

The Apostle Philip

Including Narcissus of the Seventy and Joseph of Arimathaea

November 14, 2023

GOSPEL: John 1:43-51

EPISTLE: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16

Philip's Early Life

Philip was born in Bethsaida, as were Peter and Andrew, (John 1:44, 12:21) and was instructed in the Scriptures from his youth. Philip was a follower of John the Baptist, as was his friend, Nathanael of Cana (John 21:2). As followers of John, Philip and Nathanael did a lot of prayer and fasting, as John taught his disciples to do (Mark 2:18-22, Luke 11:1-13). This may have been what Nathanael was doing when Jesus "saw him under the fig tree" (John 1:48). John Chrysostom stated¹ that Philip's association with John the Baptist was no small preparation for his Apostleship with Christ.

The Scriptures do not mention whether or not Philip was among the fishermen of the Apostles (John 21:1-3). It was customary for all Jewish boys to learn a trade as part of their education, and Philip needed to work at his trade to support his family, which included several young children at the time Jesus called him. John Chrysostom commented² that the lack of background information on the Twelve Apostles was not a big deal:

"And why, one may say, has he not told us how and in what manner the others were called; but only of Peter and Andrew, James and John, and Philip and Matthew? Because these lived such a humble way of life, more than others! There is nothing worse than the publican's business, or more ordinary than fishing. And that Philip also was among the very ignoble is manifest from his country (i.e. Galilee). Therefore these they proclaim to us, with their ways of life, to show that we ought to believe them in the glorious parts of their histories also. Many signs and miracles are passed over by them; while the events of the cross, accounted to be reproaches, they spell out in detail. The disciples' pursuits too, and their faults, and those of their Master's ancestry, who were notorious for sins (Matthew 1:3, 5-6), they discover with a clear voice. Whence it is manifest that they made much account of truth, and wrote nothing for favor, nor for display".

The hymns of the Church, however, do mention Philip as being a fisherman, but not working on the Sea of Galilee in company with the other fishermen:

"O most glorious wonder! The Apostle³ that once cast his nets for fish has become a fisher of men, appointed by God. He fished for the nations with the net of his discourse and brought up the world with the rod of the Cross. O what a draught the divine worker has brought to God, he whose memory we now celebrate. O most glorious wonder! Sent by God like a lamb among wolves, the Apostle Philip fearlessly strode

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¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, XIX, 2.

² John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXX, 1.

³ "Four Stichera for Ode IX of Matins of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip", November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

forth and, through faith, showed forth wild beasts as lambs, divinely transforming the world. Having exchanged the catching of fish for the fishing of men, with the net of your mysteries you drew in them that were in the depths of deception, O Apostle Philip. You pursued the whole world and brought it to Christ, your Teacher”.

John Chrysostom noted⁴ that the locale where Philip grew up was not exactly famous for its desire for righteousness. In fact, Jesus condemned Bethsaida as being worse than Sodom.

“Having failed to persuade them, He now laments over them; which is more than terrifying. He had exhibited both His teaching by His words, and His wonder-working power by His signs. But forasmuch as they abode in their own unbelief, He now upbraids saying, ‘Woe unto you, Chorazin! Woe unto you, Bethsaida!’ (Matthew 11:21)”

“Then, to show you that they are not such by nature, He states also the name of the city out of which proceeded five apostles. For both Philip, and those two pairs of the chief apostles, were from there. ‘For if, the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes’. And He does not add Sodom with the others for naught, but to aggravate the charge against them. For it is a very great proof of wickedness, when none are found so bad as they”.

“Elsewhere He makes a comparison, condemning them by the Ninevites, and by the Queen of the South (Matthew 12:41-42). With this law of condemnation, Ezekiel too was acquainted; wherefore also he said to Jerusalem, ‘You have justified your sisters in all your sins’ (Ezekiel 16:51 LXX). And not even at this does He stop, but makes their fears yet more intense by saying that they should suffer things more grievous than Sodomites and Tyrians (Matthew 11:24), so as by every means to gather them in, both by bewailing, and by alarming them”.

Philip, One of the Married Apostles

Prior to meeting Jesus, Philip was married and had (at least) three daughters. The question we might ask is how the Lord’s commendation of the Twelve for leaving “wife and children” (Matthew 19:29) applied to Philip. The indication from the following is that they went with him, at least to most places. After Philip was martyred in Hierapolis of Asia, his daughters remained in that city. What Philip seems to have “left” was the pleasures of the flesh associated with a wife and children, and his daughters seem to have emulated the life of their father.

The Deacon Philip was also married and had four daughters (Acts 21:8-9). At the time that Paul visited him, the Deacon Philip was the Bishop of Caesarea, while the Apostle Philip still traveling extensively.

Polycrates (130-196 AD), Bishop of Ephesus, in an Epistle⁵ to Victor, the Bishop of Rome, wrote:

“For in Asia great luminaries have gone to their rest, who shall rise again in the day of the coming of the Lord, when He comes with glory from heaven and shall raise again all the saints. I speak of Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who is

⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXVII, 6.

⁵ Roberts and Donaldson, “Polycrates, Epistle to Victor and the Roman Church”, Remains of the Second and Third Centuries, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

laid to rest at Hierapolis. And his two daughters, who arrived at old age unmarried; his other daughter also, who passed her life under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and reposes at Ephesus. John, who reclined on the Lord's bosom, and who became a priest wearing the mitre⁶, and a witness and a teacher — he rests at Ephesus. Then there is Polycarp, both bishop and martyr at Smyrna; and Thraseas from Eumenia, both bishop and martyr, who rests at Smyrna. Why should I speak of Sagaris, bishop and martyr, who rests at Laodicea? Of the blessed Papirius, moreover? And of Melito the eunuch, who performed all his actions under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and lies at Sardis, awaiting the visitation from heaven, when he shall rise again from the dead?"

This portion of Polycrates' Epistle was also quoted by Eusebius⁷, the 4th Century Church Historian, and by Jerome⁸, the 4th Century Church Father. Philip's daughters were thus included in a very exclusive company of late 1st and early 2nd Century saints.

Sozomen, the early 5th Century Church Historian, in writing⁹ about a miracle performed by Epiphanius, the 4th Century Bishop of Cyprus, referred to earlier miracles performed by Philip's daughters, where they raised someone from the dead:

"I desire also to relate another miracle that is attributed to Epiphanius. I have heard that a similar action has been related of Gregory, who formerly governed Neocaesarea; and I see no reason to doubt the veracity of the account; but it does not disprove the authenticity of the miracle attributed to Epiphanius. Peter, the Apostle, was not the only man who raised another from the dead; John, the evangelist, wrought a similar miracle at Ephesus; as did likewise the daughters of Philip at Hierapolis. Similar actions have been performed in different ages by the men of God".

Papias (60-130 AD), the Bishop of Hierapolis, whose writings today only exist in fragments, also wrote¹⁰ of this miracle by Philip's daughters as having occurred in his day. He also noted that Philip lived in Hierapolis with his daughters at one time. Eusebius also quotes¹¹ Papias as saying this in his Church History.

Eusebius quotes¹² Clement of Alexandria as opposing the idea of a celibate clergy¹³. In saying this, Clement referred to Philip's daughters as having husbands. This may mean that there were more than three daughters:

"Clement indeed, whose words we have just quoted, after the above-mentioned facts gives a statement, on account of those who rejected marriage, regarding the apostles that had wives. 'Or will they', says he, 'reject even the apostles? For Peter and Philip begot children; and Philip also gave his daughters

⁶ This refers to a turban similar to that worn by the High Priest as described in Exodus 28:36-39, 29:6.

⁷ Eusebius, Church History, III, 31.

Eusebius, Church History, V, 24.

⁸ Philip Schaff, ed., "Jerome, Lives of Illustrious Men", II, 45, Jerome and Gennadius, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, v. 3.

⁹ Salaminius Hermias Sozomenus, Ecclesiastical History, VII, 27.

¹⁰ Roberts and Donaldson, "Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord", Fragments of Papias, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 1.

¹¹ Eusebius, Church History, III, 39.

¹² Eusebius, Church History, III, 30.

¹³ See also Tertullian, "To His Wife", IV, iv, 2, Elucidation, which also refers to Clement's comments

in marriage. And Paul does not hesitate, in one of his epistles, to greet his wife¹⁴, whom he did not take about with him, that he might not be inconvenienced in his ministry'. And since we have mentioned this subject it is not improper to subjoin another account which is given by the same author and which is worth reading. In the seventh book of his Stromata he writes as follows: 'They say, accordingly, that when the blessed Peter saw his own wife led out to die, he rejoiced because of her summons and her return home. And calling to her very encouragingly and comfortingly, he addressing her by name, saying, 'Oh you, remember the Lord!' Such was the marriage of the blessed, and their perfect disposition toward those people who were dearest to them'. This account being in keeping with the subject in hand, I have related here in its proper place".

The Calling of Philip, Who Brought Nathanael

Andrew and Philip had been followers of John the Baptist. Andrew one day watched as John looked at Jesus and proclaimed, 'Behold the Lamb of God' (John 1:29, 36). That day, Andrew got his brother, Peter, and brought him to Jesus, saying, 'We have found the Messiah' (John 1:41). Philip, like Andrew, was from Bethsaida and may have overheard Andrew and Peter talking. The next day, Jesus said to Philip, 'Follow Me!' (John 1:43) Not only did Philip drop everything and follow Jesus, but he also went to get his friend Nathanael saying, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph' (John 1:45). Following Jesus was more difficult for Philip than for those of the Twelve who were single, since Philip had at least three young children.

Both Andrew and Philip immediately recognized Jesus as the Messiah, and immediately brought someone else to Him. Philip came calling on Nathanael when he was under a fig tree (John 1:48), where the secluded fig tree location may have been Nathanael's place of prayer. Jesus confirmed Who He was by stating to Nathanael that He saw him under the fig tree before Philip called him. Thus both Philip and Andrew exhibit faith and recognition toward Christ at their first encounter.

John Chrysostom stated¹⁵ that Andrew was persuaded when he had heard from John the Baptist, and Peter, from Andrew. But Philip heard only from Christ who said to him, 'Follow Me' (John 1:43). Immediately he obeyed, and even became a preacher to others, like Nathanael (John 1:45). For the expression, 'we have found', belongs always to those who are in some way seeking.

Since Philip had chosen this of himself, he afterwards remained firm. He was better acquainted with Jesus as having been born and bred in Galilee. The wonderful thing respecting Peter and James and Philip was that they believed, not only before the miracles, but that they did so being of Galilee, out of which 'arises¹⁶ no prophet' (John 7:52), nor 'can any good thing come' (John 1:46). For the Galilaeans were somehow of a more boorish and dull disposition than others; but even in this Christ displayed forth His power, by selecting from a land, which bore no fruit, His choicest disciples. Philip probably overheard Peter and Andrew discussing what John had said

¹⁴ This is a reference to Philippians 4:3, which some have interpreted as a reference by Paul to his wife. There is no general agreement among the Church Fathers on whether Paul was referring to his wife here, or on whether Paul was married.

¹⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, XX, 1-2.

¹⁶ This comment came from the Pharisees who had neglected to notice that the prophet Nahum came from Gath Hopher, about 4 miles from Nazareth (2 Kings 14:25), and the prophet Nahum came from Galilee also.

and followed. It is also probable that Christ called Philip because He knew those who would be serviceable. But all these points the Evangelist cuts short.

When Philip found Nathanael, he referred him to the Scriptures, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph” (John 1:45). He said this, to make his preaching credible, which it must be if it rests on Moses and the Prophets. For since Nathanael was an exact man, and one who viewed all things with truth, Philip with reason refers him to Moses and the Prophets, so that he might receive Him who was preached. How this is the Christ, and how the prophets proclaimed Him beforehand, he did not say; but he drew Nathanael to Jesus, as knowing that he would not afterwards fall away, if he should once taste His words and teaching.

Philip at the Feeding of the 5000

Just before Passover, 29 AD, Jesus took His disciples to the Northern end of the Sea of Galilee to teach them about John the Baptist, who had just been beheaded (Matthew 14:10-13). Philip’s wife and young daughters may have been among the multitude that was there. “Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?’ But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, ‘Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may have a little’” (John 6:5-7).

John Chrysostom stated¹⁷ that Jesus’ question for Philip was intended to give Philip more insight into Who Jesus is:

“Jesus did not sit idly with the disciples, but carefully conversed with them, and made them attend and turn towards Him, a thing which peculiarly marks His tender care, and the humility and condescension of His demeanor towards them. Now the other Evangelists say, that the disciples came and asked Him that He would not send them away fasting, while John said, that the question was put to Philip by Christ. Both occurrences seem to me to be truly reported, but not to have taken place at the same time. The first was prior to the other, so that the two are entirely different. Why then did He ask Philip? He knew which of His disciples needed the most instruction. For Philip was the one who afterwards said, ‘Show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us’ (John 14:8), and on this account Jesus was beforehand bringing him into a proper state. Had Jesus simply done the miracle, it would not have been so great a marvel. But now He beforehand constrains Philip to confess the existing want, that knowing the state of matters he might be more acquainted with the magnitude of the miracle about to take place. Therefore He said, ‘Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?’”

“So in the Old Testament He spoke to Moses, for He wrought not the sign until He had asked, ‘What is that in your hand?’ (Exodus 4:2). Things coming to pass unexpectedly and all at once can cause us to forget previous things. Therefore He first involved him in a confession of present circumstances, that when the astonishment should have come upon him, he might be unable afterwards to drive away the remembrance of what he had confessed. And thus he might learn by comparison the greatness of the miracle, which in fact takes place in this instance. For Philip replied, ‘Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little’ (John 6:6-7)”.

¹⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, XLII, 1-2.

“What does it mean, ‘to test him’? God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Take your beloved son whom you love’ (Genesis 22:1, 2). Just so when the Evangelist said that He tested Philip, he means that He knew exactly what He was doing. As He once made Abraham more approved, so also He brought Philip to an exact knowledge of the miracle. The Evangelist therefore, that you may not stop at the feebleness of the expression, and so form an improper opinion of what was said, adds, ‘He Himself knew what He would do’”.

Rufinus of Aquilea stated¹⁸ that Philip said what he did in order that Christ might exhibit His power in some way:

“For at the time when the multitude in the desert were hungry, and the Lord said to his Apostles, ‘You give them something to eat’ (Mark 6:37). Philip, who was one of them, instead of bringing out the loaves, which were hid in the wallet¹⁹ of the Apostles, said that there was a little lad there who had five loaves and two fishes. He knew that the exhibition of the divine virtue would be nonetheless brilliant if the ministry of some of the little ones were used in its fulfillment. He modestly excused his action by adding, ‘What are these among so many?’ He did this so that the divine power might be more conspicuous through the difficult and desperate circumstances in which it acted”.

Gentiles Want to See Jesus

“Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus’. Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus. But Jesus answered them, saying, ‘The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified’” (John 12:20-23).

Moses of Chorene stated that these Greeks were from Edessa in Mesopotamia. Abgar, king of Edessa, who requested that Jesus come to heal him of his leprosy, had sent them. Jesus fame had gone throughout all Syria, and Gentiles had been coming to him from places distant from Judea (Matthew 4:24-25). Others have stated²⁰ that these “Greeks” were not Hellenic Jews, but were from somewhere quite a bit more remote. In a similar fashion, people had come from Mesopotamia and points even farther distant from Jerusalem to attend the Pentecost celebration where the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 2:9). Following the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Apostle Thomas sent Thaddaeus of the Seventy to heal Abgar and to evangelize the area around Edessa. In his letter to Jesus, Abgar requested²¹ the following:

“Abgar, son of Archam, prince of the land, to Jesus, Savior and Benefactor of men, who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem, greeting. I have heard of You, and of the cures done by Your hands, without remedies, without herbs. For, as it is said, You make the blind to see, the lame to walk, the lepers to be healed; You drive out unclean spirits, You cure unhappy beings afflicted with prolonged

¹⁸ Philip Schaff, ed, “Rufinus, Preface to the Two Books of Ecclesiastical History, Added by Rufinus to His Translation of Eusebius”, Preface to the Translation of the Sayings of Xystus, Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, v. 3.

¹⁹ That is, buying bread with what was in the money box, see John 12:6.

²⁰ Clement of Alexandria, Stromata, II, Elucidations, i.

²¹ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “Moses of Chorene: The History of Armenia”, 6, Ancient Syriac Documents, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

and inveterate diseases; You even raise the dead. As I have heard of all these wonders wrought by You, I have concluded from them either that You are God, come down from heaven to do such great things, or that You are the Son of God, working as You do these miracles. Therefore have I written to You, praying You to condescend to come to me and cure me of the ills with which I am afflicted. I have heard also that the Jews murmur against You and wish to deliver You up to torments. I have a city small but pleasant; it would be sufficient for us both.”

“The messengers, the bearers of this letter, met Jesus at Jerusalem, a fact confirmed by these words of the Gospel. ‘Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus’. Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus’ (John 12:20-22). Jesus did not then accept the invitation given to Him, but He thought fit to honor Abgar with an answer²² in these words:

“Blessed is he who believes in me without having seen me! For it is written²³ of me, ‘Those who see me will not believe in me, and those who do not see me will believe and live’”.

“As to what you have written asking me to come to you, I must accomplish here all that for which I have been sent; and when I shall have accomplished it all, I shall ascend to Him who sent me. When I shall go away I will send one of my disciples, who will cure your diseases, and give life to you and to all those who are with you’. Anan, Abgar’s courier, brought him this letter, as well as the portrait of the Savior²⁴, a picture which is still to be found at this day in the city of Edessa”.

Philip Asks Jesus to Clarify the Persons of the Godhead

During the Last Supper, Jesus spoke to His disciples about many things (John 13-17). Included in this discussion was Jesus’ statement that He was going to prepare a place for them (John 14:2). Some of the Apostles were still unclear regarding Who He was, where He was going, and even Who His Father was.

“Thomas said to Him, ‘Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me’”.

“‘If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him’. Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us’. Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves”.

²² Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “Moses of Chorene: The History of Armenia”, 7, Ancient Syriac Documents, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

²³ Where this is written is not known.

²⁴ This portrait is called “The Icon of Christ Made Without Hands”, which Jesus made by pressing his face against a cloth. This icon is so famous that it has its own Feast Day, August 16th, to commemorate its spectacular history.

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*” (John 14:5-14).

Jesus had referred many times to His Father. He spoke of the Father in His teaching at the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:4-32, 7:11, Luke 6:36), and in His prayers (Matthew 11:25-29, John 11:41). He spoke of the entire Trinity many times (Luke 11:13, John 1:14, 3:36, 12:27). And He taught continuously that the Son was merely doing the work of the Father (John 5:17-47, 6:36-46, 8:14-38, 10:29-38). Yet a confusing aspect in Philip’s mind about this came from the Law, which was used as a Creed in the synagogue worship. “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). If God was one, how could there be a Father and a Son, never mind a “Trinity”?

This was a very important point: clarification of Who God is and how the Son reveals the Father to those who seek Him (Matthew 11:27). The Church Fathers had many things to say about Philip’s question. In the following, a number of Church Fathers are quoted. In the introduction to each quote, a highlight of the quote and the issue raised by the quote is presented. Some of the most significant issues in the history of the Church have been addressed through the commentary on Philip’s question.

Tertullian stated²⁵, that it was not the Father whom they were ignorant of, but it was the Son. This was such an important subject that the Lord’s treatment of it continues to the end of John’s Gospel, furnishing us with details that distinguish the Father and the Son, with the properties of each:

“Philip was roused with the expectation of seeing the Father, but didn’t understand in what sense he was to take ‘seeing the Father’. Now whom does Christ say that they ought to have known? For this is the sole point of discussion. Christ, who had been so long a time with them, could not possibly ever have been supposed to have been the Father. Christ is clearly defined to us in all Scriptures, in the Old Testament as the Christ of God, in the New Testament as the Son of God. This being the case, after His lengthy discourse with them, it was not the Father whom they were ignorant of, but it was the Son. And accordingly the Lord, while upbraiding Philip for not knowing Himself who was the object of their ignorance, wished Himself to be acknowledged indeed as that Being whom He had reproached them for being ignorant of after so long a time; i.e. as the Son. For in many passages²⁶ He had shown Himself to be the Father’s Commissioner, through whose agency the Father could be seen in His works, and heard in His words, and recognized in the Son’s administration of the Father’s words and deeds”.

“The Father indeed was invisible, as Philip had learned in the law, and ought at the moment to have remembered, ‘No man shall see God, and live’ (Exodus 33:20). So he is reprov’d for desiring to see the Father, as if He were a visible Being, and is taught that He only becomes visible in the Son from His mighty works, and not in the manifestation of His person. If He meant to say that the Father is the same with the Son by saying, ‘He who sees me sees the Father’, how is it that

²⁵ Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, II, vii, 24-25.

²⁶ For example, John 5:30, 16:28, 14:6-9, 6:44, 5:21, Matthew 11:27,

He adds immediately afterwards, ‘Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?’ (John 14:10) He ought rather to have said, ‘Do you not believe that I am the Father?’ He did this to clear up that which He wished men to understand; namely, that He was the Son?”

“What follows Philip’s question, and the Lord’s whole treatment of it, to the end of John’s Gospel, continues to furnish us with statements of the same kind, distinguishing the Father and the Son, with the properties of each. Then there is the Comforter, which He promises to pray for to the Father, and to send from heaven after He had ascended to the Father (John 14:16). He is called ‘another Comforter’, indeed; but in what way He is another we have already shown, ‘He shall receive of mine’ (John 16:14), says Christ, just as Christ Himself received of the Father’s. Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Comforter, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct One from Another. These Three are one essence, not one Person, as it is said, ‘I and my Father are One’ (John 10:30), in respect of unity of substance not singularity of number”.

Cyril of Jerusalem addressed²⁷ those who say that the Father is at one time Father, and at another Son. Witness Lee and “The Local Church” promoted this heresy in the 20th Century.

“Let us neither separate them, nor make a confusion. Neither say that the Son is foreign to the Father, nor admit those who say that the Father is at one time Father, and at another Son. For these are strange and impious statements, and not the doctrines of the Church. But the Father having begotten the Son, remained the Father and is not changed. He begot Wisdom, yet didn’t lose wisdom Himself; and begot Power, yet did not become weak. He begot God, but didn’t lose His own Godhead; and neither did He lose anything Himself by diminution or change; nor does He who was begotten have anything lacking. Perfect is He who begot, Perfect that which was begotten; God was He who begot, God He who was begotten. For Christ is not ashamed to say, ‘I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God’” (John 20:17).

Theodoret stated²⁸ that the substance of the Father is the same as the substance of the Son, because it is from that substance that the Son was begotten:

“For we confess the same to be both God eternal, and made man for the sake of man’s salvation; but made man not by the change of the Godhead but by the assumption of the manhood. For the nature of this godhead is immutable and invariable, as is that of the Father who begot Him before the ages. And whatever would be understood of the substance of the Father will also be wholly found in the substance of the only begotten; for of that substance He is begotten. This, our Lord taught when He said to Philip, ‘He that has seen me has seen the Father’ (John 14:9). Again in another place ‘All things that the Father has are mine’ (John 16:15), and elsewhere ‘I and the Father are one’ (John 10:30), and very many other passages may be quoted setting forth the identity of substance”.

“It follows that He did not become God; He was God. ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God’ (John 1:1). He was not man; He became man, and became so by taking on Him our nature. So

²⁷ Cyril of Jerusalem, Catechetical Lectures, XI, 18.

²⁸ Theodoret, Letters, 151.

says the blessed Paid, ‘Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, hut made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant’ (Philippians 2:6-7). And again, ‘For verily He took not on Him the nature of angel’s; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham’ (Hebrews 2:16). And again, ‘Forasmuch then as the children are partaker’s of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same’” (Hebrews 2:14).

Hilary of Poitiers emphasized²⁹ the importance of the Father’s relationship to the Son. While this is a great mystery, He has not left us in doubt or obscurity regarding this and He has not abandoned us to lose our way in dim uncertainty.

Hilary continued³⁰, to explain the problem facing Philip and the Twelve. A Man is before their eyes; this Man states that He is the Son of God, and declares that when they have known Him they will know the Father. He tells them that, seeing Him, they have seen the Father, and that, because they have seen Him, they shall know the Father thereafter. This truth is too broad for the grasp of weak humanity; their faith fails in the presence of these paradoxes. Philip had not grasped that Christ could have both the Father’s nature and human nature at the same time. He was not tampering with the Faith; he just made a mistake in ignorance. He hadn’t understood what he had seen.

“Christ says that the Father has been seen already and shall now be known; and this sight is knowledge. He says that if the Son has been known, the Father has been known also. Though the Son has imparted knowledge of Himself through the bodily senses of sight and sound, the Father’s nature is different altogether from that of the visible Man, which they know, and could not be learned from their knowledge of the nature of Him, Whom they have seen”.

“He has often borne witness that no man has seen the Father. And so Philip broke forth, with the loyalty and confidence of an Apostle, with the request, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it suffice us’ (John 14:8). He was not tampering with the faith; it was but a mistake made in ignorance. For the Lord had said that the Father had been seen already and henceforth should be known, but the Apostle had not understood that He had been seen. Accordingly he did not deny that the Father had been seen, but asked to see Him. He did not ask that the Father should be unveiled to his bodily gaze, but that he might have such an indication as should enlighten him concerning the Father, Who had been seen. For he had seen the Son under the aspect of Man, but cannot understand how he could thereby have seen the Father. His adding to the prayer, ‘Lord, show us the Father’, reveals clearly that it was a mental, not a bodily vision of the Father which he desired. He did not refuse faith to the Lord’s words, but asked for such enlightenment to his mind as should enable him to believe. For the fact that the Lord had spoken was conclusive evidence to the Apostle that faith was his duty. The consideration, which moved him to ask that the Father might be shown, was that the Son had said that He had been seen, and should be known because He had been seen. There was no presumption in this prayer that He, Who had already been seen, should now be made manifest”.

“And therefore the Lord answered Philip as He did. He rebukes the Apostle for defective knowledge of Himself; for previously He had said that, when He was known, the Father was known also”.

²⁹ Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, VII, 33.

³⁰ Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, VII, 35-37.

“But what is the meaning of this complaint that for so long they had not known Him? If they had known Him, they must have recognized in Him the Godhead, which belongs to His Father’s nature. For His works were the peculiar works of God. He walked upon the waves, commanded the winds, changed the water into wine and multiplied the loaves, put devils to flight, healed diseases, restored injured limbs and repaired the defects of nature, forgave sins and raised the dead to life. And all this He did while wearing flesh; and He accompanied the works with the assertion that He was the Son of God. Hence it is that He justly complains that they did not recognize in His mysterious human birth and life the action of the nature of God, performing these deeds through the Manhood, which He had assumed”.

“And therefore the Lord reproached them that they had not known Him, though He had so long been doing these works, and answered their prayer that He would show them the Father by saying, ‘He that has seen Me has seen the Father also’. He was not speaking of a bodily manifestation, of perception by the eye of flesh, but by that eye of which He had once spoken; — ‘Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white to harvest’ (John 4:35). The season of the year, the fields white to harvest are allusions equally incompatible with an earthly and visible prospect. He was bidding them lift the eyes of their understanding to contemplate the bliss of the final harvest. And so it is with His present words, He that has seen Me has seen the Father also”.

“It was not the carnal body, which He had received by birth from the Virgin, that could manifest to them the image and likeness of God. The human aspect, which He wore, could be no aid towards the mental vision of the incorporeal God. But God was recognized in Christ, by those who recognized Christ as the Son on the evidence of the powers of His Divine nature; and recognition of God the Son produces recognition of God the Father. For the Son is in such a sense the Image, as to be One in kind with the Father, and yet to indicate that the Father is His Origin. Other images, made of metals or colors or other materials by various arts, reproduce the appearance of the objects, which they represent. Yet can lifeless copies be put on a level with their living originals? Painted or carved or molten effigies with the nature which they imitate? The Son is not the Image of the Father after such a fashion as this; He is the living Image of the Living. The Son that is born of the Father has a nature in no wise different from His; and, because His nature is not different, He possesses the power of that nature which is the same as His own. The fact that He is the Image proves that God the Father is the Author of the birth of the Only-begotten, Who is Himself revealed as the Likeness and Image of the invisible God. And hence the likeness, which is joined in union with the Divine nature, is indelibly His, because the powers of that nature are inalienably His own”.

John Chrysostom stated³¹ that Christ did not say, ‘Have you not seen Me’, but ‘Have you not known Me’. For if Jesus is that which the Father is, yet continues to be a Son, then He shows in Himself Him who begot Him. To distinguish the Persons He said, ‘He that has seen Me has seen the Father’, lest any one should assert that the same person is Father and Son. Had He been the Father, He would have said, ‘I am the Father’, not, ‘He that has seen Me has seen Him’:

³¹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on John, LXXIV, 1.

“Christ said, ‘No man has seen God at any time’ (John 1:18); and again, ‘Every man that has heard and has learned from God comes unto Me’ (John 6:45). ‘You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape’ (John 5:37). And in the Old Testament, ‘No man shall see My face, and live’ (Exodus 33:20). Very reprovably He said, ‘Have I been so long time with you, and have you not known Me, Philip?’ He said not, ‘have you not seen’, but, ‘have you not known Me’. ‘Why’, Philip might say, ‘do I wish to learn concerning You? At present I seek to see Your Father, and You say unto me, have you not known Me?’ What connection then has this with the question? Surely a very close one; for if He is that which the Father is, yet continuing a Son, with reason He shows in Himself Him who begot Him. Then to distinguish the Persons He said, ‘He that has seen Me has seen the Father’, lest any one should assert that the same person is Father and Son. For had He been the Father, He would not have said, ‘He that has seen Me has seen Him’”.

“Why then did He not reply, ‘you ask things impossible, and not allowed to man; to Me alone is this possible?’ Because Philip had said, ‘it suffices us’, as though knowing Christ, He shows that he had not even seen Him. For assuredly he would have known the Father, had he been able to know the Son. Wherefore He said, ‘He that has seen Me, has seen the Father’. ‘If any one has seen Me, he shall also behold Him’. What He said is of this kind, ‘It is not possible to see either Me or Him’. For Philip sought the knowledge, which is by sight, and since he thought that he had so seen Christ, he desired in like manner to see the Father. But Jesus showed him that he had not even seen Himself. And if anyone calls knowledge, sight, I do not contradict him, for, ‘he that hath known Me’, said Christ, ‘has known the Father’. Yet He did not say this, but desiring to establish the Consubstantiality, declared, ‘he that knows My Essence, knows that of the Father also’. ‘And what is this?’ said some one; ‘for he who is acquainted with creation knows also God’. Yet all are acquainted with creation, and have seen it, but all do not know God”.

“Besides, let us consider what Philip seeks to see. Is it the wisdom of the Father? Is it His goodness? Not so, but the very whatever God is, the very Essence. To this therefore Christ answers, ‘He that has seen Me’. Now he that has seen the Creation has not also seen the Essence of God. ‘If any one has seen Me, he has seen the Father’, He said. Now had He been of a different Essence, He would not have spoken thus. But to make use of a grosser argument, no man that doesn’t know what gold is, can discern the substance of gold by looking at silver. For one nature is not shown by another”.

Irenaeus stated³² that the understanding of the relationship of the Father and the Son was important for the missionary campaigns of the Twelve and the Seventy. To them the Lord bore witness, that in Himself, they had both known and seen the Father. To say that they did not know the truth is to say that they have played the part of false witnesses.

“The Lord replied to Philip, who wished to behold the Father, ‘Have I been so long a time with you, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He that sees Me, sees also the Father; and how say you then, show us the Father? For I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; and henceforth you know Him, and have seen Him’. To these men, therefore, did the Lord bear witness, that in Himself they had both known and seen the Father (and the Father is truth). To allege, then, that these men

³² Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III, xiii, 2.

did not know the truth is to act the part of false witnesses, and of those who have been alienated from the doctrine of Christ. For why did the Lord send the Twelve Apostles to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6), if these men did not know the truth? How also did the Seventy preach (Luke 10:1-17), unless they had themselves previously known the truth of what was preached? Or how could Peter have been in ignorance, to whom the Lord gave testimony, that flesh and blood had not revealed to him, but the Father, who is in heaven? (Matthew 16:17) Just, then, as ‘Paul was an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father’ (Galatians 1:1), so with the rest; the Son indeed leading them to the Father, but the Father revealing to them the Son”.

Hippolytus stated³³ that some heretics twisted Christ’s response to Philip to imply that Jesus was none other than the Father, saying, ‘He that has seen me has seen the Father’. Hippolytus answered that Christ is the image of the Father (Colossians 1:15), which is like the original, and in this manner the Father is made readily known.

“If they choose to maintain that their dogma is ratified by this passage, as if He owned Himself to be the Father, let them know that it is decidedly against them, and that they are confuted by this very word. For though Christ had spoken of Himself, and showed Himself among all as the Son, they had not yet recognized Him to be such, neither had they been able to apprehend or contemplate His real power. And Philip, not having been able to receive this, as far as it was possible to see it, requested to behold the Father. To whom then the Lord said, ‘Philip, have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known me? He that has seen me has seen the Father’. By which He means, If you have seen me, you may know the Father through me. For through the image (Colossians 1:15), which is like the original, the Father is made readily known. But if you have not known the image, which is the Son, how did you seek to see the Father? And that this is the case is made clear by the rest of the chapter, which signifies that the Son who ‘has been set forth (Romans 3:25) was sent from the Father (John 5:30, 6:29, 8:16-18), and goes to the Father” (John 13:1, 14:12).

Gregory of Nyssa stated³⁴ that Christ’s flesh veiled the Godhead in Him. In His Deity, He was unchanged; in His humanity, He had a beginning and was changed as He grew up. We need to look beyond that which changed to see that which is unchangeable.

“For the Right Hand of God was God Himself; manifested in the flesh. He did the work of the Father, being, both in fact and in thought, the Right Hand of God, yet being changed, with respect to the veil of the flesh by which He was surrounded, as regarded that which was seen, from that which He was by Nature. Therefore He says to Philip, who was gazing only at that which was changed, ‘Look through that which is changed to that which is unchangeable, and if you see this, you have seen that Father Himself, Whom you seek to see. For he that has seen Me — not Him Who appears in a state of change, but My very self, Who am in the Father — will have seen that Father Himself in Whom I am, because the very same character of Godhead is beheld in both’. We believe that the immortal and uncreated Nature came to be in the passable Nature of the creature. If we conceive the ‘change’ to consist in this, on what grounds are we charged with saying that He

³³ Hippolytus, “Against the Heresy of One Noetus”, II, 7, The Extant Works and Fragments of Hippolytus.

³⁴ Gregory of Nyssa, Against Eunomius, VI, 3.

‘was emptied to become Himself’, by those who keep prating their own statements about our doctrines? For the participation of the created with the created is no ‘change of the Right Hand’. To say that the Right Hand of the uncreated Nature is created belongs to Eunomius alone, and to those who adopt such opinions as he holds. For the man with an eye that looks on the truth will discern the Right Hand of the Highest to be such as he sees the Highest to be. Uncreated of Uncreated, Good of Good, Eternal of Eternal without prejudice to Its eternity by Its being in the Father by way of generation. Thus our accuser has unawares been employing against us reproaches that properly fall upon himself”.

Ambrose elaborated³⁵ on the terms used in the Scriptures to describe the Son, such as “Brightness”, “Mirror”, “Image”, and “Expression”. These terms describe the relationship of the Son to the Father.

“The Apostle said that Christ is the image of the Father — for he calls Him the image of the invisible God, the first-begotten of all creation (Colossians 1:15). First-begotten, mark you, not first-created, in order that He may be believed to be both ‘begotten’, in virtue of His nature, and ‘first’, in virtue of His eternity. In another place also the Apostle has declared that God made the Son ‘heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds, Who is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His substance’” (Hebrews 1:2-3).

“The prophets say, ‘In Your light we shall see light’ (Psalm 36:9); and again, ‘Wisdom is the brightness of everlasting light, and the spotless mirror of God’s majesty, the image of His goodness’ (Wisdom 7:26). See what great names are declared! ‘Brightness’, because in the Son the Father’s glory shines clearly; ‘spotless mirror’, because the Father is seen in the Son (John 12:45); ‘image of goodness’, because it is not one body seen reflected in another, but the whole power of the Godhead in the Son. The word ‘image’ teaches us that there is no difference; ‘expression’, that He is the counterpart of the Father’s form; and ‘brightness’ declares His eternity. The ‘image’ in truth is not that of a bodily countenance, not one made up of colors, nor modeled in wax, but simply derived from God, coming out from the Father, drawn from the fountainhead”.

“By means of this image the Lord showed Philip the Father. saying, ‘Philip, he that sees Me, sees the Father also. How then did you say, Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me?’ (John 14:9-10) He who beholds the Father in the Son, beholds Him in a portrait. Mark what manner of portrait is spoken of. It is Truth (John 14:6), Righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6, 33:16, 1 Corinthians 1:30), the Power of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). Not dumb, for it is the Word (John 1:1-18); not insensible, for it is Wisdom (1 Corinthians 1:24,30); not vain and foolish, for it is Power. Not soulless, for it is the Life; not dead, for it is the Resurrection (John 11:25). You see, then, that while an image is spoken of, the meaning is that it is the Father, Whose image the Son is, seeing that no one can be his own image”.

Theodoret stated³⁶ that nowhere does the Scripture represent the two Natures of Christ (human and Divine) as one. Christ is the exact image of the Father, and the Father can be “seen” in the spotless and living mirror of His Image:

³⁵ Ambrose, *Exposition of the Christian Faith*, I, vii, 48-50.

³⁶ Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History of Theodoret*, I, 3.

“In the words, ‘I and My father are one’ (John 10:30), the Lord does not proclaim Himself to be the Father, neither does He represent two natures as one. But that the essence of the Son of the Father preserves accurately the likeness of the Father, His nature taking off the impress of likeness to Him in all things, being the exact image of the Father and the express stamp of the prototype. When Philip, desirous of seeing the Father, said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father’, the Lord with abundant plainness said to him, ‘He that has seen Me has seen the Father’, (John 14:8-9) as though the Father were beheld in the spotless and living mirror of His image. The same idea is conveyed in the Psalms, where the saints say, ‘In Your light we shall see light’ (Psalm 36:9). It is on this account that ‘he who honors the Son, honors the Father’ (John 5:23). And rightly, for every impious word which men dare to utter against the Son is spoken also against the Father”.

The hymns of the Church also celebrate Philip’s ascent to understand more about God:

“Having made your activity³⁷ the ascent of true vision, and your vision the end of your activity of love for God, O blessed one, you beseeched Christ to show you the ineffable glory of the Father. For every rational being, O glorious one, desires God the Creator, and you obtained what you desired, immediately receiving the seal of His Son. Entreat Him with boldness in behalf of our souls. Ever instructed by divine ascents, as Moses had been in the past, you desired to behold God. Noetically you beheld His Image, having received His likeness. For the Son is the immaculate knowledge and disclosure of the Father. And the Son is known to be of the same essence as the Father, and their unity, kingdom, power, glory and worship are exalted with honor by all. Burning with rays of great light, O Philip, you shone forth as a universal beacon. Having sought, you found the Father of lights within the Son, for light is revealed in light, just as a seal is identical, disclosing the Archetype. Beseech Him, O Philip, that we that have been sealed by His divine blood may be saved”.

“Christ Himself³⁸, showing you the glory of the Father, enrolled you in the choir of His disciples, O Philip, perceiving your virtue, O divinely blessed one”.

³⁷ “Eight Stichera for Vespers of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip”, November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

³⁸ “Ode III for Matins of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip”, November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

Philip in the First Year of the Church

In the first year of the Church, the Book of Acts describes several encounters between the Apostles and the religious leaders. In all cases, either Peter or John is quoted as being the spokesman for the Apostles. On Pentecost, Peter was described “standing with the Eleven” (Acts 2:14) in his message to the people who were confused by the events taking place. When Peter and John healed the lame man, the man held onto both Peter and John, but Peter was the one who spoke to the people about what had happened (Acts 3:1-12). When Peter and John were arrested for this, it was Peter who spoke in their defense (Acts 4:1-8). When the Twelve were arrested and put in prison, an angel let them out during the night. Summoned before the High Priest and the Sanhedrin, the account reads that Peter *and the other Apostles answered* and said, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:17-29).

Few details are given in Acts regarding the exact accusations that were brought against the Apostles, or who of the Twelve answered these accusations. Pseudo Clement³⁹ records one example where Philip responded:

“And, behold, one of the scribes, shouting from the midst of the people, said, ‘The signs and miracles which your Jesus wrought, he wrought not as a prophet, but as a magician’. Him Philip eagerly encountered, showing that by this argument he accused Moses also. For when Moses wrought signs and miracles in Egypt, in like manner as Jesus also did in Judea, it cannot be doubted that what was said of Jesus might as well be said of Moses. Having made these and such like protestations, Philip was silent”.

Philip’s Early Missionary Journeys

“Philip became a preacher of Christ amid the Gentiles⁴⁰ shortly after the stoning of Stephen, for it fell to him to preach in Asia Minor and Syria. He preached first in Galilee, where it came to pass that a certain woman met him, bearing in her arms her dead boy and lamenting inconsolably. When he saw her, the Apostle was moved to pity and, stretching forth his hand over the infant, said, ‘Arise! Thus Christ commands you!’ And immediately the child was restored to life. The mother, seeing her son raised up alive and well, and overcome with joy, fell at the feet of the Apostle, pouring forth her gratitude to him for raising her son and asking him for baptism, for she had come to believe in the Lord Christ Whom he was preaching. After baptizing mother and son, Philip departed into pagan lands”.

“Preaching the Gospel in Greece, he worked many miracles, healed diseases, and raised up a dead man through the power of Christ. This miracle astonished the Jews living there, and they sent word to Jerusalem, to the chief priests and princes of the Jews, that a stranger named Philip had come among them, preaching the Name of Jesus. They said that he was casting out demons and healing all diseases, and had even raised a man from the dead by the Name of Jesus; and many

³⁹ Pseudo-Clement, *Recognitions of Clement*, I, 58.

⁴⁰ Isaac Lambertsen, *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, pp. 155-165. This is a translation from the following:

The Lives of the Saints in the Russian Language, According to the Menology of St. Dimitri of Rostov, Moscow, Synodal Press, 1911, v. 3, (November) pp. 372-384.

The Great Synaxaristes of the Orthodox Church [in Greek], Archimandrite Matthew Lagges, pub., Athens, 5th ed., 1979, v. XI, pp. 456-467.

had come to believe in Christ. Soon there came from Jerusalem to Greece a certain chief priest accompanied by scribes, who made loud and violent accusations against Philip”.

“Arrayed in his priestly vestments, he sat with pride and hauteur in the judgment seat in the presence of a multitude of people, both Jews and Gentiles. Led there, the Apostle Philip was set in the midst of that company. Fixing a threatening gaze upon him, the chief priest began to speak wrathfully, ‘Is it not enough that you have deceived the simple and illiterate people of Judea, Galilee and Samaria? But you have also come here, to the wise Greeks, to spread the corruption which you have learned from Jesus, the opponent of the Law of Moses, for which He was condemned, crucified on a cross and died an ignominious death? It was only because of the feast of the Passover that He was buried; and you, His disciples, stole His body secretly, and to deceive many, spread the word everywhere that He Himself had risen from the dead”’.

“When the chief priest had uttered these words, the crowd cried out against Philip, ‘What have you to say in answer to this, O Philip?’ And a great noise arose from the people. Some demanded that Philip be immediately slain; others that he be sent to Jerusalem to be executed. Then the Apostle opened his mouth and said to the chief priest, ‘Wrongly do you love vanity and speak falsehood! Why does your heart remain hardened, and why do you not wish to confess the truth? Did you not set a seal upon the tomb and post a guard. And when the Lord rose from the dead without breaking the seal of the tomb, did you not then give gold to the watch, that they perjure themselves, saying that while they slept His disciples stole His body? How is it that you are not now ashamed to pervert the truth? On the Day of Judgment the very seals of the tomb shall be the greatest unmaskers of your falsehood, for they were indisputable evidence of the true resurrection of Christ!”’

The ancient hymns of the Church also speak of the testimony of the seals on the Tomb:

“While the stone⁴¹ was sealed by the Jews, and the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure Body, Thou didst arise on the third day, O Saviour, granting life to the world. For which cause the heavenly powers cried aloud unto Thee, O giver of Life: Glory to thy Resurrection, O Christ; glory to Thy Kingdom; glory to Thy Providence, O Thou Who alone art the Lover of mankind!”

“O Jewish race⁴², which loves trouble, understand and comprehend! Where are they who went in to Pilate? Let your guardian soldiers tell where the seals of the tomb are! How was the buried One moved from the grave? How was the priceless One sold? How was the treasure stolen? Why do you deny the Resurrection of the Crucified, O wavering people, thus falling into error, O Jews who transgress the law? He has truly risen, standing up, free among the dead, and has granted great mercy to the world”.

“Say, O Jews⁴³, where is Jesus whom you thought you were guarding? Where is He whom you had thrown into the grave, and sealed there with the stone? Give us the dead One, O deniers of life! Give us the buried One, or else believe in the risen One! And if you keep silent about the Resurrection, the stone shall proclaim it, even that stone which was rolled away from the door of the tomb. Great

⁴¹ The Troparion of the Resurrection in Tone 1.

⁴² Seraphim Nassar, “Stichera from the Oktoechos in Tone 1 for Matins”, Divine Prayers and Services, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, 1993, p. 143.

⁴³ Seraphim Nassar, “Stichera from the Oktoechos in Tone 4 for Matins”, Divine Prayers and Services, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America, 1993, p. 143.

is your mercy, and great is the mystery of your dispensation, O Savior; glory to You”.

“When the Apostle had said this to challenge the chief priest, the chief priest grew yet more angered and cast himself at him in a fit of insane malice, desiring to seize and slay the Apostle himself. But at that instant he was stricken blind. Those present, seeing what had taken place, ascribed it to sorcery and, casting themselves upon Philip, wished to destroy him as a warlock. But all who wished to lay hold of him were struck with the same punishment as the chief priest. Meanwhile, the earth began to shake tremendously, and everyone quaked out of fear. The Apostle Philip, seeing their blindness of spirit and body, shed tears for them and turned to God in prayer, begging Him to forgive them. At Philip’s prayer, all that were afflicted were healed of their blindness. This miracle caused many to convert to Christ and to believe on Him. But the chief priest, blinded all the more by malice, not only did not wish to mend his ways after the punishment inflicted upon him, but again began to utter many blasphemies against our Lord Jesus Christ. Then a greater punishment befell him. Suddenly the ground opened up and swallowed him alive, as once it had Dathan and Abiron” (Numbers 16:1-35).

“After the chief priest had perished, Philip baptized many there and appointed as their bishop a certain honored and worthy man named Narcissus; then he himself passed on to Parthia”. This Narcissus⁴⁴ was originally one of the Seventy, and he was later referred to as Bishop of Athens. Paul referred to “the household of Narcissus” in Rome (Romans 16:11) in c. 55 AD, where there were 18 of the Seventy in Rome at that time (Romans 16:3-23). Toward the end of his life, Narcissus went to Edessa in Mesopotamia to help Thaddaeus, also of the Seventy, whom Thomas had sent to Edessa at the Lord’s request. Narcissus was martyred there⁴⁵ in the latter part of the 1st Century along with Thaddaeus⁴⁶, who was also called “Addaeus”.

The hymns of the Church refer to Narcissus as follows:

“Casting right skillfully⁴⁷ with the net of your tongue, you drew forth Divine food from the deep of deception, O Apostle Narcissus, and you offered it to the King and Master of Creation, Who came to save the lost”.

“You preached God⁴⁸, Who wills mercy, and freed the souls of the pious, O Divinely blessed and godly Narcissus, as the great primate of the Athenians and planter of beautiful gardens”.

The hymns of the Church refer to Philip’s encounter and debate with the chief priest:

“As light⁴⁹, you have been loosed in the guise of an arrow, O Apostle, illumining with splendid radiance them that cry out with faith. Radiantly shining with the rich outpourings of divine preaching, O blessed one, you enlightened them that are in darkness. Having vanquished

⁴⁴ Hippolytus, On the Seventy Apostles, 30

⁴⁵ Roberts and Donaldson, “From the Epistle of Addaeus the Apostle, Which He Spoke in the City of Edessa”, Extracts from Various Books Concerning Abgar the King and Addaeus the Apostle, Ancient Syriac Documents, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

⁴⁶ For more details on the work of the Apostle Thaddaeus, of the Seventy, see the study for the Apostle Thomas.

⁴⁷ “Ode III for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostles Stachys, Amplus & Those With them”, October 31st”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁴⁸ “Ode VI for Matins of the Commemoration of the Holy Apostles Stachys, Amplus & Those With them”, October 31st”, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁴⁹ “Ode VII for Matins of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip”, November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

by the mighty word of faith all the craft of the orator's logic and fables, you sang, 'Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers!'

"As Philip traveled along the way to Parthia, he asked God to help him in his labors. And the moment he bent his knees in prayer, there appeared to him from heaven the form of an eagle with golden pinions stretched forth in the form of the Cross of Christ. Fortified by this manifestation, Philip again went forth to preach. Having gone about the towns of Arabia and Candacia, he took ship and sailed across the sea to the Syrian City of Azotus. At night a mighty storm descended upon the sea, and all despaired of saving their lives. Then Philip began to pray, and immediately there appeared in the heavens the sign of the light-bearing Cross, which shone through the darkness of the night; and the sea immediately became calm, and its waves died down. Dropping anchor off the shore of Azotus, Philip disembarked and was received at the home of a certain hospitable man named Niocledes, who had a daughter named Charitina, who suffered from a disease which affected the sight in one of her eyes. They listened to the preaching of the Apostle, and all came to believe and accept baptism. After this, Niocledes requested a favor of Philip: to heal his daughter's eye. The Apostle then said to the maiden, 'Charitina, to reveal the wonderworking power inherent in baptism, I wish you to heal your own disease. Therefore, in the morning, place your right hand to your eye, and invoke the Name of Christ the Master, that you may be cured'. When she followed the Apostle's instructions, Charitina was healed, and gave thanks to the Lord. Then the Apostle departed".

"From Azotus, the Apostle Philip journeyed to Hierapolis of Syria, where, preaching Christ, he provoked the wrath of the people, who threatened to slay him by stoning. But the aid of the ruler, a man named Irus, saved him from the indignation of the crowd. 'Citizens!' he appealed to the people, 'Listen to my counsel! Do no evil to this foreigner until we learn if his doctrine is true; and if it turn out not to be such, then let us slay him'. The people did not dare to contradict Irus, and he then brought Philip to his home. They arrived together; but this offended Marcella, the wife of the ruler. She demanded that she be released from her conjugal bond and that he return her dowry to her, if he did not drive Philip from their house. The Apostle knew that the ruler was stricken with consternation, and urged him to stand fast in the Faith. He then offered up supplication for Marcella. Now Marcella's maidservant had heard the Apostle speak and said to her master, 'Where did this wondrous man come from? How gentle and agreeable are his words and how laudable his character!' The ruler said to her, 'Woman, this is the herald of the great God and the ambassador of the everlasting kingdom. Therefore, let us believe his words'. And immediately the maid went in to Marcella and told her of the great virtue of Philip. Marcella listened to her words, and Irus and all his household respected the Apostle and were baptized, together with many of their neighbors".

"When the citizens of Hierapolis learned that Irus had accepted baptism, they assembled at night and surrounded his house, intending to set it on fire while Irus, the Apostle, and all his servants were asleep. Informed of their plans by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle fearlessly went before them; and they, like wild beasts, fell upon him, gnashing their teeth, and led him away to their council. When the chief among them, a man by the name of Aristarchus, saw the Apostle, he said, 'I know they desired to burn you on account of your sorceries. Now, if you will not repudiate these things of your own accord, I will have you slain by stoning! As to the crucified God, I will question you concerning Him at some later time'. And so saying, he stretched forth his hand and laid hold of the Apostle's hair, and, to ridicule him, pulled him about from one place to another".

"The Apostle, so as to bring correction for Aristarchus' misconduct, or perhaps that all might know the power of the servants of God, cried aloud with a great voice, for all to hear. 'O

Lord, Who have fashioned our heart and knows its movements and thoughts, fulfill my word, which comes not from anger of heart, but out of a desire for the reformation of others! Paralyze the arm of this unruly man, who dares to lift his hand against the head, which You have blessed!’ At that very instant his arm withered, and he was deprived of sight and hearing. Then a change took place in the people's feelings; their wrath turned to astonishment at the sight of this wonder, and they besought the Apostle to heal their exarch, Aristarchus. But Philip said, ‘If he does not believe in the God Whom I preach, he will not be healed’”.

“At that time a funeral procession was passing by them, and the people, wishing to mock the Apostle, said, ‘If you resurrect this dead man, then Aristarchus and we shall all believe in your God!’ The Apostle lifted his eyes to heaven, prayed a while, and then, turning to the dead man, said in a meek voice, ‘Theophilus!’ Immediately, the dead man sat up on the bier and opened his eyes. Then Philip addressed him again, saying, ‘Christ commands you, arise and speak with us!’ The dead man, rising from his bier, fell at the feet of the Apostle. ‘I thank you, O holy servant of God that you have delivered me at this hour from great evil. For two noxious men had laid hold of me and were dragging me along with them; and if you had not driven them off and delivered me from them, I would have been cast down into gloomy⁵⁰ Tartarus!’”

“Then all who beheld this most glorious miracle were stricken with fear and wonder, for Philip knew the name of the dead man, whom he had never seen before, and raised him up instantly; and they glorified the one true God Whom Philip preached. The Apostle motioned with his hand for the people to be silent, and commanded Irus, who had come, to make the sign of the Cross with his hand over the afflicted limbs of Aristarchus. No sooner did Irus do so, than immediately the withered arm of Aristarchus was made whole. Therefore, the people cast aside all doubt and hesitation, and believed in Christ, exclaiming, ‘He Whom you preach, O wondrous one, is the only true and almighty God, Who hath performed all of these marvelous wonders. To Him do we all pray, and in Him do we steadfastly believe!’ Then he stilled the tumult of the crowd with a gesture and commanded Aristarchus to make the sign of the Cross and to call upon the name of the Holy Trinity. This Aristarchus did, and was completely restored (i.e. healed of the blindness and deafness that occurred at the prayer of Philip). He was then one of the first people to receive baptism, together with Praefectus, the father of the one raised from the dead, who was an elder of the city. He believed in Christ with all his soul, and gave the Apostle the gold from twelve idols, which he owned, which he distributed among the poor. Moreover, he sold the rest of his property and kept the Faith to the end, finishing his life in a God-pleasing manner. And the Apostle established and confirmed them in the Orthodox Faith. Irus, the husband of Marcella, he ordained a bishop; and others he appointed as presbyters and deacons, commanding them to erect a church. And he strengthened them with his instruction before departing to preach Christ in other lands.

Having thus founded the Church in Hierapolis of Syria and established the newly enlightened ones in the holy Faith, Philip departed, passing through other parts of Syria and the mountainous regions of Asia.

The hymns of the Church refer to Philip’s work as follows:

⁵⁰ Tartarus in Greek mythology was the deepest abyss in Hades for the worst offenders. See also 2 Peter 2:4, Psalm 86:13 LXX, Job 40:15 LXX, Job 41:23 LXX.

“You have been shown⁵¹ to be a dwelling place of the Sun, of Christ Who is the light, and a temple which contains His splendor, and a heaven proclaiming the Glory of God to men. Casting the salt of God, which is from Christ, into mankind corrupted by the passions, O glorious herald of God, you dried up its putrefaction. Strengthened with the power of Christ, O Philip, you were shown to be more powerful than the legions of demons and the wicked, proclaiming unto them that are on earth the glad tidings of divine life”.

Philip’s Missionary Journeys in Gaul with Joseph of Arimathaea

After Philip’s early missionary journeys to Syria, Greece, Parthia, Arabia and Candacia, he traveled to Gaul (modern France) and Ethiopia. In Gaul, Philip worked with Joseph of Arimathaea, who had performed the burial rite for Jesus along with Nicodemus. Joseph was a prominent member of the council (Mark 15:43) known as the Sanhedrin.

Joseph had been a very wealthy man (Matthew 27:57), where he had obtained his wealth as a merchant⁵² in the mining of tin in the British Isles. Tin was alloyed with copper that was mined in Israel (Deuteronomy 8:9) to make bronze, which was superior to either tin or copper by themselves. Tin was sent by ship from the British Isles to Israel for this purpose, and Joseph owned several ships.

By performing the burial rite for Jesus, the fact that Joseph was a secret follower of Jesus (John 19:38) became known. Called before the Council prior to the Resurrection, Joseph said⁵³, “Why are you angry against me because I begged the body of Jesus? You have not acted well against the just man, because you have not repented of crucifying him, but also have pierced him with a spear”. The members of the Council said, “Because the Sabbath is dawning, we can’t deal with you now. But know that you shall not be deemed worthy of burial, but we shall give your flesh to the birds of the air”. Joseph threw this right back at them, “These are the words of the arrogant Goliath, who reproached the living God and holy David (1 Samuel 17:43-44). For God has said by the prophet, ‘Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, said the Lord’ (Deuteronomy 32:35). And now Pilate has taken water, and washed his hands in the face of the sun, saying, ‘I am innocent of the blood of this just man; you see to it’. And you answered and said to Pilate, ‘His blood be upon us, and upon our children’ (Matthew 27:24-25). And now I am afraid lest the wrath of God come upon you, and upon your children, as you have said”.

Hearing this, the Jewish leaders were very bitter, and locked Joseph in a windowless room until the Sabbath was past. They stationed guards outside the locked door, and sealed the door as they had done the Tomb (Matthew 27:66). While in prison⁵⁴, he had a vision of the Lord, and was translated from the closed prison to his home in Arimathaea. “And when the Sanhedrin was

⁵¹ “Ode IV for Matins of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip”, November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁵² I forgot where I read this!!

⁵³ Roberts and Donaldson, “The Gospel of Nicodemus”, First Greek Form, 12, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8

⁵⁴ Roberts and Donaldson, “The Gospel of Nicodemus”, First Greek Form, 15, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8

Roberts and Donaldson, “The Avenging of the Savior”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8

sitting⁵⁵ after the Sabbath, they ordered Joseph to be brought with much indignity. And having opened the door, they did not find him. And all the people were surprised and dismayed, because they found the seals unbroken and because Caiaphas had the key. And they no longer dared to lay hands upon those who had spoken before Pilate in Jesus' behalf".

Later Joseph was witness to a group of people who had been raised from the dead at Jesus' death (Matthew 27:51-53), and who testified before the Sanhedrin about Christ's Resurrection⁵⁶. The Jewish leaders were terrified at all this, expecting the imminent wrath of God for their deeds. But when judgment didn't come right away, they lapsed back to their old ways.

Eventually the Jewish leaders drove Joseph from Israel. In being driven from his homeland, Joseph undoubtedly had to pay quite a price. The Scriptures (Matthew 27:57) refer to Joseph as being a rich man. Being driven away, he had to leave his wealth behind. Like others of the Twelve and the Seventy, Joseph considered treasure in heaven as worth far more the wealth in this life (Matthew 19:16-30).

Prior to being driven away, however, Joseph played an important role⁵⁷ in starting the first Christian community at Lydda, which is West of Jerusalem, near Joppa. Joseph was also very close to the Virgin Mary, and he was present at her funeral in c. 55 AD. One of the documents⁵⁸ describing the events surrounding the death of the Virgin Mary claims to have been written by Joseph.

When Philip began to preach the Gospel in Gaul⁵⁹, Joseph of Arimathaea accompanied him as a devoted disciple, along with many others. Philip sent Joseph to Britain, along with 12 priests in their company, and placed these priests under Joseph's direction. The king of Britain to whom they addressed themselves would not accept Christianity, but he gave them an island, Yniswitrin, in the middle of a swamp, to build a Church. This island was later known as Glastonbury, and with the help of the archangel Gabriel, they built a Church there, made out of wattles⁶⁰, in 62 AD, dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The dedication of the Church to the Virgin Mary is understandable due to Joseph's close association with her.

Later accounts, attributed to John of Glastonbury's history of the abbey, state that shortly thereafter, 150 other men and women crossed the English Channel from Gaul (France) to Britain accompanied by Joseph's son, Josephes. The king of North Wales soon imprisoned them. When they were released, they were allowed to occupy Yniswitrin, which was identified with both Glastonbury and Avalon. Joseph died of old age there and was buried at the chapel of wattles.

⁵⁵ Roberts and Donaldson, "The Gospel of Nicodemus", First Greek Form, 12, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8

⁵⁶ Roberts and Donaldson, "The Gospel of Nicodemus, Part 2, The Descent of Christ into Hell", Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v. 8

⁵⁷ Lydda is connected with Joseph of Arimathaea in F. L. Cross, The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, 1978, p. 758. The Gospel of Nicodemus is stated as the source of the information.

⁵⁸ Roberts and Donaldson, "The Passing of Mary, First Latin Form", Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.

⁵⁹ Thurston and Attwater, Butler's Lives of the Saints, Christian Classics, Westminster, MD, 1990, March 17.

⁶⁰ Construction using "wattles" involved poles interwoven with small branches or reeds.

Very well known legends concerning the “Holy Grail” have grown up, all connected to Joseph and his son Josephes. Featured in these legends are two silver cruets containing the blood of Jesus. Since the focus of the early Christian worship was on the mystery of the Eucharist, containing the body and blood of Christ, and served from a common cup, these legends seem to have their roots in the worship of the Church as seen, but not understood, by a pagan culture.

About this time, Philip also traveled to Ethiopia. His work in Ethiopia is commemorated in the hymns of the Church as follows:

“The whole world⁶¹ is splendidly adorned; Ethiopia dances, graced with a crown, having been enlightened by you, and she radiantly celebrates your memory, O divinely eloquent Philip. For you taught all to believe in Christ and fittingly finished the course of the Gospel. Wherefore the land of Ethiopia boldly entreats God. Beseech Him to grant us great mercy”.

Philip Returns to Jerusalem for the Funeral of the Virgin Mary

Philip was busy on his missionary journeys in Gaul just prior to the time of the death of the Virgin Mary in c. 55 AD. As Mary reached her mid 70’s, she was feeling the effects of old age. And it was then that the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her to tell her that her departure was imminent⁶², and would occur in three days.

Shortly after Gabriel left, the Apostle John was translated in a bright cloud from wherever he was at the time. This was similar to the way the Deacon Philip was translated from the desert road between Jerusalem and Gaza to Azotus (Acts 8:26, 39-40), and as Habakkuk the prophet carried food to Daniel, who was in the lions’ den, and quickly returned to Judea⁶³. There is some disagreement among the Church Fathers as to whether John was in Ephesus or in some region of Judea. They contend that John did not leave the Virgin Mary alone during her lifetime, unless it was just briefly in the care of her stepson, James, the Lord’s brother.

After John arrived⁶⁴, “the rest of the Twelve arrived also from whatever part of the world where they were then preaching the Gospel, and Joseph of Arimathea was there also. All of the Twelve arrived except Thomas. They stood and went in, and greeted the queen mother with the following words: ‘Hail, Mary, full of grace! The Lord be with you’ (Luke 1:28). And she eagerly rose quickly, and bowed herself, and kissed them, and gave thanks to God. And Peter answered and said to the Apostles, ‘Let us each, according to what the Holy Spirit announced and commanded us, give full information to the mother of our Lord’. And those who had come likewise agreed to give an account of how they had come. So each of the Twelve gave Mary an account of where they were when they were summoned”. The account of where Philip was at this time is not recorded.

⁶¹ “Troparion for Vespers of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip”, November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁶² Roberts and Donaldson, “The Book of John Concerning the Falling Asleep of Mary”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8. Roberts and Donaldson, “The Passing of Mary”, Ante-Nicene Fathers, v.8.

⁶³ Lancelot C. L. Brenton, “Bel and the Dragon 1:33-39”, The Septuagint with Apocrypha, Hendrickson, Peabody MA, 1990

⁶⁴ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Passing of Mary, First Latin Form”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

“Then the blessed Mary said to her brethren: ‘What is this, that you have all come to Jerusalem?’ Peter, answering, said to her: ‘We had need to ask this of you. Certainly, as I think, none of us knows why we have come here today with such rapidity. And they all wondered that they were there when they heard these things. The blessed Mary said to them: ‘I asked my Son, before He endured the passion, that He and you should be at my death; and He granted me this gift. Whence you may know that my departure will be tomorrow’”.

“After Mary’s death the next day, the Apostles with great honor laid the body in a tomb on the Mount of Olives, then Thomas was suddenly brought to the Mount of Olives, like the others had been brought earlier. He saw Mary’s body going up to heaven, and began to cry out to her. Then the girdle with which the Apostles had encircled her body was thrown down from heaven to the blessed Thomas. And taking it, and giving thanks to God, he came again into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, finding all the Apostles and a great crowd there. Then Thomas said, ‘Where have you laid her body?’ And they pointed out the sepulcher with their finger. And he said, ‘The body is not there’. But they didn’t believe Thomas. Then they went to the sepulcher, which was a new one hollowed out in the rock, and took up the stone; but they did not find the body, and did not know what to say. Then Thomas told them how he was singing mass in India — he still had on his sacerdotal robes. He, not knowing the word of God, had been brought to the Mount of Olives, and saw the body of the blessed Mary going up into heaven, and prayed her to give him a blessing. She heard his prayer, and threw him her girdle, which she had about her. And the Apostles seeing the belt which they had put about her, glorified God, on account of the benediction which the blessed Mary had given him, and because he had seen her body going up into heaven. Then Thomas gave them his benediction, and said, ‘Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!’”

“And the same cloud⁶⁵ by which they had been brought carried them back each to his own place. And so also the Apostles quickly returned to where they had at first been, to preach to the people of God”.

The Martyrdom of Philip

Do Prologue, Butler and Lambertson agree that this occurred?

Philip and Nathanael were very close, as we see when Philip first brought Nathanael to Jesus (John 1:44-46). After Philip had gone through the cities and regions of Lydia and Mysia in Asia, where he converted the unbelieving pagans to the true God, he came to Hierapolis of Asia, which was near Phrygia, where the Apostle Paul had been 30 some years earlier (Acts 16:6). This occurred during the latter part of Philip’s missionary journeys, where he joined Nathanael and Philip’s sister, the maiden Mariamne plus others of their followers. Since Philip’s daughters were described earlier as living in Hierapolis, they may have been there at this time also.

This occurred in the latter part of the 1st Century, where Hierapolis of Asia was devoted to the worship of a huge snake. This may seem odd to us, but there was a heretic group that predated Christ called the “Ophites”, where they took their name from the Greek word for snake. The

⁶⁵ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Passing of Mary, First Latin Form”, *Apocrypha of the New Testament*, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

Ophites came to adopt many of the teachings of the Arch heretic Simon Magus. Tertullian described them⁶⁶ as follows:

“The Ophites magnify the serpent to such a degree that they prefer him even to Christ Himself. For it was he, they say, who gave us the knowledge of good and of evil (Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7). His power and majesty, they say, Moses perceived and set up the brazen serpent; and whoever gazed upon him obtained health (Numbers 21:5-9). Christ Himself, they say further, in His gospel imitates Moses’ serpent’s sacred power, in saying, ‘And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so it behooves the Son of Man to be lifted up’ (John 3:14-15). Him they introduce to bless their eucharistic elements”.

One account⁶⁷ of Philip’s missionary campaign in Hierapolis states that it occurred during the reign of Emperor Trajan, who began his reign in 98 AD. Hippolytus, on the other hand, stated⁶⁸ that this occurred during the reign of Emperor Domitian, who began his reign in 81 AD. Other traditional sources⁶⁹ place these events in 86 AD and in 71 AD respectively. This event occurred toward the end of Philip’s missionary journeys, as he was going through the regions of Lydia and Asia. Abridged accounts⁷⁰ of these events are given in several traditional sources. The descriptions presented here⁷¹ come from one of the New Testament Apocryphal works to give more details.

Nathanael, Philip and Mariamne were together in Hierapolis (or Ophioryma) of Asia, teaching people the things of God. This city was called “Ophioryma”, which comes from the Greek word *ophis*, meaning snake, and was dedicated to the worship of a huge viper. The local priests had built a temple for the viper, and statues had also been made of the snake.

Mariamne was sitting in the entry of the house of a believer named Stachys, persuading people to come listen to the Apostles. This Stachys was not the Stachys of the Seventy, but had recently gained celebrity status⁷² in Hierapolis since he had been blind for forty years. Philip and Nathanael healed him and baptized him, and the word spread quickly that blind Stachys had received his sight. Philip and Nathanael counseled the people that came to them to trample under foot the snares of the serpent (Luke 10:19) for his father is the devil, his mother is corruption, destruction is in his mouth and his path is Hades. As a contrast, they told people of the love of Jesus, who is light, and life and Truth. They urged the people who were coming to worship the viper to take hold of Him in love, that He may bring them up out of the pit of the wicked, and having cleansed them, set them blameless, living in truth, in the presence of His Father. All the people gave ear and a great multitude of them fleeing from the enemy were turned to Jesus, and

⁶⁶ Tertullian, Against All Heresies, II, ix, 2.

⁶⁷ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Acts of Philip, From the 15th Act Until the End”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8

⁶⁸ Hippolytus, On the Twelve Apostles, Where Each of Them Preached, 5

⁶⁹ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 14.

Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, pp. 169.

⁷⁰ Nickolai Velimirovic, Prologue From Ochrid, Lazarica Press, Birmingham, 1986, November 14.

Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, 1990, pp. 169.

Thurston and Attwater, Butler’s Lives of the Saints, Christian Classics, Westminster, MD, 1990, May 1.

⁷¹ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Acts of Philip, From the 15th Act Until the End”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8.

⁷² Isaac Lambertsen, The Lives of the Holy Apostles, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, p. 174.

were added to Philip and those about him. And the faithful were the more confirmed in the love of Christ.

“And Nicanora⁷³, the wife of the proconsul and a Hebrew by descent, was lying in bed from various diseases, especially of the eyes, having heard about the Apostles and their teaching, and believed in the Lord. For she had even before this heard about Him; and having called upon His name, she was released from the troubles that afflicted her. And rising up, she went forth out of her house through the side door, carried by her own slaves in a silver litter, and went into the house of Stachys, where the Apostles were”.

“And when she came before the gate of the house, Mariamne, the sister of Philip the Apostle, seeing her, spoke to her in Hebrew before Philip and Bartholomew, and all the multitude of those who had believed. Mariamne said that Nicanora had formerly been given as a down payment to the serpent, but that she had now forsaken her father and the temple of that deception. Fleeing from the dwelling place of death, Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, has risen upon her to enlighten her”.

“And when Nicanora, standing before the door, heard these things, she took courage before all, crying out, and saying, ‘I am a Hebrew, and a daughter of the Hebrews. Speak with me in the language of my fathers. For, having heard the preaching of my fathers, I was immediately cured of the disease and the troubles that encompassed me. I therefore adore the goodness of God who has caused you to come to this city, in order that through you we may receive the knowledge of Him. Nicanora having thus spoken, the Apostle Philip, along with Bartholomew and Mariamne and those with them, prayed for her to God. ‘You, who bring the dead to life, Christ Jesus the Lord, who have freed us through baptism from the slavery of death, completely deliver also this woman from the error, the enemy. Make her alive in Your life, and perfect her in Your perfection, in order that she may be found in the country of her fathers in freedom, having a portion in Your goodness, O Lord Jesus’”.

And all having sent up the Amen along with the Apostle Philip, there came the tyrant, the husband of Nicanora, raging like an unbroken horse. Having laid hold of his wife’s garments, he cried out, saying, ‘Didn’t I leave you in bed? How have you so much strength to come to these magicians? And how have your eyes been cured? Tell me who your physician is or I’ll punish you severely, and have no compassion.

“And Nicanora said to him, ‘O tyrant, get rid of your tyranny, forsake your wickedness. Run away from the brutality of your worthless disposition; flee from the wicked dragon and his lusts; throw away the works of the man-slaying serpent. Renounce the abominable sacrifices of the idols, make for yourself a life chaste and pure. If you were in holiness you could know my Physician, and get His Name. If you wish me to be beside you, prepare yourself to live in chastity and self-restraint, and in fear of the true God, and I shall live with you all my life. Only cleanse yourself from the idols and from all their filth”.

“And when the gloomy tyrant (the proconsul), her husband, heard these words, he seized her by the hair of her head, and dragged her along, kicking her, and saying. ‘It will be better for

⁷³ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Acts of Philip, From the 15th Act Until the End”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8

you to be cut off by the sword, than to commit fornication with these foreign magicians; for I see that you have fallen into the madness of these deceivers. First I shall cut you off by an evil death; and then, I shall put them to a most cruel death'. And having turned, he said to those about him, 'Bring out for me those impostors of magicians'. And the public executioners ran into the house of Stachys, laid hold of the Apostle Philip, and Bartholomew and Mariamne, dragged them along, and led them to where the proconsul was. And Stachys followed, and all the faithful. Seeing them, the proconsul gnashed his teeth, saying, 'Torture these deceivers that say that they are worshippers of God, while they are an abomination'".

"And he ordered thongs of rawhide to be brought, and Philip and Bartholomew and Mariamne to be beaten. And after they had been scourged with the thongs, he ordered their feet to be tied, and them to be dragged through the streets of the city as far as the gate of their temple. And a great crowd was assembled, so that scarcely anyone stayed at home; and they all wondered at their patience, as they were being violently and inhumanely dragged along".

"Having tortured the Apostle Philip and the saints who were with him, the proconsul ordered them to be secured in the temple of the idol of the viper by its priests, until he should decide by what death he should destroy each of them. And many of the crowd believed in the grace of Christ, and were added to the Apostle Philip, and those with him, having renounced the idol of the viper, and were confirmed in the faith being magnified by the endurance of the saints. And all together with their voice glorified God, saying the Amen". We might note that the "Amen" that they were saying was part of the Liturgy of the Church, even at this early date.

"And when they were locked up in the temple of the viper, along with all the snakes — both Philip, Bartholomew and Mariamne — the priests of the viper assembled in the same place, along with a great crowd, about seven thousand men. And having run to the proconsul, they cried out, saying, 'Avenge us of the foreigners, and magicians, and corrupters and seducers of men. Ever since they came to us, our city has been filled with every evil deed. And they have also killed the serpents, the sons of our goddess. They have closed down the temple, and the altar has been desolated. And we have not found the wine which had been brought in order that the viper, having drunk of it, might go to sleep. But if you wish to know that they are really magicians, look and see how they wish to bewitch us. They say, 'Live in chastity and piety, after believing in God'. The dragons (i.e. the large snakes) have not struck them blind, or even killed them; but even the keepers of our city (the snakes) have been cast down by these men'".

This complaint is strangely similar to the one that was leveled at the Apostle Paul in Philippi.

"But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities. And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, 'These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.' Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks" Acts 16:19-24).

“And the proconsul⁷⁴, having heard these things, was even more inflamed with rage, and said to the priests, ‘Why need you speak, when they have bewitched my own wife? Since then she has spoken to me with strange words; and praying all the night long, she speaks in a strange tongue with a light shining round her. And groaning aloud, she says, ‘Jesus the true light has come to me’. Having gone forth from my chamber, I wanted to look down through the window and see Jesus, the Light, which she spoke of. And like lightning it came upon me, so that I was almost blinded; and since then I have been afraid of my wife, on account of her luminous Jesus. Tell me, you priests, what I am to do’. And they said to him, ‘O proconsul, we are no longer priests; for ever since you locked them up in the temple, because of their prayers, not only has the temple been shaken from the foundations, but it is also about to collapse’”.

“Then the proconsul ordered to bring the Apostles out of the temple, and to bring them up to the tribunal, saying to the public executioner, ‘Strip them, and search thoroughly to try to find their enchantments’. Having therefore first stripped Philip, then Bartholomew, they came also to Mariamne. And dragging her along, they said, ‘Let us strip her naked, that all may see her, how she follows men; for she especially deceives all the women’. And the tyrant said to the priests, ‘Proclaim throughout the whole city that all should come, men and women, that they may see her indecency, that she travels about with these magicians, and no doubt commits adultery with them’”.

“While everyone was gathering, he ordered Philip to be crucified, and his ankles to be pierced using iron hooks, and his heels also to be driven through, and to be hanged head downwards, opposite the temple on a certain tree. And they crucified Bartholomew opposite Philip, having nailed his hands on the wall of the gate of the temple”.

“And both of them smiled, seeing each other, both Philip and Bartholomew; for they were as if they were not tortured; for their punishments were prizes and crowns. And when they had stripped Mariamne, the semblance of her body was changed in the presence of all, and there was about her a cloud of fire before all. And they could no longer look on the place where holy Mariamne was, but they all fled from her”.

The hymns of the Church refer to the nakedness of Bartholomew and Philip (when they were crucified) and to the stripping of Mariamne as follows:

“Having woven a robe⁷⁵ of divine grace, O blessed one, you have clothed those who have been cruelly stripped bare through the malice of the serpent, and have given them the faith to chant, ‘O all-hymned Lord God of our fathers, blessed are You’”.

“While Philip and Bartholomew⁷⁶ were hanging there, the mob set fire to the house of Stachys. As they were doing that, the Apostle John entered the city. At first they took him to be a fellow citizen of the viper, but John spoke to them about their delusion saying, ‘Why do you punish these men because they told you that the serpent is your enemy?’ And when they heard these words from John, they raised their hands against him, saying, ‘We thought you to be a fellow-

⁷⁴ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Acts of Philip, From the 15th Act Until the End”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8

⁷⁵ “Ode VII for Matins of the Commemoration of the Return of the Relics of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew”, August 25th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁷⁶ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Acts of Philip, From the 15th Act Until the End”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8

citizen, but now you have shown yourself that you are their companion'. But when the priests attempted to lay hold of John, their hands were paralyzed".

"Philip then prayed that Hades would open its mouth, 'Let the great abyss swallow up these the ungodly, who have been unwilling to receive the word of truth in this city'. And, suddenly the abyss was opened, and the whole place where the proconsul was sitting was swallowed up. Also swallowed up was the whole temple, the dead viper, the priests of the viper and a great crowd, about seven thousand men. And their voices came up from beneath, saying, with weeping, 'Have mercy upon us, O God of the Apostles, because we now see the judgments of those who have not confessed the crucified One. The cross illumines us and we are being justly scourged because we have unjustly crucified Your Apostles".

"Not swallowed up were both Stachys and all his house, Nicanora, and fifty other women who had believed with her upon the Lord, and a multitude besides, both of men and women. A hundred virgins also had not been swallowed up because of their chastity, having been sealed with the seal of Christ".

"Just then there appeared a Cross in the air coming down from above even to the bottom of the abyss, and it was full of light, and had its form like a ladder. And the whole multitude that had gone down from the city into the abyss came up on the ladder of the luminous cross. But there remained below the proconsul, the dead viper, the priests of the viper and a number of other unbelievers⁷⁷".

"And when the multitude had come up, they looked upon Philip hanging head downwards, and lamented with a great lamentation at their lawless action. And they also saw Bartholomew, and Mariamne having her former appearance. And all the unbelieving people silently glorified God in fear and trembling. And all the multitudes cried out, saying, 'He alone is God, whom these men proclaim. He alone is God, who sent these men for our salvation. Let us therefore truly repent for our great error, because we are by no means worthy of everlasting life. Now we believe, because we have seen great wonders, because we have been brought up from the abyss. And they all fell upon their face, and adored Philip, and entreated him, 'Do not do another miracle, and again send us away into the abyss'. And they prayed that they might become worthy of Christ".

The hymns of the Church refer to this abyss as follows:

"With the net of your words⁷⁸, O divinely eloquent Apostle, you did draw forth the ends of the world out of the abyss of vainglory and wicked ungodliness, and did bring them with faith to Christ God, Who had given you such grace".

"Dragging up the nations⁷⁹ out of the depths of ignorance in godly manner with the net of the Word, you did bring them in with faith; and as a well-spring of spiritual waters you have watered the whole world with grace".

"Whirled about in the abyss of sin⁸⁰, I call upon the unfathomable abyss of Your loving-kindness. Lead me up from corruption, O God".

⁷⁷ Isaac Lambertsen, *The Lives of the Holy Apostles*, Holy Apostles Convent Press, Buena Vista, CO, p. 176.

⁷⁸ "First Antiphon for Vespers of the Commemoration of the Apostle Bartholomew", June 11th, *Russian Menaion*, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁷⁹ "Sedalion for Matins of the Commemoration of the Apostle Bartholomew", June 11th, *Russian Menaion*, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁸⁰ "Ode VI for Matins of the Commemoration of the Apostle Bartholomew", June 11th, *Russian Menaion*, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

“With the rod of grace⁸¹, O right wondrous one, you did draw men from the abyss of vanity, submitting to the order of the Teacher, Who wholly enlightened your understanding and showed you as an honored Apostle and a divine proclaimer of His unapproachable Divinity, O most blessed Philip”.

“Your elucidation⁸² of the mysterious has been piously shown to be a ladder of divine teachings whereby we have come to know the Son, Who is consubstantial and united with the Father. You were a golden lamp shining forth the ever-existing Light upon men and thereby manifestly enlightening the whole world with knowledge, O most eminent Philip”.

“Having dried up⁸³ the deadly abyss of the soul-destroying poison of the enemy with your healing hands, you delivered them that are oppressed by grievous sickness. You have been shown to be wholly fiery of breath, O Philip, through the descent and grace of the Paraclete. With the warmth of faith you have restored to life them that were chilled through the winter of godlessness”.

“Beholding the deception⁸⁴ of the enemy which surrounds and destroys the human race, You took aim and loosed Your sharpened arrows, the Apostles, and laid open the serpent’s mouth of clay, O Savior, healing all that had been harmed by his wounding corruption”.

“Your discourse⁸⁵ was healing for those who had received the deadly venom of the serpent, O Bartholomew. And in accordance with the prophecy, the ground of the impious fell at the proclamation of your all-wise doctrines”.

“And some of the faithful⁸⁶ ran up to take Philip down, and take the iron grapnels out of his ankles. But Philip told them to let Bartholomew loose first. While they were doing that, Philip explained that he was about to depart from his body as a result of hanging there for six days. He asked the people not to grieve for him because he would be with the Lord. He asked them instead to cleave to Christ, and not to forsake Him, for He is our life everlasting”.

“As they brought Bartholomew down, Philip asked that they build a Church in this place and that Nicanora provide for Bartholomew and Mariamne while they are in the city. He instructed Bartholomew to appoint Stachys as Bishop, and gave him instructions on the burial⁸⁷ of his body. He also said that a grapevine would grow at the spot where his blood dropped, and that they should use the fruit of that vine as an offering to the Lord”.

⁸¹ “Litia for Vespers of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip”, November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁸² “Ode III for Matins of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip”, November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁸³ “Ode V for Matins of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip”, November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁸⁴ “Ode VI for Matins of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip”, November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁸⁵ “Ode V for Matins of the Commemoration of the Return of the Relics of the Holy Apostle Bartholomew”, August 25th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁸⁶ Roberts and Donaldson, ed., “The Acts of Philip, From the 15th Act Until the End”, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante Nicene Fathers, v. 8

⁸⁷ Hippolytus, On the Twelve Apostles, Where Each of Them Preached, 5.

“And after three days the plant of the vine sprouted up where the blood of the holy Philip had dropped. And they did all that had been commanded them by him, offering an offering for forty days, praying without ceasing. And they built the church in that place, having appointed Stachys to be Bishop in the church. And Nicanora and all the faithful assembled, and did not cease, all of them, glorifying God on account of the wonders that had happened among them. And the whole city believed in the Name of Jesus. And Bartholomew commanded Stachys to baptize those who believed into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And after the forty days, the Savior, having appeared in the form of Philip, said to Bartholomew and Mariamne, ‘My beloved brethren, do you wish to rest in the rest of God? Paradise has been opened to me, and I have entered into the glory of Jesus. Go away to the place appointed for you; for the plant that has been set apart and planted in this city shall bear excellent fruit’. Having therefore greeted the brethren, and prayed for each of them, they departed from the city of Ophioryma, the Hierapolis of Asia. Bartholomew and Mariamne then departed to continue their separate missionary journeys while Stachys and those with him remained, maintaining the church in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

The hymns of the Church refer to the martyrdom of Philip as follows:

“Having forsaken earthly things⁸⁸, you followed after Christ, signed with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and sent by Him to the Gentiles which were perishing, to turn men to the light of the knowledge of God, O Apostle Philip. And having completed the struggles of your divine suffering and diverse torments, you did commit your soul to Christ”.

“Having finished⁸⁹ the struggle with a cross of suffering, you were fittingly arrayed in crowns of victory, O Philip”.

“Aspiring to the sufferings⁹⁰ of the Savior, you set the falsehood of idolatry at naught, O glorious Philip. You appeared to the world pouring forth heavenly wonders upon all, having become an Apostle to the Gentiles, O most blessed one”.

After Philip was martyred in Hierapolis of Asia, his daughters remained in that city, and his daughters seem to have emulated the life of their father. His daughters were later included among the great luminaries who reposed in Asia, such as the Apostle John and Polycarp, which is a very exclusive company of late 1st and early 2nd Century saints.

Philip Appears to Emperor Theodosius

The following is an account⁹¹ from Theodoret in the 4th Century, regard an appearance of the Apostles Philip and John to Emperor Theodosius prior to his going to battle.

“In this manner the most religious emperor Theodosius secured the peace of the churches. Before the establishment of peace he had heard of the death of Valentinianus and of the usurpation of Eugenius and had marched for Europe”.

⁸⁸ “Litia for Vespers of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip”, November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁸⁹ “Aposticha for Vespers of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip”, November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁹⁰ “Ode III for Matins of the Commemoration of the Apostle Philip”, November 14th, Russian Menaion, St. John of Kronstadt Press, Liberty, TN.

⁹¹ Theodoret, Ecclesiastical History, V, 24.

“At this time there lived in Egypt a man of the name of John, who had embraced the ascetic life. Being full of spiritual grace, he foretold many future events to persons who from time to time came to consult him. To him the Christ-loving emperor sent, in his anxiety to know whether he ought to make war against the tyrants. In the case of the former war he foretold a bloodless victory. In that of the second he predicted that the emperor would only win after a great slaughter. With this expectation the emperor set out, and, while drawing up his forces, shot down many of his opponents, but lost many of his barbarian allies”.

“When his generals represented that the forces on their side were few and recommended him to allow some pause in the campaign, so as to muster an army at the beginning of spring and out-number the enemy, Theodosius refused to listen to their advice. ‘For it is wrong’, said he, ‘to charge the Cross of Salvation with such infirmity (for it is the cross which leads our troops), and attribute such power to the image of Hercules which is at the head of the forces of our foe’. Thus in right faith he spoke, though the men left with him were few in number and much discouraged. Then when he had found a little oratory, on the top of the hill where his camp was pitched, he spent the whole night in prayer to the God of all”.

“About cock-crow sleep overcame him, and as he lay upon the ground he thought he saw two men in white raiment riding upon white horses, who bid him be of good cheer, drive away his fear, and at dawn arm and marshal his men for battle. ‘For’, said they, ‘we have been sent to fight for you’. And one said, ‘I am John the evangelist’, and the other, ‘I am Philip the Apostle”.

“After he had seen this vision the emperor ceased not his supplication, but pursued it with still greater eagerness. A soldier in the ranks also saw the vision and reported it to his centurion. The centurion brought him to the tribune, and the tribune to the general. The general supposed that he was relating something new, and reported the story to the emperor. Theodosius said, ‘Not for my sake has this vision been seen by this man, for I have put my trust in them that promised me the victory. But in order that none may have supposed me to invent this vision, because of my eagerness for the battle, the protector of my empire has given the information to this man too. He also bears witness to the truth of what I say when I tell you that first to me did our Lord give this vision. Let us then fling aside our fear. Let us follow our front rank and our generals. Let none weigh the chance of victory by the number of the men engaged, but let every man think he has the same power as the leaders”.

“He spoke in similar terms to his men, and after thus inspiring his entire host with high hope, led them down from the crest of the hill. The tyrant saw the army coming to attack him from a distance, and then armed his forces and drew them up for battle. He himself remained on some elevated ground, and said that the emperor was desirous of death, and was coming into battle because he wished to be released from this present life: so he ordered his generals to bring him alive and in chains. When the forces were drawn up in battle array those of the enemy appeared by far the more numerous. But when both sides had begun to discharge their weapons the front rank proved their promises true. A violent wind blew right in the faces of the foe, and diverted their arrows and javelins and spears, so that no missile was of any use to them, and neither trooper nor archer nor spearman was able to inflict any damage upon the emperor’s army. Vast clouds of dust, too, were carried into their faces, compelling them to shut their eyes and protect them from attack. The imperial forces on the other hand did not receive the slightest injury from the storm, and vigorously attacked and slew the foe. The vanquished recognized the divine help given to their conquerors, flung away their arms, and begged the emperor for quarter. Theodosius then

yielded to their entreaty and had compassion on them, and ordered them to bring the tyrant immediately before him. Eugenius was ignorant of how the day had gone, and when he saw his men running up the hill where he sat, all out of breath, and showing their eagerness by their panting, he took them for messengers of victory, and asked if they had brought Theodosius in chains, as he had ordered. 'No', they said, 'we are not bringing him to you, but we are come to carry you off to him, for so the great Ruler has ordained'. Even as they spoke they lifted him from his chariot, put chains upon him, and carried him thus fettered, and led away the vain boaster of a short hour ago, now a prisoner of war".

"The emperor reminded him of the wrongs he had done to Valentinianus, of his usurped authority, and of the wars which he had waged against the rightful emperor. He ridiculed the figure of Hercules and the foolish confidence it had inspired and at last pronounced the sentence of right and lawful punishment".

"Such was Theodosius in peace and in war, ever asking and never refused the help of God".

The Epistle Lesson for the Apostles: 1 Corinthians 4:9-16

The Epistle Lesson for the Feast Day of the Apostle Philip is also used for a number of the other Apostles as follows:

Name	Calling
Andrew	Of the Twelve Apostles
James, son of Alphaeus	Of the Twelve Apostles
Matthew	Of the Twelve Apostles
Philip	Of the Twelve Apostles
Simon the Zealot	Of the Twelve Apostles
Thomas	Of the Twelve Apostles
Simeon	Of the Seventy, 2 nd Bishop of Jerusalem

The message of this Epistle Reading is that the Twelve Apostles have been exhibited as a spectacle of the ways of God. “For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men” (1 Corinthians 4:9).

From the world’s point of view, there have been many people throughout the ages who think that the things they do in secret are hidden from the eyes of God. For example, murderers often think, “The Lord does not see” (Psalm 94:7), slanderers often say, “Who can see them?” (Psalm 64:2-6), and adulterers think that, “No eye will see me” because their activities are private and in the dark (Job 24:15). But yet Paul says that “there is no creature hidden from His sight but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:13). Paul spoke of the Lord’s return when He will bring to light the hidden things of darkness (1 Corinthians 4:5) and judge the secrets of men (Romans 2:16). Thus everything we do – even the most private things – we do as it were in a fishbowl with many observers looking in.

Yet Paul’s stated that he and the other Apostles have been displayed as a spectacle (Greek: *theatron* meaning theatre) to the world, both to angels and to men. One of the things angels do is witness human affairs and the working out of our salvation. Angels desire very much to look into the things the Prophets ministered (literally deaconed) to us, and into the evangelization of the Church by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 1:12). For example, Paul cautioned the Hebrews not to forget to entertain strangers; they may be angels looking in on human affairs (Hebrews 13:2). Another example occurs when a sinner repents as a result of the Holy Spirit’s evangelism; there is joy in the presence of the angels (Luke 15:10). Recognizing this, Paul, when he set Timothy up as overseer (1 Timothy 5:21), charged him before God, the Lord Jesus and the angels (who look in) to do things right.

Quoting an ancient hymn or creed, Paul referred to the mystery of godliness as having at least six parts (from 1 Timothy 3:16):

- The incarnation
- Justified in the Spirit (baptism and resurrection) see Matthew 3:16, Romans 1:4
- Seen by angels
- Preached among the Gentiles
- Believed on in the world
- Received up in glory

Most of us would see the incarnation, justification, preaching, believing and receiving as a much bigger deal than just being seen by angels. Perhaps that's because we're so focused on our own human affairs that we don't realize that we are in the fishbowl and they are all watching us.

John Chrysostom commented⁹², "There is a great depth of meaning and severity implied in (Paul's) saying 'us the Apostles' who are enduring such innumerable ills, who are sowing the word of godliness, who are leading you to this severe rule of life. But what does 'unto angels' mean? It is possible to 'become a spectacle unto men', but not so to angels when the things done are ordinary. But our wrestling is such as to be worthy even of angelic contemplation".

So what is Paul doing that is worthy of angelic contemplation? He and others are:

- Morons because of Christ
- Weak or feeble
- Dishonored
- Hungry and thirsty
- Poorly clad
- Punched out (with the fist)
- Homeless
- Working with their hands
- Reviled
- Persecuted
- Defamed
- Refuse (lit. Pot scrubbing) of the world
- Off scouring (lit. floor sweepings) of all things

Yet Paul said that the Corinthians claimed to be:

- Wise in Christ
- Strong
- Held in Honor

Chrysostom stated⁹³ that Paul put it this way to shame them and was leading up to addressing the immoral man who had his father's wife in the next chapter.

"How can it be that you should be wise and we fools in the things relating to Christ? Here he sets himself against the noble and those who plumed themselves upon external advantages. How can it be that the Apostles are beaten and despised and dishonored and esteemed as nothing, while the Corinthians enjoy honor and are looked up to by many as a wise and prudent kind of people? We (the Apostles)

⁹² John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XII, 6.

⁹³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XII, 6-7.

take no account of outward pomp, but we look to God only. This everyone needs to practice in every place. For not only are angels looking on, but even more than they: He that presides over the spectacle”.

“Let us not then desire any others to applaud us. For this is to insult Him; hurrying past Him, as if He were insufficient to admire us, we make our way quickly to our fellow servants. For just as they who contend in a small theatre seek a larger audience, as if this were insufficient for their display, so also do they. Contending in the sight of God, (they are not content); afterwards they seek the applause of men. Giving up the greater praise and eager for the lesser, they draw upon themselves severe punishment. This turns everything upside down”.

Chrysostom then went on to say⁹⁴ that if men were looking on, no one would choose to commit adultery and fornication. But yet in the sight of God, men not only commit adultery and fornication but other things also that are much more dreadful. When we commit uncleanness, we fear men more than God; we have thus subjected ourselves unto them and made them lords over us.

“There are many other things⁹⁵ also which seem to these our lords to be evil, but aren’t; these we flee for our part in like manner. For instance to live in poverty, many account disgraceful; and we flee poverty not because it is disgraceful nor because we are so persuaded, but because our masters count it to be disgraceful and we fear them. Again, to be unhonored and contemptible and void of all authority seems likewise to the most part a matter of great shame. This again we flee; not condemning the thing itself, but because of the sentence of our masters”.

“Again on the contrary side also, we undergo the same mischief. As wealth is counted a good thing, and pride, and pomp, and to the conspicuous, accordingly this we pursue. Not from considering the nature of the things as good, but persuaded by the opinion of our masters. This master is savage and a severe tyrant; not so much as a command being needed in order to make us listen to him. It is enough that we just know what he wills, and without a word we submit; so great a good will do we bear toward him. God may threaten and admonish day by day but we don’t hear that. But the common people, our master, made up of all manner of the dregs of society, has no occasion for one word of command. Enough for it only to signify with what it is well pleased, and in all things we obey immediately”.

In Corinth, they had tolerated sexual immorality such as was not even named among the Gentiles (1 Corinthians 5:1). They had separated into cliques: some of Paul, some of Apollos, some of Peter, etc. (1 Corinthians 1:12). Paul could not speak to them as spiritual people but as fleshly people, who needed milk and not solid food (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). If the Corinthians thought they were wise in Christ, strong and held in honor, the question is, “Who says so?” Paul thought they were puffed up and was planning to come to see what power was behind their haughtiness (1 Corinthians 4:18-21). Paul’s aim was to get the Corinthians to imitate him (1 Corinthians 4:16) and focus on what God considers good rather than what their peers consider good.

To help them with this, Paul had sent Timothy (one of the Seventy who had been traveling with Paul for about seven years at this point) on ahead to remind them of Paul’s ways in Christ (1

⁹⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XII, 7.

⁹⁵ John Chrysostom, Homilies on 1 Corinthians, XII, 8.

Corinthians 4:17). The Corinthians had become somewhat puffed up (1 Corinthians 4:18, 19; 5:2) but were unaware of their problem (which everyone outside the fishbowl could see). Paul was diligent to point this out as a loving father concerned for his children (1 Corinthians 4:14-15).

And this is what the Epistle lesson illustrates. The Twelve Apostles took a great deal of abuse in this life in being loving fathers concerned for their children. This can also be illustrated by the use of salt and saltiness to describe the work of the Twelve and those that followed them.

Salt and Saltiness: Salt in ancient times was valuable and was an important commodity in trade. Besides seasoning food, it was also used to keep food from spoiling in the absence of refrigeration. In all the sacrifices offered to the Lord, salt had to be present (Leviticus 2:13). The significance of this was that nothing rotting or putrefying was to be offered to the Lord. And the Twelve left everything (Matthew 19:27) and offered their lives to the Lord as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).

The recipient of the animal sacrifices (after they were offered) and of the tithe, were the priests and Levities. They had no inheritance and owned no land like the other twelve tribes since the Lord was their inheritance (Numbers 18:20-24). The term used to describe the priests' and Levities' portion was called a "covenant of salt" (Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5). In this aspect, salt took on the implication of unbending truthfulness and lack of corruption.

This has strong implications, especially as applied to the Apostles and Fathers of the Church. Matthew 5:13 reads literally, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt becomes foolish (or moronic), by what shall it be salted? It has no longer strength for anything but to be thrown out and be trampled underfoot by men." From the context as applied to Jesus' disciples (and their followers as the pillars of the Faith), this verse has much to say.

John Chrysostom⁹⁶ commented on this exchange between the Lord and His disciples as follows:

"Think not then,' He says, 'that you are drawn on to ordinary conflicts, or that for some small matters you are to give account. You are the salt of the earth. When then; did they restore the decayed? By no means! For neither is it possible to do any good to that which is already spoiled, by sprinkling it with salt. This therefore they did not. But rather, what things had been before restored, and committed to their charge, and freed from that ill savor, these they then salted, maintaining and preserving them in that freshness, which they had received of the Lord. For that men should be set free from the rottenness of their sins was the good work of Christ; but their not returning to it again any more was the object of these men's diligence and travail. See how by degrees He indicates their superiority to the very prophets? In that He says they are teachers, not of Palestine, but of the whole world?"

If the Apostles and Fathers of the Church (both in ancient times and in the present times) adhere to unbending truthfulness and are morally straight, the whole earth will tend in that direction also. If they don't, they're worse than useless. Salt that's thrown out can't be put where anything is growing (Luke 14:35) because it alters the pH of the soil (acid/alkali balance) and inhibits growth. (That's why crops can't be irrigated with seawater). The only place to put it is on roads or paths where nothing is supposed to grow.

⁹⁶ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XV, 10.

Chrysostom continues⁹⁷:

“Be not then impatient, as though my sayings were too burdensome. For while it is possible for others who have lost their savor to return by your means, you, if you should come to this, will with yourselves destroy others also. So that in proportion as the matters are great, which you have put into your hands, you need so much the greater diligence. For other men, though they fall never so often, may possibly obtain indulgence: but the teacher, should this happen to him, is deprived of all excuse, and will suffer the most extreme vengeance. Thus, lest at the words, ‘when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you,’ they should be too timid to go forth, He tells them, ‘unless you are prepared to combat with all this, you have been chosen in vain.’ For it is not an evil report that you should fear, but lest you should prove partners in hypocrisy. For then, ‘You will lose your savor, and be trodden under foot’. But if you continue sharply to brace them up, and then are evil spoken of, rejoice; for this is the very use of salt, to sting the corrupt, and make them smart. And so their censure follows of course, in no way harming you, but rather testifying your firmness. But if through fear of it you give up the earnestness that becomes you, you will have to suffer much more grievously, being both evil spoken of, and despised by all. For this is the meaning of trodden under foot”.

In other words, If the Lord’s disciples don’t adhere to unbending truthfulness and righteousness, they will be trodden under foot.

The Light of the World: The salt of the earth is also the light of the world. One doesn’t light a lamp (i.e. an oil burning lamp) and put it under a basket; one puts it on a lamp stand. In Revelation 1:11-20 the seven Churches in Asia to whom the Apostle John addressed chapters 2 and 3 are referred to as seven lamp stands. They were the light of that part of the world. Yet they each had something that they needed to repent of and correct. And if they didn’t do so, John said that their lamp stand would be removed from its place (Revelation 2:5). These are the things that the Apostles and Church Fathers were very much involved with. Chrysostom pointed out⁹⁸ that they were to be the light of the world; not of one nation, not of twenty states, but of the whole inhabited earth.

A lamp set on a lamp stand, like a thriving Church in its own region of the world, is a city set on a hill (Matthew 5:14). It’s not easy to hide a thriving Church because people see their good works and glorify our Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16). Chrysostom wrote⁹⁹:

“Again, by these words He trains them to strictness of life, teaching them to be earnest in their endeavors, as set before the eyes of all men, and contending in the midst of the amphitheater of the world. ‘For look not to this,’ He says, ‘that we are now sitting here, that we are in a small portion of one corner. For you shall be as conspicuous to all as a city set on the ridge of a hill, as a candle in a house on the candlestick, giving light”

⁹⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XV, 10.

⁹⁸ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XV, 11.

⁹⁹ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XV, 11.

