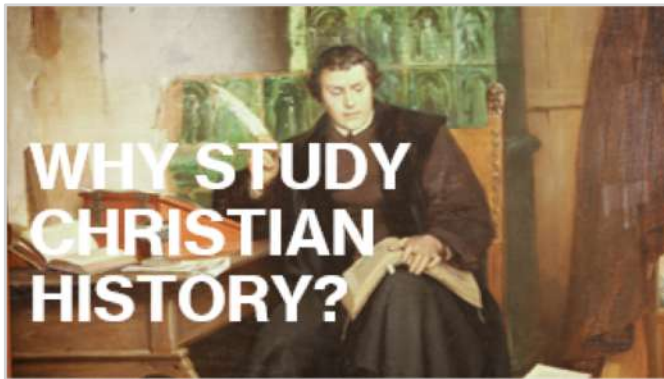


**PART
1**



**FIRST 500 YEARS OF
CHRISTIAN HISTORY
IN TWO HOURS**

ROAD MAP

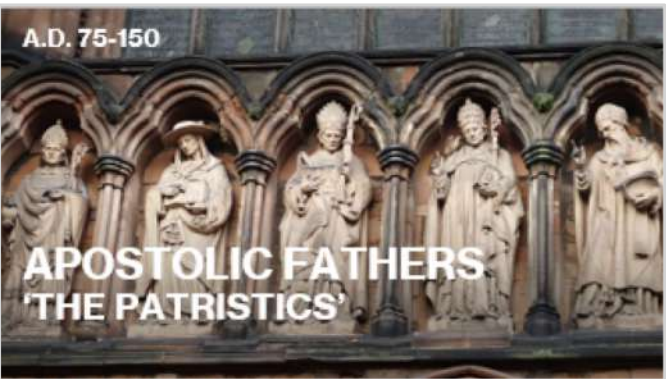


APOSTOLIC AGE

AD 30-95



A.D. 75-150



DIDACHE "The Teaching"



- Discovered 1873
- 1st century catechism
- Two parts
 - First half – Living out 10 commandments
 - Second half – church rituals

APOLOGISTS AND HERESIES

SECOND CENTURY



MARCION

CHURCH UNDER PERSECUTION

A.D. 100-323





WHY STUDY CHRISTIAN HISTORY?

1 John 1:1 (ESV)

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—

APOSTOLIC AGE

AD 30-95



Acts 1:8 (ESV)

8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

An engraving depicting the martyrdom of St. Thomas. On the left, a large, muscular, shirtless man (St. Thomas) stands with his arms outstretched, facing a large, arched opening from which flames are emerging. He wears a loincloth and a sash. To his right, a group of men in traditional robes and head coverings are gathered, some pointing towards the martyr. In the background, a tall palm tree stands next to a building with a crenelated roof. The scene is set outdoors.

THOMAS

- Traveled to Syria and India
- Killed near Madras

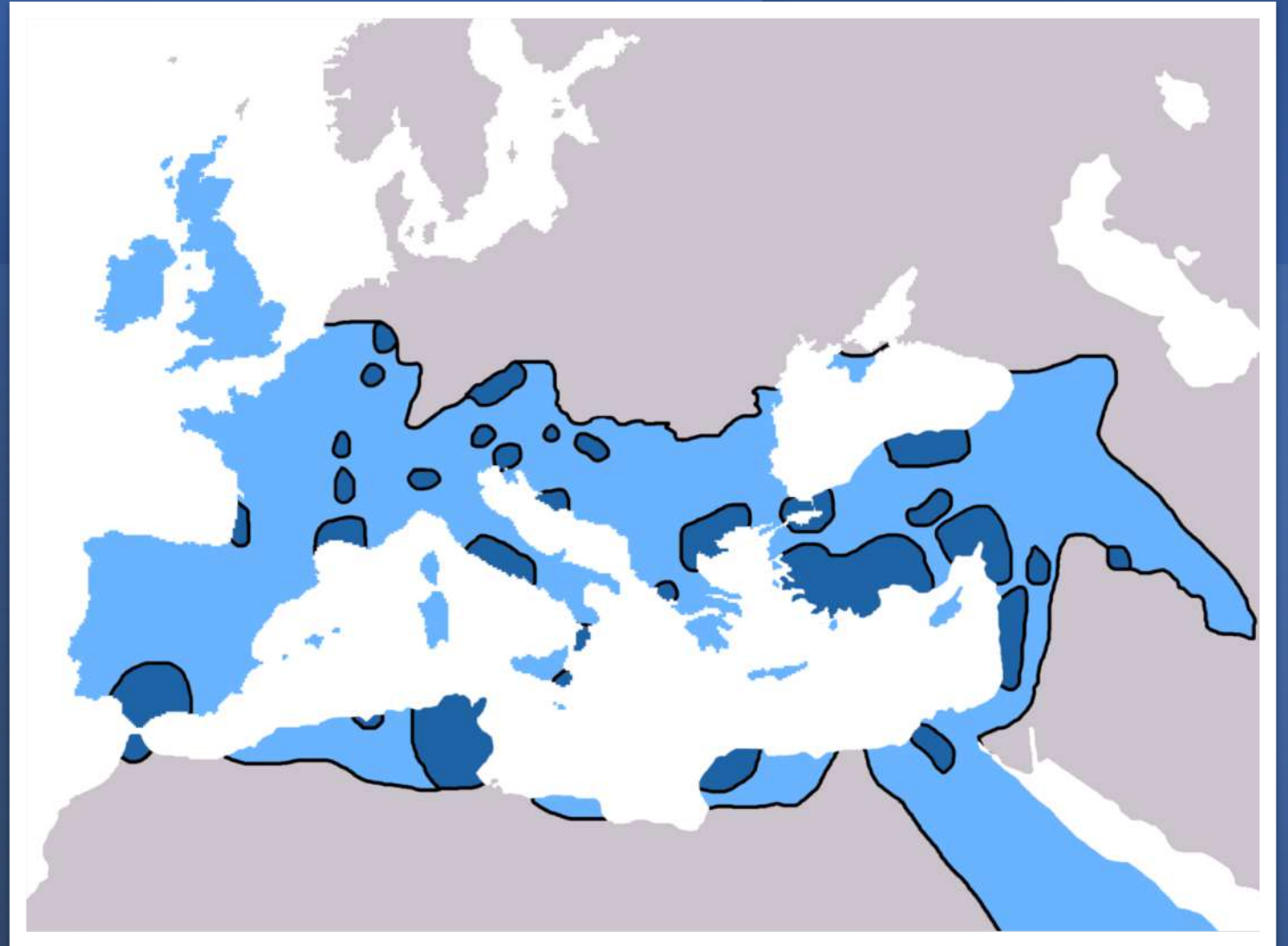


- Arrived 52 AD
- Founded 7 churches

KERALA, INDIA

**WHAT BEGAN AS
A JEWISH SECT IN
AD 30 HAD
GROWN INTO A
WORLD RELIGION
BY AD 60**

J. Herbert Kane | Historian



SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY

A large, ancient stone cross carved into a rock surface, set against a backdrop of a lush, green landscape with trees and a person walking in the distance.

Ancient Church in North Africa

Christian Growth Projected at 40% Per Decade

Figures estimated
by Rodney Stark

of Christians

1,000

1,400

7,530

40,496

217,795

1,171,356

6,299,832

33,822,008

% of Population



FIRST CENTURY



SECOND CENTURY



THIRD CENTURY

Contributing Factors

- Zeal of early Christians
- Moral lifestyle
 - Contrast to Roman infanticide
- Social networks

The Urban Character of Christian Growth

Figures estimated by Rodney Stark

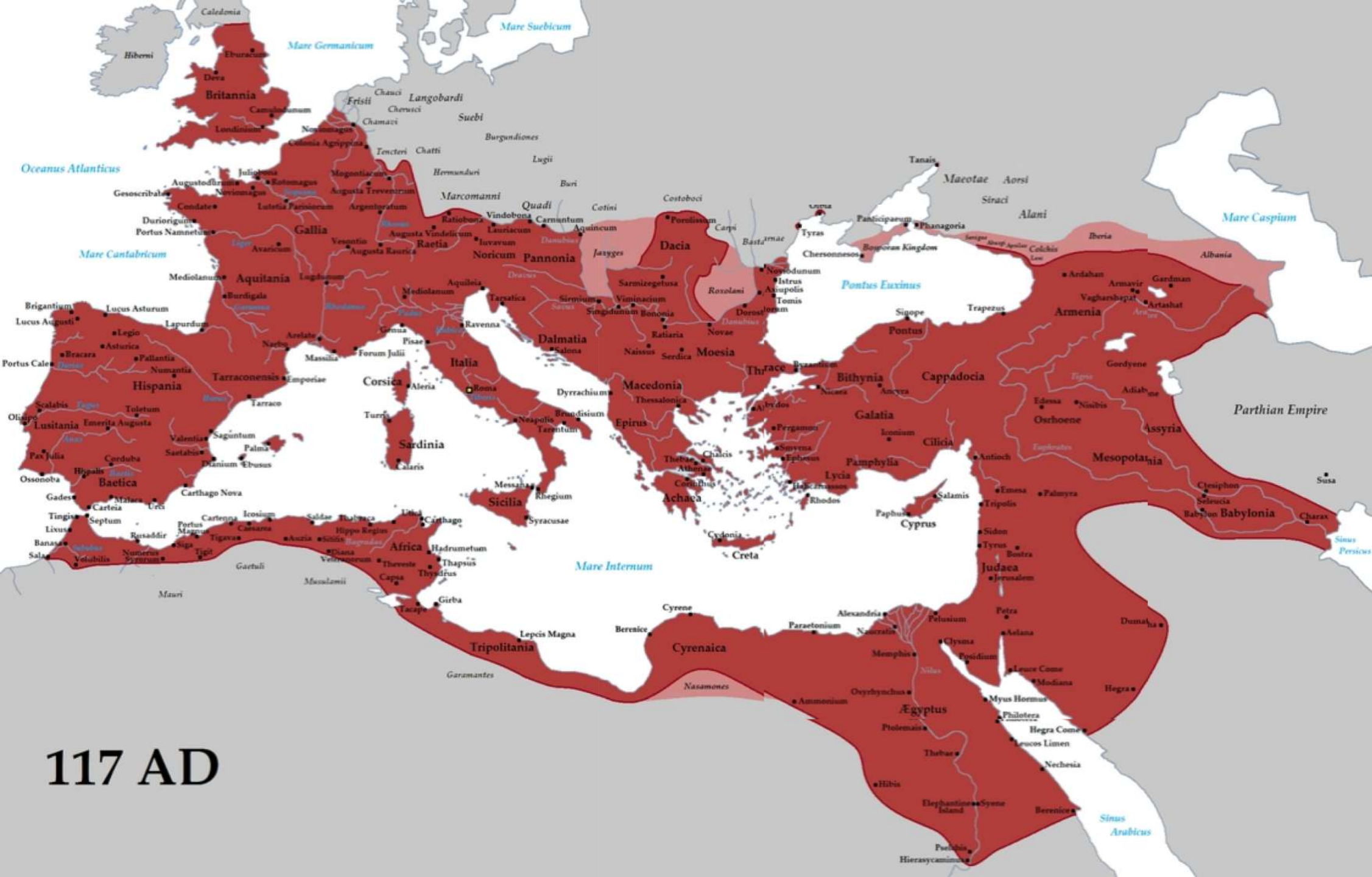
- *Rome
- *Alexandria
- *Ephesus
- *Sardis
- *Corinth
- Cadiz
- **Memphis
- **Carthage
- **Edessa
- **Syracuse
- *Smyrna

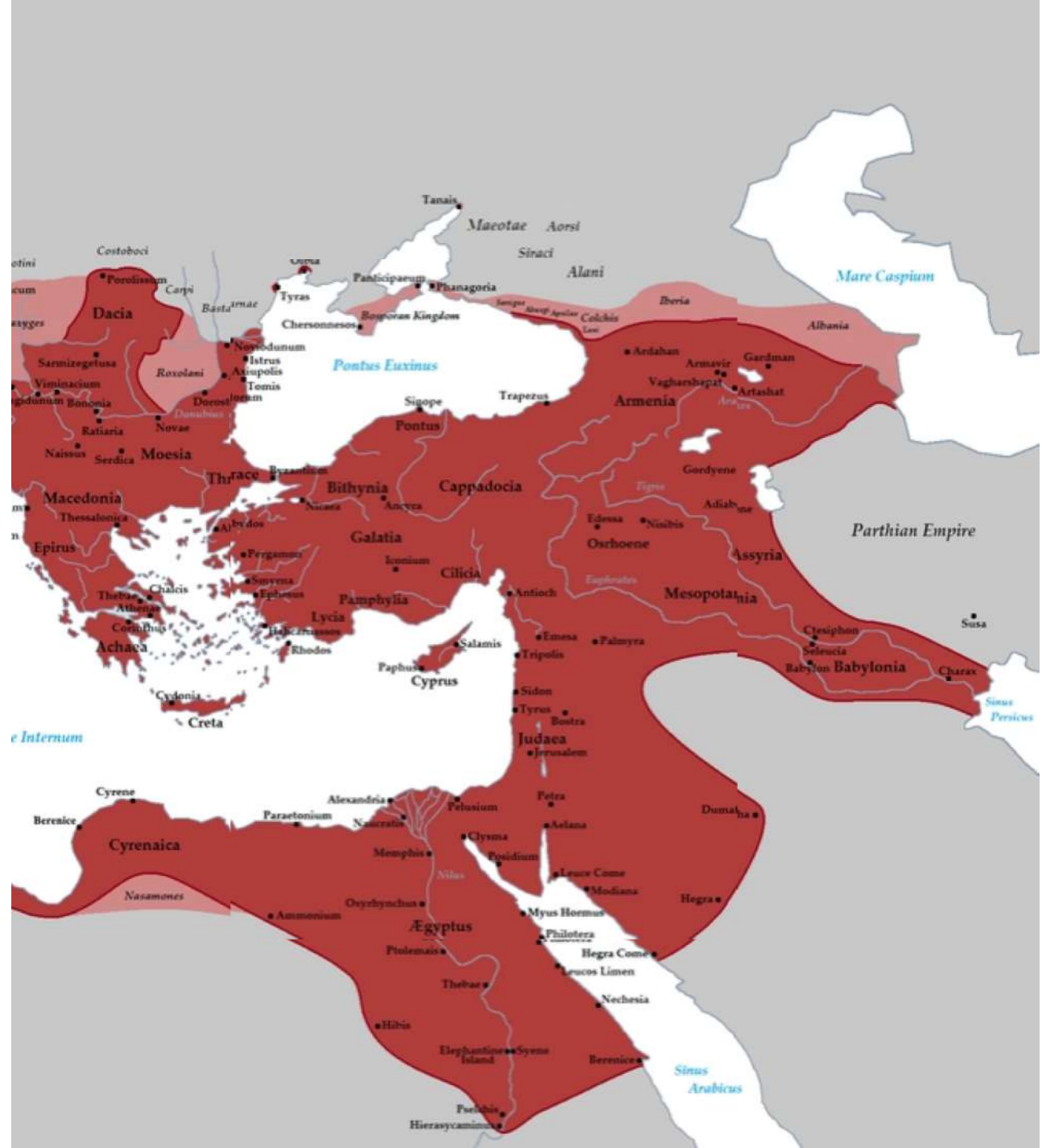
*Known to have a church by AD 100
**Known to have a church by AD 200

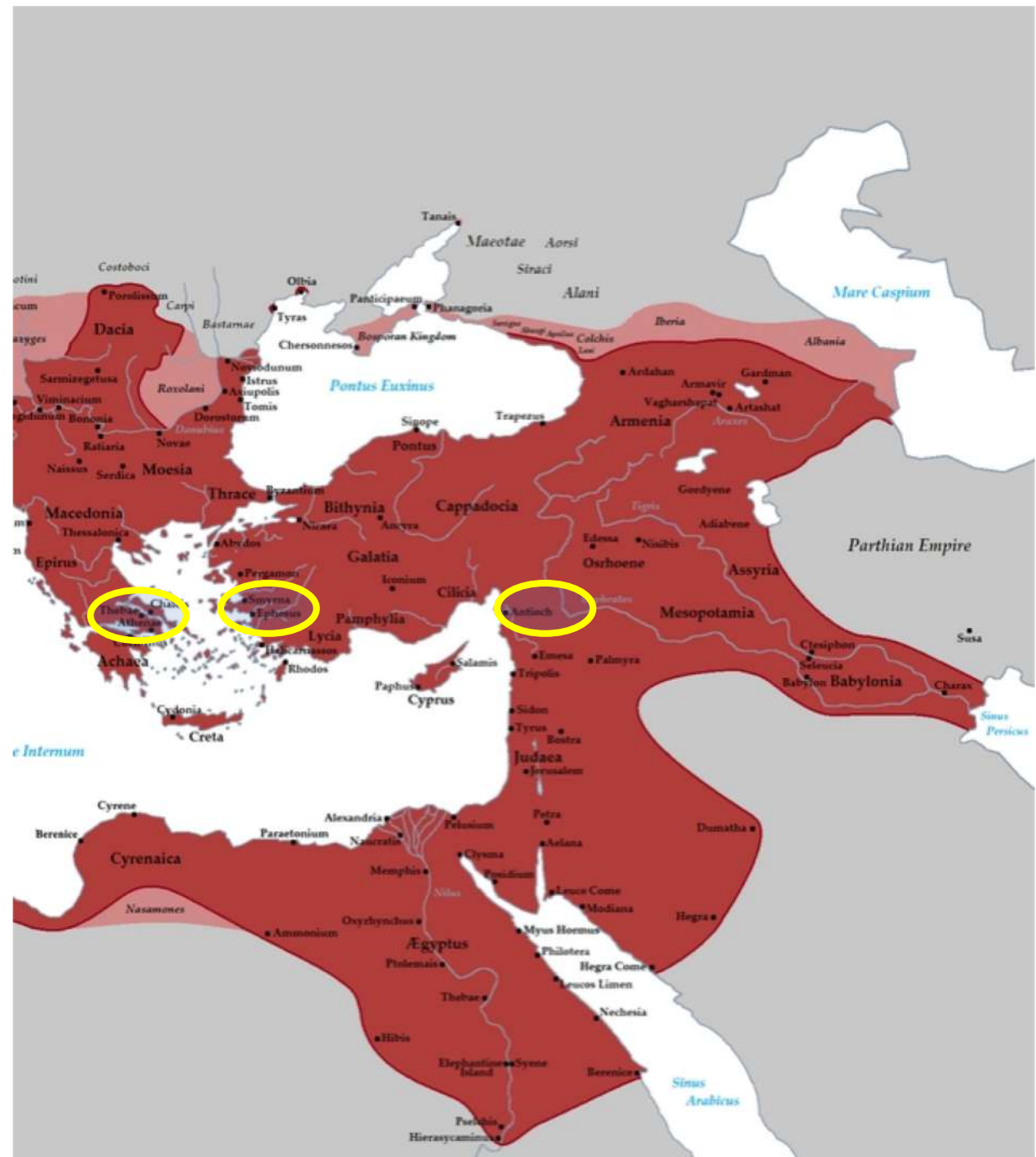
400,000

200,000





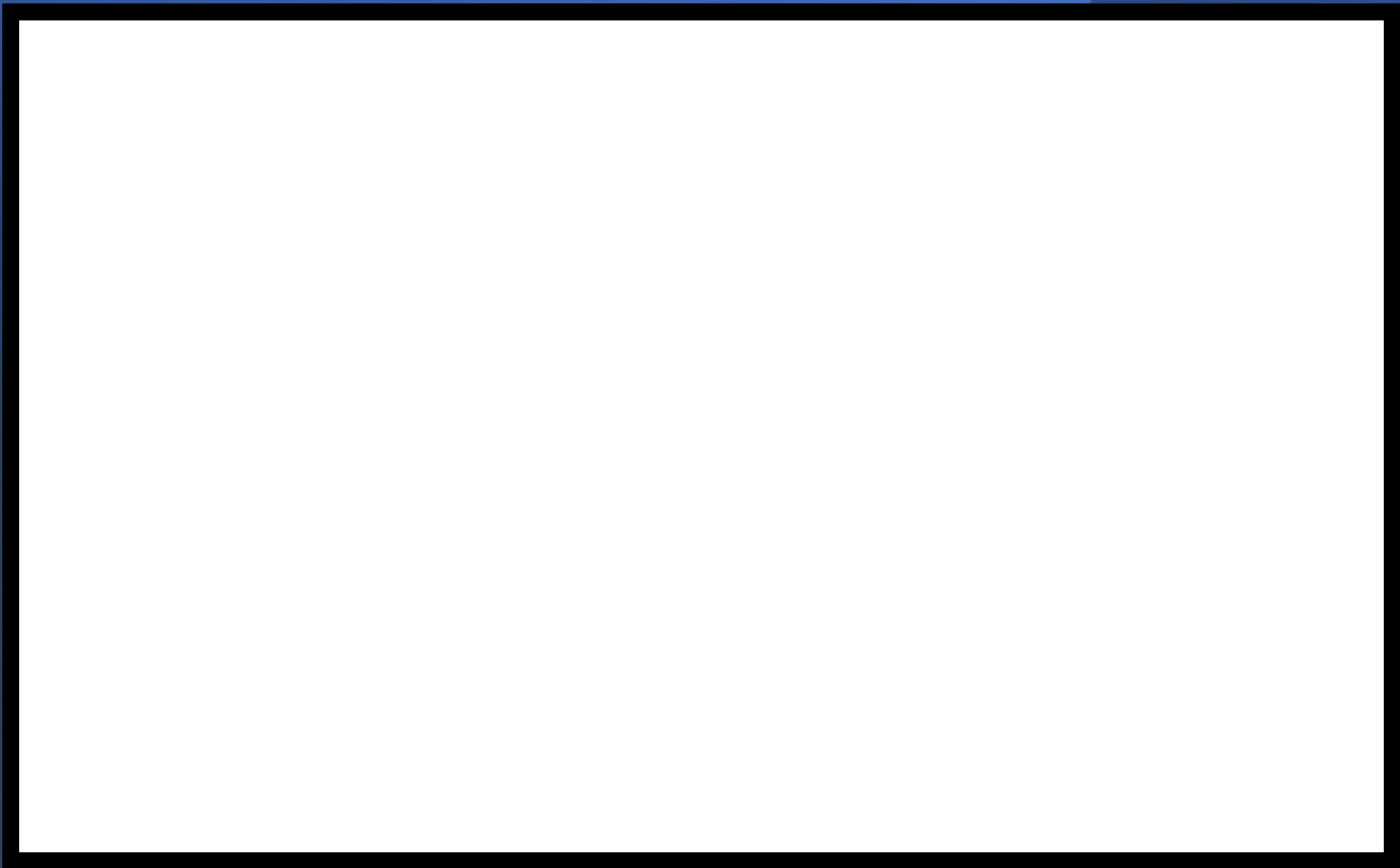






ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL

- **50,000 miles of Roman roads**
- **Still used today**





PAX ROMANA



- **Political and social stability**
- **Common Greek language**
- **Spread of ideas**

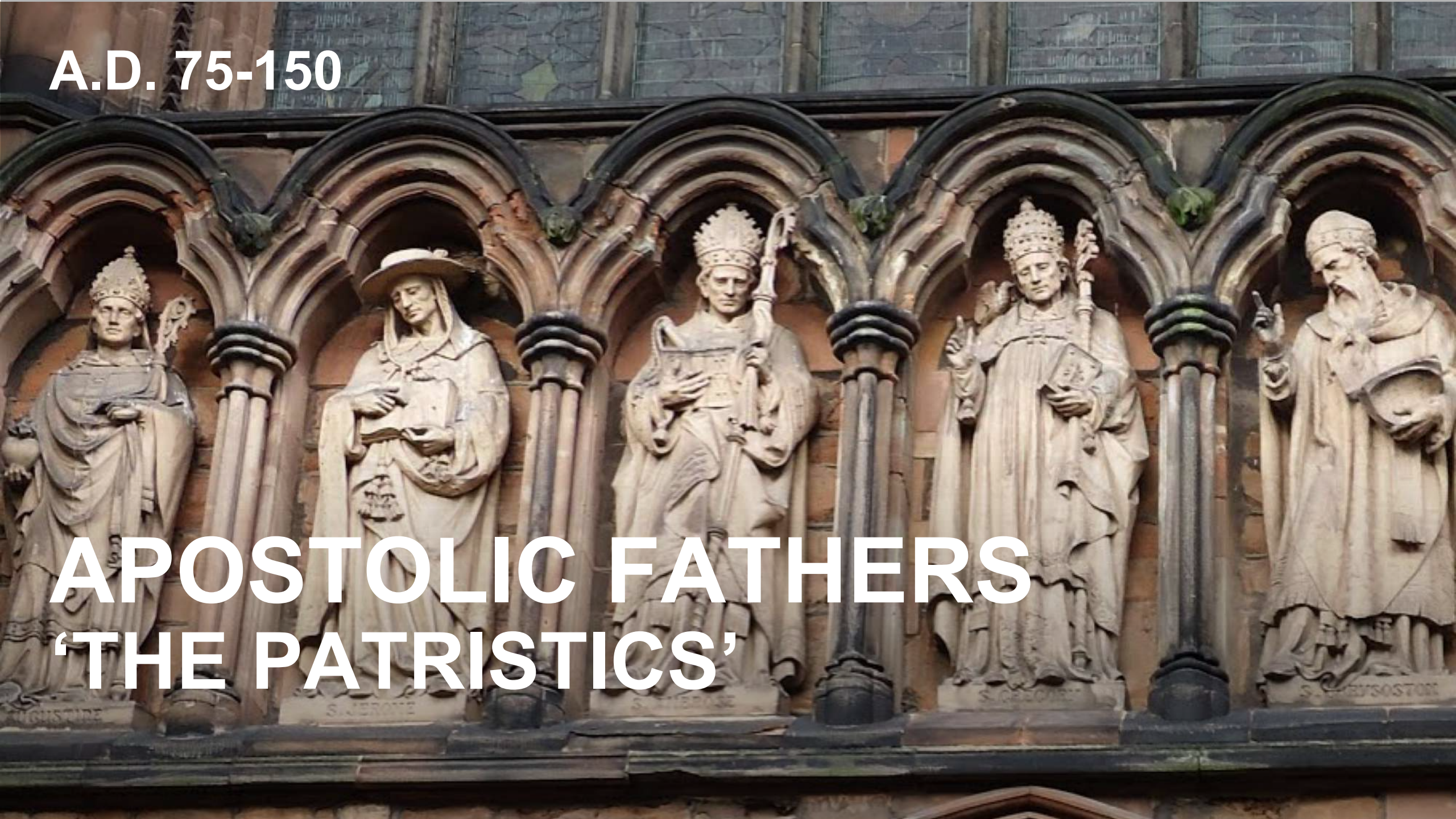
JUDAISM

The background of the slide is a photograph of ancient stone ruins. On the left, there are three tall, fluted columns standing. To their right is a wall made of large, rectangular stone blocks. In the center-right, there is a semi-circular archway, also constructed from stone. The scene is set outdoors with some greenery and a cloudy sky in the background.

- **Judaism recognized as a legal religion**
- **Same status given to Christians**

A.D. 75-150

APOSTOLIC FATHERS 'THE PATRISTICS'



APOSTOLIC FATHERS

~ Directly linked to apostles themselves

Clement of Rome

Ignatius of Antioch

Polycarp

CLEMENT OF ROME

A.D. 35-99

- **Bishop**
- **Disciple of
Apostle Paul**
- **Witnessed
martyrdom of
Peter and
Paul**



Philippians 4:3 (ESV)

3 Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with **Clement** and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

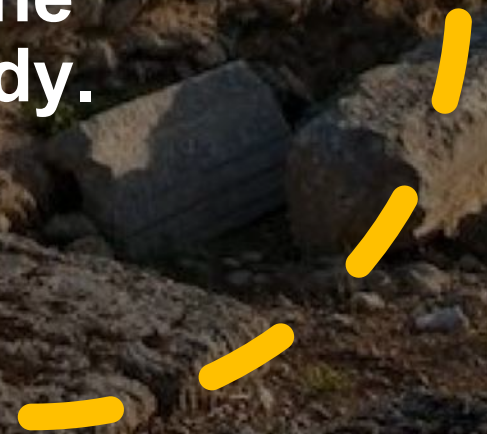
Letter from Clement

'The church of God, living in exile in Rome, to the church of God, exiled in Corinth - to you who are called and sanctified by God's will through our Lord Jesus Christ. Abundant grace and peace be yours from God Almighty through Jesus Christ.'



Letter from Clement

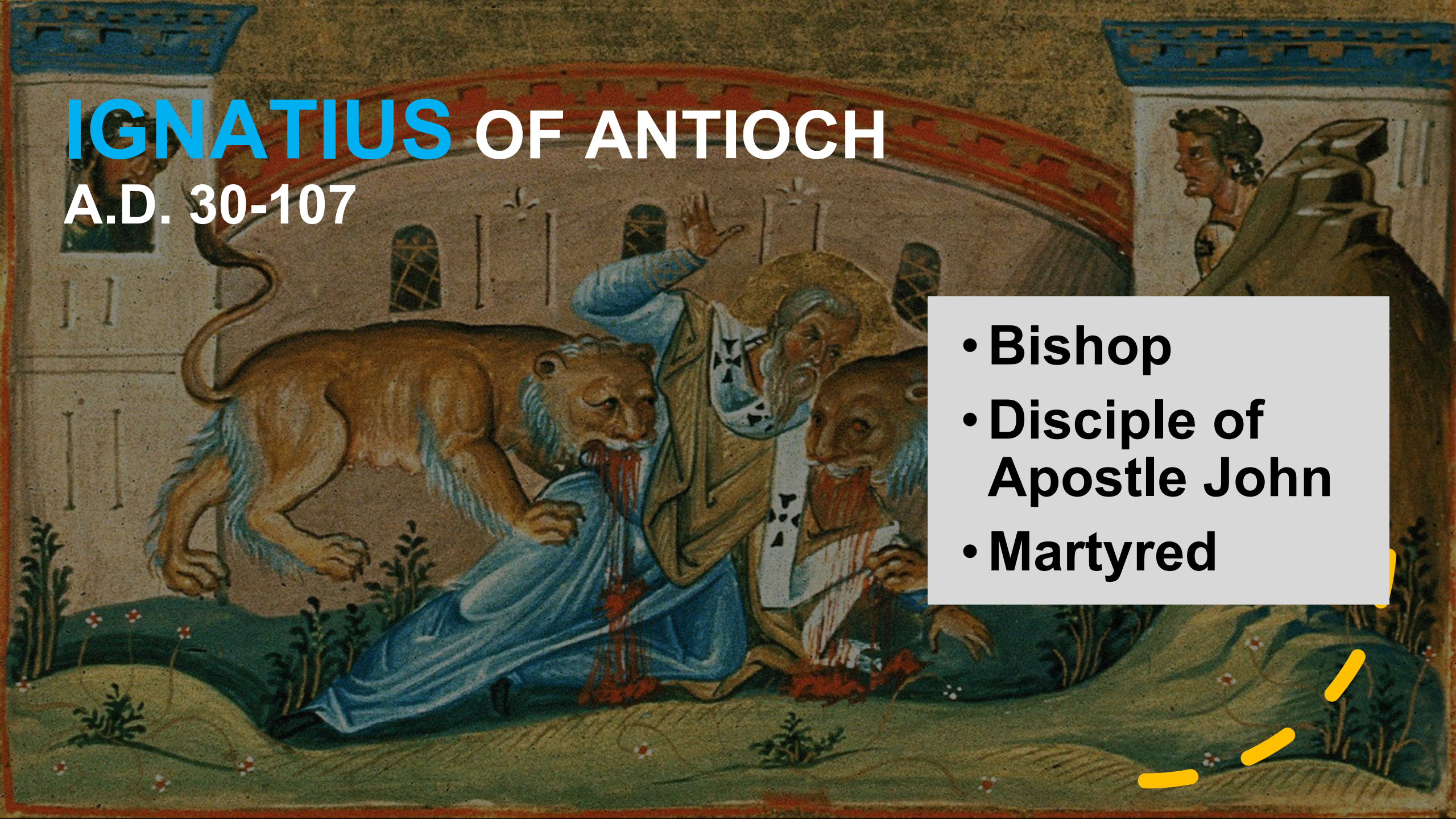
Let us take our body for an example. The head is nothing without the feet, and the feet are nothing without the head; yea, the very smallest members of our body are necessary and useful to the whole body. But all work harmoniously together, and are under one common rule for the preservation of the whole body.



IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

A.D. 30-107

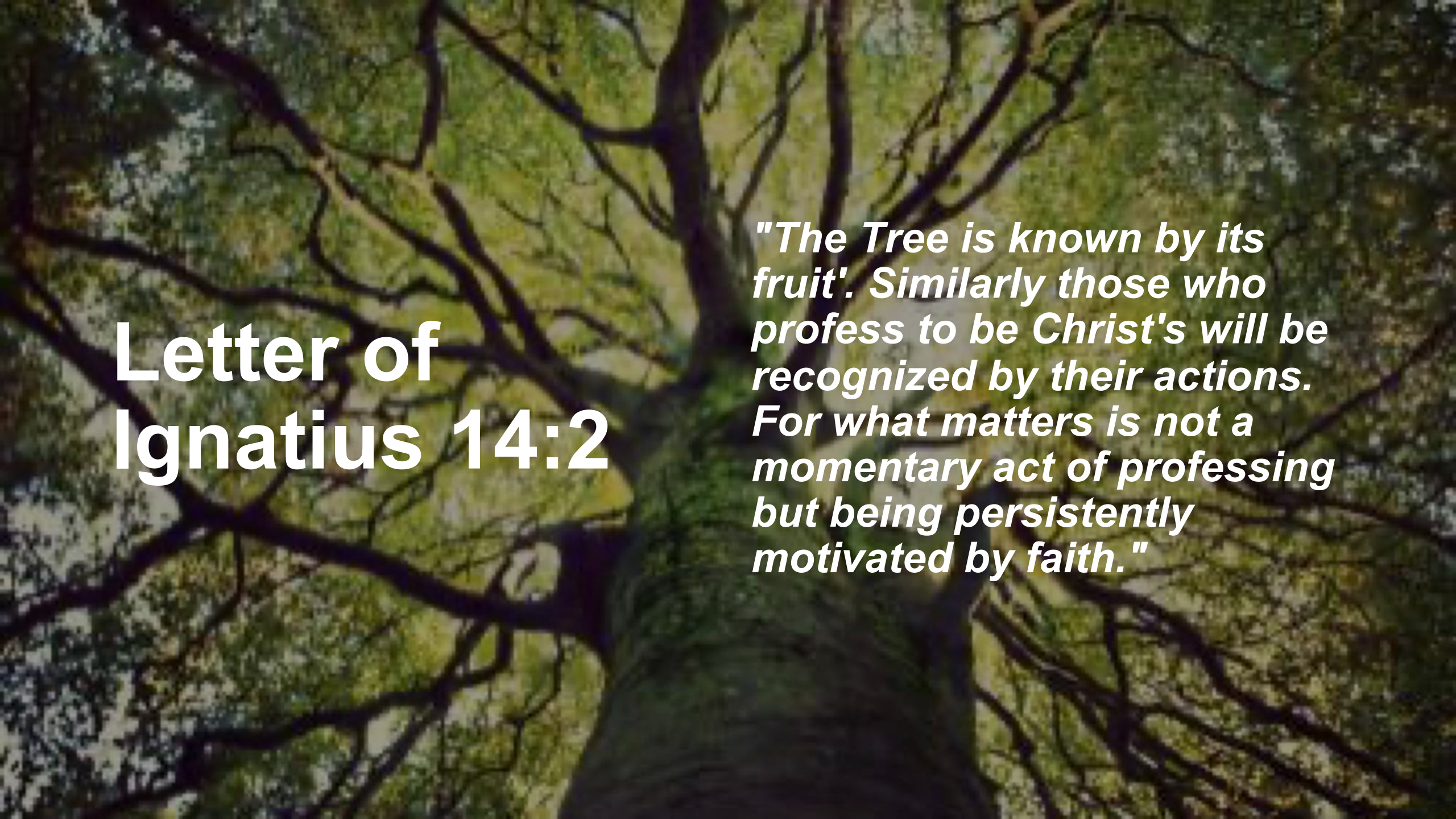
- Bishop
- Disciple of Apostle John
- Martyred





IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH A.D. 30-107

"Just pray that I will have the strength both outwardly and inwardly [...] that I might not merely be called a Christian, but actually prove to be one."



Letter of Ignatius 14:2

"The Tree is known by its fruit'. Similarly those who profess to be Christ's will be recognized by their actions. For what matters is not a momentary act of professing but being persistently motivated by faith."



POLYCARP OF SMYRNA A.D. 69-156

- **Disciple of Apostle John**
- **Arrested after prayer meeting**
- **Tied to the stake**
- **Martyred**

The background of the slide is a dark, atmospheric photograph of a large fleet of sailboats, likely a regatta, sailing on a body of water. The boats are silhouetted against a hazy, light-colored sky, creating a sense of depth and scale. The water appears calm with subtle ripples.

IRENÆUS

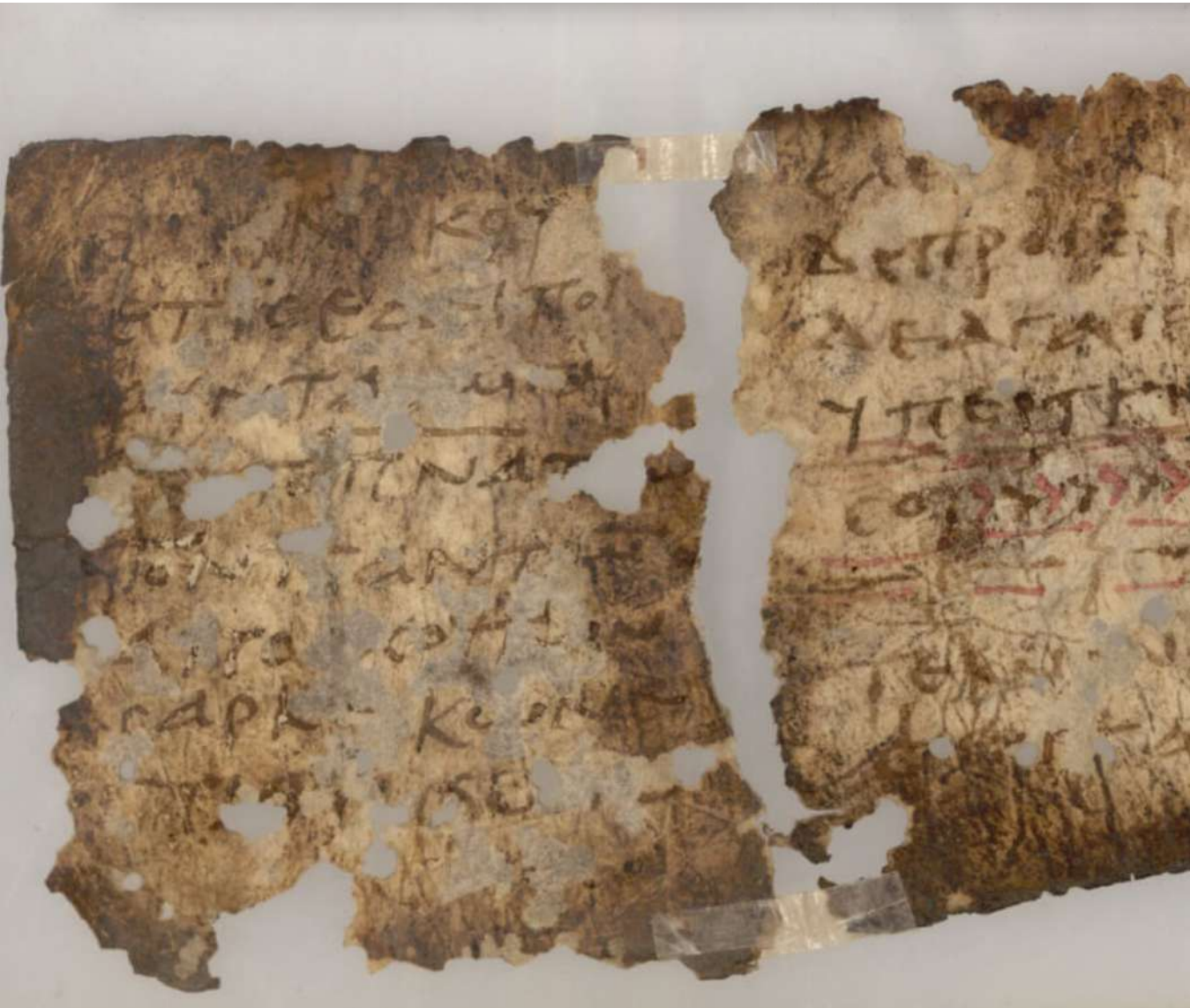
BISHOP OF GAUL

STUDENT OF POLYCARP

"And I remember how he spoke of his conversations with John and with others who had seen the Lord, how he would recite their words from memory, and recall what he had heard from them concerning the Lord, his mighty works and his teaching."

DIDACHE

“The Teaching”



- **Discovered 1873**
- **1st century catechism**
- **Two parts**
 - **First half – Living out 10 commandments**
 - **Second half – church rituals**



BAPTISM

“Baptize in running water, ‘in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.’[...] if you cannot in cold, then in warm.”



LORD'S SUPPER

“Eucharist” from Greek word “the giving of thanks”

APOLOGISTS AND HERESIES

SECOND CENTURY



MARCION

TWIN PRESSURES



Outward Pressure

Pagan Philosophers / Intelligencia



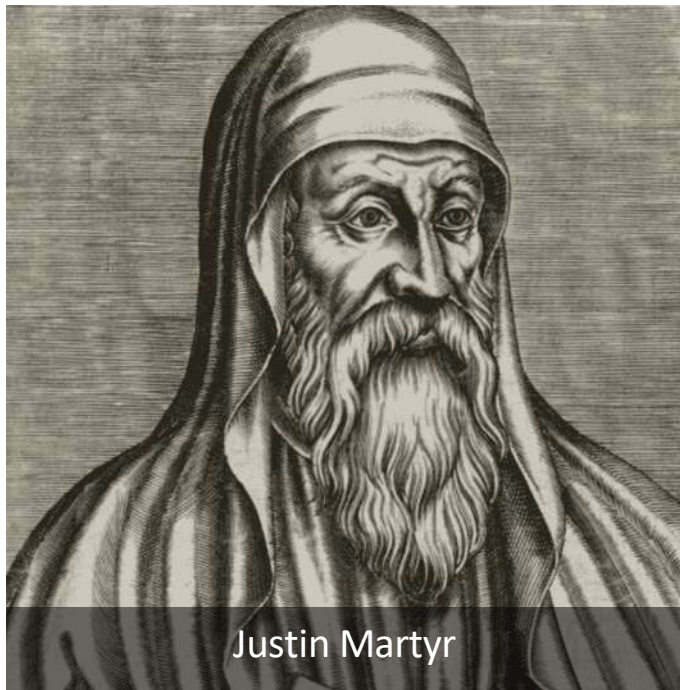
Internal Pressure

Heresy

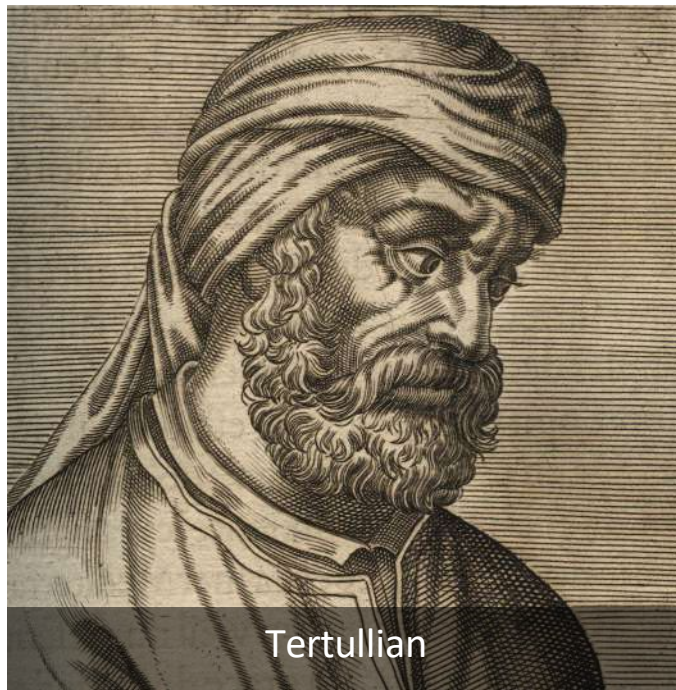


Someone who defends their beliefs against critics and recommends their faith to outsiders

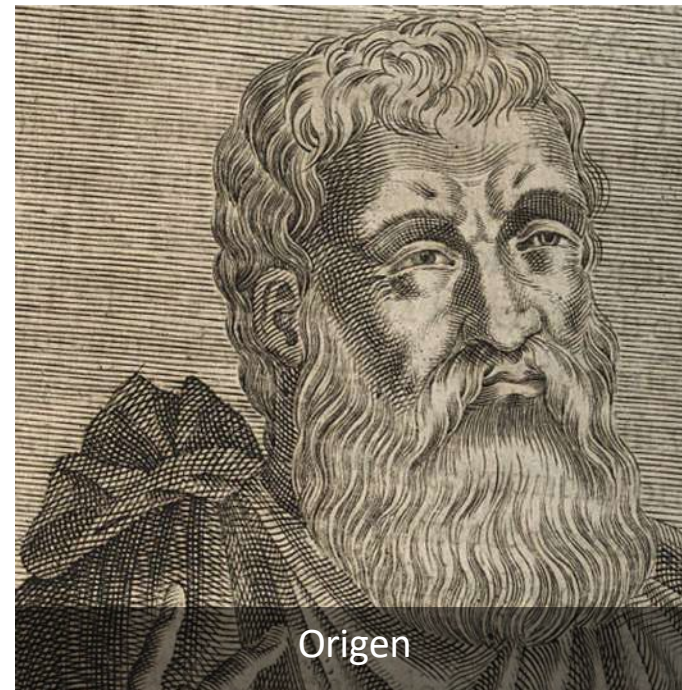
DEFINITION OF APOLOGIST



Justin Martyr



Tertullian



Origen

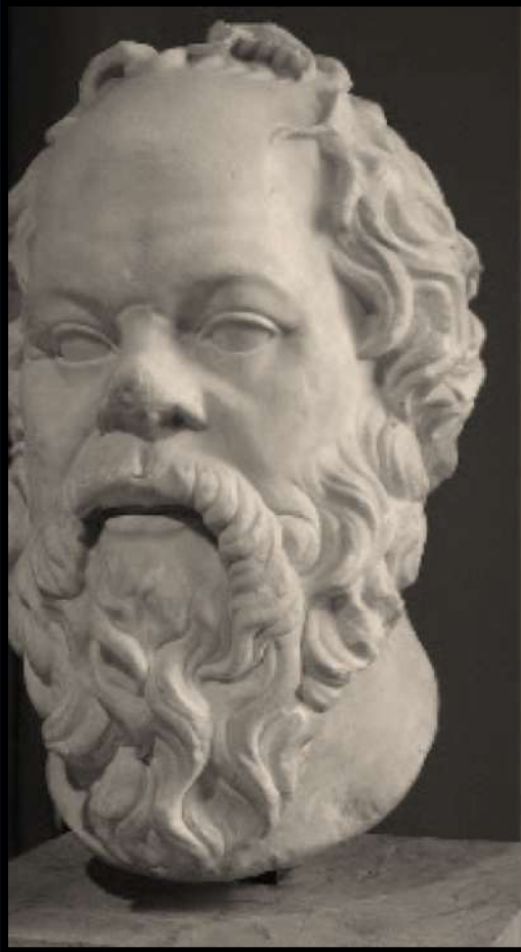
THE APOLOGISTS



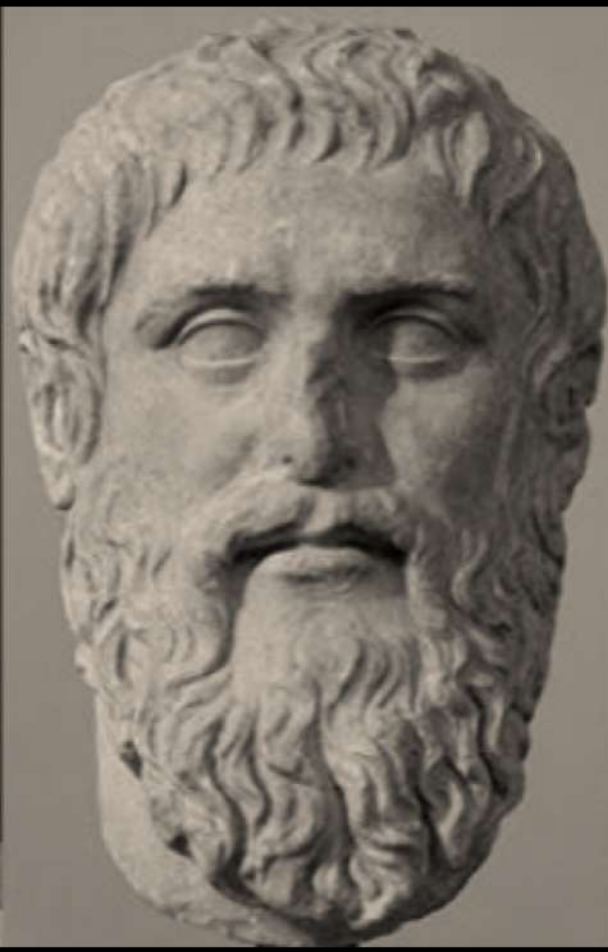
JUSTIN MARTYR

A.D. 100? - 165

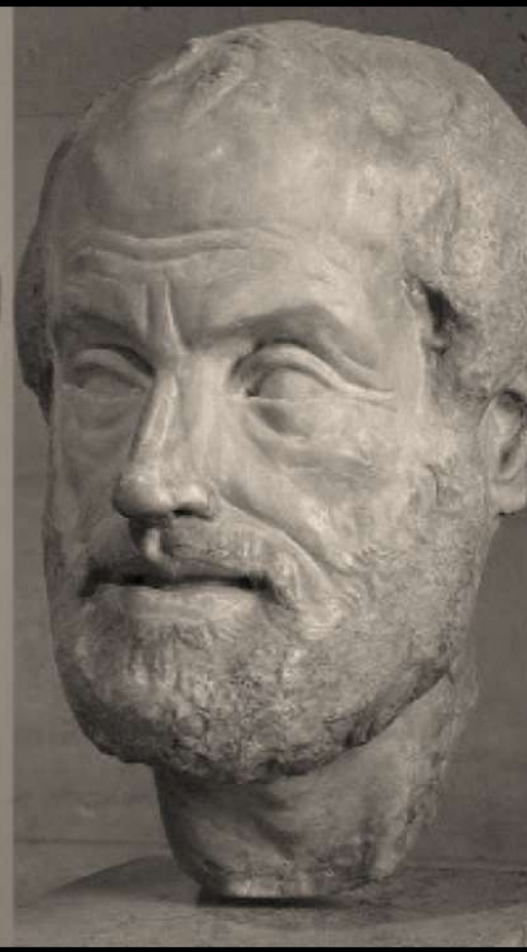
- **Philosopher, apologist**
- **Scholarly basis for Christianity**
- **Argument for free will**



Socrates



Plato



Aristotle



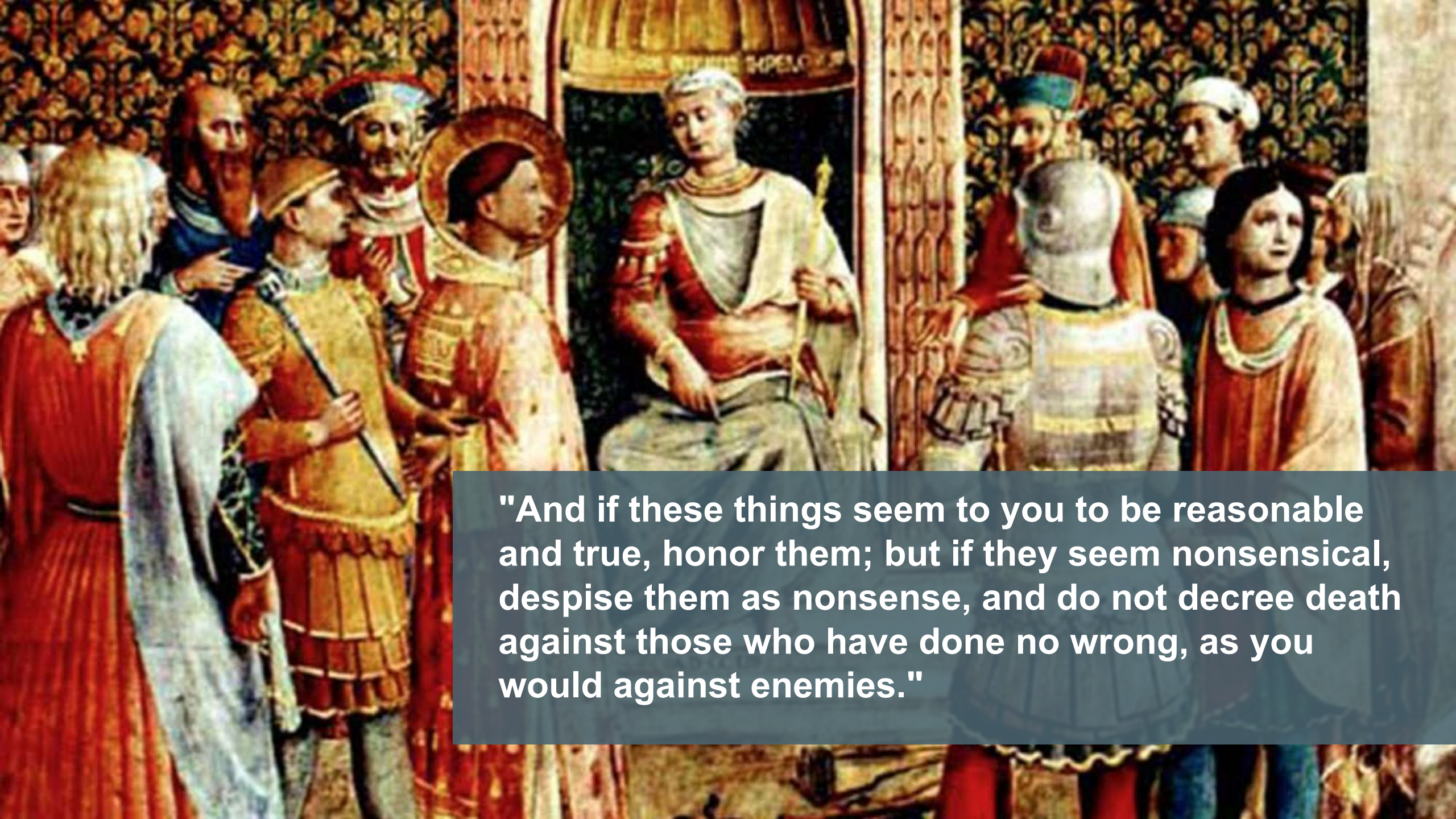
CONVERSION OF JUSTIN MARTYR

- **Witness of old man**
- **Dialogue through Christian writings**
- **Witnessed Christian martyrs**



JUSTIN MARTYR

- Started giving special talks
- Writes defenses of faith “apologies”
- Explains Christian worship



"And if these things seem to you to be reasonable and true, honor them; but if they seem nonsensical, despise them as nonsense, and do not decree death against those who have done no wrong, as you would against enemies."



JUSTIN MARTYR

- Started giving special talks
- Writes defenses of faith “apologies”
- Explains Christian worship
- Criticizes philosopher Crescens for prejudice



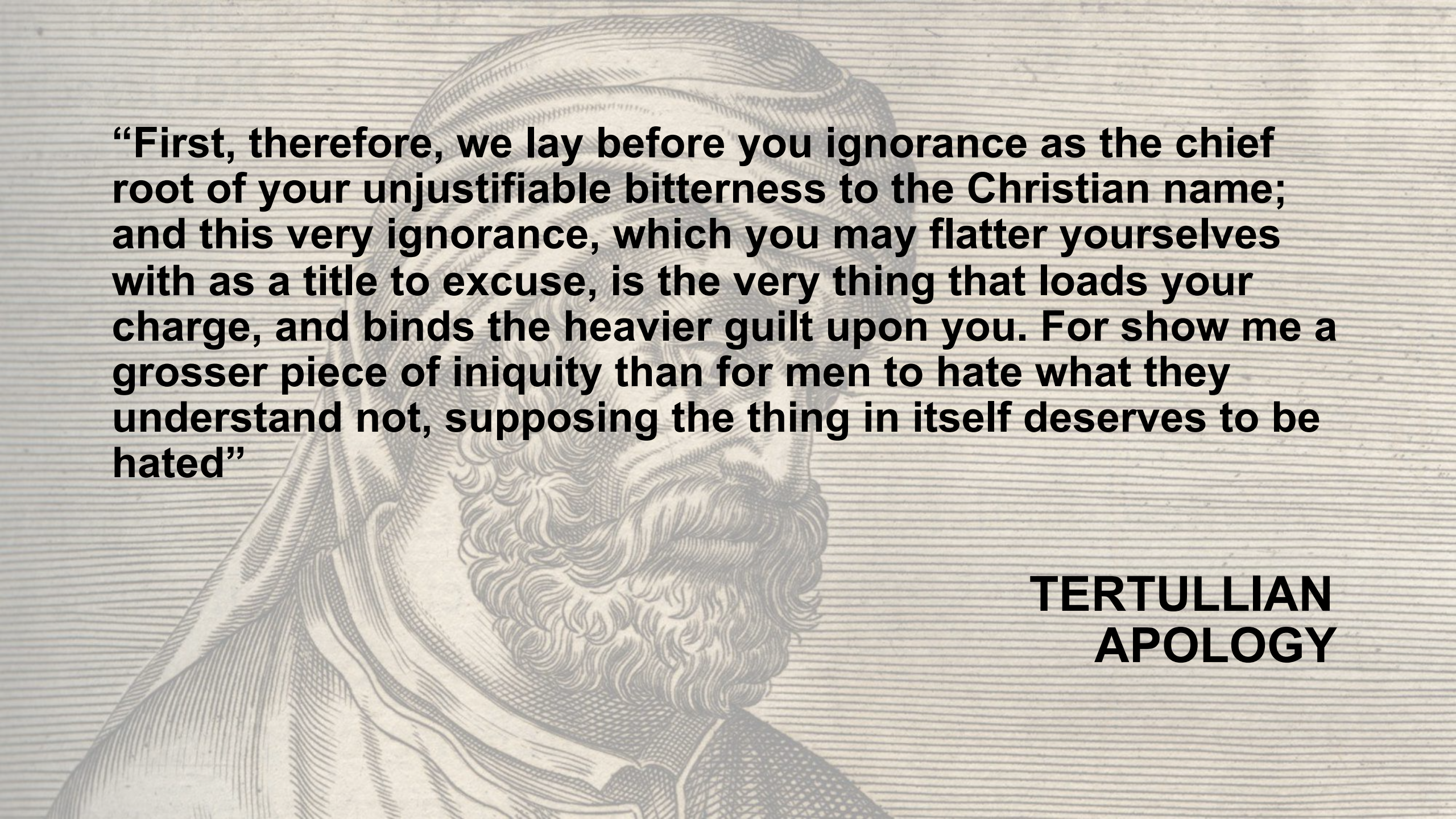


TERTULLIAN

OF CARTHAGE

A.D. 155-240

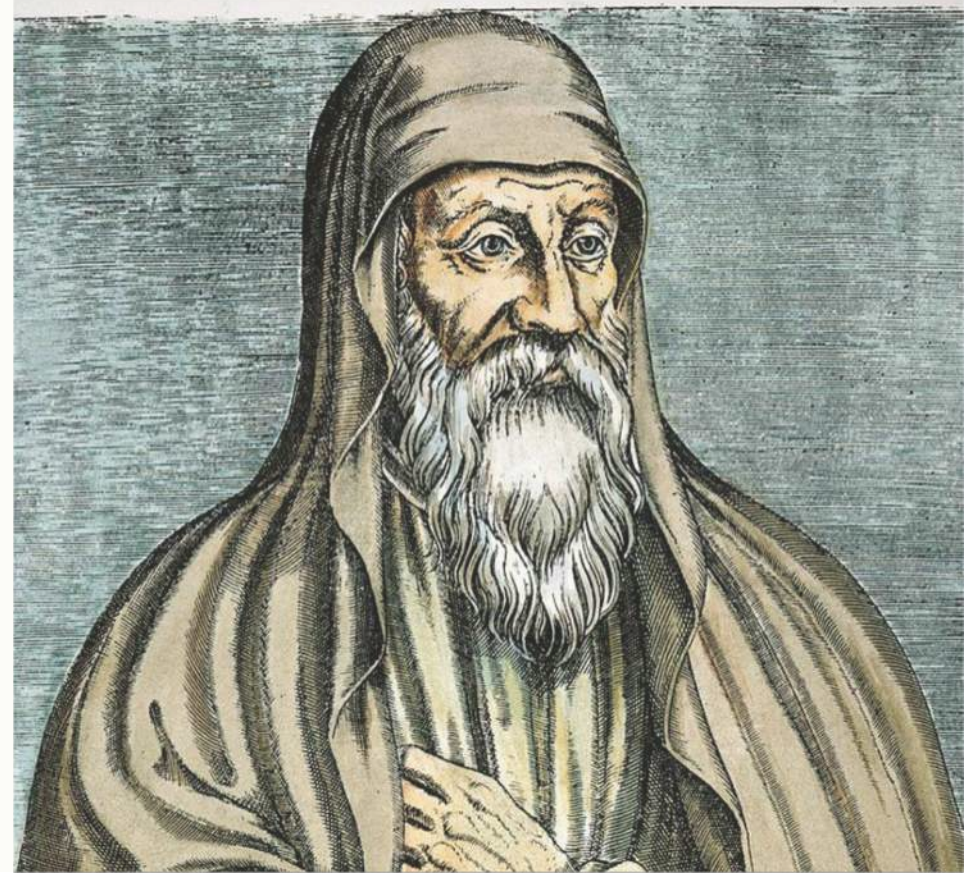
- **Born 150AD**
- **Converted at 34 by witnessing martyrs**
- **Used legal skills to defend Christianity**



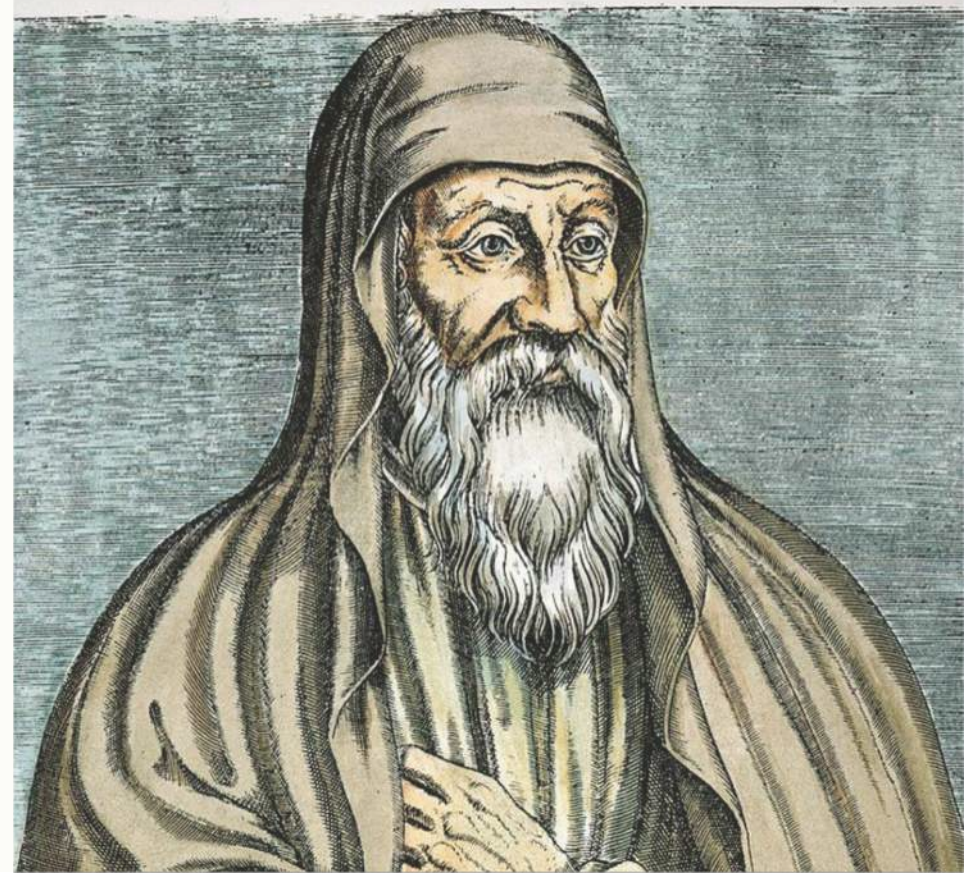
“First, therefore, we lay before you ignorance as the chief root of your unjustifiable bitterness to the Christian name; and this very ignorance, which you may flatter yourselves with as a title to excuse, is the very thing that loads your charge, and binds the heavier guilt upon you. For show me a grosser piece of iniquity than for men to hate what they understand not, supposing the thing in itself deserves to be hated”

**TERTULLIAN
APOLOGY**

**ORIGEN OF
ALEXANDRIA
A.D. 185-254**



**ORIGEN OF
ALEXANDRIA
A.D. 185-254**

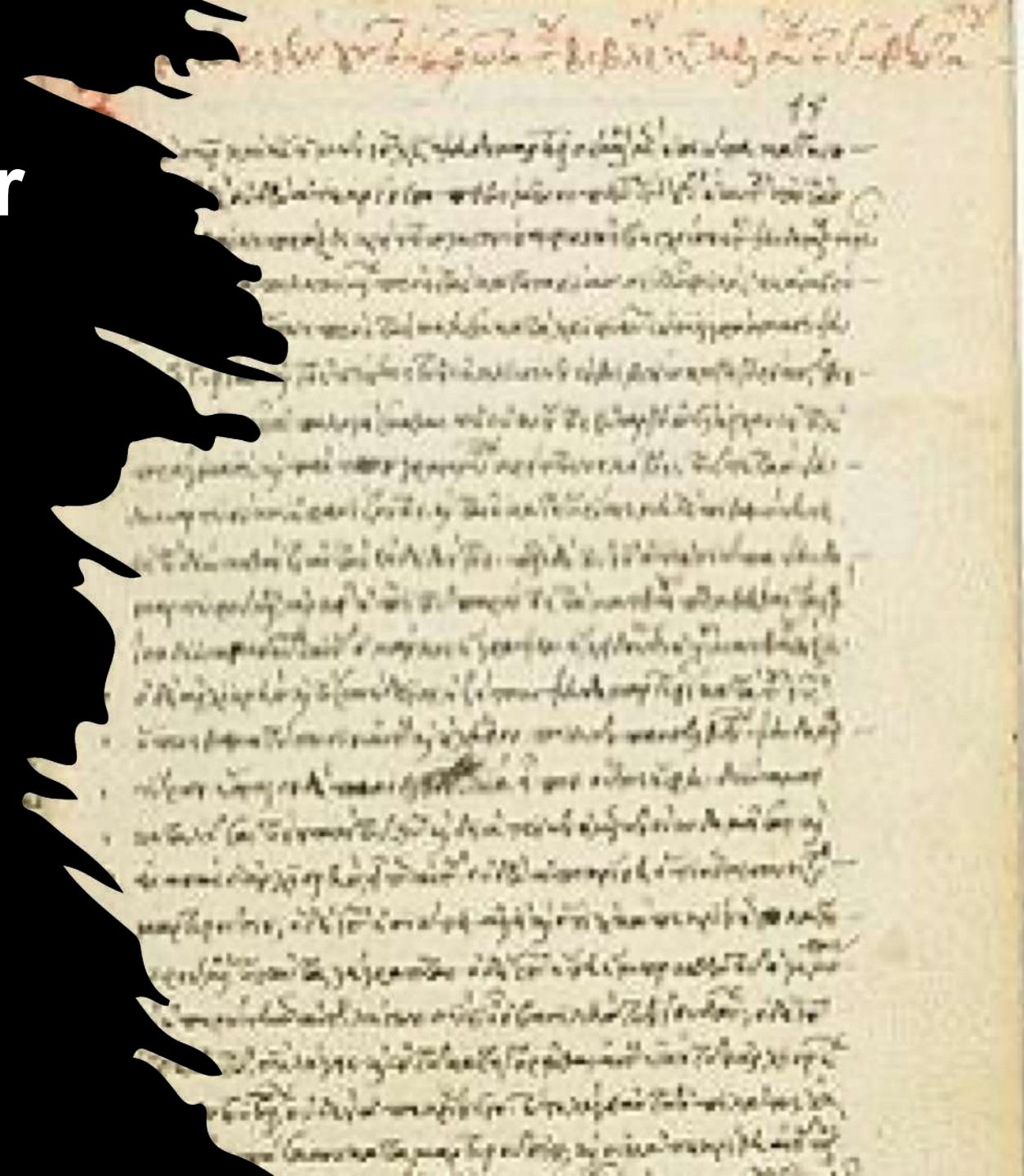


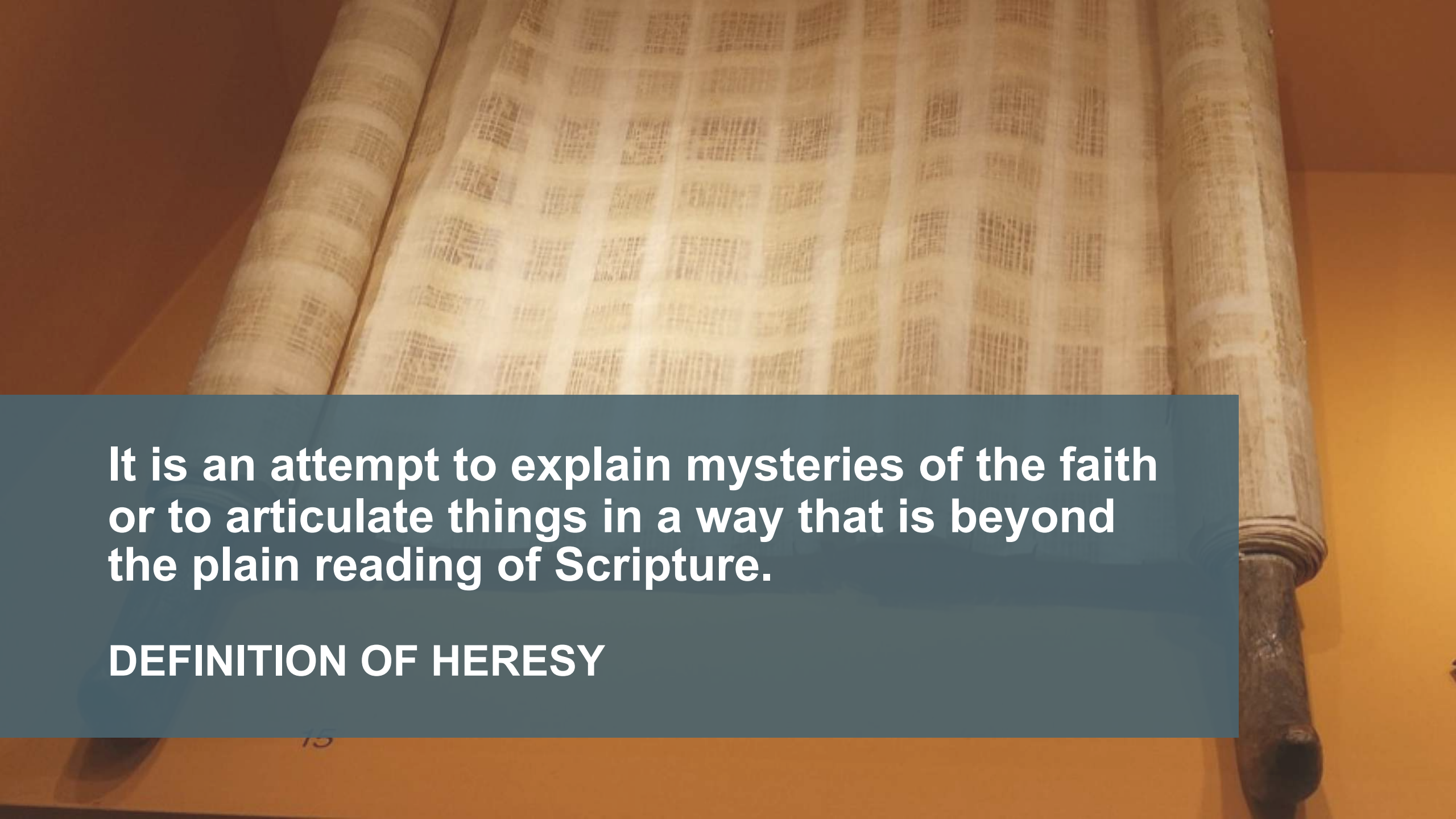
202 AD
Leonides, Origen's
father, is martyred



Prolific Christian writer

- Life of self-sacrifice, slept on the floor, one set of clothing
- 18yo - becomes president of the catechetical school of Alexandria
- Wrote ~6000 documents, 2000+ books





It is an attempt to explain mysteries of the faith or to articulate things in a way that is beyond the plain reading of Scripture.

DEFINITION OF HERESY

HERESIES




Unwillingness to Change



**Organizes a Counter-
Movement Against the
Church**

GNOSTICISM



- 
- "gnostikos" = knowledge
 - combination of many different mythologies, religions, or pseudo-cosmological speculations
 - Redemption for them is to discover their true spiritual identity, escape from the body, and return to its heavenly home

DUALISM

MATERIAL | SPIRITUAL



3 Gnostic Fundamentals



WORLD ISN'T REAL

MATERIAL WORLD IS EVIL

SECRET KNOWLEDGE

WORLD ISN'T REAL

- **No truth to be discovered within the world**
- **Truth is a mystical experience beyond this world**

MATERIAL WORLD IS EVIL

- **Sin is related to our physical bodies**
- **Body was of no consequence**
- **Two lifestyles:**
 - **Asceticism – severe fasting from food and sex**
 - **Compartmentalization – ritual orgies**

SECRET KNOWLEDGE

- **Salvation is through**
 - **secret knowledge that individuals come to know themselves**
 - **Christ the Redeemer, who frees the spirit from contamination of matter**
- **No mention of the cross**

3 Gnostic Fundamentals



WORLD ISN'T REAL

MATERIAL WORLD IS EVIL

SECRET KNOWLEDGE



IMPACT OF GNOSTICISM

Extreme asceticism and self-denial
OR
Morally loose and licentious behavior

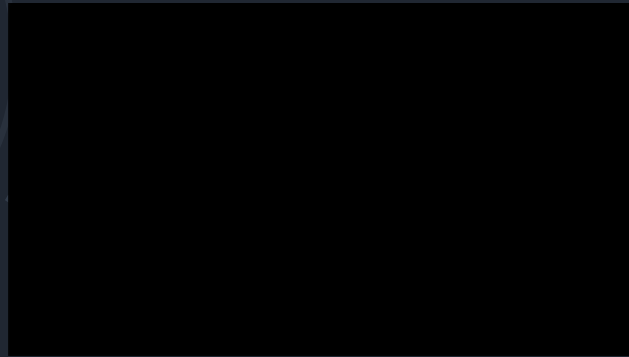
Jude 4 (ESV)

4 For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.



IRENÆUS
A.D. 130-202

**Discuss the importance of
apologists and the canon
in the passing down of
Christian doctrine**

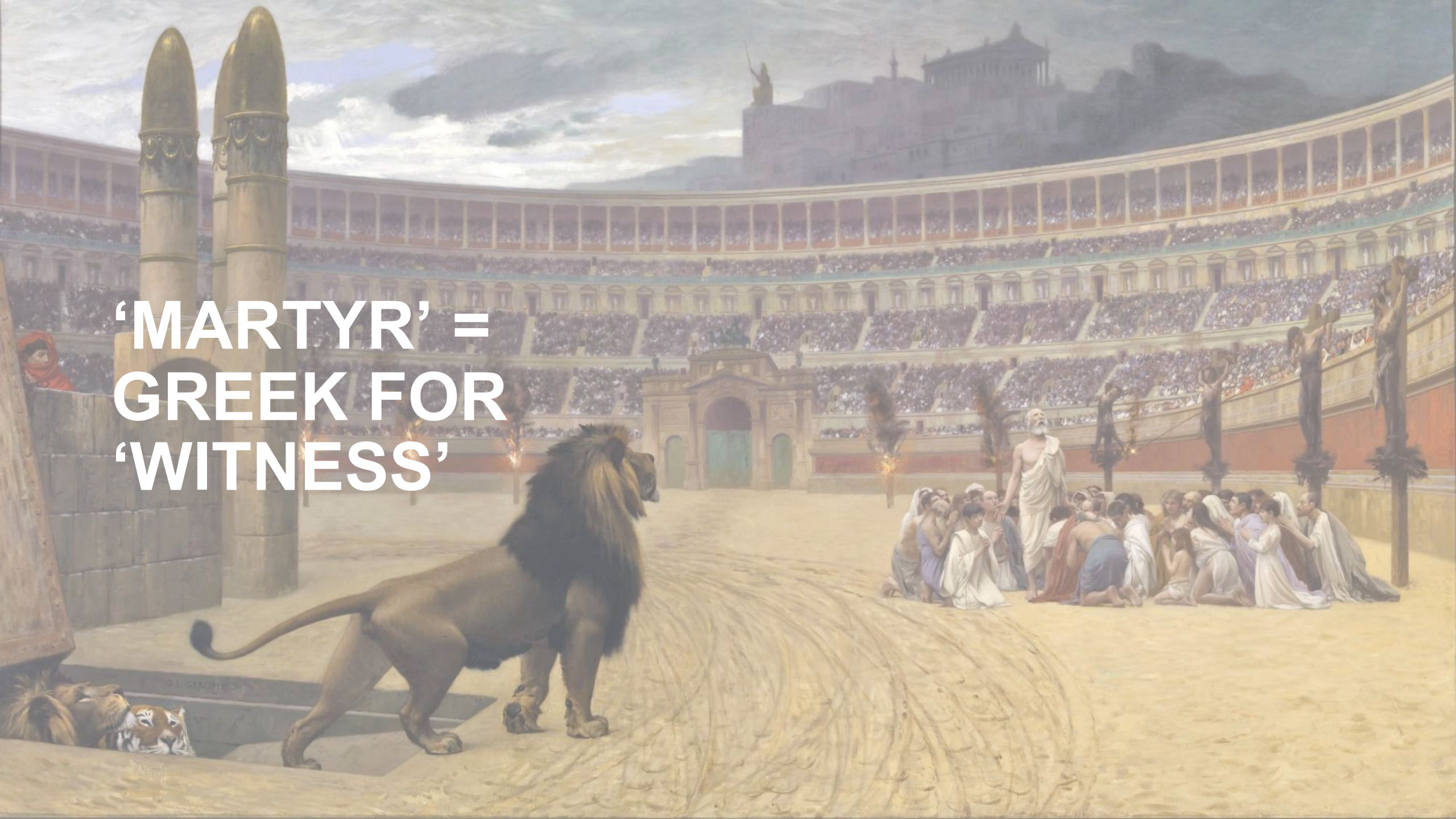




CHURCH UNDER PERSECUTION

A.D. 100-323

**‘MARTYR’ =
GREEK FOR
‘WITNESS’**





***“All your cruelties can accomplish nothing.
Our number increases the more you destroy
us. The blood of the Christians is their seed.”***

Tertullian

LIST OF PERSECTIONS OF CHRISTIANS

1st – 3rd Centuries

Claudius (A.D. 49)

Nero (A.D. 64)

Trajan (A.D. 111)

Severus (A.D. 202)

Decius (A.D. 250-251)

Valerian (A.D. 257-260)

Diocletian (A.D. 303-323)

A detailed marble bust of the Roman Emperor Nero, showing his head and shoulders. He has thick, wavy hair and a full, curly beard. The sculpture is set against a dark background.

NERONIAN PERSECUTION

A.D. 64

‘THE GREAT FIRE’

ROME, JUNE 18, 64 A.D.





“But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition.”


Tacitus



A black and white photograph of a marble bust of the Roman Emperor Diocletian. The bust is centered in the frame, showing the head and shoulders. The emperor has short, curly hair and a serious expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

DIOCLETIAN PERSECUTION

“The Great Persecution” A.D. 303-323



FESTIVAL TO GOD TERMINUS

February 23, 303 A.D.



THE GREAT PERSECUTION

- Death toll in the thousands
- Entire town burned by soldiers
- Wild beasts attacked Christian town
- Lasted 8 years
- Ended with Galarius' Edict of Toleration

Christian Growth Projected at 40% Per Decade

Figures estimated
by Rodney Stark

of Christians

1,000

1,400

7,530

40,496

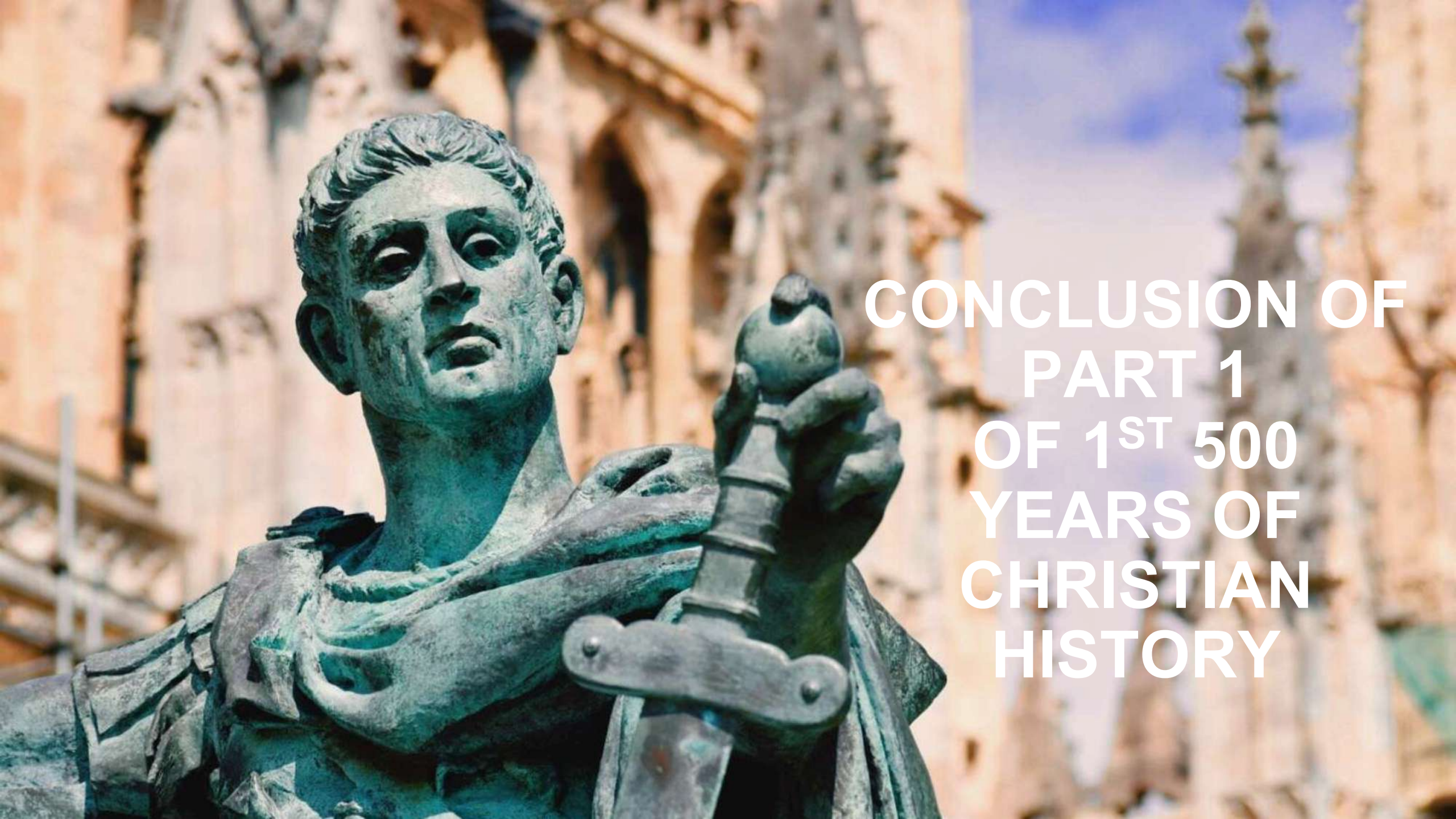
217,795

1,171,356

6,299,832

33,822,008


% of Population



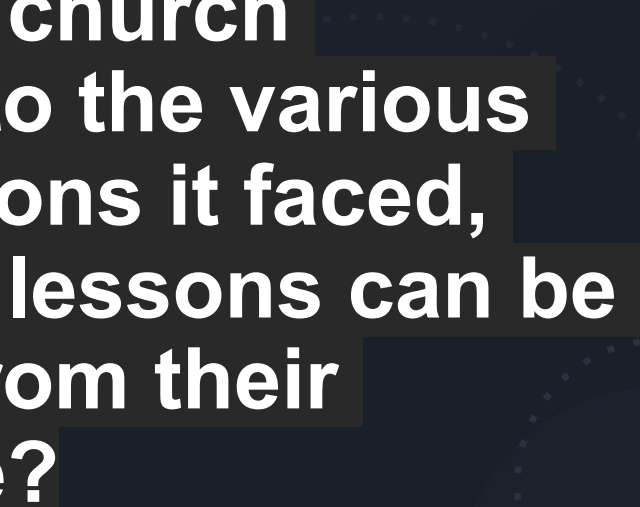
CONCLUSION OF
PART 1
OF 1ST 500
YEARS OF
CHRISTIAN
HISTORY



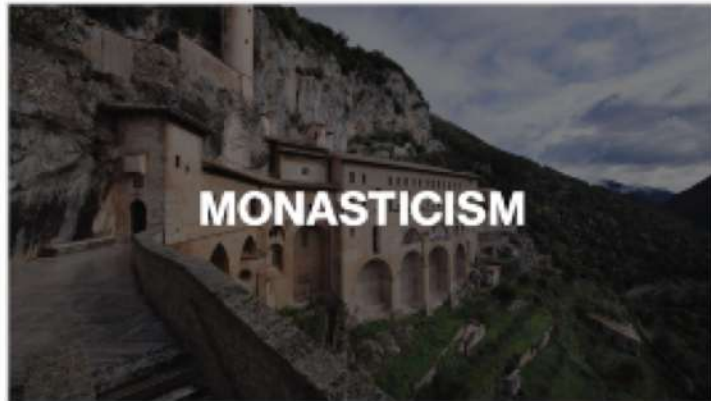
DISCUSSION



How did the early
Christian church
respond to the various
persecutions it faced,
and what lessons can be
learned from their
resilience?



ROAD MAP



RESOURCES

CARTER LINDBERG (THE REFORMATION)

WILLIAM ESTEP (THE ANABAPTISTS)

ROLAND BANTON (MARTIN LUTHER)

KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE

JUSTO GONZALES

TOM HOLLAND

RODNEY STARK (RISE OF CHRISTIANITY)