

## Ignatius Warning the Trallians of Heresies in 107 AD:

**CHAPTER 6:** "I therefore, yet not I, but the love of Jesus Christ, entreat you that you use Christian nourishment only, and abstain from herbage of a different kind; I mean **heresy**. For those [that are given to this] mix up Jesus Christ with their own poison, speaking things which are unworthy of credit, like those who administer a deadly drug in sweet wine, which he who is ignorant of does greedily take, with a fatal pleasure leading to his own death."

**CHAPTER 7:** "Be on your guard, therefore, against such persons. And this will be the case with you if you are not puffed up, and continue in intimate union with Jesus Christ our God, and the bishop, and the enactments of the apostles."

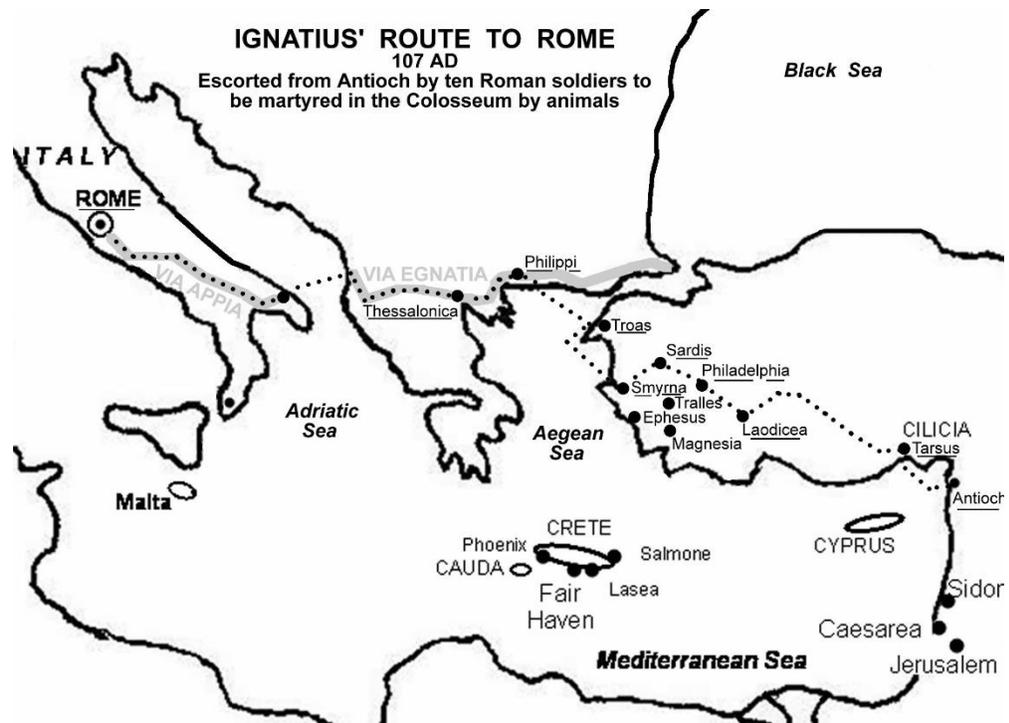
**CHAPTER 9:** "Stop your ears, therefore, when any one speaks to you at variance with Jesus Christ, who was descended from David, and was also of Mary; who was truly born, and ate and drank. He was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate; He was truly crucified, and [truly] died, in the sight of beings in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. He was also truly raised from the dead, His Father quickening Him, even as after the same manner His Father will so raise up us who believe in Him by Christ Jesus, apart from whom we do not possess the true life."

**CHAPTER 10:** "But if, as some that are without God, that is, the unbelieving, say, that He only seemed to suffer (they themselves only seeming to exist), then why am I in bonds? Why do I long to be exposed to the wild beasts? Do I therefore die in vain? Am I not then guilty of falsehood against [the cross of] the Lord?"

**CHAPTER 11:** "Flee, therefore, those evil offshoots [of Satan], which produce death-bearing fruit, whereof if any one tastes, he instantly dies. For these men are not the planting of the Father. For if they were, they would appear as branches of the cross, and their fruit would be incorruptible..."

**CHAPTER 12:** I salute you from Smyrna, together with the Churches of God which are with me, who have refreshed me in all things, both in the flesh and in the spirit. My bonds, which I carry about with me for the sake of Jesus Christ (praying that I may attain to God), exhort you..."

**CHAPTER 13:** "The love of the Smyrnæans and Ephesians salutes you. Remember in your prayers the Church which is in Syria, from which also I am not worthy to receive my appellation, being the last of them. Fare well in Jesus Christ,..."



<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 <b>the 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 <u>Used Matthew and Hebrews</u>
<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. <u>Marcion was excommunicated in 144.</u>
<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 117.
<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. <u>At its peak it reached from China to Spain.</u>
<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. <u>Council of Antioch condemns it in 268.</u>
<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. <u>Condemned at Rome in 200.</u>
<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. <u>By 300 Monarchianists have become Arians.</u>

<b>EMPEROR</b>	<b>Vespasian</b> (69-79) <b>Nerva</b> (96-98) <b>Titus</b> (79-81) <b>Domitian</b> (81-96)	<b>Trajan</b> (98-117)	<b>Hadrian</b> (117-138)	<b>Antoninus Pius</b> (138-161) <b>Lucius Verus</b> (161-169) <b>Septimius Severus</b> (193-211)	<b>Marcus Aurelius Commodus</b> (180-192) <b>Septimius Severus</b> (193-211)		
<b>PERSECUTION</b>	<b>90-96</b>	<b>98-117</b>	<b>117-138</b>	<b>165-177</b>	<b>202-211</b>		
<b>JERUSALEM</b>	<b>Simeon</b> (62-107)	<b>Justus I</b> (107-113) <b>Zaccheus</b> (113-?) <b>Tobias</b> (?-117)	<b>Benjamin</b> (?-117) <b>Tobias</b> (?-117)	<b>Judas</b> (died 148, last Hebrew bishop) <b>Marcus</b> (1st Gentile bishop in Jerusalem)			
<b>in ANTIOCH</b>	<b>Ignatius</b> (50-117)	<b>Heron</b> (117-127)	<b>Cornelius</b> (127-154)	<b>Eros</b> (154-169) <b>Theophilus</b> (169-182) <b>Maximus I</b> (182-191) <b>Serapion</b> (191-211)			
<b>in EPHEBUS</b>	<b>John</b> (66-98)			<b>Polycrates</b> (130-196)			
<b>HIERAPOLIS</b>	<b>Papias</b> (60-163)						
<b>in SMYRNA</b>	<b>Polycarp</b> (70-155)			<b>Melito</b> (Sardis; d.180)			
<b>YEAR</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>in ROME</b>	<b>Linus</b> (67-76) <b>Clement I</b> (88-97) <b>Anacleus</b> (76-88) <b>Evaristus</b> (97-105)	<b>Alexander I</b> (105-115) <b>Sixtus I</b> (115-125)	<b>Telesphorus</b> (125-136) <b>Hyginus</b> (136-140)	<b>Plus I</b> (140-155) <b>Anicetus</b> (155-166)	<b>Soter</b> (166-175) <b>Eleutherius</b> (175-189)	<b>Victor I</b> (189-199) <b>Zephyrinus</b> (199-217)	
<b>OTHER LEADERS</b>	<b>Hermas</b> (in Rome; 90) <b>Quadratus</b> (Athens; died 129) <b>Aristides</b> (Athens; died 134)			<b>Justin Martyr</b> (100-165)	<b>Irenaeus</b> (126-202)	<b>Tertullian</b> (155-220) <b>Hippolytus</b> (170-236)	
<b>???</b>					<b>Clement</b> (Alexandria, 150-215)	<b>Origen</b> (185-254)	
<b>HERETICS</b>	<b>Cerinthus</b> (30-100) <b>Nicolas</b> (active 30-70)	<b>Basilides</b> (125, Alexandria)	<b>Marcion</b> (85-160; in Rome 138-144) <b>Valentinus</b> (140 in Rome)	<b>Montanism</b> (155)			
<b>HERESYS</b>	<b>Nicolaitans</b> (60-98) <b>Ebionism</b> (50-135)	<b>Docetism</b> <b>Adoptionism</b>	<b>Montanism</b> (155) <b>Gnosticism</b> (50-300)	<b>Montanism</b> (155) <b>Gnosticism</b> (50-300)		<b>- Modalism, Manichaeism</b> <b>- Patripassianism,</b> (200-600) <b>- Monarchians</b> (190-300)	

# Heretics:

1. Judaizers (40-70)
2. Simon Magus (30-60)
3. Nicolas (30-70)
4. Cerinthus (30-100)

## Simon Magus

Simon Magus (Simon the Sorcerer, Simon of Gitta)

- Acts 8:9–24
- Simon also appears in Gnostic texts
- **Luke** says in Acts:
  - Simon “*amazed all the people of Samaria*” (Acts 8:9)
  - Simon was not a mere illusionist, but used demonic powers since Luke writes, “*they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.*” (Acts 8:11)
  - Simon received attention “*from the least to the greatest*” in Samaria giving him a messianic title when they said, “*This man is the **power of God that is called ‘Great’***” (Acts 8:10)
  - Simon “*believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip.*” (Acts 8:13)
- When Peter and John arrived in Samaria they laid hands on the new believers in Samaria to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17):

“*Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, saying, “Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall[c] of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” And Simon answered, “Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.”*” (Acts 8:18-24)
- **Josephus** (Antiquities of the Jews, book 20, chapter 7) writes of a Jew called Simon who “pretended to be a magician” born in Cyprus.

“***While Felix was procurator of Judea, he saw this Drusilla, and fell in love with her; for she did indeed exceed all other women in beauty; and he sent to her a person whose name was Simon one of his friends; a Jew he was, and by birth a Cypriot, and one who pretended to be a magician, and endeavored to persuade her to forsake her present husband, and marry him; and promised, that if she would not refuse him, he would make her a happy woman. Accordingly she acted ill, and because she was desirous to avoid her sister Bernice’s envy, for she was very ill treated by her on account of her beauty, was prevailed upon to transgress the laws of her forefathers, and to marry Felix.***” (<https://ccel.org/ccel/josephus/complete/complete.ii.xxi.vii.html>)
- **Justin Martyr** reports that Simon visited Rome during the reign of Emperor Cladius (41-54 AD). In Rome Simon’s followers were amazed with his works of miracles and deified him.

“***There was a Samaritan, Simon, a native of the village called Gitto, who in the reign of***

*Claudius Cæsar, and in your royal city of Rome, did mighty acts of magic, by virtue of the art of the devils operating in him. He was considered a god, and as a god was honoured by you with a statue, which statue was erected on the river Tiber, between the two bridges, and bore this inscription, in the language of Rome: — Simoni Deo Sancto, To Simon the holy God. And almost all the Samaritans, and a few even of other nations, worship him, and acknowledge him as the first god; and a woman, Helena, who went about with him at that time, and had formerly been a prostitute, they say is the first idea generated by him. And a man, Menander, also a Samaritan, of the town Capparetæa, a disciple of Simon, and inspired by devils, we know to have deceived many while he was in Antioch by his magical art. He persuaded those who adhered to him that they should never die, and even now there are some living who hold this opinion of his. And 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. All who take their opinions from these men, are, as we before said, called Christians; just as also those who do not agree with the philosophers in their doctrines, have yet in common with them the name of philosophers given to them. And whether they perpetrate those fabulous and shameful deeds — the upsetting of the lamp, and promiscuous intercourse, and eating human flesh — we know not; but we do know that they are neither persecuted nor put to death by you, at least on account of their opinions. But I have a treatise against all the heresies that have existed already composed, which, if you wish to read it, I will give you.” (Justin Martyr, “The First Apology”, chapter 26 - <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0126.htm>)*

- **Irenaeus** calls Simon an antichrist and says he continued his sorcery and began the heresy of Gnosticism itself.
- **Hippolytus** wrote that Simon had developed theology that included three pairs:
  - Mind and Intelligence
  - Voice and Name
  - Ratiocination and Reflection
 Hippolytus says that Simon claimed, “that, if he were buried alive, he would rise the third day. And accordingly, having ordered a trench to be dug by his disciples, he directed himself to be interred there. They, then, executed the injunction given; whereas he remained in that grave until this day, for he was not the Christ.” (St. Jerome referring to Hippolytus’ description of Simon Magus in Book VI, Chapter 15 - <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/050106.htm>)
- The greed of Simon is recalled in the modern word simony, “using religion as a means of profit.”

**Hippolytus “Refutation of All Heresies”** (Hippolytus of Rome 170-235 AD)  
 (SOURCE - <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/050106.htm>)

## Chapter 2. Simon Magus.

It seems, then, expedient likewise to explain now the opinions of Simon, a native of Gitta, a village of Samaria; and we shall also prove that his successors, taking a starting-point from him, have endeavoured (to establish) similar opinions under a change of name. This Simon being an adept in sorceries, both making a mockery of many, partly according to the art of Thrasymedes, in the manner

in which we have explained above, and partly also by the assistance of demons perpetrating his villany, attempted to deify himself. (But) the man was a (mere) cheat, and full of folly, and the Apostles reproved him in the Acts. Acts 8:9-24 With much greater wisdom and moderation than Simon, did Apsethus the Libyan, inflamed with a similar wish, endeavour to have himself considered a god in Libya, And inasmuch as his legendary system does not present any wide divergence from the inordinate desire of that silly Simon, it seems expedient to furnish an explanation of it, as one worthy of the attempt made by this man.

#### Chapter 4. Simon's Forced Interpretation of Scripture; Plagiarizes from Heraclitus and Aristotle; Simon's System of Sensible and Intelligible Existences.

In this way we must think concerning Simon the Magician, so that we may compare him unto the Libyan, far sooner than unto Him who, though made man, was in reality God. If, however, the assertion of this likeness is in itself accurate, and the sorcerer was the subject of a passion similar to Apsethus, let us endeavour to teach anew the parrots of Simon, that Christ, who stood, stands, and will stand, (that is, was, is, and is to come,) was not Simon. But (Jesus) was man, offspring of the seed of a woman, born of blood and the will of the flesh, as also the rest (of humanity). And that these things are so, we shall easily prove as the discussion proceeds.

**Now Simon, both foolishly and knavishly paraphrasing the law of Moses, makes his statements (in the manner following): For when Moses asserts that God is a burning and consuming fire, Deuteronomy 4:24 taking what is said by Moses not in its correct sense, he affirms that fire is the originating principle of the universe. (But Simon) does not consider what the statement is which is made, namely, that it is not that God is a fire, but a burning and consuming fire, (thereby) not only putting a violent sense upon the actual law of Moses, but even plagiarizing from Heraclitus the Obscure. And Simon denominates the originating principle of the universe an indefinite power, expressing himself thus: This is the treatise of a revelation of (the) voice and name (recognisable) by means of intellectual apprehension of the Great Indefinite Power. Wherefore it will be sealed, (and) kept secret, (and) hid, (and) will repose in the habitation, at the foundation of which lies the root of all things. And he asserts that this man who is born of blood is (the aforesaid) habitation, and that in him resides an indefinite power, which he affirms to be the root of the universe.**

#### Chapter 5. Simon Appeals to Scripture in Support of His System.

#### Chapter 6. Simon's System Expounded in the Work, Great Announcement; Follows Empedocles.

#### Chapter 7. Simon's System of a Threefold Emanation by Pairs.

#### Chapter 8. Further Progression of This Threefold Emanation; Co-Existence with the Double Triad of a Seventh Existence.

And of those six powers, and of the seventh which co-exists with them, the first pair, Mind and Intelligence, he calls Heaven and Earth. And that one of these, being of male sex, beholds from above and takes care of his partner. but that the earth receives below the rational fruits, akin to the earth, which are borne down from the heaven. On this account, he says, the Logos, frequently looking towards the things that are being generated from Mind and Intelligence, that is, from Heaven and Earth, exclaims, Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, because the Lord has spoken. I have brought

forth children, and exalted them; and these have rejected me. Now, he who utters these words, he says, is the seventh power — he who stood, stands, and will stand; for he himself is cause of those beautiful objects of creation which Moses commended, and said that they were very good. But Voice and Name (the second of the three pairs) are Sun and Moon; and Ratiocination and Reflection (the third of the three pairs) are Air and Water. And in all these is intermingled and blended, as I have declared, the great, the indefinite, the (self-) existing power.

#### Chapter 9. Simon's Interpretation of the Mosaic Hexaëmeron; His Allegorical Representation of Paradise.

**When, therefore, Moses has spoken of the six days in which God made heaven and earth, and rested on the seventh from all His works, Simon, in a manner already specified, giving (these and other passages of Scripture) a different application (from the one intended by the holy writers), deifies himself. When, therefore, (the followers of Simon) affirm that there are three days begotten before sun and moon, they speak enigmatically of Mind and Intelligence, that is, Heaven and Earth, and of the seventh power, (I mean) the indefinite one. For these three powers are produced antecedent to all the rest. But when they say, He begot me prior to all the Ages, (Proverbs 8:22-24) such statements, he says, are alleged to hold good concerning the seventh power. Now this seventh power, which was a power existing in the indefinite power, which was produced prior to all the Ages, this is, he says, the seventh power, respecting which Moses utters the following words: And the Spirit of God was wafted over the water; that is, says (the Simonian), the Spirit which contains all things in itself, and is an image of the indefinite power about which Simon speaks — an image from an incorruptible form, that alone reduces all things into order. For this power that is wafted over the water, being begotten, he says, from an incorruptible form alone, reduces all things into order. When, therefore, according to these (heretics), there ensued some such arrangement, and (one) similar (to it) of the world, the Deity, he says, proceeded to form man, taking clay from the earth. And He formed him not uncompounded, but twofold, according to (His own) image and likeness. (Genesis 2:7) Now the image is the Spirit that is wafted over the water; and whosoever is not fashioned into a figure of this, will perish with the world, inasmuch as he continues only potentially, and does exist actually. This, he says, is what has been spoken, that we should not be condemned with the world. 1 Corinthians 11:32 If one, however, be made into the figure of (the Spirit), and be generated from an indivisible point, as it has been written in the Announcement, (such a one, albeit) small, will become great. But what is great will continue unto infinite and unalterable duration, as being that which no longer is subject to the conditions of a generated entity.**

#### Chapter 10. Simon's Explanation of the First Two Books of Moses.

The river, therefore, he says, which proceeds out of Edem is divided into four principles, four channels — that is, into four senses, belonging to the creature that is being born, viz., seeing, smelling, taste, and touch; for the child formed in Paradise has these senses only. This, he says, is the law which Moses appointed; and in reference to this very law, each of his books has been written, as the inscriptions evince. The first book is Genesis. The inscription of the book is, he says, sufficient for a knowledge of the universe. For this is (equivalent in meaning with) generation, (that is,) vision, into which one section of the river is divided. For the world was seen by the power of vision. Again, the inscription of the second book is Exodus. For what has been produced, passing through the Red Sea, must come into the wilderness — now they say he calls the Red (Sea) blood, — and taste bitter water. For bitter, he says, is the water which is (drunk) after (crossing) the Red Sea; which (water) is a path to be trodden, that leads (us) to a knowledge in (this) life of (our) toilsome and bitter lot. Altered,

however, by Moses— that is, by the Logos— that bitter (water) becomes sweet. And that this is so we may hear in common from all who express themselves according to the (sentiments of the) poets:—

Dark at the root, like milk, the flower,  
Gods call it 'Moly,' and hard for mortal men  
To dig, but power divine is boundless.

Chapter 12. Fire a Primal Principle, According to Simon.

**According to Simon, therefore, there exists that which is blessed and incorruptible in a latent condition in every one — (that is,) potentially, not actually; and that this is He who stood, stands, and is to stand. He has stood above in unbegotten power. He stands below, when in the stream of waters He was begotten in a likeness. He is to stand above, beside the blessed indefinite power, if He be fashioned into an image. For, he says, there are three who have stood; and except there were three Aeons who have stood, the unbegotten one is not adorned.** (Now the unbegotten one) is, according to them, wafted over the water, and is re-made, according to the similitude (of an eternal nature), a perfect celestial (being), in no (quality of) intelligence formed inferior to the unbegotten power: that is what they say — I and you, one; you, before me; I, that which is after you. This, he says, is one power divided above (and) below, generating itself, making itself grow, seeking itself, finding itself, being mother of itself, father of itself, sister of itself, spouse of itself, daughter of itself, son of itself, mother, father, a unit, being a root of the entire circle of existence.

Chapter 13. His Doctrine of Emanation Further Expanded.

**Therefore, according to this reasoning, Simon became confessedly a god to his silly followers, as that Libyan, namely, Apsethus — begotten, no doubt, and subject to passion, when he may exist potentially, but devoid of propensions.** (And this too, though born from one having pro-pensions, and uncreated though born) from one that is begotten, when He may be fashioned into a figure, and, becoming perfect, may come forth from two of the primary powers, that is, Heaven and Earth. For Simon expressly speaks of this in the Revelation after this manner: To you, then, I address the things which I speak, and (to you) I write what I write. The writing is this: there are two offshoots from all the Aeons, having neither beginning nor end, from one root. And this is a power, viz., Sige, (who is) invisible (and) incomprehensible. And one of these (offshoots) appears from above, which constitutes a great power, (the creative) Mind of the universe, which manages all things, (and is) a male. The other (offshoot), however, is from below, (and constitutes) a great Intelligence, and is a female which produces all things. From whence, ranged in pairs opposite each other, they undergo conjugal union, and manifest an intermediate interval, namely, an incomprehensible air, which has neither beginning nor end. But in this is a father who sustains all things, and nourishes things that have beginning and end. This is he who stood, stands, and will stand, being an hermaphrodite power according to the pre-existent indefinite power, which has neither beginning nor end. Now this (power) exists in isolation. For Intelligence, (that subsists) in unity, proceeded forth from this (power), (and) became two. And that (father) was one, for having in himself this (power) he was isolated, and, however, He was not primal though pre-existent; but being rendered manifest to himself from himself, he passed into a state of duality. But neither was he denominated father before this (power) would style him father. As, therefore, he himself, bringing forward himself by means of himself, manifested unto himself his own peculiar intelligence, so also the intelligence, when it was manifested, did not exercise the function of creation. But beholding him, she concealed the Father

within herself, that is, the power; and it is an hermaphrodite power, and an intelligence. And hence it is that they are ranged in pairs, one opposite the other; for power is in no wise different from intelligence, inasmuch as they are one. For from those things that are above is discovered power; and from those below, intelligence. So it is, therefore, that likewise what is manifested from these, being unity, is discovered (to be) duality, an hermaphrodite having the female in itself. This, (therefore,) is Mind (subsisting) in Intelligence; and these are separable one from the other, (though both taken together) are one, (and) are discovered in a state of duality.

#### Chapter 15. Simon's Disciples Adopt the Mysteries; Simon Meets St. Peter at Rome; Account of Simon's Closing Years.

The disciples, then, of this (Magus), celebrate magical rites, and resort to incantations. And (they profess to) transmit both love-spells and charms, and the demons said to be senders of dreams, for the purpose of distracting whomsoever they please. But they also employ those denominated Paredroi. And they have an image of Simon (fashioned) into the figure of Jupiter, and (an image) of Helen in the form of Minerva; and they pay adoration to these. But they call the one Lord and the other Lady. And if any one among them, on seeing the images of either Simon or Helen, would call them by name, he is cast off, as being ignorant of the mysteries. **This Simon, deceiving many in Samaria by his sorceries, was reproved by the Apostles, and was laid under a curse, as it has been written in the Acts. But he afterwards abjured the faith, and attempted these (aforesaid practices). And journeying as far as Rome, he fell in with the Apostles; and to him, deceiving many by his sorceries, Peter offered repeated opposition. This man, ultimately repairing to ... (and) sitting under a plane tree, continued to give instruction (in his doctrines). And in truth at last, when conviction was imminent, in case he delayed longer, he stated that, if he were buried alive, he would rise the third day. And accordingly, having ordered a trench to be dug by his disciples, he directed himself to be interred there. They, then, executed the injunction given; whereas he remained (in that grave) until this day, for he was not the Christ. This constitutes the legendary system advanced by Simon, and from this Valentinus derived a starting-point (for his own doctrine.** This doctrine, in point of fact, was the same with the it Simonian, though Valentinus) denominated under different titles: for Nous, and Aletheia, and Logos, and Zoe, and Anthropos, and Ecclesia, and Aeons of Valentinus, are confessedly the six roots of Simon, viz., Mind and Intelligence, Voice and Name, Ratiocination and Reflection. But since it seems to us that we have sufficiently explained Simon's tissue of legends, let us see what also Valentinus asserts.

## 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 angels 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. Ebionitism.
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.

## Heresies:

1. Justification by Law (40-70)
2. Nicolaitans (60-98)
3. Ebionism (50-135)
4. Docetism
5. Adoptionism
6. "Gnosticism" (50-300)

## 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].

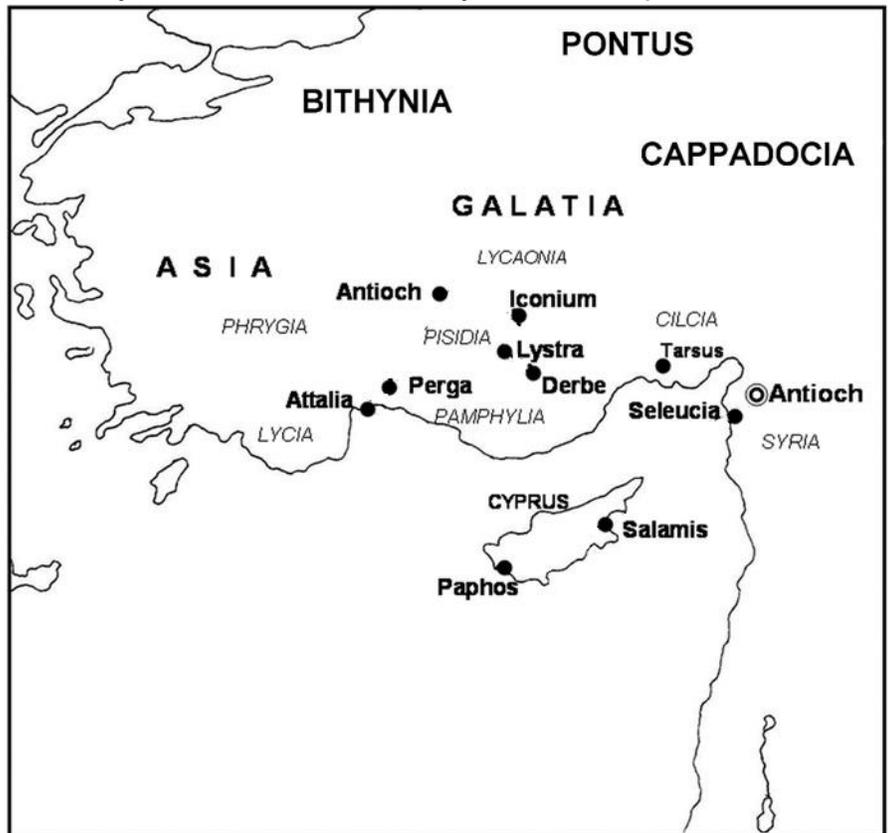
3. The Nicolaitans may be the same groups identified as “those holding to the teaching of Balaam” mentioned in:

- 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.”

## 110 AD - Pliny's Punishment of the Christians

## Pliny the Younger (61-113 AD)

- Born in Italy
- Uncle was **Pliny the Elder** (the Younger's mother's brother) who helped raise and educate him
  - Pliny the Elder was a naval and army commander of the early Roman Empire
  - Friend of Vespasian
  - An author who wrote the encyclopedic work called "Natural History", an early model for encyclopedias.
  - Also wrote "The History of the German Wars"
  - Pliny the Elder was used as a source for Roman historians such as Plutarch, Tacitus and Suetonius
  - Pliny the Elder died in 79 AD in the city of Stabiae (only 10 miles from Mount Vesuvius and 2 ½ miles from Pompeii) attempting to rescue a friend and his family from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.
- Educated at home, then sent to Rome to learn rhetoric by a great teacher and known author (Quintilian)
- In Rome he was also educated by his uncle Pliny the Elder until the uncle died in 79 AD when the Younger was 18 years old.
- He was a lawyer who dealt mainly with inheritance cases
- He moved into Roman government as a Senator, then as a Praetor, Prefect and became the Imperial governor of Bithynia Pontus Province
- He was an author and wrote 100's of letters. 247 of these letters survive.



Below is one of Pliny the Younger's letters from 110 AD to Trajan and following that is Trajan's letter of response. The general information is detailed here:

(source -<https://www.christianstudylibrary.org/article/plinys-punishment-christians> )

- addressed to the Roman emperor **Trajan**
- concerns the interrogation of Christians in Bithynia-Pontus, the province to which Pliny was legate (a governor sent by the emperor).
- Pliny describes of the Christians' behaviour, the report of his treatment of the prosecuted, and the attitude he displays towards the "perverse and immoderate superstition" provide insight into the relationship between the Roman government and the early Christian church.
- One of the more challenging judicial cases for Pliny was caused by friction between the Christian community and the Greek and Roman citizens of the towns throughout the province.

- The Roman populace was accustomed to a range of deities, and tolerated the practice of foreign cults (provided social behaviour was not contravened); but the monotheism of the Christians was annoying.
- And since the great fire of Rome in 64, citizens in the city often falsely accused the Christians (and the Jews, with whom they were sometimes identified) of causing disturbances and inciting riots among the lower classes.
- Indeed, rumour had it that the Christians conducted bizarre rites and cannibalistic feasts.
- It is not surprising, therefore, that unofficial informers reported instances of 'social misconduct' among those practicing a foreign cult (such as the Egyptian Isis worship and eastern Bacchanalism), which would then be banned. Thus it became customary among private individuals, magistrates, and civic priests, to accuse Christians of immoral behaviour.
- The refusal of the Christians to pay divine homage to the emperor provoked many local officials to charge them with *contumacia*, that is, persistent exclusiveness and denial of Roman social and religious custom.
- Cases of this and similar nature form the subject of Pliny's letter (X, 96) to the emperor Trajan. Pliny's reason for writing the emperor is clearly stated:

***I have never presided over a trial of the Christians, and therefore do not know what the procedure of the investigation should be and the extent of the punishment***

He expresses other doubts: should he make distinction between the old and young, the weak and healthy? And should he pardon those who had renounced Christianity? More importantly, Pliny asks if he ought to punish those who are charged merely with "being a member of the Christian sect", or only those Christians who had committed a crime or some anti-social act. And Pliny is uncertain as to what he should do with those who once were believers, but have since abandoned the faith.

Trajan is requested to approve of Pliny's method in dealing with the accused.

Pliny then outlines his treatment of those who were brought before him by private prosecutors:

- The legate first asked whether the arraigned was a Christian.
- The question seems obvious enough, but it was necessary to ascertain the religious membership of the accused.
- It was not the *nomen ipsum per se* (meaning "no one is bound to accuse himself") which resulted in punishment, but the repeated affirmation.
- For Pliny asks a second and third time, threatening punishment, whether the accused admits to being a Christian. (This procedure is not unlike that followed by Pontius Pilate in Matthew 27:11-15).
- He who persisted was summarily executed. Pliny's reason: "For I am convinced that – whatever the confession – stubborn and unbending obstinacy ought to be punished ."
- Only Roman citizens (the majority of the accused were foreigners and slaves) were not immediately decapitated but detained, to be sent to Rome.
- It seems that just the admission of being a Christian was sufficient to earn the penalty of death.

Those who denied the allegation Pliny treated in this way:

- in the governor's presence the accused called upon the Roman gods and offered sacrifices of wine and incense before a statue of Trajan.
- In addition, the accused were asked to curse Jesus Christ (*male dicerent Christo*, meaning “they would speak ill of Christ”).
- This test is sound, writes Pliny, because one who is a true Christian refuses to comply with his request.
- The same test he applied to those who confessed to having been Christians in the past, but who now renounced their faith.
- All these were permitted to depart with impunity, since they committed no particular crime besides belonging to the sect.

From these lapsed Christians Pliny received information regarding the nature of the services held by the early church:

- It was the custom of the believers to meet before dawn, to sing antiphonal songs in praise of the Lord Jesus Christ (*carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem*).
- They professed an oath to refrain from stealing, robbery, and adultery, to pay creditors, etc.
- Pliny also mentions having heard of the Agape, or banquet, which he describes as a “common and harmless feast.”
- Apparently, the believers congregated to partake of a meal (*coeundi ad capiendum cibum*).
- Upon Pliny's edict banning societies and political clubs, the banquets were halted.
- Christianity was spreading fast, for “not only the towns, but even the villages and countrysides were pervaded by that contagious superstition.”
- In the eyes of a Roman governor who made no distinction between Christianity and other sects, the belief was but a fad. Indeed, he concludes the letter by stating that he has hope that, given the opportunity to repent, the wrongdoers will amend their ways.

#### **The emperor Trajan wrote a brief reply to Pliny:**

- In it he gives the terse command “not to seek out” the Christians.
- However, those who are shown to be believers “are to be punished.”
- Those who demonstrated that they no longer believed (by sacrificing to the Roman gods) were to be dismissed.
- Trajan writes, anonymous accusations were not to be considered. For “that would set a terrible precedent, and is not in keeping with the spirit of the times.” But, one may ask, what about the innocent Christians who were executed simply for their confession?

#### **First Peter written to Pontus and Bithynia**

- 1:1 – “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who are elect exiles of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,”
- 2:13-17 – “Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. 16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

- 3:15-17 – “Now who is there to harm you if you are zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled, but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if that should be God's will, than for doing evil.
- 4:14-17 – “If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or an evildoer or as a meddler. Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name. For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”

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*Pliny, Letters 10.96-97*

## **Pliny to the Emperor Trajan**

It is my practice, my lord, to refer to you all matters concerning which I am in doubt. For who can better give guidance to my hesitation or inform my ignorance? I have never participated in trials of Christians. I therefore do not know what offenses it is the practice to punish or investigate, and to what extent. And I have been not a little hesitant as to whether there should be any distinction on account of age or no difference between the very young and the more mature; whether pardon is to be granted for repentance, or, if a man has once been a Christian, it does him no good to have ceased to be one; whether the name itself, even without offenses, or only the offenses associated with the name are to be punished.

Meanwhile, in the case of those who were denounced to me as Christians, I have observed the following procedure: I interrogated these as to whether they were Christians; those who confessed I interrogated a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment; those who persisted I ordered executed. For I had no doubt that, whatever the nature of their creed, stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy surely deserve to be punished. There were others possessed of the same folly; but because they were Roman citizens, I signed an order for them to be transferred to Rome.

Soon accusations spread, as usually happens, because of the proceedings going on, and several incidents occurred. An anonymous document was published containing the names of many persons. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the gods in words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statues of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ--none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do--these I thought should be discharged. Others named by the informer declared that they were Christians, but then denied it, asserting that they had been but had ceased to be, some three years before, others many years, some as much as twenty-five years. They all worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ.

They asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not

falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food--but ordinary and innocent food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden political associations. Accordingly, I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing else but depraved, excessive superstition.

I therefore postponed the investigation and hastened to consult you. For the matter seemed to me to warrant consulting you, especially because of the number involved. For many persons of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes are and will be endangered. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms. But it seems possible to check and cure it. It is certainly quite clear that the temples, which had been almost deserted, have begun to be frequented, that the established religious rites, long neglected, are being resumed, and that from everywhere sacrificial animals are coming, for which until now very few purchasers could be found. Hence it is easy to imagine what a multitude of people can be reformed if an opportunity for repentance is afforded.

## **Trajan to Pliny**

You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been denounced to you as Christians. For it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it--that is, by worshiping our gods--even though he was under suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance. But anonymously posted accusations ought to have no place in any prosecution. For this is both a dangerous kind of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of our age.