

## Concerning the Recent Archaeological Discovery at Hagia Sophia

I am sure many have taken notice of the recent archaeological find at the site of the Hagia Sophia. This site has of course its own particular history for the current building was once a Christian Church that has gone through phases of destruction and restoration and which site and building currently belongs to the Moslem community in Turkey. What is of interest of course is that, in its earliest phase of existence, it housed a library where millions of scrolls were preserved. Whether scrolls were recently discovered, is not clear, but perhaps many interesting things might come from this archaeological discovery. (There were many of this type of Church Library and the Church historian, Eusebius of Caesarea, kept, for example, one in this ancient harbour city).

Now, what should be of interest to those who are interested in early church history, is that Istanbul (Constantinople) was from the earliest times in Christianity also the place where Christian preachers like Clemens I had left his presence and apparently also known as an evangelist for he was an itinerant preacher and we have good reason to believe that he was an Essene, also that he was more of a St Peter fan than of St Paul although the apostle presumably also mentions him in his Philippian letter.

It was there in Constantinople where Erasmus' Greek New Testament was also discovered and which should be of interest to those who want to preserve scriptural truth as Erasmus' Constantinople MS does not have the KJV's 1 Jn 5.7 wording ("There are three in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Spirit and these three are one") and it was also in Constantinople where the Essene "Two Way" MS (linked to the Didache) was also discovered.

Looking at these discoveries objectively, and of course considering how the apostolic deposit of our faith was affected and naturally by new or adapted teachings that were introduced especially after the apostles of Jesus had left the scene, we can rest assured that what had impacted on this area was an admixture of apostate doctrine as well as apostolic teachings.

We can infer from the Johanne letters to the seven Asian assemblies (distributed in Roman Asia Minor, see the *Book of Revelations*) that an element of apostasy had already, at the time, impacted heavily on the local churches - churches that were especially evangelised and planted by Paul and John. Therefore, trying to deny the rise of an apostate branch having emerged already at the end of the first century C.E is a fallacious idea held in place only by those who faithfully want to proceed in the footsteps of apostasy.

Fact is, what clearly emerged, and which is then something that must especially have been planted by the Hellenistic Church (emerging from that Hellenistic brotherhood mentioned in Acts 6.1-2) is a clear *admixture* of apostolic and post-apostolic doctrine. With this in mind, what also is significant to any observant believer, is that the prophetic word spoken by the apostles of Jesus, namely concerning the rise of a new apostolic order, had come into fulfilment just as the apostles had spoken thereof, and clearly shortly after the departure of the apostles from the scene.

It was there in Constantinople (Byzantium/Istanbul today) that Paul's prophetic word concerning the establishment of a new Christian institution with its "many teachers who will bring their own type of doctrine to the world" had come into fulfilment for it was also there where theological education ascended to its fullest height and glory, along with of course Alexandrian theological expertise (the School of Alexandria), however, it is as if Constantinople (Byzantium) had, from its beginning, just overtaken the West in glamour and in glory - the history of grandeur linked to the imposing Hagia Sophia is clearly something that can never be overlooked - focusing here of course on the earlier Christian history thereof - for it is a history speaking of Greek thought and influence and an intense search for philosophical and theological prowess proving, once again, that what the apostles, especially Paul, had foreseen would come *after* he (as bastion of Gospel truth) was removed from the scene (by death - the apostle was beheaded for the sake of Christ; 2 Thes. 2), was then indeed true prophetic word not spoken in vain (2 Tim. 3; 1 Tim. 4).

Briefly, it should be clear to a sharp mind, that Gospel truth was adapted, and, once again, with this Greek scholarly impact in mind and which adaptation of the early apostolic faith to this very day, still reverberates in our scholarly theological schools. Fact is, Greek thought had never left the scene

but Gospel truth had and therefore God wants us to take heed of our New Testament apostolic faith and so that we can separate the chaff from the wheat in order to selvage a harvest for our Lord Jesus Christ who died on Calvary – a horrendous death! - to set man free from the power of satanic deception. Jesus said: “Truth shall set you free!” (Gospel of John, 14).

Let the faithful desiring to please God, therefore seek gospel truth, keeping their eyes upon new discoveries made – especially archaeological finds – for this is how God deals with mankind who wants “evidence”.

Let us then pray that gospel *truth* will break through the veil of deception that was cast over Christendom *in diverse ways*, so that our glorious Lord and Saviour will once again be served in *spirit and in truth*, and that that *gospel truth* He had given to his apostles to establish here on earth *in honour of His Name*, will be upheld by the saints, just as God Most High desires it of us (Eph 1; Jn 4.24; Rom. 1.25) - *Biblical truth* that is not always found in theological schools even traditional Bible Schools for the *status quo* always seems to be honoured by especially those who seek the honour of man.

There is a pursuit of acknowledgement and accreditation by man, as hardly ever before! Isn't this what Jesus had spoken of, namely never to seek the honour and approval of man? Should we then seek the honour and approval of man when it comes to *Gospel Truth*, we are doing so outside God's will. Fact is, only those who truly follow Christ, adhering to His Word and what the Word desires of us, can please God for these are the ones led by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 2).

May God give us enlightened hearts and minds through the power of His Holy Spirit and so that we will be able to walk *in the Spirit*, not pleasing mortal man, but obeying the eternal God and Father *through* Jesus Christ, the divine touchstone of our faith in a living God!

Ester Blomerus  
[www.housealtarnetwork.com](http://www.housealtarnetwork.com)  
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I'd rather humbly walk the path of Jesus than seeking the favour of mortal man for in the end, we all will have to give account of what we have *done* for Christ our Saviour *here on earth* and while we have lived *on the breath He had given us!* Isn't it then time, considering the aforesaid, that we knew God's *conditions for serving Him*, making it our aim *to walk in the steps of Jesus*, not serving man as if flesh and blood, with all its vainglory, can ever give us *eternal life!*

Truth will always be fought by the carnal minded, but those who trust in the Lord will never give up for in the end, only truth will prevail!

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