Matthew 28.19 and the Second Coming of Christ, Acts 1.11. Thus to better appreciate how this will come about, it is necessary to study how the Gospel extends outward or "ex-hales." This outward motion is represented by the master of the house departing (Mark 13.34). He follows the same route on his return as on his initial exit, only his return is the inverse side of the coin, so to speak.

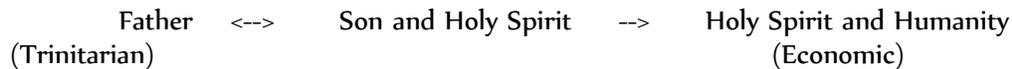
* * *

According to John 16.13-14, the Holy Spirit who consists of five elements with respect to Father, Son and ourselves:

- 1) he will *guide* you into all truth
- 2) he *speaks* of what he hears
- 3) he *proclaims* what will come
- 4) he will *glorify* me
- 5) he will *take* from me and *announce* it to you

These five actions, rather, six (number 5 has two actions) create a unity which enables us to perceive the Holy Spirit: hearing and speaking, announcing the future, glorification, guidance into truth, a taking from Christ and announcing it. This last step may be considered as the Spirit interpreting his relationship to Christ as second divine Person of the Trinity and then passing it on... announcing it...to us.

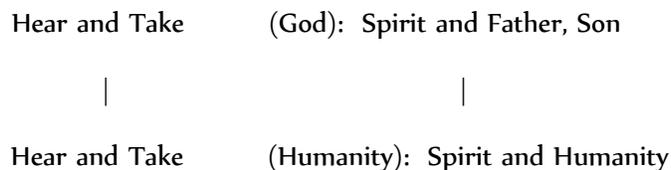
The region of activity in which the Holy Spirit operates may be divided into two pairs as follows:



- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) hears* 5) glorifies Christ 6) takes of Christ* | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) guides you 3) speaks what he hears* 4) announces the future 7) announces this to you* |
|---|---|

The two pairs represented by asterisks participate on each side of the Son and Holy Spirit, as it were, as indicated by the directional lines above (each forms a unity, thereby giving five elements). The other three elements belong to their respective sides and "are not" related to each other. The numbers show the sequence in which the elements are recounted in John 16.13-15. Note that between Father, Son and Holy Spirit the arrow goes two ways, that is, it shows the mutual interaction between all three Persons as equals. But there is a one-way arrow between the Son and Holy Spirit and the Spirit and humanity which shows the bestowal or "economy" of grace to another person who is not on the same plane as God.

The Holy Spirit communicates to us his "hearing" and his "taking of Christ" as the pairs 5 and 4, 6 and 7 demonstrate. Thus we can perceive Trinitarian activity in terms of this hearing and taking. One is passive (hearing) and the other active (taking), so we must align ourselves by a similar hearing and taking with respect to the Spirit. This concurs with the hearing and taking of the Spirit regarding Christ:



Here are two parallel realities existing side by side. The latter one (humanity) imitates by the former (God) on the two levels of hearing and taking as shown by the connecting arrows. One side of the diagram prior to the earlier one, the hearing, glorifying and taking are "female" or passive characteristics. Glorification lies in a sense in between as active in the sense of making Christ known. However, even this puts the agent, Spirit, in a passive role because his activity is directed

towards the making known of Christ, another Person.

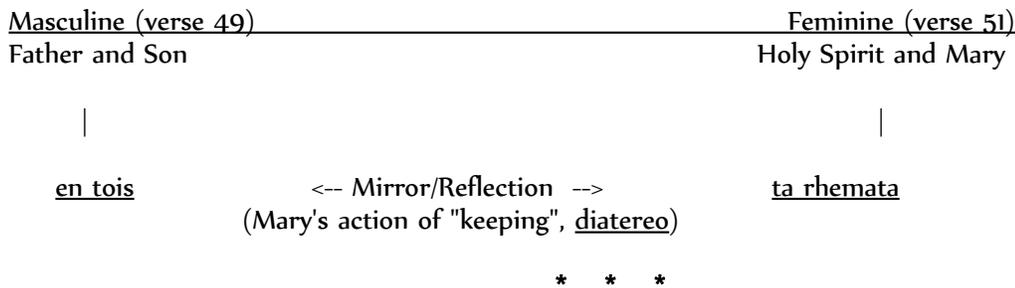
The vertical lines in the diagram just above regarding hearing/hearing and taking/taking are like two sets of mirrors which must be aligned with each other to create a perfect reflection. In this way humanity reflects the hearing/hearing and taking/taking between itself and the Holy Spirit which is, in turn, another immediate reflection of the Holy Spirit between Father and Son.

* * *

Luke 2.49: "And he said to them, 'How is it that you sought me? did you not know that I must be *in my Father's house?*'" Note that the Greek here reads en tois tou patros mou with the indefinite tois ("things") and lacks a transitive verb; emphasis is upon the relationship between Father and Son (masculine).

Compare verse 49 with verse 51: "And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother *kept* all these *things* in her heart." Here we have a transitive verb, "keep" (diatereo); emphasis is upon doing the "things" (ta rhemata). This shows the relationship between the Holy Spirit and Mary (feminine). Verse 51 has precedents regarding Mary's "kinship" with the (feminine) Holy Spirit, 1.35, where it overshadows her.

With verses 49 and 51 thus clarified, we may contrast them by the following diagram:



Hebrews 12.3: "*Consider* him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted." The Greek verb for "consider" is analogizomai which suggests paying close attention or making a comparison, and from it we derive the word "analogy." We may thus interpret this verse as saying that a *comparison* is to be made between Christ's patience and resistance by sinners.

Compare this verse with Romans 12.6: "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, *in proportion* to our faith." Again, we have the notion of comparison with respect to spiritual gifts for Christ's body, verse 5. This reference to the body further clarifies the role of anologia where various members balance out, as it were, each other in a proportionate fashion to make up the body. When Paul speaks earlier (verse 1) of our bodies as living sacrifices, he could imply that awareness of anologia regarding one's bodily members are to maintain a balance. Thus the verb metamorphomai in verse 2 ("do not be *conformed* to this world") can apply to awareness of the *form* as implied by the verb and manifested by anologia, the body's members in balance.

In the description of the body, Paul maintains this balance between it as a whole and the individual members: "For the body does not consist of one member but of many" (1Corinthians 12.14). Each member partakes of both its own self-consciousness and that of the whole. Only the body imparts self-awareness to each member, and only each member imparts self-awareness to the body. Note the identity between these two aspects, verse 27: "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."

* * *

John 3.13: "No one has gone up to heaven except him who has come down from heaven, the Son of man." Compare this reference to the ascent recounted in Romans 10.6 and 7 which quotes from Deuteronomy 9.4; 30.12-14 concerning the question of who will ascend into heaven and descend into the abyss. Note that the Deuteronomy text (verse 4) draws a horizontal line to counter or balance the vertical one: "But the word is very *near* you." From the point of view of this word, one can witness both the ascent and descent of Christ as he passes through this axis. Paul continues to speak of this nearness in verse 9: "you will be *saved*." That is, salvation consists in positioning oneself within the ascent-descent line which yields this nearness mentioned in the Deuteronomy text.

In other places I have cited the role of Matthias who was chosen to take Judas' place as the twelfth apostle. As Acts 1.22 says, Matthias must be a *witness* to the resurrection, that is, one familiar with Christ's descent (incarnation) and ascent (ascension). Note that this vertical imagery is preceded by familiarity with *horizontal* movement: "So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus *went in* and *out* among us" (verse 21). This "in" and "out" movement occurs within chronos, "secular" time, not kairos, "sacred" time, the latter which applies to that "nearness" spoken of in Romans 10.8.

* * *

John 14.26: "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your *remembrance* all that I have said to you." The Spirit will remind in the literal sense of the verb used here, hupomimnesko, *stand-under-the-memory* with regard to what Christ had taught. That is, the Holy Spirit takes the place of memory, that faculty which is responsible for giving meaning to so much of our lives. It is as though the memory is substituted for the person of Christ who is activated by the Holy Spirit.

* * *

Matthew 1.20: "But *as he considered this*, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.'" Such "considering" implies a deep laying hold of by Joseph followed by a sudden "behold" by the angel. The angel (unidentified) communicates two things: to marry Mary and to call his son Jesus. The narrative (verse 22-3) interprets this message in light of Isaiah 7.14 and 8.8. Note that the angel says "*you* will call" and Isaiah 7.14 has "*they* will call," that is, the interplay between Joseph and scripture. It is as though the collective "they" of tradition exerts itself through the individuality of Joseph who is directly responsible for the upbringing of the child Jesus.

* * *

Genesis 3.8: "And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day." Adam and Eve heard the *sound* of God, not especially his *voice*. One point to be considered with regard to our first parents is their forgetfulness of God, a direct result of the serpent's temptation. Previous to the intervention of the serpent they could always hear God's *sound*. It seems that this sound was always present in the garden, yet once Adam and Eve became aware of it after being deceived the serpent, they became fearful or self-conscious of their nakedness.

* * *

Psalms 27.4: "One thing I desired of the Lord, that I will *seek after*: that I may *dwell* in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to *behold* the beauty of the Lord, and to *inquire* in his temple." The psalmist desires *one* thing. However, this single request involved a *seeking after* which

is three-fold: dwell, behold, inquire. It precedes from a general request to that which is more specific. "Dwelling" provides an orientation opposite, for example, to standing and motion extended on the horizontal plane. Once this important initial stage has been established, we move on to an activity not involving motion, "to behold." But even before this, the tense of "seek after" is future while sh'al in the past tense. Furthermore, "dwell" lacks the letter ל ("to") prefixed to it as in lechazoth and levaqar which is more directional by nature. It is as though this directionality were transformed from place-to-place movement to a reality which lacks reference. The "dwelling" seems necessary for the dual ל, "behold" and "inquire." Actually, the "one thing" ('echath) refers to "dwelling" since the beholding and inquiring flow naturally from it. Vaqar lacks an object of regard whereas chazoth has the Lord's "beauty." The verb vaqar means "to cleave open, inquire;" boqer means "morning, dawn."

Regarding the two words with the preposition ל to it: first comes "seeing" and then "inquiring." At first you would think the situation to be opposite, inquire and then see. Rather, seeing (the active verb) leads to a deeper inquiring (the active verb). Levaqar also does not have an object of its regard, whereas lechazoth does have one "beauty."

* * *

"The most stupendous scenery ceases to be sublime when it becomes distinct, or in other words limited, and the imagination is no longer encouraged to exaggerate it." Henry David Thoreau, **A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers** (New York; no date given for the edition quoted), chapter entitled "Tuesday," p.172. Such an observation can be applied to the practice of lectio divina which necessitates the use of our imaginations. When this faculty becomes dried up, the Holy Spirit's inspiration cannot speak to us. Thus essential to lectio is the proper cultivation of our imaginative faculty which can be more difficult than we initially think because the all-pervasive nature of modern communication deadens us to being sensitive with regard to spiritual realities.

* * *

An outline of Ephesians 1.17-23:

God the Father might give you (two parts of Spirit):

Spirit of wisdom

Spirit of revelation

in knowledge of Christ: function of Spirit

Having enlightened your eyes to know (Father's function with Spirit). The following are three parts of knowledge worked by the Father and Spirit on our behalf:

the hope of your called

the wealth of the glory of your inheritance

the greatness of his strength

The following outlines the four parts which the Father worked in Christ:

he raised him

seated him at his right hand

put all things under his feet

gave him as head over all the church, his body

* * *

The following is an extended excerpt from **De Natura Amoris** by William of St. Thierry, taken from **Patrologia Latina**, J.P. Migne, #84.399. I have cited it at some length because the spiritual sense of taste plays an important role in Cistercian spirituality:

"1) There is a *sense of taste* created in and for us in Christ by the Spirit who teaches us how to read; in the given case, how to read the Holy Scriptures, by enabling us to delve deeper than the written page, down to those depths where the secrets of God reside.

"(Note: It was this same Spirit of Love which presided at the composition of the Scriptures and at their interpretation. He now creates for us and in us (*facit nobis*) a sense adapted both to this intimate perusal of the Holy Books as well as to the contact with the God of one's desiring. All of that, besides, is brought about in Christo.

"It is the creation of this taste which, in the account of the apparition of the Lord to the disciples after his resurrection, introduces the remark of the Evangelist: At that moment he opened for (in) them the meaning of the penetrating reading of the Scriptures.

"2) When the deep meaning of the Scriptures and the power of the divine mysteries and secrets begin not only to come clear to us between the lines, so to speak, but even more when we begin 'to palpitate' them, to manipulate them with a hand that has, as it were, become shaped to do this by a kind of experience.

"3) (which can only be done with the help of a certain *sense organ* grafted upon the very heart of one's faculty of knowing, and by a certain training deriving from experience in reading between the lines and even, to push this further, which by the same all-powerful goodness the work of grace operates with efficacious energy in the sons of grace).

"4) Then and only then wisdom completes the work which is its own proper one; then, by placing upon them the seal of the goodness of God, this wisdom puts its mark upon and makes firm all our quieted faculties rendered malleable by this unction; all hardness, all stiffness that it has found in them it repels and dispels until, in the gladness newly found in the salvation of God, in the strength received from the sovereign spirit of wisdom, the holy soul joyful directs this cry to God: 'the light of your countenance, Lord, is imprinted upon me; you have made your joyful gladness come to birth in our hearts.

"5) And the Lord replies: 'Eternal life is that they should know you by experience, you, the only true God, you and the one whom you have sent, Christ Jesus. O blessed science, which contains eternal life! This life derives from the sense of taste, for tasting means to perceive and to understand in depth.'

Charles Dumontier (**St. Bernard et la Bible**, Paris, 1953) comments on this passage as follows:

"1) There exists in the intimate recesses of the soul, a *sense of taste* directed to the penetration and to the interpretation of the Scriptures.

"2) This penetrating interpretation of the Scriptures is accompanied by a *felt experience* of their profound content which could if we wish be assimilated to the sense of touch.

"3) Such an experience evidently supposes a *sense organ which is appropriate*, adapted that is to immediate contact on the one hand with the center of the soul where, besides, this 'organ' is to be as it were grafted, and on the other hand with

the goodness of God and his operations in the soul.

"4) This felt experience sets in action an intervention of *wisdom* to consolidate by its own proper means the results already achieved and to crown these with gladness.

"5) This crowing experience, this gladness, contains within itself a foretaste of eternal life. It is indeed the *sense of taste* which, by inviting one to an ever deeper interpretation of the Bible, engenders this life."

* * *

Some Notes on Ephesians 1.20: "(His power) which he accomplished in Christ when he raised him from the dead and made him sit at his right hand in the heavenly places."

This verse implies reference to Psalm 110.1, "Sit at my right hand." Such "sitting" implies a making firm, an establishing which refers to Christ and is a knowledge (*epignosis*, 1.18) implying a very intense beholding or awareness that one is being beheld. This "sitting" is "above every name that is named" (verse 21). Therefore when we engage in "sitting," we are able to perceive the Father.

Relate Ephesians 1.20 to Colossians 1.15-17 where Paul calls Christ the "first born of all creation," Hebrews 1.3, "splendor of his glory" who is "in the bosom of the Father" (John 1.18). "Bosom" or *kolpos* equals breast or womb, a hollow place as in *koilados* of Song 2.1.

The "stamp" or *charakter* of Hebrews 1.3 implies an exact image, and *hupostasis*, "substance," literally means a standing under, substance, foundation. Realization of this "stamp" is available to everyone due to Christ being "the light who enlightens every man" (John 1.9). Here "light" equals the "radiance" (*apaugasma*) of Hebrews 1.3, sometimes translated "reflects."

A more developed awareness can be shown in light of Wisdom 7.25: "For she (wisdom) is a breath of the power of God, and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty." This "glory" may be compared with the *apaugasma* of Hebrews 1.3. All Wisdom's attributes (7.22-7) are related to transcendence, that *hupoballo* of Ephesians 1.19. Returning to this passage, note that is the "hope of his calling" (verse 18). An intuition of God's inner life is hinted, Trinitarian life. The Father "calls" the Son eternally which results in a pouring out of the Son to which the adjectives Wisdom 7.22-7 apply.

It is interesting to further trace back *apaugasma* of Hebrews 1.3 and tie it in with the Hebrew word *kavod*, "glory" which means "to be heavy." Now Song 1.3 says "Your name is as ointment poured out." Myrrh is poured out due to its heaviness. A drop starts from an amorphous ground, becomes heavy and assumes form by weight due to gravitational pull.

A use of *kavod* as "glory" is in Isaiah 6.3: "the entire earth is full of his glory." A comparison of glory with a raindrop may be applied here where *kavod* fills the earth as rain because it is heavy and must fall.

* * *

An outline of 1Peter 1.10-12:

-The prophets who *prophesied* of the grace that was to be yours *searched* and *inquired* about this salvation.

-They *inquired* what person or time was indicated by the Spirit of Christ within them when *predicting* the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glory.

-It was *revealed* to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things which

have now been announced to you by those who preached the good news to you through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels *long to look*.

Pervading these verses is a definite sense of mystery, an intense longing, with which we can all identify. We can make a parallel between their “searching” and “inquiring” and our practice of lectio divina. Note the passive form of the verb, “it was revealed to them;” in other words, the revelation these prophets had received was dependent upon a certain vague yet real sense that they were “serving” generations unborn, that is, those who have the full revelation of Jesus Christ. Even the angels were unsuspecting of this revelation for they too “longed to look.”

Thus the section from 1Peter may be distilled into the following verbs of action:

- to prophesy
- to search
- to inquire
- to reveal
- to long for

* * *

The book of Jonah begins, like many prophetic books, with “hear the word of the Lord.” However, when God addresses Jonah directly, there’s no mention of the familiar “thus says the Lord.” Perhaps lack of those words gave him an excuse to flee. Jon 1.2 is more explicit about this, “But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.” The verb “arose” shows immediacy and determination to escape as faraway as possible, Tarshish being modern Spain, the other end of the Mediterranean Sea from Israel. Again Jonah’s attitude is revealed when the ship he was on ran into a storm: “But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep” (1.5). Withdrawing deep within the ship is another sign of Jonah’s flight...his having gone to sleep during a crisis brings it out even more. Being there is as far away from the Lord as possible, but God would take it a step further, by casting him into the belly of a large fish.

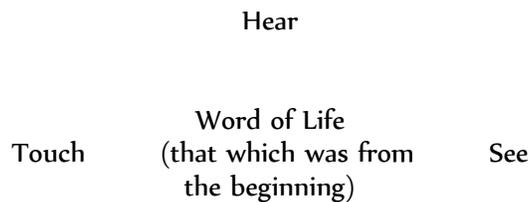
Some remarks concerning the spiritual sense of taste

The passage from William of St. Thierry’s **De Natura Amoris** quoted earlier in this Home Page and Dumontier’s remarks upon it demonstrate that the early Cistercians were particularly attached to the Incarnation of God. Therefore it comes of no surprise that the sense of taste also became a principle vehicle for expressing their insights into divine reality. St. Bernard especially leans heavily upon sensual images in describing his relationship to Christ and the Church which becomes evident even by a cursory reading of his works.

Many medical doctors will say that the human faculty of taste is our most highly developed sense organ. There is an indefinite number of flavors which the tongue alone is able to distinguish, let alone the almost infinite number of combinations which can be devised. It is this wide range of subtle distinctions that is so intriguing when applied to the presence of God and his Word in Scripture.

Taste is also the most intimate sense organ we possess, being located inside the body. It is closely akin to our sense of touch but is far more subtle as already noted. In his first epistle St. John the Evangelist begins with “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life.” This statement is eloquent testimony to an intimate contact with Jesus Christ; John is describing Jesus as though he were feeling a piece of fruit in the market. In fact, the verb pselaphao means “to touch, handle, caress.” Although we cannot do this to the historical person of Jesus Christ, it serves as a good starting point to speak of an interior *taste* of the Word of God.

For clarity, St. John's statement may be outlined as follows:



Look

This new "garden of paradise," so to speak, is bounded on four sides by perceptions arising from the human sense organs. They all interact as a unit to create a place allowing for us to "taste" God.

Closely allied to this text of St. John is Psalm 34.8: "*Taste and see* that the Lord is good." Notice the sequence: we are first requested to taste with the subsequent result of seeing. Taste in Hebrew also means "to perceive;" the psalmist does not mean just intellectual comprehension but a *sense contact* transcending the intellect. John is quick to point out that this sense contact does not take place in isolation, for he says in verse 3, "that which we have seen and heard we proclaim to you, so that you may have *fellowship* (*koinonia*) with us." This seems to be his way of stating that what he is announcing is so good that it must be shared as we see in Matthew 28.8 where Mary Magdalene and the other Mary run to tell the disciples about the resurrection.

Some of the early Cistercian writers saw a parallel between Psalm 34.8 and Genesis 3.6 where Eve gave her husband the forbidden fruit to eat. Verse 7 reads, "the eyes of both were opened and they knew that they were naked." This was the cause of "original sin" or the introduction of evil into paradise. Psalm 34.8 counteracts man's original sin in first mentioning "taste" and then "see." Only by turning around and correcting the error *from* seeing and tasting *to* tasting and seeing are we able to regain our lost primeval companionship with God.

The enjoyment of eternal life as related to taste may be found in Matthew 16.28: "There are some standing here who *will not taste* death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." Christ seems to be inferring that the faculty of taste is bound up with immortality. Once again we have taste as pertaining to death, rather, the avoidance of death.

In Hebrews 6.5 we have another explicit mention of tasting God's word: "We have tasted (*geuomai*) the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come." One can readily see the similarity between this verse and Psalm 34.8. Usually connected with the reality of tasting is a sense of discrimination which allows for perceiving the richness of God. In this case, discrimination is a means for transcending the different stages or "flavors" of God than to analytically categorize them.

In the New Testament "to understand" means a conformity of wills (*suniami*, "to send with"). After the resurrection Christ meets his disciples in Jerusalem and converses with them, and while engaged in conversation he "opens their minds to understand (*suniami*) the scriptures." We might say that the process of *lectio divina* is a walking...a conformity...with the Word of God as understood here. An interesting note is that the Greek text literally reads, "the mind (singular) of them (plural) for "their minds."

Once we have established the relationship between tasting and seeing, we can better intuit why Christ refers to himself as the "living bread which came down from heaven" (John 6.51). Here Christ is identified with bread or food which nourishes the taste-see apprehension of reality. In the verse (49) immediately preceding, he states that "your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they died." In other words, they *saw*—like Eve saw the fruit—the manna *before* tasting it. They became subject to the same original sin of not using

their faculty of tasting...intuiting...God with their full bodies and souls.

William of St. Thierry puts this living bread, Jesus Christ, in good perspective with regard to the Old Testament:

“Its (Old Testament) eyes are the angels with their piercing contemplation; its ears are the patriarchs with their obedience. Its nostrils are the prophets who knew things far off. Touch is the sense common to all these. Now before the Mediator came, all these senses were in the head. The rest of the body languished because one sense was missing, namely taste. Without this sense the body could not live, nor the other sense have their full power. For of what use is food to the body if taste is lacking? When you taste food, the tasting is followed by a sweet savor which the soul feels within itself. The other senses cannot feel it; only taste distinguishes it and make a judgment on it. Then all the senses can, as it were, grow fat on it.” **On the Nature and Dignity of Love** (London, 1956), chapter nine.

As this text clearly demonstrates, taste for William is *the* prime “organ” for apprehending God. Because taste distinguishes flavors, it is not totally unrelated to discernment...discernment of spirits. Thus lectio divina which seeks to “feel” the Spirit pulsating between the lines, can be a powerful aid in discerning particular situations.

In Song 2.9 we have a better description of how this pulsating or palpitating of the Holy Spirit takes place: “Behold, there he (the bridegroom) stands behind our wall, gazing in at the windows, looking through the lattice.” More properly the Hebrew and Septuagint have “looking...peeping through the *nets*.” As the Septuagint has it, “looking” implies a kind of stooping or turning one’s head in an affectionate manner. The nets may symbolize the words of scripture which tend to separate or spread apart the more one becomes aligned to this divine “peeping.” Luke 24.45 mentioned earlier may be likened to God’s peeping when Christ opened the disciples’ minds to understand the scriptures.

Once this separation of the “nets” occurs, only can Song 2.3 be correctly applied: “With great delight I sat in his shadow (the bridegroom’s), and his fruit was sweet to my taste.” The bride perceives sweetness by sitting in the bridegroom’s shadow. St. Bernard quotes 2Corinthians 3.18 when speaking of the conformity of wills between bride and bridegroom or in this context, the reader of scripture and That (Him) which is read: “And we, with unveiled face, are beholding (reflecting) the glory of the Lord, are being changed (here this ‘changing’ may be taken as the passing from ‘taste’ to ‘see’) into his likeness from one degree of glory to another.”

Another passage from William of St. Thierry may be helpful to sum up these remarks on spiritual tasting:

“This is the sense of taste which the Spirit of understanding has made for us in Christ; that is, the understanding of God’s scriptures and mysteries which Christ opened unto his apostles after his resurrection. When we begin not only to understand but in some way to touch with our hands and to feel the inner sense of the scripture and the power of God’s mysteries and sacraments, then Wisdom begins to offer her riches. This touching and feeling is produced by the inner sense when these are well practiced in the art of reading the soul’s secrets and the hidden action of God’s grace. To those whom she judges worthy, Wisdom teaches all things by means of her anointing.” **On the Nature and Dignity of Love**, chapter nine.

* * *

Some remarks concerning the biblical background to the dedication of a church

In order to gain a fuller appreciation of the dedication and consecration of a church, it is helpful to examine briefly this notion contained within the Bible. A very rich awareness of God’s holiness pervades both

the Old and New Testaments, and for our purposes it is good to center upon the text of Genesis 28.10-22, Jacob's dream at Bethel. Here we have the famous story of Jacob's vision of angels descending and ascending a ladder situated between heaven and earth, signifying the union of the divine sphere with the human condition.

Our explanation will deal more specifically with this point of contact, or the enlivening of our human awareness in light of God's transcendent being. In verse twelve we first encounter a ladder "set upon the earth." The very notion contained in a ladder suggests a bridging of opposites; we could almost say this bridging takes a full lifetime between two opposite realities. Ladder (sulam in Hebrew) fundamentally means "something which is lifted up, elevated. This is closely related to an important biblical notion, righteousness (sedeq), which is unfortunately misunderstood and not appreciated.

First of all, a certain amount of "cleansing" or removal of cultural accretions is required to grasp the mystery in all its pristine fullness. We normally tend to think of righteousness as a purely moral concept devoid of any feeling. In other words, it connotes the idea of rigor, hardness and even fear. Certainly God did not intend a distasteful and unappealing presence to be imparted to his creatures.

The Hebrew notion tied in with righteousness is "straightness, taking aim and direction." Synonymous with righteousness, then, is creativity. Naturally our minds are able to turn towards God the Father, source of all creativity, who looks within himself...sees...beholds himself. Upon this realization, the Second Person of the Trinity comes to birth or better still, is always coming to birth as he eternally proceeds from his Father.

Righteousness cannot be separated from the Trinity or the procession of Persons as it was seminally revealed in the minds of the inspired authors of scripture. Its fundamental meaning is that God the Father constantly gazes and begets begetting his Son. Of course, such a gaze must take form or direction according to a pattern, to use human terminology. This may be likened to a person shooting an arrow. The person first shoots with a bow, becomes the arrow itself, and immediately rushes in front to receive the arrow, completing the process or the process-ion.

Thus when Psalm 7.8 says "Judge me O lord, because I am just," it may be interpreted as God aiming his divine life of sonship into a person in righteousness. The only way a person may acknowledge this stream of life, of righteousness, is to say that he or she has become just or has become the target of God. If anyone fails to become an object of righteousness, this person is said to have sinned in the original sense of "missing the mark" or katarah. The ladder is therefore not established.

Notice carefully that the person *is* just; he or she has no need of striving after an object in order to obtain it. His or her justice is at the level of being, or that which is inmost and proper to him or herself as made in God's image and likeness. This person is "perfected" (literally, "made through") as Christ desires his disciples in saying "Be perfect" or look within yourself and see the divine activity at work, forming and shaping your being; no attaining is demanded, merely a gentle recognition of what is already present.

We may liken this shift of awareness to a ray of sunlight effortlessly moving from one object to another in an almost imperceptible manner. This shift is not noticed if we concentrate or urge the light on, but if we turn our minds away from this desire to hasten the light, we soon notice that it moves without our interference. Indeed perfection is well worth investigation in itself, and it relates nicely with the concept of being cured, healed and even relaxation...realities hardly associated with our traditional ideas of perfection.

Such a divine reality is contained by the term "ladder" as the text of Genesis shows. The ladder's top is where God the Father is situated looking upon the earth and pouring himself out to Jacob below. Angels are seen "ascending and descending" the ladder, signifying movement of divine life. We might even say that these angels represent different levels of awareness stemming from Jacob at the ladder's bottom all the way up to God himself. They help Jacob ascend according to God's plan in righteousness.

God makes it explicitly clear that he is initiator of this revelation, for he says in verse 13, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac." In light of New Testament revelation, Jesus

Christ quotes a similar Old Testament passage in reference to the resurrection: "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is not the God of the dead but of the living; for all live to him" (Luke 10.37). That is to say, I am the one who enlivens, redeems and glorifies humanity according to the will of my eternal Father.

Notice that the Genesis narrative explicitly mentions in verse 13 "land": "the land on which you lie will I give to you." This land or ha'erets does not imply a specific locality. We have before us just a vague and unfixed area in the space-time continuum without any importance attached. A person needs some kind of definite spot in order to contact the divine presence and sanctify his or her abode. Otherwise, it will appear hostile and profane...profanus..."outside the temple."

A person sets limits to his or her place of worship much as a child defines certain boundaries and invents rules to play a game. The reality of this setting limits worship which is not unlike playing, for both require a designated place and guidelines for it to work. However, both realities stem from the same basic, almost primitive awareness of a person to define the world and to enjoy living in it. The ancient Hebrews engaged in this, for they make a difference between their ordinary world, ha'erets, and their "playground," as it were. Here activities outside and above the seriousness of daily life could be accomplished without interference from them. In this sphere the worshipper and child are at home, for they both represent transcendent values beyond their normal consciousness in a common earnest attitude.

It is worth mentioning that maqom or "place" occurs in every book of the Old Testament except for the Song of Songs. A suggested reason for this is that the Song is concerned with the dynamics transpiring *within* the Temple (God) itself. In this book we have transcended the inherent dualisms of an ordinary place versus a sacred place, and our whole being is shifted to the source of both what we call sacred and profane. In Christ's words, we are now "*where* I am, they may also be."

Returning to our original point of departure, the Genesis episode of the ladder, we may view Jacob's words in light of exchanging his previous vague conception of reality symbolized by ha'erets to a definite locality: "Surely the Lord is in this place (maqom) and I did not know it" (verse 16). Jacob now has been made righteous...he has received direction, life and the awareness of God according to righteousness as mentioned above. The most natural reaction to such a vision is fear, a healthy apprehension seeking to cement his contact with God and not losing it among the various distractions of daily life.

Jacob exclaims in verse 17 that "this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Notice that we have two elements, house and gate. The first signifies God the Father's dwelling in heaven at the top of the ladder. It is completely inaccessible to Jacob as he struggles with the overpowering and dreadful vision of God. Nevertheless, he is sharp enough to distinguish in his vision a gate, the entrance to the ladder's summit. Being mindful of the Old Testament foreshadowing the New, we may intuit Christ as saying "I am the gate." That is, I, Christ, am the entrance and way to the Father. Inaccessibility has been overcome, and the divine life is allowed to flow freely between God and humankind.

Continuing along in verse 18, "and Jacob rose up early in the morning," delightful summons by Christ to enter his joy and awareness of the Father and to drink from the "stream of his delights." Later in another encounter with God, Jacob wrestles and prevails over God himself. He is so successful that God yells out, "Let me go, for the day is breaking!" (Genesis 32.26), interpreted as the preference God has for darkness and hiddenness. God must vanish from Jacob's overwhelming strength, else the daybreak will full reveal him. Thus returning to Genesis 18.18, Jacob's "rising up early in the morning" foreshadows his ultimate "conquest" of God or better still, his bringing to light the depths and riches within God himself, the Son, Jesus Christ. Jacob is ascending the ladder into God's house by way of "conquest;" he becomes one of those who are taking the kingdom of God by storm" until he ultimately rests in the Father's bosom.

Notice that upon rising early Jacob takes the stone on which he used as pillows. The original text is explicit here: the stone (singular) is used as pillows (plural). On his mystical ascent up the ladder, Jacob brings along a piece of earth (ha'erets), notably a stone symbolizing the transferal of creation from the profane

to the sacred realm. Actually the stone in itself has not changed but its meaning.

These stones which Jacob set up as a pillar may be considered in light of Christ's words, "God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones" (Matthew 3.9). What more precisely is this raising up, and how is it related to the Genesis narrative? Jacob proceeds to erect a pillar from the stones of the earth upon which he pours oil. We could say that he anoints the pillar, thereby sanctifying it as fit for a temple of God.

Closely connected with Jacob's anointing is Christ himself whose name means "the anointed one, the Messiah." It is Christ who becomes the ladder "raising up children to Abraham," the person at the ladder's summit with God, as it were. Now Christ is the vehicle of ascent to God and Abraham. Verse 18 specifically says, "the *top* of the ladder, the very same word used for the pillows upon which Jacob rested his head when first awakened by God. Jacob only anoints the pillar after realizing how dreadful was the spot on which he stood.

Once this has been accomplished, Jacob names the place of his awakening Bethel, "house of God." In the biblical tradition, giving a name is of the utmost importance, tantamount to having intimate knowledge of God. Whenever God knows someone by name, he has that person share in his eternal begetting of the Son, even if it were not fully realized by people of the Old Testament. Jacob then shares in this divine power of naming, of imparting life where it was not in evidence. Consider a passage which testifies to Jacob's new divinely bestowed power, Genesis 28.18, where Jacob rolls away a stone from a well, thus watering Laban's flocks. This passage also prefigures the rolling away of the stone in front of Christ's tomb, setting free, so to speak, the divine waters "springing to life eternal."

Jacob sums up his experience by "making a vow to the Lord" and ardently wishes to eat bread (verse 20). With a little play on words, we may transfer the name Bethel, "House of God," to Bethlehem, "House of Bread," the house in which God manifests himself now through the "pillar of bread" extending into heaven. The meaning of this liberty with the text is quite obvious, namely, the dedicated and consecrated place, maqom, is a site for the eucharistic celebration. The angels "ascending and descending" are now, according to ancient tradition, the means by which we center our attention upon Christ's eternal yet mysterious procession from his Father. With this biblical background into a key Old Testament narrative we have better understanding and appreciation of patristic interpretations related to the dedication of a church.

* * *

A Brief Article Entitled "The Name of Jesus (*Yeshuah*) and The Psalms"

In biblical times the name of a person expressed his or her role in the world at large and served to define a mission. A name was perceived not merely as a label of identity but as expressing the essential nature of its bearer. In Origen's words, "A name is a term which summarizes and expresses the specific quality of the thing named" (Irenaeus Hausher, **The Name of Jesus**, Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1978, p.3). This definition of a name by a noted Church Father fits in well with the Semitic concept of a name being the representation of a person. Nothing exists apart from a name, hence creation is not complete until all creatures receive a name [cf. Genesis 2.19]. A name thus has the inherent power of exercising constraint upon its bearer: a person must conform to his or her essential nature as expressed in one's name. "As his name is, so is he; Nabal [fool] is his name, and folly is with him" [1Samuel 25.25]. As this passage illustrates, to change one's name is to change one's personality. E. Cothonet remarks that in contrast to the Semitic world, our modern society has a rather superficial appreciation of a name: "Le nom devient une designation purement conventionnelle, susceptible d'etre remplacee par un code chiffre." (**Dictionnaire de Spiritualite**, Paris, 1982, vol. xi, col. 397).

In early Christian centuries, especially in Eastern monastic circles, a form of prayer was created from this Semitic background of a name which consists of the literal, vocal invocation of the name Jesus. This method of prayer has a history reaching far back into antiquity and has come to form the nucleus of Orthodox monastic life. Prayer in this tradition developed into the form of calling upon the name Jesus with roots in Acts 4.12: "There is no other name [onoma] under heaven given to men by which we are to be saved."

Full disclosure of God's nature and character is given in Jesus Christ who has manifested his name: "Holy Father, keep them in your name which you have given me, that they may be one even as we are one" [John 17.11]. Although name here is attributed to the Father, it is shared by the Son, his revelation. The incarnation of God in the world revealed his inner being and relationship to mankind. Right at the beginning of Matthew's account of the Incarnation we have the bestowal of Christ's name by the angel Gabriel: "You will conceive a son and call his name *Jesus*, for he will *save* his people from their sins" [1.21] (It should be noted that in the Old Testament, a name was given at birth or shortly thereafter. Only in New Testament times is it given with circumcision on the eighth day). This passage is interesting to read in Hebrew transliteration, for it elicits the close association between the name Jesus and his mission to save: "...Jesus (Yeshuah) will save (yosheyah)" (**The New Testament in Hebrew and English**, London (no date given).

The Gospels depict Jesus Christ as a person endowed with perception and penetrating insight. A sense of mystery hangs over him, a sense of unmistakable otherness that is not subject to analysis. Awareness of his proper name surely had to play a role in Christ's realization of personal divinity and mission in the days before his public ministry. Christ's Jewish contemporaries found both their God and self-identity in God's past acts and in their hope for a future restoration of their lives and character. They viewed the present as a time of preserving what God had done as summed up in the Law and in the fulfillment of the promises. As a result, the present became relatively insignificant. However, Jesus proclaims that the "kingdom of God is at hand" [Mk 1.15], a statement which had roots in his reading of scripture, especially the psalms.

For some historical observations on the name Jesus, refer to the following:

"The name Jesus was common among the Jews up to the beginning of the second century AD. Early Christianity adopted the current Greek form of the Hebrew Jeshuah to *Iesous*. Among Palestinian Jews and also among the Jews of the diaspora the name Jesus was widely distributed in the pre-Christian era and in the early part of the Christian era. Josephus (first century AD) gives no fewer than nineteen bearers of the name Jesus. It is even borne by one of Christ's ancestors, Joshua (Luke 3.29). By the end of the first century AD, the name Jesus died out among the Jews." **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament** edited by G. Kittel (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1965), p.284 ff.

The psalter formed an integral part of the Jewish liturgy of Christ's time. It implores God's deliverance, decries injustices, threatens punishment and promises reward for the righteous. Thus every feeling and hope of Israel, as well as each pious Jew, is expressed here. ("There is no single experience of the soul of Israel that is not put into words there [the psalter]. The psalms are the fullest expression of God's revelation in the Old Testament." **The Psalms** by P. Drijvers, New York, 1965, p.4). Composed after the saving events of Israel's history, the psalms manifest the collective tensions and aspirations of the Jewish people, and this in turn illumines the Gospels.

We may assume that part of Christ's religious upbringing at Nazareth was learning to read scripture in the Hebrew language. Although he must have received some training in the local synagogue, his parents--and they were, to be sure, no ordinary parents--complemented his training at home. At the heart of Jewish spirituality lies the psalter, around which this family's prayer life revolved as with the case for any devout Jewish household of the time. Although the Gospels record no words of Joseph, Jesus' father, it is intriguing to imagine this dreamer [cf. Matthew 1.20], named after his Old Testament prototype, teaching his son how to read and interpret the scriptures. On the other hand we have Mary. She is recorded in Luke's Gospel as keeping the events associated with her son's birth close to her heart: "But Mary *kept* (suneterei) all these things, pondering them (sumballousa, literally, 'placing together for comparison') in her heart" [2.19]. The Greek verb suntereo means to keep or preserve closely, to protect. It implies that Mary assimilated the significance of all these events associated with her son's birth. Principle among these events was, of course, the angel Gabriel's command to call her son Jesus, that is, Savior. Mary must have transmitted her ability of *keeping* and of *pondering* to Jesus in the process of his education and learning to read scripture in the Hebrew language.

Coupled with Joseph's propensity for dreams, the inclination to linger over the Hebrew text of scripture acquired from Mary must have wielded a powerful influence in Jesus' consciousness as a young man. Towards the end of his life, we see something of this *keeping* or remembrance handed down from Mary: "Holy Father, *keep* (tereson, from tereo, which is related to suntereo regarding Luke 2.19 above) them in your name" [John 17.11]. The Father's name is, of course, the revelation of his Son, Jesus Christ. The *keeping* takes up and perfects the *keeping* learned from his mother, Mary, and he wishes to have his disciples participate in it. Only now it is Jesus' express wish to have his Father effect the *keeping* of the disciples, that is, to "situate" them in his name.

Christ became more aware of his unique character while he was learning about the history of his people. The frequency at which the Hebrew verbal root of his name, Yeshuah (Jesus) occurred in the psalter certainly must have impressed him. (It should be noted that the word yashah means "to be spacious, ample, broad; figuratively, 'to be opulent.' The significance of 'ample space' is in Hebrew applied to liberty, deliverance from dangers and distresses, as on the other hand, narrowness of space is frequently used of distresses and dangers." **Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon** by S. Tregelles, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1971, p.374).

We may assume that this frequency of yashah, in light of Jesus' parents religious training, assisted to awaken in him an awareness of his role of Savior. This Hebrew verb occurs one-hundred and thirty-four times in the psalter alone, both as a verb and as a noun, quite an extraordinarily high frequency for so short a book. The verbal root yashah occurs in other parts of the Hebrew Bible. These references must have impressed Jesus Christ as well. Although such references are valuable in themselves, the scope of this article is confined to the psalter. To share this experience of Jesus discovering the verbal root of his name, one should examine the one-hundred and thirty-four excerpts from the psalter listed in this article. Of course, this is simply a personal view with no basis in contemporary scriptural studies, but it evolved from my own reading of the psalms in the original language.

The Hebrew verbal root has been transliterated in this list to suggest something of the effect Christ felt when reading these very same verses (Reading these verses is in the tradition of monastic lectio divina as briefly explained in this Home Page's Introduction). For Jesus, this experience of finding his name in the psalms must have been like seeing his own face in a mirror. The meeting point of figure (the psalter) and reality (Jesus Christ) reaches fullness in Christ's messianic awareness. This sacred place, so to speak, enables all Old Testament history to come together and find unity. In the words of Henri DeLubac, "The entire dialectic of the two Testaments is drawn together: The New Testament in its entirety is brought forth by the Old, while at the same time the Old Testament in its entirety is interpreted by the New...Jesus is aware that he is fulfilling the religion of Israel, and that it becomes completely spiritual in him" (**The Sources of Revelation**, New York, 1968, p.40).

By an awareness of the root yashah which suggests his role as *Savior*, Christ takes up Mary's *keeping* and *pondering* and passes this two-fold contemplative activity to his disciples so that they might absorb the mystery of Christ's revelation in the flesh. Subsequent generations of the Church, in turn, *kept* and *pondered over* the name Jesus in order to appropriate it. For example, the name of Jesus to St. Bernard of Clairvaux "is honey in the mouth, music in the ear, a song in the heart" (**On the Song of Songs**, Spencer, Massachusetts, 1971, p.110).

In other places of his **Commentary on the Song of Songs**, Bernard describes the name of Jesus as a kind of medicine and backs up this insight with biblical quotations. In the person of Bernard we have one instance taken from the Church's long history where a person realizes, like the historical Jesus, the significance of this name. We may envision Jesus Christ himself reading scripture (like Bernard and others) drawing out a whole string of biblical references pertaining to his name. Thus he was able to shed further light on his proper identity as Savior of humankind. We may say that Christ indeed "grew and waxed strong in the spirit, filled with wisdom" [Luke 2.40] while pondering all those one-hundred and thirty-four references to his name in the psalter!

The realization of "being Savior" (Yeshuah) came to its fruition after Christ's passion, death and resurrection. On the road to Emmaus we see Christ attempting to impart this realization to his disciples. However, he had to rebuke them for their slowness to understand the recent events in light of scripture [cf. Luke 24.45]. He proceeded to interpret "in all the scriptures the things *concerning himself* (ta peri autou)" (verse 27). Later in verse forty-four Christ elaborates the Old Testament prophecies pertaining to his person by saying "everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the prophets and the *psalms* must be fulfilled." The psalms to which Christ is referring here may be found in numerous commentaries. However, it is enlightening to see how the one-hundred and thirty-four verses from the psalter containing the verbal root yashah might amplify this statement. Christ was, in a sense, teaching his disciples how to read and interpret scripture on the road to Emmaus. Their response was "Did not our heart *burn* within us while he opened to us the scriptures" [verse 32]? In other words, did not our hearts burn within us while Jesus opened to us the hidden meaning of these one-hundred and thirty-four verses from the psalter containing the verbal root yashah, "to save?" Later when the disciples invoked the name of Jesus in their ministry, they do so on the basis of this name's capacity to reveal God's nature and character.

The Gospels display Jesus with a clear sense of mission and goal. The divine sonship is present in all Christ's activities, and to interpret his mission, he possibly used these verses from the psalms pertaining to yashah. A spiritual messiahship tends to be uncovered...revealed...in them, a fact which also pervades the New Testament like leaven to prepare us for the full revelation of his divinity. With the apostles, however, their enlightenment as to the significance of the name Jesus (Yeshuah) came about after experiencing the reality which had first occurred. Then they referred back to the obscurity of the psalms as well as other books of scripture to see the deeper meaning which, in turn, they related to their experiences to discover it in a greater depth of mystery.

To give a better appreciation of the one-hundred and thirty-four verses in the psalter containing the verbal root yashah, they are broken down into six basic categories at the end of this article. The first group contains those verses pertaining to God who effects salvation (fifty-eight verses). Here God's relationship as Savior/saving is stressed, and they must have been of special importance in the awakening of Christ's divinity and mission to save. The second group indicates those psalm verses petitioning God to save or rescue (forty-two verses). These passages depict Christ's humanity in relationship to God the Father, for they are mostly cries of a man to implore God's salvation and mercy. The third group has those references expressing jubilation or joy at experiencing salvation (twenty-three verses). We may apply them to Christ giving thanks to his Father for his mission to save, yashah. They are directed more properly to the Father as Source (Begetter) of salvation, that is, to the One who bestows the reality of salvation (seven verses). It shows the folly of looking for deliverance in places, persons or things other than in Jesus or Yeshuah.

The fifth grouping is unique in the sense that words here are attributed directly to God the Father. While only three such verses are found in the psalter, they show the Father as utterer of yashah. This verse ("Why are you so far from *helping* me?") is traditionally applied to Christ upon the cross. Occurring as it does at the conclusion of Christ's earthly existence, this verse shows the fulfillment of the preceding five groupings in that it was uttered by the *Savior* working out our *salvation*. Perhaps we may say that at this point (Christ on the cross) Jesus had a full comprehension of his name as traced in the psalter. After all, it is a psalm with the verbal root yashah quoted by the Savior, Yeshuah, and this cry of despair is to be considered in light of Psalm twenty-two's victorious conclusion.

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A List of Verses from the Psalter Containing the Hebrew Verbal Root Yashah

It should be noted that those verses in brackets refer to the numbering in the Hebrew text where it differs from the Revised Standard Version whose translation is used throughout. Also it should be noted that the Hebrew verb forms which are transliterated here contain the object of their action at the end of the verb as in

the case of nouns with possessive pronouns.

Psalm 3.2[3]: Many are saying of me, there is no *help* (yeshu'atah) for him in God.

7[8]: Arise, Lord, *deliver* (hoshi'eni) me, O my God.

8[9]: *Deliverance* (hayeshu'ah) belongs to the Lord.

6.4[5]: Turn, O Lord, save my life; *deliver* (hoshi'eni) me for the sake of your steadfast love.

7.1[2]: *Save* (hoshi'eni) me from all my pursuers and deliver me.

10[11]: My shield is with God who *saves* (moshi'a) the upright in heart.

9.14[15]: that I may rejoice in your *deliverance* (bishu'ataka).

12.1[2]: *Help* (hoshi'ah), Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly.

5[6]: I will place him in the *safety* (beyesha') for which he longs.

13.5[6]: My heart shall rejoice in your *salvation* (bishu'ateka).

14.7: O that *deliverance* (yeshu'at) for Israel would come out of Zion.

17.7: O *savior* (moshi'a) of those who seek refuge.

18.2[3]: my shield, and the horn of my *salvation* (yishi'i).

3[4]: and I am *saved* ('ushi'a) from my enemies.

27[28]: for you *deliver* (toshi'a) a humble people.

35[36]: You have given me the shield of your *salvation* a(yish'eka).

41[42]: They cried for help, but there was none to *save* (moshi'a).

46[47]: and exalted be the God of my *salvation* (yishi'i).

50[51]: great *deliverance* (yeshu'ot) he gives to his king.

20.5[6]: May we shout for joy over your *victory* (bishu'ateka).

6[7]: Now I know that the Lord will *help* (hoshi'a) his anointed.

6[7]: he will answer him from his holy heaven with mighty *victory* (yessa') by his right hand.

9[10]: Give *victory* (hoshi'ah) to the king, O Lord.

21.1[2]: and in your *help* (bishu'atka) how greatly does he [the king] rejoice.

5[6]: His glory is great through your *help* (bishu'ateka).

22.1[2]: Why are you so far from *helping* (mishu'ati) me?

21[22]: *save* (hushi'eni) me from the mouth of the lion.

24.5: He will receive...vindication from the God of his *salvation* (yish'u).

25.5: for you are the God of my *salvation* (yishi'i).

27.1: The Lord is my light and my *salvation* (yishi'i).

9: forsake me not, O God of my *salvation* (yishi'i).

28.8: The Lord is...the *saving* (yeshu'ot) refuge of his anointed.

9: O *save* (hoshe'ah) your people.

31.2[3]: Be...a strong fortress to *save* (lehoshi'ni) me.

16[17]: *save* (hoshi'ni) me in your steadfast love.

33.16: A king is not *saved* (nosha') by his great army.
 17: The war horse is a vain hope for *victory* (litshu'ah).

34.6[7]: [the Lord] *saved* (hoshi'o) the poor man out of all his troubles.
 18[19]: [the Lord] *saves* (yoshi'a) the crushed in spirit.

35.3: Say to my soul, "I am your *deliverance* (yeshu'atek)."
 9: exalting in his *deliverance* (bishu'ato).

36.6[7]: man and beast you *save* (toshi'a), O Lord.

37.39: The *salvation* (teshu'at) of the righteous is from the Lord.
 40: he delivers them from the wicked and *saves* (yoshi'em) them.

38.22[23]: Make haste to help me, O Lord, my *salvation* (teshu'ati).

40.10[11]: I have spoken of your faithfulness and your *salvation* (teshu'atka).
 16[17]: may those who love your *salvation* (teshu'ateka) say continually, "Great is the Lord."

42.5[6]: Hope in God...the *salvation* (yeshu'ot) of his countenance.
 11[12]: for I shall again praise him, the *salvation* (yeshu'ot) of my countenance and my God.

43.5: for I shall again praise him, my *help* (yeshu'ot) and my God.

44.3[4]: nor did their own arm give them *victory* (lo-hushi'ah).
 4[5]: You are my king and my God who ordained *victories* (yeshu'ot) for Jacob.
 6[7]: nor can my sword *save* (lo-toshi'eni) me.
 7[8]: But you have *saved* (hosha'tanu) us from our foes.

50.23: I will show the *salvation* (beyesha') of God.

51.12[14]: Restore to me the joy of your *salvation* (yish'eka).
 14[16]: Deliver me from death, O God, you the God of my *salvation* (teshu'ati).

53.6[7]: O that *deliverance* (yeshu'ot) for Israel would come from Zion.

54.1[3]: *Save* (hoshi'eni) me, O God, by your name.

55.16[17]: But I call upon God, and the Lord will *save* (yoshi'eni) me.

57.3[4]: He will send from heaven and *save* (yoshi'eni) me.

59.2[3]: *save* (hoshi'eni) me from bloodthirsty men.

60.5[7]: give *victory* (hoshi'ah) by your right hand and answer us.
 11[13]: for vain is the *help* (teshu'at) of man.

62.1[2]: from him comes my *salvation* (yishu'ati).
 2[3]: He only is my rock and my *salvation* (yishu'ati).
 6[7]: He only is my rock and my *salvation* (yishu'ati).
 7[8]: On God rests my *deliverance* (yish'i) and my honor.

65.5[6]: O God of our *salvation* (yish'enu).

67.2[3]: that your *saving* (yeshu'ateka) power may be made known among all the nations.

68.19[20]: God is our *salvation* (yeshu'atenu).

20[21]: Our God is a God of *salvation* (lemosha'ot).

69.1[2]: *Save* (hoshi'eni) me, O God.

13[14]: with your faithful *help* (yish'eka) rescue me from sinking in the mire.

29[30]: let your *salvation* (yeshu'atka), O God, set me on high.

35[36]: For God will *save* (yoshi'a) Zion.

70.4[5]: May those who love your *salvation* (yeshu'ateka) say evermore, "God is great!"

71.2: incline your ear to me and *save* (hoshi'eni) me.

3: be to me a rock of refuge...which you have ordained to *save* (lehoshhi'eni) me.

15: my mouth will tell...of your deeds of *salvation* (teshu'ateka) all the day.

72.4: may he...give *deliverance* (yoshi'a) to the needy.

13: He *saves* (yoshi'a) the lives of the needy.

74.12: God...working *salvation* (yeshu'ot) in the midst of the earth.

76.9[10]: When God arose to establish judgment to *save* (lehoshi'a) all the oppressed of the earth.

78.22: they did not trust his *saving* (bishu'atu) power.

79.9: Help us, O god of our *salvation* (yish'enu).

80.2[3]: Stir up your might, and come to *save* (lishu'atah) us.

3[4]: let your face shine, that we may be *saved* (niuashe'ah).

7[8]: let your face shine, that we may be *saved* (niuashe'ah).

19[20]: let your face shine, that we may be *saved* (niuashe'ah).

85.4[5]: Restore us again, O god of our *salvation* (yish'enu).

7[8]: Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your *salvation* (yesh'aka).

9[10]: Surely his *salvation* (yish'o) is at hand for those who fear him.

86.2: *save* (hosha') your servant who trusts in you.

16: *save* (hoshi'ah) the son of your handmaid.

88.1[2]: O Lord, God, of my *salvation* (yeshu'ati), I call by day.

89.26[27]: He shall cry to me, "...the rock of my *salvation* (yeshu'ati).

91.16: I will show him my *salvation* (bishu'ati).

96.2: tell of his *salvation* (yeshu'ato) from day to day.

98.1: His right hand has made known his *victory* (hoshi'ah).

2: The Lord has made known his *victory* (yeshu'ato).

3: All the ends of the earth have seen the *victory* (yeshu'at) of our God.

106.4: help me when you *deliver* (bishu'ateka) them.

10: So he *saved* (yoshi'em) them from the hand of the foe.

21: they forgot God their *Savior* (Moshi'am).

47: *Save* (hoshi'enu) us, O Lord our God.

107.13: and he *delivered* (yoshi'em) them from their distress.
 19: and he *delivered* (yoshi'em) them from their distress.

108.6[7]: give *help* (hoshi'ah) by your right hand and answer us.

109.26: *Save* (hoshi'eni) me according to your steadfast love.
 31: to *save* (lehoshi'a) his soul from judgment.

116.6: when I was brought low, he *saved* (yehoshi'a) me.
 13: I will lift up the cup of *salvation* (yeshu'ot).

118.14: The Lord...has become my *salvation* (lishu'ah).
 15: Glad songs and *victory* (yeshu'ah) in the tents of the righteous.
 21: you have become my *salvation* (lishu'ah).
 25: *Save* (hoshi'ah) us, we beseech you, O Lord.

119.41: your *salvation* (teshu'atka) according to your promise.
 81: My soul languishes for your *salvation* (lithshu'atka).
 94: I am yours, *save* (hushi'eni) me.
 117: Hold me up, that I may be *safe* ('iwashe'ah).
 123: My eyes fail with watching for your *salvation* (lishu'ateka).
 146: I cry to you, *save* (hushi'eni) me.
 155: *Salvation* (yeshu'ah) is far from the wicked.
 166: I hope for your *salvation* (lishu'atka), O Lord.
 174: I long for your *salvation* (lishu'atka), O Lord.

132.16: Her priests I will clothe with *salvation* (yeha).

138.7: and your right hand *delivers* (toshi'eni) me.

140.7[8]: O Lord, my God, my strong *deliverer* (yeshu'ati).

144.10: O God...who gives *victory* (teshu'ah) to kings.

145.19: he also hears their cry, and *saves* (yoshi'em) them.

149.4: The Lord...adorns the humble with *victory* (bishu'ah).

* * *

The 134 verses from the psalter containing the verbal root yashah are listed in this table. They have been broken down into six categories starting with the highest frequency.

Psalms with God as Savior or Giving Salvation (58 references)

3.8[9], 3.10[11], 17.7, 18.2[3], 18.27[28], 20.6[7], 20.6[7], 21.5[6], 24.5, 28.8, 34.6[7], 34.18[19], 36.6[7], 37.39, 37.40, 42.5[6], 43.5, 44.3[4], 51.14[16], 55.16[17], 57.3[3], 62.1[2], 62.2[3], 62.6[7], 62.7[8], 65.7[8], 68.20[21], 69.29[30], 72.13, 74.12, 76.9[10], 78.22, 85.4[5], 85.9[10], 88.1[2], 88.4[5], 89.26[27], 91.16, 98.1, 98.2, 98.3, 106.8, 106.10, 106.21, 107.13, 107.19, 109.31, 116.13, 118.13, 119.41, 119.81, 119.123, 138.7, 140.7[8], 144.10, 145.19, 149.4

Psalms of Petition

(42 references)

3.7[8], 6.4[5], 7.1[2], 12.1[2], 14.7, 20.9[10], 22.21[22], 27.9, 28.9, 31.2[3], 31.16[17], 38.22[23], 51.12[14], 53.6[7], 54.1[3], 59.2[3], 60.5[7], 67.2[3], 69.1[2], 69.13[14], 69.29[30], 71.2, 71.3, 72.4, 79.9, 80.2[3], 80.3[4], 80.7[8], 80.19[20], 85.7[8], 86.2, 106.4, 106.47, 108.6[7], 109.26, 118.25, 119.94, 119.117, 119.146, 119.166, 119.174

Psalms of Jubilation

(23 references)

7.10[11], 9.14[15], 13.5[6], 18.3[4], 18.35[36], 18.46[47], 20.5[6], 21.1[2], 25.5, 27.1, 35.9, 40.10[11], 40.16[17], 42.11[12], 43.5, 44.7[8], 50.23, 70.4[5], 71.15, 95.1, 96.2, 118.15, 118.21

Psalms of Scorn

(7 references)

3.2[3], 118.41[42], 33.16, 33.17, 44.6[7], 60.11[13], 119.155

Psalms with God Speaking

3 references)

12.5[6], 35.3, 132.16

Psalms of Lament

(1 references)

22.1[2]

-Lectio divina: literally, divine reading. Lectio (a feminine noun derived from the Latin verb lego, to pick out, select. Thus lectio is a special type of choosing from a number of options, in this case as it pertains to reading. Divina is the adjective with obvious meaning. Divinus (masculine) applies to God, that which is divine. That makes lectio divina stand out by reason of association with the divinity. One might have assumed that the alternate adjective sacer (-a, feminine) to be more preferable. That adjective means sacred, holy, consecrated. Sacer pertains more to objects associated with the holy, the divine, as related to a church, etc. The same could apply to a person whose mode of life is sacer. So when doing lectio divina, we engage in a type of reading which is distinct from all others and is divine, directly related to God. It would be a different type of reading if the phrase was lectio sacra.

-“The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant” [Ps 25.14]. The Hebrew for “friendship” here is sod which variously means a sitting together, assembly, deliberation, familiar conversation and couch. Sod thus suggests a sitting on the ground (common in the Middle East) or people gathered together in an intimate way. Another use of sod (as confidence) is Prov 3.32: “For the perverse man is an abomination to the Lord, but the upright are in his confidence.” Sometimes this noun has negative connotations: “Pour it (divine wrath) upon the children in the street and upon the gatherings of young also” [Jer 3.11]. The image of sod here is that of people sitting on the ground as in a house engaged in conspiracy. Such intimacy implies whispering among the participants in order to keep others from hearing the plot being hatched.

-Even if someone showed interest in the classical tradition...and this I've run into several times...a common objection comes to the surface. The Eastern material that nourishes them spiritually speaks directly to experience whereas the classical material seems cluttered with chatter and lacks focus. In brief, it's more laborious and has given birth to an equally laborious, loquacious society. Partly because of this Western religion always held as suspect any program dealing with the quieting of the mind despite the presence of contemplative elements within society. So instead of being more disposed toward trans-intellectual practices, it favors abstraction which hovers one step removed, if you will, from contemplative traditions. On top of this is

the historical character of Christianity which deals with miracles and more importantly, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. While accepted as part and parcel of our heritage, the very nature of these events makes things more awkward. They don't tie in directly with what we've come to know as meditative practices despite being the subject of loving devotion and reflection down the ages. There exists a rift of sorts between their account and how one today attempts to cultivate a sense of God's presence. In part these events have become dogmatized. That's fine, but quickly dogma can pass in the realm of intellectualization where it's analyzed and thrown out there you either accept it or not, quite removed from what the New Testament authors wished to convey. Thus Scripture passed from an intent of reading it in the spirit of *lectio divina* to analysis. the ancient languages is connected with the old *termini technici*; and by the use of living languages for learned investigation, the study of the ancient languages is more and more in danger of being set aside. But if it comes to this, if the spirit of the ancients tied to their languages disappears from a literary and scientific education, then coarseness, insipidity and vulgarity will take possession of all literature. For the works of the ancients are the pole star for every artistic or literary effort; if it sets, you are lost...Think not that your modern wisdom can ever take the place of that initiation into being a human being; you are not, like the Greeks and Romans, born free, unprejudiced sons of nature. In the first place, you are the sons and heirs of the crude Middle Ages and of their folly and nonsense, of infamous priest-craft, and of half brutal, half idiotic chivalry...Without the school of the ancients, your literature will degenerate into vulgar gossip and flat philistinism." **The World as Will and Representation** by Schopenhauer, p. 124.

-“One thing have I asked of the Lord, that I will seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple” [Ps 27.4]. The psalmist asks for “one thing” (achath) from the Lord, but it includes three requests: 1) to dwell (*yashav*) in the house of the Lord. This verb more specifically means sitting but can apply to taking up permanent residence. 2) To behold the Lord's beauty or chazah which suggests contemplating divine beauty or noham. This noun means pleasantness or brightness, a kind of radiance emanating and filling the (Jerusalem) temple. 3) Finally, to inquire or baqash within this same temple. Baqar means to open, plough or cleave from which is derived the noun oxen, cattle. The primary idea is that of a cloven foot, domesticated animal breaking the ground with its hoof in search of food. Thus the “one thing” consists of a three-fold unitary gesture.

-“And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built” [Gen 11.5]. Following this comes a similar verse [7], “Come, let us go down and there confuse their language that they may not understand one another's speech.” Tower of Babel and scattering a prelude to Abraham, chap 12.

-“And the men set out from there, and they looked toward Sodom” [Gen 18.16]. This sentence refers to the three mysterious visitors to Abraham who then set out to Sodom and Gomorrah. The Hebrew verb for “looked toward” is shaqaph which fundamentally means to lay upon or cover with planks. Also it connotes a looking forth or down as God does from heaven: “The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men” [Ps 14.2]. Another instance is 2 Sam 6.16: “As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord.” As for the verse at hand, after the three men left Abraham, he bargained with the Lord as to finding just men in Sodom and Gomorrah. The bargaining stopped with ten just men; Abraham dared not go below that number. This incident ends with “And the Lord went his way...and Abraham returned to his place.” Where is “his way?” Does it have a location? No, but we could say that the Lord also took up his shaqaph...his looking down from heaven...to see what the three men would do and prepare himself for the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

-“But he (Lot) lingered; so the men seized him and his wife and his two daughters by the hand, the Lord being merciful to him” [Gen 19.16]. Such lingering is all the more poignant given the immediate destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah though no details are given. Often in such tense situations people tend to slough off the tension by engaging in what to external eyes appears useless activity. The entire chapter of 19 is filled with urgency, of departing the city as quickly as possible. Once Lot does get on the road, he beseeches God to spare a small city called Zoar. Compare this with his brother Abraham who earlier bargained with God to spare Sodom, going as far as ten just men.

-The last two weeks of July have the feasts of Mary Magdalene, Martha and Mary's parents, Joachim and Ann. In other words, compressed in this short time we have a celebration of several key persons, most being women, who were close to Jesus as no apostle ever was. All soften the Christian message, if you will, in the sense of introducing a much needed feminine element we can lose sight of at other times. For example, for Mary Magdalene the first reading at Mass is from the Song of Songs; same applies for the reading of Vespers that day.

-“His (Joseph) feet were hurt with fetters, his neck was put in a collar of iron” [Ps 105.18]. The Hebrew is much more vivid of Joseph's condition of slavery: “His soul (nephesh) came into iron.” That is to say, Joseph's very being passed from being a favorite of his father Isaac to the most abject condition imaginable. This, of course, was necessary before the Pharaoh exalted him, a foreshadowing of what happened to Jesus Christ whose “soul came into iron” at his incarnation.