

Purpose: to encourage you to trust and obey the risen Messiah.  
“Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts...”

# 900 Years of Fraud

Written by: Mick Abraham

## Another Chapter in the Pagan Invasion

### *The Areopagites*

The Areopagus was a council of learned individuals who met on Mars Hill in Athens. The “Areopagites” devoted endless hours to thought, philosophy, and ideas; ancient Greece looked to them for right rulings and interpretations. Two of these thinkers are mentioned by name in Acts 17:34; they converted to the Christian faith under the teaching of Paul.

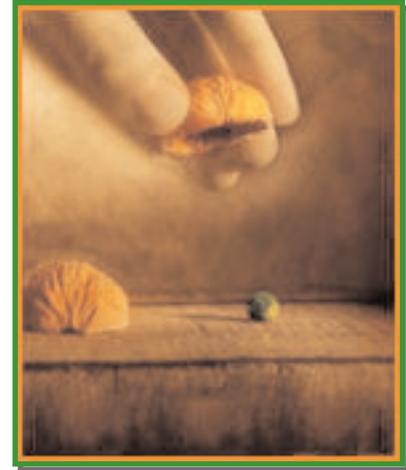
Of these two names, “Dionysius” is the best known Areopagite (even though he appears in only this one verse). A possibly identical Dionysius is revered as the patron saint of France within the Catholic Church, and is sometimes referred to as Saint Denis.

### *The “Dionysian” Manuscripts*

Around 520 A.D., a number of manuscripts surfaced which appeared to date from the first century. The author claimed to be the Dionysius from Acts 17. This claim lent a near instant credibility to the works, approaching the authority of scripture.

The writings frequently mention first century notables such as Paul and John. The author implied that these apostles were his coworkers, and he claimed to present the secret teachings of Paul.

The major works are: *Divine Names*, *Mystical Theology*, *Celestial Hierarchy*, and *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. There are also ten letters which resemble New Testament epistles. These documents have affected the thinking of Catholics, Protestants and even non-Christians. *Celestial Hierarchy* is most influential; writers on the subject of “angels and demons” almost always cite this ancient book.



### *The “Dionysian” Fraud*

Although never in the canon of scripture, the Dionysian manuscripts were nevertheless highly respected for at least 900 years; their influence on Christianity and philosophy is great even now. If all the threads could be followed, Dionysian influences would be found in mysticism, Bible symbolism, Gothic architecture, Bible translation, angelology, and more. Many commentaries were written on the works of Dionysius. Thomas Aquinas (a favorite scholar of the Catholic church) quoted Dionysius hundreds of times in his writings.

The problem is this: none of the works were actually written by the first century convert. These documents are called pseudepigraphs (or false writings). There have been many false writings that claimed authorship by a notable person. However, few have defrauded so many people for so long as have the Pseudo-Dionysian writings.

### *The Fraud Unraveled*

A scholar named Lorenzo Valla lived in the 1,400’s. Valla had previously studied a school of Greek thought called “Neoplatonism”. When Valla read the “Dionysian” works, he recognized that large chunks of Neoplatonic thought had been lifted directly from the pagan Greeks, couched in Biblical terms, and then published as if they were the doctrines of Paul and his star pupil, Dionysius.

Heated arguments ensued for several hundred years, until today almost all scholars acknowledge that these are not first century writings, and were probably written by a Syrian author shortly before they were “discovered”.

By the time the fraud was widely known, elaborate church doctrines and institutions had already been erected on the foundations of “Dionysian thought”. Eventually, Yahweh must straighten out the crooked paths that his people have followed. He’ll have to remove the leaven, but the bread is already half-baked. Nothing is impossible for the creator, of course, but I think we may be surprised to someday learn how wrong we have been.

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### For Further Study...

Most encyclopedias contain an article on this deceitful author. Look under “Pseudo-Dionysius”, or “Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite”. Internet searches for these terms will turn up many references.

If you also look up the subject of angels, you’ll see that Phony-Dionysius is *still* cited as a reliable authority on that subject.

### Angelology & Demonology

Consider this statement: “Scripture teaches that there are nine orders of angels: Angels, Archangels, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Dominations, Thrones, Cherubim and Seraphim.”

One might assume that there is at least one Bible passage which lists and explains these nine angelic categories, but there is no such text. The “celestial hierarchy” is straight out of Phony-Dionysius, who smuggled pagan concepts into the Christian faith.

### Paul and the Principalities

To be sure, all of the nine terms do appear in one part of scripture or another, and many Bible readers do think of “spirit beings” when they read these terms. The question is: do these thoughts result from proper Bible scholarship, or from hundreds of years of brainwashing and false teaching?

The word “principalities” is a case in point; the King James translators used this word in seven Pauline chapters: Romans 8; Ephesians 1, 3, & 6; Colossians 1 & 2; and Titus 3. All of these passages should be examined (in multiple translations and with an open mind) to understand what Paul really means. I suggest that he does not use “principalities” to indicate demonic forces, but rather to indicate powerful *human* forces.

Paul taught Titus to be “subject to principalities” (unlikely advice if they are demons). He told the Ephesians to teach the “principalities and powers” (that’s only necessary if they are people). These same proud people were prophesied against in Psalm 82 and in Jeremiah 13: **“Say unto the king and to the queen, Humble yourselves, sit down; for your principalities shall come down, even the crown of your glory.”**

The underlying Greek word (“ar-khay”, Strong’s #746) is mostly translated as “beginning”—it denotes the starting point. When applied to people, ar-khay starts at the top, and signifies the pinnacle of human power. Paul did not struggle against “normal people”, but against people (and institutions like government) so powerful that they considered themselves to have godlike authority. These are the forces that took Paul’s life; they represented evil in “the heavenlies” (to use an idiom of the day). **“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities (ar-khay), against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”** Ephesians 6:12

### Damage Response

The 900 year fraud continues to twist our thinking even today, but very few people know about the deception or care about it. Yahweh knows, however, and Yahweh cares. Truth is important, and truth will reign. I hope I can correct some of my thinking, so I’ll have less mental upheaval when Yahweh corrects the rest.

**“...all the chief of the priests, and the people, transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of the Lord...”** II Chronicles 36:14

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