Summary of Course C.6–9: Apocalyptic Theology

This course was taught in 1992–1993 (pagination AT1–AT71) and deals with the theological, apocalyptic, and liturgical insights of the Byzantine liturgy. The central concept, *apokalypsis*, literally means the "unveiling" or "revelation" of what is hidden, occult, and esoteric. Unlike merely historical or prophetic biblical texts, apocalyptic theology addresses all peoples universally and sheds light on the deeper spiritual and paranormal reality.

1. The Concept of God and Apophatic Theology

"The One Who Is": The biblical concept of God is rooted in the revelation at Sinai of Yahweh as "the One Who Is" (Exodus 3:14 / "I AM"), the eternally present and active Ground of existence.

Apophatic Theology: Because the divine essence remains transcendent and incomprehensible, the Byzantine liturgy employs apophatic (negative) theology: a way of speaking that respects the ineffable mystery of God.

Axiomatic and Situational Prayer: In this tradition, prayer is situational and axiomatic: the believer first identifies the divine value or requirement of salvation and then joins it through prayer and assent.

2. Glory (Doxa), Theophany, and Deification (Theosis)

Divine Glory (Kebod / Doxa): Glory is the all-transcending radiance and emanation (aura) of God as the supreme Sovereign.

Theophany and Epiphany: Theophany is the manifestation of God becoming visible within creation. The Christmas cycle (the Incarnation) and the Easter cycle (the Cross, the Descent into Hades, and the Resurrection) together form a diptych depicting God's royal entrance (epiphany) into the world.

Historical Eyewitness Testimony versus Myths: In particular, during the Transfiguration on the mountain (*metamorphosis*), Jesus reveals His divine aura and the radiance of His future Resurrection. Peter emphasizes (2 Peter 1:16–18) that the apostles were eyewitnesses to these historical events and that their proclamation is not based on fabricated myths.

Deification (Theosis): The central idea of Eastern theology is expressed as follows: *Incarnatio Dei, deificatio hominis* — God became human (the

Incarnation) in order to deify humanity and the entire cosmos and enable them to share in the divine nature.

3. The Mystery of the Economy of Salvation and Hell as a Presupposition

Economy of Salvation (Oikonomia): The divine economy of salvation encompasses the entire plan of redemption through Jesus Christ, in whom two complete natures (divine and human) are united in one divine-human person (*unio hypostatica*).

Hell as a Presupposition:

As a result of original sin and the *mysterium iniquitatis* (the mystery of lawlessness), humanity sank into the prison of the underworld (*Sheol / Hades*). Jesus' Descent into Hell shattered the gates of death and set the imprisoned souls free.

The Reversal of the Opposite: Just as the patriarch Joseph turned his brothers' evil intentions into good, Christ uses His freely accepted suffering on the Cross to transform death definitively into eternal life.

4. The Three Great Mysteries: The Trinity, Mary, and the Angels

A. The Mystery of the Trinity

The Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) forms the background to the entire history of salvation. In the Old Testament, this mystery was already prefigured in the seraphic Trisagion ("Holy, holy, holy") in Isaiah and in the appearance of the three men to Abraham beneath the oak of Mamre.

B. The Marian Mystery (Theotokos)

Mary, as the *Theotokos* (Mother of God) and the "Gate of Heaven," occupies a central place in the economy of salvation.

Her virginal motherhood is typologically compared to the burning bush at Sinai: just as the bush burned without being consumed, Mary bore the divine fire without her virginity being violated.

As Queen of the universe and Mediatrix of all graces, she brings human supplications before the throne of her Son and provides assistance in every kind of physical and spiritual distress.

C. The Mystery of the Angels

Angels are incorporeal spirits and servants of God, but as created beings they remain fallible.

Guardian Angels of Peoples and the Prince of This World: Angels act as protectors of peoples and individuals, but they encounter the opposition of the "prince of this world" (Satan) and evil spirits that influence the kingdoms of the world.

Angelic Guidance: The Book of Tobit, in which the Archangel Raphael accompanies a traveller and conveys prayers, shows that human beings are never alone in their trials and are continually accompanied by heavenly spirits.

5. The Mystery of Christ, Asceticism, and the Unveiling of the Heart

The Son of Man and the Suffering Servant: In Himself, Jesus unites the apocalyptic figure of the Son of Man (Daniel 7), who comes on the clouds with divine power, and the Suffering Servant of Yahweh (Isaiah 53), who brings about redemption through His vicarious suffering.

The Unveiling of the Heart: *Apokalypsis* primarily means unveiling what lies hidden in the depths of the human heart. Encountering Christ brings about a process of judgment and separation (the Matthew effect): those who recognize that they are "unable to speak" or blind receive the divine light, whereas those who claim to "see" autonomously remain blind.

Fasting and Asceticism (*Bios Angelikos*): Lent is a forty-day reenactment of Jesus' trial in the wilderness. Through asceticism and prayer, human beings purify their hearts of demonic impulses in order to attain the "angelic life" (*bios angelikos*) and the illumination of the Spirit.

Conclusion

Course C.6–9 shows that the Byzantine liturgy is not dry theory but a living theology expressed through prayer. Through the mysteries of the Trinity, the Incarnation through Mary, the angelic beings, and the Descent into Hades, Christ enters time from the "eternal now" in order to redeem fallen humanity, unveil the human heart, and deify the entire cosmos.