

The Event of Golgotha and Modern Humanity
Good Friday, 16 April 1954 – Rudolf Steiner House
Unrevised Lectures given by Willi Sucher

During these days, Christian humanity commemorates an Event that happened 2000 years ago in Palestine. We are commemorating the Descent of Christ—the Death and the Resurrection. Who is Christ? And must it only be a commemoration? Let us bring Good Friday and Easter into a present event.

Anthroposophy recognizes in Christ a Divine-Cosmic Being that descended from the cosmos to the Earth. What was the intention of this Divine Being and the Divine plan in which our planet's evolution was centered? In order to find the answer, we must take a little detour.

Let us start with a sketch of the universe in which we live. The Sun is in the center of our solar cosmos. This Sun is pictured by modern science as a solid, physical body, whereas spiritual research speaks about the Sun as a spiritual non-spatial entity—anti-space or a hole in space—for a hole is also space. The Sun works like a gigantic cosmic vacuum, sucking in substance from far beyond the reaches of our solar cosmos, the divine-sidereal, archetypal substance, which upon its dissolution is radiated back as light and warmth onto the Earth. In short, the Sun is an entity of perfect cosmic altruism, which gives away the substance it receives, after it has been transformed. Thus the Earth receives the steady inflow of this cosmic-divine substance, which is essential to our planetary existence.

The planets of the solar cosmos, such as the Earth, stand among the Sun's rays, receiving the full impact of these forces that work through light and warmth. The sidereal side is exposed to the night sky, a time when we sleep and recover from the strains and labors of the day. This is an invisible process. With the Sun comes the daylight, as a world of archetypal, divine forces, creatively revealing the wonders of the universe and the kingdoms of nature to the human senses.

Since the Day of Creation, these divine forces have been dying into our Earth existence. Gravity grabs this substance from the universe, and it is then revealed in the human being as egoism. This could have led to a deadlock on Earth; so one day, something of the altruistic power and capacity of the Sun came to give humanity new spiritual meaning 'ere it died in the coldness of its own egoism. Perfect altruism gives away all that is taken in—but transformed.

The Sun came into being in the first place because an entire Hierarchy brought it to “light” through Divine love. It was necessary for the Earth to receive its spiritual meaning; for until Christ it had only materialized the Divine substance. The supreme, spiritual Guide of the Sun is the Christ, and He was sent to bring to Earth this Divine altruism and love. Thus, all has been created by the Sun's activity, and Christ must therefore be Master and Sustainer of the solar universe.

If this Being brought this great “Good Friday” sacrifice to Earth, He did it out of His authority over the whole cosmos. Imagine a Being standing at the center but living also at the periphery. Such a cosmic I AM comprehends the whole universe and sustains the whole cosmos. We should therefore find traces of His great capacities, and Rudolf Steiner has given us these revelations regarding His true cosmic nature.

In St. John's Gospel the Events are sevenfold. We know that of these seven I AM's, “I AM the Bread” and “I AM the True Vine” are the first and last. These same rhythms are in the other gospels. Read all the stories of the Crucifixion and find the seven phrases from the Cross, which are taking in meditation in all the churches.

Christ's Incarnation did not take place all at once, but it took place during three years in order to bring the great I AM to Earth and to embody the forces of the planetary cosmos on Earth. Christ is the Ego of the solar cosmos, and everything He did was thus manifested in cosmic rhythms. There is a sevenfold planetary cosmos and seven celestial entities. (The three newer planets—Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto—are intermediary messengers between this and an extra-solar world. The rhythm in St. John's Gospel points to this embodying in the Earth of these sevenfold forces. Christianity's meaning is a sustaining substance.

But are these Gospel writers purely commemorators of the past? Modern humanity is struggling through toward a new celebration of the spiritual festivals. How can this enter into our daily tasks? If Christ incarnated the planetary forces to sustain the Earth, where do they appear?

There is a law concerning all spiritual evolution: “Like comprehends like.” The more we strive to become like the Christ, the more we can comprehend the Presence of Christ. Only a little step beyond this, our present development, may be needed for some to recognize Christ as being very close to us.

Golgotha was the final death of the cosmos into this Earth, and it still operates with the incarnation of every soul. The last seven Words from the Cross could be both the last utterances of a human agony: “My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”; yet sounding through the cosmos, their inner spiritual echo could also have revealed a more spiritual answer: “My God, how Thou hast glorified Me.”

Saturn, on the periphery of the cosmos, works as uprightness in the human being. Its spirit force works as the capacity to find both a direction in the spirit and the great apocalyptic aspects of all evolution and also to read in the past all future possibilities. Before Christ, this was only possible to Initiates who had the vision of the totality of evolution. Now it is open to all who attain affinity to the Christ Spirit, and anthroposophy wishes to serve only the eternal Christ. The spiritual force of Saturn is embodied in the Earth for all.

The Sun was the dwelling place of the Cosmic Christ; but at Golgotha He died into the Earth existence. The Sun is empty—up to a point—and Christ is now in our Earth. We walk on His Body. There can be an inward spiritual light even in eternal darkness, and His Presence can be realized with courage and presence of mind. We are happy in sunshine but lost in darkness. Modern humanity is going into this darkness, socially beyond the iron curtain [Ed: a major world factor in 1954], and individually because all is breaking up in crisis. More and more this darkness sets in, but inwardly spiritual light can manifest as the modern revelation of Christ. He can only enter where human beings are in despair. Rudolf Steiner has given us the new revelation of Christ: “the Second Coming.” There are many records of His Coming in our age, usually in a moment of outer darkness, when all is threatened with breakdown. When we hold our breath for a moment in time, rather than falling into this despair, and by holding to kinship with the Cosmic Christ, at such a moment a messenger can come with healing, with the gesture of taking into Himself all that was ill or despairing—the incompleteness of the world. This experiencing of the fullness of light in outer darkness is now increasingly possible.

The spiritual power of the Moon was also incarnated before Golgotha, and now this makes the sap rise, which is a miracle as yet unexplained and quite contrary to gravity. This lunar power of anti-gravity, or levitation, was also a repetition of the ancient cosmic memory; however, since Golgotha, its ancient spiritual forces are united by Christ to the Earth.

Levitation is the power of the Tibetans and even the Christian Saints. This is also deeply connected with the rising from the Sepulcher. This anti-gravity power can be realized most of all in thinking. Modern statistical thinking is miles behind this reality. It is stagnating in social and scientific spheres, leading only to atomic destructive forces. We need a thinking to grasp new and creative ideas that will elevate us out of the eternal wheel of routine, tradition, and convention. Rudolf Steiner and his anthroposophy are true servants of Christianity and reveal this new impulse (see *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*). We can also follow this through in regard to the other planets.

Easter is not 2,000 years old merely for commemoration; rather, it is an ever-present spiritual fact with which we must unite with our hearts and our heads, as Christ united with the Earth. If we can bring down these cosmic forces, which are the garment of Christ, we have the Resurrection in our own hearts. Christ finds Himself in the manifesting deed—the cosmic forces enfolding that which died into the Earth.

This is the everlasting Eastertide knocking at humanity’s door. With the resurrection of these new forces in our hearts, and with these only can humanity go into the future.