



**The Orthodox Parish
of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
Lancaster, U.K.**

The Stavronian

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*Βαθρονος Χριστος Ζωοδότης.
(Φ. Κόντογλου, 1962).*

*The Parish of the Holy and Life-Giving Cross,
belongs to the Antiochian Orthodox Deanery of the United Kingdom and Ireland,
which is part of the Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Europe.
The Patriarchate of Antioch is third senior of the Orthodox Churches.
The Patriarch is His Beatitude John X.*

***The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch
(Acts 11:26)***



PLENITUDE, PREFIGUREMENT AND PROPHECY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT – Part I

Two *Old Stavronians* wrote to me recently asking for an explanation and interpretation concerning a couple of those “difficult” passages which are to be found within the pages of the Old Testament. I offered my humble consideration of the text. It is certainly the case that the Old Testament exposes human sin and corruption and gives examples of them in great measure. Individual, corporate, national and world sin is to be seen revealed; but it would be a pity to limit our perspective of the Old Testament to fallen nature, acts of violence and wilful transgressions. Indeed, there is much to be found about sacrifice, obedience, faith, service, love, goodness, kindness, mercy, justice and repentance.

This particular *Old Stavronian* informed me that his own spiritual father in Greece described the Old Testament as “the wooden scaffolding for the building of the New Testament Church.” Indeed, this is a good illustration, but it needs to be stated that one could not have the New Testament without the Old. In a real way the Old Testament is the foundation for the New Testament for it would be difficult to understand God’s Salvation Plan for Humanity without both! As Orthodox Christians we should be well versed in the whole of the Bible!

In a series of three essays, I want to look at how the Old Testament has a bearing not only on the New Dispensation under Christ but upon today’s problems and issues in contemporary life. Christ was, is and always will be the Word of God. Let us look at the concept of:

1. Wisdom in the Old Testament

The Way of Wisdom

We live in an age of instant communication -an age of information- the information highway is wide and has many turns: Matthew 7:13; “Enter by the **narrow gate**; for wide **is** the gate and broad **is** the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.”

In order to have knowledge we must have a sense of values, an ethical compass and a framework of spiritual references. This is what the Old Testament offers us in terms of the Commandments of God. However: Matthew 7:14; “Because narrow **is** the gate and difficult **is** the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

To acquire understanding and wisdom we need a relationship with our Father in Heaven, the Mind of Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit who brings discernment. The wisdom books in the Old Testament include the Psalms,

the book of Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, the Wisdom of Solomon, Wisdom of Sirach and the famous collection of sayings and religious instructions known as the Proverbs:

Proverbs 9:1-6

The Way of Wisdom

9 Wisdom has built her house,

She has hewn out her seven pillars;

2 She has slaughtered her meat,

She has mixed her wine,

She has also furnished her table.

3 She has sent out her maidens,

She cries out from the highest places of the city,

4 "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!"

As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him,

5 "Come, eat of my bread

And drink of the wine I have mixed.

6 Forsake foolishness and live,

And go in the way of understanding.

This invitation to attain wisdom offers hospitality to the simple. The Proverb stands on its own as a beautiful metaphor of accepting God's gifts but it comes to fullness of meaning and fruition in the incarnation of the Word. Holy Wisdom (Agia Sophia) is Christ Himself and He has built His house in the womb of the Holy Theotokos where he was conceived. The House is also the Church, the Body of Christ, of which Christ is the Chief Cornerstone; for it is built upon the Mother of God's acceptance of the Invitation of God through the message of Gabriel and upon the teachings of the Apostles.

The seven pillars may be understood as the Seven Ecumenical Councils and as the seven graces or spirits of God prophesied by Isaiah Ch.11:2 to rest upon God's Anointed - wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, Godliness and the fear of God.

Christ sheds His precious blood and offers it in the wine at the Holy Table at the Eucharist. The allusion to killing the calf she has slaughtered her meat is also reminiscent of the return of the Prodigal who abandoning passions has come to his

right mind to go back to his father (God). Christ sends out invitations to: "Come eat my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed" which is His body and His blood of the Eucharist. We are to forsake foolish vices of sinful passions and acquire Wisdom's discernment through following the Way, who is Christ.

The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 1:23; that *Christ is the power and the wisdom of God*. There is also to be found in this image of the *House of Wisdom* an image of the Heavenly Church of which Christ invites us as partakers in the Heavenly Banquet.

Fr. Jonathan



GLOSSARY OF ORTHODOX TERMS: -W-

WISDOM (OF GOD) A name for God's Son and Word; Christ is the Wisdom of God. Also, wisdom is given to the Church as a gift of the Holy Spirit. See John 1:1; 1 Cor. 2:6-8; Col. 3:16.

WITNESS (Greek: martyria) One who testifies by word and deed. In the New Testament, the word is also rendered "martyr," a reference to those who give their lives for the gospel of Christ. Also,

the Holy Spirit bears witness to the spirits of those who believe in Christ, that they belong to Him. See Rom. 8:16; Heb. 10:15; 12:1; 1 John 5:6 12; Rev. 11:3 12. See also MARTYR.

WORD OF GOD (Greek: Logos) The Son of God, who from the mystery of His eternal birth is called the Word of the Father. The "Word became flesh" (John 1:14) for the salvation of the world. The Holy Scriptures are also called the Word of God, for they reveal the truth of God (John 1:1-14; 2 Pet. 1:19-21). See also INCARNATION.

WORSHIP Literally, "to bow down." In the Christian sense worship is the adoration of God through participation in the services of the Church, the highest act of a Christian (John 4:19-24). See also LITURGY.

WORTHY (Greek: axios) Describes those who act in a manner befitting one who is a follower of Christ. No one is worthy of salvation in and of himself, but all are made worthy through Christ (see 1 Thess. 2:10-12).

For the original text please click [here](#).

PARISH NEWS

Iryna and Bart Lambrecht have been part of our Parish since 2005. We wish them every blessing from God as they move this month in order to prepare for Bart to take up his new post at Cambridge University. Both of them have been most active members and supporters of our Community and we will miss them and their children Paul and Anna whose presence has been such an enrichment to our Parish. Iryna has lead our choir with her beautiful

voice and later she assumed the role of our Church Treasurer. We hope to see them again in Lancaster in the near future. We thank them for their commitment, fellowship and hospitality over the years. May God save, protect and bless them.

OLD STAVRONIAN CORNER

We would like to thank Athanasios Eustathiou for the beautiful epitachelion that his grandmother kyria Nikki gave to our community as well as for the Cypriot honey and sweet almond paste! We pray that God may give you the reward for your kindness and generosity!

We would also like to thank Nikolaos Georgopoulos for candles and charcoal and Christina Krassakopoulou for the olive oil and prosphora seal!

Our thanks goes to Sophocles and Angeliki Ioulianou for the white candles and the most generous donation to our community. We are truly humbled by your offerings and by the support you show to our Community in so many different ways!

MAJOR CELEBRATIONS THIS MONTH

1st July: **Cosmas and Damian the Holy Unmercenaries**

2nd July: **St. John Maximovitch, Bishop of Shanghai & Archbishop of San Francisco (†1966); St. Juvenal, Protomartyr of America and Alaska (†1796)**

3rd July: **St Germanus Bishop of the Isle of Man (†474)**

4th July: **St. Andrew of Crete, author of the Great Canon**

7th July: **Great-martyr Kyriake**

11th July: Great Martyr Euphemia the All-praised; St. Olga, equal to the Apostles, Princess of Kiev

13th July: Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel

15th July: Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Great Prince Vladimir, in Baptism Basil, Enlightener of the Russian Land

17th July: Great-Martyr Marina of Antioch and Child-Martyr Prince Kenelm

20th July: Holy Glorious Prophet Elijah

25th July: Dormition of righteous Anna, mother of the Most Holy Theotokos

26th July: Holy Martyr Paraskeue

27th July: Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon

31st July: St Joseph of Arimathea

For the lives of Saints please visit the Calendar of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America: www.calendar.goarch.org

Services during July*

Sat. 6 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 13 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sat. 20 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in R.C.
Sun. 28 th	10:00 am	Holy Liturgy in Q.R. followed by Parish lunch

*Help setting up the church is greatly appreciated and starts from 9:15 a.m.

“God cares for everyone. Despair is in effect a lack of faith”

- St. George Karslides -



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