

THE EPISTLE

Saint James' Episcopal Church
Livingston, Alabama



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November 2018

This Month's Cover

Our cover this month, in honor of the Feast of Saint Andrew (November 30), is El Greco's *Saint Andrew the Apostle*, completed in about 1610. It is oil on canvas, measuring 3'7"x2'1", and is on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts in New York. It is El Greco's own copy of a detail of an earlier work, *Saint Andrew and Saint Francis*, which is on display in the Prado in Madrid. It is not clear why he chose to associate Saint Andrew with Saint Francis (they lived 1100 years apart), or why he later made a separate painting of Saint Andrew that is very similar. In the original he is conversing with Saint Francis, and here he is in the same pose, making the same gesture.

The painting depicts Saint Andrew, the Patron Saint of Scotland, in what could be a Scottish highland setting, holding the traditional X-shaped or saltire cross on which he was crucified. Saint Andrew, the brother of Saint Peter, was one of Jesus' first followers, and it was he who brought Peter to Jesus (Jn. 1:40f). Andrew, Peter, James and John were the first four Apostles, and constituted the inner circle in the patronal hierarchy of his followers. The other three appear to have superceded him in some way, however, because while they play a vital role in several important events in Jesus' life, Andrew seems to have faded into the background. The Bible does not tell us how he died, but from the very earliest times it has been an unchallenged tradition that he was crucified in Greece on an X-shaped cross (which is quite consistent with Roman custom). Tradition says that he was a missionary to Scythia, Asia Minor and Greece. Relics of his cross are in the Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Patris, Greece and in the High Altar of Saint Andrew's Cathedral in Edinburg, Scotland. In A.D. 832 the Pictish

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(Scottish) king Angus MacFergus, just before a battle with the Northumbrians (English) at Athelstanford, saw a saltire cross in the sky and had a vision of Saint Andrew, who told him that if he and his people would be faithful to Christ he would be victorious even though badly outnumbered. His army routed the Northumbrians, and he dedicated Scotland to Saint Andrew. The Cross of Saint Andrew has been on the Scottish flag ever since, and since the union of Scotland and Britain it is on the Union Flag of the United Kingdom of Great Britain.¹

For a brief sketch of El Greco's life we refer you to last month's *Epistle*.

Richard R. Losch+

A Word from the Editor

As a nation made up primarily of immigrants, America has been described in three ways: as a melting pot, a stew pot, and a salad bowl. In a melting pot, the ingredients lose their individual identities and blend to form something new; in a stew pot the ingredients are still identifiable, but change and meld together to produce a common flavor; in a salad bowl each ingredient retains its own identity unchanged, but they all work together in harmony to enhance each other. Which of these three is the most desirable for our country has been argued for decades, and it would be arrogant to try to say which is best. The Church is much the same. It is made up of people of every cultural, ethnic and racial background, all of whom contribute to its liturgical and traditional expression in worship.

Unfortunately, in both our country and the Church we are moving away from being any of these three. There is a tendency these days to pull apart from one another on the basis of our origins or tastes, and this is often exploited for the

¹ The Union Flag is comprised of the red cross of Saint George of England, the white saltire of Saint Andrew of Scotland, and the red saltire of Saint Patrick of Ireland. Wales (whose symbol is a dragon) is not represented on it. The Union Flag is often incorrectly called the Union Jack. A jack is a national flag flown from a short staff at the bow or stern of a ship. The Union Flag is a jack only when it is so displayed.

consolidation of power, influence or wealth. The modern expression for this is identity politics. Sociologists call it tribalism. We tend to identify ourselves less as members of the whole and more as separate tribes on the basis of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socio-economic history, political or religious ideology, sex, age, or whatever other specific identity we can find that designates us as different from others. We put more value on *being* something than on *doing* something. Having designated ourselves as different, we then all too often also designate ourselves as superior. This elitism is a divisive and dangerous trend, because it leads us not only to where we no longer blend or enhance our flavors, but also to where we face angry confrontation and thus sometimes destructive conflict.

Are you black, white, old, young, straight, gay, male, female, liberal, conservative or anything else? Those are adjectives, and they may describe you, but you must not let them define you. If you do, you are letting your adjectives instead of your actions control your life.

Saint Paul tells us that “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). As Christians we can have no tolerance for identity politics or tribalism—they are divisive, and have no place in society. We are all different—in fact each of us is unique—yet we can celebrate our differences as being contributors to a greater whole rather than as separators. The laws of thermodynamics teach us that unless there is a stabilizing external force, order will always degenerate into chaos. We have been given that external force—it is God—but unless we consciously open ourselves to him through prayer and self-discipline, our country and the Church are doomed to sink deeper and deeper into chaos. The Church will survive, and the gates of Hell cannot prevail against it regardless of how we may abuse it on earth. For our country and our culture, however, there is no such promise.

It is incumbent on us as Christians and as creatures of God to resist anything that divides or separates us. Work and pray for unity, civility and peace.

Father Rick Losch

“Bells of Peace” Nationwide Bell-Tolling

St. James' will join with other churches and organizations across our nation and participate in the “Bells of Peace” Nationwide Bell-Tolling on Sunday, November 11, 2018 (the Centennial of the Armistice) in honor of the 116,516 American men and women who died in World War I. If there are any World War I veterans who you would like remembered in our service on that Sunday, please get the names to Hiram Patrenos no later than Friday, November 9th.

Hiram Patrenos

Community Thanksgiving Service

The Livingston United Methodist Church will be hosting the Community Thanksgiving Service on Sunday, November 18th, at 6:00 p.m. You are asked to bring canned goods which will be given to the Department of Human Resources for distribution to those in need. Please make your plans to attend and invite your friends and neighbors as we give thanks for the multitude of blessings God has bestowed upon us.

Hiram Patrenos

Altar Flower Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to provide altar flowers through the season of Pentecost. A sign-up chart is located in the sacristy. You may use flowers from your yard or, if you wish, make arrangements with a florist to provide them. For more information, please speak with Carolyn Patrenos.

Hiram Patrenos

Forward Day by Day

The new *Forward Day by Day* devotional booklets for November, December, and January are available on the table in the back of the church and in the tract rack in the parish house. They are available in both pocket-size and large print editions.

Hiram Patrenos

Wilmer Hall Christmas Contribution

Once again, St. James' will be making a special gift to Wilmer Hall for its Christmas needs this year. Envelopes are available on the table in the back of the church and contributions should be made payable to St. James' and designated for "Wilmer Hall Christmas." Envelopes may be placed in the alms basins or given to Hiram Patrenos. So that we may forward our gift in time for use this Christmas, you are asked to make your contribution no later than Sunday, November 25th.

Hiram Patrenos

Every Member Canvass

St. James' will be conducting its Every Member Canvass during the month of November. The Vestry needs this information so that it can plan appropriately for the upcoming year. If you have any questions regarding our parish finances, please do not hesitate to speak with our Treasurer, Hiram Patrenos. Pledge cards are available on the table in the back of the church. Please prayerfully consider your commitment to St. James', its mission and its work.

Hiram Patrenos

Moving?

If you are moving, please let us know your new address. You can contact us at rlosch33@gmail.com or at P.O. Box 446, Livingston, AL 35470. Since we use bulk mail, the Post Office hits us with a hefty extra charge for every copy that is forwarded or returned. If you no longer wish to receive *The Epistle*, please let us know. Production and mailing are expensive, and we would rather not send copies to your trash basket.

Richard R. Losch+

If you talk to yourself, you are normal. If you ask yourself a question and answer it, you are normal. But if you catch yourself asking, "What did you say?," you might consider seeking help.

Be Wordly Wise

Bishop

A bishop in the Catholic traditions is believed to be a direct successor of the Apostles through the physical laying on of hands in what is called the Apostolic or Historic Succession. The word comes from the Middle English *biscop*, which in turn comes from the Old English *bisceop*. That word derives from the Greek *episkopos* (ἐπίσκοπος) which is made up of *epi-*, over, and *skopos*, one who looks (also the source of our word scope). It came into Latin as *episcopus*. A bishop, then is one who looks over or oversees. Many Protestant traditions call the equivalent official an overseer or a supervisor (super-visor, one who looks over) or a superintendent (from the Latin *superintendere*, to look over). In all its roots, then, a Bishop is one who looks over the Church (and who iwhould not overlook his duties). An archbishop is a bishop who has administrative authority over other bishops. It is not a higher ecclesiastical order.

The adjective for bishop is episcopal. The Episcopal Church is so called because it is governed primarily by bishops, even though priests and the laity also have a great deal to say in its operation. The Greek origin (*episkopos*) is evident in many languages' words for bishop: *obispo* (Spanish), *biskup* (Czech), *vescovo* (Italian—remember that in most languages *v* and *b* are often interchangeable), *évêque* (French)¹, *Bischof* (German), *bispo* (Portuguese), and even *umbhishobhi* (Zulu).

Richard R. Losch+

The Epistle is Online

The last five years of *The Epistle* are now online. Go to <http://rlosch.com> and click on the “Epistle” tab at the top. You can read it online or download it as a *.pdf* file. This is an easy way to share articles with others.

Richard R. Losch+

¹ In French the *accent circonflex* (ˆ) indicates a dropped *s*. Remembering that *b* and *v* are interchangeable, *évêque* is equivalent to *ébesque*.

Triennial and General Convention #79

In July of this year, I was sent to Austin, Texas as a delegate to the ECW Triennial meeting which is held every three years in conjunction with the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. I attended as the Diocese of Alabama ECW United Thank Offering (UTO) representative. Having never had this in my radar, this was a very exciting opportunity for me!

I flew to Austin on July 3 having had no idea what to expect! I hit the ground running the next day. I began in the exhibit hall. It was overwhelming indeed! I had no idea of the extent of the Episcopal Church's involvement in so many wonderful ministries.

The ECW Triennial delegates, the House of Deputies, and the House of Bishops met simultaneously. I was able to observe some of the business in the House of Bishops but not the House of Deputies. There were Episcopalians everywhere!

The nightly Eucharist services were attended by several thousand Episcopalians of varied languages and nationalities. During the UTO service, the ECW representatives from each diocese processed in with the Bishops robed and processing after us. It was a proud moment! Each of us presented a card to Presiding Bishop Michael Curry which contained our diocesan UTO contribution for the triennial. Alabama is a part of Province IV and our province donated over \$700,000 and was either the highest or second highest province!

Most of the workshops that I attended involved UTO, and I learned a great deal not to mention further getting to know our national folks. All money collected for UTO is used to fund grants applied for by Episcopal churches within and without of the United States. There are many wonderful projects that would not come to fruition if not for the UTO grant program, and I am most proud to be a part of this great ministry.

We are a church of ultra-conservatives, moderates, and liberals, but we all love the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as well as our fellow man. I am proud and happy to be a lifelong Episcopalian!

Maggie Noland

The Galilee That Jesus Knew

The image of Jesus' Galilee in most people's minds is that it was a simple, rural backwater that no sophisticated person took very seriously. In fact, even in Jesus' time that was the impression of many of the more urbane people. Nathanael asked, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). In modern Palestine this is to some extent true, and since archaeologists had found very little of significance there, that impression might have been justified until the discovery of the city of Sepphoris. Since then a number of discoveries have shown that the common impression of Galilee is quite wrong.

Although the ancient city of Sepphoris was known from contemporary writings, its ruins had long since disappeared until their discovery in 1905. Until the end of the first century B.C. it had been an important Jewish city. It was a center of learning, in which were many fine synagogues that served as much as institutions of learning as centers of worship. Shortly before the birth of Christ the city rebelled against the Romans, who almost totally destroyed it. King Herod decided to rebuild it as a Roman city—he loved the Romans and they loved him—and in the process it became a center of Greco-Roman culture. The synagogues were also rebuilt, however, and again became Jewish educational centers.

Sepphoris was less than four miles from Nazareth, which in those days would not have been an unusual distance for someone to walk to work. Since it is more likely that Joseph was a stonemason than a carpenter, and the city was being rebuilt at the time that Jesus was a small child, it is probable that Joseph worked on the rebuilding there. By the custom of the time, as soon as Jesus was old enough to walk with him to Sepphoris but too young to work as an apprentice, he would have gone with Joseph and been left at one of the synagogues for "day care" and early education. The rabbis would have quickly latched on to a bright child who was interested in learning, and would have given him a good education. By the time he was 12 and went to the Temple in Jerusalem (Luke 2:41ff), he had an understanding that astounded the rabbis there, who

undoubtedly also had the impression of Galilee as a rural backwater. Jesus also would have had a constant exposure to Greek and Latin in Sepphoris, and very likely became fluent in both. His native tongue was Aramaic, but as a student in the synagogues he would also have learned Hebrew, so it probable that he was conversant in at least four languages.

Since the discovery of Sepphoris in 1905 there have been a number of discoveries in Galilee that thoroughly belie the image of rural simplicity. Inscriptions and documents indicate that Greek was spoken there as much as Aramaic. One of the finds in Sepphoris is what has been dubbed the “Mona Lisa of Galilee.” It is a breathtaking Greco-Roman mosaic that is part of a larger mosaic depicting a *symposium*. A symposium was a formal dinner with many exotic courses at which alcohol flowed abundantly, and which would often go on for hours. In the mosaic, the hero Heracles and the god of wine, Dionysius, are depicted as guests. More recent archaeological digs have found similar mosaics in several sites in Galilee. Also found are shrines to Greek and Roman gods, and the landscape was dotted with examples of Greek and Roman architecture. In about A.D. 20, ten years before Jesus began his ministry, the city of Tiberias was built on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was a Roman city dedicated to the emperor Tiberius, and it became a center of classic scholarship. It was there several centuries later that *Niqqud*, the system of vowel pointing for the Hebrew alphabet, was developed. It was also there that was amassed the Masoretic Texts, the collection of sacred scriptures that is now used as the Hebrew Bible (the *Tanakh*) and that is equivalent to the so-called “Protestant” Old Testament.

By the time Jesus grew up and preached in Galilee, despite what might have been the case in earlier times, it was not at all a rural region populated by country bumpkins. Although the Judaism generally practiced there may not have been as sophisticated as that of Jerusalem and most of Judea, Galilee was a rich haven of Greco-Roman culture, educational opportunities and solid traditional Judaic worship and scholarship.

Richard R. Losch+

Jacob or James?

People are often confused when we refer to the language of the King James Bible as Jacobean English,¹ yet Jacobean is actually the correct adjective for James. Why? Because Jacob and James are the same name. It all goes back to John Wycliffe, whose 14th century English translation of the Bible has set a plethora of traditions that have become deeply ingrained into modern culture even though many are inaccurate.²

The Hebrew name that we translate as Jacob or James is *Ja'akov* (יעקוב). Transliterated into Greek this became *Iakobos* (Ἰακωβος). In many languages *b* and *v* are interchangeable, and frequently when a foreign word enters a new language a *b* becomes an *m*. When *Iakobos* came into Latin it became *Jacomus* (thus the Italian for James is *Giacomo*, and the French is *Jacques*). By the time the name made its way into English the *co* had dropped from *Jacomus* to form James, and the Greek influence had prevailed to form Jacob. Thus James and Jacob are the same name, *Ja'akov*.

Wycliffe was not consistent in his translation. Sometimes he translated *Ja'akov* as Jacob, and sometimes as James. His choices stuck, however, and for the most part his pattern is still used today. Even so, in many early English Bibles the 20th book of the New Testament is called the Epistle of Saint Jacob instead of the Epistle of Saint James.

The main problem with this is that the name Jacob is primarily associated with Judaism, while James is associated with Gentile Christianity. This is unfortunate, because it tends to obscure the Jewish roots of Christianity, and in particular the fact that in his epistle James's theology is deeply rooted in Judaism.

Richard R. Losch+

¹ It is not Elizabethan English. That was the English of less than a century earlier, yet for a number of reasons was quite different in many ways.

² Among these are that Joseph and Jesus were carpenters when it is much more likely that they were stonemasons; and that God created Eve from Adam's rib, while the Hebrew text implies that she was created from a side after God split Adam lengthwise down the middle.

In the Beginning Was the Word

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Most Christians erroneously think that these opening words of the Gospel According to Saint John represent a radical break from Judaism into the new Faith of Christianity. Nothing could be more inaccurate. In fact, the first 13 verses are pure Judaism. It is not until the 14th verse, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,” that John steps onto new theological ground.¹

John’s opening parallels the opening of Torah, and this is certainly no coincidence. Both start with “In the beginning,” and both deal with creation: “All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being” (Jn. 1:3). While Matthew’s gospel is the most Jewish from the point of view of daily customs and religious practices, John’s is by far the most deeply rooted in Torah—everything begins with it. The concept of Logos, the Word, was well known to Judaic thinking. In Greek, *logos* (λογος), which we translate word, means much more than a just group of letters or sounds that denote an object or concept. The Aramaic *memra* or *me’mer* (מאמר) is the equivalent to the Greek *logos*. It means commandment, speech or word. It is what John would have used in his daily conversation,² and it means the same as *logos*. There is no equivalent in English, so we have little choice but to translate it simply as word. Both the Greek and the Aramaic words, however, mean not just “word” as we use the word, but carry with them the concepts of existence, creation through a divine command, and God, the source of creation.

¹ This is why the priest and people genuflect at the 14th verse when this passage is read. It is the first purely Christian statement in the passage, and denotes the fulfillment of Judaism in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

² Scholars universally acknowledge that all the New Testament books were originally written in Greek, and are not just Greek translations of earlier Aramaic or Hebrew books. Luke’s and Paul’s native tongue was Greek, while that of the other writers was Aramaic. They all wrote in Greek, however, because it was spoken throughout the Roman Empire at that time along with the many local languages.

When John says, “In the beginning was the Word,” he is in fact iterating the opening line of Torah, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. . . . And God said, ‘Let there be light’” (Gen. 1:1f). The first act of creation was when God spoke—the Word. It was not just words, however, it was the Word, the first cause of all creation, and through it the Creator’s existence was extended through all his creatures.

Whenever the holy Name of God, Yahweh (יהוה), appears in the Hebrew Bible it is changed to *Adonai*, Lord, so that readers will not pronounce the Sacred Name of God. The consonants are left alone (יהוי, YHVH), but the vowels of *Adonai* are used, making a word that in Hebrew is essentially unpronounceable.¹ This is a reminder to the reader to say *Adonai* rather than Yahweh. When the Hebrew Bible was translated into Aramaic in the 1st century A.D. (the Targum), they substituted *memra*, Word, for Yahweh. Thus when John said, “In the beginning was the Word,” he was fully aware of the association of the Word, *memra*, with God, Yahweh. He then, as a purely Christian statement, equates the Word with the Second Person of the Holy Trinity when he says, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”² He is not equating the Word with the non-Trinitarian God, but with the Second Person of the Trinity. He says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word *was with* God, and the Word was God.” When he uses the word God (*Theos*, Θεός) he sometimes means God the Father, and sometimes the whole Godhead. The context usually makes it clear which he means. Here he is saying that the Word was with God, but not simply as an angel (a creature) might be with him, but that the

¹ Some early translators, not being aware of this tradition, tried to make sense out of this word. The closest they could come was *Jehovah*. This, however, is an incorrect transliteration of a “code” name. In many English editions of the Bible this is indicated by using LORD in small caps.

² The perception of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit, is also found in several places in the Old Testament, although it escaped theological thinking until the revelation of Christianity. For example, Genesis says, “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2). Not just that God moved, but the Spirit of God moved.

Word was also God: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (Jn. 1:1-2). The Word (Christ) was with the Father, and both are God. He then reaffirms the divinity of the Word in verse 14, “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory,¹ the glory as of a Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.”

Richard R. Losch+

The Long Nose of God

When Moses approached God on Mount Sinai God shielded him from the overpowering glory of his presence, and in doing so he described some of his attributes. He said, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, *slow to anger*, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Ex. 34:6). The phrase that is usually translated “slow to anger” is *erek apaim* (עֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם), which literally means “[with] a long nose.” The word for nose (*apaim*) is actually plural, noses, but in Hebrew pluralizing a word is often used as an idiom of emphasis, thus implying a very long nose.² The Jews were fully aware that God is pure spirit and has no body and thus has no nose, long or otherwise, so why this phrase to describe him?

When someone is very angry his nostrils usually flare visibly, making the nose seem larger. However, the longer a person’s nose, the less apparent is the flaring. To have a long nose was a Hebrew expression meaning to have great patience and control of one’s anger. Fortunately, most translators were aware of this idiom and rendered the passage as being very patient or slow to anger.

Richard R. Losch+

¹ See the article on the Glory of God below.

² Many languages use this device. In English until a couple hundred years ago, “thou” was singular and “you” was plural, but “you” was used to an individual of eminence as a sign of respect. Eventually it became standard and the use of “thou” disappeared. One of the early Hebrew names for God was Elohim, which is a Hebrew plural. It was not meant to imply multiple gods, however, but was used to denote God’s eminence.

The Glory of God

When we read the word “glory” we all have some vague concept of what it means, but it is actually quite hard to pin it down. John’s gospel speaks of the Word being “full of glory,” and he focuses on God’s glory in several places. The Hebrew word for glory is *kavod* (כבוד), which also means honor. It is rooted in *kaved* (כבד), heavy or weighty—something that seriously matters.¹ In Greek glory is *doxa* (δοξα), appearance, which also means a weighty opinion.² Both *kavod* and *doxa* also have strong implications of authority and honor. Thus when the Psalmist says that God has given glory and authority to man (Ps. 8:5ff), he is saying that God has laid a powerful responsibility on man, and to have been given that responsibility is a great honor. Saint Paul deals with this in Romans 8, when he argues that the followers of Christ have been given glory and authority to be his agents in remaking and restoring the world to righteousness.

The Old Testament also deals with the visible aspects of the glory of God’s presence, which we often associate with overwhelmingly dazzling light that is unbearable to the normal viewer. In Exodus 8 when God comes to dwell in the Tabernacle, and in I Kings 40 when his divine presence descends on Solomon’s Temple at its dedication, we find the priests falling on their faces in terror. When Moses approached God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34), God’s presence was so overwhelming that he shielded Moses from it. In the visions of Isaiah and Saint John the Divine, even when they were transported into heaven they were overcome by the glory of God.

This is why the Church teaches that even at death we are not ready to enter into the full presence of God, but must be prepared in the intermediate state that we call the Church Expectant. Only after that purification can we face God’s glory.

Richard R. Losch+

¹ The opposite is *qalon* (קלון), shame or dishonor, which is rooted in *qal* (קל), light (as in light weight).

² *Doxa* is the root of orthodoxy, correct opinion.

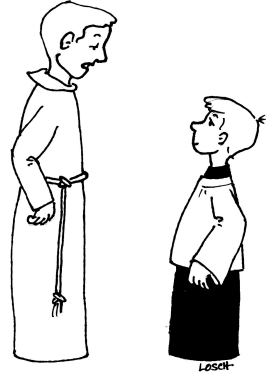
A Touch of Trivia

Pocahontas was not the Indian maiden's name, but is a nickname meaning "Playful One." Her real name was Matoaka. When she first visited the Jamestown settlement they kidnapped her and held her for ransom. When she married John Rolfe, she was given the English name Rebeckah. It was a happy marriage, however, and she turned out to be a powerful ambassador for peace between the English settlers and the Powhatan people.

Richard R. Losch+

JAMIE

by Richard R. Losch



"Sorry, Jamie, but 'awesome' is not an acceptable answer for what you want to be when you grow up."



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