

## The Apologists

### Course Outline

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#### I. The Apologists

- a. Of God
- b. Of the *Logos*, i.e., his *Christology*
- c. c. Of man: freedom of the will the outcome of the marriage of Greek philosophy and Scripture
- d. Tatian the Syrian, a student of Justin Martyr
  - i. A Discourse to the *Greeks*
  - ii. The *Diatessaron*, a harmony of the Gospels
- e. Athenagorus of Athens
  - i. Defense of Christians
  - ii. The resurrection of the dead
  - iii. The doctrine of the subordination of Christ
  - iv. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit and of the trinity
- f. Theophilus of Antioch
  - i. A defense of Scripture as the Holy Word of God
  - ii. The term triad used to describe the relationship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- g. Melito of Sardis
  - i. Development of the doctrine of the person of Christ
  - ii. Development of the doctrine of original sin

#### II. The Interpretation of the Scriptures by the Apostolic Fathers and Apologists

- a. The Apostolic Fathers:
  - i. Proclaimed all the words of the Bible to be inspired words of the Holy Spirit
  - ii. Implemented apocryphal literature
  - iii. Used a modified form of allegorical exegesis
  - iv. Wrote in a style obviously inferior to New Testament writers

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#### b. The Apologists

#### **The Persecution in the Ancient Church over Two Hundred Years Ending in 312 A.D.**

##### I. General Characteristics

- a. Historically from the Jews; then from Gentiles
- b. Exact number of persecutions not defined

##### II. Persecutions under the Jews

##### III. Persecution under the Roman Government

- a. Domitian (81-96 A.D.)
- b. Trajan (98-117 A.D.)
- c. Antonius Pius (137/138-161 A.D.)
- d. Marcus Aurelius (161-180 A.D.)
- e. Septimus Severus (193-211 A.D.)
- f. Decius (249-251 A.D.)
- g. The Diocletian Persecution (303-311/313 A.D.)
- h. The edicts of toleration (311-313 A.D.)

##### IV. Analysis of the Persecution

- a. Persecution not continuous but always possible
- b. The Christian way of life: Christians known as killjoys
  - i. Christians were atheists: no visible gods in their worship
  - ii. Christians were cannibals: "My body and blood"
  - iii. Christians were incestuous: "Greet one another with a holy kiss"

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c. Summary

- i. Important theological points in this period
- ii. Persecution triggered by the mobs
- iii. No social status, a religion of the poor
- iv. Unpatriotic in terms of society
- v. Christians characterized as gloomy
- vi. Persecution first by mobs; later by the government

d. What judgment can we make?

- i. God's blessing did not manifest itself in material prosperity
- ii. Christianity had something to say to its culture
- iii. The church is purer the closer it comes to persecution
- iv. The absence of persecution in our society should call forth great praise and faithful service

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