

“Arise, Let Us Leave This Place”: John 14:31b and Pseudo-Epiphanius

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JOHN BEHR, in his recent and magisterial study of *John the Theologian and His Paschal Gospel*,¹ numbers, among the compositional *aporias* that trouble modern readers, John 14:31b: ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν (“rise, let us be on our way”; NRSV). Jesus speaks these words at the Last Supper, yet immediately proceeds to continue discoursing for three more chapters (15–17). Despite their apparent oddness to modern readers, the manuscript tradition leaves no indication of early or later editors attempting to correct, omit, transfer, or expand upon these three words; the phrase apparently posed no challenge to their reading or understanding of the text.² And yet likely because of its awkwardness (seemingly leading nowhere), it has been omitted in the Roman Catholic *Lectionary*, where significant portions of John 13–17 make appearance on the Sundays following Easter and form something of a *lectio continua* during the weekdays (weeks 4–7) of the Easter season.³

A shorter version of the same phrase—ἐγείρεσθε ἄγωμεν—is recorded

¹ John Behr, *John the Theologian and His Paschal Gospel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 34–35.

² The 28th edition of the Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* offers no variants. For that matter, neither does the Weber-Gryson *Biblia Sacra Vulgata Editio quinta*.

³ John 14:23–31 is found also in the *Lectionary* of the *usus antiquior* of the Mass, assigned to be read at Pentecost; and lest the suspicious infer that the omission of 14:31b in the reformed *Lectionary* is a modernizing move, verse 31b is omitted in the older form as well.

by both Mark (14:42) and Matthew (26:46), without variants in either case; in both instances the line is uttered in Gethsemane, as Judas approaches to hand Jesus over to the authorities. In the Synoptics, the line does not pose the same quandary as does its placement in the Johannine narrative. However, in all three instances, the line is spoken in a context in which Judas and his act of betrayal figure prominently.

The context of the Johannine narrative is not yet the garden, but Jesus's supper in the company of his disciples. Having indicated that he is well aware that he will be betrayed, Jesus, signaling to the Beloved Disciple the one who would betray him, hands the morsel (τὸ ψωμίον) to Judas, who takes it (μετὰ τὸ ψωμίον . . . λαβών). The evangelist indicates that in the very act of reception, Satan entered Judas (John 13:27). Judas's departure was immediate, and the evangelist adds the detail, "it was night" (ἦν δὲ νύξ; 13:30); this is no mere descriptive aside, but rather a theological commentary (John 1:5; 3:19; Luke 22:53). What amounts to the first sacrilegious communion is substantially an anti-communion: a refusal by Judas of the offer of communion made by the Lord in his gesture of handing Judas the morsel.⁴ This act is thus effectively a counter-sign: Judas receives the morsel from the Lord and simultaneously intends to hand him over, signaling by this very act his chosen complicity in the satanic rebellion. Judas recapitulates the primal sin of Adam: what was intended as gift is seized and grasped as possession; the communion established, offered, and intended by God is broken only by human choice. The essence of sin is to take as possession what is intended to be received as gift. Adam (here and throughout a synecdoche for the first couple) sought to grasp and to possess what was not and could not be his other than by divine gift. In an Irenaean hermeneutic, Philippians 2 unties the cord knotted in Genesis 3: Christ relinquishes the prerogative of divinity which is properly his, precisely in order to offer it as gift. Both the initiative and the gift are divine. Augustine makes this precise connection with verbal hints at Genesis 3 and Philippians 2 in explaining John 14:31: "Adam had 'grasped' the sin when, having been duped, he presumptuously reached out his hand in order unlawfully to seize upon the title of divinity, which was

⁴ Augustine interprets it precisely in such terms; see *In Evangelium Johannis tractatus* 50.10: "Peter and Judas received from the one bread, yet what share is there between the one who is faithful and the one who is faithless? For Peter received unto life, Judas unto death [de uno pane et Petrus et Iudas accepit, et tamen quae pars fidei cum infideli? Petrus enim accepit ad vitam, Iudas ad mortem]" (*Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* [CCL], 36:437).

conferred on the Son of God by nature, not by robbery."⁵ Perhaps it is the case that Judas, disheartened that the pomp and promise that attended Jesus's entry into Jerusalem just a few days earlier seem to have fizzled and petered out into mere idle talk and foot-washing, chose to take matters into his own hands by his collusion with the Jerusalem authorities. In his failure to understand the divine plan, he sought to wrest control of the situation from Jesus, even as he receives, quite disingenuously, the Lord's offer of communion.

There is extant from Christian antiquity a homily attributed to Epiphanius of Salamis (†403 AD),⁶ a small portion of which is assigned to be read as part of the Office for Holy Saturday in the *Liturgy of the Hours*.⁷ One of the striking features of the homily is that the words of the Lord recorded in John 14:31b (ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν) are placed by the homilist repeatedly on the lips of the Lord Jesus as he seeks out Adam in Hades. Communion with God, broken originally by Adam, recapitulated in Judas's betrayal, now restored by the Crucified, is once again offered to Adam, as Christ invites him to depart Hades in his company.

The entire homily deserves careful theological and stylistic analysis,⁸ but for the purposes of this inquiry attention is given to the last part of the homily and in particular its peroration. Adam, bound in the depth of Hades, is described by the homilist as "the first-created, the first-formed, and the first-to-die, who is deep within [us] all."⁹ Despite his being

⁵ *In Evangelium Johannis tractatus* 79.2: "Rapuerat autem Adam peccatum, quando manum in arborem praesumptione deceptus extendit, ut incommunicabile nomen inconcessae divinitatis invaderet, quam Filio Dei natura contulerat, non rapina," (CCL, 36:527). Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine. For a further development of this theme, see my essay "Liturgy and Vocation," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 14, no. 4 (2016): 1083–98.

⁶ *Patrologia Graeca* [PG], 43:439–64, entitled by the editors *Homilia [II] in sancto et magno Sabbato* and classed there among the *spuria* and *Dubia*; in addition to the text reproduced by Migne, there is another (non-critical) edition by Wilhelm Dindorf, *Epiphani Constantiae Opera* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1859–1862), 4.9–29. See also *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, no. 3768, where, among the works spuriously attributed to Epiphanius, it is assigned the title *Homilia in divini corporis sepulturam*.

⁷ It is employed similarly in the Byzantine liturgical tradition; see *Synaxarion of the Lenten Triodion and Pentecostarion*, ed. D. Kidd and G. Ursache (Rives Junction, MI: Holy Dormition Monastery, 1999), 160–61.

⁸ Questions of provenance and authorship are neither unimportant nor uninteresting, but do not affect the analysis offered here.

⁹ ὁ Ἀδὰμ ἐκεῖνος, ὁ πάντων ἀνθρώπων πρωτόκτιστος, καὶ πρωτόπλαστος, καὶ πρωτόθνητος ἐνδότερος πάντων (PG, 43:460–61); Henri de Lubac, who cites this homily in his influential volume *Catholicism: Les aspects sociaux du dogme* (Paris: Cerf, 1938), draws

described as securely shackled in Hades (μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς ἀσφάλειας δέσμιος κατεχόμενος), it is he who first recognizes the footsteps of the approaching Master, and alerts the others to his coming.¹⁰ Christ is described by the homilist as entering Hades armed with his Cross as token of his victory (τὸ νικητικὸν ὄπλον τοῦ σταυροῦ κατέχων).¹¹ The pivotal moment is when Adam greets Christ, and the homilist takes on the *persona* of Christ, speaking with his voice (shifting from third-person to first-person). Adam, in something of a liturgical greeting, says, “My Lord be with [you] all,”¹² to which Christ responds, “and with your spirit,” acknowledging—or perhaps re-establishing—a bond. Christ then grasps Adam by the hand (the very hand that had seized the fruit), raising him up and speaking to him the words of Eph 5:14. For the next seventy-five lines or so (of the Greek text as printed in Migne’s *Patrologia Graeca* [PG], vol. 43), Christ speaks to Adam. It is a brilliant rhetorical conceit by which the homilist, speaking to Adam, is in fact speaking to his hearers, Adam’s progeny.

His first two invitations addressed to Adam are, as one would expect, in the singular: ἐγείρε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν (PG, 43:461) and λοιπὸν ἐγείρε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν (PG, 43:464). The rhetorical intensity is heightened by the use of anaphora, the repetition of the same word or words in successive clauses: ἀνάστα, a synonym for ἐγείρε (the two verbs that are employed in

upon it in support of his larger thesis and includes a portion of it in the collection of primary texts which form a lengthy appendix. Perhaps it was de Lubac’s drawing attention to this particular homily that explains its subsequent incorporation into the reformed *Liturgy of the Hours*; further, it is cited (the citation itself referring to the *Liturgy of the Hours*) in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, in explicating the credal article on Christ’s descent *ad inferos* (§635).

¹⁰ Neither Eve (nor any other of the dead) engage in dialogue with the Lord, but when the homilist shifts to third-person, she, along with “many other bodies [καὶ ἡ Εὐα καὶ ἄλλα πολλὰ σώματα]” are described as sharing in the resurrection, as Adam, described as being “in [Christ],” leads the way (ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ ἡγούμενος Ἀδάμ; PG, 43:464).

¹¹ Irenaeus had drawn the connection between the description in Isa 9:5–6 to “the government [ἡ ἀρχή] upon his shoulders” and the Cross to which Christ’s shoulders were affixed: that which was a sign of embarrassment and reproach becomes the sign of his victory and rule; see *On the Apostolic Preaching* 56, trans. by J. Behr (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1997), 76–77. Even earlier, Justin had made the same interpretive move in *Apology* 1.35 [I am grateful to an anonymous reader for this latter reference].

¹² This phrase, found in 2 Thess 3:16, had been incorporated, by the time of the so-called *Apostolic Tradition* attributed to Hippolytus, in the Eucharistic liturgy. The Greek of the homily is here perhaps intentionally ambiguous; it could equally be translated “my Lord is with [us] all,” serving as an announcement by Adam of the conquering Lord’s *parousia* in Hades.

Eph 5:14), is repeated three times in the invitation to "arise"; then διὰ σέ is employed eleven times, as the homilist, in the voice of Christ, catechizes Adam on God's kenotic love revealed in the Passion.¹³ Woven into this rhetorical pattern is another anaphora, this time through use of the imperative ἴδε (five times), inviting Adam to witness his wounds, the eternal sacrament of that love. The reiteration of "for your sake . . ." and "see . . ." serves both to heighten rhetorical intensity and to convey soteriological truth. The homilist invites Adam to contemplate the Lord's Body as the living sign of God's unfathomable love for his creature, and to recognize himself as the object of that divine love. Yet, even more boldly, Christ declares to Adam: "For you are in me, and I am in you, we are now inseparably one person [σὺ γὰρ ἐν ἐμοὶ, κἀγὼ ἐν σοὶ, ἐν καὶ ἀδιαίρετον ὑπάρχομεν πρόσωπον]."¹⁴ The New Adam reveals to the first Adam the fullness of his own identity: what the human being was created to be is revealed, even to Adam, only fully in Christ.¹⁵ Further, in an intricate series of rich typologies, which explicate this "identity" between Adam and Christ, the homilist links the garden of the Fall both to the garden of Gethsemane and to the garden of the crucifixion;¹⁶ Adam's hands grasping at the wood of the tree in Eden to Christ's hands extended on the wood of the Cross;¹⁷ and the side of sleeping Adam, from which Eve came forth, and

¹³ Articulated in fuller fashion in the Nicene and Constantinopolitan formula "for us men and for our salvation": δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν. Further, the homilist explicitly uses the language of Phil 2:7 to drive home the paradox of such love: "It is for your sake that the Master took the form of a servant" (διὰ σέ ὁ Δεσπότης ἔλαβον τὴν σὴν μορφήν τοῦ δούλου; PG, 43:461).

¹⁴ In the context of the development of Christology, πρόσωπον is a freighted term, though I do not think the author is here making any formal Christological claim; it is a rhetorical ploy. To the degree that it is a metaphysical assertion, it is less about the *persona* of Christ and more about the identity of the first Adam and the New, and, precisely because of this, the intimate *communio* established by Christ with each believer. See John 15:4 and throughout the Fourth Gospel, where the verb μένω recurs over forty times and introduces a predominant Johannine theme that Paul also develops with his own language of being "in Christ."

¹⁵ On this theme, see the trenchant reflections of John Behr, "Older than All Creation," *Communio Viatorum* 55 (2013): 237–54, and as developed more fully in *John the Theologian*, 194–244. The notion that Christology is simultaneously an anthropology is one of the principal themes of John Paul II's inaugural encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis* (1979).

¹⁶ "[It was for you who] departed from a garden, that I was handed over to the Jews in a garden, and that I was crucified in a garden" (ἀπὸ κήπου ἐξελθοντα ἀπὸ κήπου Ἰουδαίοις παρεδόθη, καὶ ἐν κήπῳ ἐσταυρώθη; PG, 43:461).

¹⁷ "[See] my hands, pinned to a tree for your good, who, for a wicked purpose, stretched out your hand to a tree" (τάς προσηλθωσείσας χεῖρας ἐν τῷ ξύλῳ καλῶς, διὰ σέ τὸν

the pierced side of Christ who sleeps in death.¹⁸ Christ's wound, Christ's "sleep," heals and undoes Adam's wound, his "sleep" of death.¹⁹ The words "Arise, let us leave this place" are then repeated (the first of four times), and function as something of a refrain or antiphon, as the homilist continues using types to relate the first Adam to Christ, but the figurative links educed by the homilist now are arranged as delicate antitheses, revealing the even-greater dignity afforded Adam in the economy of grace, a dignity made possible by the Incarnation: the enemy drove Adam from paradise, but what now awaits Adam is greater than paradise—he is to be seated on a heavenly throne;²⁰ Adam was prevented from receiving from the tree of life, but that tree itself was a type of the life which is God himself, and God has made himself one with Adam, sharing that life;²¹ the cherubim were commanded to guard Adam as one would a slave, but now the cherubim are made to worship Adam as they would a god;²² naked, Adam had hidden himself from God, but Adam now conceals within himself the "naked" God;²³ in shame, Adam clothed himself in garments of skin, while in response God has clothed himself in Adam's flesh and blood.²⁴ The gift

ἐκτείναντα τὴν **χεῖρα** ἐν τῷ **ξύλῳ** κακῶς (PG 43:461).

- ¹⁸ "I **slept** on the Cross, and a sword pierced my **side** for the sake of you who, **asleep** in paradise, brought forth Eve from your **side**" (**ὑπνώσα** ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ, καὶ ῥομφαία ἐνύχθην τὴν **πλευράν**, διὰ σέ τὸν ἐν παραδείσῳ **ὑπνώσαντα**, καὶ τὴν Εὐαν ἐκ **πλευρᾶς** ἐξενέγκαντα; PG, 43:464).
- ¹⁹ "My **side** has healed the pain in your **side**; my **sleep** will wake you from your **sleep** in Hades" (ἡ ἐμὴ **πλευρά** ἰάσατο τὸ ἄλγος τῆς **πλευρᾶς**; ὁ ἐμὸς **ὑπνος** ἐξάξει σε ἐκ τοῦ ἐν ᾧ **ὑπνοῦ**; PG, 43:464).
- ²⁰ "The enemy led you out from paradise; I will establish you, no longer in paradise, but upon a heavenly throne" (Ἐξήγαγέ σε ὁ ἐχθρὸς ἀπὸ γῆς παραδείσου· ἀποκαθιστῶ σε οὐκέτι ἐν παραδείσῳ, ἀλλ' ἐν οὐρανίῳ θρόνῳ; PG, 43:464); on this particular point, see A. Stolz, *The Doctrine of Spiritual Perfection*, trans. A. Williams (New York: Herder and Herder, 2001), 27.
- ²¹ "I forbade you from the tree which was but a type of life, but I who am Life have made myself one with you" (Ἐκώλυσά σε τοῦ ξύλου τοῦ τυπικοῦ τῆς ζωῆς, ἀλλ' ἰδοὺ αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ἠνώθην σοι ἡ ζώῃ (PG, 43:464).
- ²² "I commanded the cherubim to guard you in the manner of slaves; I now make the cherubim worship you in the manner of gods" (Ἔταξα τὰ χερουβὶμ δουλοπρεπῶς φυλάττειν σε· ποιῶ τὰ χερουβὶμ θεοπρεπῶς πρὸς σκυνῆσαι σε; PG, 43:464); the juxtaposition of δουλοπρεπῶς φυλάττειν σε and θεοπρεπῶς πρὸς σκυνῆσαι σε captures magnificently the changed status of Adam in the order of grace.
- ²³ You hid yourself from God because you were naked; but behold, you bear hidden within yourself the 'naked' God" (Ἐκρύβης ἀπὸ θεοῦ ὡς γυμνός· ἀλλ' ἰδοὺ ἔκρυψας ἐν ἑαυτῷ θεὸν γυμνόν; PG, 43:464).
- ²⁴ "In shame, you clothed yourself in garments of skin; but I, who am God, have clothed myself in your flesh and blood" (Ἐνεδύθης τὸν τῆς αἰσχύνης δερμάτινον χιτῶνα· ἀλλ' ἡ ἐγὼ θεὸς ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ καὶ αἵματι σου ἐνεδύθην; PG, 43:464).

of communion, severed by Adam in the beginning, is restored again, by Christ's invitation, and Adam and Christ are now one, and so raising the first Adam to an unparalleled dignity and honor.

Then, subtly, the homilist, in addressing Adam, shifts the verb to the plural. The homilist now more explicitly associates his hearers with Adam,²⁵ having first associated Adam with Christ. Christ's words, addressed to fallen and (now) redeemed Adam, are from this point on addressed to the entire Paschal congregation, as Adam. The homilist then repeats the invitation three times, now in the plural: ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν.²⁶ His hearers are, through him, and with him, and now in him, to depart the place of darkness, from the shadow of death,²⁷ and return to the communion originally intended and now made possible again by the suffering and saving love of the incarnate Son, the New Adam. It is through his undergoing death and rising, Christ declares to Adam, that his lordship over all things, living and dead, has been established.²⁸

Their "departure" is described with a series of clipped prepositional phrases, and their "destination" is capped by a collage of images drawn from the Scriptures, with "Arise, let us leave this place" again serving as a kind of refrain. They are departing "from death to life, from corruption to incorruption, from darkness to eternal light, from grief to gladness, from slavery to freedom, from captivity to the Jerusalem on high, from bondage to release, from detention to the delights of paradise, from earth to heaven."²⁹ Christ tells Adam that his heavenly Father is awaiting the lost sheep,

ἐνεδύθη ἡ θεὸς ὧν τὸν τῆς σῆς σαρκὸς αἱμάτινον; *PG*, 43:464).

²⁵ Recall that the homilist had earlier alluded to the fact that Adam is "deep within [us] all"—ἐνδότερος πάντων (*PG*, 43:461).

²⁶ All three instances are found in *PG*, 43:464; note that, in his edition, Dindorf [p. 28, ln. 31] offers a variant with the addition of διὸ introducing its final occurrence—διὸ ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν—serving to sum up and finalize the repeated invitations: "For this reason, then, arise, let us leave this place."

²⁷ The homilist had already echoed the language of Ps 23:4 and Luke 1:79, addressing "those dwelling in darkness and the shadow of death [τοὺς ἐν σκότει καὶ σκιᾷ θανάτου καθημένους]" (*PG*, 43:452).

²⁸ The homilist places Paul's words (Rom 14:9) on Christ's lips: "For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living" (NRSV; Ἐπὶ τοῦτο γὰρ ἀπέθανον καὶ ἀνέστην, ἵνα καὶ νεκρῶν καὶ ζώντων κυριεύσω; see *PG*, 43:464).

²⁹ Διὸ ἐγείρεσθε ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν, ἀπὸ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν, ἀπὸ τῆς φθορᾶς εἰς ἀφθαρσίαν, ἀπὸ τοῦ σκότους εἰς τὸ αἰώνιον φῶς. Ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν, ἀπὸ τῆς ὁδύνης εἰς εὐφροσύνην, ἀπὸ δουλείας εἰς ἐλευθερίαν, ἀπὸ φυλακῆς εἰς τὴν ἄνω Ἱερουσαλὴμ, ἀπὸ τῶν δεσμῶν ἐπὶ τὴν ἄνεσιν, ἀπὸ τῆς κατοχῆς ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ παραδείσου τρυφὴν, ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν (*PG*, 43:464).

and that the ninety-nine, too, are awaiting Adam, their fellow-servant (σύνδουλος), as he rises, ascends, and returns to God.³⁰ What awaits him? He is told: “The cherubic throne has been prepared, its bearers keen and ready; the bridal chamber has been arranged; the meal has been prepared; ready, too, are the eternal dwelling places and mansions; the treasures of goods have been opened: the Kingdom of heaven has been made ready for you from before the ages.”³¹

The phrase ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν is not a particularly classical expression, nor, to my knowledge, is it found anywhere in pre-Christian Greek literature. And in addition to appearing in patristic commentary on the Gospel text itself, it is found elsewhere only in a handful of places, always with allusion to the text of the Gospel. Three instances where the phrase is picked up and used are, however, worthy of particular note: (1) in a work spuriously attributed to Athanasius; (2) in an oration of Gregory of Nazianzus on baptism; and (3) in the Greek text of *Barlaam and Josaphat*, traditionally associated with John Damascene but quite probably the product of the tenth-century Athonite monk Euthymius.

The lengthy homily spuriously attributed to Athanasius is given the title Εἰς τὸ πάθος τοῦ κυρίου καὶ εἰς τὸν σταυρόν,³² and the phrase ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν emerges within a discussion of the harrowing of hell, and description of the Lord’s victory as a triumph over the powers of death. The text emphasizes that by his death Christ makes sport of death itself and leads from Hades those whom he associates with himself: “And he loosed the bonds of Hades, and raised the others, saying as he did so, ‘Arise, let us leave this place,’ and he rose from death to life, having made a mockery of death itself.”³³ Like the text of Ps.-Epiphanius, the words from John

³⁰ πότε ἀναστῇ, πότε ἀνέλθῃ, καὶ πρὸς θεὸν ἐπανέλθῃ [PG 43:464].

³¹ Χερουβικὸς θρόνος ἡτρεπίσται· οἱ ἀναφέροντες ὀξεῖς καὶ ἔτοιμοι· ὁ νυμφὼν παρεσκευάσται· ἐδέσματα ἔτοιμα· αἱ αἰώνιοι σκηναὶ καὶ μοναὶ ἔτοιμοι· οἱ θησαυροὶ τῶν ἀγαθῶν ἀνεῳχθησεν, ἢ τῶν οὐράνων βασιλεία πρὸ αἰώνων ἡτοιμάσται (PG, 43:464); this allusive collage of images draws from, respectively, Ezek 10:1, Matt 22:10 [cf. the variant witnessed in Codex Sinaiticus], Luke 16:9, John 14:2, Deut 28:12, and Matt 25:34. The homilist makes use of a series of perfect passive verbs, underlining the fact that what is now the case is so because God had so planned it πρὸ αἰώνων.

³² *De passione et cruce Domini* (PG, 28:185–249); the Migne volume includes it under the *dubia*; cf. *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, no. 2247, which notes the existence of versions in both Syriac and Armenian.

³³ *De passione et cruce Domini* 26: καὶ τὰς ὡδῖνας ἔλυσε ἄδου, καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους ἡγείρε λέγων, Ὑγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν, αὐτὸς δὲ ἐξανέστη καὶ κατέβησε τοῦ θανάτου, χλεύην αὐτοῦ τὴν τόλμαν ἡγησάμενος (PG, 28:229); it is worth noting that the choice of the verbal ἡγησάμενος may be quite deliberately a pun, meaning here (tropologically)

14:31b are used by Christ in Hades, as he invites those who have died to share in his victory and in his life.

The phrase is also found in one of the *Orations* of Gregory of Nazianzus, a homily on baptism given on Epiphany of 381 at Constantinople. The phrase is placed amid a mélange of scriptural texts and is employed as part of an invitation and encouragement to the baptismal font. Gregory assembles a group of texts which are meant to arouse and move his hearers to action. He makes use of Psalm 95:1, "Come, let us exult before the Lord"; Micah 4:2, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord"; and Matthew 11:28, "Come to me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you."³⁴ He then uses the words of John 14:31b ("Arise, let us leave this place") and employs Lamentations 4:7 ("her leaders were purer than snow, whiter than milk, more ruddy than ivory, more beautiful than sapphire") to allude to the mystery of light and glory proper to baptism. He encourages his hearers neither to resist nor to dally, but to emulate John and Peter, racing each other to the tomb (John 20:3–4); Gregory says, "Arise, let us leave this place' . . . let us become Peter and John: as they raced to the tomb and to the resurrection, so let us hasten to the font, running, racing one another, striving to be the first to receive such a good."³⁵ By clever use of these texts, Gregory has shifted from the second-person singular to the first-person plural to forge an identity between his hearers and himself. This sets him up nicely to employ with some power the hortatory subjunctive of John 14:31b, and then to follow it with *Γενώμεθα*: his hearers are not merely invited to *do* something; they are invited to *become* something. While here, unlike the homily attributed to Athanasius or that of Ps.-Epiphanius, the liturgical context is not Paschal, nonetheless the phrase is employed in relation to the mystery of baptism, and further linked to the tomb, the light and grace of the Risen One, and the transformation offered to the believer.

The Greek text of the story of *Barlaam and Josaphat* is another witness to the use of this phrase, though in abbreviated form. Strikingly similar to its employment in Ps.-Epiphanius's homily, the context is not the harrowing

"having regarded" or "having considered," but whose original meaning, in the active voice, is of course "to lead" or "to lead the way"—in leading those imprisoned in Hades to freedom, Christ simultaneously demonstrates a disdain for death and its power.

³⁴ The verb common to these three texts and linking them in Gregory's mind is δεῦτε.

³⁵ *Oration* 40.25: μὴ ἀντιτείνωμεν, μὴ βραδύνωμεν . . . Ἐγείρεσθε, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν . . . Γενώμεθα Πέτρος καὶ Ἰωάννης, ὡς ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον ἐκεῖνοι καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν, οὕτως ἐπὶ τὸ λουτρὸν αὐτοὶ σπεύδωμεν, συντρέχοντες, ἀντιπρέχοντες, ὅπως, ἂν τὸ ἀγαθὸν προλάβωμεν ἀγωνιζόμενοι (*Sources Chrétiennes*, 358:252–54).

of hell, but the invitation to faith and baptism is offered to Josaphat by Barlaam. While the context is not Hades, this invitation to faith which Barlaam offers is cast precisely as an invitation to liberation from the grip of the devil, and to depart the “prison” (φυλακή) and bondage to the ruler of this age (τῆς δουλείας λυτρώσασθαι τοῦ δεινοῦ κοσμοκράτορος).³⁶ Josaphat responds to Barlaam: “Lead my soul forth from this prison, and taking me with you, let us leave this place, so that, fully ransomed from this wicked world, I might then receive the saving seal of baptism, and become with you a sharer in this wonderful philosophy and supernatural *askesis*.”³⁷ Note that the words here are on the lips of Josaphat, rather than Barlaam, and express both an understanding of what is offered and an eagerness to embrace it. Josaphat’s response echoes almost antiphonally the invitation issued by Barlaam, indicating his desire for freedom from the devil’s harsh grip (τῆς πικρᾶς τοῦ διαβόλου δουλείας ἐλευθερώσαι).³⁸ The fact that the words are Josaphat’s, and not Barlaam’s, also explains their abbreviated form and the omission of the imperative, ἐγείρεσθε: here it is not an invitation, but a response. Moved by the invitation to faith, it is Josaphat’s initiative that is highlighted. While the setting is not Hades, the themes of liberation from the devil’s grip, baptism, and participation (κοινωνός . . . γένωμαι) in new, supernatural life are central.

Intriguing questions of borrowing and dependency aside, and perhaps beyond our capacity presently to discover, the deliberate choice of the otherwise unknown homilist to place the words of John 14:31b repeatedly on the lips of Christ as he extends his saving work even to Hades is significant. Words which, in the Gospel, are associated with the betrayal by Judas, here in this homily, with an irony worthy of the Fourth Gospel, become words signaling an invitation to a communion restored, offered by the New Adam to the first Adam. Further, these words are also employed elsewhere, outside of strict commentary on the Gospel text, by three other witnesses, and in each instance the phrase is likewise associated in the imagination of

³⁶ *Barlaam and Josaphat* 18.156 (Loeb Classical Library [LCL] 34, ed. G. R. Woodward and H. Mattingly (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 262].

³⁷ *Barlaam and Josaphat* 18.157: Ἐξάγαγε ἐκ φυλακῆς τὴν ψυχὴν μου, καὶ παραλάβων με μετὰ σοῦ, ἄγωμεν ἐντεῦθεν, ἵνα τέλεον λελυτρωμένοι τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ἀπάτης τὴν σφραγίδα τηνικαῦτα δέξωμαι τοῦ σωτηρίου βαπτίσματος, καὶ κοινωνός σοι τῆς θαυμαστῆς ταύτης φιλοσοφίας καὶ ὑπερφυοῦς ἀσκήσεως γένωμαι (LCL, 34:266–64). “Philosophy,” by the time of the Cappadocians in the fourth century (and undoubtedly even earlier) came to be used synonymously with an intentional asceticism, an entire way of life, not merely the adoption of a discourse or adherence to a set of intellectual propositions.

³⁸ *Barlaam and Josaphat* 18.157 (LCL, 34:264).

each author with a nexus of themes including the harrowing of hell,³⁹ the new life offered in baptism, and communion with the Risen One. N.V

³⁹ Literary and theological engagement with the harrowing of hell is by no means limited to the East. Prudentius († ca. 410 AD), in the ninth poem of his *Liber Cathemerinon*, expends considerable energy on the descent to Hades. The *Hymnus omnis horae* is devoted to the *gesta Christi insignia*. Having recounted Christ's remarkable birth, his healings, and miracles, Prudentius then crafts thirty-two lines (of 114 total lines, thus more than one fourth of the hymn) unpacking the significance of Christ's redeeming work in Hades (*Tartarum benignus intrat*), and of his undoing of the deceit of the ancient serpent (*anguis/serpens*). Adam, and with him all humanity, is redeemed by the Incarnation and by Christ's death: "quid tibi, profane serpens, profuit rebus novis / plasma primum [recall here the reference to Adam as *πρωτόπλαστος* in the Ps.-Epiphonian homily; *PG*, 43:461] perculisse versipelli hortamine? / diluit culpam recepto forma mortalis Deo" (*Liber Cathemerinon* 9.91–93 [LCL 387, ed. H. J. Thompson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 82]).