

What were the origins of Catholic-Babylonian Christianity? What was Simon Magus' religion before he met the apostle Peter? Where did that religion originate? Read in this article the detailed and documented account of Simon Magus and his great COUNTERFEIT CHRISTIANITY!

**Hope of Israel Ministries**  
**(Ecclesia of YEHOVAH):**

**SIMON MAGUS and the Origins of the Catholic Church!** by Ernest L. Martin and John D. Keyser

THE FALSE religious system began very early -- almost with Pentecost in 31 A.D. Even in the earliest of Paul's epistles, he informs us that "the mystery of iniquity DOTN ALREADY WORK" (II Thess. 2:7). Paul wrote this in 50 or 51 AD The plot to supplant the Truth had already begun. In the later epistles of Paul and in those of the other apostles, we find it gaining considerable momentum. However, even though the apostles discuss the diabolical system which was arising, THEY NOWHERE MENTION HOW IT STARTED. They had no need in mentioning its beginning -- that had already been done!

The book of Acts is the KEY to the understanding of Christian beginnings. Not only does it show the commencement of the TRUE Church, but it equally reveals the origins of the False Church masquerading as Christianity. Indeed, you would think it odd if the book of Acts did not discuss this vital subject.

**The Book of Acts -- the Key**

First, let us recall two points of necessary understanding:

- 1)** The book of Acts was written by Luke about 62 AD some 31 years after the True Church began. Acts recalls ALL events which affected, in a major way, the True Church. It especially tells us about the beginnings of matters relating to Church history.
- 2)** Acts does NOT record every single event relative to the Church, important as one might think them to be.

For example, Luke doesn't mention a single thing about the activities of the original twelve apostles of the Messiah. Yet are we to assume that they did nothing important in the history of the Church? Absolutely NOT! They must have done many mighty works. But we can see from this omission that Luke recorded ONLY THOSE EVENTS WHICH WERE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY for YEHOVAH's Church of the future to know.

Notice that Luke's geography leads him towards the Northwest and West of Palestine. He discusses Church history in Asia Minor, Greece and ROME. He wanted to leave us with the truth of what was going on in the West and North because the prophecies showed the false system arising in these localities.

All other activities of YEHOVAH's Church -- all about the other ten apostles, etc. -- fall into relative unimportance because the trouble wasn't going to come from Palestine itself. It was to come from ROME and adjacent areas. It is no wonder that Luke spares no pains to tell us the truth of what was really going on in these critical areas, and that is the reason Acts concerns itself primarily with Paul.

These are well-known principles that help us understand the overall viewpoint of Acts.

With the foregoing in mind, read the incident recorded by Luke, of the first encounter of YEHOVAH's apostles with a heretic. This encounter was not with an ordinary run-of-the-mill individual, but with one of the greatest men in the East at that time -- *Simon the Magus!*

The reason Luke describes the intentions of this man so thoroughly is the profound effect this man, and his followers, had on YEHOVAH's Church in Asia Minor, Greece, and ESPECIALLY ROME. Actually, this man by 62 AD, (when Luke composed the book of Acts) had caused the True Church so much trouble that Luke had to show the people that he was NOT, as he claimed to be, a part of the Christian Church.

All scholars realize that Luke tells about Simon's beginning because of his *later notoriety and danger to the Church*.

In this regard, notice the comment of ***Hasting's Dictionary of the Apostolic Church***, Vol. 2, p. 496: "It seems beyond question that Luke KNEW THE REPUTATION which Simon acquired, and that he regarded the subsequent history of Simon as the natural result of what occurred in the beginning of his connection with the Christians."

If we assume that Luke recorded this encounter of the apostles with Simon Magus simply to show that "simony" was wrong, we miss the point completely. There is a score of places in other parts of the Bible to show the error of buying ecclesiastical gifts.

Luke was exposing SIMON MAGUS HIMSELF. This IS the important point!! Luke was clearly showing that Simon was NEVER a part of YEHOVAH's Church, even though by 62 AD, many people were being taught that Simon was truly a Christian -- taught that he was the HEAD of the only TRUE Christians; the apostle to the Gentiles!

## What Luke Tells Us About Simon Magus

Notice the points Luke places clearly before us --

- 1) Simon was a Samaritan, not a Jew -- (Acts 8:9). Remember that the Bible tells us salvation was of the Jews -- not of the Samaritans (John 4:22).
- 2) Simon Magus greatly used demonistic powers to do miracles and wonders (Acts 8:9).
- 3) The whole population of Samaria (both small and great) gave heed to him (Verse 10). He was looked on as the greatest prophet -- all Samaria BELIEVED IN HIM!
- 4) The Samaritans WORSHIPPED him as "the Great One" -- a god. "This man is that power of God called Great [that is the Almighty]" (RSV. Verse 10).

Imagine it! They called him god in the flesh!

Luke is also careful to inform us that Simon had become firmly established in Samaria as "the Great One" and had practiced his powers "for a long time" (Verse 11).

- 1) Luke wants us to understand that he nominally became a Christian ("Simon himself believed") and was baptized -- that is, he physically, outwardly "entered" the Christian Church (Verse 13).
- 2) Simon even recognized that the Messiah's power was greater than his but wanted to be associated with that great name (Verse 13).
- 3) Simon, seeing the potential of the Christian religion waited until the authorities, Peter and John, came to Samaria and then offered to pay them money to OBTAIN AN APOSTLESHIP IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Verses 18-21).

### Simon Coveted Apostle's Office

Those who carelessly read this section of Scripture may get the mistaken notion that Simon wanted only to buy the holy spirit. Yes, he wanted that -- but his main intention went far beyond. He had eyes on becoming an APOSTLE!

Peter immediately perceived his intention and said "You have neither PART nor LOT in this matter" (Verse 21). The true apostles had been chosen after the Messiah's death to take PART in the apostleship by LOT (Acts 1:25, 26). Peter was telling Simon he couldn't buy an APOSTLESHIP.

Luke is showing that Simon wanted to be one of the APOSTLES -- a top man in the Christian Church. He was after that office. After all Simon imagined himself to be fully qualified to be an APOSTLE, especially over the Samaritans since they already looked to him as the greatest religious leader of the age. However, Peter rebuked him sternly.

Peter perceived that Simon was in the "gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity [lawlessness]" (Verse 23).

NOTE: This verse has been misunderstood because the King James Version fails to give the full force of Peter's accusation. This verse when understood in the manner Peter intended, is one of the most important of the whole chapter. IT IS A PROPHECY! Peter knew the mind of this man and what this man was to become. This is made plain by Sir William Ramsay in his *Pictures of the Apostolic Church*, p. 60. He says: "Peter rebuked him in strong and PROPHETIC TERMS. The PROPHECY is concealed in the ordinary translation: the Greek means 'thou art FOR a gall of bitterness and a fetter of unrighteousness [lawlessness]', i.e., a cause of bitterness and corruption to others."

This makes it plain. Peter was uttering a prophecy by the holy spirit. He was telling what this Simon was to become; *Lange's Commentary* says:

"Peter's words, literally, mean: 'I regard you as a man whose influence WILL BE like that of bitter gall [poison] and a bond of unrighteousness [lawlessness], or, as a man who has reached such a state'." (Vol. 9, p. 148).

Not only was Simon, in Peter's time, a great antagonist to the Church, but he would be the adversary of the future.

This prophecy is the KEY that opens to our understanding the ORIGINS of the heresies mentioned in the letters of the apostles. Peter clearly knew Simon wouldn't repent. Verse 22 shows that in the original.

### **Gall of Bitterness Defined**

It is also interesting to note Peter's statement that Simon was to become a "gall of bitterness." People today may not realize the exact meaning of such a phrase, but no Jew in the First Century was in any doubt as to its meaning.

It was a figure of speech adopted from the Old Testament which denoted going over to the idols and abominations of the heathen. Read Deuteronomy 29:16-18 and see how plainly this figure of speech is used. When the apostle Peter applied to Simon Magus the phrase "gall of bitterness," he meant that Simon would be the responsible party for

the introduction of heathen beliefs and idols into Christianity. The prophecy takes on a new and important scope when we realize this real meaning of Peter's prophecy.

No wonder Jude later says, speaking about the very men who followed Simon Magus (including Simon himself): "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ORDAINED to this condemnation" (Verse 4). We can be confident that Peter recognized that Satan was going to use this Simon Magus as the GREAT PROTAGONIST OF FALSE CHRISTIANITY.

The later history of Simon Magus shows that Peter's prophecy came true in a most remarkable way.

### **Simon Magus Unrepentant**

Even after Peter's strong rebuke, Simon DID NOT REPENT! And Peter knew that he wouldn't!

Conclusion: This means that Simon thought he deserved to be an apostle -- if not the chief apostle -- in the Christian Church. He became baptized which, in a physical way, made him ostentatiously a "member." It is important to remember that he DID NOT REPENT of his error. There is not the slightest hint that he gave up believing that he had divine right to be an apostle.

He deliberately continued in this error, with his later followers -- calling himself "Christian"! It is because of the later deceptive activities of this would-be apostle that Luke was compelled to show his ignominious beginning and to reveal what Peter prophesied about him.

It is by identifying the real beginning of the great false church system with this Simon that opens up a whole new vista of understanding in regard to the counterfeit Christianity which began even in the infancy of the Church.

### **What Did Simon and the Samaritans Believe?**

One of the most scholarly of early church historians was Harnack, who wrote an extensive seven-volume work titled *The History of Dogma*. This man is recognized as one of the top authorities in the world on this subject.

He states: "Long before the appearance of Christianity, combinations of religion had taken place in Syria and Palestine, ESPECIALLY IN SAMARIA, insofar as the

ASSYRIAN and BABYLONIAN religious philosophy . . . with its manifold interpretations, had penetrated as far as the eastern shore of the Mediterranean" (Vol. 1, pp. 243, 244).

Notice he says the Babylonian religion had come ESPECIALLY TO SAMARIA! !

And why not? The Samaritans were largely Babylonian by race. The Bible tells us in II Kings 17:24 that most of the Samaritans had been taken to Samaria from Babylon and adjacent areas. Later on, Ezra informs us that others who were mainly of Babylonian stock came to Samaria (Ezra 4:9-10). These people amalgamated their Babylonian religious beliefs with some of the teachings from the Old Testament. But they NEVER DEPARTED basically from their own Babylonian-Chaldean religious teachings.

If anyone doubts that these Samaritans practiced outright paganism under the guise of YEHOUAH worship, let him read the extraordinarily clear indictments recorded in the inspired Word of YEHOUAH God (II Kings 17:24-41).

### **A Brief History of the Samaritans**

There were originally five Babylonian tribes who had been transported to the area where Northern Israel once lived before Israel's inglorious defeat and captivity by the Assyrians. When these five tribes moved INTO the vacant land of Samaria, they brought their Babylonian and Assyrian gods with them. After a short while in their new country, they were ravaged by lions. They interpreted this punishment as coming upon them because they failed to honor the god of the new land -- not realizing that there is only One Great GOD, who is not confined to any one land. These Samaritans didn't have sense enough to realize that the True God of the land had sent Israel into captivity because of their calf-worship and their introduction of Phoenician religion.

They asked the Assyrian king to send back one of the priests of Israel to teach them the former religion in order that the plague of lions would be stayed.

The Israelitish priest who was sent to them taught the religion of Northern Israel. Remember that the priests of Northern Israel were NOT Levites. At the time of Jeroboam, the true priests of YEHOUAH God were forced to flee to Jerusalem and Judea (II Chron. 11:14). Jeroboam set up his own form of religion with the calves at Dan and Bethel (I Kings 12:28-30). He moved the Holy Days from the seventh to the eighth month. He made priests of the lowest of the people, those who were NOT of Levi (I Kings 12:31).

All of these acts of Jeroboam were outright violations of YEHOUAH's law. It was from the time of Jeroboam down to the time of Israel's captivity, that the majority of Israel was

NOT worshipping the True God at all! Jerusalem and YEHOVAH's temple had been repudiated, and paganism had been introduced on a grand scale. When these transplanted Babylonians who were being afflicted by lions in Samaria asked for a priest of the former people -- THEY GOT ONE!

But that priest was one of the former calf-worshipping priests of the rebel Israelites. He was almost as pagan as the Babylonians themselves!

This priest of Israel taught the Babylonians (now called Samaritans) to adopt the former worship of the Northern Israelites. The priest taught them to revere YEHOVAH as the "God of the Land." Thus, these Samaritans finally took upon themselves the NAME: The People of YEHOVAH; but their religion was outright paganism -- a mixture of Israelitish calf-worship and Babylonianism -- just as Simon Magus later was eager to appropriate the Messiah's NAME, but continue his pagan abominations!

Notice what YEHOVAH God says about the final condition of these Samaritans --

"So these nations feared the Lord [calling themselves YEHOVAH's people], AND served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers [the Babylonians], so do they unto this day" (II Kings 17:41).

These people called themselves the worshippers of the True God, but were actually Babylonian idolaters.

### **What Deities Did the Samaritans Worship?**

It will pay us to notice the gods and goddesses that these forefathers of Simon Magus brought with them to Samaria. The people from the City of Babylon adored SUCCOTH-BENOTH; the Cuthites: NERGAL; the Hamathites: ASHIMA; the Avites: NIBHAZ and TAR-TAK; the Sepharvites: ADRAM-MELECH and ANAM-MELECH.

The first deity is SUCCOTH-BENOTH, a goddess. It was Semiramis in the form of Venus. Listen to Jones in his *Proper Names of the O.T.*, p. 348. He says the name signifies "Tabernacles of daughters." It means: "Chapels made of green boughs, which the men of Babylon, who had been transported into Samaria, erected in honor to Venus, and where their daughters were PROSTITUTED by the devotees of that abominable goddess. It was the custom of Babylon, the mother of harlots, and therefore HER SONS DID THE SAME THING IN SAMARIA." What about the god NERGAL of Cuth? We are informed by *McClintock and Strong's Encyclopedia* that the name signifies "the great man," "the great hero" or "the god of the chase," i.e., the Hunter. In other words, as the

**Encyclopedia** further points out, he was a form of NIMROD. This Hunter-god was honored by the people of CUTH for Arabian tradition tells us that CUTH was the special city of NIMROD (vol. VI, p. 950).

The next god was that of Hamath: ASHIMA. Jones shows us that he was the great pagan god of propitiation, i.e., the god who bore the guilt of his worshippers (p. 42). This god was the pagan REDEEMER -- the OSIRIS of Egyptian fame or the dying NIMROD.

The Avites worshipped NIBHAZ (masc. -- the god of HADES) and TAR-TAK, "the mother of the gods". This last-mentioned goddess was supposedly the Mother of the Assyrian race, or, as Jones says, she was SEMIRAMIS (see p. 354).

The fifth Babylonian tribe worshiped pre-eminently two gods. ADRAM-MELECH and ANAM-MELECH. The first was the "god of fire," the Sun or the Phoenician Baal (Jones, p. 14); the second was "the god of the flocks" or the Greek HERMES, the Good Shepherd (p. 32).

(It is self-evident that these gods and goddesses were the major Babylonian deities, and at the same time, the very gods and goddesses which the Roman Catholic Church deifies today as the Messiah, Mary, etc.)

Simon Magus grew up in this mixed-up society. The Samaritans called themselves the people of the True God, but religiously were practicing Babylonians. Simon himself was a priest of these people (the word "Magus" is the Chaldean/Persian word for "priest"). Thus, in the encounter of Peter with Simon Magus, we find the first real connection of true Christianity with the Chaldean priest who was prophesied to bring in its false counterpart.

### **Simon Magus Begins UNIVERSAL Church**

History comes alive with the startling story of how Simon Magus -- branded a FALSE PROPHET by the book of Acts -- established HIS OWN UNIVERSAL church! SIMON MAGUS was a Babylonian priest. He was a part of the Babylonian community that had been living in the land of Northern Israel ever since the Northern Ten Tribes were carried away captive by the Assyrians. YEHOVAH God tells us that these Samaritans, as they were called, were claiming to be the true people of YEHOVAH while at the same time practicing many heathen rites which came directly from Babylon (II Kings 17:41).

This was the type of religious environment in which Simon Magus was born. This was the environment in which he commenced his own ministry and was finally proclaimed the "great one...the great power of God" -- that is, YEHOVAH God Himself (Acts 8:9-10).



He so swayed the whole of the Samaritan nation that all gave heed to him -- they did for a very long time (Verses 9-11). But when he saw the potential of Christianity, he endeavored to buy an apostleship in the Church. Peter rebuked him sternly.

Simon Magus, after his rejection by Peter, began to fashion his own "Christian" church -- a church of which HE was head -- a church designed to completely overthrow the True Church of YEHOVAH God. His idea was to blend together Babylonian teaching with some of the teachings of the Messiah -- especially to take the name of the Messiah -- and thus create ONE UNIVERSAL CHURCH! But a church with Babylonianism as its basis.

Harnack, a church historian, states that Simon Magus "proclaimed a doctrine in which the Jewish faith was strangely and grotesquely mixed with BABYLONIAN myths, together with some Greek additions. The mysterious worship...in consequence of the widened horizon and the deepening religious feeling, finally the wild SYNCRETISM [that is, blending together of religious beliefs], whose aim WAS A UNIVERSAL RELIGION, all contributed to gain adherents for Simon" (Vol. 1, p. 244).

Simon can be classified among the major group of so-called Christians (and Simon called himself such), called by Harnack the: "decidedly anti-Jewish groups....They advanced much further in the criticism of the Old Testament and perceived the impossibility of saving it [that is, the Old Testament] for the Christian UNIVERSAL RELIGION. They rather connected this [universal] religion with the cultus-wisdom of BABYLON and SYRIA" (Vol. 1, p. 246).

With this background, we can understand why Peter so strongly rebuked Simon for his Babylonian ideas. Peter prophesied that this was the man who was to be the "gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity" to the True Church. Simon's attitude was corrupt in the extreme!

The Bible shows he had been working through demons. And yet, he finally called himself a "Christian." Dr. McGiffert, speaking of Simon Magus, says: "His effort to rival and surpass Jesus very likely began after his contact with the Christians that Luke records. His religious system was apparently a SYNCRETISM of Jewish and Oriental elements" (*Hasting's Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, Vol. 2, p. 497).

### **Simon Magus and Gnosticism**

To read all the material that the writers of the second to the fourth centuries wrote about this man and his followers, would literally take days. He has been called by many of

them "the father of HERESY," and, apart from the Bible, the amount of literature devoted to him and his activities, shows he lived up to that title. Some of the following authorities to be brought forth were eyewitnesses of many of the things mentioned, and they were writing to others who were likewise eyewitnesses. Much of the testimony to be mentioned is conclusive and cannot be set aside.

With this evidence of Simon's activities after his rejection by Peter, we will clearly be able to see why Luke thought it most important to tell the real condition of this man, proving that he was in actuality NEVER an apostle of the Messiah. In this regard, notice the comment of *Hasting's Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, Vol. 2, p. 496: "But it need NOT be supposed that when Simon broke with the Christians HE RENOUNCED ALL HE HAD LEARNED. It is more probable that he carried some of the Christian ideas with him, and that he wove these into a system of his own. This system did contain some of the later germs of Gnosticism. Thus he became a leader of a retro-grade sect, perhaps nominally Christian, and certainly using some of the Christian terminology but in reality anti-Christian and exalting Simon himself to the central position which Christianity was giving to Jesus Christ" (*Ibid*).

Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul or France, wrote that Simon Magus was "the FATHER OF GNOSTICISM" -- see the Introduction to *Work Against Heresies*. Adding to this, author Jacques LaCarriere elaborates --

...in its beginnings, in the first centuries when Christianity itself was fighting for its survival and seeking its own path, *Gnosticism could still create the illusion that it was a Christian doctrine*. It could do so on two essential counts: **first**, because of its content, since *it borrowed a number of elements from the teaching of the apostles and the texts of the Gospels*; **second**, in its form, for in the early days it was preached by men who, LIKE THE APOSTLES, travelled the highroads of Samaria, Palestine, Syria and Anatolia, and, in many places, *came into direct confrontation with the disciples of Jesus*.

The most ancient of these wandering GNOSTIC PROPHETS is known to history as SIMON MAGUS (*The Gnostics*. E.P. Dutton, NY: 1977. P. 44).

A description of Gnosticism, found in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, shows how remarkably it conforms to the practices of modern Roman Catholicism -- notice!

These little Gnostic sects and groups ALL lived in the conviction that they possessed a secret and *mysterious knowledge*, in *no way accessible to those outside*, and not based on reflection, on scientific inquiry and proof,

but on *revelation*. It was derived directly from the times of primitive Christianity; from the Saviour himself and his disciples and friends, with whom they *claimed to be connected by a secret tradition*, or else from later prophets, of whom many sects boasted. It was laid down in *wonderful mystic writings*, which were in the possession of the various circles (Liechtenhahn, *Die Offenbarung im Gnosticismus*).

In short, Gnosticism, in all its various sections, its form and its character, *falls under the great category of mystic religions*, which were so *characteristic of the religious life of decadent antiquity*. All alike boast a MYSTIC REVELATION and a DEEPLY-VEILED WISDOM. As in many mystic religions, so in Gnosticism, the ultimate object is **individual salvation**, the assurance of a **fortunate destiny for the soul after death**....And as in all mystical religions, so here too, HOLY RITES and FORMULAS, ACTS OF INITIATION AND CONSECRATION, all those things which we call **SACRAMENTS**, play a very prominent part. The Gnostic religion is full of such sacraments. Indeed, sacred formulas, NAMES AND SYMBOLS are of the *highest importance* among the Gnostic sects (1943 edition. Vol. 10, p. 453).

The *Encyclopedia* goes on to show that early Christianity and Gnosticism had a *magnetic attraction* for each other:

...the essential part of most of the conceptions of what we call Gnosticism was already in existence and *fully developed before the rise of Christianity*. But the fundamental ideas of *Gnosticism* and of *early Christianity* had a kind of MAGNETIC ATTRACTION for each other. What drew these two forces together was the energy exerted by the *universal idea of salvation in both systems*. **Christian Gnosticism** actually introduced only one new figure into the already existing Gnostic theories, namely that of the historical Saviour Jesus Christ....Above all the Gnostics represented and developed the distinctly ANTI-JEWISH tendency in Christianity....In approximately all the Gnostic systems the doctrine of the seven world-creating spirits is given an *anti-Jewish tendency*, the god of the Jews and of the Old Testament appearing as the highest of the seven (1943 edition. Vol. 10, p. 454).

The importance of sacraments and mystical ideas, such as we find in the Catholic Church, have their source in the Gnosticism of the first few centuries of our era:

The Gnostic religion also anticipated other tendencies. As we have seen, it is above all things A RELIGION OF SACRAMENTS AND MYSTERIES.

Through its *syncretic origin* Gnosticism introduced for the first time **into Christianity** a whole mass of sacramental, mystical ideas, which had hitherto existed in it only in its earliest phases. Gnosticism was also THE PIONEER OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH in the strong emphasis laid on the idea of *salvation in religion*.

Finally, it was *Gnosticism* which gave the most decided impulse to the *consolidation of the Christian Church* as a church. Gnosticism itself is a free, natural-growing religion, the religion of isolated minds....Its adherents feel themselves to be the isolated, the few, the free and the enlightened, as opposed to the sluggish and inert masses of mankind degraded in matter, or *the initiated as opposed to the uninitiated*....This freely-growing Gnostic religiosity aroused in the Church an **increasingly strong movement towards unity and a firm and inelastic organization, towards authority and tradition**. An **organized hierarchy, a definitive canon of the holy scriptures, a confession of faith** and a rule of faith, and **unbending doctrinal discipline**, these were the means employed. A part was also played in this movement by a free theology which arose within the Church itself, a kind of Gnosticism which aimed at holding fast whatever was good in the Gnostic movement, and obtaining its recognition within the limits of the Church (Clement of Alexandria, Origen). -- *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1943 edition. Vol. 10, p. 454).

The *dualistic element* found in Gnosticism is also prevalent in the Catholic Church. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* explains --

The conception of a *resurrection of the body, of a further existence for the body after death*, was unattainable by almost all of the Gnostics, with the possible exception of a few Gnostic sects dominated by Judaeo-Christian tendencies. With the dualistic philosophy is further connected an attitude of **absolute indifference** towards this lower and material world, and **the practice of asceticism**. *Marriage and sexual propagation are considered either as absolute evil or as altogether worthless, and carnal pleasure is frequently looked upon as forbidden*. Then again asceticism sometimes changes into wild libertinism. Here again *Gnosticism has exercised an influence on the development of the [Catholic] Church* by way of contrast and opposition....It was just at this point, too, that *Gnosticism started a development which was FOLLOWED LATER BY THE CATHOLIC CHURCH*. In spite of the rejection of the ascetic attitude of the Gnostics, as a blasphemy against the Creator, a part of this ascetic principle became at a later date **DOMINANT THROUGHOUT ALL CHRISTENDOM** [read, Catholic

Church]. And it is interesting to observe how, e.g., St. Augustine, though desperately combating the DUALISM of the Manichaeans, yet afterwards **introduced a number of dualistic ideas into Christianity**, which are distinguishable from those of Manichaeism only by a *very keen eye*, and even then *with difficulty* (1943 edition. Vol. 10, p. 454).

S. Gusten Olson, in ***The Apostasy of the Lost Century***, adds the following: "Gnostic DUALISM nevertheless made such heresies [as Simon Magus] APPEAR TO BE CHRISTIAN. As the author of *The Rome of the Early Church*, on page 36, noted: '...when the great tide of these Eastern beliefs encountered the pure stream of the Gospel, it MUDDIED THOSE WATERS with this distorted conception of life. *Christianity has never recovered...*' (Nordica SF Ltd. England. 1986, p. 101).

Olson goes on to show how the early Church in Rome compromised with its conscience and gave in to the national worship popularized by Simon Magus --

In an age when Christianity, even the Gentile version, was a prohibited religion, it is not surprising that the Church in the Imperial City soon found itself pastored by bishops who *compromised* with their conscience and with the national worship which "**was not held incompatible with foreign cults**" (*The Student's Roman Empire*, Murray, p. 577).

"It is one of the paradoxes of history that the *State-cult of Rome*...proved THE MODEL for the organisation of institutional Christianity..." (*Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome*, Bailey, p. 275).

Bailey explained also that Christianity in its TRADITIONAL FORM was INFLUENCED BY MYSTERY RELIGIONS and contemporary philosophy. The Greek and Latin fathers failed to distinguish between the character of apostolic Christianity and that of the Roman Church in the latter half of the second century (*ibid.*, p. 114).

### **Simon Magus Blends Paganism With Christianity!**

What Simon did was to bring the Babylonian and Greek religious beliefs into a form of Christianity in order to bring about, as Harnack says, a UNIVERSAL [Catholic] religion.

"The amalgam of paganism and Christianity which was characteristic of Gnosticism, and which was especially obvious in the Simonian system, is readily explicable in the teaching of Simon Magus, who, according to the

story in Acts, was brought into intimate contact with Christian teaching without becoming a genuine member" (*Ibid.*, p. 496).

We further find in **Schaff's History of the Church** a reference to this Simon Magus. He says: "The author, or first representative of this baptized HEATHENISM, according to the uniform testimony of Christian antiquity, is Simon Magus, who unquestionably adulterated Christianity with pagan ideas and practices, and gave himself out, in a pantheistic style for an emanation of God" (***Apostolic Christianity***), Vol. 2, p. 566).

Simon only used the name of Christianity to bring about his own desired ends. ***The Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*** says that Simon was "a false Messiah, who practiced magical arts and subsequently attempted, by the aid and with the sanction of Christianity, to set up a rival UNIVERSAL [Catholic] RELIGION" (Vol. 11, p. 514).

Again, what do the histories tell us Simon's doctrines consisted of primarily?

"Two independent traditions profess to preserve the teaching of Simon, the one betraying the influence of Alexandrian allegory, the other of Syrian and Babylonian religion" (***Dictionary of Religion and Ethics***, Vol. 11, p. 516).

It is no wonder that Luke hits hard at the infamy of Simon -- for Simon claimed to be a Christian -- even an apostle -- and yet was preaching Babylonian paganism. HE WAS CALLING PAGANISM BY THE NAME OF CHRISTIANITY!

"Evidently the Simonian heresy always had a Christian tinge. This made it more dangerous to Christians than a gnostic which did not affect any Christian influence. Luke therefore would be anxious to disclose the true circumstances that accounted for the origin of the sect -- circumstances highly discreditable to Simon" (***Hasting's Bible Dictionary***, p. 498).

The reason Luke recorded this encounter with Simon was its far-reaching effects. As Hasting's explains, the important reason was that of "Luke's well-known plan of describing THE FIRST MEETING between Christianity and rival systems" (*Ibid.*, p. 498).

Luke gives in detail the principal character who established the so-called Christian counterpart of the Truth in the apostles' days. This is the reason the apostles in their Church letters many times mention the false system as ALREADY IN EXISTENCE, but fail to describe its origin. They didn't have to. That was already done RIGHT AT THE FIRST by Luke!

## Who History Says This Simon Became!

"When Justin Martyr wrote [152 A.D.] his *Apology*, the sect of the Simonians appears to have been formidable, for he speaks four times of their founder, Simon; and we need not doubt that he identified him with the Simon of the Acts. He states that he was a Samaritan, adding that his birthplace was a village called Gitta; he describes him as a formidable magician, and tells that he came to ROME in the days of Claudius Caesar (45 A.D.) [actually, 42 A.D.], and made such an impression by his magical powers, THAT HE WAS HONORED AS A GOD, a statue being erected to him on the Tiber, between the two bridges, bearing the inscription 'Simoni deo Sancto' (i.e., the holy god Simon)" (*Dictionary of Christian Biography*, Vol. 4, p. 682).

That these things actually happened CANNOT BE DOUBTED! Justin was writing to the Roman people at the time and they could certainly have exposed Justin's credulity if what he said was not so. And, that a statue of Simon was actually erected is definite, for Justin asks the authorities in Rome to destroy it!

There are many writers, who lived in Rome itself, who afterwards repeated Justin's account. Those who want to reject these clear statements have nothing in their favor. Justin is clearly giving us fact!

*Hasting's Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, Vol 2, p. 496, states that there is "very slight evidence on which to reject so precise a statement as Justin makes; a statement he would scarcely have hazarded in an apology addressed to Rome, where every person had the means of ascertaining its accuracy. If he made a mistake, it must have been at once exposed, and other writers would not have frequently repeated the story as they have done."

At the time of Claudius, it was illegal to erect a statue to any man as a god or greatly honored person unless the permission of the Emperor and the Senate had been secured. The statue was still standing in Justin's day (152 A.D.), people were still giving regard to it.

There are many other accounts of Simon's traveling to Rome and becoming one of the great gods to the city and to the people of Rome. There are records which show that Simon "prophesies that Rome will be the scene of his crowning glory, when he will be adored as a god" (*Dictionary of Religion & Ethics*, Vol. 11, p. 522).

## Simon Peter AND Simon Magus in Rome?

Later, about the fourth century, a flood of works came out about Peter encountering Simon Magus in Rome and overthrowing him -- is this true? Did Peter ever spend some time in Rome?

Simon Metaphrastes, who lived around 900 A.D., is quoted as saying "that Peter stayed sometime in Britain; where having preached the word, established churches, ordained bishops, priests, and deacons, in the 12th year of Nero HE RETURNED TO ROME."

William Cave, in his scholarly book on the lives of the twelve apostles, echoes the historian Onuphrius thus --

Onuphrius, a man of great learning and industry in all matters of antiquity...goes away by himself...and...affirms, that he [Peter]...having spent almost the whole reign of Nero in several parts of Europe, RETURNED, in the last of Nero's reign, TO ROME, AND THERE HE DIED...( *The Lives of the Apostles*, Oxford, 1840).

Dean Stanley writes that "the vision that came to St. Peter...(2 Peter 1:14), appeared to St. Peter on this his last visit to Britain....Shortly afterwards Peter RETURNED TO ROME, where he was later executed."

The word "RETURNED" in the above passages implies at least TWO visits to Rome! Can we pinpoint when they were?

The historian Jean Danielou gives us a time-frame for Peter's FIRST visit to Rome -- notice!

The Acts tell us that IN 43, after the death of James, Peter left Jerusalem "for another place" (Acts 12:17). He is lost from sight until 49, when we find him at the council of Jerusalem. No canonical text has anything to say about his missionary activity during this time. But Eusebius writes that he CAME TO ROME, ABOUT 44, at the BEGINNING OF CLAUDIUS' REIGN ( *The Christian Centuries*, p. 28).

In the book *Drama of the Lost Disciples*, however, author George F. Jowett states that "Peter FIRST went to Rome 12 YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF JESUS..." (p. 113). Since Jowett believed the Messiah died in 30 A.D., this places Peter's arrival in Rome in 42 A.D.

Hippolytus, bishop of Pontus, also confirms this early visit to Rome by the apostle Peter:



This Simon [Magus] deceiving many by his sorceries in Samaria was reprov'd by the apostle and was laid under a curse, as it has been written in the Acts. But he [Simon Magus] afterwards abjured the faith and attempted [these practices], and journeying as far as Rome, HE FELL IN WITH THE APOSTLE [PETER], and to him, deceiving many by his sorceries, PETER OFFERED REPEATED OPPOSITION (*Philos*, vi, 15).

In her book ***Sacred and Legendary Art***, author Anna Jameson states: "The magician [Simon Magus], vanquished by a superior power, flung his books into the Dead Sea, broke his wand, and fled to Rome, where he became a *great favorite* of the EMPEROR CLAUDIUS and afterwards of NERO. Peter, bent on counteracting the wicked sorceries of Simon, FOLLOWED HIM TO ROME" (p. 209).

How long did Peter stay in Rome on his first visit? The Latin (Hieronymian) and the Syriac translations of Eusebius' ***Chronicle*** have Peter going to Rome in the second year of Claudius and TO ANTIOCH TWO YEARS LATER. The TWO YEARS mentioned here actually represent the time Peter spent IN ROME on his first visit -- according to tradition and conscientious scholarship.

Following this Peter "stayed sometime in Britain" and, according to Origen (185-254 A.D.) preached in Pontus and other places to the Jews of the Dispersion. The historian Onuphrius, as recorded by William Cave, affirms that Peter "went first to Rome; whence returning to the council of Jerusalem, he thence went to Antioch...and having *spent almost the whole reign of Nero in several parts of Europe*, returned, in the last of Nero's reign, to Rome, and there died..."

Eusebius (circa 324) remarks that Peter "appears to have preached through Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia and Asia, who also finally coming to Rome, was crucified head downwards, at his own request."

When Peter finally returned to Rome in the later part of Nero's reign, he "found the minds of the people strangely bewitched and hardened *against* the embracing of the Christian religion by the subtleties and magic arts of Simon Magus...." (Cave, ***The Lives of the Apostles***). As a result of Peter's campaign against the heresies promulgated by Simon Magus, and the death of Simon Magus in a fall (67 A.D.), Nero (who treated Magus as a favorite) was so enraged that he had Peter cast into prison to await his return to Rome from Greece.

For more evidence regarding Peter's visits to Rome, read our article ***Did the Apostle Peter Ever Visit Rome?***

## Peter Was NOT The First Pope!

THE PRIMACY of the Roman Catholic Church depends upon one fundamental doctrine: the claim that Peter was the first Bishop of Rome who "occupied the episcopal *cathedra* 25 years 2 months 3 days. He was bishop in the time of Tiberius Caesar, Gaius, Tiberius Claudius and Nero" (*The Book of Pontiffs*, translated by Raymond Davis. Liverpool University Press: 1989. P. 1).

The historians tells us that Simon Peter went to Rome at the same time as Simon Magus in order to thwart his evils. This was during the reign of Claudius. After successfully combating the Magus, they tell us, Peter assumed the Roman bishopric and ruled it until the Neronian persecutions of 68 A.D., during which Peter was crucified upside down on Vatican hill. This is the basic story and the writers never shirk in attempting to defend it. They say that this general account is one of the most provable of historical events.

While the bulk of the above is true, many ecclesiastical authors of the second century, Justin Martyr among them, give information completely negating Peter's supposed Roman bishopric. This is admitted by virtually all scholars – except conservative Catholics (*Ency. Biblica*, col. 4554). But, more important than this, the records of the True Church of YEHOVAH God -- the writings of the New Testament -- absolutely refute the Roman Catholic claim.

It is time that the world gets its eyes open to the truth of this matter -- the truth, which is clearly revealed in the Word of YEHOVAH God. The Apostle Peter was NEVER the Bishop of Rome!

### The Bible Teaching

There are eight major New Testament proofs which completely *disprove* the claim that Peter was in Rome *continuously* from the time of Claudius until the time of Nero. These Biblical points speak for themselves and ANY ONE of them is sufficient to prove the ridiculousness of the Catholic claim. Notice what YEHOVAH God tells us! The truth IS conclusive!

**PROOF ONE:** At the end of Paul's Epistle to the Romans he greets no fewer than 28 different individuals, but never mentions Peter once! See Romans 16 -- read the whole chapter!

Remember, Paul greeted these people in 55 or 56 A.D. Why didn't he mention Peter? -- Peter simply wasn't there at that time!

**PROOF TWO:** Some four years after Paul wrote Romans, he was conveyed as a prisoner to Rome in order to stand trial before Caesar. When the Christian community in Rome heard of Paul's arrival, they all went to meet him. "When THE brethren [of Rome] heard of us, they came to meet us" (Acts 28:15).

Again, there is not a single mention of Peter among them. This would have been extraordinary had Peter been in Rome, for Luke always mentions by name important apostles in his narration of Acts. But he says nothing of Peter's meeting with Paul.

Why? Because, once again, Peter was not in Rome at that time!

**PROOF THREE:** When Paul finally arrived at Rome, the first thing he did was to summon "the chief of the Jews together" (Acts 28:17) to whom he "expounded and testified the kingdom of God" (Verse 23).

But what is amazing is that these chief Jewish elders claimed they knew very little even about the basic teachings of the Messiah. All they knew was that "as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against" (Verse 22). Then Paul began to explain to them the basic teachings of the Messiah on the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God. Some believed -- the majority didn't.

Now, what does all this mean? It means that if Peter, who was himself a strongly partisan Jew, had been preaching constantly in Rome for 17 long years before this time, AND WAS STILL THERE -- how could these Jewish leaders have known so little about even the basic truths of Christianity?

This again is clear proof Peter had not been in Rome for quite some time prior to 59 A.D.

**PROOF FOUR:** After the rejection of the Jewish elders, Paul remained in his own hired house for two years. During that time he wrote Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, Philemon, and to the Hebrews. And while Paul mentions others as being in Rome during that period, he nowhere mentions Peter. The obvious reason is -- the apostle to the circumcision wasn't there during these two years (59-61 A.D.)!

**PROOF FIVE:** At the end of Peter's First Epistle we read: "Through Sila, whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written you briefly, encouraging you and giving my witness

that this is God's true grace. Stand firm in it! Your sister congregation IN BABYLON, chosen along with you, sends greetings to you, as does my son Mark" (I Peter 5:12-13, Jewish New Testament).

While Catholics claim this refers to the city of Rome -- as Revelation 17 clearly indicates -- in this instance it is a reference to the *literal* city of Babylon on the Euphrates! In the ***Insight On the Scriptures*** we read --

Available evidence clearly shows that "Babylon" refers to the city on the Euphrates and NOT to Rome, as some have claimed. Having been entrusted with "the good news for those who are circumcised," Peter could be expected to serve in a center of Judaism, such as Babylon. (Ga 2:8, 9) There was a large Jewish population in Babylon. The *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1971, Vol. 15, col. 755), when discussing production of the Babylonian Talmud, refers to Judaism's "great academies of Babylon" during the Common Era. Since Peter wrote to "the temporary residents scattered about in [literal] Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (1Pe 1:1), it logically follows that the source of the letter, "Babylon," was the literal place by that name (International Bible Students Association, Brooklyn, NY: 1988. P. 621).

Not only that, but M'Clintock and Strong's ***Cyclopaedia***, Vol. 8, p. 18 states:

Moreover, as has often been observed, the countries of the persons addressed in the epistle (1,1) are *enumerated in the order in which a person writing from Babylon would naturally arrange them*, beginning with those lying nearest to him, and passing in circuit to those in the west and the south, at the greatest distance from him.

So here, in 65 A.D., we find the apostle Peter in the city of Babylon on the Euphrates -- NOT in Rome!

**PROOF SIX:** In 2 Peter 1:14 Peter writes that "I know that I will soon lay aside this tent of mine, as our Lord Yeshua the Messiah has made clear to me." This is a reference to John 21:18 where the Messiah tells Peter he will die a similar death to the Messiah, that is, crucifixion.

In the ***Historical Memorials of Canterbury***, author Dean Stanley remarks that the vision that came to Peter foretelling his doom, appeared to Peter *on his last visit to Britain*. Shortly afterwards Peter returned to Rome where he was later executed. This places Peter in Britain in 66 A.D.

"There is plenty of evidence to show that Peter visited Britain and Gaul (France) several times during his lifetime, his last visit to Britain taking place shortly before his final arrest and crucifixion in Nero's circus at Rome....Of his visits in Britain we have the corroboration of Eusebius Pamphilis, A.D. 306, whom Simon Metaphrastes quotes as saying: 'St. Peter to have been in Britain as well as in Rome' (George F. Jowett, ***The Drama of the Lost Disciples***, Covenant Publishing Co., London: 1980).

**PROOF SEVEN:** With the expiration of Paul's two year's imprisonment, he was released. But four years later (Autumn 66 A.D.), he was again sent back a prisoner to Rome. This time he had to appear before the throne of Caesar and was sentenced to die. Paul describes these circumstances at length in II Timothy.

In regard to his trial, notice what Paul said in II Timothy 4:16.

"At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men [in Rome] forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."

This means, if we believe the Catholics, that Peter forsook Paul, for they tell us Peter was very much present at Rome during this time! Peter once denied the Messiah, but that was before he was converted. To believe that Peter was in Rome during Paul's trial, is untenable!

**PROOF EIGHT:** The apostle Paul distinctly informs us that Peter was not in Rome in 66 A.D. -- even though Catholics say he was. Paul said: "Only Luke is with me" (II Tim. 4:11).

The truth becomes very plain. Paul wrote TO Rome; he had been IN Rome; and at the end wrote at least six epistles FROM Rome; and not only does he NEVER mention Peter, but at the last moment says: "Only Luke is with me."

Peter, therefore, was never Bishop of Rome for 25 years 2 months and 3 days!

### **Where Was Peter?**

A summary of Peter's life shows *exactly* where he was during the 25 years the Catholics claim he was a bishop and the first pope in Rome.

In 42 A.D., we find Peter being cast into prison at Jerusalem (Acts 12:3, 4).

Following this, Peter travels to Rome where he stays for two year (42-44 A.D.). This is confirmed by Baronius, who writes: "Rufus the Senator received St. Peter into his house on Viminalis Hill, in the year A.D. 44" (***Ecclesiastical Annals***).

According to George F. Jowett, "In the year A.D. 44 a Claudian Edict expelled the Christian leaders from Rome. Many of them sought sanctuary in Britain. Among those who fled to Britain from Rome was Peter" (***The Drama of the Lost Disciples***, p. 158). He was in Britain during the Caradoc-Claudian war of 45-52 A.D.

In 49 A.D., he was again in Jerusalem, this time attending the Jerusalem Council. About 50 A.D., he was in Antioch of Syria where he got into differences with Paul because he wouldn't sit or eat with Gentiles.

In 52 A.D. Peter left Antioch for Asia Minor. During the years 52-56 A.D. he preached the Good News of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. He meets up with his brother Andrew in Sinope on the south shore of the Black Sea.

In 59 A.D. Peter and Mark are in Carthage in North Africa. They part company here and Peter goes on to Britain, while Mark heads for Rome to be with Paul. Peter arrives in Britain during the revolt of Boadicea (60-62 A.D.).

Later in 65 A.D., we find him in the city of Babylon among the Jews (I Pet. 5:13). Remember that Peter was the Apostle to the CIRCUMCISED. Why was he in Babylon? Because history shows that there were as many Jews in the Mesopotamian areas in the Messiah's time as there were in Palestine. It is no wonder we find him in the East. Perhaps this is the reason why scholars say Peter's writings are strongly Aramaic in flavor -- the type of Aramaic spoken in Babylon. Why of course! Peter was used to their eastern dialect.

Peter returns to Britain in 66 A.D. where II Peter is written. In the autumn of this year Paul is arrested and conveyed to Rome where he appears before Nero. In the latter part of the year Peter leaves Britain for Rome.

On January 25, 67 A.D., Paul is beheaded in Rome. In the winter or spring of this year Peter arrives in Rome and has a confrontation with Simon Magus, who dies after a fall.

In May of 67 Peter is arrested and incarcerated in the Mamertine Prison. On February 22, 68 A.D. -- after Nero returns from Greece -- Peter is crucified in Nero's circus.

At the times the Catholics believe Peter was in Rome, the Bible and secular history clearly show he was elsewhere. The evidence is abundant and conclusive. By Paying attention to YEHOVAH's own words, no one need be deceived. Peter was NEVER the Bishop of Rome!

### **The REAL Bishop of Rome!**

If Peter was *never* the bishop of Rome -- who was?

According to George Edmundson, in his work ***The Church in Rome in the 1st Century***:

Jerome writes as follows: "Simon Peter, prince of the apostles, after an episcopate of the church at Antioch and preaching to the dispersion of those of the circumcision, who had believed in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, *in the 2nd year of Claudius goes to Rome to oppose Simon Magus and there for 25 years beheld the sacerdotal chair until the last year of Nero, that is the 14th.*" Now here amidst a CERTAIN CONFUSION...a definite date is given for Peter's *first arrival in Rome*, and, be it noted, it is the date of his escape from Herod Agrippa's persecution and his disappearance from the narrative of the Acts (London: 1913. Pp. 50-51).

Now why does Edmundson refer to "CERTAIN CONFUSION" in Jerome's statement? What we are seeing here is the difficulty early historians had in separating the actions of the apostle Peter and those of Simon Magus. After all, the names are similar -- Peter was called SIMON Peter.

When the lives of the two men are unraveled, the "episcopate" of Peter at Antioch, mentioned by Jerome, is nothing more than the time spent in Antioch BY SIMON MAGUS before he went to Rome in 42 A.D. Other references make this to be 7 years in length. Also, the 25 years Jerome assigns Peter to the "sacerdotal chair" at Rome is the time spent by SIMON MAGUS IN ROME between his arrival in 42 A.D. and his death in 67 A.D.

Notice what ***The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*** has to say -- "The 25 year episcopate of Peter at Rome is evidently due to the statement of Justin Martyr *regarding the labors of Simon Magus at Rome*" (Funk & Wagnall Co. NY and London. 1910).

While the apostle Peter was traversing the Roman Empire, bringing the Good News of the Kingdom of YEHOVAH God to those of the circumcision, Simon Magus was

ensconced in Rome beguiling and deceiving the populace with his Babylonian theology. Simon Magus was the REAL bishop of Rome -- for 25 years, 2 months and 3 days!

### **A "PETER" Was in Rome Two Thousand Years B.C.!**

Who was the first "Peter" of Rome? What were his successors called? The history of ancient religion reveals the plain truth about the original Peter of Rome. The truth about his real successors is now clear to us – but hidden to the world. Here is what history shows us of the ORIGINAL Peter of Rome. The truth is startling!

THE BIBLE records that in the earliest ages, right after the Flood of Noah, men began to rebel against the teachings of YEHOVAH God. They began to build cities, found religions, bring in idolatries. Pagan temples were erected – the Tower of Babel came on the scene. All of these things started within the first two hundred years after the Flood.

### **Pagan Gods Called "Peters"**

Surprising as it may sound, it is a well-known fact among students of ancient religion, that the chief pagan gods worshipped in the early civilizations were generally known by the name PETER. It is also known that the priests of those heathen gods were also called PETERS. That same name in one form or another, was even applied to the pagan TEMPLES consecrated to those gods.

Notice what Bryant, in his work ***Ancient Mythology*** says: "Not only the gods, but the Hierophantae [special priests], in most temples; and those priests in particular, who were occupied in the celebration of mysteries, were styled PATRES" (vol. 1, p. 354).

According to Ronald R. Wlodyga in ***The Ultimate Source of All Super Natural Phenomena*** --

Ancient history reveals that the pagan deities worshipped by the Babylonians and the Greeks were known as PETERS. "Not only the gods but the Hierophantae (special gods), in most temples, and those priests in particular who were occupied in *the celebration of mysteries*, were styled PATRES" (Bryant, *Ancient Mythology*, Vol. 1, p. 354). *Davidson's Hebrew Lexicon* shows that the consonantal word P-T-R (PETER) means "TO INTERPRET."

The priests of the Babylonian and other mystery religions claimed to have the power to INTERPRET THE PAGAN MYSTERIES.



In the Luceii Fragments we find that ancient Romans regarded Neptune, Saturn, Mars and Liber as "gods" of PETER-RAND -- i.e. CHIEF GODS. In the first century Rome was known as "THE CITY OF THE GODS." All the "gods" of paganism were strongly represented there.

When SIMON MAGUS went to Rome he bewitched the inhabitants with his "magical" (demoniac) powers and soon became known as SIMON PETER -- SIMON THE INTERPRETER (of the BABYLONIAN MYSTERIES).

Simon...had taken the name of Jesus Christ and much of the terminology of Christianity and was using these tools to expand his own sphere of influence (Triumph Publishing Co., Altadena, CA. 1981. P. 66).

This is significant! The word PATRE is the same as PATOR or PETER in meaning and pronunciation.

Bryant continues: "PATRE was undoubtedly a religious term . . . the same as PATOR and PATORA."

The ancient pagan gods, the priests who were their ministers, and their sacred sanctuaries -- their temples -- were ALL called PETORS or PETERS (either spelling is acceptable since vowels are fluid in all languages -- especially the Semitic).

### **The Meaning of "Peter"**

What did the word PATOR or PETER really mean to the ancients? Surprisingly enough, the word is in the Bible. When Moses wrote about the Egyptian priests, he shows they were called PETERS or "interpreters" -- interpreters of the ancient Egyptian mysteries.

Notice Genesis 41:8. Davidson shows in his *Hebrew Lexicon* that the consonantal word P-T-R (PETER) signifies "to interpret" or "interpretation" (p. 638; of Brown, Driver, Briggs, p. 837; and *Gesenius*, p. 877 and p. 843). Bryant points out that "the term always related to oracle interpretation" (p. 308).

The pagan priests of the mystery religions were called PATORS or PETERS. They had the power to interpret the heathen mysteries. This is further brought out by Bunson in his *Hieroglyph*, page 545, where he shows that the Egyptians -- as the Bible also indicates -- called their "interpreters" or priests: PETR, that is, PETER.

The term PETER was one of the earliest names for the pagan gods. It lasted as late as Greek and Roman times. But by that time the term also took on a widespread secular

meaning. It came generally to mean "father" or "parent." But this was not its primary meaning at all. Bryant continues: "The word PATER, when used in the religious addresses of the Greeks and Romans, meant NOT, as is supposed, a father or parent; but related to the divine influence of the Deity, called by the people of the East, PATOR" (*Ibid.*, p. 353).

In many ancient religions the father was the chief priest of the family. That is the reason the head of the family became known as PATOR or "father."

The father, because of his priestly position, became known as the ARCHPATOR, or, as it is commonly rendered, PATRIARCH. This is how the term PATOR came to signify, in a secular sense, "a father." But originally, it always meant, "interpreter" -- especially one of the mystery religions.

We have clear evidence showing that the ancient Romans called their chief gods PETERS -- the divine interpreters. The early Roman writer Lucilius, mentions Neptune, Liber, Saturn, Mars, Janus and Quirinus -- all were PATERS. (See the *Lucilii Fragments*.) He did not mean they were "father-gods." He meant they were gods of PETER-rank -- the chief gods.

Lucilius doesn't exhaust the list. In fact, he leaves out JUPITER, the "Father" of the Roman gods. But it was unnecessary to mention him as a "PETER-god." Due to his high rank, the title PETER was actually incorporated as a part of his name. He was called JU-PETER.

Gladstone in his work on the antiquities of Greece, shows that Jupiter and the Greek god ZEUS were one and the same, JU-PETER was the Roman way of saying ZEUS-PETER, the chief god of the Greeks (*Homer and the Homeric Age*, vol. I, p. 287), PETER was the name that came to signify high rank among the gods -- and among their priests.

### **Greeks Used Term "Peter"**

The Romans were not the only ones who called their gods PETERS, the *Classical Manual* reveals that the Greeks used the term PETER (or its variants) as often as did the Romans. For example, Apollo was called PATRIUS and his followers APOLLO PATRIUS (p. 23). Pausanias tells us that Artemis and Bacchus were called PATORA, that is PETER-gods (Books 1, 2). Pindar speaks of Poseidon Petraios. He says the Thessalonians worshipped Neptune under this title (*Pyth.* Ode 4).

In Egypt, the Ammonian priests -- who headed one of the chief pagan oracles of ancient Egypt -- were called Petors, as Bryant also says: "The chief instrument (idol) in their hands was styled PIETAURUM" (*Ibid.*, p. 356).

This idol on many occasions took the form of a pole or upright stake (*Ibid.*, p. 358). The pagan god Artemis is often pictured standing by a stone pillar which is called PATROA or PETER (*Pausanius*, Bk. 1). These pillars, and all the phallic symbols like them, came to be known as PETRAS -- the sacred PETERS. (It is still common among the vulgar to refer to the male member by its original religious name -- PETER.) These phallic Peter-stones can be found all over the ancient world. In fact, there is not a mention of an ancient pagan oracle temple without some notice being given to a PETER emblem -- the sacred stone.

Like the word PATOR -- which came to indicate simply a "father" or "parent" -- the word PETRA came to mean any large stone. But in the earliest times, it conveyed only the original religious meaning.

"The term PETRA came at length to signify any rock or stone and to be in a manner confined to that meaning. But in the first ages it was ALWAYS TAKEN IN A RELIGIOUS SENSE; and related to the shrines of Osiris, or the Sun (Baal), and to other oracles which were supposed to be exhibited" (Bryant, p. 359). In other words, the term PETRA meant the sacred PETER-stone -- a stone usually phallic in design.

### "Petras" in Pagan World

Notice some references to these sacred PETRAS found throughout the pagan world.

At the temple of Delphi in Greece, the chief object in the ritual was the PETRA (*Pausanius*, Bk. 10). At the Acropolis in Athens, Euripides tells us, the niches which held the idols were called the PETRAE (verse 935). It is well-known that even the sacred book which was used in the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries, was entitled "Book PETROMA," PETER-ROMA -- PETER'S BOOK (see *Potter's Antiquities*, vol. 1, p. 356).

In Alexander Hislop's pioneering work on the Babylonian Mystery Religions and the Catholic Church, we find further details --

In the Eleusinian Mysteries at Athens, when the candidates for initiation were instructed in the secret doctrine of Paganism, the explanation of that doctrine was read to them out of a book called by ordinary writers the "BOOK PETROMA;" that is, as we are told, a book formed of *stone*. But this

is evidently just a play upon words, according to the usual spirit of Paganism, intended to amuse the vulgar. The nature of the case, and the history of *the mysteries*, alike show that this book could be none other than the "BOOK PET-ROMA;" that is, the "BOOK OF THE GRAND INTERPRETER," in other words, of HERMES TRISMEGISTUS, the great "INTERPRETER OF THE GODS." In Egypt, from which Athens derived its religion, the books of Hermes were regarded as the divine fountain of all true knowledge of THE MYSTERIES. In Egypt, therefore, Hermes was looked up to in this very character of GRAND INTERPRETER, or "PETER-ROMA" (*The Two Babylons*. Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, NJ. 1959. Pp. 208-209).

Remember that the pagan temples were also called after the PETERS. The temple at Elis in Greece was called PETRON (*Lycophron*, verse 159). Pytho at Delphi was called PETRAessa (*Olymp*. Ode 6). The oracle temple dedicated to Apollo in Asia Minor was called the PATARA and the oracle there was called PATAREus ("Eus" means "person who, one") -- (*Lempriere's Classical Dictionary*, p. 438).

Also PATRAE -- an ancient town where DIANA had a temple (p. 438), and the oracle in Achaia was called PATRA (Jones, *Proper Names of the Old Testament*, p. 296).

Examples are too numerous to mention, but this should be enough to show that the name PETER, or its variants, figured very high in every phase of pagan worship. These PETER stones and temples were found all over the ancient world.

"There is in the history of every oracular temple some legend about a stone; some reference to the word PETRA" (Bryant, p. 362).

### **Balaam and the Origin of Ancient PETER-worship**

PETER-worship can be traced directly back to MESOPOTAMIA. It was there that idolatry had its beginning. There is where the Tower of Babel was erected.

It is no wonder that in Mesopotamia we find the first mention of a PETER-temple. In Numbers 23; 22:4-5 we read that the false prophet Balaam was called to prophesy against Israel. Further, in Deuteronomy 23:4, we read that this Balaam had been called from "Pethor of Mesopotamia" -- that is, from the PETER of MESOPOTAMIA.

This Pethor or Peter (either spelling is correct) was the place of an oracle temple. In the dictionary *Proper Names of the Old Testament*, edited by A. Jones, we find that Balaam's PETHOR was the sacred high place "where there was an oracular temple, and hence called PETHOR, and PETHORA, which meant, place of interpretation, or

oracular temple. Here was, no doubt, a college of priests of whom Balaam had been appointed chief PATORA" (p. 296).

Yes, Balaam was the chief PATORA (Peter) of the PETHOR (Peter-temple) of Mesopotamia.

It was customary for each pagan country to have a chief oracle or temple. The PETHOR or PETER in Greece was Delphi, In Egypt it was Ammon. In Asia Minor it was Lycia -- and later Pergamos. Professor Jones tells about the other PETHORS throughout the world. Notice: "These 'high places' were scattered about in many parts. There was a city of 'interpretation' in Acaia, called PATRAE, and another in Lycia, called PATARA, where Apollo had an oracle. PETHOR was in after times celebrated for the worship of Ailat" (*Ibid.*, p. 296).

But Balaam came from PETHOR on the Euphrates -- the oracle of Mesopotamia. He was no less than the CHIEF PATORA (as Jones mentions) of the VERY HOME of idolatry and false religion.

The very meaning of the name "Balaam" shows he considered himself as sitting in the very chair of Nimrod, the beginner of the mystery religions. The name "Balaam" means in Semitic tongues "Conqueror of the People." This was the exact proper name the Greeks used to designate NIMROD. They called him NICOLAUS, which also meant "Conqueror of the People."

In the New Testament we read of people following the doctrines of NICOLAUS (Nimrod). They were called Nicolaitanes. **McClintock and Strong's Encyclopaedia** speaking of them says: "The sect of the Nicolaitanes is described as following the doctrine or teaching of Balaam -- and it appears not improbable that this name is employed symbolically, as NICOLAUS is equivalent in meaning to BALAAM" (vol. 1, p. 621).

Yes, the two names NICOLAUS and BALAAM are exactly the same in meaning -- they both point to NIMROD, the originator of paganism. We also find that when Simon Magus (alias Simon Peter) "Christianized" the religion of NIMROD, John the apostle plainly labels his followers NICOLAITANES and followers of BALAAM. All of the heresies mentioned in the Seven Churches are of only ONE system -- the system of NIMROD, under the leadership of Simon Magus.

The name of Balaam is another name for NIMROD. But, understand this clearly -- the "Balaam" who met Israel on their way out of Egypt was NOT the original Nimrod. He had been killed several hundred years before. This Balaam merely represented Nimrod

as his successor. We are all aware that Joshua, being a successor of Moses, was looked on as sitting in Moses' seat. Even in the Messiah's time the scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' seat of authority (Matt. 23:1-4).

So it was with Balaam. He maintained one of the proper names of Nimrod to signify that he was the legitimate successor of the Arch-Rebel. And to emphasize his authority, Balaam could point to his headquarters as the PETHOR or PETER of Mesopotamia. Therefore, the Moabites in their hatred for Israel called for the chief priest of the pagan world. They ignored the priesthood of their own national gods -- going to the highest authority they knew! Josephus represents this false prophet as "Balaam, who lived by the Euphrates, and was the greatest of the prophets of that time" (*Ant.* IV, 6,2). Balaam was the successor of Nimrod -- the PONTIFEX MAXIMUS of the pagan world. His headquarters was the "PETER on the Euphrates" -- the SAINT PETER'S OF MESOPOTAMIA, the chief oracle of paganism. This is a shocking revelation -- but one which stands the test of the Bible and ancient religious history.

### **PETER-gods Come to Rome**

It is well-known history that in the earliest ages, the center of civilization was in Asia and Mesopotamia. In later times, political power passed to the Greeks and then to the Romans. It is also well-recognized that the religions of Asia, by Greek and Roman times, had also passed to the West. By the first century, the mystery religions of the Babylonians were centered primarily in Rome! By that time, Rome had become the chief city of the world.

Early records mention this transference of pagan religion from Asia right to the city of Rome. The first century book by Virgil, *The Aenid*, in Imperial times became a type of Roman "Bible." It gives the story of one Aeneas who wandered away from Asia right after the Trojan War and settled in Italy.

The main theme of the book concerns the so-called "sacred task" of Aeneas: bringing the pagan gods of Asia to Italy! Virgil spares no words in glorifying Aeneas' journey. He shows how Aeneas brought the Romans ORGANIZED RELIGION -- with all the pagan gods and goddesses necessary for performing it. And most important: Virgil constantly says that these deities were the PATRII of Asia. (See the *Classical Manual*, page 592, for full information confirming this.) These gods and goddesses were the PETER-deities -- the chief deities which were destined to favor Rome and Italy above all other countries.

Asia had been the original home of the PETER-gods. Through Virgil we find them being transported to the doorstep of Rome. And why not? By the first century, Rome was considered "the home of the gods." Prudentius, an ancient Roman himself, says that there wasn't a single pagan deity that did not in the end find its headquarters at Rome.

Notice what he says: "There came to be one single home for all earth-born gods, and you may count as many temples of gods AT ROME as tombs of heroes in all the world" (*Symmachus*, 189 to 197).

It could hardly be clearer! By Imperial times, Rome became the headquarters of pagan religion. It was the chief oracle of the world, the PETER for the earth.

### The Chief Gods of Rome

There were two gods of ancient Rome which were pre-eminently worshipped as PETER-gods. One was JU-PETER (Zeus-Peter). The other, says the *Classical Manual*, was JANUS, called PATER or PETER (see page 389). Sometimes these two gods are confused. But they are to be reckoned as distinct -- relative to Roman paganism of the First Century. The latter god, JANUS-PETER, had some interesting roles to play in the pagan religion at Rome. These roles answer the question: Who was the original Peter of Rome? Notice a brief history and some of the activities of this god.

*Plutarch* in his life of Numa, gives us the identity of JANUS. Originally, according to *Plutarch*, Janus was an ancient prince who reigned in the infancy of the world. He brought men from a rude and savage life to a mild and rational system. HE was the first to build cities and the first to establish government over men. After his death he was deified. There can be no mistaking who this JANUS was! This title was just another of the many names of Nimrod. This ancient prince who was violently killed, was later deified by the pagan religions. Because of his high authority, he was called a PATOR or PETER.

Here are some of the religious activities of which JANUS-PETER was in charge.

It was JANUS-PETER who was pre-eminent in interpreting the times -- especially prophecy. "The past and the future was always present in his mind" (*Classical Manual*, pages 388 and 389). He was pictured as being double-faced. *Plutarch* said this was a symbol of his endeavor to change men from barbarism to civilization -- that is, bring them to the civilization of NIMROD. One of JANUS' roles, after his deification as a god, was the continuation of his sacred task of "civilizing" men.

But let us go a little farther.

## Janus-Peter Had "Keys"

The PETER-god JANUS was to the ancient Romans the "KEEPER OF THE GATES OF HEAVEN AND EARTH." "HE IS REPRESENTED WITH A KEY IN ONE HAND . . . as emblematic of his presiding over GATES and highways."

Alexander Hislop notes that

...before the Christian era, and downwards, there was a "PETER" at Rome, who occupied the highest place in the PAGAN priesthood. The priest who explained THE MYSTERIES to the initiated was sometimes called by a Greek term, the Hierophant; but *in primitive Chaldee*, the real language of the Mysteries, his title, as pronounced without the points, was "PETER" -- i.e., "THE INTERPRETER." As the revealer of that which was hidden, nothing was more natural than that, while opening up the esoteric doctrine of the Mysteries, he should be *decorated with the KEYS of the two divinities* whose mysteries he unfolded. Thus we may see how **the KEYS of Janus and Cybele** would come to be known as THE KEYS OF PETER, the "INTERPRETER" of the Mysteries. Yea, we have the strongest evidence that, in countries far removed from one another, and far distant from Rome, these KEYS were known *by initiated pagans* not merely as the "KEYS OF PETER," BUT AS **THE KEYS OF A PETER IDENTIFIED WITH ROME** (*The Two Babylons*, p. 208).

How shocking! The pagan Romans were calling their JANUS a PETER hundreds of years before the birth of the Apostle Peter. It was this JANUS who was in charge of the "pearly gates"! The very word JANUS means "gates," that is, the one in charge of the GATES.

The *Classical Manual* continues: "Ovid speaks of him [Janus] in the first book of his *Fasti*; his face is double to denote his equal empire over the heavens and the earth -- [does not the Pope claim the same power today?] -- and that all things are open and shut to him AT HIS WILL -- [he was infallible and answered to no one for his actions, so too the Pope] -- that he governs the universe [Catholicism], and alone possesses the power of making the world revolve on its axis; THAT HE PRESIDES OVER THE GATES OF HEAVEN."

Hislop further shows how the "KEYS of the kingdom of heaven" -- given to the apostle Peter -- were appropriated by the Papacy to validate their claim of being successors to Peter --



It has always been a matter of amazement to candid historical inquirers how it could ever have come to pass that the NAME OF PETER should be ASSOCIATED WITH ROME in the way in which it is found from the Fourth Century downwards -- how so many in different countries had been led to believe that *Peter*, who was an "**apostle of the circumcision**," had apostatised from his Divine commission, and become *bishop of a Gentile Church*, and that he should be the spiritual ruler IN ROME....But the book of "PETER-ROMA" accounts for what otherwise is entirely inexplicable. The existence of such a title was too valuable to be overlooked by the PAPACY; and, according to its usual policy, it was sure, if it had the opportunity, to *turn it to the account of its own aggrandisement*. And that opportunity it had. When the POPE came, as he did, into INTIMATE CONNECTION WITH THE PAGAN PRIESTHOOD; when they came at last, as we shall see they did, UNDER HIS CONTROL, what more natural than to seek not only to RECONCILE PAGANISM AND CHRISTIANITY, but to make it appear that the Pagan "PETER-ROMA," with his **KEYS**, meant "PETER OF ROME," and that that "PETER OF ROME" was the very apostle to whom the Lord Jesus Christ gave the "**KEYS** of the kingdom of heaven"?

Continues Hislop:

Hence, from the mere jingle of words, *persons and things essentially different were confounded*; and **Paganism and Christianity jumbled together**, that the towering ambition OF A WICKED PRIEST might be gratified; and so, to the BLINDED CHRISTIANS OF THE APOSTACY, the POPE was the REPRESENTATIVE OF **PETER THE APOSTLE**, while to the INITIATED PAGANS, he was only the representative of **PETER [PETR], the INTERPRETER OF THEIR WELL-KNOWN MYSTERIES** (*The Two Babylons*, pp. 209-210).

The Catholic Church claims Peter gave to it the keys of the gates of heaven and that no one will enter into YEHOVAH's presence unless that church opens the gates. The very word "Cardinal" means "hinge." The Cardinals of the Roman Church are the HINGES upon which the GATE -- the Pope -- is able to turn.

The College of Cardinals is another holdover from Babylon -- notice: "From the Pope downwards, all can be shown to be now *radically Babylonian*. The College of Cardinals, with the Pope at its head, is just the *counterpart* of the Pagan College of Pontiffs, with its 'Pontifex Maximus,' or 'Sovereign Pontiff,' which had existed in Rome from the earliest times, and which is known to have been framed on the model of the grand original Council of Pontiffs at Babylon" (*ibid.*, p. 206).

The *Classical Manual* continues: "the successions of day and night are regulated by his influence; and that the east and the west is at one moment open to his view." It was JANUS-PETER who also controlled the calendar by his priests. The first month of the year was named after him to show his control over the years. So, today, we still have JANU-ary as the first month. The Catholic Church, like the priests of Janus, feels it has this same authority over the calendar today.

### **Mithras -- Another Name for Nimrod**

Finally, it is necessary to notice at least one more name under which Nimrod masqueraded -- the name MITHRAS, the Persian name for Baal, the sun god. This Mithras-worship of Nimrod was popular and was one of the last to plant itself in Rome, but it had a very old theme -- outright PETER-worship. "Mithras was styled by the nations of the East PATOR; his temples were PATRA and PETRA and his festivals PATRICA" (Bryant, vol. 1, p. 370).

Yes, even Nimrod under the name Mithras, the sun-god, was called PETER!!!

Sir James Frazer tells us of this religion of Mithra -- the religion of the pagan PETER -- coming to Rome. Notice it. "Among the gods of eastern origin who in the decline of the ancient world competed against each other for the allegiance of the West was the old Persian deity of MITHRA. The immense popularity of his worship is attested by the monuments illustrative of it which have been found scattered in profusion ALL OVER THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

"In respect both of doctrines and of rites the cult of MITHRA appears to have presented many points of resemblance not only to the religion of the Mother of the Gods but also to Christianity" (*Golden Bough*, St. Martin's ed., vol. 1, p. 471).

What he means is that the Christianity of the third and fourth centuries had already by that time inherited so much from pagan beliefs, that this PETER-religion coming from the East found many similarities with Roman Christianity. The Catholics had already, by this late date, accepted the **pagan festivals** of Christmas, Easter and a host of other rituals and beliefs. Frazer continues: "Taken altogether, the coincidences of the Christian with the heathen festivals are too close and too numerous to be accidental" (*Ibid.*, p. 475).

It was this pagan MITHRAISM which gave the most to "Christianity."

Bryant shows that the chief name of MITHRA in the East was PATOR or PETER -- "his temples were PATRA and PETRA and his festivals PATRICA." Everything connected with this ancient pagan religion can be traced right back to the original PETER -- the original "interpreter of the mysteries" who was none other than NIMROD. This is the same mystery system which the Roman Catholics have absorbed.

### **Sits in "Peter's" Chair**

No wonder the Roman Catholic Church claims to sit in PETER'S CHAIR and that the chief temple of the world is today called SAINT PETER'S. That Church has accepted the practices and symbols of the oldest pagan religion on earth: PETER-worship -- the religion of Nimrod.

This pagan religion was believed and practiced before the Messiah ever told the apostle Peter and the other apostles that they were to have the "keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 16:19). Satan counterfeited YEHOVAH's true religion centuries before the Messiah came!

This was Satan's attempt to smother YEHOVAH's true religion with a counterfeit that to the untrained eye looks genuine. He did this principally through Simon Magus (Pater) who amalgamated all the pagan religions into one UNIVERSAL religion and called the system "Christianity."

The Bible tells us to come completely out of this false religious system masquerading under the name of Christianity. We are to get back to the faith once delivered to the saints. We can thank YEHOVAH God for His goodness in giving to His Church the TRUTH.

### **Magus Promotes ORAL Traditions**

Elevating his personal teachings above the Bible, and preaching a "no-works" doctrine of salvation, Simon Magus soon had a universal, popular following.

Deified by the Romans, he was buried on Vatican Hill. Read how it happened later in this article.

SIMON Magus, just like his Samaritan forefathers, deliberately blended together the teachings of Babylon with Biblical phrases.

One of his main intentions was to appropriate a Christian vocabulary to the Babylonian ceremonial system. In other words, he kept on with his heathenism, but now called his system "Christian" in origin.

To legitimately introduce paganism into the Church he had to explain away many passages in the Old Testament which forbade idolatry and contact with the abominations of the heathen. This he quite cleverly did. His primary method of explaining the Old Testament was to allegorize its teachings.

If this wasn't sufficient to explain it away, he would repudiate it as being of less value than the present will of YEHOVAH God which was supposedly being revealed to him. In fact, he got to the place of doing away altogether with the Old Testament by teaching that its doctrines were meant to enslave people and that its commandments were too grievous to bear. "Irenaeus states that Simon taught, that the Jewish prophecies [the Old Testament] were inspired by the creator angels; therefore, those who had hope in him and Helen NEED NOT ATTEND TO THEM, BUT FREELY DO AS THEY WOULD; for that men should be saved according to his grace, and not by any intrinsic quality of their own, but by the accident of these being ordered by these creator angels WHO HAD MERELY WISHED TO ENSLAVE THOSE WHO HEARD THEM" (*Dict. Of Christian Biography*, vol. 4, p. 683).

How diabolical!

The *Dict. of Religion and Ethics* had this to say about this cardinal doctrine of SIMON PATER. "Simon taught that the precepts of the law and the prophets were inspired by angels [lesser beings] in the desire to reduce men to slavery, but those who believed in him and Helen, since they were delivered from the sinister tyranny of the law, were free to act as they would. For men are saved by grace and not by good works. The antinomianism of the Simonians issued in LIBERTINE conduct and A COMPROMISE WITH HEATHENISM" (vol. 11, p. 518).

These tactics were not new -- they were a Roman counterpart of time-worn Pharisaic tradition! Following the lead of Simon Magus and the Pharisees, false teachers simply rejected parts or the entirety of writings which the Church had already considered Scripture. Others simply perverted the meaning of them.

"The early Catholic theologians," writes S. Gusten Olson, "seemed confident that the Roman Church represented the Christian faith as it was in the beginning. But how did they *justify* their claim?...By which means, then, did the early Catholic bishops maintain that *their* version of Christianity was the original?" (*The Apostasy of the Lost Century*, p. 93).

A Pharisee would light up at the answer!

**Firstly**, they considered that the reliability of the *traditions* of the Church could be equated with the reliability of the *authenticity* of their form of Christianity as being the original. This in turn meant that the *reliability* of the accepted traditions had to be substantiated. This led to the admission that the apostles *alone* could be the bearers of apostolic tradition.

**The next step** in the reasoning of the bishops is where *their logic breaks down*. They then maintained that their traditions derived from that which the apostles received from Christ, not only as transmitted in the apostolic writings, **but also as received ORALLY**. That included traditions which Christ *supposedly* REVEALED AFTER THE RESURRECTION. Hence the **CHURCH** becomes the supposed authority which *expediently DECIDES that which was received from Christ orally!* (*ibid.*, p. 93).

The Church soon accepted that its practices originated from not only written teaching, *but also from traditions of the apostles handed over "in secret"!*

Satan won out again!

### **Simon Honored as Jupiter**

Let's go on:

"But he [Simon] promised that the world should be dissolved, and that those who were his own should be redeemed. And accordingly, HIS PRIESTS, Irenaeus tells us [yes, Simon established a priesthood], led lascivious lives, used magic and incantations, made philtres, HAD FAMILIAR SPIRITS by whose aid they were able to trouble with dreams those whom they would.

"They had IMAGES of Simon and Helen, in the forms respectively of JUPITER and MINERVA" (*Dict. of Christian Biography*, vol. 4, p. 683).

People who had demonistic powers as Simon did, were honoured as gods in the first century -- even sacrifices were offered to them. Does this seem unlikely? Then read Acts 14:11-13. After seeing the great miracles that Paul and Barnabas had done through the holy spirit, Luke says: "When the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury." Then the priest of Jupiter came out to offer them sacrifice.

Paul and Barnabas "rent their clothes" at such action. What would SIMON MAGUS have done? Or rather, what did Simon Magus do? He let the Roman Senate with the approval of the Emperor Claudius deify him as a god and erect a statue to him. And, the people who followed SIMON called him JUPITER -- at the same time calling themselves Christians. The statue that must have been dedicated to Simon was in the likeness of the chief god of the pagan world -- the god that desolated the Holy Place in YEHOVAH's temple -- Jupiter Capitolinus.

The Hebrews honoured and regarded the number seven as recorded in YEHOVAH's law -- that is, kept the seventh day, the seven holy days, etc., -- but Simon and his followers made a distinct change and honoured the number eight instead (i.e. the eighth day -- which becomes the first day of the week). (See *Ante-Nicean Fathers*, vol. 7, p. 379.)

### The Death of Simon Magus

A number of accounts regarding the death of Simon Magus have come down to us today, but only one of them is the most persistent and probable.

One *Bible Dictionary* states that "Hegesippus, who wrote in the 4th Century, describes the contest between Peter and Simon Magus over a kinsman of the emperor [Nero] raised from the dead, and then HOW THE DECEIVER REACHED A TRAGIC END. Because of this, the emperor, *who treated Simon Magus as a favorite*, was so enraged that he had Peter *cast into prison*" (article, "Simon Magus").

What was the "TRAGIC END" Simon Magus came to?

"There are," according to the book *Andrew and Peter, Brothers from Bethsaida*, "TWO conflicting tales of Simon's downfall. A third century writer Hippolytus, states that Simon [Magus] asked to be buried alive in order to demonstrate his power to survive, but that he failed to rise. The *Acts of Peter* relates his dramatic downfall while ATTEMPTING TO FLY OVER THE ROMAN FORUM" (page 75).

In an attempt that parodies the account in Matthew 4 where Satan set the Messiah on the pinnacle of the Temple and told him to throw himself down, Simon Magus,

having asserted that he was himself a god, and could raise the dead, Peter...rebuked his impiety, and challenged him to a trial of skill in the presence of the emperor [actually, the prefect of Rome]. The arts of the magician failed; Peter...restored the youth to life...at length he [Simon Magus] undertook to FLY UP TO HEAVEN in sight of the emperor [prefect!]

and the people; and crowned with a laurel, and supported by MENONS [DEMONS], he **FLUNG HIMSELF FROM A TOWER**, and appeared for a while to float thus in the air, but St. Peter, falling on his knees commanded the menons to let go their hold, and SIMON MAGUS, PRECIPITATED TO THE GROUND, AND WAS DASHED TO PIECES (*Sacred and Legendary Art*, by Anna Jameson. P. 209).

The author of the work called *The Clementines* is more specific regarding Simon Magus' injuries and tells us that "finding Simon Magus there [in Rome], the apostle [Peter] challenged him to give proof of his miraculous or magical powers, whereupon the sorcerer flew up into the air, and Peter brought him down in such haste THAT HIS LEG WAS BROKEN" (Gieseler, vol. i. pp. 206-208).

The *Apostolic Constitutions* state: "...I [Peter] had overcome him [Simon Magus]...I drove him away into Italy. Now, when he was at Rome, he commanded that the people should bring me also *by force* into the theatre, and promised that HE WOULD FLY IN THE AIR, and when all the people were in suspense at this, I prayed by myself" (*Apost. Const.* VII. 9). After this is mentioned the legend of Simon Magus' fall.

In the little church of Francesca Romana, near the Basilica Marentia at the triumphal Arch of Titus, is found a stone in which are seen marks that tradition says were left by Peter when he knelt to pray that Simon Magus might fall to his doom. While this is more than likely not the stone that Peter knelt on, it does show a long-standing tradition that the event actually happened.

According to the book *Peter: Prince of Apostles*, "...Simon [Magus], according to the Latin version [of his fall and death], **dies under the hands of unskillful physicians.**" Keep this in mind.

There is an engraving extant today -- found on a basilica door in Rome -- that shows the dramatic downfall of Simon Magus while *attempting to fly from a tower* erected on a hill overlooking the Forum, before the PREFECT and populace of Rome.

The aftermath of this incident is noted by William Cave --

Such was the end of this miserable and unhappy man (Simon Magus): which no sooner came to the ears of the emperor [Nero], to whom by wicked artifices he [Simon Magus] had endeared himself, but it became an occasion of HASTENING PETER'S RUIN. The emperor probably had been before displeased with Peter, not only upon the account of the general

disagreement and inconformity of his religion, but because he had so strictly pressed temperance and chastity....(*The Lives of the Apostles*).

Peter was ordered arrested by Nero and thrown into the Mamertine Prison to await the return of Nero from Greece. Shortly after Nero's return to Rome, Peter was crucified in Nero's Circus.

We have seen how Simon Magus died after falling from a tower, but what happened to his remains? *Where* was the body buried? The answer to these questions is full of mystery and intrigue!

### The Empty Grave

Around 330 A.D. -- only two decades or so after the Emperor Constantine issued his Edict of Milan (by which he ended the persecution of the infant church) -- the old Roman district known as Vaticanum was covered over by a huge Roman basilica, and has lain hidden beneath St. Peter's for more than sixteen hundred years. Why did Constantine pick the spot that he did for the new basilica -- and why was the high altar centered over a particular spot in an ancient pagan cemetery?

Constantine, in his efforts to bring stability to the empire, set himself the task of blending the pagan religions of Rome with the new and expanding Christianity. What better way to satisfy both the pagan and Christian elements in Roman society than to erect a house of worship OVER THE GRAVE OF SIMON MAGUS -- and to transfer the remains of Peter from their resting place on the Via Appia to the tomb under the basilica? In *The Lives and Deaths of the Holy Apostles* we read that: "His [Peter's] body was removed [from alongside Nero's circus] to the cemetery in the Appian Way, 2 miles from Rome where it rested obscurely **until the reign of Constantine** [who] rebuilt and enlarged the Vatican to the honor of St. Peter" (Dorman Newman, 1685. P. 20).

"Constantine himself," writes John Evangelist Walsh, "though he was at that period more concerned with the plans for his new capital at Constantinople, took a symbolic part in the work, going so far as to carry on his shoulders twelve baskets of earth-fill, one for each of the apostles" (*The Bones of Saint Peter*. Richard Clay (The Chaucer Press) Ltd. Bungay, Suffolk. 1982. P. 15).

Then in the 16th Century, having come into a state of disrepair, the splendid structure was demolished, stone by stone. In its place, even while the work of demolition proceeded, "there slowly arose -- more than a century was needed for completion -- an



even larger and grander monument, the present basilica [of St. Peter's] with its breathtaking proportions and majestic dome" (*ibid.*, p. 16).

Only when necessary to sink foundations for the massive pillars and the enormous walls did the builders of the new basilica interfere with the original ground. The purported grave of the apostle Peter -- deep beneath the high altar -- was scrupulously avoided. The floor of the new basilica's central aisle was raised well above the old one. "Thus," comments Walsh, "while Constantine's church had completely disappeared aboveground, AT NO TIME had there been any wholesale intrusion on the sequestered precincts below. Whatever was buried under the first basilica in the fourth century -- *no actual record had come down to the present* -- must still lie there for the most part undisturbed in the twentieth" (*ibid.*, p.16).

In 1939, following the death of Pope Pius XI, alterations needed for his interment in St. Peter's caused the first extensive change in the area under the central aisle after it had lain undisturbed for centuries. Soon after the pope's burial it was decided that this area should be converted into a subterranean chapel. Working towards the high altar, the excavators found a succession of second- and third-century Roman tombs. Reaching the area under the high altar, they discovered a grave that they believed to be that of the apostle Peter. Writes John Walsh --

...straight down, a simple slab grave was encountered, holding a portion of a skeleton. When the grave proved to be of the fourth century, the bones were removed and the slabs cleared away. Another foot down and the foundations of the wall came into view. They were made of plain brick with a waterproof outer layer, and they rested directly atop another slab grave. To the excavators' delight, this grave proved to be of the FIRST CENTURY (*The Bones of Saint Peter*, p. 53).

Gaining access to the grave, one of the excavators, Engelbert Kirschbaum, "quickly scrambled down into the pit and aimed a flashlight. Because of his nervous excitement and the sudden yellow glare, for a moment his straining eyes swam out of focus. As his vision cleared he found himself peering into an *irregular little chamber*, about four feet on a side with an earthen floor. **IT APPEARED TO BE EMPTY!**" (*ibid.*, p. 54).

Empty! How could this be? The amazing truth can be found in *Bede's Ecclesiastical History!* In the year 656 Pope Vitalian decided the Catholic Church was no longer interested in the remains of the apostles Peter and Paul. The Pope therefore ordered them sent to Oswy -- King of Britain! Here is part of his letter to the British king:

However, we have ordered the blessed gifts of the holy martyrs, that is, **the relics of the blessed apostles, Peter and Paul**, and of the holy martyrs Laurentius, John, and Paul, and Gregory, and Pancratius, to be delivered to the bearers of these our letters, **to be by them delivered to you** (*Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, bk. III, ch. 29).

Could anything be more astounding? The bones of Peter and Paul (termed "relics" in the Pope's letter) sent by the Pope from Rome to Britain! The arrival of the remains in Britain was recorded and the record kept in the archives of Canterbury Cathedral -- still available today!

### **The Red Wall Bones**

This being the case -- how could Pope Paul VI drop the following bombshell on the world in 1968?

In the summer of 1968 it was announced by Pope Paul VI that the skeletal remains of St. Peter had at last been found and satisfactorily identified. The revered bones had been unearthed some time before, he said, from the tangle of ancient structures that lay deep beneath the magnificent high altar of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Paul was careful to explain that his statement rested on long and intensive study by experts, but then he deliberately WENT FURTHER, adding the weight of his own prestige. In light of the archaeological and scientific conclusions, he said, "the relics of St. Peter have been identified in a manner which *WE BELIEVE* convincing...very patient and accurate investigations were made with a result which *WE BELIEVE* positive." Firmly persuaded as he was, he had felt it nothing less than a duty to make "this happy announcement" at the earliest possible moment (*The Bones of Saint Peter*, pp. 1-2).

On the day following the Pope's announcement, the bones were placed in the empty grave claimed to be that of Peter's. Since then, privileged visitors have regularly been allowed to enter the small, silent chamber beneath the high altar of St. Peter's to pay homage to what *they believe* to be the final resting place of Peter's remains. Through a narrow opening in the repository, "the bones" -- encased in several transparent receptacles -- are just visible.

If Peter's remains are now resting somewhere in Britain -- as Bede plainly states -- whose remains were identified by Pope Paul VI as being those of Peter's? As *whose*

remains were placed into the *supposed* grave of the apostle beneath the high altar of St. Peter's? The story gets even more intriguing!

Let's now go back to 1942 and the original excavation of what was believed to be Peter's grave. After Kirschbaum entered the grave and **FOUND IT EMPTY**, "he gradually became aware that the chamber held *an air of disarray*. The rough niche in the red wall, especially, and the heavy sill above it that supported the closure slab, had both suffered *extensive breakage* at their right extremities. It was as if they had been purposely hacked away....With a sigh, Kirschbaum wondered if he was looking at some of the 'unspeakable iniquities' committed by the Saracen horde a thousand years before" (*ibid.*, p. 56).

While what Kirschbaum was seeing could well be the result of Saracen intrusion, it could also have been caused by Pope Vitalian's workers who removed Peter's remains to be sent to Britain!

Continues Walsh --

As the [flash]light continued slowly to search into cracks and crevasses, Kirschbaum spotted another feature he had missed. At the bottom of the niche in the red wall foundations, where they disappeared into the dirt floor, there was a small opening. He inserted an exploratory hand but felt nothing. Then he scraped away some of the dirt. The space was not just an opening, it was a large gap in the structure of the wall itself, shaped like an inverted V, apparently a rise and fall in the foundations. Running his hand over the dirt that almost filled the gap, he felt his fingers brush something hard embedded in the earth. He scraped around the object, then gently pulled it free. Holding it up, he saw that it was *a bone*, about five inches long....*More bones*, deeply embedded, were piled in and around the same spot...workmen were sent to procure some of the special lead-lined boxes that had been prepared for holding any random bones turned up in the digging....

During the next several hours, bone after bone was gingerly passed out, some broken or reduced by decay, many more only fragments, and all were carefully deposited in the boxes...( *The Bones of Saint Peter*, pp. 57-58).

When these bones were later examined, they were found to belong to not one but *several individuals* -- three in fact. Two had probably been in their fifties and the third individual was determined to be a female. Bottom line: **NONE** of these bones could be linked to the apostle Peter. Therefore the grave, assumed to be that of Peter's, was *completely DEVOID* of any bones that could be identified as those of the apostle.

## The Graffiti Wall Bones

But the story doesn't end here! At the time the grave was discovered, and the bones were being removed from the inverted V-shaped space beneath the red wall that crossed the grave, one of the excavators, without the knowledge of the other four, found some bones in the graffiti wall that abutted the red wall and was to one side of the grave. Notice what unfolded --

As the work beneath the body of the basilica brought to light stray parts of skeletons, he [Monsignor Kaas] had made it his personal duty to see that no human bones should, in the confusion of cleaning up, become mixed with the mounds of dirt and debris and be accidentally thrown out. Whenever bones were found, including an occasional skull, he had them placed in special boxes and stored away for reburial.

Walsh continues with the incredible story:

One evening early in 1942, a day or so after the team had first exposed the graffiti wall and peered briefly into the man-made cavity, intending to return later for a close look, Kaas had come to the area on his rounds, along with the foreman. Segoni, flaking off some of the plaster rim for a better view, inspected the cavity with a light. When he reported what appeared to be a NUMBER OF BONES mixed with some debris, Kaas unhesitatingly told him to REMOVE THEM for safekeeping (*ibid.*, p. 79).

Many human bones were found in the cavity, along with shreds of cloth, a few thick threads and two corroded coins. These items were all placed in a wooden box. Kaas NEVER TOLD THE OTHERS of his discovery!

Years later the wooden box, with its contents, was uncovered in a Vatican storeroom and handed over to one Professor Correnti for evaluation. Aside from the bones, he found some dozen small shreds of decaying fabric, colored a washed-out reddish-brown "in which still glinted purplish highlights and gold threads....Led to believe that the graffiti wall cache held a varied mix of individuals, Correnti was mildly surprised when he could find no duplication among the bones spread before him on the table, duplication such as had been quickly evident with the red wall bones" (*ibid.*, p. 106).

As Correnti continued to examine the bones one *very curious factor* leapt right out at him -- every part of the skeleton was represented **EXCEPT FOR THE FEET!** "Only **THE FEET**, from the ankles down, were **ENTIRELY MISSING**. Not a single one of the many small bones to be found in the human foot could be seen on the table" (*The Bones of*

**Saint Peter**, p. 107). How curious! There has been little or no comment from the Catholic Church on this peculiarity of the graffiti wall cache. That these bones may have been lost because of their small size is *no answer* because many bones from the fingers of a similar size **are** present -- showing how much care and devotion was used with these relics.

So WHAT is the answer? WHY are all the bones from the ankles down missing? Because when SIMON MAGUS fell from the tower he smashed his feet so badly that he died "under the hands of unskilful physicians" when they attempted to amputate his feet! These remains, found in the graffiti wall cavity, WERE THOSE OF SIMON MAGUS -- **NOT** the apostle Peter!

Professor Correnti determined that the bones belonged to a man between 60 and 70 years of age, about five feet seven inches tall and of heavy build -- certainly the age range of Simon Magus when he died.

Another interesting fact that came to light was that four of five of the larger bones showed an unnatural staining on their intact extremities. "The color," comments Walsh, "was a dark, uncertain red, in spots tending to reddish-brown, the same as could be seen in the shreds of fabric found in the wooden box. All these bones, it appeared, at some time after dissolution of the flesh, had been TAKEN FROM THE EARTH and WRAPPED IN A PURPLISH, GOLD-THREADED CLOTH" (*ibid.*, p. 107).

As well as the staining, there was soil still adhering to the bones, indicating that the body must first have been buried in the ground. Then, at some later date, the bones had been wrapped in the purple cloth and deposited in the graffiti wall. From WHAT grave had these decayed bones been lifted and WHY were they found in the graffiti wall and not in the grave where they belonged? And WHO was responsible? John Walsh inadvertently answers the last question when he says -- "But why, in the first place, had the bones been moved from the grave to the wall, and **who was responsible? Constantine?**" (*ibid.*, p. 112).

In the spring and summer of 1964 tests were conducted on the bones at the University of Rome. Particles of earth from the central, empty grave, the courtyard in front of the MEMORIAL or TROPAION, and the graffiti wall were broken down chemically into their basic elements then, under a microscope, the mineral and other components were identified and their relative quantities enumerated. "At the conclusion of the study there was **NO DOUBT**: the soil scraped from the bones made a *perfect match* with the soil in the central grave. Both were of a type called sandy marl, *quite different* from the blue clay or yellow sand which occurred generally in Rome, and which overlay much of Vatican Hill" (*ibid.*, p. 115).

In other words, the bones found in the graffiti wall -- **those of SIMON MAGUS** -- were originally lying in the central grave! Simon Magus was the *original* occupant of the empty grave explored by Engelbert Kirschbaum. So HOW did they come to be found in the graffiti wall? WHY were they moved?

As mentioned before, Emperor Constantine, in his efforts to stabilize the empire, decided to MERGE the prevalent PAGAN mystery religions (which he himself actually followed) with that of Christianity; and to keep both parties happy he built his new basilica OVER THE LOCATION OF SIMON MAGUS' GRAVE, centering it under the high altar. Then he MOVED THE REMAINS OF PETER from their resting place on the Appian Way, placed them in a bronze casket which, in turn, was placed in the central grave where Simon Magus lay. To make room for the casket, the remains of Simon Magus were carefully wrapped in the purple cloth and deposited in the cache in the graffiti wall to the side of the grave! Brilliant! The followers of the pagan mystery religions could worship in the basilica confident that their PETER, or INTERPRETER of the mysteries was buried below, while the Christians (who by this time were moving away from "the faith once delivered") could worship there knowing that the remains of the apostle Peter were also buried below!

Peter's remains lay in the grave until Pope Vitalian sent them to King Oswy of Britain in the year 656. By this time the location of Simon Magus' remains was probably forgotten, or the papacy by then believed that the grave was indeed Peter's and that Peter was the founder of the Catholic Church. And so Simon Magus' remains lay hidden in the graffiti wall and the grave remained empty after 656.

### **The Question of the "Tropaion"**

We mentioned earlier that soil samples were taken from the courtyard in front of the "memorial" or "Tropaion" -- what was this structure that was carefully preserved by Constantine under the high altar of St. Peter's, and was attached to the red wall directly above the grave? Built some 60 or 70 years after Pope Anacletus (84-95 A.D.), this Tropaion was mentioned by the Christian historian Eusebius in his work entitled ***Theophania***: "...he [PETER] is honored with a SPLENDID TOMB overlooking the city. To this tomb, *countless crowds* come from all parts of the Roman Empire, AS TO A GREAT SANCTUARY AND TEMPLE OF GOD." Eusebius also mentions that a priest by the name of Gaius saw the memorial around the year 200, and cited him as saying the memorial was *familiar to most people in Rome*.

Emperor Constantine took great care not to disturb this "Tropaion" when he built his basilica over it -- centering the Tropaion (which stood over the grave) directly under the high altar.

But there is something very disturbing about this memorial! "How can the unusual design of the Tropaion, its largely PAGAN DERIVATION, be explained?" laments John Walsh, "And how does it happen that the name of [the apostle] Peter IS NEVER ONCE written out in full among the crowding inscriptions on the graffiti wall, while in its CODED FORM it appears as many as two dozen times?" (*The Bones of Saint Peter*, p. 133).

In an attempt to explain away the PAGAN design of the Tropaion, Walsh comes up with a *theory* that many entertain --

Concerning the Tropaion's design, only one answer will satisfy. The close similarity to PAGAN ARCHITECTURE, and the TOTAL LACK OF ANY CHRISTIAN ELEMENT were no accidents. The form was DELIBERATELY CHOSEN, and therefore could only have been meant as a disguise, a means of hiding the monument's real function....No wandering visitor, passing to view the site, would have had any cause to suspect the presence of the outlawed faith (*ibid.*, p. 133).

Well, I'm afraid this answer doesn't satisfy! The disguise obviously didn't work -- the priest Gaius clearly reported the memorial was familiar to most of the citizens of Rome and Eusebius said that "countless crowds come from all parts of the Roman Empire as to a great sanctuary and temple of God"! Some secret!! Even Walsh, later on in his book, casts doubt on his own conclusion! Notice!

In the discussion so far, based on the theory of a HIDDEN GRAVE, it must be admitted that there *lurks a difficulty*, or an apparent difficulty. If the LOCATION of the grave was always to be kept a *secret*, then WHY did the church erect over it a CONSPICUOUS MONUMENT, THE TROPAION, surrounded by other substantial structures? Even though disguised, all this hardly added to the grave's concealment (*ibid.*, p. 140).

Why indeed! The bottom line is that the true church NEVER erected a monument over the grave in the pagan cemetery on Vatican Hill! It was the site of SIMON MAGUS' burial and the pagan Tropaion erected over the grave was FITTING in every respect! It was a "great sanctuary and temple" of Simon Magus who claimed to be God!

Further proof of this is found in the two NICHES located in the Tropaion -- "a broad upper one with a window-like aperture cut through it, and a lower, narrower one, the two

niches separated by a jutting, table-like shelf" (*ibid.*, p. 69). Walsh asks, "What exact purpose [might] the two niches...have served, especially the upper one with its curious aperture..."? The answer to this is provided by the Greek dramatist Euripides (c. 480-406 B.C.) who tells us that the niches, **which held idols**, were called PETRAE -- once again proving the Tropaion to be dedicated to Simon Magus, the great PETER or OPENER of the mysteries!

When the apostle Peter was crucified in Nero's circus his body was "buried in the Vatican, NEAR THE TRIUMPHAL WAY. Over his grave a small church was soon after erected; which being destroyed by Heliogabalus (A.D. 218-222), his body was removed to the cemetery in the Appian Way, two miles from Rome..." (*The Lives of the Apostles*). His remains remained on the Appian Way until Constantine reinterred them under his newly built basilica. This was the first and only time the remains of the apostle Peter were buried at this spot. This location truly belonged to SIMON MAGUS -- the great PETER or INTERPRETER of the Babylonian Mystery Religion!

### **Catholic Church Accepts SIMON MAGUS' Teachings**

We have the record of history which tells us that Simon's teaching spread like wildfire -- especially in Rome where he was honoured as a god. In fact, after going there he made that city his headquarters. But let us recall that the followers of Simon called themselves TRUE Christians.

Simon steadfastly adhered to this. In fact, it finally became the desired name for his followers to use. The names Simonians and Samaritans began to die out in the 2nd century A.D. Justin tells us that some were still going by the parent name in his day (152 A.D.). But by the time of Origen (220 A.D.), he states that there were hardly 30 people in the world which went by the parent name. Yet Eusebius, who lived about 100 years later, said they were indeed still numerous all over the world.

The fact is, they were divorcing themselves from the use of the name SIMON or Samaritans because by the fourth century their names were beginning to have an odious connotation to them. Nonetheless the Simonians were very much around -- this time with the name of "Christian." And we have the exact testimony of Eusebius himself (325 A.D.) that these people were flocking into the Catholic Church.

Notice what Eusebius says, after stating that Simon Magus in the days of the apostles received baptism and feigned Christian belief: "And what is more surprising, the same thing IS DONE EVEN TO THIS DAY by those who follow HIS most impure heresy. For they, after the manner of their forefather, SLIPPING INTO THE CHURCH, like a



pestilential and leprous disease GREATLY AFFLICT THOSE [a great number of people] into whom they are able to infuse the deadly and terrible poison concealed in themselves" (*Eccl. Hist.*, II, ch. I, sect. 12).

This is amazing testimony, for Eusebius is telling us that these people were now "Christians" and that they were corrupting the entire church as a pestilential disease which hits the whole body. Eusebius later maintains that the chief troublemakers were being expelled from the Catholic Church. But how could they expel all of them? Almost the whole church by this time was affected.

It is not to be supposed that all of the early heretical sects were direct branches of the Simon Magus religion. By the end of the first century there were at least 50 minor sects. The Simon Magus group represented several of these sects, but not all of them. The truth is, the Simonians, whose headquarters were at Rome, finally absorbed ALL these minor sects by the fifth century.

### **Simonism IS Catholicism**

It is also true that even some of the Catholics (in Eusebius' time) were unwilling to go all the way and accept the SIMON MAGUS doctrines of IMAGES, PICTURES, INCANTATIONS, etc., but within another hundred years, history shows the bars were let down completely.

But in Eusebius' day, he even balked at their bringing outright images into the churches and worshipping them. Notice what he finally says of these "Christians" of SIMON: "Simon was the author of all heresy. From his time down to the present those who have followed his heresy have FEIGNED the sober philosophy of the Christians, which is celebrated among all on account of its purity of life. But they nevertheless have embraced again the superstitions of idols, which they seemed [ostentatiously] to have renounced; and they fall down before pictures and images of Simon himself and of the above-mentioned Helena who was with him [that is, the images of JUPITER and MINERVA -- the Catholics do exactly this today]; and they venture to worship them with incense and sacrifices and libations" (*Eccl. Hist.* II, 13, 6).

What clear and revealing statements! Eusebius is not talking about what he considers distinct heretics outside the Catholic Church. He is talking about the MAJOR group IN THAT CHURCH which was continually adding more and more on a large scale. He attributes these evils to the "Christians" who followed SIMON MAGUS. They were so active in his day INSIDE THE CHURCH as to give him grave concern.

But what happened?

Did the few Catholic leaders of the fourth century who abhorred outright IDOLATRY manage to persuade the masses to give it up and turn away from the SIMONIANS (now called Christians) who were the cause of it all?

The answer from history is NO!

The Simonian "Christians" won out. Imagery, idolatry and paganism – became the Universal Church just as planned in the very beginning by SIMON MAGUS

-- or by the Devil who possessed him.

Can we now understand why YEHOVAH God, through Luke, devotes a whole section of Acts to warn us of this man's origin. He was NEVER a part of the Church of YEHOVAH God, NEVER!! But he, and his followers -- from clear history -- have succeeded in bringing in their UNIVERSAL religion -- a pagan blend, called "Christian"!

### **Magus Counterfeit Marked Throughout New Testament**

WHILE the book of Acts gives us the KEY which shows the beginnings of the false religious system under Simon Magus, it does not describe its activities in any great detail. The Acts, however, performs its purpose in exposing who started the whole mess. YEHOVAH leaves it to the epistles, Revelation, and also the Gospel of John to describe the heresy IN DETAIL. We are certainly NOT left in doubt concerning its abominable teachings.

There is hardly an epistle that does not mention the religion of Simon Magus. Even the scholars who have studied Church History have clearly seen that almost ALL of the references in the New Testament epistles exposing the errors in the first age of the Church are directed exclusively to Simon Magus, or his immediate followers. **Schaff's History of the Church** says the following about Simon Magus and his doctrines: "Plain traces of this error appear in the later epistles of Paul (to the Colossians, to Timothy, and to Titus), the second epistle of Peter, the first two epistles of John, the epistle of Jude, and the messages of the Apocalypse to the seven Churches."

"This heresy, in the second century, spread over the whole church, east and west, in the various schools of Gnosticism" (**Apostolic Christianity**, vol. 2, p. 556).

## **The Gospel of John**

But to single out the one apostle who seems to have made the most deliberate and planned attack on the false Christianity of Simon Magus -- we must look to John. Take his Gospel for instance. While he records a history of the Messiah's ministry, he has an entirely different approach to the subject than the other three.

John wrote late. Times had changed. John knew that the teachings of the Messiah were being corrupted by a well-known plot to destroy the TRUTH. To understand John's approach to his Gospel we must be aware of his endeavour to expose this false system which had arisen and was gaining momentum.

Notice how John constantly hits at the necessity of keeping the commandments of YEHOVAH God. Why? Because the false system was preaching LIBERTINE doctrines.

Notice also John's particular geographical settings for his Gospel. He was the one who mentions the Messiah's meeting with the woman of Samaria. John is clearly striking home at something in this Samaritan incident that the Church of his time NEEDED to know.

All the other Gospels mention SAMARIA about five times, and even then only casually or in order to give a simple geographical indication. But, when we get to John, writing years after the others, he devotes more space to matters in SAMARIA than is done in all the rest of the New Testament put together. He had a definite and precise REASON for doing so.

John is noted for his plan of "tying up" or "capping off" the Gospel accounts of the Messiah so as to give the Church a well-rounded Gospel -- bringing in the extra points which were necessary for our knowing.

Also, John's epistles are jam-packed with specific information regarding the conspiracy to overthrow the Truth. But yet, none of these works of John mentioned above represent his LAST efforts to warn the Church of that conspiracy which was very much present. John's last witness to YEHOVAH's Church before his death was the book of Revelation.

The Messiah gave his last written message of WARNING of this system through John in Revelation! He tells us specifically the VERY NAMES OF THE SYSTEM TO WATCH in a remarkable and hidden way. Hidden, and yet SO PLAIN once the KEYS are understood. YEHOVAH God certainly does NOT leave His Church in the dark.

## **The Book of Revelation**

This book is perhaps the most important towards our study of SIMON MAGUS' Christianity. Why? Three clear-cut reasons --

**1)** The book of Acts gives us the PAST history of the Church. It tells us about Simon Magus who started the false system. Without the book of Acts identifying the MAN behind it all, the activities of that false system as recorded in the epistles becomes obscured and in some cases unintelligible.

So, the book of Acts is vitally important!!

**2)** The epistles then come on the scene, describing the false system. With the epistles, the incident of SIMON MAGUS in Acts represents dynamite!!

Each section of Scripture is designed to fulfill specific duties. It is when we understand those duties that the Bible really makes sense.

**3)** Now to the all-important book of Revelation. While Acts describes the beginning of the false system; the epistles nail down its doctrines and describe its activities; the Book of Revelation next comes to the foreground showing the false system's PROPHETIC HISTORY THROUGH ALL ERAS OF THE CHURCH. We must remember that Revelation intends to show us "things which shall be hereafter." This is its duty -- and it marvelously performs what it was intended to do.

### **The Seven Churches of Revelation**

This section of Revelation gives a big KEY. It describes a brief prophetic history of the Church until the coming of the Messiah. But also -- and this is important -- it continually shows the false system with which the TRUE Church would come in contact. Though different names are used to describe the corrupters of the Truth, careful study shows the Messiah is referring to ONE general false system -- perhaps with ramifications, but nevertheless ONE system which will counter the True Church in its entire history.

And in regard to this, the Messiah tells us in the plainest of words what people it will be, who represent this false system. He tells us it will be SAMARITANS! That is, it will be Samaritans, alias Christians or, plainly, the followers of SIMON MAGUS!

The Messiah gives us double witness of this identification in a most remarkable way. What he tells us in Acts of SIMON MAGUS being the beginning of the diabolical scheme, he reinforces by telling us in Revelation that Simon's followers will make up the false system until the Messiah returns to this earth. Remember that Dr. Schaff, speaking

of Simon Magus, says that "plain traces of this error appear in . . . the messages of the Apocalypse to the seven Churches."

But before seeing these clear references, we must say that the material to follow would have been in the past classified as ABSURD in the extreme, but recent discoveries put a whole new complexion on the matter. Let us see.

### **The Synagogue of Satan**

The Messiah identifies the people behind the false system with several names, but these are simply different names of the same system. Notice this. In two distinct AGES of the Church we read of these people with a distinct description.

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do LIE; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet" (Rev. 3:9).

This is a promise for US today in the Philadelphia Church. We also read of these false people called by this same name afflicting the Christians of the Smyrna church era (Rev. 2:9). The identification is repeated TWICE and both are describing conditions hundreds of years apart. Now the question remains:

WHO ARE INTENDED? The answer is so clear. They are Samaritan-Christians, that is, the followers of SIMON MAGUS the Samaritan!

Look again at this verse ". . . which say they are Jews, and are not, but do LIE. . . ."

If we would take that expression out of its Biblical context and, for example, place it into an ordinary secular work written in the first century, that expression could IDENTIFY only one people -- and especially if a Jew was doing the writing: THE SAMARITANS.

The Samaritans were the only distinct people in the world in the first and second centuries who said they were Jews, and yet were NOT Jews and they knew it. The Samaritans were LIARS!!

Notice what Josephus said at the end of the first century -- just about the time John wrote Revelation. He is speaking of the Samaritan nation: "When the Jews are in adversity they [the Samaritans] deny that they are kin to them, and THEN THEY CONFESS THE TRUTH; but when they perceive that some good fortune hath befallen them, they immediately PRETEND to have commune with them, saying, that they

belong to them, and desire their genealogy from the posterity of Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh" (*Antiquities*, XI, 8, 6).

This is plain history! The Samaritans, if to their advantage, called themselves Jews. But they were LIARS! They knew better. Their own records showed they came from Babylon and adjacent areas. This is exactly what the Old Testament says. They were clearly Gentiles.

Josephus continues about these Samaritans: "And when they see the Jews in prosperity, they PRETEND they are changed and allied to them, and call them kinsmen, as though they were derived from Joseph, and had by that means an original alliance with them; but when they see them falling into a low condition, they say that they are no way related to them, and that the Jews have no right to expect any kindness or marks of KINDRED from them, but they declare that they are sojourners, that come from OTHER countries" (*Antiquities*, IX, 14, 3).

Now this should begin to make sense. At the time of Simon Magus it was clearly an advantage to the Samaritan followers of Simon (and Simon himself) to call themselves JEWS. Why? ALL the prophecies stated that the Messiah and Christianity would come from the Jews. There was no way around this. So Simon went over to the time-honored custom of his Babylonian ancestors and contemporaries of calling themselves Jews WHEN IT WAS TO THEIR ADVANTAGE.

The Jews, however, never had any real association with these Babylonian imposters. Even when the Messiah discussed matters with the Samaritan woman at the well, she acknowledged -- with amazement because the Messiah a Jew, talked with her -- that "the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9).

But even though the Samaritans were Gentiles, they consistently lied about their origin when it was profitable to them.

Notice that the woman at the well carried on the fiction of kinship with the Jews when she said, "Art thou greater than OUR father Jacob, which gave us the well?" (John 4:12). They claimed to be a type of Jew, but they were LIARS.

This is made plain by the Messiah himself when he first sent forth the twelve. He charged them: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5, 6).

Pretty plain, isn't it? The Apostles were to go to the Jews and Israel -- but not to the Gentiles or Samaritans. The Samaritans were plainly Gentiles -- NOT Jews!

With the foregoing in mind, let us now go back to the two identifying scriptures in Revelation. The whole matter becomes so plain when the KEY about Simon Magus and the Samaritan-Christian heresy is realized. "Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan [inspired by Satan himself], which say they are Jews, and are NOT, but do LIE; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet" (Rev. 3:9).

The synagogue of Satan are those "Samaritan-Christians" -- the followers of Simon Magus.

The phrase "which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie" could easily be set off by brackets, for that is the way John intended it. He meant only one people -- the "Christian" Samaritans.

When we now look at the other indications about this heretical system, the Simon Magus (and followers) identification becomes exact. Look, for example, at the Ephesus Church era. Notice the group they had to counter. "And thou hast tried them WHICH SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES, and are NOT, and hast found them LIARS" (Rev. 2:2).

Now, if we let the Bible be our guide in understanding this matter, it shows only one man who heretically sought an APOSTLESHIP and never repented of His desire to have that office -- it was Simon Magus. History shows us that Simon established his own "Christianity" with his own apostles.

And also, notice this important point. Compare the statements about the Samaritans -- "Which say they are JEWS, and are NOT, but do LIE" (Rev. 3:9) -- with our present scripture under discussion "which say they are APOSTLES, and are NOT, and hast found them LIARS" (Rev. 2:2).

The only differences are the words "JEWS" and "APOSTLES." But -- if we get the point at which John is driving -- he is saying that these people were calling themselves JEWISH APOSTLES, but that they were all LIARS.

### **The Prostitute Prophetess -- Simon's Female Counterpart**

It is well-known that the history of Simon and his religion is connected with the old Babylonian idea of the male and female religious principles.

Simon's Helen (alias Semiramis) figured high in his system.

It would seem odd if the book of Revelation didn't mention something of the female side of the false system. However, the Messiah seems to emphasize the male portion of the

system in six of the Church eras -- the genders are all masculine. But, when he comes to the Thyatira era, the Messiah switches remarkably to the female part. Yet, there are not different false systems being discussed, but only the various divisions of the ONE system.

It is when we come to Thyatira that we find the system described under the symbol of a woman -- the woman Jezebel. This analogy was deliberately chosen for many obvious reasons. Reasons so plain that John's first century readers could not help but comprehend what he was talking about.

We must remember that John was writing to seven literal Churches all contemporaneous with one another, and he was using language or symbols with which they were acquainted. We, of course, realize the prophetic meaning of the seven churches, but we know that John also had distinct and pertinent messages to the seven congregations which existed in his day. By keeping this obvious fact in mind, the real truth of what John was talking about is made clear to us today.

First, we notice that John says this "Jezebel" called herself a "prophetess" (Rev. 2:20). There must have been a particular false prophetess which had caused YEHOVAH's servants to commit fornication and to eat things sacrificed to idols. By looking on this "Jezebel" as having been contemporaneous with all the heresies of the other Churches -- and that these heresies were in reality only ONE false system which originated with Simon Magus -- we can then easily see that this "Jezebel" can be equated with the "Female Principle" which Simon introduced into his "Christianity." None other than Simon's Helen -- the reclaimed temple prostitute from Tyre. Helen WAS a prostitute -- what better type of person is there who could so expertly "teach" and "seduce my servants to commit fornication," literally as well as spiritually?

Notice what Stephen Benko has to say about this prostitute Helen, or Helena --

Irenaeus wrote about SIMON, a Gnostic leader who "redeemed from slavery at Tyre, a city in Phoenicia, a certain woman named HELENA. He was in the habit of taking her around with him, declaring that she was the first conception of his mind, the matter of all..." Helena was a prostitute, and from this Irenaeus concluded about SIMON'S SECT that: "the MYSTIC PRIESTS belonging to this sect both lead profligate lives and practice magical arts....They use exorcism and incantations, love potions, too, and charms...." Justin Martyr also mentioned SIMON, who he said "was CONSIDERED A 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." Eusebius quoted this passage by Justin, and then with reference to Irenaeus he ADDED that THE *SECRET RITES* performed by Simon's followers were so evil that they could not be put into writing and could not even be uttered by decent men. On closer examination it appears that the prostitute Simon converted was A SYMBOL OF THE FALLEN SOUL, temporarily imprisoned in the world of senses (the brothel) until liberated to return to its heavenly abode. We can only imagine, however, how this theology found expression in the liturgy of SIMON'S Gnostic SECT, and the nature of those unspeakably bad elements in it mentioned by Eusebius. The service must have had a strong Phoenician-Syrian element to it, that is, it was sexually oriented (**Pagan Rome and the Early Christians**. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis. 1986. Pp. 63-64).

Simon Magus came in contact with a priestess of Tyre who had been a temple prostitute. The Samaritans worshiped SUCCOTH-BENOTH who was the goddess VENUS. Her devotees continually prostituted themselves. It was their religious duty to do so.

Jacques LaCarriere brings in the concept of "the mother of the universe" which eventually developed into "Mary" worship -- notice!

...two features characterize his [Simon Magus] life and his teaching: he travels the roads in the company of a woman called HELEN, a former prostitute whom he found in a brothel in Tyre, and he declares, by turns, THAT HE IS THE SUN, and HELEN THE MOON, that he is ZEUS and she ATHENE, and that HE IS THE SUPREME POWER and she is ENNOIA (SOPHIA), Wisdom descended from the heavens, **THE MOTHER OF THE UNIVERSE**.

And so the Father and Mother of the universe tramp the roads, preach, convert and, as the Acts of the Apostles attest, amaze the crowds by the miracles and the prodigious feats they perform. This takes place exactly seventeen years after the death of Jesus...(The Gnostics. E.P. Dutton, NY:1977. Pp. 45-46).

This woman was overawed by Simon's demonistic power and was persuaded to follow him -- to live with him -- to become the female principle, the necessary counterpart to his claim as being a type of male deity. Relative to this, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 25, p. 126, quoting from Justin states: "And almost all the Samaritans and a few among the other nations, acknowledge and adore him as the first god. And one Helen,

who went about with him at the time, who before had had her stand in a brothel, they say was the First Thought that was brought into being by him."

This is interesting because Justin was himself a Samaritan -- born and reared in the country. He certainly knew his people's native traditions and teachings. What he says agrees exactly with the New Testament revelation of how the Samaritans regarded Simon. They actually called him the "great power of God" (Acts 8:10). It is because of this that they believed him to have creative powers. He himself said he created Helen, his female companion whom he later elevated to a goddess.

"Irenaeus, Theodoret, and Epiphanius agree in identifying Simon with the Supreme God and Helena with ennoia, the first conception of his mind and his agent in creation" (*Dict. of Religion of Ethics*, vol. 11, p. 517).

What blasphemy!! But this is what he taught everywhere he went – and under the guise of Christianity.

### Typically Pagan

There always had to be the Man and Woman divinities in paganism. Or, to make it plain, Nimrod and Semiramis.

Now notice what the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* says about this teaching of Simon which he took to Rome and they accepted: "The original of Simon's Helena is the moon-goddess of Syria and Babylonia. In the *Clementine Recognitions* Helena is always translated 'Luna.' The theory that Simon was accustomed to borrow from paganism IS CORROBORATED by the assertion of the Fathers that he and Helena were worshipped by their sect with the attributes of ZEUS and ATHENE and received the cult-title 'Lord' and 'Lady' (i.e. our Lord and our Lady)" (*ibid.* p. 518).

As stated before, it was Simon's plan to bring about a UNIVERSAL religion under the powerful name of Christianity. Remember that Simon NEVER gave up the Christian name.

His followers were called Christians. In amalgamating the pagan Babylonian religious beliefs with Christianity, he placed himself at the head – the personification of the chief pagan gods of old, and Helena as his companion in creation, the personification of the female deities. The name Helena for his consort fit his plan exceptionally well.

"There existed a wide-spread cult of the moon goddess in Syria and Egypt under the name Helene; she was identified with Aphrodite, Atargatis, and the

Egyptian Isis, who was after represented with Horns to betoken her relation to the moon. One feature of the myth of Helen can be traced to the very ancient connection of the religion of Osiris with Syria. According to legend, Isis spent ten years at a brothel in Tyre during the course of her wanderings in search of the scattered limbs of her husband. The imprisonment of Helen (Simon's Helen) is then only a variant of the many myths relating the degradation of the Queen of Heaven" (*ibid.*).

How important these observations are, for Osiris was clearly Nimrod and Isis was Semiramis. Thus, Simon Magus said that he had been the power that motivated Nimrod and that Helen was Semiramis -- the Queen of Heaven.

Now let us carefully note that Simon brought his "Female Principle" from the City of TYRE. And who was the original Jezebel -- the woman who seduced Israel to worship BAAL? She was the daughter of the king of the Sidonians whose capital city was TYRE. (I Kings 16:31). The original Jezebel was also from TYRE.

And not only that, Helen claimed herself to be the creation of Simon -- that it was Simon who brought her into existence (*Ency. Britannica*, vol. 25, p. 126). She was, in a sense, the daughter of Simon. But, the original Jezebel WAS THE LITERAL DAUGHTER OF THE KING OF TYRE (I Kings 16:31).

### **John's Death Blow**

With all of these things in mind, we can see why John hits hard at the Samaritans in his Gospel, as well as the book of Revelation. He was the only Gospel writer who mentions the incident of the Samaritan woman at the well. He saw it absolutely necessary by his time, for doing so.

Actually, the whole incident at the well is of relative unimportance if it was simply put there to show us that the Messiah could perceive that the woman had had five husbands. But there was MUCH more to it than that. If we will carefully notice what the conversation between this Samaritan woman and the Messiah was, we will see that John is giving the DEATH BLOW to the claims of the "Christian" -- Samaritans of his day -- the anti-Christ system.

Since these false Christians DID NOMINALLY REGARD the Messiah as the (or perhaps better) a founder of the "Christian Church," John tells them what Yeshua informed the Samaritan woman --

1) "Ye worship ye know not what" (John 4:22). The Messiah meant by those words that the Samaritans were NOT worshiping the True God at all. They were worshiping something foreign to the God of the Bible. It was the Devil.

2) "We know what we worship: FOR SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS" (v. 22). We can see why John saw the necessity of explaining what the Messiah really said on this matter. Yeshua said the JEWS would give forth salvation, NOT the Samaritans -- and he was even talking to a Samaritan at the time. John put this here primarily to show that Simon Magus, the Samaritans and his followers, were in COMPLETE error in their grandiose claims.

And to further emphasize the true Messiahship of Yeshua -- who was a Jew -- John records that one whole city even of the Samaritans recognized Yeshua as the Messiah (vs. 39-42). He was showing that some of the people in Simon's own home-ground knew that Yeshua the Messiah and the Jews were responsible for salvation.

John tells us that the woman at the well had FIVE husbands. This is to be taken literally, but isn't it remarkable that the original Babylonian tribes which became the Samaritans were FIVE in number -- and they each brought their false deities with them. Thus, according to the figurative language of the Old Testament, these Samaritans -- who claimed to be worshippers of YEHOVAH -- were in reality, like the woman at the well, committing adultery with FIVE spiritual "husbands."

### **The "Lost" Century**

The years that immediately followed the deaths of the apostles Peter and Paul have rightfully been labeled "The Lost Century" or "The Age of Shadows." For a period of almost fifty years up to the first known writings of the church fathers around 120 A.D., church history is almost a TOTAL BLANK! The church that we finally read about during the second century was in many vital ways *radically different* from the church established by the Messiah and his apostles.

By the end of that century, Christians who ardently "contended for the faith once delivered" -- handed down to them by the immediate followers of the Messiah -- were rapidly becoming a minority. Mosheim, in *The Ecclesiastical History*, tells us that

Christian churches had scarcely been organized when men rose up, who, not being contented with the simplicity and purity of that religion which the Apostles taught, attempted innovations, and *fashioned religion according to their own liking.*

By the closing years of the second century the Roman bishop Victor attempted to "excommunicate" the churches of Asia Minor for refusing to abandon practices handed down to them from the apostles of the Messiah. Professor J.B. Lightfoot, in ***The Christian Ministry***, informs us that

with Victor, the successor of Eleutherus, A NEW ERA begins. Apparently the first Latin prelate who held the metropolitan see of Latin Christianity [?], he was moreover the first Roman Bishop who is known to have had *intimate relations with the imperial court*, and the first also who advanced those claims to UNIVERSAL [CATHOLIC] DOMINION which his successors in later ages have always consistently and often successfully maintained...the close of the second [century] witnessed the *autocratic pretensions of the haughty pope Victor*, the prototype of a Hildebrand or an Innocent (pp. 223-224).

"The harsh action of Victor against the believers in Asia," writes S. Gusten Olson, "can now be seen in the light of his close relations with the Imperial Court. The Latin Christianity which emerges AT VARIANCE WITH THE ORIGINAL FORM can now be understood in relation to the *uncompromising Imperial Policy*" (***The Apostasy of the Last Century***, p. 177).

Olson goes on to say that "by the end of the second century, the conflict between Victor and the Christian leaders in Ephesus and Smyrna revealed a *spirit of apostasy* among the Romans from the direction of the exalted Christ in the Church" (*ibid.*, p. 181).

Soon a new "gospel" began to be preached which praised the Messiah and his virtues but DENIED his all-important message that he would RETURN to this earth and set up the KINGDOM OF YEHOVAH GOD! Asserts Ivor C. Fletcher --

When the Roman or Latin form of Christianity became the *state religion* of the empire under Constantine, men saw less need for the return of Christ and sought to establish their own *ecclesiastical empire*, with ROME, not Jerusalem, as its headquarters.

The "little flock" which constituted the true Church of God were now classified as "heretics" by Constantine's "Christian" empire and true to prophecy (Dan. 12:7, Rev. 12) were forced to flee into the wilderness or die as martyrs for their faith (***The Incredible History of God's True Church***, Triumph Publishing Co. Altadena, CA. 1984. P. 131).

Those of YEHOVAH's people who continued to keep His commandments were now forced to flee for their very lives into remote, wilderness areas of Europe, hopefully beyond the reach of their Catholic persecutors. "The new state religion, A BIZARRE BLEND OF CHRISTIANITY AND PAGANISM, now began to dominate Europe for over **a thousand years**, leaving the true Church in 'a place prepared of God' (Rev. 12:6) -- the remote mountains and valleys of central Europe" (*ibid.*, p. 132).

During this 1,000 year period the Universal (Catholic) Church of SIMON MAGUS conducted a campaign of systematic SLAUGHTER against those who disagreed with the Papacy and the Babylonian rites it espoused. "One thinks immediately," writes Dave Hunt, "of the Inquisitions (Roman, Medieval, and Spanish) which for centuries held Europe in their terrible grip. In his *History of the Inquisition*, Canon Llorente, who was the Secretary to the Inquisition in Madrid from 1790-92 and had access to the archives of all the tribunals, estimated that IN SPAIN ALONE the number of condemned **EXCEEDED 3 MILLION**, with almost **300,000 burned at the stake**" (*A Woman Rides the Beast*. Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR. 1994. P. 79).

Continues Dave Hunt --

Pagan Rome made sport of throwing to the lions, burning and otherwise killing thousands of Christians and not a few Jews. Yet "Christian" Rome *slaughtered* many times that number of both Christians and Jews. Beside those victims of the Inquisition, there were Huguenots, Albigenses, Waldenses, and other Christians who were massacred, tortured, and burned at the stake by the **HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS** simply because they refused to align themselves with the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH and its *corruption and heretical dogmas and practices*. Out of conscience they tried to follow the teachings of Christ and the apostles independent of Rome, and for that crime they were maligned, hunted, imprisoned, tortured, and slain (*ibid.*, p. 81).

When all the numbers are added up, a number of historians have concluded that during the 1,000-year period the Catholic Church dominated Europe and areas of the New World, more than **50 MILLION PEOPLE** died at the hands of the Vatican's inquisitors and representatives -- **50,000,000!!** This makes Adolf Hitler, Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Saddam Hussein and others RANK AMATEURS when it comes to mass murder! The Roman Catholic Church has been the greatest persecutor of both Jews and Christians the world has ever seen, and has martyred far more Christians than even pagan Rome or Islam. She has been exceeded only by Mao and Stalin -- but they hardly claim to be acting in the Messiah's name! No wonder one of the first things the Messiah will set his hand to when he returns to this earth is to DESTROY the vipers nest of apostasy and murder

centered in Rome -- called by the apostle John "**Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth**" (Revelation 17:5).

### Revelation 17 and 18

In Revelation 17 and 18 we read about the final demise of the great whore -- the Babylonian Mystery Religion of Simon Magus -- the Roman Catholic Church! While some misguided individuals claim that "Babylon the Great" is New York City, or Iraq -- or any other number of places! -- Revelation 17 *clearly* identifies **what** "Babylon the Great" is.

Revelation 17 starts out by saying, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who *sits on many waters*" (verse 1). Then, in verse 4 -- "The WOMAN was dressed in purple and scarlet..." Remember, we must allow the Bible to interpret its own symbols, and not try to FORCE upon it our own interpretations or imaginings.

If you move down to verse 18, John tells us that "The WOMAN you saw is the GREAT CITY that rules over the kings of the earth." So, clearly, WOMAN=GREAT CITY!

Going now to verse 3, we read that John "saw a WOMAN [GREAT CITY] sitting on a scarlet beast that...had SEVEN HEADS and ten horns." Once again, letting the Bible interpret its own symbols, "The SEVEN HEADS are SEVEN HILLS on which the woman [great city] sits" (verse 9). What "great city" sits on seven hills? There is only ONE "great city" on this earth that has for millennia been associated with seven hills -- and that is ROME!

In another *clear* reference to Rome and the CATHOLIC CHURCH we read, in verse 6 -- "I saw that the WOMAN [ROME] was DRUNK WITH THE BLOOD OF THE SAINTS, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus." Rome's long history has been marked with the shedding of the blood of those who followed the Messiah. Can anyone doubt that this refers to the CATHOLIC CHURCH? In 1208 Pope Innocent III warred against the Waldenses and Albigenses -- in which **ONE MILLION** perished. During the early years of the Jesuits (1540-1580) **900,000** Christians were destroyed. **ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND (150,000)** were put to death by the Inquisition in thirty years. In the low lands **50,000** persons were hanged, beheaded, burned alive or buried alive for the crime of heresy -- Christianity, in other words! Within 38 years from the Edict of Charles V, **18,000** were executed. The Catholic Church tried to put down the Reformation in Germany and Switzerland. It takes no stretch of the imagination to convince us that verse 6 refers to the Catholic Church!

The historian W.E.H. Lecky says, "The church of Rome has **shed more innocent blood than any other institution that ever existed among mankind**, will be questioned by no Protestant who has a complete knowledge of history." As mentioned earlier, some historians have estimated that the persecuting hands of Rome have been reddened by the blood of **FIFTY MILLION** saints. Can anyone doubt that Revelation 17 refers to the Catholic Church?

Revelation 18 describes the downfall and destruction of the Catholic Church and the city that hosts her blasphemous headquarters. The great deceiver is going to receive her retribution from YEHOVAH God and the Messiah. She was the hold of every foul and unclean bird and the habitation of demons. To the student of history the VATICAN is the headquarters of the rottenest and most corrupt acts in the sordid history of mankind. In Revelation 18:4 YEHOVAH God says "*come out of her...DO NOT partake of her sins.*" There is nothing holy about the "holy Catholic Church." YEHOVAH God is going to pour out his judgment upon her.

"Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her: death, mourning and famine. She will be CONSUMED BY FIRE [just like Sodom and Gomorrah], for mighty is the Lord God who judges her" (Revelation 18:8). The word of YEHOVAH God informs us that the seat of the Roman whore will be consumed by fire. Some have thought that this is merely a figure of speech rather than an actual occurrence. But there is a strong possibility that YEHOVAH God intends to end the Papal power, that has for so long intoxicated the world with the heresies of Simon Magus, in this very way. Notice what Gibbon says in *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire* --

In the opinion of a general conflagration, the faith of the Christian very happily coincided with the tradition of the East, the philosophy of the Stoics, and the analogy of nature; and *even the country*, which, from religious motives, had been chosen for the origin and principal scene of the conflagration, was the best adapted for that purpose by natural and physical causes; **by its deep caverns, beds of sulfur, and numerous volcanoes of which those of Aetna, of Vesuvius, and of Lipari**, exhibit as very imperfect representation (Vol. 1, p. 263, ch. 15).

When a certain Mr. Townsend made his tour of Italy in 1850, he wrote the following:

I behold everywhere -- in Rome, near Rome, and through the whole region from Rome to Naples -- most astounding proof, not merely of the possibility, but the probability, that the whole region of central Italy will one day be destroyed by such a catastrophe (by earthquakes and volcanoes). The soil of Rome is tufa, with a volcanic subterranean action going on. At Naples the



boiling sulfur is to be seen bubbling near the surface of the earth. When I drew a stick along the ground, the sulfurous smoke followed the indentation; and **it would never surprise me to hear of the utter destruction of the southern peninsula of Italy**. The entire country and district is volcanic. It is saturated with beds of sulfur and the substrata of destruction. It seems as certainly prepared for the flames as the wood and coal of the hearth are prepared for the taper which shall kindle the fire to consume them. **The divine hand alone seems to me to hold the element of fire in check** by a miracle as great as that which protected the cities of the plain, till righteous Lot had made his escape to the mountains. (Quoted in part from **Barnes Commentary**, p. 399-400)

"Rejoice over her, O heaven! Rejoice, saints and apostles and prophets! God has judged her ["Babylon the Great" -- Rome and the Catholic Church] for the way she treated you (Revelation 18:20). May YEHOVAH God speed that day!

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