



Talk III: The Apologists Part II

Tertullian

Clement

Hippolytus

Origen

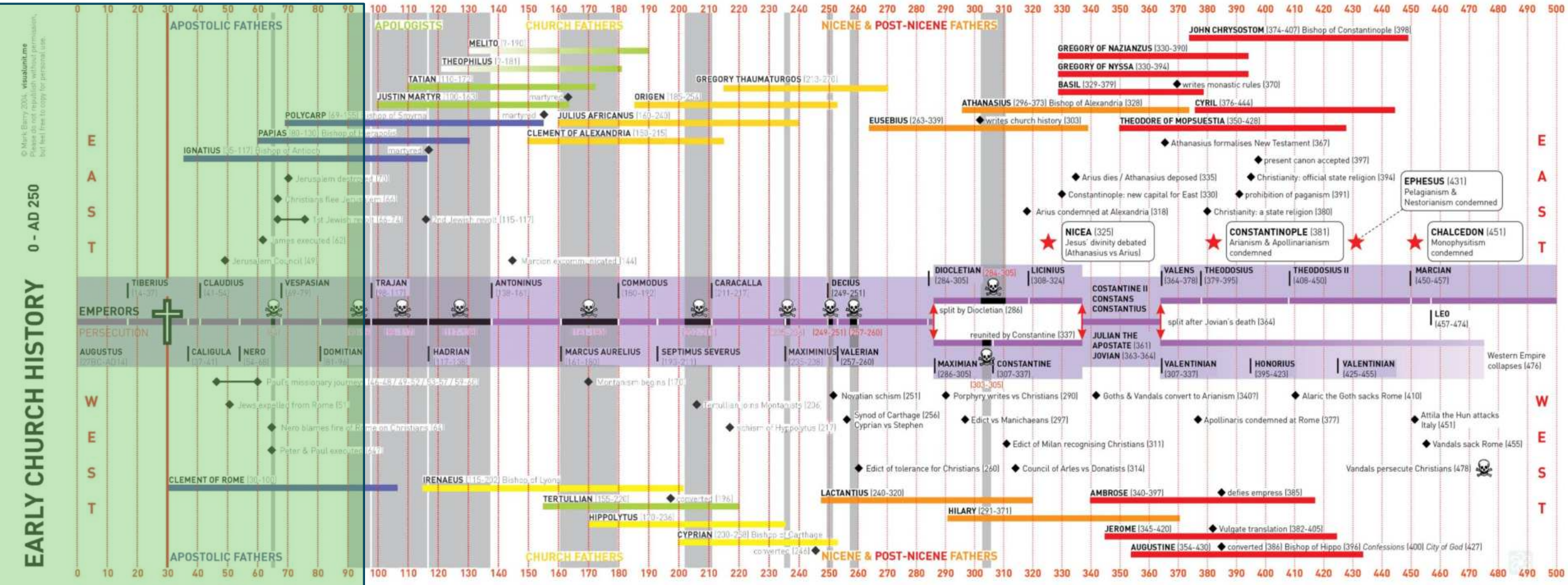
1 Cor 4:15 *“For although you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you have not many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, through the Gospel, I have begotten you.”*

PATROLOGY III — THE APOLOGISTS PART II

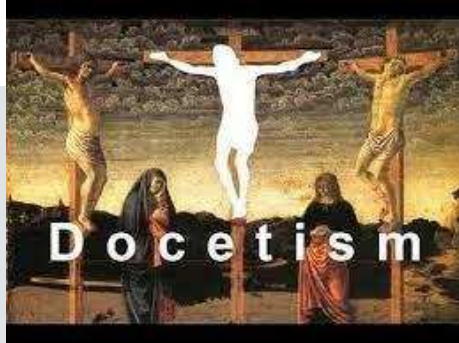
Pre-Servants Program
Ehab Roufail



THE CHURCH FATHERS (300 AD-480 AD)



2. THE SECOND CENTURY - HERESIES



DOCETISM

- Docetic, which comes from the Greek word meaning "to appear." Those who proposed this heresy maintained that Jesus really did not possess, or inhabit a physical body, but only "appeared" to have a body.
- Some of them believed that Simon of Cyrene was crucified instead of Jesus
- Saint Ignatius of Antioch responded to this heresy in his writings.
- Type of Gnosticism



MARCIONISM

- Marcion was the son of a bishop. He moved to Rome around 135 AD where he became known in the church and began to teach.
- Marcion observed differences between the God of Old Testament and the God of Jesus in the NT. His answer was to reject the God of the OT, seeing him as the creator of an evil world. He excluded the entire OT, and included only Paul's letters and Luke's gospel.
- Tertullian and many fathers responded to his heresy



MONTANISM

- Montanus testified that he had experienced an ecstatic visitation of the Paraclete (the Holy Spirit) and, along with two women (Maximilla and Priscilla), had the ability to deliver prophetic messages from God.
- The Montanist message was about close return of Jesus and the apocalyptic end of the world, and encouragement to embrace persecution and martyrdom. Some church leaders were women arguments against this position,
- Extreme Asceticism
- He claimed Jesus will reign for 1000 years on earth

3. THIRD CENTURY - HERESIES



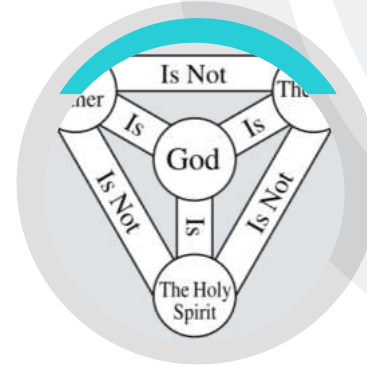
PAUL OF SAMOSATA

- Bishop of Antioch and was supported by Zenobia queen of Palmyra
- He claimed the Jesus was a normal human and was elevated to a God by His baptism.
- He also denied the Holy Spirit as a person of God claiming it's a kind of Godly power
- Excommunicated by Council of Antioch & Dionysius of Alex (14th Pope) wrote against his heresy



NOVATIAN/ DONATISTS

- Bishop of Rome who refused readmission of apostates during the persecutions of the time
- He was excommunicated by a council in Carthage, but his ideas remained and developed into a sect called Donatists in 4th century after the great persecution
- Pope Dionysius of Alex & Bishop Cyprian of Carthage fought his ideas



SABELLIANISM

- Libyan priest named Sabellius rejected the idea of three persons of God (Trinity) (Modalism)
- For him, God is described by an analogy: water in its three states of ice, liquid, and steam appear to be different substances, but they all are composed of the same chemical compound. Likewise, God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit appear to be three distinct persons, but they are different manifestations of one solitary God
- Dionysius of Alex & Hippolytus

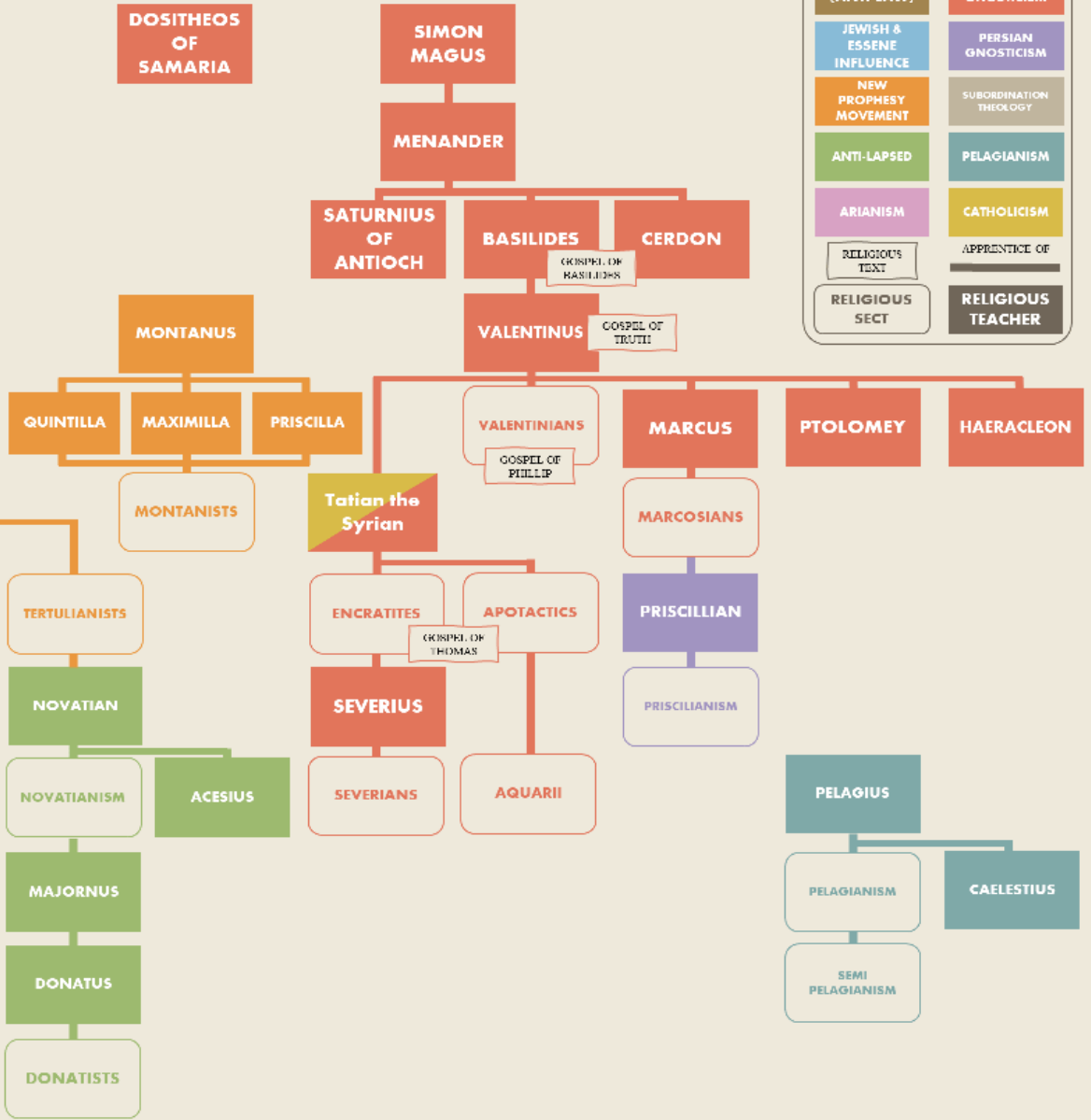
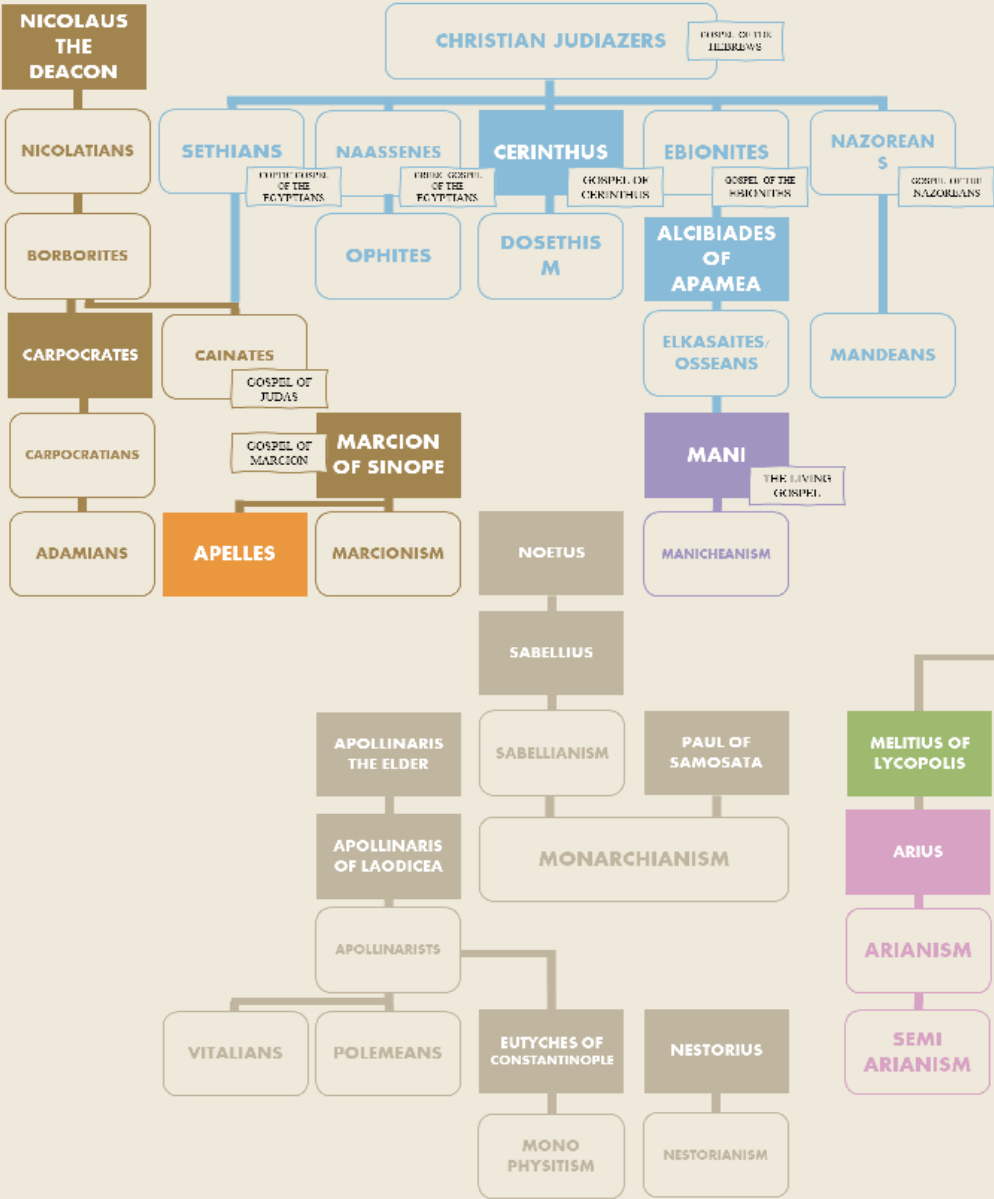


MANICHAISM

- Found by Mani the Persian as a new religion that blended Gnosticism, Christianity, and the teachings of Persian Magi
- He believed that : all religions are equally valid, two cosmic kingdoms, which included a Kingdom of Light (the Primal God) and the Kingdom of Darkness (Satan). Accepted as prophets: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Paul, Mani
- Believed in cycles of life (reincarnation)

EARLY CHRISTIAN SECTS

JULY 2022
MADE BY: @VINXENZO1



CHRISTIANS IN A HOSTILE WORLD

Three main accusations against Christians

- **Atheists**. Because they did not take part in traditional or imperial worship. This threatened the stability of cities as the rejected gods would take their revenge.
- Christians practiced **incest**. When they got together for their evening meals it was only to indulge in orgies, the worst kinds of wickedness between 'brothers' and 'sisters'
- They were **cannibals** as they ate the flesh and blood of a child victim in ritual murder.

CHRISTIANS IN A HOSTILE WORLD - ACCUSATIONS

That various heinous crimes were attributed to Christians throughout the second century can be seen in an apology by a Christian. The apologist, **Minucius Felix**, gave the following description of contemporary Christians as probably seen by an educated Roman citizen of the day:

How can we witness without pain the attacks against the gods made by this miserable, unlawful, and fanatical faction? They collect from the scum of the populace ignorant and credulous folk and make them fellow conspirators; in their nocturnal meetings, after solemn fasts and unnatural repasts, they bind themselves together, not by an oath but by a sacrilege; they are a race which hides itself and flies from the light, silent in public, loquacious in their retreats... They recognize each other by secret signs and love each other almost before being acquainted; they are united by a religion of debauchery; they call one another sister and brother...

It is said by some unheard of folly they adore the head of a filthy animal [the ass]: A fine religion and one well worthy of them. Their rites of initiation are as detestable as they are known. A child, covered with flour to deceive the uninstructed, is presented to the one to be initiated; the latter, seeing only a floury mass and thinking his blows harmless, strikes the unseen child and kills him. And then these wicked people greedily drink his blood; they unite themselves together by this sacrifice and bind each other mutually to silence by complicity in the crime.

CHRISTIANS IN A HOSTILE WORLD - ACCUSATIONS

A Greek writer – Lucien (c.124-192) from Samosata Syria. Travelled and wrote extensively. Paints an amusing picture of society in his time. In *The death of Peregrinus* he tell the life-story of a boastful swindler who exploits the naivity of Christians.

The poor wretches have convinced themselves, first and foremost, that they are going to be immortal and live for all time, in consequence of which they despise death and even willingly give themselves into custody; most of them. Furthermore, their first lawgiver persuaded them that they are all brothers of one another after they have transgressed once, for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws. Therefore they despise all things indiscriminately and consider them common property, receiving such doctrines traditionally without any definite evidence. So if any charlatan and trickster, able to profit by occasions, comes among them, he quickly acquires sudden wealth by imposing upon simple folk.

CHRISTIANS IN A HOSTILE WORLD- ACCUSATIONS

But the most dramatic account comes from a later Christian author, **Epiphanius of Cyprus**, who claimed to have knowledge of a Christian group called the **Phibionites** which practiced ritual intercourse and the eating of an unborn child. (20)

When they thus ate together and so to speak filled up their veins from the surplus of their strength they turn to excitements. The man leaving his wife says to his own wife: "Stand up and perform the agape with the brother." Then the unfortunates unite with each other, and as I am truly ashamed to say the shameful things that are being done by them, because according to the holy apostle the things that are happening by them are shameful even to mention, nevertheless I will not be ashamed to say those things which they are not ashamed to do, in order that I may cause in every way a horror in those who hear about their shameful practices. After they have had intercourse in the passion of fornication they raise their own blasphemy to heaven. The woman and the man take the fluid of the emission of the man into their hands, they stand, turn toward heaven, their hands besmeared with the uncleanness, and pray as people called *stratitotikoi* [στρατιωτικοί] and *gnostikoi* [γνωστικοί], bringing to the father the nature of all that which they have on their hands, and they say: "We offer to thee this gift, the body of Christ." And then they eat it, their own ugliness, and say: "This is the body of Christ and this is the Passover for the sake of which our bodies suffer and are forced to confess the suffering of Christ." Similarly also with the woman when she happens to be in the flowing of the blood they gather the blood of menstruation of her uncleanness and eat it together and say: "This is the blood of Christ." [Panarion 26.4-5]

CHRISTIANS IN A HOSTILE WORLD

Accusation of Atheism

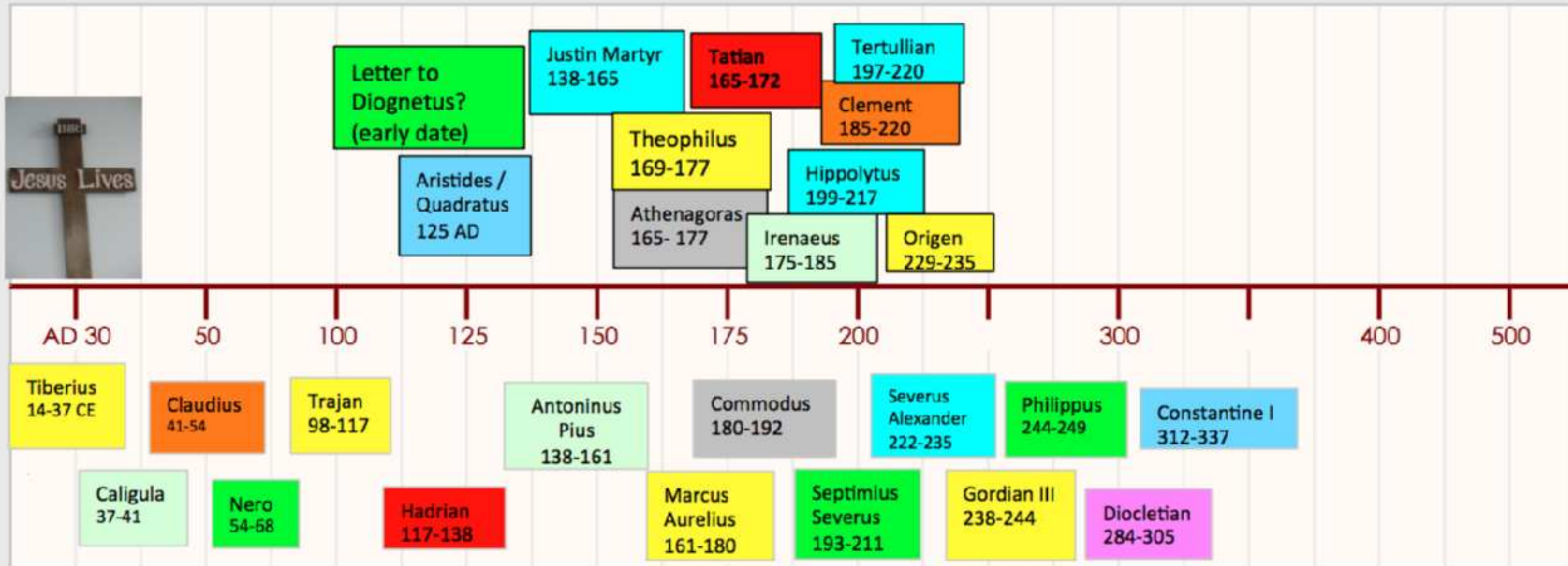
Celsus:

Celsus, a 2nd-century Greek philosopher, was a vocal critic of Christianity. He accused Christians of atheism due to their rejection of the Roman gods and their failure to participate in traditional worship. In his work *The True Doctrine*, he writes, **"Christians have abandoned the gods revered by their ancestors, and by their disloyalty to the national religion, they bring misfortune upon themselves and their city"** (*The True Doctrine*).

Tertullian:

Tertullian, an early Christian apologist, responded to these accusations by clarifying the Christian stance. In his *Apology*, he states, **"We are accused of atheism. And we do confess that we are atheists, so far as gods of this sort are concerned, but not with respect to the most true God"** (*Apology*, Chapter 10).

Early Christian Apologists Timeline



APOLOGIST — TERTULLIAN (160-220)

Early Christian theologian and moralist.

Educated in Carthage, he became impressed by the courage, morality, and uncompromising monotheism of Christian martyrs, and he converted to Christianity.

He became a leading member of the African church and one of the early Apologists.

He devoted himself to writing for 20 years, producing works on such topics as defense of the faith, prayer and devotion, and morality, as well as the first Christian book on baptism, *De baptismo*.

Later, dismayed by the laxity he witnessed among even his orthodox contemporaries, he joined the prophetic movement known as Montanism, then left it to form his own sect, which survived in Africa until the 5th century.



APOLOGIST — TERTULLIAN (160-220)

Tertullian, a prominent figure in early Christian literature, lived in the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD. Born in Carthage, North Africa, he was well-educated in law and rhetoric, which greatly influenced his writing style.

Tertullian's conversion to Christianity led him to become one of the most influential theologians of his time. He was the first to write extensively in Latin, contributing significantly to the development of Latin Christian literature.

His works cover a wide range of topics, including **theology**, **ethics**, **apologetics**, and **ecclesiology**. Some of his notable works include "Apologeticum" (Apologetic), "Ad Martyras" (To the Martyrs), "De Spectaculis" (On the Spectacles), and "De Oratione" (On Prayer). Tertullian's writings are characterized by their **passionate** defense of Christian beliefs, uncompromising stance against heresy, and sharp criticism of pagan practices.



APOLOGIST — TERTULLIAN (160-220)

Tertullian's influence on Christian theology and Latin literature is profound. His contributions to the development of Christian doctrine, particularly in the areas of Trinitarian theology and ecclesiology, laid the groundwork for future theological discussions.

Despite his eventual adherence to Montanism, a controversial Christian sect, Tertullian's legacy as a defender of orthodox Christian faith remains significant.

His writings continue to be studied and referenced by theologians, historians, and scholars today, making him a foundational figure in the early Christian tradition.



APOLOGIST — TERTULLIAN (160-220)

The Trinity: "Three Persons, One Substance"

Tertullian is perhaps best known for coining the term "Trinity" (Latin: *Trinitas*) and for his precise articulation of the concept of "**one substance, three persons**" (*una substantia, tres personae*). This formulation was pivotal in shaping the orthodox Christian understanding of the Godhead. He wrote, "**The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are inseparable, yet distinct,**" emphasizing both unity and distinction within the Godhead.

In his work *Against Praxeas*, Tertullian confronts the heresy of modalism, which denied the distinct persons of the Trinity. He clarifies, "**We do indeed believe that there is only one God, but we believe that under this dispensation... there is the Son, and under the name of the Holy Spirit**" (*Against Praxeas*, Chapter 2).

This articulation helped to guard the early Church against theological errors and provided a framework that would later be affirmed by the Nicene Creed.



APOLOGIST — TERTULLIAN (160-220)

Christology: Affirming the Dual Nature of Christ

Tertullian's contributions to Christology are equally significant. He argued for the **full divinity and full humanity of Christ**, a doctrine that would later be crystallized in the council of Ephesus 431 A.D. Definition. In his work *On the Flesh of Christ*, Tertullian asserts, "The Son of God, therefore, was born of the Virgin... He is also the Son of Man, because the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (*On the Flesh of Christ*, Chapter 5). This teaching was crucial in combatting heresies such as Docetism, which claimed that Christ's physical body was an illusion.

The Role of Tradition and Scripture

Tertullian was also a staunch defender of the authority of apostolic tradition and Scripture. He famously asked, "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" emphasizing the primacy of Christian revelation over Greek philosophy. In *Prescription Against Heretics*, he argued that true doctrine is rooted in apostolic tradition, writing, "Our appeal, therefore, must not be made to the Scriptures... but to the tradition of the apostles" (*Prescription Against Heretics*, Chapter 19).

This defense of tradition over speculative theology provided a safeguard for orthodoxy, ensuring that the teachings of the Church remained grounded in the apostolic witness. Tertullian's insistence on the authority of Scripture and tradition continues to resonate within orthodox Christianity, underscoring the importance of fidelity to the faith handed down from the apostles.



APOLOGIST — CLEMENT (150-215)

St. Clement of Alexandria (born 150 CE, Athens—died between 211 and 215; Was the second known leader and teacher of the catechetical School of Alexandria).

The most important of his surviving works is a trilogy comprising the *Protreptikos* (“Exhortation”), the *Paidagōgos* (“Instructor”), and the *Strōmateis* (“Miscellanies”).

As a student, he traveled to various centres of learning in Italy and in the eastern Mediterranean area. Converted to Christianity by his last teacher, **Pantaenus**—reputedly a former Stoic philosopher and the second recorded president of the Christian **catechetical School at Alexandria**—Clement succeeded his mentor as head of the school about 180.

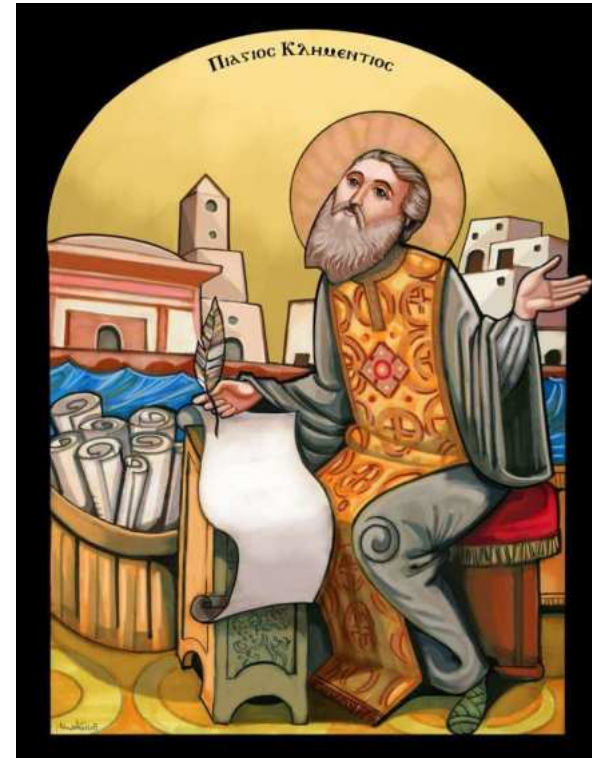
During the next two decades Clement was the intellectual leader of the Alexandrian Christian community: he wrote several ethical and theological works and biblical commentaries; he combated heretical Gnostics (religious dualists who believed in salvation through esoteric knowledge that revealed to humans their spiritual origins, identities, and destinies); he engaged in polemics with Christians who were suspicious of an intellectualized Christianity; and he educated persons who later became theological and ecclesiastical leaders (e.g., Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem).



APOLOGIST — CLEMENT (150-215)

His three great works, *The Exhortation to the Heathen*, *The Instructor, or Paedagogus*, *The Miscellanies, or Stromata*, are among the most valuable remains of Christian antiquity, and the largest that belong to that early period.

The Exhortation, the object of which is to win pagans to the Christian faith, contains a complete and withering exposure of the abominable licentiousness, the gross imposture and sordidness of paganism. With clearness and cogency of argument, great earnestness and eloquence, Clement sets forth in contrast the truth as taught in the inspired Scriptures, the true God, and especially the personal Christ, the living Word of God, the Saviour of men. It is an elaborate and masterly work, rich in felicitous classical allusion and quotation, breathing throughout the spirit of philosophy and of the Gospel, and abounding in passages of power and beauty.

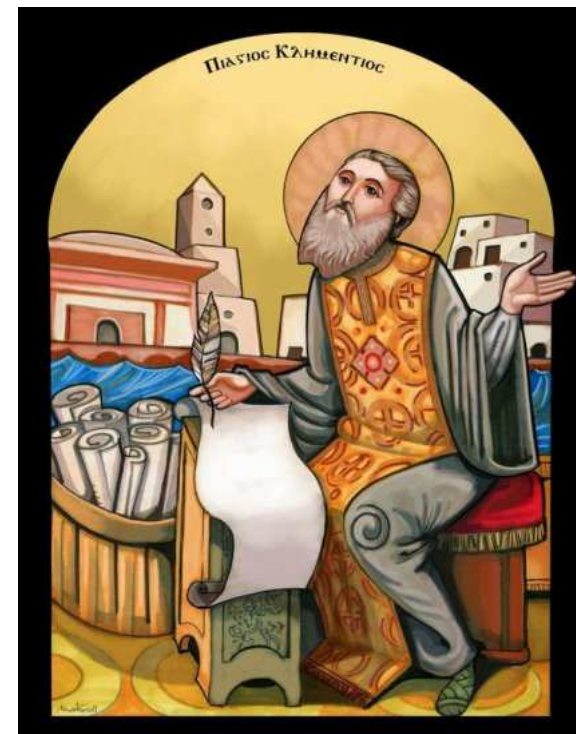


APOLOGIST — CLEMENT (150-215)

The *Paedagogus, or Instructor*, is addressed to those who have been rescued from the darkness and pollutions of heathenism, and is an exhibition of Christian morals and manners, -a guide for the formation and development of Christian character, and for living a Christian life. It consists of three books. It is the grand aim of the whole work to set before the converts Christ as the only Instructor, and to expound and enforce His precepts.

In the first book Clement exhibits the person, the function, the means, methods, and ends of the Instructor, who is the Word and Son of God; and lovingly dwells on His benignity and philanthropy, His wisdom, faithfulness, and righteousness.

The second and third books lay down rules for the regulation of the Christian, in all the relations, circumstances, and actions of life, entering most minutely into the details of dress, eating, drinking, bathing, sleeping, etc. The delineation of a life in all respects agreeable to the Word, a truly Christian life, attempted here, may, now that the Gospel has transformed social and private life to the extent it has, appear unnecessary, or a proof of the influence of ascetic tendencies. But a code of Christian morals and manners (a sort of "whole duty of man" and manual of good breeding combined) was eminently needed by those whose habits and characters had been moulded under the debasing and polluting influences of heathenism; and who were bound, and were aiming, to shape their lives according to the principles of the Gospel, in the midst of the all but incredible licentiousness and luxury by which society around was incurably tainted. The disclosures which Clement, with solemn sternness, and often with caustic wit, makes of the prevalent voluptuousness and vice, form a very valuable contribution to our knowledge of that period.



APOLOGIST — CLEMENT (150-215)

The ***Stromata***, The aim of the work, in accordance with this title, is, in opposition to **Gnosticism**, to furnish the materials for the construction of a true gnosis, a Christian philosophy, on the basis of faith, and to lead on to this higher knowledge those who, by the discipline of the Paedagogus, had been trained for it.

The work consisted originally of eight books. The eighth book is lost; that which appears under this name has plainly no connection with the rest of the *Stromata*. They consist of the speculations of Greek philosophers, of heretics, and of those who cultivated the true Christian gnosis, and of quotations from sacred Scripture. The latter he affirms to be the source from which the higher Christian knowledge is to be drawn; as it was that from which the germs of truth in Plato and the Hellenic philosophy were derived.

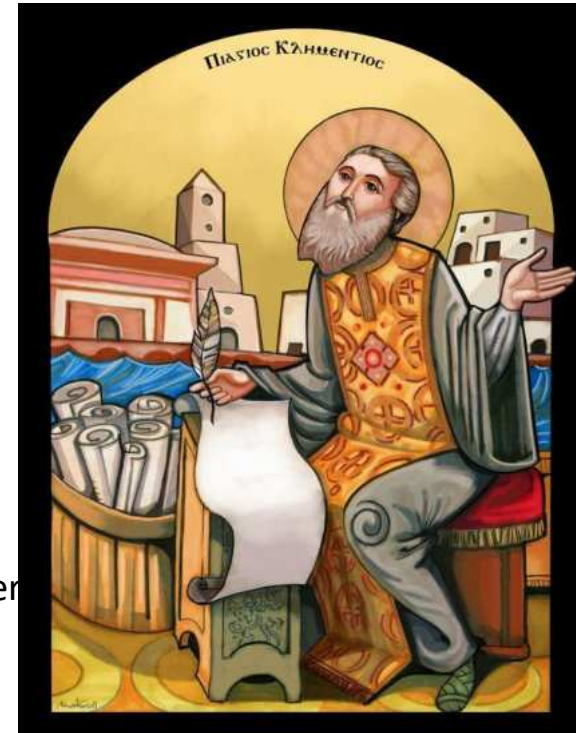
He describes philosophy as a divinely ordered preparation of the Greeks for faith in Christ, as the law was for the Hebrews; and shows the necessity and value of literature and philosophic culture for the attainment of true Christian knowledge, in opposition to the numerous body among Christians who regarded learning as useless and dangerous.

He proclaims himself an eclectic, believing in the existence of fragments of truth in all systems, which may be separated from error; but declaring that the truth can be found in unity and completeness only in Christ, as it was from Him that all its scattered germs originally proceeded.

It was regarded so much as the author's great work, that, on the testimony of Theodoret, Cassiodorus, and others, we learn that Clement received the appellation (the Stromatist).

[The writings of Clement of Alexandria, Vol. 1 \(of 2\) by Saint of Alexandria Clement | Project Gutenberg](#)

[The writings of Clement of Alexandria, Vol. 2 \(of 2\) by Saint of Alexandria Clement | Project Gutenberg](#)



APOLOGIST — CLEMENT (150-215)

On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason

Clement emphasized the harmony between faith and reason, asserting that Christian faith was not in conflict with rational understanding.

"For we are not taught by mere human philosophy, but by the divine Word; yet we are taught by that which is human, for we are men." — *The Stromata* 1.1

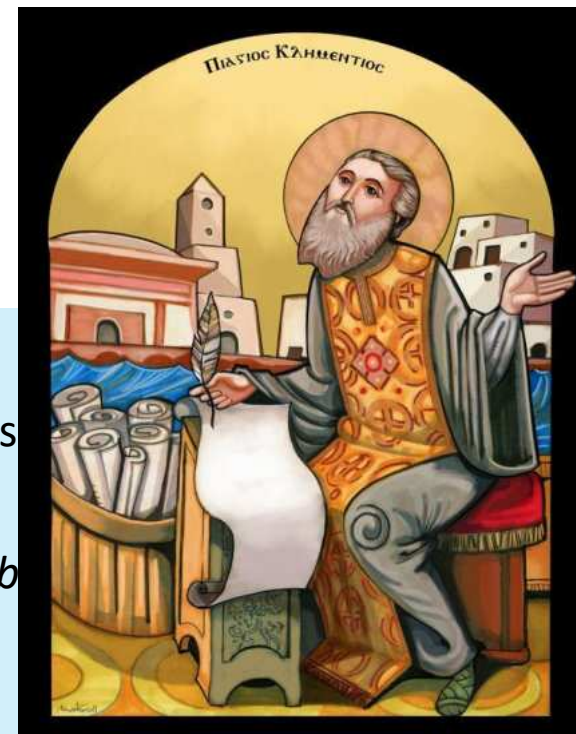
"Faith, without knowledge, is weak. But knowledge, without faith, is destructive." — *The Stromata* 6.6

Christ as the Logos (Divine Word)

Clement was deeply influenced by the concept of the **Logos** (the Word) in both Greek philosophy and Christian theology. He identified Christ as the Logos, the agent through whom all creation was made.

"For in truth, the Word is the creator of all things. But, in the case of man, He became flesh so that He might re-create and regenerate him." — *The Stromata* 1.21

"The Logos is the first cause, and through Him, all things are created." — *The Stromata* 7.6



APOLOGIST — CLEMENT (150-215)

Christian Ethics and the Christian Life

Clement was an advocate for an ascetic lifestyle, though his views on asceticism were more moderate compared to later Church Fathers like St. Anthony.

"Let the Christian understand that the soul is in exile and in need of salvation. The purpose of life is the acquisition of virtue." — *The Stromata* 2.9

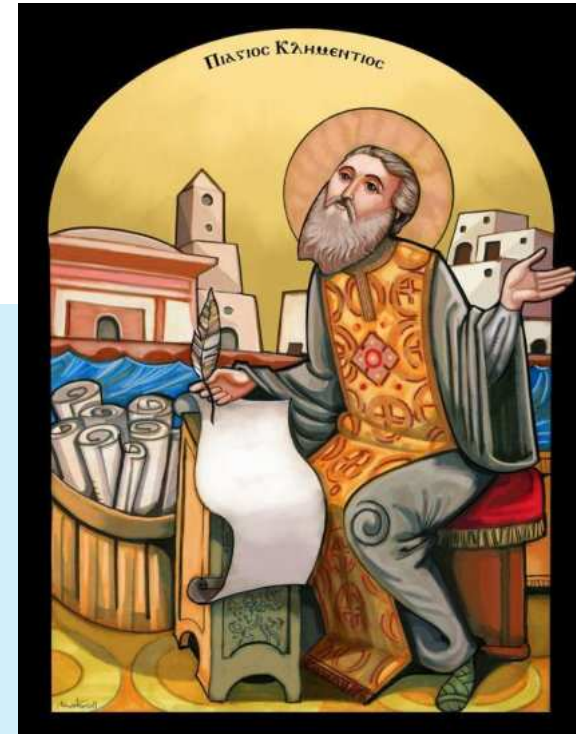
"The Christian is to be a man of virtue, one who is by nature bound to the good." — *The Stromata* 7.7

The Role of Philosophy

Clement viewed philosophy as a precursor to the gospel, preparing humanity for the revelation of Christ.

"The Greeks have their philosophy; we have the wisdom of God in Christ." — *The Stromata* 6.7

"Philosophy was a tutor to bring us to Christ, but now that the truth has come, philosophy is no longer necessary." — *The Stromata* 1.1



APOLOGIST — CLEMENT (150-215)

The Importance of Christian Charity

Clement viewed love and charity as fundamental to Christian life, seeing them as expressions of God's grace.

"Love is the foundation of virtue, the greatest of all virtues, and the true source of all good works." — *The Stromata* **4.14**

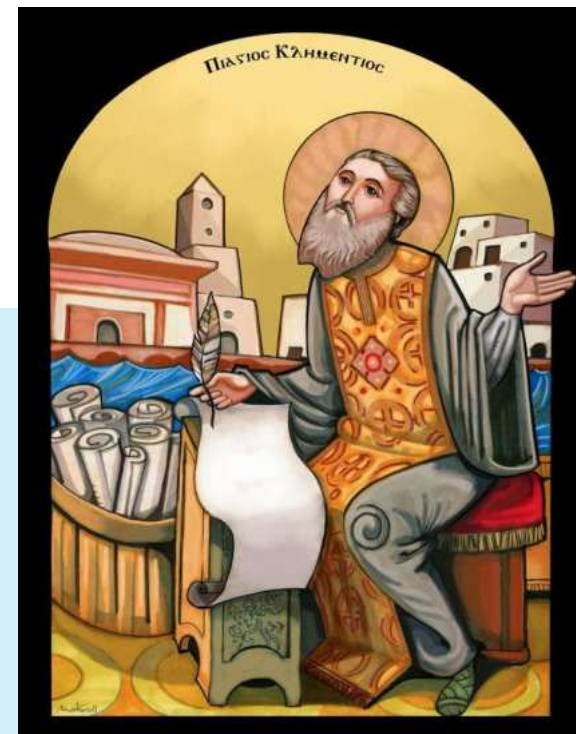
"The Christian should be known by love, for love is the essence of the new life in Christ." — *The Stromata* **3.11**

The Concept of True Gnosis (Knowledge)

Clement differentiated between the knowledge of God and mere intellectual knowledge, emphasizing that true knowledge was an experiential understanding of God's truth, grounded in faith.

"The true Gnostic is not the one who knows only the letters of Scripture but the one who knows the meaning of the Scriptures, which are revealed only to those who are pure in heart." — *The Stromata* **6.10**

"True knowledge of God is not something taught by men but something revealed by God through the Holy Spirit." — *The Stromata* **6.12**



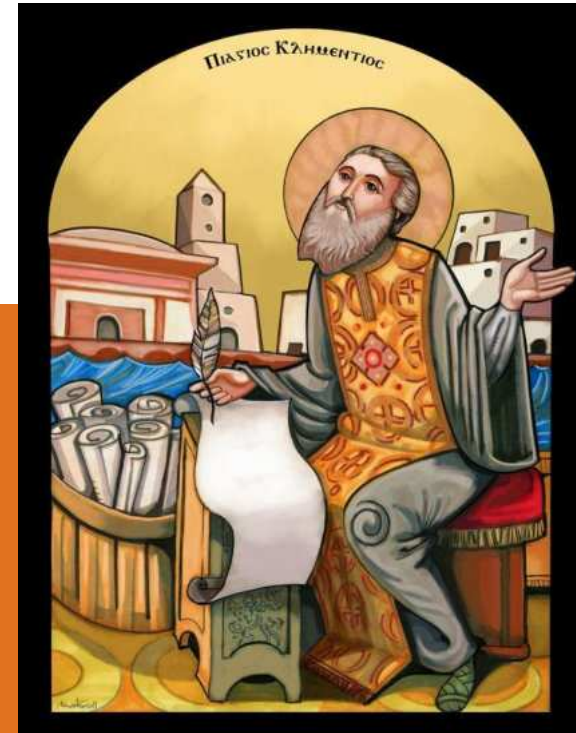
APOLOGIST — CLEMENT (150-215)

Christian Universalism – Heresy!

Clement believed in the eventual salvation of all people, including the possibility of the **universal restoration** of all souls, similar to Origen's ideas.

"God is good, and therefore the righteous shall inherit the kingdom, but also those who are not righteous will be corrected, and in the end, all will be reconciled to God." — *The Stromata* **6.16**

"The final purpose of all things is that God may be all in all, for God is the creator of all and the final end of all things." — *The Stromata* **7.12**



APOLOGIST — HIPPOLYTUS (160-236)

Background and Role:

Hippolytus served as a **presbyter (elder)** in the church at Rome during a time of confusion and doctrinal challenges.

While he held this position, **Zephyrinus** and later **Callistus** served as bishops in Rome.

Orthodox Christology:

Hippolytus is known for championing the **Logos doctrine**, which was also promoted by Greek apologists like **Justin Martyr**.

The Logos doctrine distinguished the **Father** from the **Logos** (the "Word") and emphasized the divine nature of Christ.

Apologetic and Polemic Impact: Hippolytus wrote extensively, and his main extant apologetic work is titled "**The Refutation of All Heresies.**"

In this work, he addressed various heretical movements that plagued the early church.

Hippolytus argued for the superiority of the **Christian faith** over competing religions and worldviews.

His concerns and safeguards regarding church governance, doctrinal fidelity, and apologetics remain relevant today



APOLOGIST — HIPPOLYTUS (160-236)

Christology: Affirming the Divinity and Humanity of Christ

Hippolytus' Christology is central to his theological legacy. He vehemently opposed the heresies of his time, especially modalism and adoptionism, which threatened the orthodox understanding of Christ's nature. In his *Refutation of All Heresies*, Hippolytus defends the **distinct personhood of the Son within the Trinity**, arguing **against the modalist view** that the Father and the Son are merely different modes of the same person. He writes, "The Logos is the Son of God, but **He is not the same as the Father**" (*Refutation of All Heresies*, Book 10, Chapter 29). This distinction was crucial in maintaining the balance between unity and diversity within the Godhead.

Moreover, Hippolytus upheld the **full divinity and full humanity of Christ**, a doctrine that was vital in countering adoptionism, which claimed that Jesus was a mere man adopted as God's Son. In his *Apostolic Tradition*, he asserts, "**He who is both God and man**, truly exists in two natures, and yet is one in person" (*Apostolic Tradition*, Chapter 22). This clear articulation of the dual nature of Christ laid the groundwork for later Christological formulations, particularly at the Council of Chalcedon.



APOLOGIST — HIPPOLYTUS (160-236)

Ecclesiology: The Structure and Authority of the Church

Hippolytus' views on ecclesiology, particularly in his ***Apostolic Tradition***, have significantly influenced the organization and liturgical practices of the Church. This work offers valuable insights into the early Church's practices, including ordination, baptism, and the Eucharist. He emphasizes the importance of **apostolic succession**, the continuity of teaching and authority from the apostles to the bishops. Hippolytus states, "**Let the bishop be ordained** by the laying on of hands by the bishops" (*Apostolic Tradition*, Chapter 3).

This emphasis on apostolic succession underscored the legitimacy and authority of ecclesiastical leadership, a principle that remains foundational in orthodox Christianity. Moreover, his **detailed descriptions of liturgical practices** have informed the development of Christian worship, ensuring that the sacraments are administered with reverence and continuity.



APOLOGIST — HIPPOLYTUS (160-236)

Defense Against Heresy

Hippolytus was a vigorous defender of orthodoxy against various heretical movements. His *Refutation of All Heresies* meticulously critiques the teachings of heretical groups, providing a comprehensive defense of orthodox doctrine. He identifies and refutes the errors of **Gnosticism**, **Modalism**, and other deviations from apostolic teaching. Hippolytus argues, "Those who adhere to the true faith and the tradition of the apostles cannot be deceived by the specious arguments of heretics" (*Refutation of All Heresies*, Book 1, Chapter 3).

This commitment to doctrinal purity helped to preserve the integrity of the Christian faith and provided a model for subsequent generations in combating theological errors.



APOLOGIST — HIPPOLYTUS (160-236)

When he has been made bishop, everyone shall give him the kiss of peace, and salute him respectfully, for he has been made worthy of this.

Then the deacons shall present the oblation to him, and he shall lay his hand upon it, and give thanks, with the entire council of elders, saying:

The Lord be with you. And all reply:

And with your spirit.

The bishop says: Lift up your hearts.

The people respond: We have them with the Lord.

The bishop says: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

The people respond: It is proper and just. The bishop then continues:

We give thanks to you God, through your beloved son Jesus Christ, whom you sent to us in former times as Savior, Redeemer, and Messenger of your Will, who is your inseparable Word, through whom you made all, and in whom you were well-pleased, whom you sent from heaven into the womb of a virgin, who, being conceived within her, was made flesh, and appeared as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and the virgin. It is he who, fulfilling your will and acquiring for you a holy people, extended his hands in suffering, in order to liberate from sufferings those who believe in you.



APOLOGIST — HIPPOLYTUS (160-236)

Who, when he was delivered to voluntary suffering, in order to dissolve death, and break the chains of the devil, and tread down hell, and bring the just to the light, and set the limit, and manifest the resurrection, taking the bread, and giving thanks to you, said, "Take, eat, for this is my body which is broken for you." Likewise the chalice, saying, This is my blood which is shed for you. 10 Whenever you do this, do this (in) memory of me.

Therefore, remembering his death and resurrection, we offer to you the bread and the chalice, giving thanks to you, who has made us worthy to stand before you and to serve as your priests.

And we pray that you would send your Holy Spirit to the oblation of your Holy Church. In their gathering together, give to all those who partake of your holy mysteries the fullness of the Holy Spirit, toward the strengthening of the faith in truth, that we may praise you and glorify you, through your son Jesus Christ, through whom to you be glory and honor, Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit, in your Holy Church, now and throughout the ages of the ages. Amen. **Hippolytus Apostolic Tradition I Ch 4**

[Apostolic Tradition by Hippolytus.pdf \(stjohnsarlingtonva.org\)](http://stjohnsarlingtonva.org)



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Early Life and Education

- **Birth:** Alexandria, Egypt, into a Christian family. His father, Leonides, was a martyr during the persecutions under Emperor Septimius Severus.
- **Education:** Origen was educated in a rich cultural environment that included Greek philosophy, rhetoric, and the study of Scriptures. He was particularly influenced by the teachings of Clement of Alexandria.

Career and Contributions

- **Catechetical School:** Origen became the head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria, where he taught theology and trained many future leaders of the Church. He emphasized the importance of understanding Scripture both literally and allegorically.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

- **Theological Works:** He produced a vast body of work, including:
 - **Hexapla:** A critical edition of the Old Testament, presenting different Greek translations side by side with the Hebrew text.
 - **On First Principles (*De Principiis*):** His theological treatise addressing the nature of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the creation of the world, laying the groundwork for later Christian doctrine.
 - **Commentaries:** Origen wrote extensive commentaries on various books of the Bible, demonstrating his innovative approach to scriptural exegesis.

Persecutions and Martyrdom

- **Persecutions:** Origen faced persecution during the Decian persecution (250-251 AD). He was imprisoned and tortured, enduring great suffering for his faith.
- **Death:** Although he survived the initial persecution, the physical toll of his suffering led to his death around 253 AD.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Defender of the Faith

As an apologist, Origen's contributions were invaluable in defending the Christian faith against both pagan criticisms and internal heresies. His work *Contra Celsum* (Against Celsus) stands out as a masterful defense of Christianity. In this text, Origen systematically refutes the arguments of the pagan philosopher Celsus, who had written a scathing critique of Christianity. Origen's methodical and intellectual approach demonstrated that Christianity was not only a faith of simple believers but also one that could withstand the scrutiny of the most sophisticated philosophical critique.

In *Contra Celsum*, Origen writes, "The doctrine of Jesus is indeed perfect and has no defect, because it is the doctrine of the divine word" (*Contra Celsum*, Book 3, Chapter 39). This assertion highlights Origen's deep conviction in the divine origin and perfection of Christian teaching, a belief that fortified the faith of many early Christians.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Theological Contributions

Origen's theological contributions are vast and complex, covering areas such as exegesis, Christology, and soteriology. His approach to Scripture was both allegorical and literal, seeking to uncover the multiple layers of meaning within the biblical text. This method is evident in his monumental work, the **Hexapla**, a critical edition of the Old Testament in six columns, which showcased his scholarly rigor and deep commitment to understanding the Scriptures.

- **Structure of the Hexapla:** The Hexapla consists of six parallel columns:
 - **Hebrew Text:** The original Hebrew text.
 - **Greek Transliteration:** The Hebrew text transliterated into Greek characters.
 - **Aquila's Version:** A Greek translation by Aquila.
 - **Symmachus's Version:** Another Greek translation by Symmachus.
 - **Septuagint:** The well-known Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible.
 - **Theodotion's Version:** Yet another Greek translation by Theodotion.

From a Coptic Orthodox perspective, Origen's emphasis on the transformative power of Scripture is particularly significant. He believed that the Bible was not merely a historical document but a living text through which God speaks to His people. Origen stated, "We must search for the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures, which can be found only through prayer and divine illumination" (*On First Principles*, Book 4, Chapter 1). This view resonates with the Coptic Orthodox emphasis on the mystical and sacramental reading of Scripture.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

The Extent of Origen's Writings: A Coptic Orthodox Perspective

Origen of Alexandria stands as one of the most prolific and influential early Christian theologians. His extensive body of work spans various aspects of theology, exegesis, and philosophy, making him a central figure in the development of Christian thought. From a Coptic Orthodox perspective, Origen's writings are viewed with a blend of admiration and caution, reflecting both his profound contributions and the controversies that surrounded his later condemnation.

The Scope and Diversity of Origen's Writings

Origen's literary output is staggering in its breadth and depth. He authored numerous treatises, commentaries, and homilies, covering almost every aspect of Christian doctrine and practice. His works include:

Biblical Commentaries and Homilies:

1. Origen's commentaries on Scripture are among his most significant contributions. His *Commentary on the Gospel of John* and *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* delve deeply into the texts, offering both literal and allegorical interpretations. He sought to uncover the spiritual meanings behind the biblical narratives, adhering to his belief that Scripture had multiple layers of significance.
2. His homilies on various books of the Bible, such as Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Isaiah, were widely circulated and influential in shaping early Christian exegesis. In these homilies, Origen emphasized moral and spiritual lessons, encouraging believers to apply biblical teachings to their lives.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Theological Treatises:

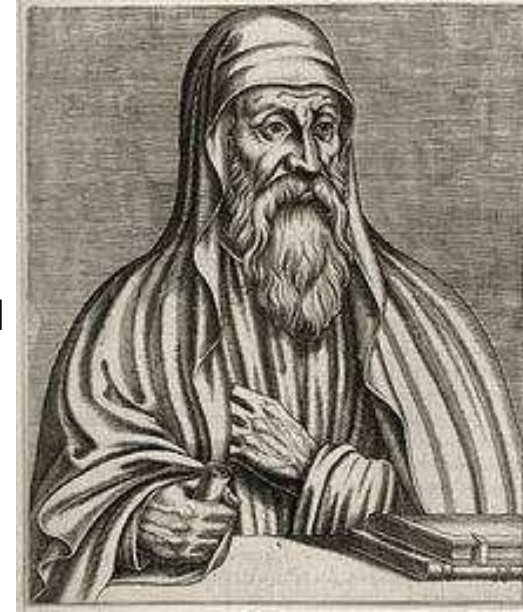
1. *On First Principles (Peri Archon)*, one of Origen's most systematic works, explores foundational theological topics such as the nature of God, the Trinity, creation, free will, and eschatology. This work reflects Origen's attempt to create a cohesive theological framework, integrating Christian doctrine with philosophical reasoning.
2. In *Against Celsus*, Origen defends Christianity against the critiques of the pagan philosopher Celsus. This apologetic work showcases his ability to engage with contemporary philosophical arguments and assert the intellectual credibility of the Christian faith.

Philosophical and Apologetic Works:

1. Origen's engagement with Greek philosophy is evident in his writings, where he often dialogues with Platonic and Stoic ideas. His philosophical approach aimed to present Christianity as a rational and intellectually fulfilling faith, capable of standing alongside the great philosophical systems of his time.

Practical Theology and Spiritual Writings:

1. Origen's pastoral concerns are evident in his practical and spiritual writings. His treatises on prayer, such as *On Prayer*, provide deep insights into the nature and practice of prayer, emphasizing the transformative power of communion with God.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

- "The exodus from Egypt may be understood as our departure from this world, and the crossing of the Red Sea as our passage from the death of this world to the life of the spirit." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on Exodus, Homily V, 1.*
- "The garden is the church, where the waters of baptism flow and where the trees of knowledge and life are to be understood not carnally, but spiritually." *Reference: Origen, Commentary on Genesis, as cited in various patristic sources.*
- "Isaac, carrying the wood for his own sacrifice, prefigures Christ carrying his cross." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on Genesis, Homily VIII, 6.*
- "Jonah's three days in the belly of the great fish are a sign of the three days Christ spent in the tomb before his resurrection." *Reference: Origen, Contra Celsum (Against Celsus), Book II, Chapter 59.*
- "The Song of Songs is not to be read as a mere love song but as an allegory of the love between Christ and the Church, or the soul and Christ." *Reference: Origen, Commentary on the Song of Songs, Prologue.*



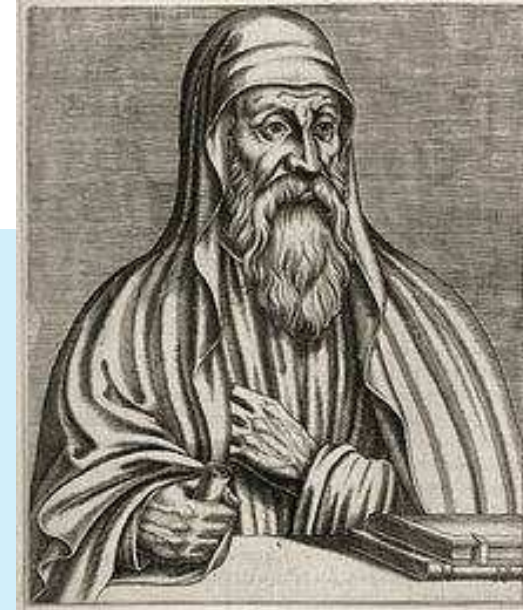
APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

- "The flood represents the baptism that washes away sin; Noah's ark is the Church, which saves believers from the deluge of worldly corruption." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on Genesis, Homily II, 2.*
- "The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah signifies the destruction of vice and the punishment of the wicked, while Lot's escape represents the salvation of the righteous." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on Genesis, Homily V, 3.*
- "Jacob's ladder is a symbol of Christ, by whom angels ascend and descend, signifying the connection between heaven and earth, and the ascent of human souls toward God through contemplation and prayer." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on Genesis, Homily XII, 4.*
- "The manna that fed the Israelites in the desert is a type of the spiritual food, the Word of God, that sustains the believer's soul." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on Numbers, Homily VII, 2.*
- "The lifting of the bronze serpent by Moses in the wilderness prefigures the crucifixion of Christ, where looking upon Him brings healing from the venom of sin." *Reference: Origen, Commentary on John, Book X, 18.*
- "The Passover lamb signifies Christ, whose blood marks the doorposts of our hearts, protecting us from the destroyer, and whose flesh we eat in the Eucharist." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on Exodus, Homily VI, 4.*
- "Joseph, sold by his brothers, represents Christ rejected by his own people, but eventually exalted for the salvation of all." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on Genesis, Homily XV, 4.*



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

- "The tabernacle, with its various parts like the altar, the lampstand, and the ark, represents different aspects of Christ or stages of spiritual growth in the soul." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on Leviticus, Homily IX, 1.*
- "The crossing of the Jordan by the Israelites into Canaan signifies the passage from this life to the heavenly kingdom, baptism being the entry into the spiritual Promised Land." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on Joshua, Homily IV, 1.*
- "David's victory over Goliath symbolizes the triumph of the spiritual over the material, of faith over doubt, and of the soul over sin." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on 1 Samuel, Homily I, 3.*
- "The Good Samaritan represents Christ, who comes to heal humanity (the man beaten by robbers), whom the law (the priest) and tradition (the Levite) could not help. The inn is the Church, offering refuge and care, while the oil and wine symbolize grace and the sacraments." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on Luke, Homily XXXIV, 3.*
- "The Prodigal Son's journey is emblematic of the soul's departure from God, living in sin, and eventual return through repentance. The father's embrace signifies God's unconditional love and forgiveness, while the elder brother represents those who judge and fail to understand God's mercy." *Reference: Origen, Homilies on Luke, Homily XX, 3.*
- "The Samaritan woman at the well stands for the soul or the Church, thirsting for truth. Jesus offering living water symbolizes the gift of the Holy Spirit, which quenches spiritual thirst and leads to eternal life. Her five husbands might represent the five senses or the idolatries of the past, from which she is freed through her encounter with Christ." *Reference: Origen, Commentary on John, Book XIII, 24-30.*



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Controversial Views and Later Re-evaluation

Despite his many contributions, some of Origen's teachings were later deemed controversial, leading to his posthumous condemnation in the 6th century. His speculations on

- the pre-existence of souls,
- the ultimate restoration (*apokatastasis*) of all beings,
- and his subordinationist view of the Trinity were particularly contentious.

However, it is essential to understand these views within the context of Origen's time, as part of his broader attempt to reconcile Christian doctrine with contemporary philosophical thought.

The Coptic Orthodox Church, while acknowledging these controversies, also recognizes Origen's profound influence on Christian thought. His speculative theology was part of a larger endeavour to explore the depths of divine mysteries, an endeavour that, despite its missteps, reflects a genuine desire to understand and articulate the faith.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Heretical views

Despite his many contributions, some of Origen's teachings were later deemed controversial, leading to his posthumous condemnation in the 6th century. His speculations on

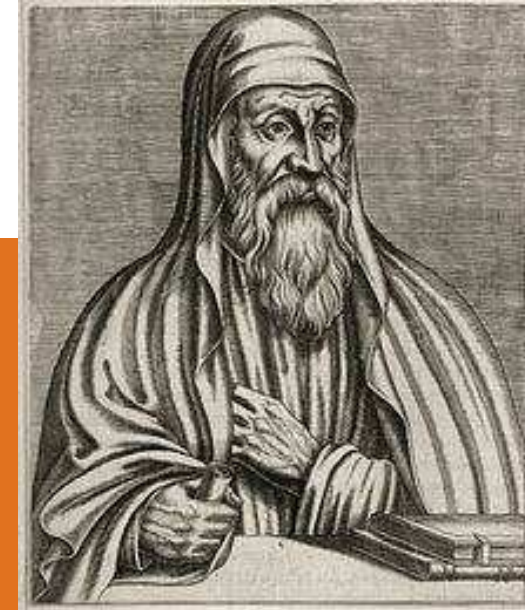
The “**Fifth non-Ecumenical Council (553 AD, Second Council of Constantinople)**” formally condemned certain teachings attributed to Origen, though the Coptic Orthodox Church does not consider this council ecumenical. However, some of his theological positions were problematic from an Orthodox perspective.

"The soul has neither beginning nor end... Every soul has existed from the beginning in the intelligible world, and has been placed in a body as a result of a fall." — De Principiis (On First Principles) 1.7.1

"Before this world, there was another world, and before that, yet another... the rational souls have been undergoing different transformations." — De Principiis 1.8.4

Condemnation:

The Church teaches that **God directly creates each human soul at the moment of conception** (Psalm 139:13-16), not from a preexistent state. The **Fifth Ecumenical Council (553 AD)** explicitly rejected this doctrine.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Heretical views

The Apokatastasis (Universal Restoration)

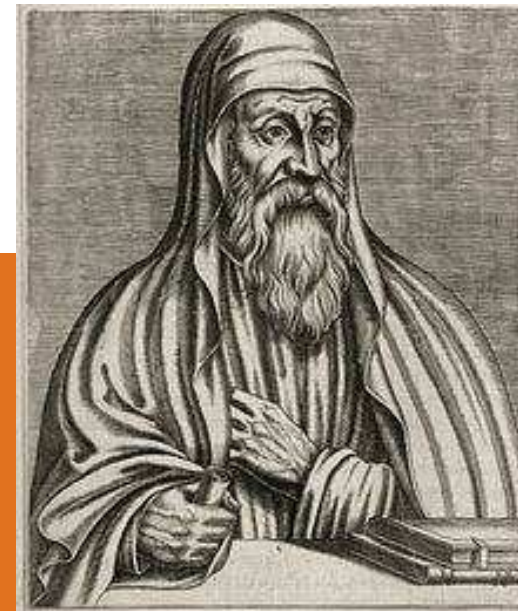
Origen speculated that at the end of time, all rational creatures—including the devil and demons—would be restored to God's grace.

"The end of all things will be the restoration (ἀποκατάστασις), when all souls, even the devil himself, will return to the knowledge and love of God." — *De Principiis* **3.6.5**

"After many ages, even Satan will be purified and restored, for God's mercy is infinite." — *Commentary on Romans* **8.11**

Condemnation:

This contradicts **Matthew 25:46**, where Christ speaks of "eternal punishment" for the wicked. The **Fifth Ecumenical Council (553 AD)** explicitly condemned this teaching.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Heretical views

Subordinationism (The Son is Inferior to the Father)

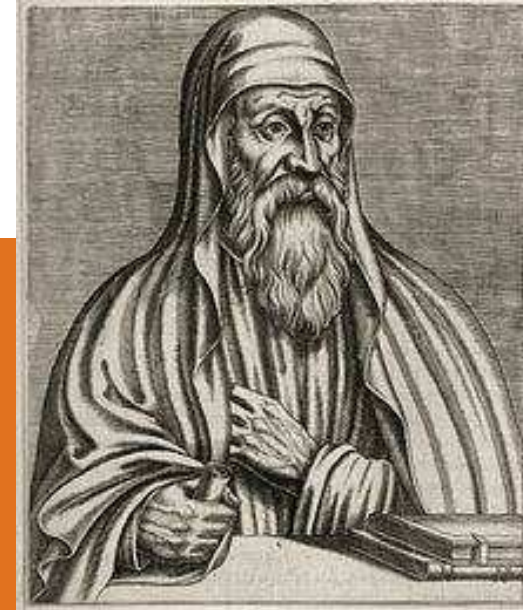
Origen sometimes suggested that the Son and Holy Spirit were lesser than the Father in **eternity**, not just in the economy of salvation.

"The Father is greater than the Son, not just in human form, but in His very being."
— *De Principiis* 1.3.5

"The Holy Spirit was made by the Son, just as the Son was made by the Father." —
Commentary on John 2.10

Condemnation:

This contradicts **John 10:30** ("I and the Father are one") and **Nicene Orthodoxy (325 AD)**, which affirmed that **the Son is co-eternal and consubstantial with the Father**. The Coptic Church **rejects any form of subordinationism**.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Heretical views

The **so called** - Second Council of Constantinople (553 AD) condemned Origen's views, stating:

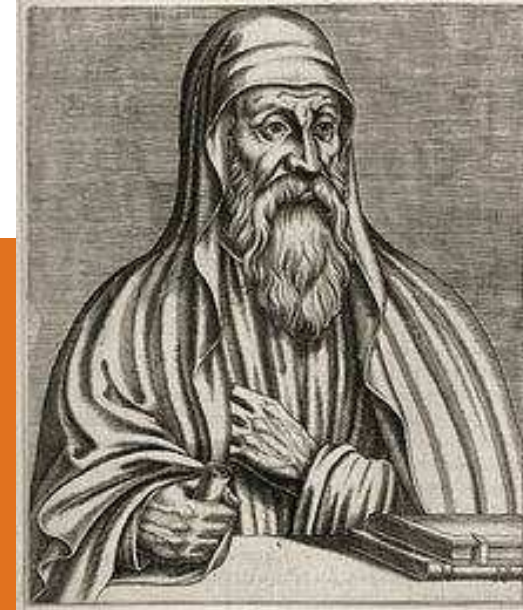
"If anyone says or thinks that the souls of men pre-existed... and that they are cast into bodies as punishment, let him be anathema." (Canon 1)

St. Jerome (347-420 AD) wrote:

"Origen erred greatly in thinking that the soul existed before the body and in believing in the eventual salvation of the devil." — Letter 84 to Pammachius

St. Epiphanius of Salamis (315-403 AD) warned:

"The Church rejects the doctrines of Origen, for he teaches the preexistence of souls, denies the reality of the resurrection, and devalues the Holy Trinity."
— Panarion **64.1**



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Heretical views analysed in defense

On the Preexistence of Souls – Was Origen Misrepresented?

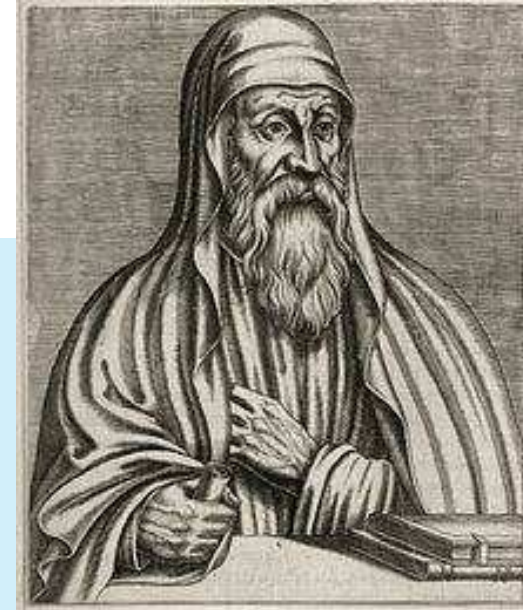
Origen is often accused of teaching that all human souls preexisted before their earthly existence, a view later condemned at the **Fifth Ecumenical Council (553 AD)**. However, Origen's actual writings show a more careful, speculative approach rather than dogmatic assertion.

"What the beginning of rational creatures was, only God knows. As for me, I only offer an opinion, rather than an assertion."

— *First Principles* (De Principiis) **1.6.2**

Defense:

Origen himself clarifies that his discussions on the preexistence of souls are speculative, not definitive doctrine. Additionally, **some scholars argue that later editors (like Rufinus and Jerome) altered his works**, making it difficult to determine his original stance.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Heretical views analysed in defense

The Restoration of All Things (Apokatastasis) – Did Origen Teach Universal Salvation?

One of the most controversial ideas attributed to Origen is *apokatastasis*, the idea that all beings—including the devil—will ultimately be restored to God. However, a closer reading of his writings suggests that he did not explicitly affirm this as a doctrine, but rather explored it as a possibility.

"We do not say that every sinner, no matter how obstinate and hardened, will necessarily attain salvation. The Scriptures warn of eternal fire and punishment."

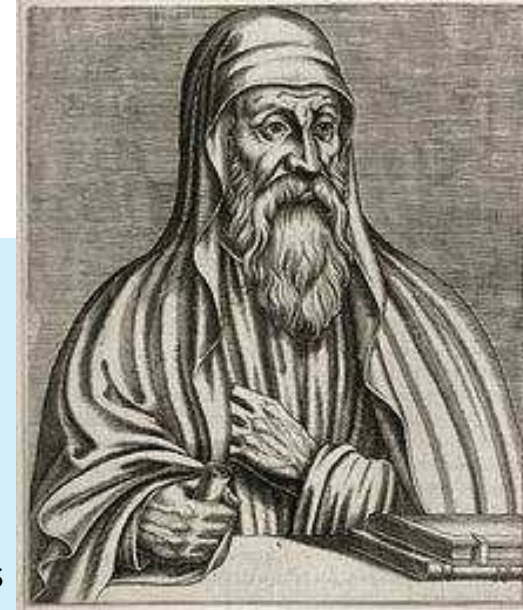
— Commentary on Romans **8.11.9**

"When the end comes, Christ shall hand over the kingdom to the Father... but only those who have truly purified themselves shall attain this blessed state."

— On Prayer **27.15**

Defense:

Origen clearly acknowledges the reality of judgment and does not categorically assert universal salvation. The condemnation of *apokatastasis* was likely based on an exaggerated or misrepresented form of his teachings.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Heretical views analysed in defense

Did Origen Deny the Resurrection of the Body?

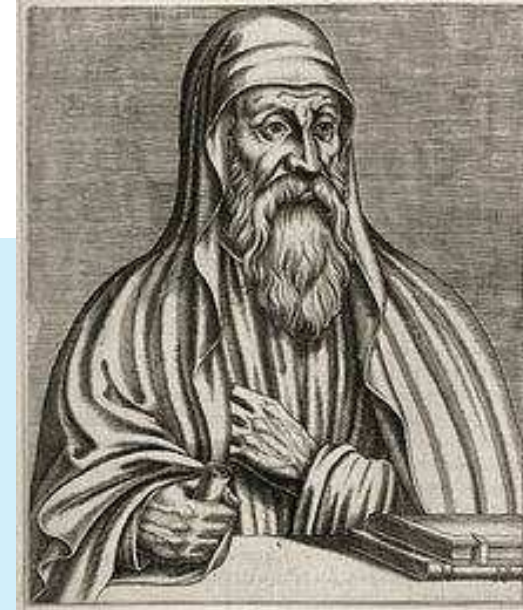
Another claim is that Origen denied the physical resurrection, instead believing in a purely spiritual resurrection. However, his own words clarify his position:

"We do not deny the resurrection of the body. But we understand that the glorified body will be transformed, incorruptible, and spiritual, as Paul himself teaches."

— *Contra Celsum* 5.19

Defense:

Origen affirms the resurrection, aligning with **1 Corinthians 15:42-44**, where St. Paul speaks of the transformation of the earthly body into a spiritual body. His explanation was later misinterpreted as a denial of bodily resurrection.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Heretical views analysed in defense - Did Origen Teach Subordinationism?

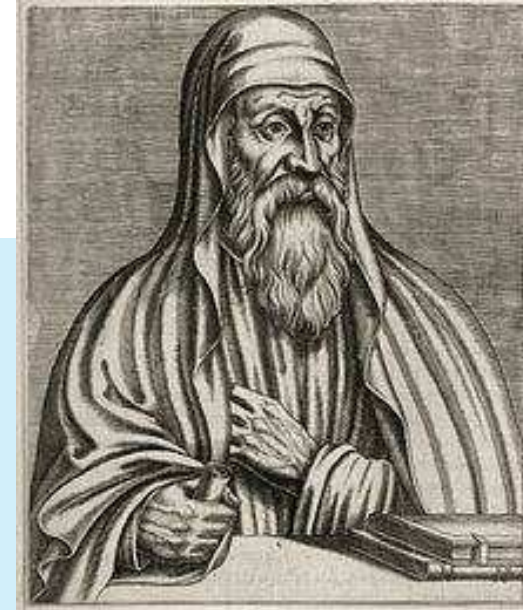
Origen has been accused of teaching that the Son is subordinate to the Father, which later Arianism distorted. However, he maintains the **co-eternity** of the Son with the Father:

"We do not say there was a time when the Son was not. The Son has his being from the Father, yet he has always existed."

— *Homilies on Jeremiah* 9.4

Defense:

While Origen distinguishes between the Father and the Son, he **explicitly rejects the idea that the Son was created**—which is a key Arian heresy. His language was later taken out of context. A careful examination of Origen's authentic texts shows that he affirmed the Son's eternal existence and divinity, even while emphasizing a distinction between the Father and the Son.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Heretical views analysed in defense - Did Origen Teach Subordinationism?

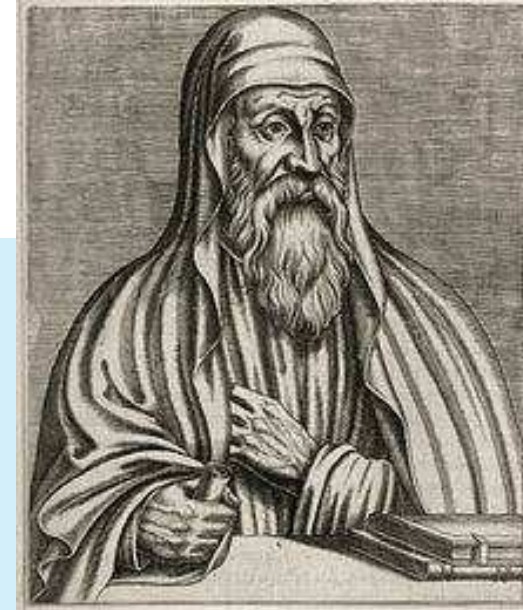
The Son is Distinct but of Divine Nature

"The Son, being other than the Father, is yet of the same nature as the Father."

— *Commentary on John 2.2*

Defense:

Here, Origen expresses a **clear distinction** between the Father and the Son, yet maintains their **shared divine nature**. While some may interpret his emphasis on distinction as subordinationism, his affirmation of the Son's divine nature refutes any claim that he saw Christ as a mere creature.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Heretical views analysed in defense - Did Origen Teach Subordinationism?

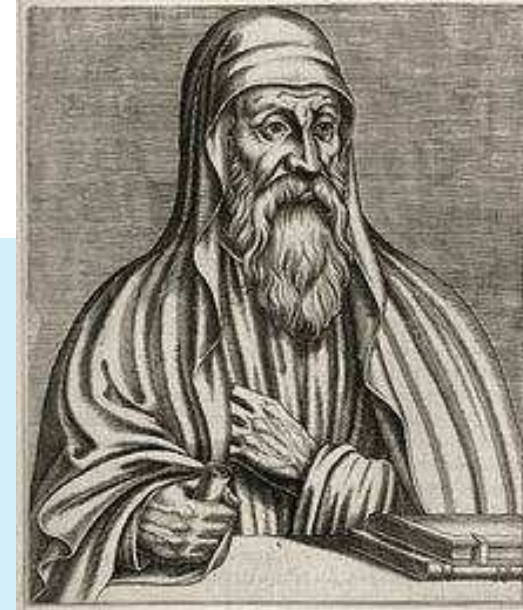
Origen Describes the Son as Divine Light from the Father's Light

"Just as we call a burning light 'fire' but distinguish it from the source of the fire, so also we say that the Son is God, yet distinguish Him from the Father."

— *Commentary on John 2.10*

Defense:

This analogy of fire and light is strikingly similar to later **Nicene theology** (325 AD), where the **Son is called "Light from Light"** in the Creed. Origen here expresses both the **distinct personhood** of the Son and His **full divinity**.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Heretical views analysed in defense - Did Origen Teach Subordinationism?

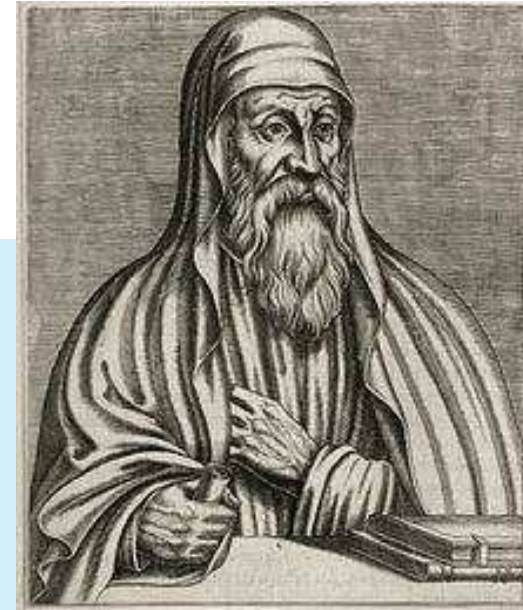
The Son is Eternally Begotten, Not Created

"The Son is not brought into existence by command, as were created things, but is eternally begotten of the Father's own nature."

— *Commentary on John* **1.22**

Defense:

Arians misused Origen's language of "generation" to argue that the Son was created. However, Origen himself clearly distinguishes between the **eternal begetting of the Son** and the **creation of the world**. This directly opposes the later Arian heresy.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

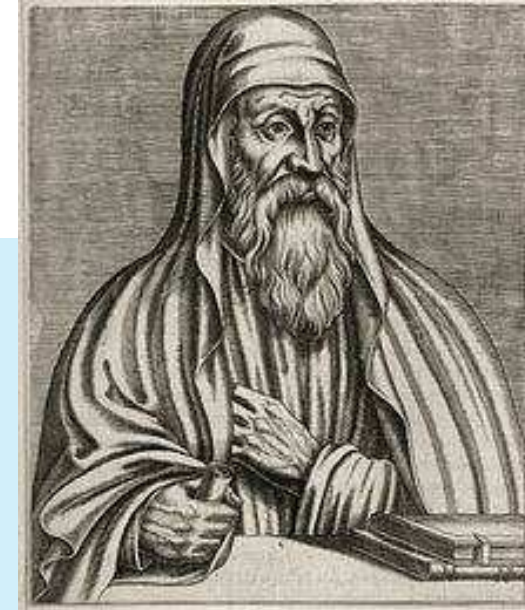
Heretical views analysed in defense - Did Origen Teach Subordinationism?

Origen Calls the Son "True God from True God"

"He is true God, begotten of the Father who is true God."
— *Commentary on John 2.2*

Defense:

- If Origen truly believed the Son was lesser, he would not have explicitly called Him "**true God.**"
- This **directly aligns with the Nicene Creed (325 AD)**, which states that the Son is "**true God from true God**".



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Heretical views analysed in defense - Did Origen Teach Subordinationism?

Why the Confusion? Origen's Language and Later Distortions

- Origen was one of the first theologians to engage in detailed speculation about **the relationship between the Father and the Son**.
- He sometimes used **philosophical terminology** that was later misunderstood or twisted by Arians.
- His writings were also **selectively edited** by later opponents, leading to distortions of his actual views.

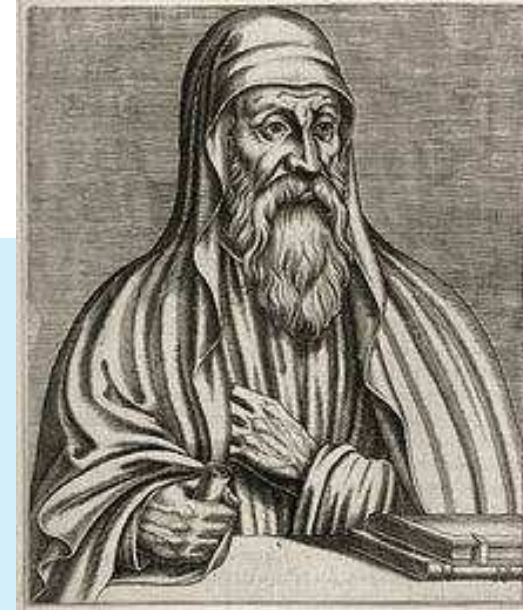
However, when we read Origen's **own words in context**, it is clear that he did **not** believe that the Son was a lesser being than the Father. Instead, he upheld:

The Son's eternal generation

The Son's full participation in the divine nature

The Son as "True God from True God"

His **emphasis on the distinction between Father and Son** was meant to preserve biblical truth—not to deny the Son's full divinity.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

Legacy in the Coptic Orthodox Tradition

Origen's legacy in the Coptic Orthodox Church is complex yet enduring. His contributions to biblical exegesis and his defense of the faith against pagan critiques continue to be appreciated. The Coptic Orthodox tradition values his intellectual rigor and his commitment to the transformative power of Scripture.

Moreover, Origen's emphasis on the moral and spiritual interpretation of Scripture aligns with the Coptic Orthodox approach to theology, which seeks to integrate doctrinal understanding with personal holiness and ascetic practice. His influence is evident in the writings of later Coptic theologians and Church Fathers who built upon his exegetical methods and theological insights.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

1. Dionysius of Alexandria - Bishop of Alexandria.

- **Contributions:** Dionysius was a prominent theologian known for his writings on the Trinity and his opposition to the views of the Gnostics. He expanded on Origen's teachings and was instrumental in establishing ecclesiastical authority in the region.

2. Theognostus - a prominent teacher.

- **Contributions:** Theognostus was known for his role in the Alexandrian school and is often associated with the theological teachings that emerged from Origen's influence. He wrote a work known as *The Exegetical Discourse*, focusing on biblical interpretation.

3. Heraclas - Succeeded Origen as the head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria.

- **Contributions:** Heraclas continued Origen's tradition of biblical exegesis and theological education. He was known for his pastoral care and efforts in evangelism.



APOLOGIST — ORIGEN (185-253)

4. Gregory Thaumaturgus - Bishop of Neo-Caesarea.

- **Contributions:** Gregory is famous for his theological works, particularly his *Declaration of Faith*, which reflects Origen's influence. He is known for his missionary work and efforts in establishing Christian communities.

5. Basil of Caesarea - Bishop of Caesarea.

- **Contributions:** Although he was not a direct disciple of Origen in the strictest sense, Basil was influenced by Origen's thought and teachings. He contributed significantly to the development of early Christian monasticism and wrote extensively on theological topics.

6. Eusebius of Caesarea - Historian and Bishop of Caesarea.

- **Contributions:** Eusebius, often called the "Father of Church History," was influenced by Origen's scholarly approach to biblical texts and history. He wrote the *Ecclesiastical History*, documenting the development of the early Church.



WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

What was a Christian service of worship like in the 2nd century? We are fortunate in having a good description of a normal Christian gathering for worship in the writings of the 2nd century theologian, Justin Martyr, who we will study in more detail later.

In his *First Apology*, Justin says:

On the day called Sunday there is a meeting of all believers who live in the town or the country, and the memoirs of the apostles, or the writings of the prophets, are read for as long as time will permit. When the reader has finished, the president in a sermon urges and invites the people to base their lives on these noble things.

WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

(Justin Martyr continued...)

Then we all stand up and offer prayers. When our prayer is concluded, bread and wine and water are brought; and the president offers up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the people assent with Amen. Then follows the distribution of the things over which thanks have been offered, and the partaking of them by all.

We hold our common assembly on Sunday because it is the first day, on which God put to flight darkness and chaos and made the world; and on the same day, Jesus Christ our Savior rose from the dead.

WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

The “president” of the assembly, who expounded the Scriptures and oversaw holy communion, was the senior presiding elder – that is, as Church organization developed in the 2nd century, the bishop.

In another place, Justin gives a more detailed account of the Lord’s supper or Eucharist:

Then bread and a cup of wine mixed with water are brought to the president of the brothers. He takes them and offers up praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. He gives thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things from His hands. When he has finished the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their joyful agreement by saying Amen. (“Amen” means “Let it be so” in Hebrew).

WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

(Justin Martyr continued...)

Then those whom we call deacons give to each of those present the bread and the wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and carry away a portion to those who are absent.

We call this food “Eucharist”, which no-one is allowed to share unless he believes that the things we teach are true, and has been washed with the washing that is for the forgiveness of sins and a second birth, and is living as Christ has commanded. For we do not receive them as common bread and common drink. But as Jesus Christ our Savior became flesh by the word of God, and clothed Himself in our flesh and blood to save us, so also we have been taught that the food which is blessed by the word of prayer handed down from Christ, by which our blood and flesh are nourished as the food becomes part of ourselves, is the flesh and blood of the same Jesus who became flesh.

WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

(Justin Martyr continued...)

For the apostles, in the memoirs composed by themselves called “Gospels”, have delivered to us what was commanded to them: that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks said, “Do this in remembrance of Me, this is My body”; and in a similar way, after taking the cup and giving thanks, He said, “This is My blood,” and gave it only to them.”

WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

From Justin's account, we learn that the main ingredients of Christian worship in the 2nd century were:

- The Reading and Expounding of Scripture,
- Prayer
- The celebration of the Lord's supper.

Indeed, compared with many churches today, the Lord's supper held a remarkably high place in early Christian worship. The local church celebrated it every Sunday and it formed a large part of the service.

WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Singing, which for many modern Christians is such a central part of worship, was not so important in the early Church; in fact, Justin does not mention it here at all.

However, he does mention it elsewhere, and we know from other accounts that singing and chanting were a widespread practice in the worship of the early Christians.

In the 2nd century, the most common form of singing and chanting was “responsive”. This means that one person (a Scripture reader or a clergyman) would sing or chant a passage, usually from a psalm, and the congregation would then make a response – either a single word, such as “Alleluia”, or a chorus.

There was also solo singing and full congregational singing, although the latter did not really become popular until the 4th century.

WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

What the early Christians chanted and sang were the Psalms of the Old Testament, and some of the poetic parts of the New Testament (e.g. the Virgin Mary's praise of God in Luke 1:46-55).

It was probably not until the 4th century that the singing of hymns written by ordinary Christians began to become common.

However, one of the greatest patristic hymns, the *Gloria in excelsis* ("Glory in the highest", based on Luke 2:14), dates from the 2nd or 3rd century.

No musical instruments accompanied the chanting and singing; Christians did not use instruments in their worship in the 2nd century, or indeed for many centuries afterwards.

The early Church looked on musical instruments as being part of Jewish or Pagan worship, but not part of the apostolic tradition of Christian worship.

WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

In one of the writings of Theodoret of Cyrrhus, an eminent Church father who lived in the early 5th century, we find the following typical statement:

Question: *It was unbelievers who invented songs, and their intent was deceitful (Gen. 4:21). God then ordained songs under the Jewish Law because of the childish state of their minds. So why do Christians, to whom God has given the perfect teachings of grace (which are quite contrary to Pagan and Jewish customs), still sing in the churches, like childish Jews under the Law?*

Answer: *Simple singing is not childish. It is singing with lifeless organs, dancing, cymbals, etc., that is childish. So we Christians renounce these instruments and other things fit only for children. We retain only simple singing.*

WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Modern Western readers should also note that standing throughout worship was the traditional practice in the early Church period, and for centuries afterwards.

The Western Church only began to introduce pews (fixed seats in the main part of the church building) in the 14th century – quite a late development.

The Eastern Church never introduced pews into Eastern church buildings.

People who were tired during early Church worship could sit around the edges of the building, but everyone had to stand to pray; the early Christians considered standing the only proper posture for public spoken prayer.

Early Christian art also shows us that when praying, Christians spread out their arms with upturned palms, and kept their eyes open, looking upwards to heaven.

WORSHIP IN THE EARLY CHURCH

As Justin's account shows us, early Christian worship was (generally speaking) simple in form and fixed in structure.

The pattern Justin describes would not have varied greatly in any church throughout the Roman Empire.

EARLY CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

From the beginning the Church has presented faith by means of a summarised statement called a ***confession***. This is a biblical term meaning to proclaim one's faith in God.

The Christian faith is a life in which the believer experiences personally together with his brothers, through the unity with the Father in the Son by the work of the Holy Spirit. This life cannot be defined or limited by a certain creed, nevertheless there is a necessity for those who accept faith to proclaim this faith in a brief simple form to show their membership in the Body of Christ.

The early church recognised this and we see this in the Baptismal confession and other writings

APOSTLES CREED

A legend which goes back to the 4th Century tells how the Twelve, before scattering, each formulated one of the twelve articles which made up this early creed.

What we found out later is that this creed was set after the apostolic age, but it was called apostolic because all its articles express the faith of the Apostles.



APOSTLES CREED

1. I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
 2. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
 3. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
 4. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
 5. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.
 6. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 7. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
 8. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 9. the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints,
 10. the forgiveness of sins,
 11. the resurrection of the body,
 12. and life everlasting.
- Amen.

