

The Body of Christ (the Messiah, Who is the Heir of the promises made to Abraham)is the New Israel

This the preface from THE SICKNESS OF RELIGION AND ITS CURE by Fr John Romanides

The basic difference between the three Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke on the one hand and that of the Gospel of John on the other hand [2] is due to the two stages of the Old and New Testament's cure of the sickness at the second center of the human personality in the heart which circulates blood, the other center being the brain or the intellect which is part of the spinal cord system which circulates spinal fluid. It is the heart which needs cure by its purification and illumination to be consummated in the glorification of the whole person. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, accompanied by texts of the Old Testaments, especially those of the Psalms, were used as part of the process of the purification and the illumination of the hearts of the catechumens which was consummated by the celebration of the passion and crucifixion of the Lord of Glory into which they were being baptized on Holy Saturday. These baptisms were followed by the celebration of the resurrection of Christ followed by the Easter Eucharist at which time the Gospel of John began to be read and interpreted up to Pentecost Sunday within this period of fifty days. During this period of Johannine instruction one was expected to progress from one's state of the purification of one's spirit in the heart to its illumination by unceasing prayers and psalms as contrasted from prayers and psalms by the intellect at given times. At this point one knew that was becoming a member of the Body of Christ as the prayer in the heart was taking hold and remaining ever present without ceasing. That one had this prayer and lost it and had thus become satisfied that he had had it means that he in danger of permanent loss since "Let us not think that we have become members of the Body once and for all". [3]

Pentecost is the event by which the Old and New Testament Church became the Body of Christ which now includes also all the forefathers who had been illumined and glorified before Yahweh's incarnation. As in the Old Testament, those who persevered in the illumination of their heart would go on to their glorification which was their ordination to prophethood. This is why John the Baptist, already glorified and ordained to prophethood, again was glorified and this time experienced the strange reality that he was Baptizing Yaweh Himself Incarnate. Six days after saying that "...some standing here...will not taste death until they see the reign of God come in power," Christ again revealed Himself as Yaweh Incarnate to Peter, James and John". [4]

Such Biblical realities are not open to correct interpretation by those who have been contaminated by Augustine's distortion of God's revelation to both the Old and New Testament the prophets. Being thoroughly intimidated by the Arian argument that proof that the Logos is created is the fact that He was visible to those to whom He revealed Himself. In sharp contrast to the tradition of the Old and New Testament and the Church, Augustine concocted the teaching that God appeared to and was heard by the prophets and the apostles by means of creatures which God brings into existence in order to be seen and heard and which he passes back into non existence after being seen and heard. In sharp contrast to these divine appearances from nothing that God may be seen and heard and disappearances back into nothing, it was only the human nature of the Logos which remained permanently in

existence after His incarnation. [5] Such supposed creatures as the dove at the Baptism of Christ, the rule of God (erroneously translated kingdom) at the Transfiguration and the tongues of fire at Pentecost are among those creatures which God brings into existence to be seen and heard and pass out of existence when their mission is accomplished.

It was expected that during this Johannine time of instruction the newly baptized would have entered into the stage of illumination of the heart with unceasing prayer and psalms as explained by St. Paul, especially in 1Cor. 12-15.12. This will be the pivotal point of this study since it is here that we have an esoteric outline of the inner reality of the worshipping primitive Church headed by apostles, prophets and teachers whose authority was their own glorification mutually accepted.

Some notes from David Robles:

Fr bless:

I am still looking up 'the new Israel' in the Fathers. So far, as stated in the couple of things I sent you, the thinking seems to be that the host of heaven, the patriarchs, prophets and old testament righteous are organically connected with the apostles, clergy, monastics and laity of the Church. In other words there is no breaking point, eventhough ethnic Israel ceased to be.

The old testament tree naturally blossomed into the body of Christ. As the Pentecostarion states, the Church existed before creation and Her organic integrity has never been broken, eventhough some (including ethnic Israel) have stopped bearing fruit and been cut off. In this sense, ethnic Israel as a nation is no different from the arians, monophysites, monothelites, papists, heretics etc.

The prophesy from the Scriptures said, "the scepter (ruling sovereignty by the Sanhedrin) shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh (the Messiah) comes."

God's judgment was announced by Stephen to the Sanhedrin. The Romans burnt the temple in 70 A.D. Ethnic Israel was no more. Israel continues with a new name (the Church). It is now ruled not by the Sanhedrin but by the Apostles and the Bishops.

I like this understanding of organic continuity.

The Apostles spent the rest of their lives preaching to both the Jews and the gentiles and both were being baptized and received. The small ark of Israel grew to become the gigantic Body of the Church without any organic discontinuity.

The term 'New Israel' appears in the liturgical services but the Fathers understand it to be an organism with its roots in the old Israel. It is one single unbroken body. Fr John Romanides emphasizes this.

The Theotokos bears in her body the physical organic integrity of the old testament church, which is shared by her Son and through His Body and Blood (Eucharist) with all the members of the Church.