

From the (so called) Gospel of Philip

(180-250 AD)

Translated by Wesley W. Isenberg

Gnostic heretics believed that they had secret knowledge (gnosis) that was necessary for salvation. They liked to meld ancient pagan beliefs with those of Christianity. Here is a passage that seems to remove any individual responsibility for sin.

The forms of evil spirit include male ones and female ones. The males are they which unite with the souls which inhabit a female form, but the females are they which are mingled with those in a male form, though one who was disobedient. And none shall be able to escape them, since they detain him if he does not receive a male power or a female power, the bridegroom and the bride. One receives them from the mirrored bridal chamber. When the wanton women see a male sitting alone, they leap down on him and play with him and defile him. So also the lecherous men, when they see a beautiful woman sitting alone, they persuade her and compel her, wishing to defile her. But if they see the man and his wife sitting beside one another, the female cannot come into the man, nor can the male come into the woman. So if the image and the angel are united with one another, neither can any venture to go into the man or the woman.

Lenten Solemn Prayer over the People

Deacon or Celebrant. Bow down before the Lord.

All kneel

Celebrant Look with compassion, O Lord, upon your this people; that rightly observing this holy season, they may learn to know you more fully, and to serve you with a more perfect will; through Christ our Lord. **AMEN**



Philip the Apostle

Feast Day May 1.

Vor Frue Kirke Church of Our Lady (Copenhagen)

Philip traditionally holds a basket of loaves and a Tau cross

Philip was born: (year unknown) at Bethsaida, Died: c. 80, Hierapolis, by crucifixion He was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. Later Christian traditions describe Philip as the apostle who proselytized in Greece, Syria,

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and Phrygia. He is said to have been martyred by crucifixion in the city of Hierapolis.

Heretical Christians appealed to the apostolic authority of Philip, ascribing a number of Gnostic texts to him, most notably the fanciful Gospel of Philip from the Nag Hammadi library found in Egypt in 1945. (see an excerpt on page 4).

The Gospel of John describes Philip's calling as a disciple of Jesus (John 1:43). The narrative of Philip's call as a disciple describes him as being from the city of Bethsaida, and connects him to Andrew and Peter, who were from the same town (John 1:43-44). Philip figures most prominently in the Gospel of John. His two most notable appearances in the narrative are as a link to the Greek-speaking Jewish community. In today's passage Philip introduces members of this community to Jesus (John 12:20-36). Later, during the Last Supper he asked Jesus to see the Father. His question, provided Jesus the opportunity to teach about the unity of the Father and the Son (John 14:8-11). Saint Philip is always listed fifth among the apostles (Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:14 and Acts 1:13).

Today's Gospel John 12: 20-33

✠ NOW AMONG THOSE WHO WENT UP TO WORSHIP AT THE FESTIVAL were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor. "Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him. Jesus answered, "This voice has come for your sake,

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not for mine. Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself." He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

Philip and the Visitors

The Holy Land was not a place where all spoke just one language. The customary language - some would say official language - was Aramaic, which was to Ancient Hebrew as today's English is to Anglo-Saxon. There were a few people who still spoke Ancient Hebrew, speaking it not just as the liturgical language of the Temple but as their normal means of conversation. There were several minor languages including those who spoke Latin, especially the Romans of the ruling classes. The rulers' lower classes, the Roman soldiers and such, usually spoke Greek, the then "universal" language of the Mediterranean world. Jesus spoke Aramaic, but, not surprisingly, the language of the New Testament manuscripts was Greek. Thanks to a thousand years of Greek colonization there were Greek speaking cities from Palestine to Spain. The Greeks clung to their native tongue so strongly that three hundred years after the Greeks of Alexander the Great absorbed Egypt the first of Egypt's Greek/Egyptian rulers to be fluent in Egyptian was the famous Cleopatra the Great (died 30 BC).

Philip is a Greek name. The father of Alexander the Great was Philip II of Macedon. The thrust of today's Gospel selection makes one suspect that Philip was a Greek speaking Jew. ... *some Greeks. They came to Philip....*

In total, ancient Palestine had at least 12 languages, a far cry from today when, thanks to the Jewish right of return, modern day Israel has 33 spoken languages and one extinct language, Ancient Hebrew. In Israel today there are two official languages. First, Modern Hebrew, a tongue crafted to be so easy to learn and speak that there are no irregular verbs, not even the verb *to be*! Arabic is the other official language.