

# THE DESCENT OF CHRIST

## OPENING THE PATH TO SHAMBHALA

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In my book *The Christ Mystery*, in the chapter “Star Wisdom and the Holy Grail,” I refer to the significance of Jupiter’s orbit around the sidereal zodiac<sup>1</sup> in connection with Christ’s passage down from cosmic realms on his path of descent toward the Earth prior to the onset of his Second Coming. And in the chapter “Reflections on the Second Coming,” I point to the importance of the  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year rhythm of Christ’s earthly life for an understanding of the unfolding of the Second Coming.

In chapter 9 (“The Second Coming and the New Age”) of my book *Hermetic Astrology: Astrological Biography*,<sup>2</sup> I expand on this and juxtapose the two rhythms, giving exact dates. The adjacent table summarizes the dates for the Jupiter rhythm. The dates given are those of Jupiter’s heliocentric ingress (entrance) into sidereal Leo. These are the astronomically computed dates and, of course, the actual dates of Christ’s descent may differ somewhat from the computed dates. Thus, it is evident that the commencement of Christ’s passage through the realm of the Kyriotetes coincided with Rudolf Steiner’s birth on February 25, 1861, which was five days after Jupiter’s heliocentric ingress into sidereal Leo.

With the completion of Christ’s descent through the planetary spheres, there took place his entrance into the human sphere, in the earthly realm. The computed date is April 25, 1932, close to Ascension Day (May 5) in 1932. It was on Ascension Day (May 14) AD 33 that Christ departed from the Earth to begin his ascension

Christ’s descent through the spiritual hierarchies		Planetary sphere	Dates
Kyriotetes:	spirits of wisdom	Sun	Feb.20, 1861–Jan.1, 1873
Dynamis:	spirits of motion	Sun	Jan.1, 1873–Nov.11, 1884
Exusiai:	spirits of form	Sun	Nov.11, 1884–Sep.21, 1896
Archai:	spirits of personality	Venus	Sep.21, 1896–Aug.4, 1908
Archangeloi:	spirits of fire	Mercury	Aug.4, 1908–Jun.15, 1920
Angeloi:	spirits of twilight	Moon	Jun.15, 1920–Apr.25, 1932

to the Father, when he took leave of the apostles and disciples on the Mount of Olives, to whom two angels then proclaimed: “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). According to the foregoing and from one point of view, it seems that we can date the angelic proclamation of Christ’s return, his Second Coming, approximately on Ascension Day 1932. This is the date attained by following the Jupiter rhythm. However, a slightly different date results if we follow the  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year rhythm of Christ’s life. Let us now turn our attention to this second rhythm.

The span of time, from the moment of birth of Jesus of Nazareth to the resurrection at dawn on Easter Sunday morning, was exactly 33-per-years (less one-and-a-half days).<sup>3</sup> As will emerge, this

1 The sidereal zodiac is the original zodiac of the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Hindus. It is defined in my book *History of the Zodiac*.

2 Powell, *Hermetic Astrology II: Astrological Biography*, pp. 327–353.

3 Powell, *Chronicle of the Living Christ*, p. 415.

rhythm of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  years is of immeasurable significance to the Earth and humankind, a rhythm that has repeated many times since the Mystery of Golgotha in AD 33.

For example, nine cycles of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  years added to Easter Sunday (April 5) in AD 33 bring us to March 29 AD 333, and Rudolf Steiner referred to AD 333 as a critical turning point in human evolution:

Before the year 333, the greater part of the astral body had been active essentially in the upper human being and its smaller part in the lower body of the human being.... In the year 333, the two parts became equal. This was the critical situation 333 years after the coming of Christ, and since then the upper part of the astral body has been continuously decreasing. That is the course taken by evolution.<sup>4</sup>

Another crucial date frequently spoken of by Rudolf Steiner is 1899, the end of Kali Yuga (the dark age), which began (according to Hindu chronology) 5,000 years previously, on February 17/18 3102 BC (3102 BC = -3,101, and 3,101 + 1,899 = 5,000). Adding fifty-six cycles of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  years to the date of the resurrection on April 5 AD 33 brings us to September 10, 1899. This coincided with the end of Kali Yuga and the start of the New Age, Satya Yuga (the age of light). However, what is the deeper justification for referring to 1899/1900 as the start of the New Age?

As we shall see, through coming to an understanding of the significance of the  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year rhythm we shall be able to comprehend why it is justifiable to speak of the commencement of the New Age at that time. We shall also try to grasp the meaning of the twelve-year Jupiter rhythm in relation to the  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year rhythm. Before taking this step, however, it will be helpful to approach a deep and profound mystery concerning the relationship of Christ to human beings. This is an aspect of the Grail mystery, comprising the sublime mystery of the different modes of communion with Christ.

To approach this mystery, we need the “magic wand of analogy” (to use Novalis’s expression). The hermetic principle of analogy offers us a key

with which to grasp the relationship between Christ and human individuals. Just as the human being is fourfold (with a physical body, ether body, astral body, and “I”), likewise it is possible for the human being to enter a relationship with one of the members of Christ’s being: his physical (resurrection) body, ether body, astral body, and “I” being. This leads to four kinds of communion with Christ. Let us consider these one by one.

The first mode of communion is that between the human self and Christ’s “I.” The words of St. Paul summarize this: “Not I, but Christ in me.” This mode of communion is characterized by the fire of Christ’s love burning in the human being as a heightened power of spirit and an intensified awareness of the relationship—through love—between oneself and the world.

When, through the activity of the Christianized human self upon the astral body, the latter becomes purified and transformed, the ennobled astral body becomes capable of entering communion with Christ’s astral body. This second mode of communion is exemplified in St. Francis of Assisi who, through his purified astral body, entered ongoing communion with Christ’s astral body. Mildness, gentleness, purity, and loving kindness are characteristic of this communion.

On the path of spiritual development, it is possible not only for the astral body but also for the ether body to become purified and transformed. This transformed ether body becomes capable of entering communion with Christ’s ether body. St. Augustine provides an example of this third mode of communion. From a certain point in his life, he attained a more-or-less ongoing communion with Christ’s ether body. This level of communion is characterized by creativity, inner strength, and a harmonious, flowing quality of life.

At a further stage of spiritual development, the physical body itself is transformed. It becomes possible for a person to enter communion with Christ’s physical (resurrection) body. The apostles periodically experienced this level of communion during the forty days from the resurrection to the ascension; it filled them to the depths of their being and bestowed new spiritual powers.

4 Steiner, *The Evolution of Consciousness*, pp. 185–186.

Just as we find the fourth mode of communion in the forty days following the resurrection, we also find the other three modes of communion revealed in the life of Christ. During the period from the death on the cross to the resurrection, it was the “I” of Christ—alone, separated from the physical, ether, and astral bodies—that descended into the underworld and then ascended. In Christ’s descent into the realm of the Mother, we find the archetype of the first kind of communion. Something of this search for the Divine Mother is found in the Grail legend of Parsifal, which depicts the development of courage in the Grail knights. Courage is needed for the descent into Hell and confrontation with the nine layers of evil in the subearthly realms interposed between humanity and Shambhala, the realm of the Divine Mother in the heart of the Earth. The descent to the Mother entails encountering, confronting, and overcoming evil. We find the first kind of communion—that of the “I” with Christ’s “I”—as the central motif of the Grail legend of Parsifal.

We may think of Parsifal as a representative of the Jupiter human being, who will have realized St. Paul’s words: “Not I, but Christ in me,” and who has the courage to descend into the underworld and take up the battle against evil for the sake of humanity and Mother Earth. The Jupiter human being is of the future—Jupiter being the next stage of evolution after the Earth, and so named owing to its connection with spiritual wisdom. Jupiter has always been called the “planet of wisdom.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, the planet Jupiter, with its twelve-year rhythm, is of particular significance for those consciously on the path toward becoming Jupiter human beings, as well as for the first mode of communion, between the human “I” and Christ’s “I.”

Let us now consider how the four kinds of communion are revealed in the life of Christ. We have found the archetype of the first mode of communion (that of the “I” with Christ’s “I”) in Christ’s descent into the underworld between the crucifixion and the resurrection. Likewise, the archetype of the fourth mode of communion (that of the physical body with Christ’s resurrection body)

occurs in the forty days leading to the ascension. Where do we find the archetypes of the other two modes of communion?

Here it is a matter of communion with Christ’s ether and astral bodies. When an individual separates from the physical body at the moment of death, leaving a corpse on Earth, one begins to live in the ether body. Inscribed into that body are all the experiences of one’s earthly days of life. Here the word *days* is appropriate, since experiences during sleep are not inscribed into the ether body; rather, they are inscribed into the astral body, in which one lives during sleep, once the physical and etheric bodies have been left behind. At the moment of death, the human being, indwelling the ether body, witnesses a panorama of images of one’s experiences between birth and death on Earth. Many who have “died” (or been at the brink of death) and returned to life describe the experience of seeing a panoramic vision of life’s experiences.

For our consideration, it is important to note that, whereas the physical body belongs to the spatial realm (three-dimensional space), the ether body belongs to the temporal realm, being a time body into which the individual’s biography is recorded. At the moment of death, one’s entire life is vividly reexperienced, from the moment of birth to the moment of death. Death is actually one’s birth into a higher realm. The moment of the resurrection on Easter Sunday morning was also a moment of birth, that of the Risen One. The biography of the Risen One extended from the birth in Bethlehem to the moment of resurrection. The ether body held all the experiences between Christ’s birth in Bethlehem and the resurrection, a span of  $33\frac{1}{3}$  years. When one dies, the ether body generally dissolves back into the cosmos, but Christ’s ether body did not dissolve but was preserved. Moreover, ever since then, it has continued to unfold its activity rhythmically every  $33\frac{1}{3}$  years. Since the Mystery of Golgotha, therefore, the  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year rhythm has played a role in the cosmic order, just as the planets have always done. It is a new cosmic rhythm, in addition to those of the planets such as Jupiter’s twelve-year

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5 Powell, *History of the Planets*, p. 4.

rhythm and Saturn's twenty-nine-and-a-half-year rhythm. However, the  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year rhythm is a purely temporal rhythm, specified by the duration of the life of Jesus Christ, in contrast to the planetary rhythms, which are specified in terms of cosmic space (by their passage against the background of the zodiacal constellations, so that a planet's rhythm is determined by the time period that elapses between its conjunction with a given fixed star until its return to conjunction with the same fixed star).

Since the commencement of the New Age on September 10, 1899, the  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year rhythm has begun to play a much more significant role than it did previously. This fact is related to Christ's Second Coming. Whereas the first incarnation was an event on the physical plane, the Second Coming is occurring on the etheric plane of existence, in the realm of life forces. Thus, Christ's ether body is especially active.

Following the Mystery of Golgotha in AD 33, the etheric body of Christ expanded slowly out into cosmic realms, attaining its greatest expansion in 966 C.E.,<sup>6</sup> a year that denoted a point of transition. Then began the slow path of Christ's ether body back toward the Earth. With the end of the fifty-sixth  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year cycle on September 10, 1899, and the close of Kali Yuga, Christ's ether body began to reenter the Earth's etheric aura, which attained a certain level of completion  $33\frac{1}{3}$  years later, January 8, 1933. This was the birth of the New Age, Satya Yuga (the "Age of Light"), whereby 1899 can be likened to the dawn and 1933 to the sunrise of the New Age. It was precisely during that period, from 1900 to 1925, that Rudolf Steiner's teaching activity unfolded. According to Steiner, Anthroposophy (spiritual science) is preparing the way for the Second Coming, the approaching advent of which he assigned the year 1933.<sup>7</sup> In his lectures (around 1910 and the following years), he proclaimed the advent of Christ's Second Coming as the greatest event of the twentieth century. Steiner acted as a kind of John the Baptist who

proclaimed the approaching Second Coming, just as John the Baptist prepared the way for the first coming nineteen centuries earlier.

With the first coming, the life of Jesus Christ lasted  $33\frac{1}{3}$  years, the most important of which were the last three-and-a-half years (the ministry, from the baptism to the Mystery of Golgotha). In contrast, the Second Coming is an event taking place primarily in the etheric world, which, in accordance with the  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year rhythm, will last for 2,500 years, or seventy-five  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year cycles, from September 10, 1899, to May 22, 4399. During these 2,500 years, the most important rhythm is the  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year cycle of Christ's ether body; through comprehension of this rhythm, we are given the possibility of attuning to that ether body. It is the renewed presence of this ether body in the Earth's etheric aura that gave birth to the New Age, thus opening up the possibility of a new, "third" communion with Christ (later, we shall focus mostly on the "first communion," related to the twelve-year, Jupiter rhythm of the "I" of Christ in relation to the descent into the underworld).

The "second communion" is that of the astral body with Christ's astral body. As indicated in *The Christ Mystery* ("The Second Coming and the Approaching Trial of Humanity"), the "second communion" relates to the twenty-nine-and-a-half-year rhythm of the planet Saturn. This rhythm holds the key to the "Apocalypse code" of our time, in which each day lived by Christ during the three-and-a-half years of his ministry clearly prepared the work of the Christ impulse for one "Saturn day" (twenty-nine-and-a-half years) in history. Christ's judgment of each day was inscribed into his astral body, and since the Mystery of Golgotha in AD 33, this activity of the Christ impulse in history has been unfolding for humanity as a whole in parallel with Saturn's orbit of the sidereal zodiac.

In terms of the Apocalypse code, humanity is now living through (1988 to 2018) the thirty-ninth day in the wilderness. This means that humanity as a whole is living through what Christ experienced on the thirty-ninth day in the wilderness: his encounter with Satan (Ahriman in Persian

6 See the diagram of Christ's ascent and descent in my book *The Christ Mystery*, p. iv.

7 Steiner, *The True Nature of the Second Coming*, Jan. 25, 1910.

tradition), who presented Christ with the third temptation, turning stones into bread.<sup>8</sup>

Thus far, we have focused on the communion with Christ's ether body in relation to the 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>-year rhythm. The yearly *Christian Star Calendar* indicates how to intensify communion with Christ by living with the daily events in the world of the stars as they correspond with events in the life of Christ.

In the case of the Second Coming, what is the relationship between the twelve-year Jupiter rhythm and the 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>-year rhythm? To understand this, we must distinguish among the members of Christ's being: his "I," astral body, ether body, and physical (resurrection) body. The central rhythm of the New Age is the 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>-year rhythm of Christ's life, and the presence of this ether body in the Earth's etheric aura gave birth to the New Age. If, however, we were to consider only the 33<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>-year rhythm, this would amount to looking at the renewed presence of Christ's ether body in isolation from the other members of Christ's being. While acknowledging that, as an event taking place in the etheric realm, Christ's ether body is of central importance for the Second Coming, we should not lose sight of the fact that all four members of Christ's being work together and are actively involved in the Second Coming. The twelve-year Jupiter rhythm may be seen especially in relation to the "I" of Christ.

As mentioned earlier, the twelve-year Jupiter rhythm is significant with respect to the first mode of communion—with the "I" of Christ. The archetype of this is the descent into the underworld by the "I" of Christ following the death on the cross. Just as at the first coming there was the descent and ascent of the Christ's "I," likewise with the Second Coming there is again a descent and ascent, but this time taking place over a considerable period of time, lasting approximately 200 years.

At the start of this article, the descent of Christ through the spiritual hierarchies from the Sun sphere down to the Earth is dated in connection with the twelve-year Jupiter rhythm, from Rudolf

Steiner's birth in 1861 up to Ascension Day in 1932 or shortly before. (The computed date is April 25, and Ascension Day was ten days later on May 5, 1932.) This gives us insight into the cosmic phase of the descent of Christ's "I" in his Second Coming. But this cosmic phase of descent was only the prelude to the next stage of descent, which again can be followed in connection with the twelve-year Jupiter rhythm.

The heliocentric ingress of Jupiter into sidereal Leo around Ascension Day 1932 saw the beginning of the passage of Christ's "I" through the earthly sphere, the human realm. Resistance to his Second Coming arose, with its central focus in the figure of the Führer, who tried to set up the Third Reich, a kingdom of evil opposed to the kingdom of heaven (Reich in German means kingdom). The ensuing struggle resulted in World War II (1939–1945). By Easter 1945, the allies had effectively won the war in Europe, and a decisive step in the war with Japan was the Hiroshima bomb on August 6, 1945. By that time, a new twelve-year Jupiter cycle had commenced, as well as Christ's descent into the underworld through the subearthly realms. However, to understand this new phase in Christ's descent, it is helpful to look back to the archetype of this event in the Mystery of Golgotha.

On Good Friday, April 3 AD 33, shortly after carrying the cross up Mt. Calvary (it was about midday that he arrived at the summit of Golgotha), Jesus was stripped of his clothes and nailed to the cross. At 12:30 p.m., just as the trumpets sounded from the temple to announce the slaying of the Passover lambs, the cross was raised, and the crucifixion began. At this moment, east of Jerusalem, the sidereal sign of Leo (the constellation of the Lion) started to rise across the horizon (1° Leo). Thus began the slaying of Christ, the Lion of Judah. The crucifixion lasted during the rising of Leo and culminated with the death on the cross as the sidereal sign of Virgo began to rise. At the moment of death, at 3 p.m., the Ascendant was 2½° Virgo (all degrees are in terms of the sidereal zodiac, as defined in my book *History of the Zodiac*).

Following this, a powerful earthquake took place, rending the earth in two at the foot of the

<sup>8</sup> See Powell, *Christian Hermetic Astrology*, pp. 271–292; and Powell, *The Christ Mystery*, pp. 57–126.



cross, and the radiant Spirit of Christ—Christ’s “I”—descended from the cross and into the bowels of the Earth. Thus commenced the fulfillment of the sign of Jonah that Christ prophesied: “Just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the Earth three days and three nights” (Matthew 12:40). These “three days and three nights” should not be taken literally (the descent and ascent lasted only thirty hours), but we may imagine thirty hours in the underworld (“hell”) allegorically as “three days and three nights in the heart of the Earth.”

For our purposes, it is significant that Christ’s descent into the underworld began with the rise of Virgo. The deeper meaning of Christ’s descent to the heart of the Earth was to reunite with the Mother prior to his ascent to the Father. The sign of Virgo corresponds to the womb in the female organism, and it was appropriate (in cosmic symbolism) that the descent of Christ into the womb of Mother Earth began as Virgo started to rise.

Knowledge of the profound significance of Christ’s descent into Hell as a descent into the underworld to reunite with the Mother is related to the Grail mysteries. This mystery of the descent to the Mother is central to Christ’s Second Coming. Just as the descent began with the rising of sidereal Virgo during the Mystery of Golgotha, likewise, with the Second Coming, the descent into the underworld began with Jupiter’s heliocentric ingress into sidereal Virgo during Easter night (Saturday to Sunday), March 31 to April 1, 1945. At this time, there was intense preparation to produce the first atomic bomb at the Los Alamos laboratory in New Mexico. The world’s first atomic bomb—named Trinity—was detonated at 5:30 a.m., July 16, 1945, 100 feet above Jornada del Muerto (“Journey of the Dead Man”) in the southern New Mexico desert. On seeing the fireball and mushroom cloud, J. Robert Oppenheimer recalled a passage from the Bhagavad Gita: “I am become death, the destroyer of worlds.”<sup>9</sup> The next two atomic bombs (*Little Boy* and *Fat Boy*) were

9 From the website of the Los Alamos Laboratory: <http://www.lanl.gov/history/atomicbomb/index.shtml>.

detonated at 9:15 a.m., August 6, in Hiroshima, Japan, and at noon, August 9, in Nagasaki, which ended World War II and began the nuclear age.

The earthquake at the foot of the cross was the outer sign of Christ’s descent into Hell at the Mystery of Golgotha; similarly, the opening of the Earth’s interior through the bomb in Hiroshima was an outer sign of Christ’s descent at the Second Coming, albeit this time a sign made by human hands and inspired by an evil force of destruction working its way up from the underworld. By August 6, 1945, Jupiter had already reached, heliocentrically,  $9\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  Virgo; geocentrically, however, Jupiter was at  $2\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  Virgo, which coincided with the zodiacal degree rising at the time of Christ’s death on the cross. The commencement (at Easter 1945) of Christ’s spiritual descent into the underworld (indicated by Jupiter’s heliocentric ingress into sidereal Virgo) was “proclaimed” to the world by the powers of evil through the explosion of an atomic bomb at Hiroshima, coinciding with Jupiter geocentrically reaching  $2\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  Virgo.<sup>10</sup> This explosion corresponded in our time—the time of Christ’s Second Coming—to the earthquake on Golgotha 2,000 years earlier, which denoted the commencement of Christ’s descent at that time into the underworld.

To understand more deeply our own time, it is helpful to look more closely at the stages of the descent of Christ’s “I” into the underworld, beginning in 1945. Again, here the twelve-year Jupiter rhythm is important. Whereas the stages of cosmic descent (1861–1932) through the realms of the spiritual hierarchies are connected with Jupiter’s heliocentric ingress into sidereal Leo, the stages of the descent into the underworld are related to Jupiter’s heliocentric ingress into sidereal Virgo, starting in 1945. Between Ascension Day 1932 and Easter 1945, Christ’s “I” was present in the earthly

10 There is an extraordinary mystery here: that the entrance into the atomic age coincided with the onset of Christ’s second coming. This onset began on (or around) Apr. 25, 1932, and just twelve days previously, on Apr. 13, 1932, there took place the disintegration of the nuclei of lithium through bombardment by artificially generated protons, first carried out by John Cockcroft and Ernest Walton at the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge.

sphere of humanity; it was a time of suffering on the part of Christ, comparable to his Passion of Good Friday in AD 33. Indeed, World War II was a kind of crucifixion of Christ (preceding his second descent into Hell), a crucifixion on the etheric plane of existence, within the Earth's etheric aura (see the postscript at the end of this article).

To comprehend Christ's descent into the underworld, we need to know something of the Earth's inner structure. According to Rudolf Steiner, we can distinguish nine subearthly spheres leading to the core of the Earth.<sup>11</sup> These nine subearthly spheres may be thought of as reflecting the nine cosmic spheres of the nine spiritual hierarchies. Each sphere of the spiritual hierarchies contains a particular kind of goodness (the love of the Seraphim, the harmony of the Cherubim, and so on), whereas each subearthly sphere is the source of a particular kind of evil. The evil of each subearthly sphere is the inverse of the goodness belonging to the corresponding cosmic sphere. For example, in contrast to the love of the Seraphim belonging to the highest cosmic sphere is the hatred directed against Christ that stems from the deepest subearthly sphere, the ninth subearthly sphere. Against the harmony of the Cherubim is the divisive influence of the eighth subearthly sphere, the source of all strife and disharmony.

The earthly human sphere, in which we normally spend our waking existence between birth and death, is placed between the nine cosmic spheres of the spiritual hierarchies above, extending up to the kingdom of the Father, and the nine subearthly spheres of the powers of evil below, which are situated within the Earth, between humankind and the realm at the heart of the Earth belonging to the Divine Mother, or Demeter, as she was known to the Greeks. Every human being incarnated on Earth is subject to the interplay of what streams from the heavens above and what arises from the depths below. Generally, what works its way up from below is subconscious. The forces of evil working up from the nine subearthly spheres into the human subconscious must be overcome; a first

step is to become conscious of those evil forces. Not everything that works up from below is evil, however, because what belongs to the realm of the Divine Mother also works into human beings from below. How may we begin to understand the realm of the Mother?

As a start, let us consider Steiner's words from the night of the full moon, April 5 and 6, 1909, when he chose to lay the foundation stone of the Rosicrucian temple at Malsch, near Karlsruhe, Germany:

We want to sink the foundation stone of this temple into the womb of our Mother Earth, beneath the rays of the full Moon shining down upon us here, surrounded by the greenness of nature enveloping the building. And just as the Moon reflects the bright light of the Sun, so we seek to mirror the light of the divine spiritual beings. Full of trust, we turn toward our great Mother Earth, who bears us and protects us so lovingly....In pain and suffering, our Mother Earth has become hardened. It is our mission to spiritualize her again, to redeem her, in that through the power of our hands we reshape her to become a spirit-filled work of art. May this stone be a first foundation stone for the redemption and transformation of our planet Earth, and may the power of this stone multiply itself a thousandfold.<sup>12</sup>

Here it is significant that the night of the full moon was chosen, as it was also full moon on the evening of Good Friday AD 33, when Christ began his descent into the womb of the Earth, down to the Mother. Steiner also described the color seen clairvoyantly arising from the depths, from the realm of the Mother:

The silver-sparkling blue below, arising from the depths of the Earth and connected with human weakness and error, is gathered into a picture of the Earth Mother. Whether we call her Demeter or Mary, the picture is of the Earth Mother. Thus it is that, as we gaze downward, we must bring together in imagination all the secrets of the depths that make up the material Mother of all existence. While in all that is concentrated in the flowing form

<sup>11</sup> Steiner, *Founding a Science of the Spirit*, Sept. 4, 1906. See also Steiner, *The Interior of the Earth*.

<sup>12</sup> Steiner, *Rosicrucianism Renewed*, pp. 112–113.

above, we feel and experience the Spirit Father of everything around us. Now we witness the result of cooperation between the Spirit Father with the Earth Mother, bearing so beautifully within itself the harmony of the earthly silver and the gold of the heights. Between the Father and the Mother, we behold the Son.<sup>13</sup>

Since the time of ancient Greece, following the rise of Christianity, knowledge of the Mother and the secrets of the depths has more or less disappeared from human consciousness. The cult of Demeter, celebrated in the Eleusinian mysteries at Eleusis, was suppressed by the emperor Theodosius at the end of the fourth century AD. Now, however, through the Second Coming of Christ, new access to the Earth Mother and her mysteries is opening up. Summarizing briefly, a three-fold mystery is connected with the Mother:

The name of the Mother (*Demeter* to the Greeks);  
Her realm (*Shambhala* in the East);  
Her will (*eternal faithfulness* to the Father, despite the withdrawal, since the Fall, of the Mother into the depths of the underworld, the heart of the Earth).

Concerning the lost realm of the Mother, Shambhala, it is interesting to consider Rudolf Steiner's words to Countess Johanna von Keyserlingk at the end of his *Agricultural Course* (Pentecost 1924), at which he laid the foundations for a new and conscious relationship to the Earth Mother, Demeter, through the spiritually based form of agriculture known as the biodynamic method:

Rudolf Steiner had the kindness to come up to my room, where he spoke to me about the kingdom in the interior of the Earth. We know that, at the moment when Christ's blood flowed down onto the earth at Golgotha, a new sun-globe was born in the Earth's interior. My search had always been directed toward studying the Earth's depths, because I had seen within the Earth a golden kernel light up, named by Ptolemy the primeval Sun. I could connect those golden depths only with the land that Steiner said was hidden

Christ's descent through the subearthly spheres:	Counter-impulses to:	Dates:
1. Mineral earth:	physical body	May 25, 1933–Apr. 1, 1945
2. Fluid earth:	ether body	Apr. 1, 1945–Feb. 10, 1957
3. Air earth:	astral body	Feb. 10, 1957–Dec. 21, 1968
4. Form earth:	sentient soul	Dec. 21, 1968–Nov. 1, 1980
5. Fruit earth:	intellectual soul	Nov. 1, 1980–Sept. 11, 1992
6. Fire earth:	consciousness soul	Sept. 11, 1992–July 24, 2004
7. Earth mirror:	spirit self (manas)	July 24, 2004–June 5, 2016
8. Earth serverer*:	life spirit (budhi)	June 5, 2016–Apr. 14, 2028
9. Earth core:	spirit body (atma)	Apr. 14, 2028–Feb. 24, 2040

\*The eighth subearthly sphere is also known as the "divisive layer."

from human sight, and that Christ would open the gates to lead those who seek it to the submerged fairy-tale land of Shambhala, of which the Indians dream.... I asked Rudolf Steiner, "Is the interior of the Earth made of the gold that comes from the hollow cavity in the Sun and is destined to return there?" He replied, "Yes, the interior of the Earth is of gold."... I continued to question him for my assurance: "Doctor, when I am standing here on Earth... the golden land is beneath me, deep within the interior of the Earth; if I now attain sinlessness and remain in the depths, will the demons be able to harm me, and will I be able to penetrate beyond them and reach the golden land?" He replied, "If you pass through them accompanied by Christ, the demons will be unable to harm you—but otherwise they would indeed be able to destroy you."

13 Steiner, *The Four Seasons and the Archangels*, p. 66.



He added emphatically, "They can, nevertheless, become our helpers. Yes, this is true; the path is a true one, but very difficult."<sup>14</sup>

Here, therefore, we see that, owing to the nine spheres of evil inserted between humanity and the realm of the Mother, the path to the Mother is beset with difficulty; however, this path is possible with Christ. Indeed, Steiner emphasized that opening the way to Shambhala is the central meaning of Christ's Second Coming.<sup>15</sup> As mentioned earlier, this path has opened up to humanity at large since 1945.<sup>16</sup> Previously, it was accessible only to the highest initiates. At the same time, with the opening of the gates of Hell, humanity is increasingly exposed to the demonic influences of subearthly spheres.

Against this background, we may view certain developments in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As outlined, the only safe way we can begin to look at these developments is together with Christ. In connection with the descent of Christ himself, his Second Coming, we shall briefly review the course of the twentieth century and the first years of the twenty-first. Before taking this step, however, it is useful to be aware that Christ's nine Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount contain the Christian impulses to counteract the demonic influences from each of the nine subearthly spheres. The sixth Beatitude, for example, says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Purity of heart counteracts the demonic influence of the sixth subearthly sphere, which is the source of evil passions that, when they take hold, render a person oblivious to the spiritual world, leaving awareness only of the lower impulses that lead to depravity. The qualities of the other eight Beatitudes likewise relate to the evil of the other subearthly spheres. The nine Beatitudes are therefore of key significance on the path that accompanies Christ on his descent into the underworld. Moreover, since the human

being is a microcosm that reflects the macrocosm, we should keep in mind that the nine subearthly spheres are also within each human being, and that the descent into the underworld is at the same time a descent into our own being. In fact, each of the nine Beatitudes refers to a particular member of the human being, and, in similar fashion, the nine subearthly spheres are the source of counter-impulses to the nine members of the human being.

Supplementing the table at the beginning of this article, we can add to the passage of Christ through the spheres of the spiritual hierarchies, culminating in his passage through the sphere of the archangels (1908–1920) and through that of the angels (1920–1932), with the passage through the realm of humanity between Ascension Day 1932 and Easter 1945. Following this is Christ's descent into the underworld, indicating the relationship underlying the counter-impulses to the nine members of the human being, as shown in the table on the following page.

The given dates are those of Jupiter's heliocentric ingress into sidereal Virgo (these astronomically computed dates may differ somewhat from the actual dates of Christ's descent). On this path of descent, each sphere involves confrontation with a particular kind of evil. We can begin to understand this struggle through an analogy with the confrontation in the human realm on Earth between 1932 and 1945. The powers of evil working from the subearthly spheres found a vehicle in the human kingdom (the Führer Adolf Hitler) to act as a focus of their opposition to the Second Coming. A full-scale attack was launched through this vehicle as a counter to the impulse brought by Christ. This counter-impulse can be followed down to the last detail. For example, instead of "Hallowed be thy name," the chant arose on Earth to hallow (heil) the name of the Führer. And instead of "Thy kingdom come" the Führer sought to establish an evil kingdom (the Third Reich) in place of the kingdom of God.

A titanic struggle ensued, culminating in World War II; as mentioned earlier, this can be regarded as a second crucifixion. However, the conflict did not end with the triumph over evil in 1945. Although

14 Von Keyserlingk, *The Birth of a New Agriculture*, pp. 84–86.

15 Steiner, *The Christ Impulse and the Development of Ego Consciousness*, pp. 112–113.

16 Further aspects of Christ's path to the Mother are described in Powell, *The Most Holy Trinosophia*.

that year saw the end of conflict in the earthly human realm, the confrontation continued in the subearthly spheres, into which Christ descended, signifying the opening of the gates of the underworld. The explosion of the atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki were a human-made sign that the gates of Hell have opened, shattering the Earth's surface, which, like an eggshell, encloses the Earth's interior: the subearthly spheres and the realm of the Mother. Through the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs, the first major cracks appeared in the shell that separates the Earth's surface from the underworld, or Hell. It should be noted that on July 16, 1945, the first test explosion of an atomic bomb at Los Alamos, New Mexico, took place 100 feet above the ground and thus had a somewhat different relationship to the Earth's surface than did the atomic bombs dropped on Japan, which affected the Earth itself at those locations.

Strictly speaking, this "eggshell" is the first subearthly sphere, or mineral earth. As such, it is not like the other eight subearthly spheres; rather, it is a layer that separates the human realm from the underworld. Even during the period before 1945, especially during World War II, the influence of the mineral earth was exerting an ever-stronger hold on human consciousness. In 1939 to 1940, the search began in Britain and the U.S. for a military application of nuclear fission. Under the direction of Enrico Fermi, this led to the first self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction, which took place in Chicago on December 2, 1942, and was known as the Manhattan Project. This whole line of scientific research was symptomatic of the increasing influence of the mineral earth on humankind.

How should we describe the influence of this first realm of subnature? Here, we find an approach to the subearthly spheres in the Beatitudes, which contain the counter-impulses to the subearthly spheres. For the first subearthly sphere, the mineral earth, the first Beatitude is relevant: "Blessed are the seekers of the spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The influence of the mineral earth is the opposite of this and leads to turning away from the spirit and toward the earthly kingdom: the mineral, material,

mechanical realm and its laws. The scientific research that led to the explosion of bombs at Los Alamos, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki is an example of this, starting with the disintegration of the nuclei of lithium through bombardment by artificially generated protons, first accomplished by John Cockcroft and Ernest Walton at the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge, on April 13, 1932. This was shortly before April 25, 1932, the date in the table at the beginning of this article for the onset of the Second Coming in the human kingdom. On September 12, 1933 (less than four months after the first date in the previous table), Leo Szilard conceived the idea of a nuclear chain reaction, subsequently realized in 1942 as part of the Manhattan Project in Chicago, involving the collaboration of Leo Szilard, Enrico Fermi, and others.<sup>17</sup>

This whole direction of scientific research, under the spirit-denying influence of the mineral earth, was characteristic of the first Jupiter period (preceding 1945) of the age of the Second Coming. During that period, a counter-impulse to that connected with the physical body held sway. Indeed, the titanic struggle during World War II was for dominion of the kingdom (*Reich*) on the physical plane of existence and for the very existence—physically—of countless human beings. This means that, during the first Jupiter period of the age of the Second Coming, instead of the impulse of seeking for the spirit, for the kingdom of heaven, there lived the counter-impulse of turning away from the spirit toward the earthly kingdom, especially matter.

During the second Jupiter period (1945–1957), which coincided with the descent of Christ through the second subearthly sphere (fluid earth), a new counter-impulse began to play into human life on Earth. How may this be characterized? The relevant Beatitude is "Blessed are those who bear suffering, for they shall be comforted." The counter-impulse of the fluid earth is that of caring only for oneself and avoiding suffering according to the principle of "survival of the fittest." In the wake of devastation and the pain and suffering of World

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<sup>17</sup> See note 10.

War II, ample opportunity existed for the awakening of a new worldwide human consciousness: caring and sharing, give and take, and comfort for the mourning ones. But with the crack in the “egg-shell,” the rupture in the mineral earth caused by the emerging atomic age, something new entered and assumed a role in human life on Earth.

Here an impulse arose that was counter to the ether body, the subtle body of life forces that interpenetrates the physical body. When the ether body separates from the physical body at death, the true nature of the physical body is revealed as a corpse. The ether body bears the principle of life, the counter-impulse of which is anti-life. This is the substance of the fluid earth, the second sub-earthly sphere. When the mineral earth cracked because of the atomic bomb, massive quantities of this anti-life substance were released on Earth as radioactive fallout. Radioactivity has the quality of being destructive to life. As soon as it comes into contact with anything alive, it destroys that life.

Against the background of Christ’s passage through the second subearthly sphere, we can see the development from 1945 onward. Confrontation with the evil at work in each subearthly sphere takes place within that sphere; such a confrontation relies primarily on becoming aware of the nature of the evil principle arising from that sphere. Many people were inspired after World War II to take up the challenge offered by this confrontation. For example, Leo Szilard, as a leading atomic scientist, took up a crusade of raising awareness of the fearful implications of atomic war. In 1947, with Albert Einstein as the chair, he formed the Emergency Committee of Atomic Scientists. He also initiated the movement for the civilian control of atomic energy. Later, in Washington, DC, he organized the Council for a Livable World.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Two further examples are Professor Joseph Rotblat and Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, who witnessed the A-bomb explosion over Nagasaki as Churchill’s official observer, and later, following a Christian conversion when someone said to him, “*God is a person and you know it*,” devoted his life to providing proper homes for the disabled (there are now some 265 Cheshire homes in forty-eight different countries around the world).

Nevertheless, the governments of the U.S. and the Soviet Union continued to support the type of research that led to developing the atomic bomb. Consequently, on March 1, 1954, the U.S. exploded a hydrogen bomb on Eniwetak-Atoll, Marshall Islands, in the Pacific, reckoned to be 600 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb. In the wake of that explosion, 287 people within 160 miles of Eniwetak-Atoll suffered the effects of radioactive fallout. The radioactive fallout was measured as far away as Heidelberg, Germany. Following suit, on November 22, 1955, the Soviet Union exploded an even more powerful hydrogen bomb in the atmosphere above Siberia. With these two hydrogen bomb explosions, the arms race took a sinister turn, allowing the anti-life substance of the fluid earth to find its way in large quantities onto the Earth’s surface via radioactive fallout.

Following the attack on the level of the physical body during the first Jupiter period (1933–1945) of the Second Coming, which culminated with World War II, and during the second Jupiter period (1945–1957), the attack on the ether body began—radioactive fallout being the principle bearer of the anti-life principle belonging to the second subearthly sphere. The attack on the ether body also started to make itself noticeable in other ways. The main indication of this is the interpenetration of the ether body with electrical effects through increased use of electrical household devices and the spread of television during the post-war years. Another potent means of electrification in the ether body was the advent of rock and electrically amplified music, which surfaced around 1950. This prepared for a new onslaught from the third subearthly sphere, the air earth.

During Christ’s descent into the underworld, passage through the air earth occurred from 1957 to 1968. We find the active Christ principle during that time in the third Beatitude: “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.” This relates to the human astral body and to its becoming Christianized through meekness or, expressed more actively, through loving kindness, goodness, and peace. The counter-impulse from the air earth

works to paralyze the astral body and cut it off from cosmic astrality, whereby the suffocating atmosphere of the third subearthly sphere annuls feeling.

Just as the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs were human-made indications of the mineral earth cracking and opening up contact with the fluid earth, so there was a human-made sign of opening up a connection with the air earth. This sign was the Soviet launching of the first *Sputnik* on October 4, 1957, the first artificial satellite to circle the globe above Earth's atmosphere. This step began the space age. The deeper significance of this step was that it began to cut humanity off from cosmic spiritual realms of existence by inserting human constructions (satellites, rockets, and space stations) between the cosmos and earthly humankind. On a macrocosmic level, this corresponds to the microcosmic effect of the air earth cutting off the human astral body from cosmic astrality.

Following the example of the Soviets, on February 1, 1958, the U.S. also successfully launched a satellite into space above the Earth's atmosphere. Then, on April 12, 1961, Uri Gagarin orbited around the Earth in a spaceship. This feat was matched shortly after when, on February 20, 1962, John Glenn circled the Earth in a space capsule. The U.S. emerged triumphant in the space race on July 21, 1969, with the remarkable feat of landing men on the Moon.

During adolescence, the astral body becomes prominent in the development of a human being; it is the time of one's awakening sexuality and feeling life, as well as a time of turbulent emotions. During the period from 1957 to 1968, the third Jupiter period of the Second Coming, owing to the confrontation that arose in the third subearthly sphere on account of Christ's passage through this realm, an onslaught of evil was directed at the astral body, the third member of the human being (after the physical and ether bodies). During that time, toward the end of the previous Jupiter period, we see many signs of "cultural adolescence," one of which was the rise and spread of rock music around 1956, which had a negative effect on the ether body. Moreover, it also has a

detrimental effect upon human emotions and thus upon the astral body in the sense of the counter-impulse of the air earth. Rock music, on the whole, works on the level of the adolescent feeling life. When rock music first surfaced in 1950, one of the first rock musicians, Bill Haley, said that a new kind of music had been discovered through which the souls of young people could be captured (away from the influence of their parents). In the meantime, numerous studies have shown that rock music can encourage not only rebellion against parents, but also rape and other violent behavior, sadism, masochism, and all manner of sexual perversion, criminal behavior, anarchy, and even black magic.<sup>19</sup> The phenomenal spread of rock music during the period under consideration points to the onslaught of evil coming from the third subearthly sphere and directed toward the astral body. Whereas genuine music (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and other composers)—being a reflection of the harmonies of the spheres—is capable of elevating the astral body toward cosmic spiritual realms, the effect of rock music, generally speaking, is to set up a connection between the astral body and the third subearthly sphere, thus dragging the astral body down.

The astral body was formed in the preceding cosmic eon, the Moon period of existence, and thus the astral body has a strong relationship to the Moon. The U.S. space mission, which initially had the goal of landing human beings on the Moon, unfolded by and large during the Jupiter period under consideration (1957–1968), motivated in part by the subconscious relationship to the Moon. In fact, at the completion of this Jupiter period, December 21, 1968, the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) launched *Apollo VIII*, which orbited the Moon ten times. This was followed on July 16, 1969, shortly after the start of the next Jupiter period, by the launch of *Apollo XI*, which carried Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin to the Moon, an event that denotes (inversely) a kind of coming of age for humanity

19 Wolfgang Weihrauch, "Natas-Satan: Texts Spoken Backwards on Rock Albums," *Flensburger Heft*, no. 19 (on the theme of music), Flensburg, Germany, 1988, pp. 167–173.

following the period of cultural adolescence. We shall return to this after considering other aspects of the Jupiter period from 1957 to 1968.

The Moon forces in the human being are expressed most directly through sexuality, the awakening of which generally takes place during adolescence. During the period of cultural adolescence, from 1957 to 1968, this awakening was expressed in the sexual revolution of the late 1960s. At the same time, with the introduction and subsequent widespread use of the contraceptive pill, another step was taken in cutting off humanity from its divine origins. This can be understood quite simply in the fact that conception is—and always has been—the door through which incarnating souls enter the path of incarnation into a physical body on Earth. The deliberate and systematic prevention of conception closes this door to the realm of souls.

At the same time, by way of books, films, and magazines, an onslaught was launched to corrupt and pervert every aspect of sexuality and desecrate its holy and sacramental character. In this connection, the words of Hermes addressed to Asclepius (Greek text written prior to the end of the third century AD) are relevant:

In the conjunction of the two sexes, or, to speak more truly, that fusion of them into one, which may be rightly named Eros, or Aphrodite, or both at once, there is a deeper meaning than human beings can comprehend. It is a truth to be accepted as sure and evident above all other truths, that by God, the Master of all generative power, has been devised and bestowed upon all creatures this sacrament of eternal reproduction, with all the affection, all the joy and gladness, all the yearning and the heavenly love that are inherent in its being. And there were need that I should tell you of the compelling force with which this sacrament binds man and woman together, were it not that each one of us, if he directs his thought upon himself, can learn it from his innermost feeling. For if you note that supreme moment when, through interaction without pause, we come at last to this: that either sex infuses itself into the other, the one giving forth its issue, and the other

eagerly taking hold of it and laying it up within. You will find that at that moment, through the intermingling of the two natures, the female acquires masculine vigor, and the male is relaxed in feminine languor. And so this sacramental act, sweet as it is, if it were done openly, the ignorant should mock, and thereby the deity manifested in either sex through the mingling of male and female should be put to blush—and the more so, if the act is exposed to the eyes of impious men.<sup>20</sup>

Through exposure, therefore, as effected by way of the media, the divine aspect of sexuality is driven out. Beyond this, the rise and spread of pornography has served not only to debase sexuality, but also to pervert and corrupt it. This, too, is connected with the counter-impulse upon the astral body working from the third subearthly sphere, the air earth.

Yet another aspect of this counter-impulse manifested and spread during the period from 1957 to 1968 as a drug epidemic, including especially the widespread use of hallucinogenic drugs such as marijuana, hashish, mescaline, and LSD. Above all, this counter-impulse corrupted the true impulse of the third Beatitude, “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth,” which was seeking to emerge at that time. The impulse of love, peace, and goodwill (“flower power”) that arose was a genuine inspiration of the Christ impulse at work in the transformation of the astral body. However, through the drug prophets such as Timothy Leary, whose experiments with LSD date from 1960, a powerful counter-impulse was directed at the astral body. The mind-altering properties of LSD had been discovered in 1943, but it was not until 1957 that the term “psychedelic” was introduced by Dr. Humphrey Osmond, who used “psychedelic therapy” to treat alcoholics. During this time, too, the CIA experimented with LSD with the aim of creating an “exploitable alteration of personality” in selected personalities.<sup>21</sup> As I

20 “Asclepius, Book III,” *Hermetica*, vol. 1, p. 335.

21 Jessica Locke Del Greco, “LSD Research: An Overview” ([http://mindmined.com/public\\_library/nonfiction/jessica\\_locke\\_del\\_greco\\_LSD\\_research.html](http://mindmined.com/public_library/nonfiction/jessica_locke_del_greco_LSD_research.html)).



described in *The Christ Mystery*, it was in 1958 that the trial of casting oneself down from the pinnacle of the temple began for humanity as a whole. In promoting LSD, Timothy Leary used to say, “Turn on, tune in, drop out,” which is an exact modern-day rendering of casting oneself down from the pinnacle of the temple. This signifies abandonment of the temple pinnacle (the highest in the human being: reason and conscience) in favor of abandoning the “I” by plunging into the experience of subconscious forces, achieved through the intoxicating influence of drugs (and other means), LSD having proved well-suited to attaining this goal.

Christ responded to this temptation—the second of the three in the wilderness—by saying, “You shall not tempt the Lord your God” (Matt. 4:7). In other words, the Divine in the human being (the “I”) should not be tempted by what is lower, the astral body. The activity of the Christ impulse in transforming the astral body leads to the development of conscious clairvoyance (Imagination), which is a metamorphosis of the dream consciousness of the astral body. On the other hand, the use of hallucinogenic drugs serves to evoke an artificially induced, atavistic clairvoyance in which astral dream consciousness is activated without the conscious participation of the human “I,” which leads to hallucinations instead of Imaginations. In this sense, we can view hallucinogenic drugs in direct relation to the counter-impulse of the third subearthly sphere upon the astral body.

These are just some of the phenomena that can be seen in connection with the confrontation between the Christ impulse and the counter-impulse of the air earth from 1957 to 1968. There are other phenomena as well, but here the following two phenomena may be mentioned:

1) The fight against racial discrimination from the days of Little Rock, Arkansas, in September 1957 to the shooting on April 4, 1968, of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., whose martyrdom did much to help establish racial equality. Just one week later, April 11, 1968, the Civil Rights Law was passed under President Lyndon B. Johnson, which (from

a legal standpoint) largely ended racial discrimination in the U.S.

2) Student rebellion, which reached a climax in Europe, particularly in France, in May 1968 in the mass demonstrations and ensuing clashes with the police, resulting in the closure of the Sorbonne.

After this, a cultural coming of age took place. The student rebellion, which reached a climax in 1968, was the last phase of the period of cultural adolescence that ended December 1968. The human sign of the new phase that opened up in 1969 was the landing of human beings on the Moon. This extraordinary feat symbolized the birth of human beings as citizens of the cosmos, albeit as a caricature of what these words mean in a spiritual sense. Here again, a counter-impulse was at work. True human destiny is to become spiritual citizens of the cosmos through an awakening of consciousness to include the cosmic dimension of existence. The physical landing on the Moon worked to counter this awakening by influencing human consciousness toward an awareness directed solely toward the physical-material dimension of the cosmos.

Following the Moon landing, the U.S. space program began to explore the solar system, sending rockets to Mars and Jupiter. *Mariner 9* encircled Mars on November 13, 1971, and *Pioneer 10* passed close by Jupiter on December 4, 1973. The space exploration program has accomplished many remarkable feats since then, including the spectacular “zapping” of Comet Temple on July 4, 2005. However, these achievements generally serve to intensify a physical-material view of the cosmos, leading to a completely false impression of humanity’s relationship to the cosmic spiritual world. This can be seen in relation to the counter-impulse of the fourth subearthly sphere, the form earth. In this sphere forms become inverted and caricatures. The space program has helped to build a kind of negative image of the solar system. This negative image is devoid of all spirituality and excludes the human being, except as an astronaut. However, the human being viewed as an astronaut, encapsulated in a space suit, is a negative image of the spiritual human being,

who is connected with the whole cosmos. The entry to the era of space travel was opened up by the Moon landing in 1969 and may be viewed in direct connection with the counter-impulse of the fourth subearthly sphere.

In terms of the opening of the gates of Hell, occasioned by Christ's descent through the subearthly spheres, the period from 1969 to 1980, the fourth Jupiter period of Christ's Second Coming, was that of confrontation with the evil of the fourth subearthly sphere, directed against the human sentient soul. The true impulse for this period—connected with the fourth stage of unfolding the new Christ impulse in the age of the Second Coming—is conveyed by the fourth Beatitude: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Something of this impulse inspired those who demonstrated for peace, especially for peace in Vietnam, and who hungered and thirsted for a righteous solution to the unjust situation in that country. On November 13 and 14, 1969, some 250,000 demonstrators for peace gathered in Washington, the largest demonstration of its kind ever to have taken place there.

The influence of the fourth subearthly sphere is to turn everything into its negative. The "hunger and thirst for righteousness" in its negative form can give rise to terrorism. Against this background, we saw the escalation of violence in Northern Ireland, which began with the wave of unrest in August 1969 and resulted in the British sending troops to Ulster. The relationship between the Catholics and Protestants of Northern Ireland is something on the level of the sentient soul, beneath the reasoning level of the intellectual soul; it thus seems to defy the rational intellect. Here, the counter-impulse directed against the sentient soul began to work in 1969. The influence of this counter-impulse is to render human beings insensitive to the just claims of other human beings. The flames of terrorism are fanned by infatuation with one's own claims for justice while viewing the claims of everyone else as wrong and unjust. This continues as the terrorism of the Islamic Jihadists, but now with the new and sinister twist of suicide bombing, representing the inverse of "No one has greater love

than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).

During this period, terrorism raised its ugly head not just in Northern Ireland, but elsewhere as well. In February 1970, Arabs and Palestinians (again, people living mainly on the level of the sentient soul) launched several terrorist attacks. On September 5, 1972, at the Olympic Games in Munich Arab terrorists killed two Israeli athletes and took nine hostages, all of whom were killed when police tried to free them. Earlier that year, the Baader-Meinhof terrorist gang in Germany had carried out attacks in May, prior to the capture of Andreas Baader on June 2, 1972. Terrorist activity—murder, kidnapping, and bombing—became widespread, with one of the worst examples taking place August 2, 1980 (toward the close of this Jupiter period), when a right-wing terrorist group bombed a railroad station in Bologna, killing eighty-three people.

On the positive side, there was increase in the movement for human rights during the 1970s, with the efforts of Amnesty International being the best-known examples. In January 1977, "Charter '77"—signed by more than 250 prominent people and issued in Prague—called for liberalization in that country. Twelve years later, one of the signatories, the playwright Vaclav Havel, who had been persecuted and imprisoned for his calls for democracy, became president of Czechoslovakia. Here we see the triumph of the hunger and thirst for righteousness. Another positive manifestation of the Christ impulse during this period was the work of Mother Teresa in caring for the sick and needy people of Calcutta. In recognition of her work, on December 10, 1979, Mother Teresa received the Nobel Peace Prize.

On the whole, however, it was the counter-impulse that came to the fore from 1969 to 1980. This was the Brezhnev era in the Soviet Union, when the cold war intensified, characterized by General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev's inverted sense of justice: "When forces hostile to socialism seek to reverse the development of any socialist country whatsoever...this becomes the concern of all socialist countries." What this Brezhnev

doctrine really signified was the Soviet Union's claim to the right to provide "military aid [read "invade"] to a fraternal country" whenever there is a "threat to the common interest of the camp of socialism" (meaning any challenge to Soviet dominance). Reading between the lines, we clearly see the inverting influence of the form earth, which produces a negative image of true righteousness, which would mean allowing the people of each land to determine the future of their own country.

In the United States, a negative image of righteousness emerged with the Watergate scandal, which involved the break-in and attempted illegal electronic surveillance of the Democratic headquarters in Washington, DC, by five members of Richard Nixon's Committee for the Reelection of the President. As a result of the Watergate affair and in the face of persistent investigations and public revelations, Nixon was eventually obliged to resign as president.

In the cultural realm, alongside the increase in violence and terrorism, a more positive development was the opening up on a widespread scale in relation to esoteric and spiritual matters. The New Age movement quickly gained momentum, a key step of which was the publication of David Spangler's *Revelation: The Birth of a New Age* (1971). Spangler, a major prophet of the New Age movement, is essentially Christian-oriented, whereas many New Age impulses have been more influenced by Eastern impulses, including Yoga, Tai Chi, breathing and meditation practices, as well as various forms of healing, many of which work mainly on the sentient soul and demand little intellectual effort or deeper consciousness, though there are notable exceptions.

One disturbing phenomenon of this period was the massive increase in drug addiction, especially to heroin. As mentioned earlier, hallucinogenic drugs, which enjoyed widespread popularity during the 1960s, affect the astral body and the dreamlike picture consciousness connected with it. Heroin, which is injected into the blood, the bearer of the "I," attacks directly on the level of the soul, the sentient soul. It overwhelms human feeling and works in the sense of the fourth subearthly sphere by making the user insensitive to

everything outside of one's immediate sense of wellbeing.

On November 1, 1980, a new Jupiter period began and lasted until 1992. Just three days into this period, on November 4, 1980, Ronald Reagan became the U.S. President, beginning the "Reagan era." At the same time a new phase in Christ's descent into the underworld commenced, this confrontation being with the evil belonging to the fifth subearthly sphere, the fruit earth. A sign of this new stage of confrontation with evil emerged in the form of the AIDS virus, which attacks the life-support system of the human being. Great healers have often drawn attention to the value of moral-spiritual practice when it comes to healing, and this no doubt also holds true with respect to the AIDS virus.

Exuberant energy is the characteristic of the substance of the fruit earth, and the drug most closely related to this quality of the fruit earth, the fifth subearthly sphere, is cocaine. The fifth subearthly sphere bears the counter-impulse to the intellectual soul, and similarly, cocaine is directed against the intellectual soul, just as heroin is directed against the sentient soul. Both heroin and cocaine work into the blood, the bearer of the "I," which they attack. However, heroin overwhelms the feeling nature (sentient soul), whereas cocaine overwhelms the mental nature (intellectual soul). In the confrontation with the counter-impulse to the intellectual soul, which began in 1980, it is not surprising that addiction to cocaine has assumed epidemic proportions.

Because cocaine is able to stimulate a relationship with the exuberant energy of the fruit earth, cocaine addicts establish an inner connection with the fifth subearthly sphere, just as heroin addicts connect with the fourth subearthly sphere, and hallucinogenic drug users connect with the third subearthly sphere. Seen in this light, drugs can become the instruments of underworld demonic beings to gain access to the human soul and astral body. The war against drugs is actually a war against demonic forces and beings that take possession of human beings and drag them downward in the direction of the subearthly spheres.

The redeeming impulse to these demonic forces is the Christ impulse. The fifth Beatitude indicates the nature of the relevant Christ impulse as a positive counter to the evil of the fifth subearthly sphere: “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.” It is a matter of compassion and forgiveness, not intellectual judgments. When Ronald Reagan branded the Soviet Union as the “evil empire,” he passed judgment on a whole people. Unfortunately, he allowed his overly hasty judgment to become the basis of his arms policy, which led to the massive build-up of nuclear arms and commitment to Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), or “Star Wars,” a fantastically expensive defense project to defend the U.S. against the “evil empire.” This is very different from the merciful attitude implicit in the fifth Beatitude. In fact, if it had been realized, SDI would represent another step along the path of cutting off the Earth and humankind from the spiritual cosmos.

When Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party on March 11, 1985, he had every reason to reciprocate Reagan’s hostile attitude, in which case the Cold War would have continued to escalate. However, President Gorbachev appears to have been imbued with some of the quality of mercy expressed by the fifth Beatitude. He did not judge but met with President Reagan in a spirit of openness. Similarly, he later met open-mindedly with President George Herbert Walker Bush. Astonishingly for the head of an officially atheistic state, in November 1989, he also met with Pope John Paul II. On the day prior to his meeting the pope in Rome, Gorbachev said, “We need a revolution of the mind.” This is evidently an impulse on the mental level (intellectual soul) that characterizes Gorbachev’s reforms, the key words of which were *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring).

The spectacular achievement of Gorbachev’s reforming impulse was to open up the possibility of democracy in the East European countries that had been satellites of the Soviet Union since 1945. If we recall that democracy was born in ancient Greece with the development of the intellectual soul, it is easy to see the level on which Gorbachev’s

reforming impulse worked and to see—at least, in its positive side—that it worked in conjunction with the Christ impulse. The deeper background to this is the preparation of the ground in Eastern Europe for the development of a new culture there, in which the Christ impulse can emerge on a new level during the future Age of Aquarius.

The counter-impulse to the fifth Beatitude is cruelty and lack of mercy, the source of which is in the fifth subearthly sphere. This impulse took the upper hand among those in power in China, whose orders led to the massacre of hundreds of peacefully demonstrating students in the Tiananmen Square during the early morning hours of June 4, 1989.<sup>22</sup>

Seven years earlier, cruelty underlay the massacre of more than 1,000 Palestinian refugees on September 18, 1982, at the hands of Christian militia who entered a refugee camp in Beirut, while the occupying Israeli troops stood by and watched. It was mainly women, children, and the elderly who died in the hail of bullets. We may also think of the assassination attempt on Ronald Reagan on March 30, 1981, and on Pope John Paul II May 13, 1981, as symptoms of the same counter-impulse. The violence to which cocaine addicts are prone may also be connected with this impulse.

This counter-impulse is active in the thousands of murders and acts of violence each year around the world. It is also expressed in more subtle ways, without necessarily being lived out. Just consider the violence depicted in films and on television. More sinister, however, are the “video nasties” that depict savage and sadistic acts of violence and brutality, establishing a link between human consciousness and the fifth subearthly sphere, just as rock music helps facilitate a link with the third subearthly sphere.

In writing this, I am aware of the danger of overgeneralization, since there are examples of rock groups who are endeavoring to raise consciousness through their music. The point is, though, that electrified music as a medium actually invokes

<sup>22</sup> The same cruelty is apparent in the Chinese annexation of Tibet, in contradistinction to the boundless compassion of the Mahayana Buddhism of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Buddhists.

subearthly forces from the third subearthly realm, which was evident in an extraordinary phenomenon of mass hysteria at concerts of the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and other leading rock groups. Similarly, there are many films made with good intentions. Yet, according to Rudolf Steiner in 1917, the medium of film itself has a detrimental effect on human beings:

While people are sitting at the cinema, what they see there does not make its way into the ordinary faculty of perception; it enters a deeper, more material stratum than we usually employ for our perception. A person becomes etherically goggle-eyed at the cinema and develops eyes like those of a seal, only much larger, I mean larger etherically. This works in a materializing way, not only upon what the person has in consciousness, but upon their deepest subconsciousness.<sup>23</sup>

During a later conversation with the musician Jan Stuten (1890–1948) in the fall of 1918, Steiner added these comments about movies:

They meet an elementary need in human beings in a clever and cunning way—this is the hunger for the world of pictures, images, and the forces connected therewith [this was the period of silent movies]. However, film is not an artistic medium....It corrupts the human being's relationship to space and time, kills fantasy, harms the ether body, and works against human freedom....It leads to compulsive thoughts and destroys the faculty for Imagination. [The latter term refers to conscious clairvoyance.]<sup>24</sup>

Another modern phenomenon, which sometimes tends to form an alliance between human consciousness and the counter-impulse directed against the intellectual soul, is the computer, the spread of which has been especially remarkable in recent years. While we cannot deny the beneficial aspect of computers when rightly applied,

an excessive preoccupation with them tends to exaggerate and overemphasize the intellect in the direction of a mechanical mode of thinking. This mechanical element of the intellect forms a link with the subearthly spheres, particularly the fifth subearthly sphere, which bears the counter-impulse to the intellectual soul. The true nature of the intellectual soul, as seen during the Greco-Roman period (the age of the developing intellectual soul), exemplified by the Greek philosophers, is organic thinking, which is comfortable pondering the relationships among God, humanity, and nature. Organic thinking may be trained by contemplation of the living, organic realm of nature. In the case of an excessive preoccupation with computers, thinking is trained by the machine and its rigid, inorganic logic; thinking becomes mechanized. This simple consideration shows that the mechanization of thought—an inherent danger for those obliged to deal extensively with computers in daily life—may be safeguarded against by deliberately cultivating living (organic) thinking.

Here we can point to the major role of computers in the arms race. Indeed, a project such as SDI would be unthinkable without computers. In 2007, a metamorphosis of SDI emerged in the form of the Missile Defence System (MDS), which, like SDI, employs the idea of tracking and destroying incoming ballistic missiles using a network of satellites, ground-based radars, high-velocity intercepting missiles and airborne lasers. Military satellites with infrared sensors are designed to spot the trail of heat given off by a ballistic missile during its launch phase. Mid-course sensors then track their trajectory and feed data to a network of ground-based radars, which monitor the missiles when they come over the horizon. When the trajectories are tracked, long-range interceptors are supposed to destroy the missiles by direct hits. Any that get through are then mopped up by shorter-range interceptors. The U.S. began plans in 2007 to establish MDS in various European countries. Sergei Ivanov, Russia's defense minister, described plans for a U.S. missile shield as "a new, virtual Berlin wall." Moreover, Russian analysts

23 Steiner, *Cosmic and Human Metamorphoses*, Feb. 27, 1917.

24 This quote by Rudolf Steiner is translated from Werner Schäfer's book, *Rudolf Steiner über die technischen Bild- und Tonmedien*, Bremen, Germany: Verein für Medienforschung und Kulturförderung, 1999, p. 12 (tr. RP).



see effort to install MDS close to Russia's borders as a revival of the Cold War.

As mentioned earlier, the arms race is built on a principle opposite to that expressed in the fifth Beatitude: "Blessed are the merciful." The "Star Wars" project, conceived of in the fall of 1979, shortly before the start of the fifth Jupiter period on November 1, 1980, epitomized the lack of mercy. That project was a significant stage in the human-made signs of the new alliance between humanity and subnature and the subearthly spheres. The stages in this development in relation to the twelve-year Jupiter rhythm are: the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs (1945); the *Sputnik* (1957); the Moon landing (1969); and SDI, which was publicly proposed by Ronald Reagan March 23, 1983, but conceived three-and-a-half years earlier. Apart from *Sputnik* (the U.S. did not launch its own version, the Explorer satellite, until 1958), each of these stages was an initiative of the U.S. Thus, the most powerful links between humanity and subnature are evident in the United States of America. Moreover, this applies not only to the technological side of humanity's alliance with the subearthly spheres, but also to the cultural side.

The impulse living in the souls of the American people may be characterized by what is termed the descent into the underworld. This, however, signifies confrontation with the evil of the subearthly spheres. In addition, it is only with Christ that this descent may be accomplished safely. This is the path to the Mother, Demeter, and to her realm, Shambhala, which existed in antiquity in a somewhat different form, for example, in the mysteries of Eleusis. To take this path means to begin awaking to Mother Earth as a living being. The worldwide growing awareness of environmental problems—the Green Movement—indicates the growing consciousness of Mother Earth. In 1983, the Green Party was voted into the German parliament on a platform of protecting the environment, disarmament, and rejection of atomic energy. There are signs that in the U.S., too, politicians are beginning to take environmental issues seriously. What a step it would be if, instead of spending hundreds of billions of dollars on SDI or on

its successor, MDS, or on other military projects, this money could be channeled into solving social and environmental problems. Seeing that the Star Wars project—on account of the National Missile Defense Act (1999)—has been superseded by the Missile Defense System (MDS), it is evident that the United States and other national governments still have a distance to travel in awakening to the virtue of mercy rather than exercising the raw might of military power. Shakespeare wrote of both mercy and earthly power:

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;  
It blesses him that gives and him that takes:  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown;  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty,  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings!  
But mercy is above the sceptred sway,  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself,  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice.<sup>25</sup>

Just as the quality of mercy was central to unfolding the Christ impulse during the Jupiter period from 1980 to 1992, likewise in the following Jupiter period from 1992 to 2004, it was the quality of purity: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The sixth Beatitude relates to a different level of unfolding the Christ impulse in confronting the evil of the sixth subearthly sphere, the fire earth, in which the counter-impulse to the consciousness soul is active. Instead of awaking human consciousness to the spirit (consciousness soul), the fire earth is a sphere of passion that fans the flames of human passions, causing one to follow the lower nature and forget one's higher nature. Whoever becomes subject to the influence of the sixth subearthly sphere receives the impulses of evil passions from below, and may eventually become utterly depraved. This is the counter-impulse to purity. Consider Steiner's

<sup>25</sup> Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, act IV, scene 1.

comments on the link between human passions and the fire earth:

There are occasions when the very substance of the passions of the fire earth begins to rebel. Aroused by human passions, it penetrates through the fruit earth, forces its way through the channels in the upper layers and even flows up into and violently shakes the solid earth. The result is an earthquake. If this passion from the fire earth thrusts up some of the Earth's substance, a volcano erupts... There is still this connection between human passions and the passion layer in the interior of the Earth; and it is still to an accumulation of evil passions and forces that earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are due.<sup>26</sup>

Here it suffices to say that, with the level of working of the Christ impulse in confronting the evil of the sixth subearthly realm in the Jupiter period from 1992 to 2004, the possibility arose of attaining a new and conscious relationship to the Christ impulse and to Christ's descent into the underworld. With the opening of the gates of Hell along Christ's path of descent, at each stage a new level of the Christ impulse begins to unfold, and at the same time a new evil counter-impulse has to be met. The question could be raised: What is the point of it all? Do we have to be confronted with the evil of the subearthly spheres?

The answer is quite simple: by confronting and overcoming evil, human beings are able to advance on the path of spiritual development—not just as individuals, but also for humanity and the entire Earth. The forces of evil in the subearthly spheres exist whether we like it or not, and they work into us continuously on a subconscious level. The task is to raise them to consciousness, to recognize them for what they are, and to overcome them—or rather to transform them—through the Christ impulse. The Christ impulse of purity (the “pure in heart” of the sixth Beatitude) helps those who open themselves to it in the struggle against the bestial and depraved passions that arise through the influence of the sixth subearthly realm. In

<sup>26</sup> Steiner, *Founding a Science of the Spirit*, pp. 140–141. See also Steiner, *The Interior of the Earth*, pp. 32–33.

overcoming, human evolution advances a step. In Steiner's words:

You will see that human beings are related to all the layers [of the subearthly spheres], for they are continually radiating out their forces. Humanity lives under the influence of these layers and has to overcome their powers. When human beings have learned to radiate life on Earth and have trained their breathing so that it promotes life, they will have overcome the fire earth. When they overcome pain spiritually through serenity, they overcome the air earth. When concord reigns, the “divisive layer” is conquered. When white magic triumphs, no evil remains on Earth. Human evolution thus implies a transformation of the Earth's interior.<sup>27</sup>

From this point of view, the period since the onset of the Second Coming in 1932/1933 offers an unprecedented possibility for human evolution, through the confrontation with the evil of the subearthly spheres—a confrontation led by Christ, with Christ at our side. At the same time, it is a period fraught with terrible danger, for never before in human history have the gates of the underworld been opened. Positive advances seem small and frail compared to the onslaught of evil arising from the underworld through the opened gates of Hell.

Positive manifestations of the activity of the Christ impulse in the twentieth century include: the popular uprising for freedom in Hungary (1956); the emergence in Czechoslovakia of “Socialism with a human face” (1968); the rise of the Solidarity movement in Poland, calling for liberalization (1979 to 1980); and the dissolution of the Soviet Union (1991). These events at twelve-year intervals took place in connection with Jupiter's heliocentric passage through sidereal Leo. Seen in relation to the unfolding Jupiter rhythm against the background of Christ's descent through the subearthly spheres, the passage through sidereal Leo always denotes the last phase of descent through a particular subearthly sphere. In other words, when Jupiter is passing through sidereal Leo, the Christ

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

impulse has, from one perspective, “triumphed” in the confrontation with evil in this sphere. The heliocentric passage of Jupiter through sidereal Leo (from August 25, 1991, to September 11, 1992) was the time of the “triumph” of the Christ impulse in confronting the evil of the fifth subearthly sphere, which manifested historically with the “peaceful revolution” leading to the liberation of the Soviet Union from the yoke of Communism. The role (wittingly or otherwise) of Gorbachev in dissolving the Soviet Union was completed December 25, 1991, when he announced his resignation as President. The most significant phase in the dissolution process began on August 23, 1991, when Boris Yeltsin decreed the suspension of the Russian Communist Party on the grounds that it had lent its support to the three-day coup by Moscow hardliners, which lasted from August 18 to August 21, 1991. As noted, around this time heliocentric Jupiter entered sidereal Leo on August 25, 1991.

When heliocentric Jupiter entered Virgo on September 11, 1992, a new twelve-year period began—that of Christ’s descent through the sixth subearthly sphere, lasting until July 24, 2004. The Beatitude, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God,” expresses the nature of Christ’s activity during this period in relation to the corrupting influence of the sixth subearthly realm, the fire earth. Here, in this sixth region of the Earth’s interior, lies the primary source of opposition to the development of the sixth member of the human being, the consciousness soul.

The development of the consciousness soul is aided by the extension of one’s cognitive faculties beyond oneself to embrace the different realms of existence: the kingdoms of nature and the cosmic spheres of the spiritual hierarchies, as well as the whole of earthly humanity’s life on planet Earth. The awakening of conscience enables one’s awareness to expand beyond the narrow, personal sphere of interest. To be pure in heart means that our conscience is awake to the suffering of others, that we are genuinely interested in the well-being of one another, in contrast to one’s exclusive focus on selfish desires. Ideally, every medical doctor has some of this quality, which entails looking

therapeutically at human beings and the world and asking: What is lacking here? What ails thee?<sup>28</sup>

Three-quarters of the way through this period, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center occurred on September 11, 2001. In the wake of this horrific event, the U.S. had the sympathy of the entire world. It was a unique opportunity for the political leadership of the U.S. to usher in a new world for the new millennium, making peace, not war, the priority. Instead of asking “What ails thee?” in relation to what motivated the terrorists, the response was to take revenge, giving birth to the “war on terror.” Who can say how different things would be if, at that moment, the voice of conscience had made itself heard?

A significant feature of the period from 1992 to 2004 was the surfacing, supported by the Internet, of sheer depravity in the form of pornography and perverse sexuality (sodomasochism, child sexual abuse, child prostitution, sexual slavery, bestiality). In the Book of Revelation, this is called fornication with “Babylon, the great whore, the mother of harlots and of Earth’s abominations” (Rev. 17:4).

The onslaught upon humanity through the corrupting influence of the great whore of Babylon (an expression of forces from the sixth subearthly sphere) emerged in full force during this period. In the words of Rudolf Steiner: “The fall of Babylon . . . will come upon us in a particular form after the time when Christ appears on the Earth for the first time in the ether body—in other words, actually after Christ’s second appearance on the Earth.”<sup>29</sup> With the surfacing of sexual depravity a powerful force of opposition to the development of the consciousness soul is present. The awaking of conscience, the hallmark of the Christ impulse in the consciousness soul, is blocked by sexual depravity as an expression of the forces of passion residing in the sixth subearthly sphere. Instead of

28 This is called “the Parsifal question” because, in the Grail story of *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach, it was the question Parsifal put to his ailing uncle Amfortas, who was healed as a result of asking this question.

29 Steiner, *The Book of Revelation and the Work of the Priest*, p. 149.

the heart forces of selfless love, sun-like, ruling the human soul, subconscious instinctual drives take control, and depravity replaces the “purity of heart” of the sixth Beatitude. The subconscious then asserts itself against the consciousness soul.

The culmination of the sixth Jupiter period of Christ’s Second Coming was with Jupiter’s passage heliocentrically through Leo between June 30, 2003, and July 24, 2004. After the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003, this period was a time during which British and American troops became increasingly embroiled in the process leading to the creation of the Hell on Earth manifesting in modern Iraq. Although U.S. political leadership had received clear warnings from numerous experts that toppling Saddam Hussein would unleash an uncontrollable cauldron of destabilizing forces in the Middle East, they went ahead with the war anyway. This blatant lack of consciousness, despite the warnings of experts, was a dramatic blow to humanity’s task of unfolding the consciousness soul.

Another more subtle blow came with the publication in April 2003 of Dan Brown’s book *The Da Vinci Code*, which during the heliocentric passage of Jupiter through Leo became one of the bestselling books of all time. The task of the consciousness soul is to learn to distinguish between good and evil; since Christ is the Good, this means learning to see Christ, who is God, or, as the Son of God, an expression of God. (“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”) Distinguishing between good and evil is not easy, because evil often clothes itself as something good. A mixture of truth and falsehood is generally the result. The kernel of truth in Dan Brown’s novel is that the Divine Feminine has been suppressed and needs to reawaken and be reestablished. Mixed in with this core truth is a fantastic web of lies concerning Mary Magdalene (see my book *The Mystery, Biography & Destiny of Mary Magdalene: Sister of Lazarus John and Spiritual Sister of Jesus*).

The real significance of Mary Magdalene is that 2,000 years ago she was the first to behold the Risen Christ. Her significance in our time is that she points the way for humanity to behold Christ

in his spiritual form at this time of his Second Coming. Mary Magdalene herself, in her younger years, lived through the temptation of the whore of Babylon and triumphed, coming to behold the Risen Christ. Her message, central to humanity today, has unfortunately become twisted and distorted in the minds of millions through the false message concerning the “Mary Magdalene” presented in the book and the film *The Da Vinci Code*.

False thoughts and images act like viruses in the human soul. Just as a computer infected by a virus cannot function properly, viruses in the human mind (as thoughts) and in the human soul (as images) work to distort human perception. The human being is then no longer pure (in heart) but infected. One of today’s tasks, therefore, is to uproot and render impotent all such viruses through conscious activity. Mary Magdalene shows that this is possible, even if we fall. It is possible to triumph over the corrupting influences from the sixth subearthly realm working against the development of the consciousness soul.

On the positive side, a modern Mary Magdalene appeared during this culminating time of the sixth Jupiter period in the anthroposophist Judith von Halle, who received the stigmata on Good Friday, April 9, 2004, at 1:47 p.m. in Berlin. She was thirty-one years old at the time. Since receiving the stigmata, she has not eaten or drunk anything except water, and that only occasionally and in small quantities. She lives from the word of God, as in Jesus’ reply to Satan’s temptation: “One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Like Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774–1824), the Augustinian nun who received the stigmata at the age of thirty-eight, and who neither ate nor drank thereafter except for the daily sacrament of the host and drinking small quantities of water, Judith von Halle lives in visions of the life of Christ, particularly the Mystery of Golgotha, beholding his death and resurrection. In her books, she describes what she witnesses from the time of Christ. There is a remarkable agreement between her descriptions and those of Anne Catherine Emmerich, whose works Judith von Halle reports

she deliberately avoided.<sup>30</sup> As a young woman bearing witness to Christ, she is a kind of modern-day Mary Magdalene, testifying to the reality of Christ's resurrection and his love for humanity. Like St. Francis of Assisi (1182–1226), who received the stigmata at the age of forty-two, Judith von Halle can be thought of as a standard-bearer of Christ in the modern world, as in the words attributed to St. Francis in the “Considerations on the Glorious Stigmata of St. Francis”:

When I was on Mount Alverna, all rapt in the contemplation of the Passion of Christ, in this Seraphic vision I was by Christ thus stigmatized in my body; and then Christ said to me, “Knowest thou what I have done to thee? I have given thee the marks of my Passion in order that thou mayst be My standard bearer.”<sup>31</sup>

The descent of Christ through the seventh sub-earthly sphere began July 24, 2004, signifying the confrontation (not only for Christ, but also for all humanity) with the forces of the earth mirror. The relevant aspect of the Christ impulse here is expressed in the words: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” The corrupting influence of the mirror earth works to turn everything into its opposite. The seventh Beatitude expresses the quality of peace connected with attaining the next level beyond the consciousness soul, the spirit self, the purified astral body, known in the East as *manas*. The spirit self, the seventh level, involves a new, spiritual birth, and becoming children of God through the “second birth”: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew . . . unless one is born of water and the spirit, one cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3: 3–5). The inverse of this means becoming children of the evil one, or to be possessed. This is the danger that Rudolf Steiner indicated in the wake of the fall of Babylon, as mentioned here in connection with the surfacing

of the forces of the sixth subearthly sphere during the period 1992 to 2004.

The first stage is the fall of Babylon. . . . The second stage is the fall of the Beast and his associate, the False Prophet, who spreads the teachings of the Beast. . . . The city of Babylon is to be found among all of earthly humankind. It exists wherever human beings have fallen victim to the Babylonian temptation. . . . The first downfall, the fall of Babylon, is the fall of errors that human beings have themselves brought about. . . . The second downfall is one in which not only human beings alone participate. Those actually affected by the fall of Babylon are human beings; it happens because of human error. In the fall of the Beast and of the False Prophet, who represents the teachings of the Beast, something supra-human and spiritual falls, not something human. Something falls that is not within the human kingdom. The Beast, who breaks in on human communities, falls, and the one who proclaims the teachings of the Beast, the False Prophet, falls. What falls is something that can make human beings possessed. . . . that their human “I” is not in them, so that one cannot address them as human beings, because they are possessed by the Beast and by the False Prophet. This will come about after the fall of Babylon. After the fall of Babylon there will be people on the earth who will be like wandering demons.<sup>32</sup>

This is the challenge facing humanity during the present Jupiter period (2004–2016), the seventh following the onset of Christ's Second Coming. This is the counterpart to “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.” It can be formulated: “Woe to the war-makers, for they shall be children of the evil one.” As indicated in my book *The Christ Mystery*, this current Jupiter period is the one in which humanity's encounter with the Beast (also known as the Antichrist) and the False Prophet is taking place. There would be enough material on this topic to fill several volumes, but here it suffices to draw attention to chapter 13 of the Book of Revelation, which describes the emergence on the world stage of the Beast and the False Prophet, representing

30 Von Halle, *Das Abendmahl* (“The Last Supper”), pp. 103–106.

31 “Considerations on the Glorious Stigmata of St. Francis” in *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*, book 2, chapter 9, London, 1963, pp. 129–130.

32 Steiner, *The Book of Revelation and the Work of the Priest*, pp. 154–156.



a historical counterpoint to the emergence 2,000 years ago of Christ and his Prophet, John the Baptist. A key date in the confrontation with the Antichrist (the incarnated Ahriman) and the False Prophet is the year 2012. In particular, the winter solstice December 21, 2012, is the date signifying the end of the Mayan calendar in its present cycle.<sup>33</sup> It is too simplistic to speak of a simple linear sequence—first, the fall of Babylon, then the coming of the Antichrist and the False Prophet—since the fall of Babylon is an ongoing event.

One of the signs for humanity of entering into this new period, perhaps the most dramatic period in all of human history, was the tsunami on December 26, 2004, when more than 283,000 people lost their lives. This event, in the words of Judith von Halle, was a manifestation of “Ahriman rattling his chains.”<sup>34</sup> Eight months later, the devastation of Hurricane Katrina occurred on August 30, 2005. Regarding “Ahriman rattling his chains,” Rudolf Steiner stated:

Upheavals in nature—earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, great floods and the like—are not an integral part of the ongoing evolution of the Earth. . . . The ordinary natural laws of the earth are not operating, but the Old Moon is beginning to stir, to rumble in the Earth. . . . And it is here . . . in respect of many events of an elemental nature [that] initiation science . . . must ask: When and where was this event set in motion? And the answer is that it derives from the horrors and atrocities of enmity and warfare.<sup>35</sup>

This is a clear indication by Steiner. It might be interpreted that the tsunami and the trio of powerful hurricanes that struck the U.S. Gulf Coast—Katrina on August 30, Rita on September

24, Wilma on October 24, 2005—as well as the devastating great Kashmir earthquake (7.6 on the Richter scale), which claimed the lives of more than 87,000 people on October 8, 2005, could perhaps all be seen in relation to the horrors and atrocities of the Iraq War, which, although the “end of major combat” was declared by President Bush on May 1, 2003, is still ongoing (as of this writing, Palm Sunday, April 1, 2007).

In keeping with the seventh Beatitude (“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God”), instead of war, “Peace on Earth to all beings of good will” (Luke 2:14) is the hallmark of the Christ impulse during the seventh Jupiter period (2004–2016) of Christ’s Second Coming. On the positive side, there is an event that has been prophesied and is expected to take place toward the end of this Jupiter period. This is the coming of the Kalki Avatar. This appearance is connected with the beginning of Satya-yuga, or “Age of Light”:

When the Supreme Lord has appeared on Earth as Kalki, the maintainer of religion, Satya-yuga will begin, and human society will bring forth progeny in the mode of goodness. . . . When the Moon, the Sun, and Brhaspati (Jupiter) are together in the constellation Karkata (Cancer), and all three enter simultaneously into the lunar mansion Pushya—at that exact moment the age of Satya, or Krita, will begin. (Bhagavatam, 12.2.22, 24)

Thus, when the Sun, Moon, and Jupiter are in conjunction in the Hindu lunar asterism Pushya (4°–17° Cancer), the emergence of the Kalki Avatar, the “bearer of goodness,” is expected. It is in this lunar mansion that the beautiful star cluster Praesepe, Jupiter’s place of exaltation in the zodiac, is to be found. Evidently the Hindus attributed something special to Jupiter’s location in this part of the zodiac: a special impulse of the Good comes to expression here.

The prophesied conjunction of the Sun, Moon, and Jupiter in Pushya took place July 27, 2014, possibly signifying the emergence of the Kalki Avatar as the bearer of a new and mighty spiritual impulse for the evolution of humanity, for

33 See the following articles in the *Christian Star Calendar* 2006, pp. 3–14, 26–32; Powell, “Zoroastrian Roots of Star Wisdom”; Farrants, “The Continuing Influence of the Grand Conjunction of 1962: An Imagination for the 21st Century,” See also the *Christian Star Calendar* 2007, pp. 33–39; Farrants, “The Reign of Antichrist: the Unlawful Prince of the World.”

34 Von Halle, *Und wäre Er nicht auferstanden . . .*, p. 104 (English tr, *And if He Had not Been Raised . . .*).

35 Steiner, *Karmic Relationships*, vol. 2, pp. 248–249, 254.

the redemption of Mother Earth, and to inaugurate a new spiritual era. Let us consider the following words to better understand the work of the Kalki Avatar in our time as the transmitter of a power of goodness that our modern world so desperately needs:

By the time the age of Kali ends...religious principles will be ruined...so-called religion will be mostly atheistic...the occupations of human beings will be stealing, lying, and need-less violence, and all the social classes will be reduced to the lowest level...Family ties will extend no further than the immediate bonds of marriage...homes will be devoid of piety, and all human beings will have become like asses. At that time, the Supreme personality of the Godhead will appear on the Earth. Acting with the power of pure spiritual goodness, he will rescue eternal religion....

Lord Kalki will appear in...the great soul of Vishnuyasha [the human being who will be the bearer of the Kalki Avatar].... When the Supreme Lord has appeared on Earth as Kalki, the maintainer of religion, Satya-yuga, will begin, and human society will bring forth progeny in the mode of goodness. (Srimad Bhagavatam, 12; 2; 16–23)<sup>36</sup>

The date of this event (2014) coincides with an indication by Rudolf Steiner in connection with the 600-year rhythm of culture. This rhythm (as I discussed in *Hermetic Astrology*, volume I) is actually a half-rhythm of the 1,199-year Venus rhythm, the time it takes for the Venus pentagram to rotate once (moving retrograde) through all twelve signs of the sidereal zodiac.<sup>37</sup> This period of almost exactly 1,200 years is the length of time that elapses between the start of a new zodiacal age and the beginning of the new cultural epoch corresponding to that age. For example, the Age of Pisces, which began when the vernal point shifted—moving in a retrograde direction—from Aries into Pisces, started in AD 215, reckoned to be the birth year of the Prophet Mani. In AD 1414 (1,199 years later), the corresponding Piscean

cultural epoch commenced, and it is striking that Joan of Arc was born in AD 1412, immediately preceding this date. Looking at the half-period, going back 600 years from 1414, we arrive at AD 814, the year of Charlemagne's death,<sup>38</sup> and the beginning of a new era in Europe, when the monastic schools started to flourish. Going forward 600 years from 1414, we reach 2014. Concerning this date, Rudolf Steiner indicated, "We are living today at the beginning of a period of transition before the onset of the next 600-year wave of culture, when something entirely new is pressing in upon us, when the Christ impulse is to be enriched by something new."<sup>39</sup>

Here it is clear that 600 years is the half period of the 1,199-year rhythm of the Venus pentagram. Steiner describes the 600-year period as a "cultural wave." Evidently, two 600-year cultural waves elapse between the beginning of a zodiacal age and the start of the corresponding cultural epoch. Applied to the Piscean Age, the first cultural wave of 600 years was from 215 to 814, the year of the death of Charlemagne (Carolingian Renaissance), and the second cultural wave of 600 years lasted from 814 to 1414 (early Renaissance). Adding another 600 years, we arrive at 2014 as the start of a new cultural wave.

Given that 2014 begins a new 600-year cultural rhythm, it is possible that a spiritual leader (such as the Kalki Avatar) could emerge sometime as a bearer of the impulse for the new wave of culture as a seed impulse for the next 600 years. It is a matter of a new culture being seeded after the toppling of the reign of the Antichrist and his False Prophet, which Steiner calls "the fall of the Beast and of the False Prophet."

Then a new Jupiter period began on June 5, 2016, when Jupiter entered Virgo heliocentrically—denoting the start of the eighth twelve-year

36 Powell, "The Coming of the Kalki Avatar," *Christian Star Calendar* 2002, pp. 12–14.

37 Powell, *Hermetic Astrology I*, pp. 58–66.

38 The year 814 was also the start of the period of the Archangel Raphael (814–1169) connected with the 355-year rhythm of the planet Mercury and this was the time of the founding of the Mysteries of the Holy Grail associated with the figure of Parzival, whom Rudolf Steiner brings into connection with the time of Charlemagne.

39 Steiner, *Background to the Gospel of St. Mark*, p. 153.

period since the onset of Christ's Second Coming in 1932/1933. This eighth period will be the time of Christ's descent through the eighth subearthly sphere, the divisive layer and source of all strife and conflict. During this time, confrontation with the forces of the human double will be the primary focus. The eighth Beatitude, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," refers to this ongoing conflict with the separating forces of the divisive layer. A historical prototype of how to deal with this conflict is given by Moses, as I described in my book *The Most Holy Trinosophia*.<sup>40</sup> Moses battled the forces of the double that manifested as the golden calf, as indicated in the following meditation by Rudolf Steiner:

Imagine to yourselves Moses as your teacher and master, the whole as a vision: Moses, to whom you direct your question as to why you do not make more rapid progress, seeing as you have such a great longing to penetrate to the spiritual world. One should then quietly await the answer, which very often will come quite unexpectedly. Usually, then, the form of the golden calf appears next to the figure of Moses—the whole as an image before the soul. Then, through Moses, fire breaks forth from the Earth, which burns up the calf, and the ashes are dissolved by Moses in water and given to the meditant to drink.<sup>41</sup>

This meditation indicates how the modern human being can begin to combat the double, which appears in this vision as the golden calf. Since the beginning of the appearance of the etheric Christ in 1932/1933, human beings have been confronted increasingly by the activity of the double, which is evident in the dramatic increase in the crime rate. Many crimes are committed at the instigation of the double working in the human being as a vehicle for the forces streaming up from the subearthly realms of the underworld.

I am not the only person who is aware that the gates of Hell have been opening since 1933. In

his book *The Healing of Europe*, Harrie Salman writes, "Since 1933, Europe has begun a descent into Hell, which can only be withstood if certain soul qualities and spiritual forces are developed."<sup>42</sup> As Rudolf Steiner predicted in his lectures on the Book of Revelation in 1924, "Before the etheric Christ can be comprehended by human beings in the right way, humanity must first cope with encountering the Beast, who will arise in 1933."<sup>43</sup> Who can doubt that this prophecy was fulfilled when Hitler rose to power that year?

Another author who looks at the spiritual background behind the tragic turn of events in 1933 is Jesaiah ben Aharon. In his book *The Spiritual Event of the Twentieth Century*, he focuses on the first Jupiter period from 1933 to 1945. This book was published in 1993; two years earlier, I published the original version of this article "Sub-nature and the Second Coming,"<sup>44</sup> outlining the sequence of twelve-year periods beginning in 1933. The first period lasted from 1933 to 1945, which ben Aharon also discussed in his book. As he described in relation to what took place then, "Through the evil enacted on the Earth, a situation was created in which a real hell...came into being."<sup>45</sup> In the last chapter of the book, he discusses the special relationship between the suprasensory aspect of the Christ's Second Coming and the main world events from 1933 to 1945.<sup>46</sup> He refers to the evil nature of the atom bomb, which was created at the end of this period. Ben Aharon stops at that point. The present study goes further, investigating the esoteric significance of the Christ event (his descent into the underworld in accordance with the twelve-year rhythm of Jupiter) in relation to significant world events in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Without going into too much detail about Christ's descent into the underworld, it is

40 Powell, *The Most Holy Trinosophia*, pp. 110–121.

41 Steiner, "Vom goldenen Kalb" (lecture "Concerning the Golden Calf" in Berlin, Mar. 22, 1912; *Aus den Inhalten der esoterischen Stunden*, vol. 2, pp. 352.

42 Salman, *Die Heilung Europas*, p. 14.

43 Steiner, *The Book of Revelation and the Work of the Priest*, p. 231.

44 *Shoreline* (1991), pp. 25–52. (a revision of this article appeared as ch. 3 in Powell, *The Christ Mystery*).

45 Ben Aharon, *The Spiritual Event of the Twentieth Century*, p. 32.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 46.

appropriate to look briefly into the future. Christ's descent through the eighth subearthly sphere lasts from June 5, 2016, to April 14, 2028, the culminating year (Jupiter in Leo) of the period lasting from March 21, 2027, to April 14, 2028, when the descent through the ninth subearthly sphere begins, lasting until 2040. As indicated earlier in this article, the deepest point on this path of descent will be at the end of Christ's descent through the ninth subearthly sphere in 2040, with the heliocentric passage of Jupiter through sidereal Leo from January 31, 2039, to February 24, 2040.

To summarize the stages of Christ's descent through the last three subearthly spheres, consider the table above.

During these last three Jupiter periods, as the attack upon the members of the human being goes beyond the present level of humanity's development, they can be met only with the help of higher spiritual beings. The beneficial forces for humankind are depicted in the last three Apocalyptic Seals: Sophia, Michael, and Christ (see next page).<sup>47</sup> The forces of the seventh subearthly realm, which influence humanity subconsciously today, are mainly those of Sophia, who shepherds the development of spirit self (*manas*) and who may be called upon in the spirit of the seventh Beatitude as the Queen of Peace. Close to the beginning of the period under consideration (2004–2012), there was an influx of the Sophia impulse at the transit of Venus across the face of the Sun on June 8, 2004, which occurred again during this period on June 6, 2012. As described in my article "Sophia and Venus" in the *Christian Star Calendar 2004*, a special relationship exists between Sophia and the planet Venus.<sup>48</sup> The influx of Sophia's grace through the two cosmic events of the Venus transits during this period are intended to help human-

	Subearthly sphere:	Counter-impulse to:	Corresponding Beatitude	Spiritual being to call upon
7.	Mirror earth July 24, 2004 to June 5, 2016	Spirit self ( <i>manas</i> )	Blessed are the peacemakers...	Sophia (Fifth Seal)
8.	Divisive layer June 5, 2016 to April 14, 2028	Life spirit ( <i>budhi</i> )	Blessed are those who are persecuted...	Michael (Sixth Seal)
9.	Earth core April 14, 2028 to Feb. 24, 2040	Spirit body ( <i>atma</i> )	Blessed are you when they revile you...	Christ (Seventh Seal) Holy Grail

ity in the conflict with the *anti-manas* forces from the seventh subearthly sphere, focused especially through the Beast (Antichrist) and the False Prophet.

As already mentioned in connection with the forces of the eighth subearthly sphere, this is the confrontation with the human double. In fact, the forces of all the subearthly spheres work into the double. In the case of the eighth subearthly sphere, it is a matter of confronting and taming the double consciously, as indicated in the sixth Apocalyptic seal, in which Michael holds the Dragon under his feet in chains. The Dragon represents an image of the collective forces (for all humanity) of the double, and Michael, as the Lesser Guardian of the Threshold, shepherds humanity through this encounter with the double.

Regarding the confrontation with the forces of black magic emanating from the ninth subearthly sphere, Christ, as the Greater Guardian of the Threshold, enables humanity to develop the white magic needed to counter the challenge of the ninth subearthly realm. The seventh Apocalyptic Seal, depicting the Grail Mystery, symbolizes the manifestation of the Heavenly Jerusalem through Christ's transformation and spiritualization of the Earth into the New Earth and Sophia's descent from above, bringing down the New Heaven.

When Christ's "I" reaches the Earth Core in 2040, it will fulfill the purpose of the Mysteries of Eleusis: to unite with Demeter, the Earth Mother, whose realm, Shambhala, is in the heart of the Earth. Christ, as the new High Priest of the new

47 Steiner, *Rosicrucianism Renewed*; includes the Seven Apocalyptic Seals drawn by Clara Rettich, based on Steiner's designs.

48 Powell, "Sophia and Venus," *Christian Star Calendar 2004*, pp. 7–14.





*The fifth, sixth, and seventh Apocalyptic Seals  
(painted by Clara Rettich, Stuttgart, 1911, based on designs by Rudolf Steiner)*

Demeter Mysteries, is reopening her Mysteries to humanity through his descent, opening the path to Shambhala, which will be complete in 2040.

At that point, Christ's ascent through the sub-earthly spheres will begin, which may be followed again in relation to the twelve-year Jupiter rhythm. The descent, the passage through the "eggshell" of the Mineral Earth, began with the first Jupiter period of the age of the Second Coming and was completed around Easter 1945. The return through this "eggshell" will occur around the time of the completion of Jupiter's passage through sidereal Leo on January 20, 2135. This date falls just two years after the commencement of a new  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year period on January 2, 2133. Here is a juxtaposition of the twelve-year rhythm (Jupiter) of Christ's "I" with the  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year rhythm.

The  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year rhythm is that of Christ's ether body; it is the key rhythm underlying the Second Coming. Thus, around 2133 to 2135, Christ's "I" will reunite with his ether body, an event analogous in importance to the resurrection on Easter Sunday morning in AD 33. This will begin a period that I described in appendix 2 of *Hermetic Astrology I* as the core period of the age of the Second Coming.<sup>49</sup> I dated this core period from 2133 to 4233, comprising three 700-year periods. This core period is analogous to the forty-day period in AD 33, following the resurrection and culminating with the ascension.

Thus, the 200-year period from 1933 to 2133 leading up to the core period (when Christ's underworld descent and ascent are taking place) is preparing for a new resurrection event around 2133 to 2135, this time on the etheric level. This etheric resurrection will have profound significance for the following epoch, from 2133 onward, just as the resurrection in AD 33 has until now. By Christ's uniting with the impulse of the resurrection, evil will be overcome ultimately, and the interior of the Earth will be transformed.

In conclusion, therefore, during the present period (through Christ, working in conjunction with human beings), the possibility is opened up for the transformation, in successive stages, of the Earth's interior. This transformation entails confrontation with the evil of subearthly spheres, which is being released in successive stages. Once a particular kind of evil gains entry to civilization (for example, via a negative technological development or through a perverted cultural impulse), it continues to work further until it is overcome. A prime example of this, as a perverted cultural impulse, is drug addiction. Humanity is called to awaken morally and spiritually and deal with such problems. Matters will improve only as we clearly recognize these challenges as the struggle with evil in which Christ (as well as Michael and Sophia) must be called upon for deliverance from the evil. Underlying this call are the words of St. Paul, "Not I, but Christ in me," which indicates the communion between the human "I" and

<sup>49</sup> Powell, *Hermetic Astrology I: Astrology and Reincarnation*, pp. 307–328.



## *The Descent of Christ*

Christ's "I," the archetypal background of which is the descent into Hell described here.

Here, it has not been possible to go into the other modes of communion with Christ. We have directed our attention primarily toward communion with the Christ "I" in relation to the twelve-year Jupiter rhythm. In my book *Christian Hermetic Astrology: The Star of the Magi and the Life of Christ*, I outlined some aspects of communion with the astral body of Christ in connection with the twenty-nine-and-a-half-year Saturn rhythm, but the main content is concerned with communion with Christ's ether body in relation to the  $33\frac{1}{3}$ -year rhythm. *Journal for Star Wisdom* offers indications about

how to intensify communion with Christ by living with the daily events in the world of stars as they correspond to events in the life of Christ.

To conclude, I am aware that this article allows only a cursory overview of a vast topic and that many important aspects relevant to the theme have had to be omitted or mentioned only briefly. Nevertheless, it is my hope that this article will stimulate further research and investigation into the Mystery of Christ's Second Coming and the confrontation with evil in our time—the major keynote of the modern world.



The stars are shining,  
It is night,  
Peace fills space,  
Everything is silent.

I feel the peace,  
I feel the silence,  
In my heart.

In my head,  
God speaks,  
Christ speaks.

RUDOLF STEINER, *Meditationen zur Herztätigkeit*  
(tr. RP; Medical Section at the Goetheanum, Dorn-  
ach, Switzerland, 2014, loc. 203; this work is cur-  
rently available only as a Kindle edition)