



The Haunted Cell Of A Heretic

By St. John Moschos

Abba John the Cilician told us that while he was staying at the ninth mile-post from Alexandria, an Egyptian monk visited them. He said:

"A brother from foreign parts came to the Lavra of the Cells and wanted to stay there. He prostrated himself before the priest and requested that he might stay the night in the cell of Evagrius*. The priest told him that he could not stay there.

The brother said: 'If I may not stay there, I will go away.'

The priest said to him: 'My child, the fact of the matter is that a cruel demon inhabits that place. It lead Evagrius astray, alienating him from the true faith, and it filled his mind with abominable teachings.'

The brother persisted, saying: 'If I am to remain here, that is where I am going to stay.'

Then the priest said: 'May it be on your own head. Go and stay there.'

The brother went and stayed there for a week and, when the holy day of the Lord came around, he came to the church. The priest was relieved to see him.

The following Sunday he did not come to church, so the priest summoned two brothers to go and find out why he was not present in church. They went to the cell and found that the brother had put a rope around his neck and strangled himself."

** Evagrius Ponticus (345-399), though highly influential and a friend of many Church Fathers, fell under the condemnation of heresy post-mortem for his esoteric speculations regarding the pre-existence of human souls, the final state of believers, and certain teachings about the natures of God and Christ. With Origen and others, his non-Orthodox teachings were declared heretical at the Fifth Ecumenical Synod in 553 AD.*

Source: *The Spiritual Meadow* (Cistercian Publications; Kalamazou, Michigan) pp. 146-147.