

# PARACLETE

ADVOCATING FOR THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Volume 5, Issue 5

September 2022

## Tomb of the Apostle Philip Found

By Dr. Don Bierle, *FaithSearch* President

The apostle Philip is known only from the Gospels. The Bible says he was from **Bethsaida in Galilee**, the same hometown as **Andrew** and **Peter** (John 1:44). He is listed as one of the twelve apostles in all four accounts in the Bible (Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13). He is *not* to be confused with Philip the evangelist, identified as a deacon in Acts 6:5.

Philip may have had some difficulty comprehending the teachings and deity of Jesus. For example, before Jesus fed the 5,000, the Bible says He specifically asked Philip (as a test) how they could possibly feed all those people (John 6:5-6). Philip's answer suggests it had not yet occurred to him that as the Son of God, Jesus would be able to do it miraculously. Likewise, in the Upper Room on the night before Jesus' crucifixion, Philip again revealed that he had not yet comprehended the full meaning that Jesus is the "I AM." Jesus informed him on that occasion that to see Him (Jesus) is to see the Father (John 14:7-11). They are one "substance."

Later, however, Philip aggressively recruited **Nathanael** when he first became a follower of Jesus (John 1:44-46). His



The apostle Philip, as represented by Peter Paul Rubens, ca. 1611. (Public domain.)

invitation, "Come and see," makes it clear that Philip had become **persuaded by the evidence** that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Philip was also used by God as an early bridge to the Gentiles who were seeking to see Jesus (John 12:20-22). The last reference to the apostle Philip in the Bible records his presence with the 120 in the upper room as they were waiting for the fulfillment of Pentecost (Luke 24:49; Acts 2).

### The Rest of the Story

Philip's ministry after that is shrouded in legend. The Acts of Philip, an apocryphal writing from the fourth century, was discovered in 1974. It is influenced by Gnostic thought and its content cannot be relied on. *Among its claims* are the following:

1. He formed a **ministry team** with his sister **Mariamne** and **Bartholomew** (another apostle).
2. They traveled throughout **Greece, Syria, and Asia Minor**, including a concentrated time in **Hierapolis**.

continued on page 2



Courtesy: HolyLandPhotos.org

The apostle Philip's tomb was discovered in Turkey. It is built out of hewn stone and has a gabled roof. It was built as part of a basilica style fifth century church.



*FaithSearch* International exists to extend the Gospel with evidence to all peoples everywhere. *FaithSearch* International is not denominationally affiliated.

## IN THE NEWS

### More than Enough!

How many legs does a millipede have? Well, its name suggests 1,000, but none had been known with more than 750 legs – until now.



Credit: Aggyrolemnoixytes/Paul Marek.

This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.en>).

A new species (*Eumillipes persephone*) was discovered which sports **1,306 legs!** The Creator must have known they would need them all to tunnel through the hard soil in Western Australia.

Source: *Answers Magazine*, July–September, 2022, p. 19.

### A New Meaning of "Goliath"

When asked what the largest living organism is, people would likely suggest the African bush elephant (5 tons); blue whales (200 tons); or the giant sequoia tree (1,000 tons).

These are but "babes" compared to the **honey mushroom** (*Armillaria ostoyae*). Parasitic on trees and living mostly underground, the largest single fungus known covers over **2,240 acres** (3.5 square miles) and may weigh up to **35,000 tons**. It is colloquially called the "Humongous fungus" and is found in the Blue Mountains of Oregon.

Sources: *Answers Magazine*, July–September, 2022, p. 54; Wikipedia – *Armillaria ostoyae*



*Armillaria Ostoyae* mushrooms at the base of a live infected grand fir in the The Malheur National Forest. (Public domain.)

## Tomb of the Apostle Philip

*continued from page 1*

3. His **death** was by crucifixion in Hierapolis (in present day Turkey), hung upside down with irons in his heels and ankles.

4. Their ministry resulted in **thousands of converts to Christianity**.

While this cannot be verified, there must have been some truth to it since historian **Eusebius** (A.D. 260-339) called the apostle Philip a “great light of Asia.” He also said that Philip was buried at Hierapolis.

### Philip’s Tomb in Hierapolis: Archaeological Verification

An octagonal martyrium to St. Philip had been built at Hierapolis early in the fifth century and remains to this day one of the most significant Christian sites in Turkey. It had always been assumed that Philip’s tomb was in the martyrium, though no evidence of the ancient burial was ever found. In 2011, the excavation director of the site, Francesco D’Andria, announced the discovery of a new church about forty yards away. There at the center of it was a first-century Roman tomb which once held the remains of the martyred apostle Philip. This early church of Christian Turkey was built around the tomb in the fourth or fifth century.

The human remains of the apostle Philip are no longer in the tomb, however. According to D’Andria, the apostle’s relics were moved from Hierapolis to Constantinople at the end of the sixth century. They were later possibly taken to Rome and placed in the newly dedicated Church of St. Philip and St. John.

This new discovery also sheds light on the wonderful imagery of the rare sixth-century bronze bread stamp currently housed in the **Virginia Museum of Fine Arts**.



The Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles in Rome, was built in the seventh century, destroyed by earthquake in the fourteenth, rebuilt in the fifteenth, restored twice in the eighteenth and nineteenth.

## IN THE NEWS


### Xenotransplantation

As of July, more than 100,000 people were on **waiting lists for replacement organs**, with 3,442 needing a new heart. Seventeen people on waiting lists die every day, for want of an organ to potentially save their lives. Is xenotransplantation – transferring animal organs to humans – the answer? **Pigs are especially seen as potential donor animals** because their hearts are anatomically similar to those of humans. A baboon was kept alive for two years with a pig heart. Likewise, researchers have transferred pig hearts



Scientists at the FDA’s Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research laboratories investigate the utility of pig cells, tissues, and organs as materials for transplantation in humans. (Public domain.)

to two brain-dead people to discover what reactions might occur.

Finally, in January of this year, doctors in Maryland tried to transplant a genetically-modified pig’s heart into a fifty-seven-year-old man who had terminal heart disease. He improved at first, only to die about two months later. Some medical researchers see animal organs only as a “bridge” to life while they wait for the availability of a human organ. Xenotransplantation is going to have medical advances in the years ahead which may save thousands of lives. Christians will need to be prepared to think through the ethical issues that this procedure generates. 


Source: *World Magazine*, July 30, 2022, p. 16.



Specially marked bread was distributed to worshippers on days or at places special to individual saints. This stamp was used for the feast day of St. Philip. The buildings on either side of the figure of the saint may be his tomb (arrow, left) and the memorial church. (Image courtesy of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.)

Along with Philip, it shows two churches from the site of Hierapolis. The structures on either side of the apostle can now be identified as the domed martyrium (on the right) and the newly excavated Byzantine basilica (church) containing the tomb of the apostle Philip (on the left).

### “Well done, good and faithful Servant”

Because we do not have detailed, historically reliable records of the apostle Philip, as we do for the apostles Peter and Paul, we tend to regard them as less important. But we know enough to be assured that he passed the test of the parable of the talents – he gained more with the investment Jesus made in him (Matthew 25:14ff). He brought the Gospel of Jesus Christ to Asia Minor. He was a faithful servant and subsequently entered “into the joy” of His Master! 


Sources: “Discovery made at Hierapolis,” *Biblical Archaeology Society Staff Report*, June 16, 2022; “Philip’s Tomb Discovered—But Not Where Expected,” *Biblical Archaeology Review*, January/February 2012; “Conversion, Crucifixion and Celebration,” Francesco D’Andria, *Biblical Archeology Review*, July/August 2011.

### Bad news for cat owners

In the U.S., 45.3 million households own cats. According to the American Bird



Conservancy, domesticated cats kill **2.4 billion birds each year**. Furthermore, a 2016 study by the National Academy of Sciences revealed that there have been **sixty-three species extinctions attributable to domesticated cats**.

These facts have alarmed the city council of **Toronto** enough to pass an ordinance which **prohibits pets from being outside the home without a leash**. (Have you tried that with a cat?!) This is bad news for cats but good news for the city’s birds and small mammals. 

Source: *World Magazine*, August 13, 2022, p. 17.

The **FaithSearch** Paraclete is published by **FaithSearch** International, an interdenominational, donor-supported, 501(c)(3) organization, based in Edina, MN, USA.

**FaithSearch** is a member in good standing of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

