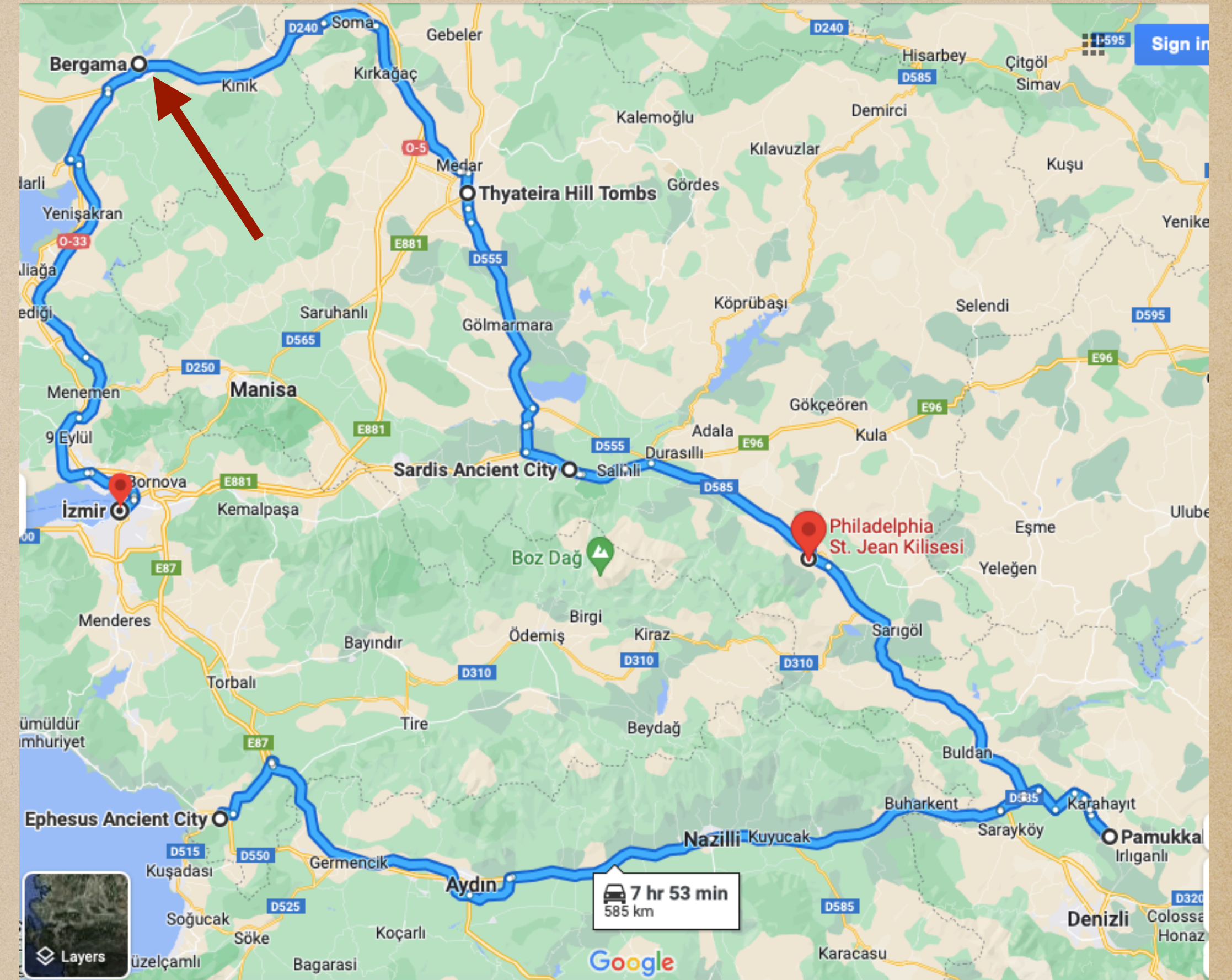


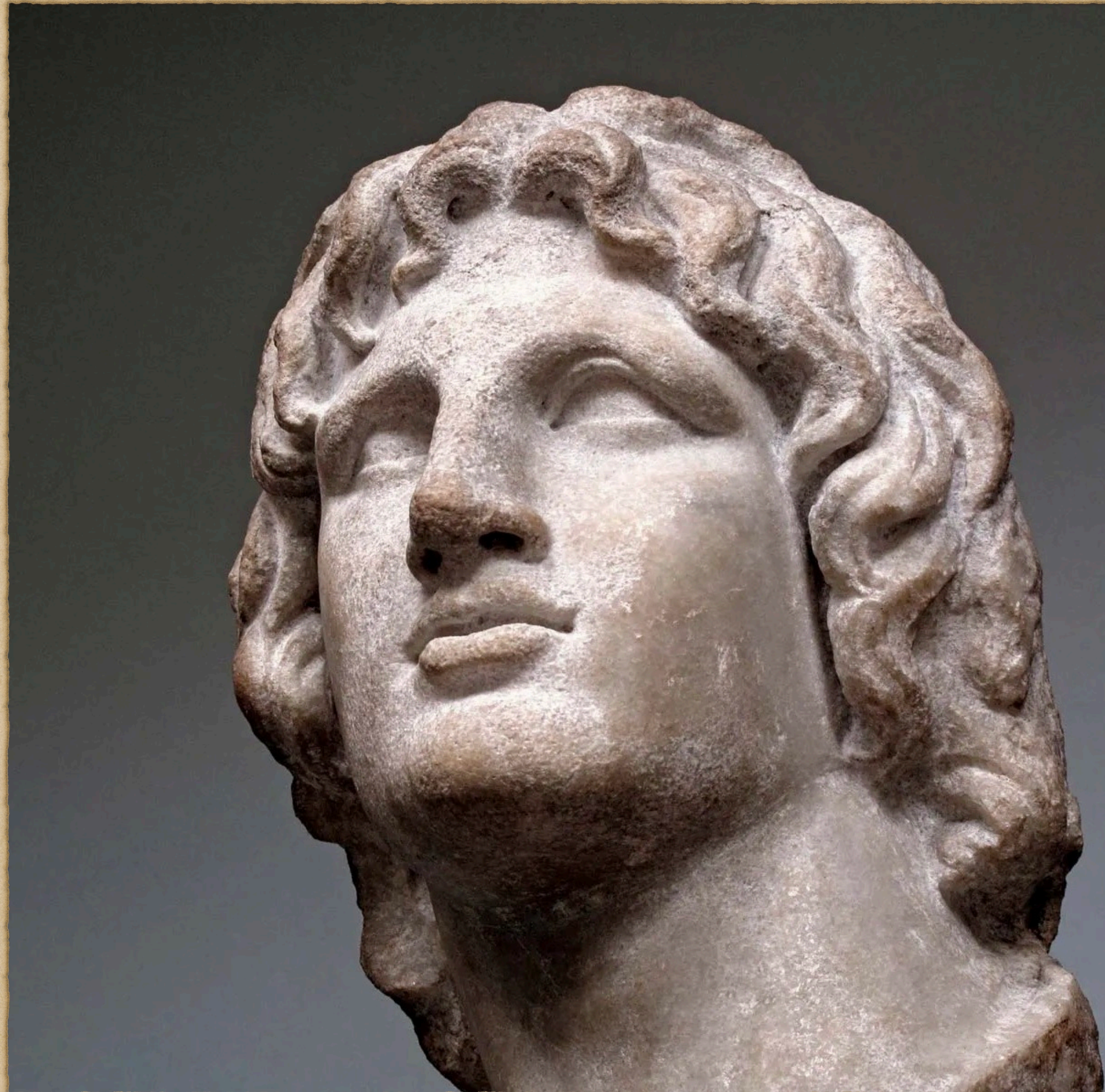
# To the Church in Pergamum

Revelation 2:12-17

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

Revelation 1:10,11





DIE AKROPOLI  
VON  
PERGAMON  
RECONSTRUIRT NACH  
DEN BISHERIGEN AUSGRÄBUN  
GEMÄSS DEN FUNDAMENTEN  
VON F. THIERSCH, FEBR. 1882



# Pergamon History

- ◆ Ancient important city on a hill by a river
- ◆ Alexander's general Lysimachus stored his treasure from spoils of war there and then died— succeeded by eunuch Philetarus
- ◆ Nephew Eumenes I founded Attelid dynasty
- ◆ The great wealth was used to hire the best sculptors, builders and artisans to build one of the most beautiful of Greek cities
- ◆ Attelids gave it to the Romans in 2nd Century BC
- ◆ Was the capital of the province of Asia until the capital was moved to Ephesus

# Pergamon Culture

- ◆ Great wealth was used to hire the best sculptors, builders and artisans to build one of the most beautiful of Greek cities
- ◆ Center of the development and production of parchment. Sheepskin was much more durable than papyrus.
- ◆ Library estimated at 200,000 "books"
- ◆ A center for healing and medicine. Galen was from there.
- ◆ Tremendous cultural pressure against the Christians.

And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: 'The words of him who has the sharp two-edged sword.'

Revelation 2:12



I know where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. Yet you hold fast my name, and you did not deny my faith even in the days of Antipas my faithful witness, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

Revelation 2:13 ESV





# Satan's Throne?

- ◆ Altar of Zeus with frieze showing Olympian Gods defeat of the Titan Gods
- ◆ This was where the worship of the divine emperor had been made the touchstone of civic loyalty under Domitian.
- ◆ Center for worship of Asclepius, demi-god of healing, often portrayed with a serpent on a staff

# Antipas Faithful Martyr

- ◆ Only mentioned here, but later church tradition said he was a bishop and saint to pray to for dental problems
- ◆ Legend also says burned alive in a brazen bull altar
- ◆ Legend his offense was casting out demons
- ◆ Or an ex-disciple of Asclepius (the demi-god of healing) was claiming Jesus Christ was the Great Physician, not Asclepius.
- ◆ Possible that he abandoned the cult of Mithra, where the highest level was called "Antipatre"



But I have a few things against you:  
you have some there who hold the  
teaching of Balaam, who taught  
Balak to put a stumbling block  
before the sons of Israel, so that  
they might eat food sacrificed to  
idols and practice sexual immorality.

Revelation 2:14 ESV



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# Balaam Caused Stumbling

- ◆ Balaam hired by King of Moab to curse Israel.  
Num 22:5-7
- ◆ Angel of the LORD forbids it and he blesses Israel.  
Num. 22:22-35
- ◆ Some of Israel worship Baal of Peor and 24,000 die  
Num. 25:1-9
- ◆ “Behold, these, on Balaam's advice, caused the people of Israel to act treacherously against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and so the plague came among the congregation of the Lord. Num. 31:16



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# Food Sacrificed to Idols

- ◆ 3 things forbidden to Gentiles by Jerusalem Council: 1) food sacrificed to idols 2) things strangled not bled 3) fornication (porneia), in Acts 15.
- ◆ In 1 Corinthians 8, Paul explains it is not because the idol is real, but in their conscience they would be respecting pagan worship and thus be defiled and they would stumble.

# Food Sacrificed to Idols

- ◆ What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 1 Corinthians 10:19-21

# Sexual Immorality or Fornication

- ◆ We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day. We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents... Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. 1 Corinthians 10:8,9,11,12

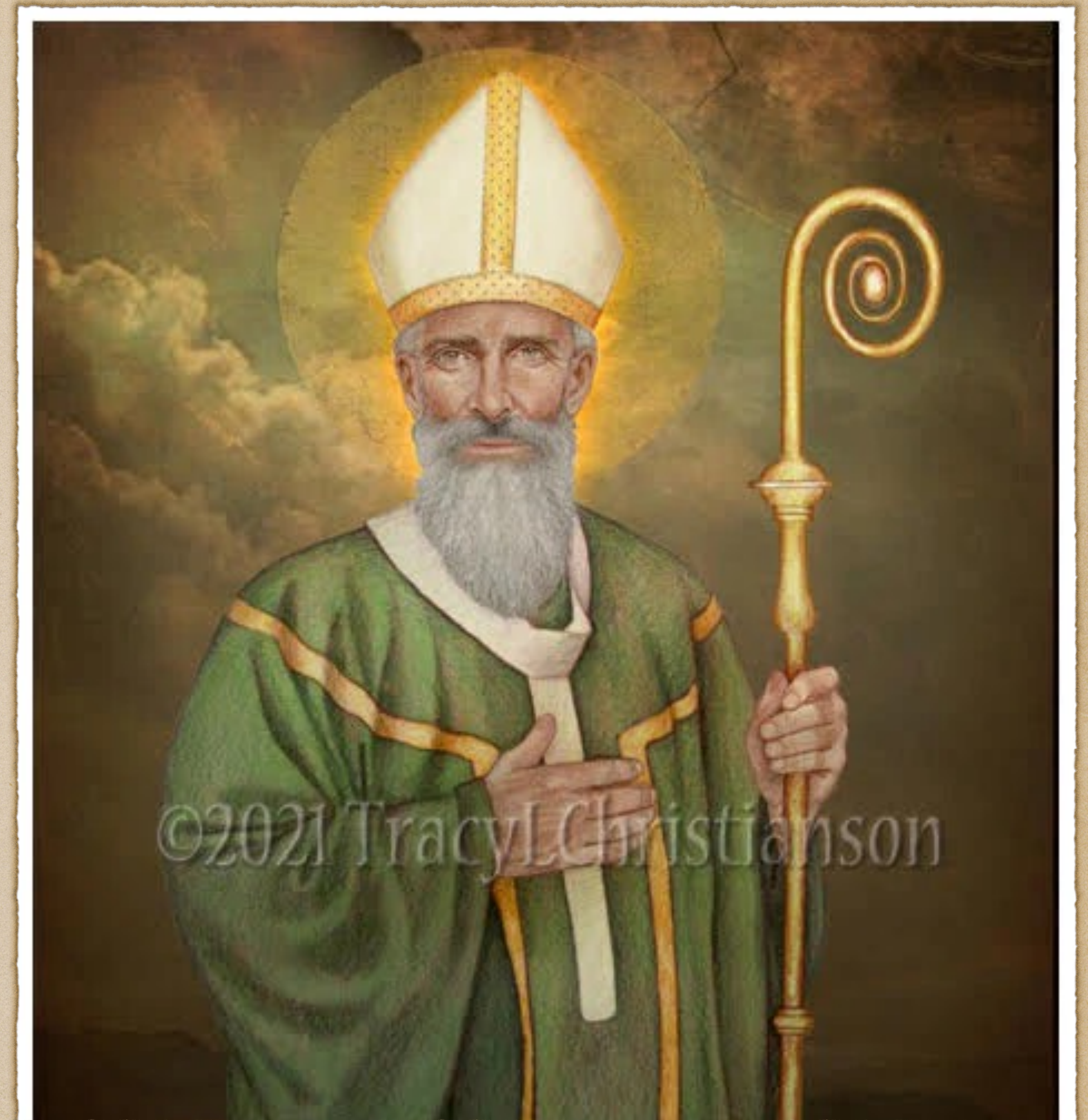
“So also you have some who hold the teaching of  
the Nicolaitans.”

– Revelation 2:15



“The Nicolaitanes are the followers of that Nicolas who was one of the seven first ordained to the diaconate by the apostles. They lead lives of unrestrained indulgence. The character of these men is very plainly pointed out in the Apocalypse of John, [when they are represented] as teaching that it is a matter of indifference to practise adultery, and to eat things sacrificed to idols.”

Iranaeus in *Against Heresies* written around 180 AD also connects them with gnosticism



“Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.”

– Revelation 2:16

“From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which  
to strike down the nations”

– Revelation 19:15a

“ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna,”

– Revelation 2:17a

and I will give him a white  
stone, with a new name  
written on the stone that  
no one knows except the  
one who receives it.

Revelation 2:17 b ESV

