

# DECEPTION AND HERESY

*History, Identification and Defeat*

## 110-210 AD

(part two)

EMPEROR	Vespasian 69-79	Nerva 96-98	Hadrian 117-138		Antoninus Pius 138-161	Marcus Aurelius 161-180	Commodus 180-192
	Titus 79-81	Domitian 81-96	Trajan 98-117			Lucius Verus 161-169	Septimius Severus 193-211
PERSECUTION	90-96		98-117	117-138		165-177	202-211
JERUSALEM	Simeon (62-107)	Justus I (107-113)	Zaccheus (113-?)	Benjamin (?-117)	Judas (died 148, last Hebrew bishop)	Marcus (1st Gentile bishop in Jerusalem)	
in ANTIOCH		Ignatius (50-117)		Heron (117-127)	Cornelius (127-154)	Eros (154-169)	Theophilus (169-182)
in EPHESUS	John (66-98)						Polycrates (130-196)
HIERAPOLIS		Papias (60-163)					
in SMYRNA		Polycarp (70-155)					Melito (Sardis; d.180)
	80	100	120	140	160	180	200
in ROME	Linus (67-76)	Clement I (88-97)	Alexander I (105-115)	Telesphorus (125-136)	Plus I (140-155)	Soter (166-175)	Victor I (189-199)
		Anacletus (76-88)	Evaristus (97-105)	Sixtus I (115-125)	Hyginus (136-140)	Anicetus (155-166)	Eleutherius (175-189)
OTHER LEADERS	Hermas (in Rome; 90)	Quadratus (Athens; died 129)	Aristides (Athens; died 134)		Justin Martyr (100 Samaria-165 Rome)	Irenaeus, Lyon, Gaul (126-202)	Tertullian (Carthage 155-220)
????						Clement (Alexandria, 150-215)	Origen (185-254)
HERETICS	Cerinthus (30-100)			Basilides (125, Alexandria)	Marcion (85-160; in Rome 138-144)	Montanus (Phrygia 155)	
	Nicolas (active 30-70)				Valentinus (140 in Rome)		
HERESYS	Nicolaitans (60-98)		Docetism	Adoptionism	Gnosticism (50-300)	Montanism (155) "Easter Conflict" (150-155)	- Modalism, - Patripassianism, - Monarchians (190-300)
		Ebionism (50-135)					Manichaeism (200-600) "Easter Conflict" (190-194)

## Events:

1. Second Jewish War with Rome (132-135) – The Bar-Kokhba Revolt
2. Easter Conflict (150-190)

## Emperors:

### Persecution

1. **Hadrian** (117-138) – defeated Jews in their second revolt.
2. **Antoninus Pius** (138-161) – Antoninus Pius had been adopted by Hadrian.
3. **Marcus Aurelius** (161-180) – the last of the “five good emperors” and the last to maintain Pax Romana (Roman Peace by force). Hadrian adopted Marcus Aurelius uncle and Antoninus Pius adopted Marcus Aurelius.

**Lucius Verus** (161-169) – His father had been adopted by Hadrian, but had died. Lucius Verus was then adopted by Antoninus Pius. Rome ruled for first time by two emperors at the same time. Marcus Aurelius was Lucius’ adopted brother who raised him to be co-emperor.

4. **Commodus** (180-192) – Marcus Aurelius’ son. Commodus was assassinated by a wrestler who held him under water.

Commodus’ rule ended Rome’s golden age. Began to rule at age 16. He reigned poorly and faced many conspiracies which moved him to rule as a dictator. Created a cult for himself.

5. **Septimius Severus** (202-211) – Trajan’s policy of tolerance of Christians was still active meaning they were not sought out and were not punished unless they refused to worship the emperor and the gods. Septimius was forced to create a form of unity in the empire punished conversion to Judaism and Christianity. There was not empire wide persecution, but local hot spots.





Shown rightside-up, the inscription reads:

**"To Titus Aelius Hadrianus  
Antoninus Augustus Pius  
The father of the fatherland, pontifex, augur  
Decreed by the Decurions"**

Hadrian's inscription reads in the original Latin as seen above:

**TITO AEL HADRIANO  
ANTONINO AUG PIO  
P P PONTIF AUGUR  
D D**

Translation of Latin:

**To Titus Ael[ius] Hadrianus  
Antoninus Aug[ustus] Pius  
the f[ather] of the f[atherland], pontif[ex], augur.  
D[ecreed] by the D[ecurions]**

### Leaders:

1. Papias (60-163) in Hierapolis
2. Polycarp (70-155) in Smyrna
3. Quadratus (died 129) in Athens
4. Aristides (died 134) in Athens
5. Anicetus (155-166) in Rome
6. Victor (189-199) in Rome
7. Justin Martyr (100-165) born in Neapolis (Shechem), Israel; died in Rome
8. Irenaeus (126-202) born in Smyrna; died in Lugdunum (Lyon)
9. Tertullian (155-220) born, lived and died in Carthage
10. Hippolytus (170-236) born in Rome; died in exile on isle of Sardinia

### Heretics:

1. **Basilides** (125) – early founder of Gnosticism. Claimed to be a disciple of Glaucias who was an interpreter of Peter. He taught in Alexandria, Egypt. He flourished as a Gnostic teacher during the time of Hadrian (117-138)
  - a. Irenaeus refers to Basilides in "Against Heresies" Book 1, Chapter 24, section 3-7: "Basilides again, that he may appear to have discovered something more sublime and plausible, gives an immense development to his doctrines. He sets forth that Nous was first born of the unborn father, that from him, again, was born Logos, from Logos Phronesis, from Phronesis Sophia and Dynamis, and from Dynamis and Sophia the powers, and principalities, and angels, whom he also calls the first; and that by them the first heaven was made. Then other powers, being formed by emanation from these, created another heaven similar to the first; and in like manner, when others, again, had been formed by emanation from them, corresponding exactly to those above them, these, too, framed another third heaven; and then from this third, in downward order, there was a fourth succession of descendants; and so on, after the same fashion, they

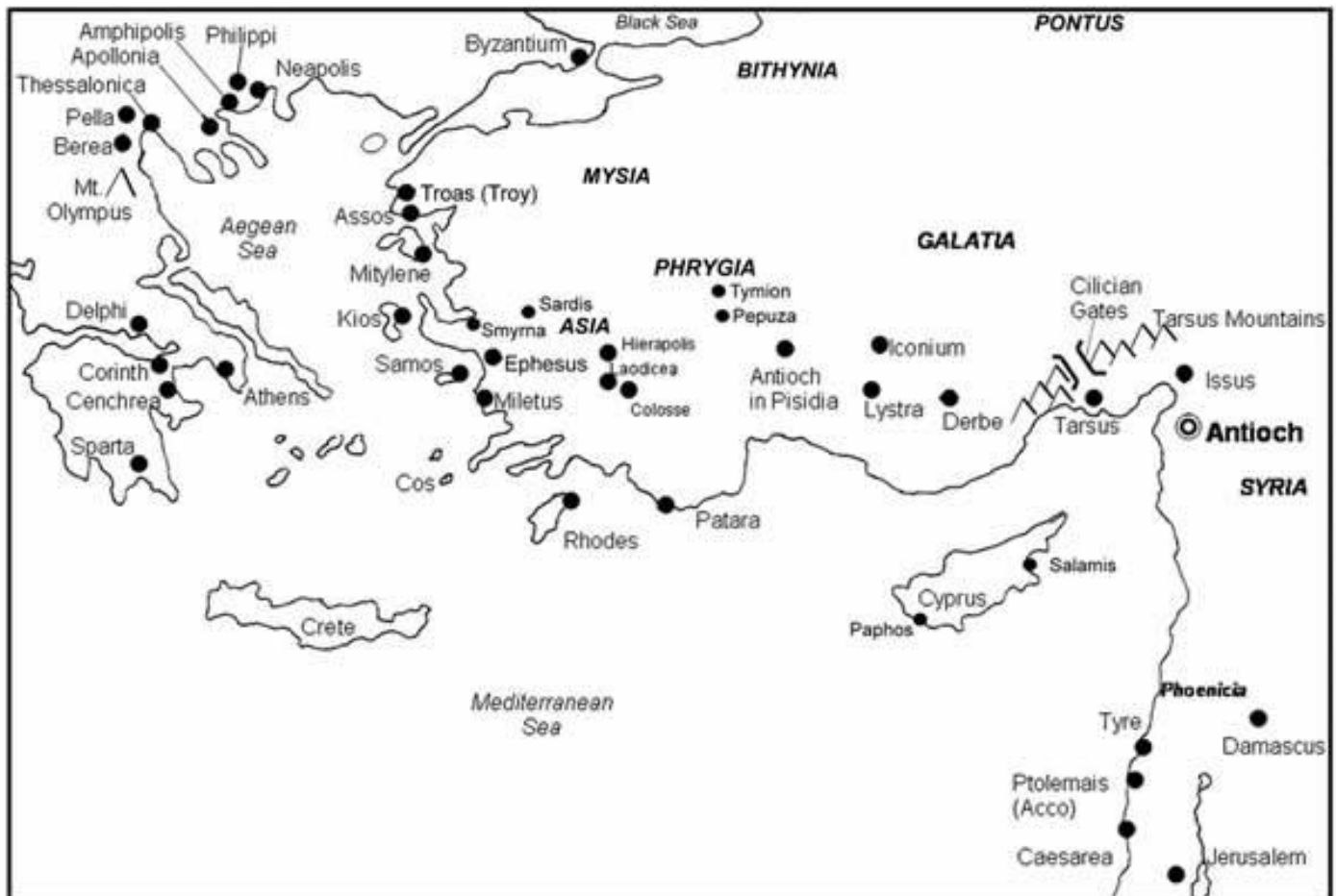
declare that more and more principalities and angels were formed, and three hundred and sixty-five heavens. Wherefore the year contains the same number of days in conformity with the number of the heavens.” – section 3

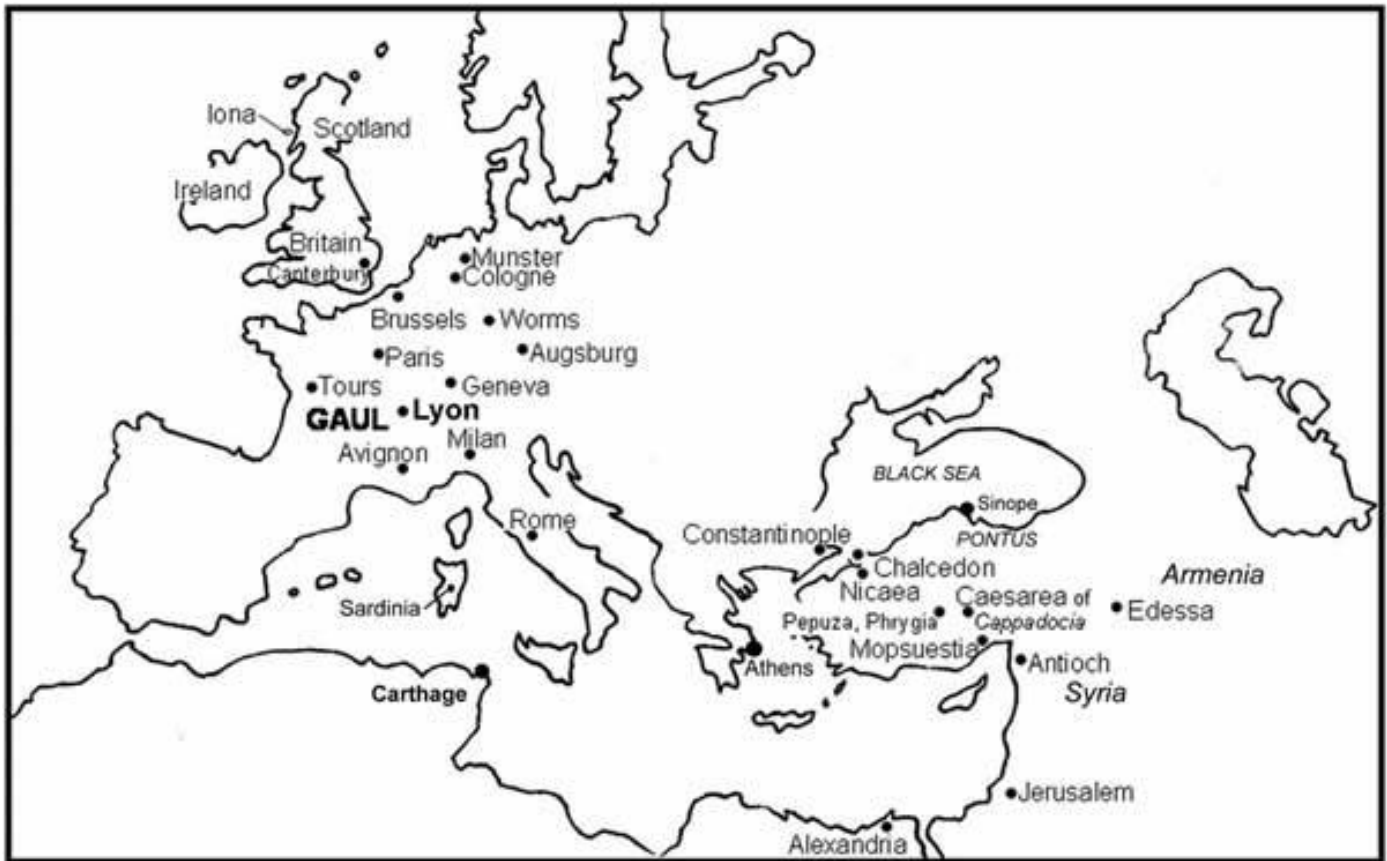
(from <https://www.earlychristianwritings.com/basilides.html> )

2. **Valentinus** (140) – an early Gnostic who founded a school in Rome. Tertullian says Valentinus was a candidate for Roman bishop, but when another bishop was selected he started his own school. Fragments of his writings exist in the form of quotes by other critics. Valentinus taught there were three kinds of people: Spiritual, psychical and material. Only the spiritual who obtained the knowledge (gnosis) could return to the divine Pleroma. The average Christian was merely a psychic nature with an lower or uncertain salvation. The Material natured were damned.
3. **Marcion** (138-144 in Rome; 85-160)
4. **Montanus** (155)

### Heresies:

1. Gnosticism (150-300)
2. Montanism (155)
3. Modalism
4. Patripassianism
5. Monarchians (190-300)
6. Manichaeism (200-600)





## Events:

1. Second Jewish War with Rome (132-135) – The Bar-Kokhba Revolt
2. Easter Conflict (150-190)

## Easter Controversy

1. Began in 150-155 AD between the Asia churches (East) and the Roman church (West)
2. The issue was a conflict of ritual and practice, but not of doctrine or doctrinal heresy.
  - a. Asian churches followed the practice taught by the Jewish apostles concerning the yearly DATE of Passover.
  - b. Roman church followed their own tradition based on the DAYS of the week
3. The church almost split because of this issue since both sides stressed an external practice. There was a demand for church unity on an issue that did not need to cause division.
4. Asia (East)
  - a. Followed Jewish chronology
  - b. Appealed to the authority of John and Philip
  - c. Christian Passover (Easter) celebrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Nisan which could be any day of the week, but always the same date.
  - d. The end of the Easter fast ended at sundown of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan.
  - e. They were not celebrating Passover, but were remembering the completion of redemption with the death of Jesus on the cross.
  - f. They recognized Christ as the true Passover lamb.
  - g. This was the oldest and most original practice.
  - h. BUT, Hippolytus of Rome would eventually refer to this practice as a contemptuous practice by a sect of contentious and ignorant people who maintain "*the Passover*"

*should be observed on the fourteenth day of the first month according to the Law, no matter on what day of the week it might fall.”*

5. Roman Church
  - a. Appealed to early custom
  - b. They celebrated the death of Christ on a Friday (the day the death of the Lord occurred.)
  - c. They celebrated the resurrection on the Sunday that occurred after the March full moon.
  - d. Their fast began on Friday and was ended on Sunday
  - e. The Roman church considered it wrong to end the fast any time before that Sunday that celebrated the Resurrection.
  - f. Most churches practiced this in 150-155 AD.
  - g. The Roman church created an entire week of holy days and fasting to remember the Lord's suffering starting with Palm Sunday the week before.
6. It was shocking and unacceptable to the Western Roman church that their sense of ritualistic propriety and uniformity were violated.
7. The problem as they saw it was that part of the universal church may be celebrating Easter with the end of the Easter fast on the 14th day of Nisan (Which could be a Monday, or Tuesday, or any day of the week depending on the year.) while the rest of the church was still fasting while they waited for Sunday (the first Sunday after the March full moon) to break the fast they started on the Friday before.
8. The issue was basically this: Does the church observe the DATE of the year for Easter or does the church observe the DAY of the week for Easter?
9. Asia followed John, Philip and the apostles with the unmovable date of the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan, but it was not a Jewish holiday celebration and it was not Judaized into a Passover celebration.
10. Rome represented a break from all Jewish custom and embraced the independence to celebrate a moveable date that was unique to the Christian system and void of any Jewish overtones.
11. Asia focused on the death of Christ and his redemptive work. Rome focused on the Resurrection.
12. The issue became a matter of universal church uniformity (with no division) and was not about the date, the death or the Resurrection.
13. Rome, or the West, won in the end. This gave Easter the movable date that varies from the end of March to late April.

#### THREE STAGES OF THE CONTROVERSY:

1. 150-155 AD – Polycarp of Smyrna visits Anicetus in Rome sometime between 150-155
  - a. The issue is discussed among many other things
  - b. The issue is not settled, but is not a big deal.
  - c. Anicetus (Rome) asks Polycarp (Asia) to celebrate communion in his church in Rome
  - d. Polycarp (Asia) and Anicetus (Rome) part in peace.
  - e. Irenaeus, a student of Polycarp, relates this event about 20 years later in 170 AD. This is a quote from Irenaeus found in a fragment of a letter to Victor (Rome, 190) preserved by Eusebius (325):

"No one was ever rejected for this reason, but the presbyters before you who did not observe it sent the Eucharist from other dioceses who did; and when the blessed Polycarp was staying in Rome in the time of Anicetus, though they disagreed a little about some other things as well, they immediately made peace, having no wish for strife between them on this matter. For neither was Anicetus able to persuade Polycarp not to observe it, inasmuch as he had always done so in company with John the disciple of our Lord and the other apostles with whom he had associated; nor did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it, for he said that he ought to keep the custom of those who were presbyters before him. And under these circumstances they communicated with each other, and in the church Anicetus yielded the celebration of the Eucharist to Polycarp, obviously out of respect, and they parted from each other in peace, for the peace of the whole church was kept

- f. POINT: The early church kept the unity of the Spirit by maintaining peace without creating divisions over non-essential issues involving rites and ceremonies.
- 2. 170 AD – A controversy broke out in Laodicea (Asia) around 170
  - a. The dispute was confined to Asia, but it involved some churches in Asia starting to practice Easter Roman style
  - b. Melito of Sardis wrote two books on Passover. These books are lost as well as the writing of Clement of Alexandria concerning the same issue.
  - c. Fragments of these books are preserved in the writings of Apollinaris of Hierapolis (Asia) in his work "Chronicon Paschale".

"There are some, then, who raise disputes about these things through ignorance, thus suffering from a pardonable circumstance, for ignorance does not admit of accusation but rather requires further teaching; and they say that on the 14th the Lord ate the lamb with the disciples, and that on the great day of Unleavened Bread he himself suffered, and they report Matthew as speaking thus, just as they opine. Wherefore their opinion is at discord with the law, and the gospels seem to be at variance against them."

- Apollinaris of Hierapolis, 165 AD

"The 14th is the true Passover of the Lord, the great sacrifice, the child of God instead of the lamb, the one bound, who is the one who has bound the strong, and the judged who is judge of the living and dead; even the one who has been delivered into the hands of sinners in order to be crucified, lifted up on horns of the unicorn and pierced in his holy side, the one who had pour out from his side the two things which are cleansing again: water and blood, word and spirit; and the one buried on the day of the Passover, a stone having been placed upon the memorial."

- Apollinaris of Hierapolis, 165 AD

- d. Apollinaris seems to protest against the Western style Easter, but blames it on ignorance instead of Heresy.
  - e. Apollinaris calls it a:
    - i. Chronological mistake
    - ii. Exegetical mistake
  - f. Apollinaris holds 14th of Nisan as the great day of the Death of the Lord, the True Lamb of God.
  - g. It seems a Jewish observant group had broke out in the church in Asia and were trying to instill the Passover during the Easter celebration. (Once Jerusalem and temple fell the Jews could no longer observe Passover according to Law of Moses since the altar no longer stood.)
  - h. Or, this may have been the same Asia (East) vs. Rome (West) controversy of 150.
3. 190-194 – This involved the whole universal church
- a. The universal church broke out in division over the date of Easter and many synods and synodical letters were created.
  - b. In Rome Victor demanded the Asiatic churches stop the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nisan practice
  - c. In Ephesus, Asia Polycrates protested in the name of a church synod organized by himself that appealed to over a century of authorities that had practiced Easter the way Asia did and provided John and Phillip as supporters
  - d. Eusebius records in 325 what Polycrates wrote in 190 (Eusebius, “Church History”, 5.23 and 5:24 and 5:25). Below are the three sections from Eusebius’ records:

**CHAPTER XXIII.—The Question then agitated concerning the Passover.**

1. A QUESTION of no small importance arose at that time. For the parishes of all Asia, as from an older tradition, held that the fourteenth day of the moon, on which day the Jews were commanded to sacrifice the lamb, should be observed as the feast of the Savior’s passover. It was therefore necessary to end their fast on that day, whatever day of the week it should happen to be. But it was not the custom of the churches in the rest of the world to end it at this time, as they observed the practice which, from apostolic tradition, has prevailed to the present time, of terminating the fast on no other day than on that of the resurrection of our Savior.... (continued)...



...(continued)... 2. Synods and assemblies of bishops were held on this account, and all, with one consent, through mutual correspondence drew up an ecclesiastical decree, that the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord should be celebrated on no other but the Lord's day, and that we should observe the close of the paschal fast on this day only. There is still extant a writing of those who were then assembled in Palestine, over whom Theophilus, bishop of Caesarea, and Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, presided. And there is also another writing extant of those who were assembled at Rome to consider the same question, which bears the name of Bishop Victor; also of the bishops in Pontus over whom Palmas, as the oldest, presided; and of the parishes in Gaul of which Irenaeus was bishop, and of those in Osroëne (Edessa, northeast of Syria) and the cities there; and a personal letter of Bacchylus, bishop of the church at Corinth, and of a great many others, who uttered the same opinion and judgment, and cast the same vote. 3. And that which has been given above was their unanimous decision.

## **CHAPTER XXIV.—The Disagreement in Asia.**

1. BUT the bishops of Asia, led by Polycrates, decided to hold to the old custom handed down to them. He himself, in a letter which he addressed to Victor and the church of Rome, set forth in the following words the tradition which had come down to him:

2. "We observe the exact day; neither adding, nor taking away. For in Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the day of the Lord's coming, when he shall come with glory from heaven, and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who fell asleep in Hierapolis; and his two aged virgin daughters, and another daughter, who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus; and, moreover, John, who was both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and, being a priest, wore the sacerdotal plate. 3. He fell asleep at Ephesus. 4. And Polycarp in Smyrna, who was a bishop and martyr; and Thraseas, bishop and martyr from Eumenia, who fell asleep in Smyrna. 5. Why need I mention the bishop and martyr Sagaris who fell asleep in Laodicea, or the blessed Papius, or Melito, the Eunuch who lived altogether in the Holy Spirit, and who lies in Sardis, awaiting the episcopate from heaven, when he shall rise from the dead? 6. All these observed the fourteenth day of the passover according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith. And I also, Polycrates, the least of you all, do according to the tradition of my relatives, some of whom I have closely followed. For seven of my relatives were bishops; and I am the eighth. And my relatives always observed the day when the people put away the leaven. 7. I, therefore, brethren, who have lived sixty-five years in the Lord, and have met with the brethren throughout the world, and have gone through every Holy Scripture, am not affrighted by terrifying words. For those greater than I have said 'We ought to obey God rather than man.'" 8. He then writes of all the bishops who were present with him and thought as he did. His words are as follows: "I could mention the bishops who were present, whom I summoned at your desire; whose names, should I write them, would constitute a great multitude. And they, beholding my littleness, gave their consent to the letter, knowing that I did not bear my gray hairs in vain, but had always governed my life by the Lord Jesus." 9. Thereupon Victor, who presided over the church at Rome, immediately attempted to cut off from the common unity the parishes of all Asia, with the churches that agreed with them, as heterodox; and he wrote letters and declared all the brethren there wholly excommunicate. 10. But this did not please all the bishops. And they besought him to consider the things of peace, and of neighborly unity and love. Words of theirs are extant, sharply rebuking Victor...(continued)...

...(continued)... 11. Among them was Irenaeus, who, sending letters in the name of the brethren in Gaul over whom he presided, maintained that the mystery of the resurrection of the Lord should be observed only on the Lord's day. He fittingly admonishes Victor that he should not cut off whole churches of God which observed the tradition of an ancient custom and after many other words he proceeds as follows:

12. "For the controversy is not only concerning the day, but also concerning the very manner of the fast. For some think that they should fast one day, others two, yet others more; some, moreover, count their day as consisting of forty hours day and night. 13. And this variety in its observance has not originated in our time; but long before in that of our ancestors. It is likely that they did not hold to strict accuracy, and thus formed a custom for their posterity according to their own simplicity and peculiar mode. Yet all of these lived none the less in peace, and we also live in peace with one another; and the disagreement in regard to the fast confirms the agreement in the faith."

14. He adds to this the following account, which I may properly insert:

"Among these were the presbyters before Soter, who presided over the church which thou now rule. We mean Anicetus, and Pius, and Hyginus, and Telesphorus, and Xystus. They neither observed it themselves, nor did they permit those after them to do so. And yet though not observing it, they were none the less at peace with those who came to them from the parishes in which it was observed; although this observance was more opposed to those who did not observe it. 15. But none were ever cast out on account of this form; but the presbyters before thee who did not observe it, sent the eucharist to those of other parishes who observed it. 16. And when the blessed Polycarp was at Rome in the time of Anicetus, and they disagreed a little about certain other things, they immediately made peace with one another, not caring to quarrel over this matter. For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe what he had always observed with John the disciple of our Lord, and the other apostles with whom he had associated; neither could Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe it as he said that he ought to follow the customs of the presbyters that had preceded him. 17. But though matters were in this shape, they communed together, and Anicetus conceded the administration of the eucharist in the church to Polycarp, manifestly as a mark of respect. And they parted from each other in peace, both those who observed, and those who did not, maintaining the peace of the whole church."

18. Thus Irenaeus, who truly was well named, became a peacemaker in this matter, exhorting and negotiating in this way in behalf of the peace of the churches. And he conferred by letter about this mooted question, not only with Victor, but also with most of the other rulers of the churches.

## **CHAPTER XXV.—How All came to an Agreement respecting the Passover.**

1. THOSE in Palestine whom we have recently mentioned, Narcissus and Theophilus, and with them Cassius, bishop of the church of Tyre, and Clarus of the church of Ptolemais, and those who met with them, having stated many things respecting the tradition concerning the passover which had come to them in succession from the apostles, at the close of their writing add these words:

2. "Endeavor to send copies of our letter to every church, that we may not furnish occasion to those who easily deceive their souls. We show you indeed that also in Alexandria they keep it on the same day that we do. For letters are carried from us to them and from them to us, so that in the same manner and at the same time we keep the sacred day."

- *Eusebius of Caesarea, "Controversy over the date of Easter from "Historia Ecclesiastica" ("Church History"), 3. 23-25*

- e. Victor ignored Polycrates
  - f. Irenaeus from further west in the name of Christianity in Gaul rebuked Victor for his arrogance.
  - g. Irenaeus prevented a church schism between the West and East at this time. (The split would eventually occur in 1054 AD)
  - h. According to church historian Schaff Irenaeus uses Scripture saying:  
 “The apostles have ordered that we should ‘judge no one in food or in drink, or in respect to a feast-day or a new moon or a sabbath day’. (Col. 2:16)  
 So why these wars? Why these schisms?  
 We keep the feasts, but in the leaven of malice by tearing the church of God and observing what is outward, in order to reject what is better, faith and charity.”
4. 200-300 AD – Roman style Easter celebration gained ground
  5. 325 Council of Nicaea
    - a. As the first Christian Roman Emperor sat to oversee this great church council at Nicaea the Western style Roman Easter celebration became the rule.
    - b. Those at the Council of Nicaea decided it was unbecoming of the church to follow the style of the unbelieving, hostile Jews.
    - c. The Eastern style of celebrating Easter on the 14<sup>th</sup> of Nissan became heresy.
    - d. And, so it remains to this day.  
 Easter is celebrated on the FIRST SUNDAY after the FIRST FULL MOON following the VERINAL EQUINOX (march 21) and always AFTER the JEWISH PASSOVER.
      - i. If the full moon occurs on a Sunday, Easter is the next Sunday.
      - ii. Easter may take place as early as March 22
      - iii. Easter may take place as late as April 25
      - iv. The council chose the equinox to ensure Easter would be celebrated in the spring and at the same time.
      - v. The Council of Nicaea decided it was important to celebrate Easter after the Jewish Passover in order to preserve the sequence of the events leading up to the crucifixion of Christ and his resurrection. Celebrating Easter before the Passover would disrupt the biblical sequence of events.
  6. 341 AD – at the Synod of Antioch those who observed Nissan 14<sup>th</sup> were excommunicated
  7. 500 AD – no one was left observing Nissan 14<sup>th</sup> as the date for Easter
  8. 1583 – Rome changed from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar under Gregory XIII
    - a. Today the Eastern, or Oriental, churches continue to follow the Julian calendar and reject the Gregorian calendar
    - b. The Eastern church with the Julian calendar does not observe Easter at the same time the Western (Roman) church does with the Gregorian calendar.
    - c. Occasionally the two calendars coincide and Easter is celebrated on the same day in the Eastern and Western churches.
      - i. The last times it occurred was 2010, 2011, 2014 and 2017.
      - ii. The next time this happens will be 2034

## 190-194 Easter Conflict

- 150-155, Smyrna Bishop Polycarp visited Rome Bishop Anicetus. The issue came up, and was not resolved, but Polycarp departed in peace saying this is how he celebrated Easter with the Apostle John.
- 170, the same controversy developed in Laodicea but was dealt with peacefully.
- 190-194, Rome Bishop Victor required the Asian churches to abandon their Easter practices. The new Ephesian Bishop Polycrates appealed with a letter which is still in existence today. Victor wouldn't listen, called them heretics, excommunicated them and would not send them communion elements. Irenaeus interceded by quoting Colossians 2:16: "The apostles have ordered that we should, '*Judge no one in meat or in drink, or in respect to a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day.*'"
- The time of the Jewish Passover and the Easter fast created a violent controversy.
- The issue became complicated and is not yet cleared up.
- The issue was purely ritualistic and involved no doctrine.
- Too much stress was laid on external uniformity.
- Asia Minor's views:
  - Followed Jewish chronology
  - Followed the Apostle John and Philip's example
  - They celebrated the Christian form of the Passover on Nisan 14 and at the end of the day they broke their Easter fast with communion and the Love Feast.
- Roman Church view:
  - Appealed to early custom of celebrating Jesus death on a Friday
  - Celebrated Easter always on a Sunday after the March full moon
  - Nearly all the churches did it this way.
  - The Roman practice created an entire holy week of fasting to recall Lord's suffering.
- The Problem to the Roman Church: Part of the universal church was celebrating and feasting the Lord's resurrection while another part of the world the church was still fasting his death.
- The Nicean Council of 325 established a law for the whole church by saying:

*"Easter should be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon succeeding the vernal equinox (March 21). If the full moon occurs on a Sunday, Easter-day is the Sunday after. Easter can be anywhere from March 22 to April 25."* -Nicean Council of 325
- The last trace of the "heretics" from Asia was seen in the 500's AD.

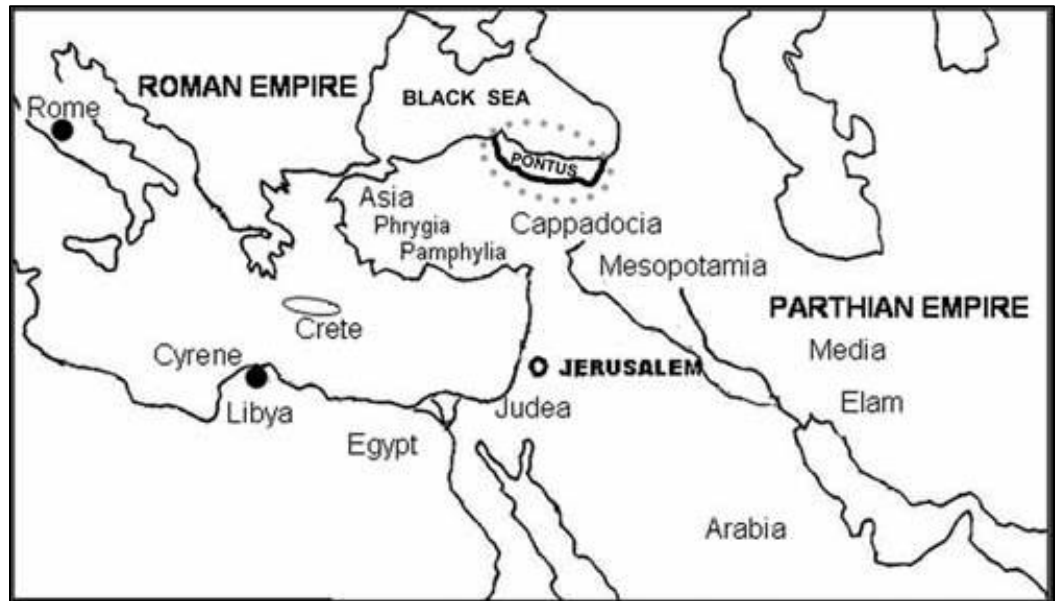
## Leaders:

1. Papias (60-163) in Hierapolis
2. Polycarp (70-155) in Smyrna
3. Quadratus (died 129) in Athens
4. Aristides (died 134) in Athens
5. Anicetus (155-166) in Rome
6. Victor (189-199) in Rome
7. Justin Martyr (100-165) born in Neapolis (Shechem), Israel; died in Rome
8. Irenaeus (126-202) born in Smyrna; died in Lugdunum (Lyon)
  - a. 43 BC a Roman military colony called Lugdunum was founded at what would be Lyon in Gaul.
  - b. Lugdunum (Lyon) was the capital of the Gauls.
  - c. Christianity arrived to Lyon in Gaul early in the second century.
  - d. Pilate was banished to Vienne 20 miles south of Lyon in 38 AD. He died in 41 A
  - e. Caligula banished Herod Antipas and Herodias to Gaul in 39 AD.
9. Tertullian (155-220) born, lived and died in Carthage
10. Hippolytus (170-236) born in Rome; died in exile on isle of Sardinia

## Heretics:

### Marcion

1. 85-160 AD
2. Born in Sinope which is a coastal city on the south coast of the Black Sea (which would be the north coast of modern Turkey, or Pontus of the New Testament).
3. Marcion's father was a bishop in Pontus, but excommunicated his son for abandoning the Christian faith he was raised in.
4. Marcion went on to make a fortune as a shipowner until he was about 50 years old.
5. Around 140 AD (maybe 138-139) Marcion moved to Rome.
  - a. He joined the church in Rome and made a very large donation to the church from his vast wealth. The donation was said to be 200,000 sesterces. When inflation hit the Roman Empire at this time the sestertius was the dominant small change.
  - b. Marcion began teaching his opposing views which made him popular and created a large following
6. According to Irenaeus a man named Cerdo from the Simonians came to Rome during the time of the Roman Bishop Hyginus (136-142).



- a. Cerdo and Marcion had doctrinal conflicts with the Roman Bishop Hyginus
  - b. Valentinus, another Gnostic, was a companion of Marcion at this time.
7. In 144 AD the church in Rome expelled Marcion and returned his donation.
  8. Many members of the church in Rome followed Marcion who then started his own church.
  9. Marcion moved back up to Pontus on the coast of the Black Sea and set up many churches.
  10. Members of his churches were forbidden sexual relations. Husbands and wives separated so they could live chaste and celibate.
  11. The focus of Marcion's doctrine was inconsistency of God in the OT and God in the NT.
    - a. The OT God was a cruel judge
    - b. The NT God was a loving father of Jesus
    - c. Jesus' teachings were not compatible with YHWH and the OT.
  12. Marcion rejected the OT, but fully embraced the books of the NT that he approved.
    - a. Marcion was a fan of the Apostle Paul
    - b. Marcion was the first to canonize any of the NT books as accepted Scripture, while rejecting other writings from that time as non-authoritative.
      - i. The books Marcion accepted as Scripture were only ten of Paul's letters and an edited Gospel of Luke.
        1. Luke was accepted because he was a Gentile and not corrupted as the other Gospel writers who were Jews that naturally defended the Old Testament: Matthew, Mark and John.
          - a. Luke's original Gospel had been tampered with by the Jewish sect so Marcion had to edit out the corruption to restore Luke's original book:
            - i. Get rid of Jesus Jewish lineage
            - ii. Get rid of Jesus use and support of Jewish Scripture
            - iii. Get rid of the part where Jesus presents himself as sent by the God of the Old Testament or shows support for YHWH.
        2. Paul was accepted because he was a Roman citizen.
          - a. Paul's letters had likewise been corrupted by Jewish apostles such as Peter, John, James and Barnabus, even Mark, who wrote Jewish things back into Paul's epistles.
          - b. Marcion had to remove the Jewish corruption from Paul's letters to regain Paul's original message.
          - c. Galatians was Paul's greatest work when he writes things like:
 

*"Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed."* (Gal. 3:23)
      - ii. Marcion "followed" or "agreed with" the teachings of Paul, so he thought.
      - iii. Marcion's canonization of some of the letters and books written at this time and his rejection of other writings by the apostles forced the church to oppose him by forming their own, official canon of Scripture which developed into what we call the New Testament.
    - c. Around 144 AD Marcion established the concept of two gods instead of one God. So, instead of being monotheistic, Marcion was ditheistic.
      - i. There was a higher transcendent God (Father of Jesus)
      - ii. There was also a lower god who ruled the earth that he had created (YHWH or Demiurge)

- iii. This form of ditheism resolved the “conflict” or “contradiction” Marcion saw between the OT and the NT.
  - iv. Christianity and Judaism were not from the same root, text or deity.
  - v. Proof:
    - 1. In the Garden YHWH walked on earth in a body and could not find Adam.
    - 2. YHWH was a local tribal God that punished sinners with suffering and death because he was jealous. But, the Father of Jesus was a universal God who acted in compassion and mercy.
    - 3. One of Marcion’s great proofs was Jesus own words that said, *“So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.”* (Matt. 7:17-20) Marcion’s point was:
      - a. The created world contains suffering and cruelty. This is bad fruit. The creator of this world is proven by Jesus’ words to be bad and NOT the true God.
  - vi. Marcion wrote a book identifying these “contradictions” called “Antitheses” (“antitheses” means “a contrast, opposition between two things” or “a thing that is the direct opposite of something”). The text of Marcion’s book “Antitheses” no longer exists, but we have references to it and the text of arguments against it.
13. Justin Martyr (100-165 AD) encountered Marcion in Rome. Justin Martyr wrote of Marcion in his “The First Apology” (155-157 AD) saying these things:
- a. *“There is Marcion, a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive, and teaching his disciples to believe in some other god greater than the Creator. And he, by the aid of the devils, has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies, and to deny that God is the maker of this universe, and to assert that some other being, greater than He, has done greater works.”* (ch. 26)
  - b. *“As we said before, the devils put forward Marcion of Pontus, who is even now teaching men to deny that God is the maker of all things in heaven and on earth, and that the Christ predicted by the prophets is His Son, and preaches another god besides the Creator of all, and likewise another son. And this man many have believed, as if he alone knew the truth, and laugh at us, though they have no proof of what they say, but are carried away irrationally as lambs by a wolf, and become the prey of atheistical doctrines, and of devils.”* (ch. 58)
14. Polycarp (69-155 AD) debated Marcion in Rome and called him “the firstborn of Satan” during the debate. After Polycarp’s presentation of apostolic teaching several of Marcion’s followers converted.
- a. Irenaeus writes concerning Polycarp meeting Marcion in “Against Heresies” 3.3.4 *“He (**Polycarp**) it was who, coming to Rome in the time of **Anicetus** caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles — that, namely, which is handed down by the Church. There are also those who heard from him that **John**, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving **Cerinthus** within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, “Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.” And **Polycarp** himself*

replied to **Marcion**, who met him on one occasion, and said, "Do you know me?"

"I do know you, the first-born of Satan."

Such was the horror which the apostles and their disciples had against holding even verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth; as **Paul** also says,

"A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sins, being condemned of himself."

15. Hippolytus (170-235 AD) – "The Refutation of All Heresies" (200 AD) - Chapter XV. -

*"But **Marcion**, of Pontus, and Cerdon, his preceptor, themselves also lay down that there are three principles of the universe—good, just, and matter. Some disciples, however, of these add a fourth, saying, good, just, evil, and matter. But they all affirm that the good (Being) has made nothing at all, though some denominate the just one likewise evil, whereas others that his only title is that of just. And they allege that (the just Being) made all things out of subjacent matter, for that he made them not well, but irrationally. For it is requisite that the things made should be similar to the maker; wherefore also they thus employ the evangelical parables, saying, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit," and the rest of the passage. Now **Marcion** alleges that the conceptions badly devised by the (just one) himself constituted the allusion in this passage. And (he says) that Christ is the Son of the good Being, and was sent for the salvation of souls by him whom he styles the inner than. And he asserts that he appeared as a man though not being a man, and as incarnate though not being incarnate. And he maintains that his manifestation was only phantastic, and that he underwent neither generation nor passion except in appearance. And he will not allow that flesh rises again; but in affirming marriage to be destruction, he leads his disciples towards a very cynical life. And by these means he imagines that he annoys the Creator, if he should abstain from the things that are made or appointed by Him."*

16. Iranaeus condemned Marcion in his Book IV by quoting the words of Jesus that opposed Marcion's position.

17. Marcion's church expanded during his life and rivaled the orthodox church.

18. Marcion is considered a Gnostic, and since Gnosticism has many, many varieties Marcion is one of the many varieties. But, Marcion differed from other branches of Gnosticism in these ways:

- a. Marcion came to his dualism (ditheism) in a different way.
- b. Marcion did not claim to possess secret knowledge.
- c. Marcion did not teach initiation into the mystery of Gnosticism, but taught salvation by faith in what he taught as the Gospel.
- d. Marcion taught that he was fixing the message of the Gospel that the church at that time had confused by combining it with Judaism and accepting the OT as Scripture.
- e. Marcion did teach that the bad creator God had made both the body and soul of man which made both the body and soul bad. Thus, Jesus could not have had an actual physical body. Jesus just "seemed" to have a body. The word "seemed" or "appear" is from the Greek word **dokeo** (δοκέω) which is why this heresy that claims Jesus did not have a physical body that was part of the creation of the lower, bad god, but he only "seemed" (*dokeo*) to have a body is the heresy of Docetism. (*Dokeo* also is used in Greek to make the Greek word *dokesis* (δόκησις) meaning "apparition" and "phantom")
- f. Jesus came from the good God to deliver mankind from the evil body and evil soul the lower god had made when he made the bad creation.



- g. All man needs to do is believe the message of Jesus.
19. After Marcion's death in 160 AD his church continued and survived conflicts with:
- The Christian church
  - Roman Empire
20. Marcion churches continued until the 400's, but this sect needed to survive on converts because sexual relation prohibited the heretical group from continuing through heredity.

### **140-160 Marcion**

- From Pontus on the Black Sea, Marcion arrived in Rome in 140.
- He made a fortune as a shipowner.
- His father was a bishop and excommunicated him.
- Marcion believed that the God of the Old Testament was different from the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Marcion taught that the God of the Old Testament was unknowable and nothing but sheer justice. The God of the New Testament was revealed and was loving and gracious.
- The Church of Rome excommunicated him in 144.
- Justin Martyr said Marcion was aided by the devil to blaspheme and deny that God was the creator.
- Tertullian wrote "Against Marcion" about 207 and called him a formidable foe of true Christian doctrine.
- Marcion stated that Jesus was not born of a woman but suddenly appeared in the synagogue at Capernaum in 29 AD.
- He taught that since creation was not the work of the true God the body must be denied.
- Marcion recognized Polycarp in Rome in 155 and Polycarp replied, "I recognize you as the firstborn of Satan."
- The followers of Marcion were called Marcionites. Constantine absolutely forbade their meeting for worship. Most were absorbed into newer heretical teaching of Mani and Manicheism. There were reports of them in the 400's. The council at Trullo 692 made provision for the reconciliation of Marcionites. There were lingering remains as late as the 900's.

# PLEROMA

Gr. "fullness", Gnostic Heaven, exists before creation

**SOPHIA** - a divine being who rebelliously attempted creation by conceiving on her own and gave birth to a formless mass called Demiurge.

**DEMIURGE**  
cast out

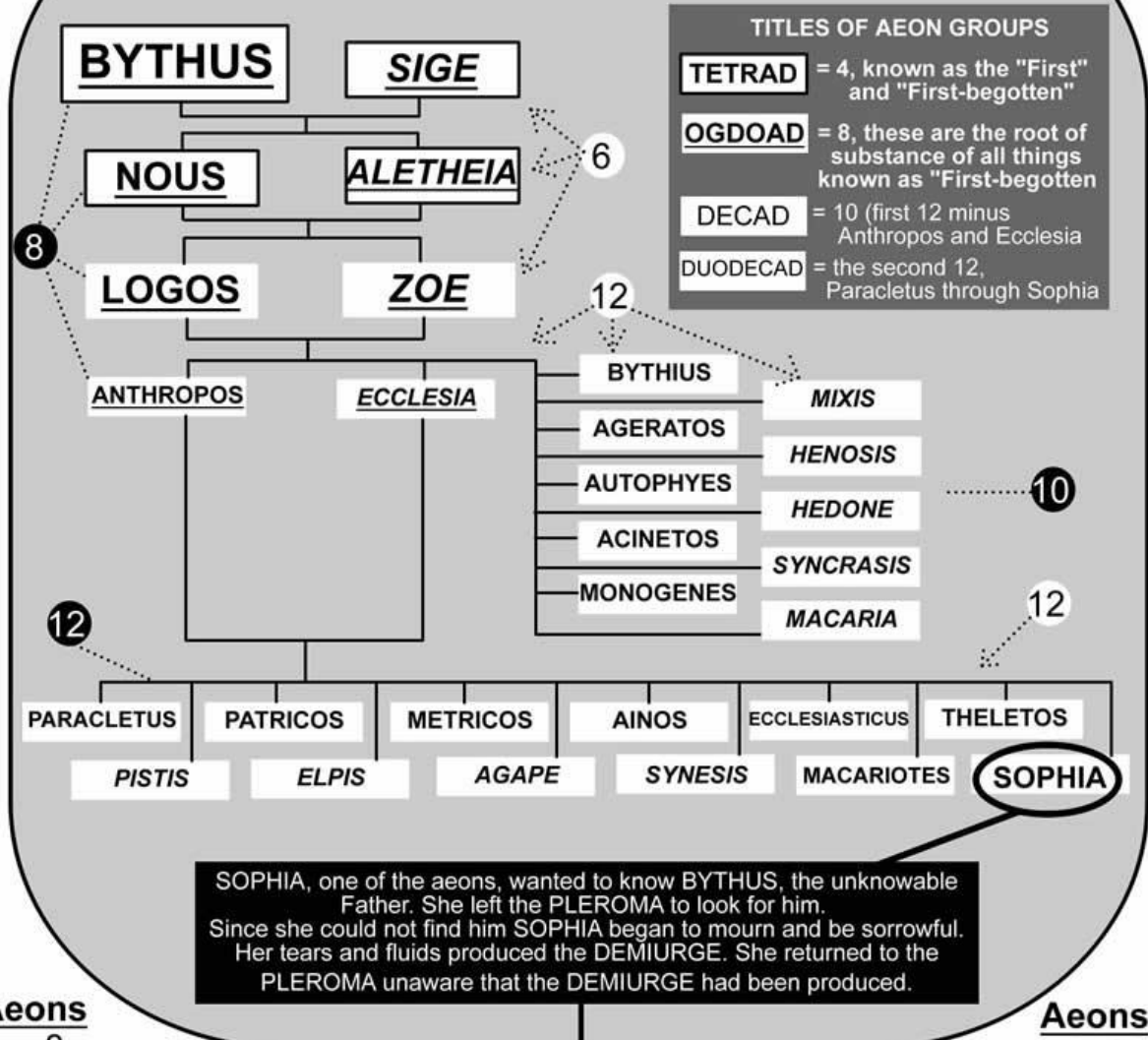
## DEMIURGE

- Demiurge is ignorant of Sophia and Pleroma
- Demiurge creates physical matter and world
- Unknown to Demiurge he is being used by Sophia to create in the physical world images of what is in the unseen, unknown Pleroma.
- Demiurge is formed of soul, but not spirit, so Demiurge does not know spiritual things, Sophia or Pleroma.
- Demiurge thinks he is God and Creator of everything

MATTER

EARTH

# PLEROMA



**TITLES OF AEON GROUPS**

**TETRAD** = 4, known as the "First" and "First-begotten"

**OGDOAD** = 8, these are the root of substance of all things known as "First-begotten"

**DECAD** = 10 (first 12 minus Anthropos and Ecclesia)

**DUODECAD** = the second 12, Paracletus through Sophia

**Aeons**  
 8  
 + 10  
 + 12  
 ---  
 30

**Aeons**  
 6  
 + 12  
 + 12  
 ---  
 30

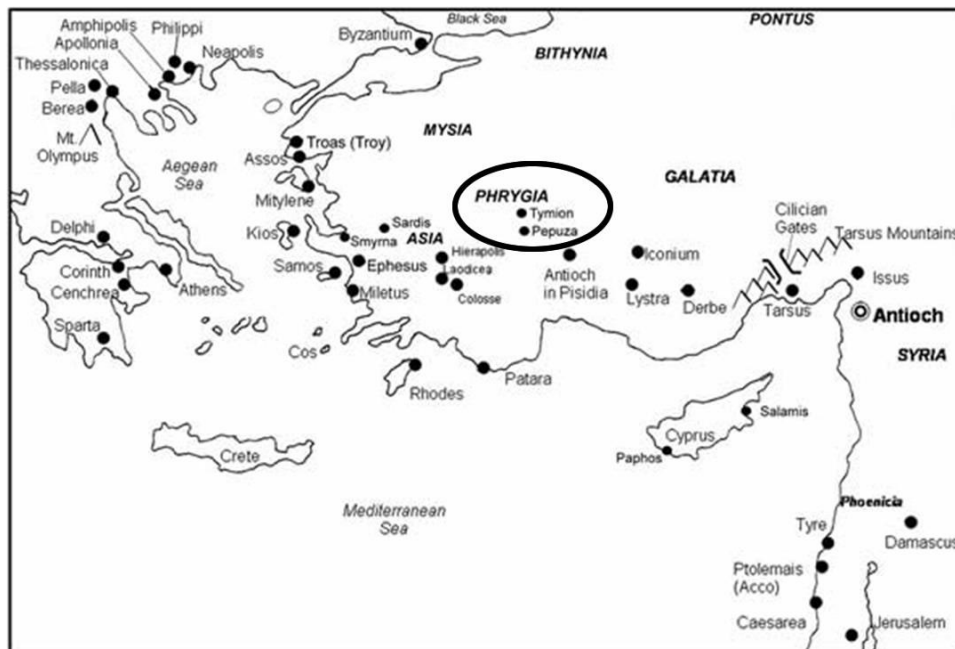
**DEMIURGE**  
 Gr. *demiurgos* meaning "craftsman" who created world;  
 Gnostics consider to be the OT God; ignorant, malicious, inferior.  
 Demiurge and physical creation should never have existed.

**MATTER**

**EARTH**

## 155 Montanism

1. The church had become formal and was led by human leadership.
2. A man called Montanus attempted to confront the problem of a Spiritless, formal church
3. He opposed the rise to prominence of the bishop in the local church.
4. Montanus began to stress the second coming of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.
5. In his zeal he taught extreme concepts such as: inspiration was immediate and continuous, that he himself was the paraclete, through whom the Holy Spirit spoke as he had through Paul and Peter.
6. His eschatology was also extravagant: He believed that the Kingdom would come down and be set up at Pepuza, Phrygia.
7. He and his followers followed strict asceticism: no second marriages, many fasts, and only dry food. They prophesied, spoke in tongues, had visions and got caught up in intense religious excitement.
8. Two prophetesses accompanied Montanus: Prisca and Maximilla
9. Their oracles said, "Do not hope to die in bed. . .but as martyrs." Today tombstones in Phrygia attest to the boldness of the Montanist Christians. Maximilla predicted: "After me there will be no prophecy, but the End."
10. He had considerable influence in North Africa, which included the conversion of Tertullian to Montanism. Tertullian allowed their strict asceticism to influence his writings at times. He refused forgiveness for serious sins after baptism, banned remarriage and forbade flight from persecution.
11. The Constantinople Council in 381 condemned Montanism and said they should be looked at like pagans.
12. The Montanists were not heretics. They were fanatics.
13. Their prophecies never came true.
14. They caused a disruption as the church was trying to establish the New Testament canon.
15. The Montanists are a warning to the church that they must maintain a connection with the Spirit of God and the emotions of man while not forsaking the doctrine and the organization of the church.



<b>Doctrinal Splits and Heresies in the Early Church</b>		
<b>Name of Group or Division</b>	<b>Years</b>	<b>History and Doctrinal Characteristics of Group</b>
<b>Ebionism</b>	50-135	Need for the <b>Mosaic Law</b> in Salvation A <b>Christological Heresy</b> Did not agree with the Apostle Paul's position. Jesus is the man anointed by the Spirit who became the Messiah. Jesus was not God. Were looking for the imminent Millennium Used <b>Matthew and Hebrews</b>
<b>Gnosticism</b>	50-300	Began with pagan philosophical ideas and incorporated it into Christian doctrine. Forms of this are beginning in Paul and John's day. Marcion (85-160) made the greatest advances with Gnostic theology. Marcion was excommunicated in 144.
<b>Montanism</b>	170-280 (400's- Small; 800's- Still Some)	An <b>ancient Pentecostal</b> group Named after Montanus. Appeared mainly in Phrygia (in Asia Minor) but spread throughout the Roman empire. Montanus said he was the Word of God and claimed to have direct revelations from the Holy Spirit. They encouraged ecstatic prophesying. They believed sinning Christians could not be redeemed, forbid remarriage, firm church discipline, celebrated Easter on Nisan 14.
<b>Docetism</b>	110	<b>Christological Heresy</b> Jesus was God, but not human. Jesus only appeared to be human. "Docetism" comes from Greek word <i>dokesis</i> which means "to seem". Ignatius warns the church of Smyrna of the danger of this in
<b>Manichaeism</b>	200-600	A <b>major Gnostic</b> religion Based on the writings of Mani (210-276) who lived in Babylon. Mani was visited as a youth by a spirit that taught him truths. These truths gave him divine knowledge which liberated his insight and understanding, and he became a "Gnostic". Mani was the Paraclete of Truth which was promised in Scripture. At its peak it reached from China to Spain.
<b>Modalists or Sabellianism</b>	190-268	<b>Trinitarian Heresy</b> God is a single person. God revealed himself in the Old Testament as the Father, in the gospels he manifested as the Son, after Jesus ascension God takes the form of the Holy Spirit. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit never existed at the same time. Some modern groups still hold to this. They deny the Trinity, claim that the name of God is Jesus and accuse Trinitarians of having three gods. Council of Antioch condemns it in 268.
<b>Patipassianism</b>	190-200	<b>Trinitarian Heresy</b> God the Father became incarnate, suffered and died and was resurrected. God the Father became the Son. Condemned at Rome in 200.
<b>Monarchians</b>	190-300	<b>Trinitarian Heresy</b> Also called Adoptionism Jesus became Christ at His baptism, was adopted by the Father after His death. God existed in Jesus in a powerful way. By 300 Monarchianists have become Arians.

## Church History Events 115-300 AD

- 115: Rylands Library Papyrus P52 the earliest extant record of a canonical New Testament text
- 135: Emperor Hadrian builds a pagan temple in Jerusalem at the precise site of Jesus' crucifixion
- 135: Christmas instituted as a feast day in Rome
- 144: Marcion of Sinope excommunicated as a heretic
- 150: Justin Martyr dedicates his *First Apology*
- 150: Polycarp writes his *epistle to the Philippians*
- 155: Polycarp martyred
- 170: Emergence of [Muratorian Canon](#) (Our books of the Bible minus Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter)
- 172: Montanist movement begins
- 175: Tatian's [Diatessaron](#) harmonizes the four canonical gospels into single narrative
- 180: Irenaeus writes *Against Heresies*
- 196: Tertullian begins writing many influential works; coins the term "Trinity"
- 215: Origen begins writing
- 215-290: Rise of the Christian schools at Alexandria and Antioch
- 220: Sabellius excommunicated for being a heretic, however he coined the helpful Greek term "homoousios" (meaning "same in essence"); this term has been used by faithful Christians to describe the Trinity
- 230: Earliest known public churches built
- 248: Cyprian elected bishop of Carthage
- 250: Origen publishes *Contra Celsum*
- 258: Cyprian, theologian and Bishop of Carthage, martyred
- 250: Decius orders empire-wide persecution
- 260-268: Paul of Samosata serves as Bishop of Antioch; circulates several heresies
- 270: Anthony takes up life of solitude
- 300: Christian population is about 6,200,000, or 10.5% of the population of the Roman Empire
- 302: 20,000 Martyrs burned at Nicomedia.
- 303: "Great Persecution" begins under Diocletian

**Rylands Library Papyrus P52 in John Rylands Library**  
in Manchester, England dated 115-135 AD, found in Egypt in 1920

The recto text comes from the [Gospel of John 18:31–33](#):

ΟΙ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΟΙ ΗΜΕΙΝ ΟΥΚ ΕΞΕΣΤΙΝ ΑΠΟΚΤΕΙΝΑΙ  
ΟΥΔΕΝΑ ΙΝΑ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΤΟΥ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΠΛΗΡΩΘΗ ΟΝ ΕΙ-  
ΠΕΝ ΣΗΜΑΙΝΩΝ ΠΟΙΩ ΘΑΝΑΤΩ ΗΜΕΛΛΕΝ ΑΠΟ-  
ΘΗΣΚΕΙΝ ΙΣΗΛΘΕΝ ΟΥΝ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΟ ΠΡΑΙΤΩ-  
ΡΙΟΝ Ο ΠΙΛΑΤΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΦΩΝΗΣΕΝ ΤΟΝ ΙΗΣΟΥΝ  
ΚΑΙ ΕΙΠΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΣΥ ΕΙ Ο ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΤΩΝ ΙΟΥ-  
ΔΑΙΩΝ

The text translates as:

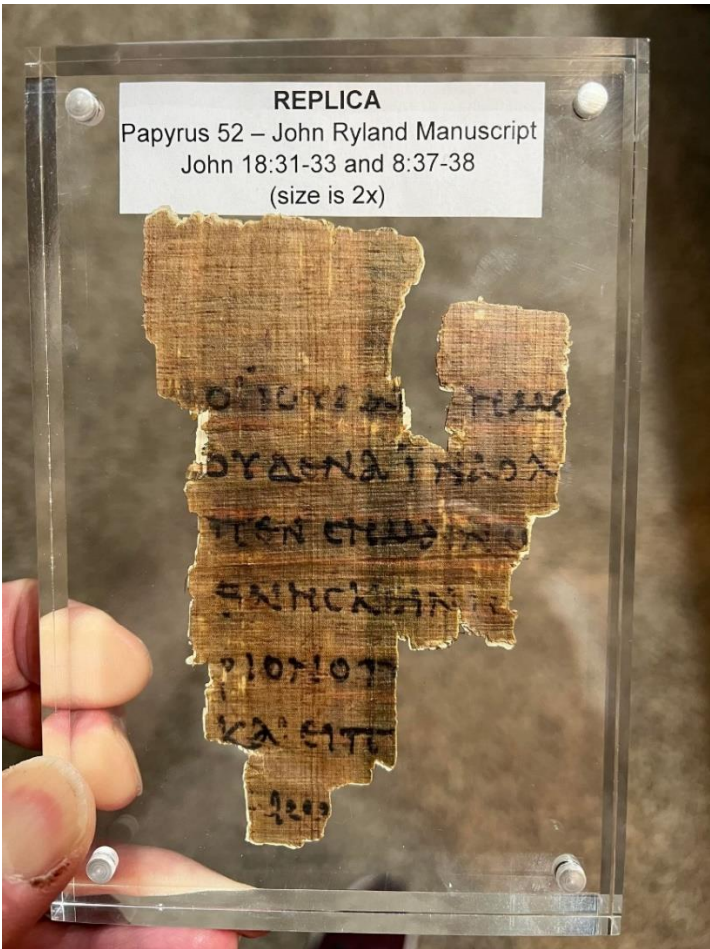
**the Jews, "For us** it is not permitted to kill **anyone," so that the word** of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he **speak** signifying what kind of death he was going to **die. Entered** therefore again into the Praetorium **Pilate** and summoned Jesus **and said** to him, "Thou art king of the **Jews?"**

The verso text comes from the [Gospel of John, 18:37–38](#):

ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΕΙΜΙ ΕΓΩ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΥΤΟ ΓΕΓΕΝΝΗΜΑΙ  
ΚΑΙ (ΕΙΣ ΤΟΥΤΟ) ΕΛΗΛΥΘΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΚΟΣΜΟΝ ΙΝΑ ΜΑΡΤΥ-  
ΡΗΣΩ ΤΗ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ ΠΑΣ Ο ΩΝ **ΕΚ ΤΗΣ ΑΛΗΘΕΙ-**  
ΑΣ ΑΚΟΥΕΙ ΜΟΥ ΤΗΣ ΦΩΝΗΣ **ΛΕΓΕΙ ΑΥΤΩ**  
Ο ΠΙΛΑΤΟΣ ΤΙ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ **ΚΑΙ ΤΟΥΤΟ**  
ΕΙΠΩΝ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΕΞΗΛΘΕΝ ΠΡΟΣ **ΤΟΥΣ ΙΟΥ-**  
ΔΑΙΟΥΣ ΚΑΙ ΛΕΓΕΙ ΑΥΤΟΙΣ ΕΓΩ ΟΥΔΕΜΙΑΝ  
ΕΥΡΙΣΚΩ ΕΝ ΑΥΤΩ ΑΙΤΙΑΝ

The text translates as:

a King I am. For **this I have been born** and (for this) I have come into the **world so that I would test** ify to the truth. Everyone who is **of the truth** hears of me my voice." **Said to him** Pilate, "What is truth?" **and this** having said, again he went out unto **the Jews** and said to them, "I find **not one** fault in him."





# Heretics:

1. Nicolas (30-70)
2. Cerinthus (30-100)

## **Cerinthus**

1. Active between 50-100 AD. Date of birth and death unknown.
2. None of Cerinthus' writings survive to our time
3. People who wrote about Cerinthus:
  - a. Irenaeus
  - b. Hippolytus of Rome (170-235 AD) in *Capita Adversus Caium*
  - c. Epiphanius, bishop of Salamis, 300's
4. Cerinthus is from Egypt where he was educated in Egyptian knowledge
5. Cerinthus was of the Jewish religion either by birth most likely (or, conversion)
6. Cerinthus studied at the school of Philo in Alexandria.
7. Cerinthus made an appearance in Jerusalem and Judea
8. Cerinthus caused conflict with Peter and Paul in Syria and Asia.
9. According to traditions collected by Epiphanius (310-403, born in Bet-Guvrin, Judea and Bishop of Salamis on Cyprus) Cerinthus was one of the false apostles who opposed Paul (2 Corinthians 11:13) and demanded circumcision (Galatians 2:4)
  - a. He was visited by angles and given revelations
  - b. Travelled through Israel and Galatia
  - c. Once came to Ephesus
10. Cerinthus founded a school in Asia and collected disciples there around 50-60 AD.
  - a. Cerinthus became an opponent of the Apostle John around 88 AD
11. Irenaeus writes in "*Against Heresies*", Book 1, Chapter 26:

**"Cerinthus**, again, a man who was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians, taught that the world was not made by the primary God, but by a certain Power far separated from him, and at a distance from that Principality who is supreme over the universe, and ignorant of him who is above all. He represented Jesus as having not been born of a virgin, but as being the son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of human generation, while he nevertheless was more righteous, prudent, and wise than other men. Moreover, after his baptism, Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler, and that then he proclaimed the unknown Father, and performed miracles. But at last Christ departed from Jesus, and that then Jesus suffered and rose again, while Christ remained impassible, inasmuch as he was a spiritual being.

Those who are called **Ebionites** agree that the world was made by God; but their opinions with respect to the Lord are similar to those of Cerinthus and Carpocrates. They use the Gospel according to Matthew only, and repudiate the Apostle Paul, maintaining that he was an apostate from the law. As to the prophetic writings, they endeavor to expound them in a somewhat singular manner: they practice circumcision, persevere in the observance of those customs which are enjoined by the law, and are so Judaic in their style of life, that they even adore Jerusalem as if it were the house of God.

12. Irenaeus writes in "*Against Heresies*" Book III, Chapter 11:

**"John**, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of the

Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and a long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans, who are an offset of that knowledge falsely so called, that he might confound them, and persuade them that there is but one God, who made all things by His Word; and not, as they allege, that the Creator was one, but the Father of the Lord another; and that the Son of the Creator was, forsooth, one, but the Christ from above another, who also continued impassible, descending upon Jesus, the Son of the Creator, and flew back again into His Pleroma; and that Monogenes was the beginning, but Logos was the true son of Monogenes; and that this creation to which we belong was not made by the primary God, but by some power lying far below Him, and shut off from communion with the things invisible and ineffable. The disciple of the Lord therefore desiring to put an end to all such doctrines, and to establish the rule of truth in the Church, that there is one Almighty God, who made all things by His Word, both visible and invisible; showing at the same time, that by the Word, through whom God made the creation, He also bestowed salvation on the men included in the creation; thus commenced His teaching in the Gospel: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made. What was made was life in Him, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. John 1:1, etc. All things, he says, were made by Him; therefore in all things this creation of ours is [included], for we cannot concede to these men that [the words] all things are spoken in reference to those within their Pleroma. For if their Pleroma do indeed contain these, this creation, as being such, is not outside, as I have demonstrated in the preceding book; but if they are outside the Pleroma, which indeed appeared impossible, it follows, in that case, that their Pleroma cannot be all things: therefore this vast creation is not outside [the Pleroma].

13. Schaff writes in Volume II "*Ante-Nicene Christianity*" (AD 100-325) in his eight-volume set called "*History of the Christian Church*" these details:
  - a. Cerinthus appeared towards the close of the first century in Asia Minor
  - b. Cerinthus came into conflict with the Apostle John who wrote the Gospel of John and his three epistles (1, 2, and 3, John) to oppose Cerinthus' Gnostic theology.
14. Cerinthus's doctrines combined:
  - a. Gnosticism
  - b. Judaism
  - c. Chiliasm
  - d. Ebionism – Jesus was a man anointed by the Holy Spirit; Jesus was not God; need Mosaic Law for salvation
15. Cerinthus' Doctrine:
  - a. Commination of Judaism and Gnosticism
  - b. Rejected all the Gospels
  - c. except for a heavily edited Matthew
  - d. One Supreme Being
  - e. World created by a different and inferior being (an angel) than the Supreme Being
  - f. According to Cerinthus this inferior creator is not YHWH (but an angel)
  - g. The angels created the world
  - h. The angels gave the Law. This Jewish Law was sacred.
    - i. Circumcision was necessary
    - ii. Observance of the Jewish sabbath was necessary.

- i. Salvation was obtained by obedience to this Jewish Law given by the ignorant angels.
- j. These angels were ignorant of the One Supreme Being
- k. The man Jesus and the Christ were two different persons:
  - i. Jesus was a man, and only a man, but a very holy man.
    - 1. Jesus suffered
    - 2. Jesus died
    - 3. Jesus was raised from the dead (or, sometimes it was taught Jesus will be raised in the end and all men with him.)
  - ii. Christ (or, Holy Spirit) was sent to dwell in the man Jesus by the One Supreme God at Jesus' baptism
    - 1. The Christ (Spirit of Christ, Holy Spirit) taught the man Jesus things that even the angels did not know
    - 2. The Christ revealed the One Supreme God to the man Jesus. The angels were ignorant of the existence of this One Supreme God.
    - 3. The Christ left Jesus when he suffered on the cross and died
- l. Cerinthus believed in the millennium here on the earth
  - i. This peaceful, happy millennium would occur before the resurrection.
  - ii. The righteous would enjoy a paradise of sensual delights in the land of Israel.
  - iii. Jesus would reign as a Messiah for one thousand years.
  - iv. The millennium on earth would occur before the manifestation of the spiritual kingdom of God began in heaven.

16. John's response and interaction with Cerinthus in Ephesus -

Irenaeus records in "Against Heresies", Book III, Chapter 3 verse 4:

**"But Polycarp** also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried [on earth] a very long time, and, when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffering martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true. To these things all the Asiatic Churches testify, as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time — a man who was of much greater weight, and a more steadfast witness of truth, than **Valentinus**, and **Marcion**, and the rest of the heretics. He it was who, coming to Rome in the time of Anicetus caused many to turn away from the aforesaid heretics to the Church of God, proclaiming that he had received this one and sole truth from the apostles — that, namely, which is handed down by the Church.

**There are also those who heard from him that John, the disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, "Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within."**

And Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion, and said, "Do you know me?" "I do know you, the first-born of Satan."

Such was the horror which the apostles and their disciples had against holding even verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth; as Paul also says,

"A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sins, being condemned of himself." (Titus 3:10)

There is also a very powerful Epistle of Polycarp written to the Philippians, from which those

who choose to do so, and are anxious about their salvation, can learn the character of his faith, and the preaching of the truth.

Then, again, the Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having **John** remaining among them permanently until the times of **Trajan** (98-117 AD), is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles.

## Nicolaitans

1. Irenaeus writes in “Against Heresies” Book 1, Chapter 26:

“The **Nicolaitanes** are the followers of that **Nicolas** who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is very plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John, [when they are represented] as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practice adultery, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. Wherefore the Word has also spoken of them thus: “But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.” (from Revelation 2:6)
2. Irenaeus writes in “Against Heresies” Book III, Chapter 11:

“John, the disciple of the Lord, preaches this faith, and seeks, by the proclamation of the Gospel, to remove that error which by Cerinthus had been disseminated among men, and a long time previously by those termed Nicolaitans, who are an offset of that knowledge falsely so called, that he might confound them, and persuade them that there is but one God, who made all things by His Word; and not, as they allege, that the Creator was one, but the Father of the Lord another; and that the Son of the Creator was, forsooth, one, but the Christ from above another, who also continued impassible, descending upon Jesus, the Son of the Creator, and flew back again into His Pleroma; and that Monogenes was the beginning, but Logos was the true son of Monogenes; and that this creation to which we belong was not made by the primary God, but by some power lying far below Him, and shut off from communion with the things invisible and ineffable. The disciple of the Lord therefore desiring to put an end to all such doctrines, and to establish the rule of truth in the Church, that there is one Almighty God, who made all things by His Word, both visible and invisible; showing at the same time, that by the Word, through whom God made the creation, He also bestowed salvation on the men included in the creation; thus commenced His teaching in the Gospel: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made. What was made was life in Him, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. John 1:1, etc. All things, he says, were made by Him; therefore in all things this creation of ours is [included], for we cannot concede to these men that [the words] all things are spoken in reference to those within their Pleroma. For if their Pleroma do indeed contain these, this creation, as being such, is not outside, as I have demonstrated in the preceding book; but if they are outside the Pleroma, which indeed appeared impossible, it follows, in that case, that their Pleroma cannot be all things: therefore this vast creation is not outside [the Pleroma].
3. The Nicolaitans may be the same groups identified as “those holding to the teaching of Balaam” mentioned in:
  - a. Jude 11 – “Woe to them! For they walked in the way of Cain and abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error and perished in Korah's rebellion.”

- b. 2 Peter 2:15 – “Forsaking the right way, they have gone astray. They have followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved gain from wrongdoing.”
- c. Revelation 2:14-15 in the church of Pergamum – “I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality. So also you have some who hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans.”

