

# APOLOGETICS

## IN ONE LESSON

↑  
almost

Ai1L.net

### Lesson 9

## How Not to Start a Religion

# Key Takeaways (review)

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1

Jews had sophisticated teaching methods designed to **improve memorization**

2

The New Testament is best understood **within a Jewish context**

3

Jesus used many Jewish teaching methods:

1. Object lessons
2. Parables
3. Chiastic structures

# IDEA IN BRIEF

What?

Discuss the distinctive attributes of Christianity (such that it got criticism from the culture)

Why?

To show that a naturalistic explanation of the church's growth is insufficient, and that Jesus' resurrection is the best explanation

How?

By showing the church was counter-cultural:

1. Treatment of women (especially as sources)
2. Belief in exclusive worship of Jesus as God
3. Belief in Jesus despite the shame of crucifixion

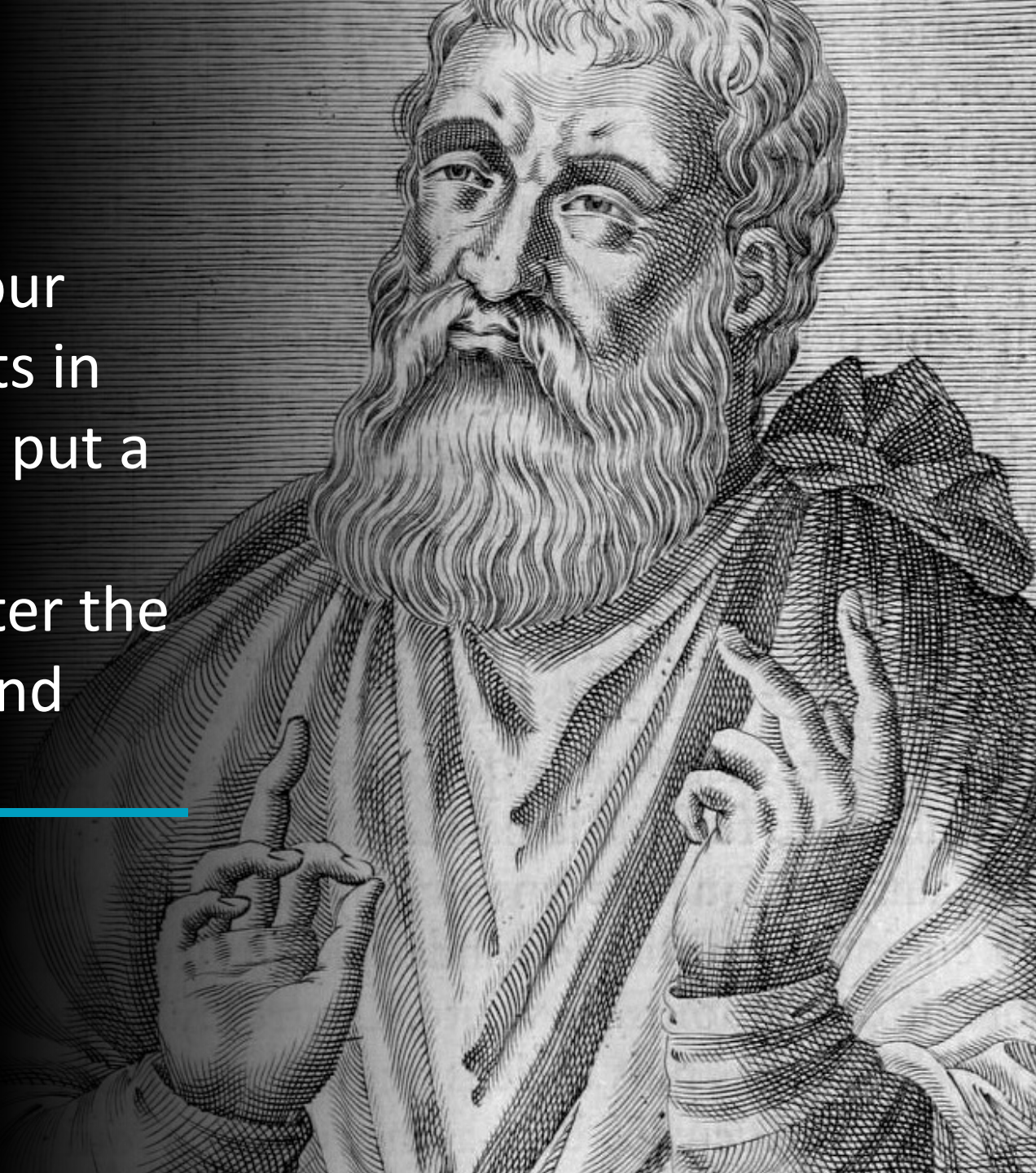
1

Detail how crucifixion was viewed by  
Jews and Gentiles in the first century

“They say that our  
madness consists in  
the fact that we put a  
crucified man in  
second place after the  
unchangeable and  
eternal God”

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Justin Martyr (150 A.D.)  
*Apology*, 13:4





“our pictures of the  
savage death of Jesus  
are the product of  
religious imagination  
and idealization. In  
reality, **he must have  
been ghastly to behold.**”

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**THE NEW YORKER**

*The woman behind the camera at Abu Ghraib*

*By Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris*

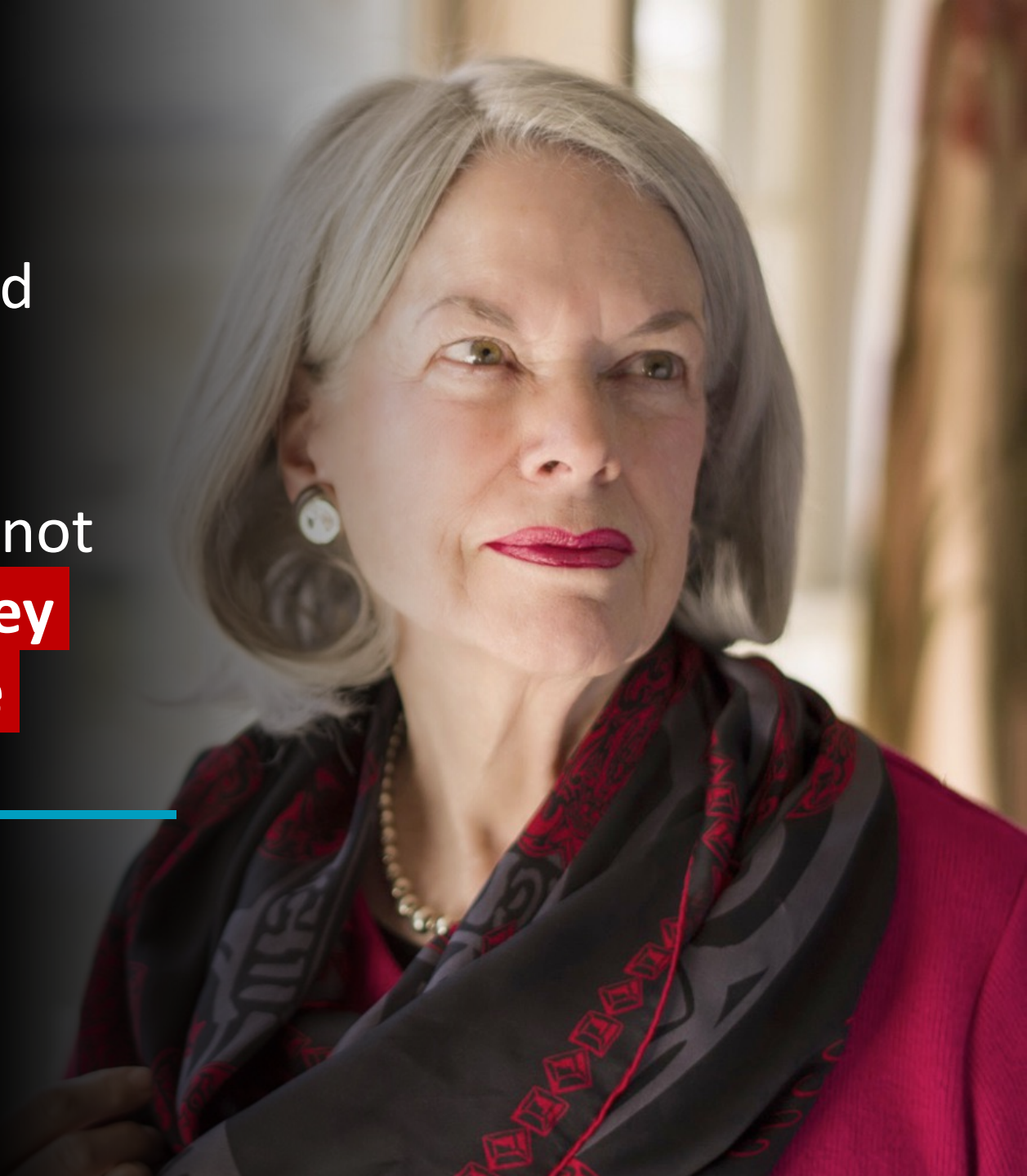
*March 17, 2008*



“the mocking and  
jeering that  
accompanied  
crucifixion were not  
only allowed, **they**  
**were part of the**  
**spectacle”**

**FLEMING RUTLEDGE**

*The Crucifixion (page 92)*



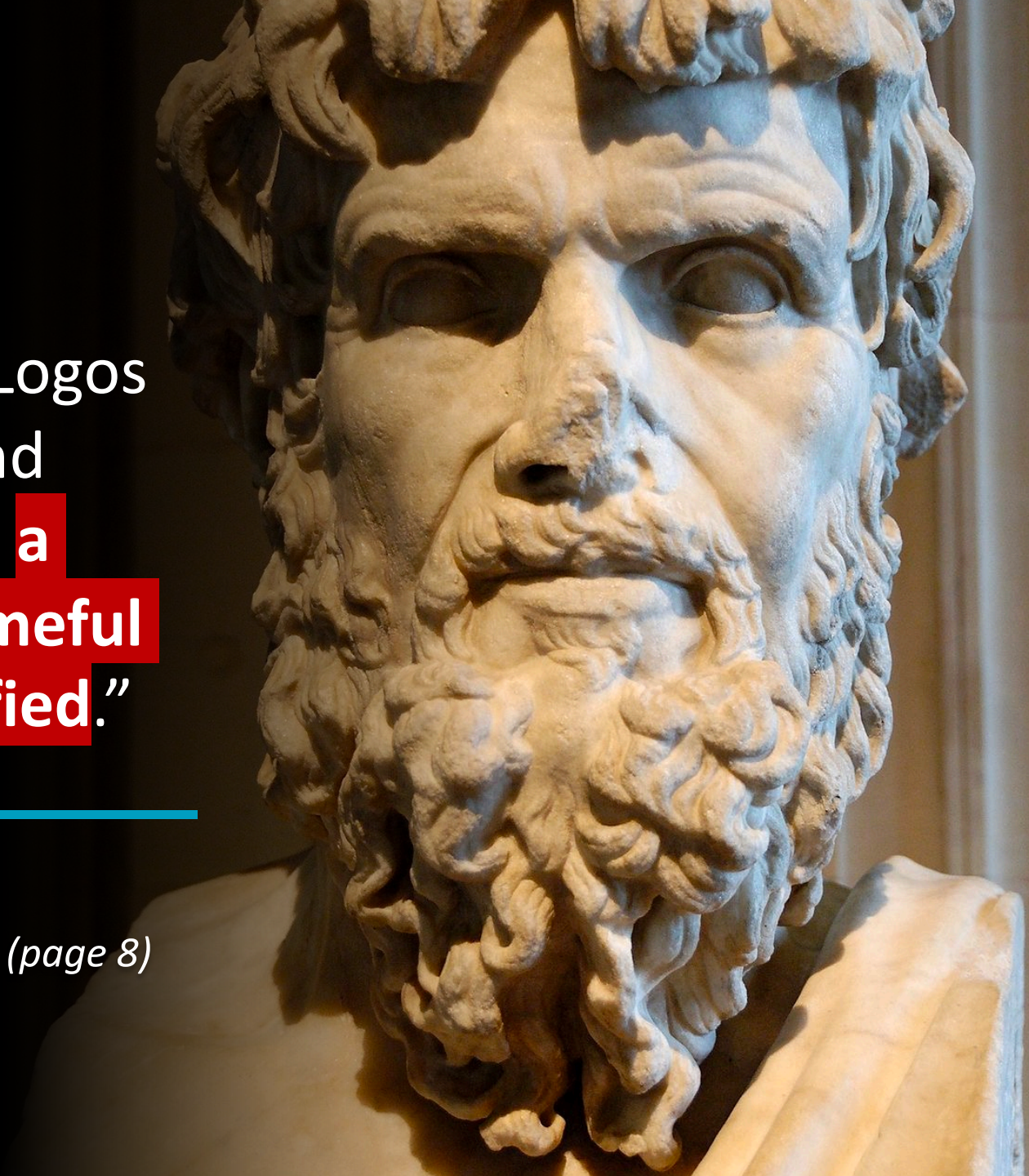


“on your own  
showing, your Logos  
is not a pure and  
holy Logos, but a  
**man most shameful  
who was crucified.**”

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**CELSUS**

*The Fragments of Celsus (page 8)*





2

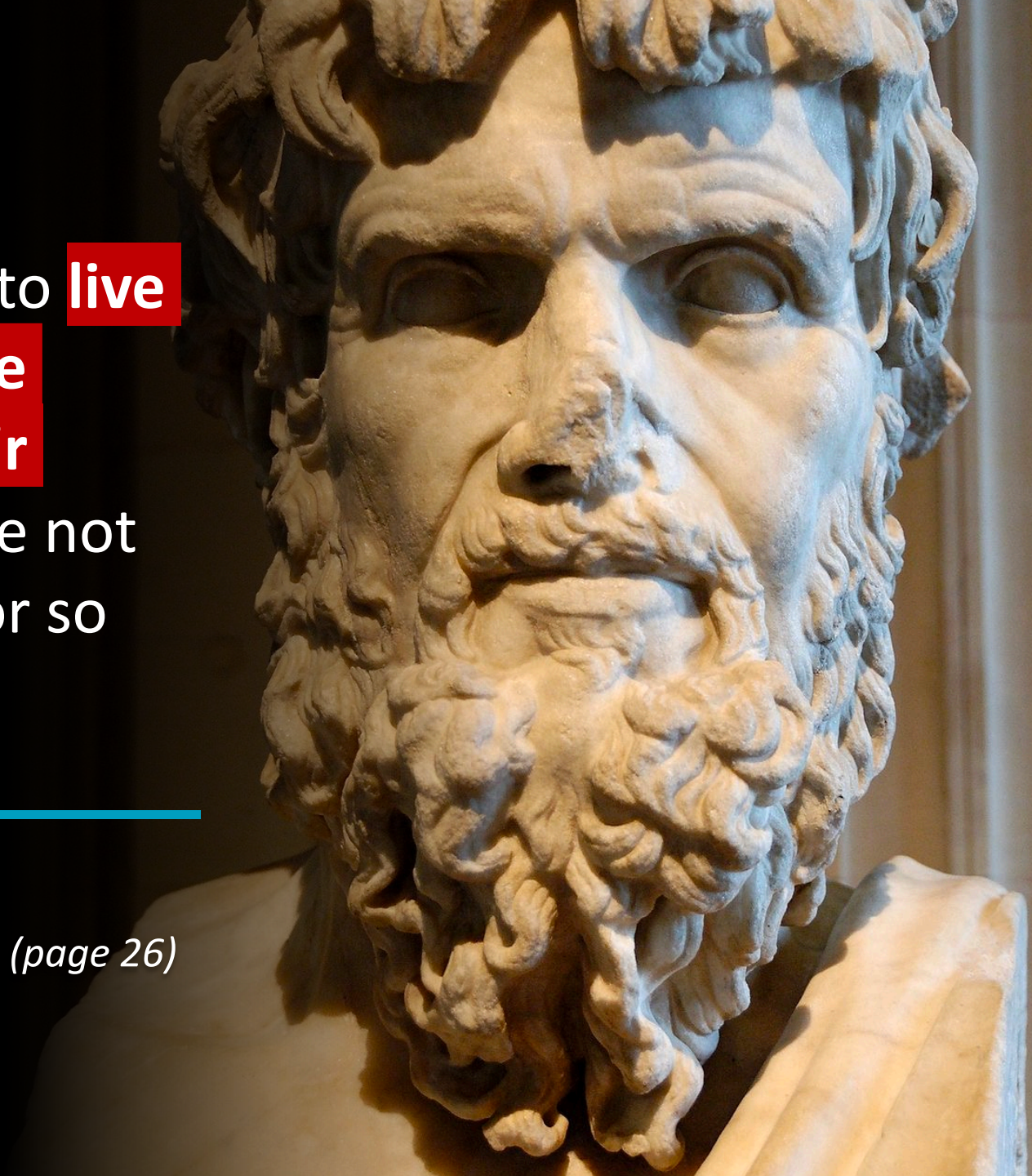
In what ways did the Gospel differ from the expectations and traditions within the first century?

“all men ought to **live**  
**according to the**  
**customs of their**  
**country**, and are not  
to be blamed for so  
doing.”

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**CELSUS**

*The Fragments of Celsus (page 26)*



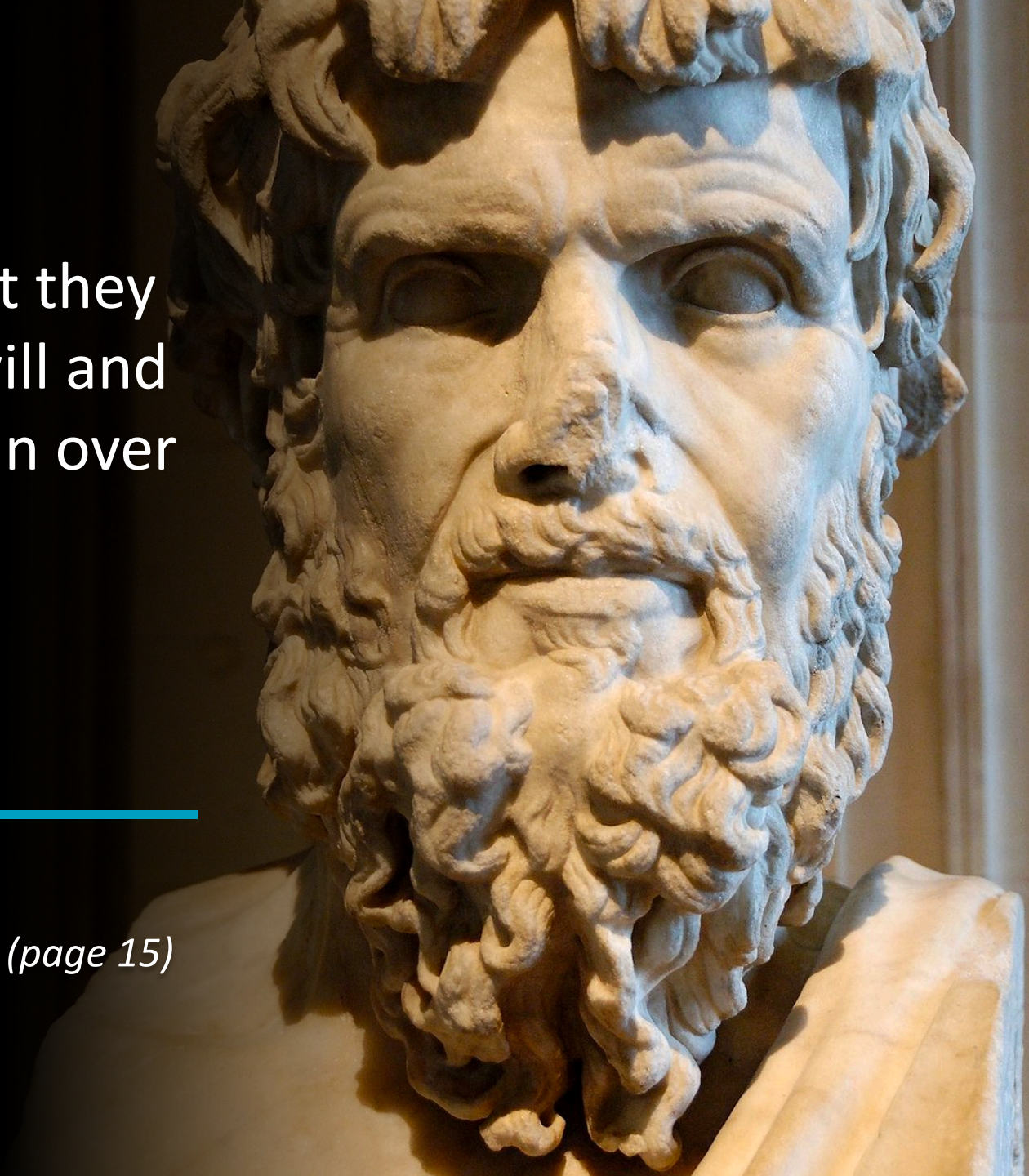


“they prove that they  
have only the will and  
the power to win over  
the foolish, the  
ignoble, slaves,  
women, and  
children.”

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**CELSUS**

*The Fragments of Celsus (page 15)*



“**2/3** of the Christianity community during the second-century was made up of women.”

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**RODNEY W. STARK**

*Sociology of Religion, Volume 56, Issue 3, Fall 1995, Pages 229–244*





“This is the exact opposite of the ratio in the broader Greco-Roman world where women only made up about **1/3** of the population.”

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**RODNEY W. STARK**

*Sociology of Religion, Volume 56, Issue 3, Fall 1995, Pages 229–244*



“In short, if early Christianity was a bad place for women, then apparently **all the women who joined the movement never got the memo.**”

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**MICHAEL J. KRUGER**

*How Early Christianity was Mocked for Welcoming Women*



“I commend to you our sister **Phoebe**, a servant of the church in Cenchrea. Welcome her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her with anything she may need from you. For she has been a great help to many people, including me. Greet **Prisca** and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who have risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the church that meets at their house. Greet my beloved Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia. Greet **Mary**, who has worked very hard for you. Greet Andronicus and **Junia**, my fellow countrymen and fellow prisoners. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion, my fellow countryman. Greet those from the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. Greet **Tryphena** and **Tryphosa**, women who have worked hard in the Lord. Greet my beloved **Persis**, who has worked very hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and **his mother**, who has been a mother to me as well. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers with them. Greet Philologus and **Julia**, Nereus and **his sister**, and Olympas and all the saints with them.”

## ROMANS 16:1-15



“denying the Greek  
gods and by  
worshipping the  
crucified sophist  
himself and living  
under his laws”

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**LUCIAN OF SAMISOTA**

*The Passing of Peregrinus, 47*





3

Document critics' responses to the church that made it difficult for Christians

4

What do these say about how women were viewed in the first century?

“But their words seemed like  
nonsense to them, and **they did not  
believe the women**”

**LUKE 24:11**

“And these are they which are not qualified [to be witnesses or judges]: A dice player, a usurer, pigeon racers, or traffickers in Seventh Year produce, and slaves. This is the general rule: any testimony for which **a woman is not qualified, they too are not qualified.**”

**MISHNAH ROSH HASHANAH 1:8**



“But let not a single witness be credited, but three, or two at the least, and those such whose testimony is confirmed by their good lives.”

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**FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS**

*Antiquities of the Jews, 4.8.15*





“But **let not the testimony of women be admitted**, on account of the levity and boldness of their sex”

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**FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS**

*Antiquities of the Jews, 4.8.15*



5

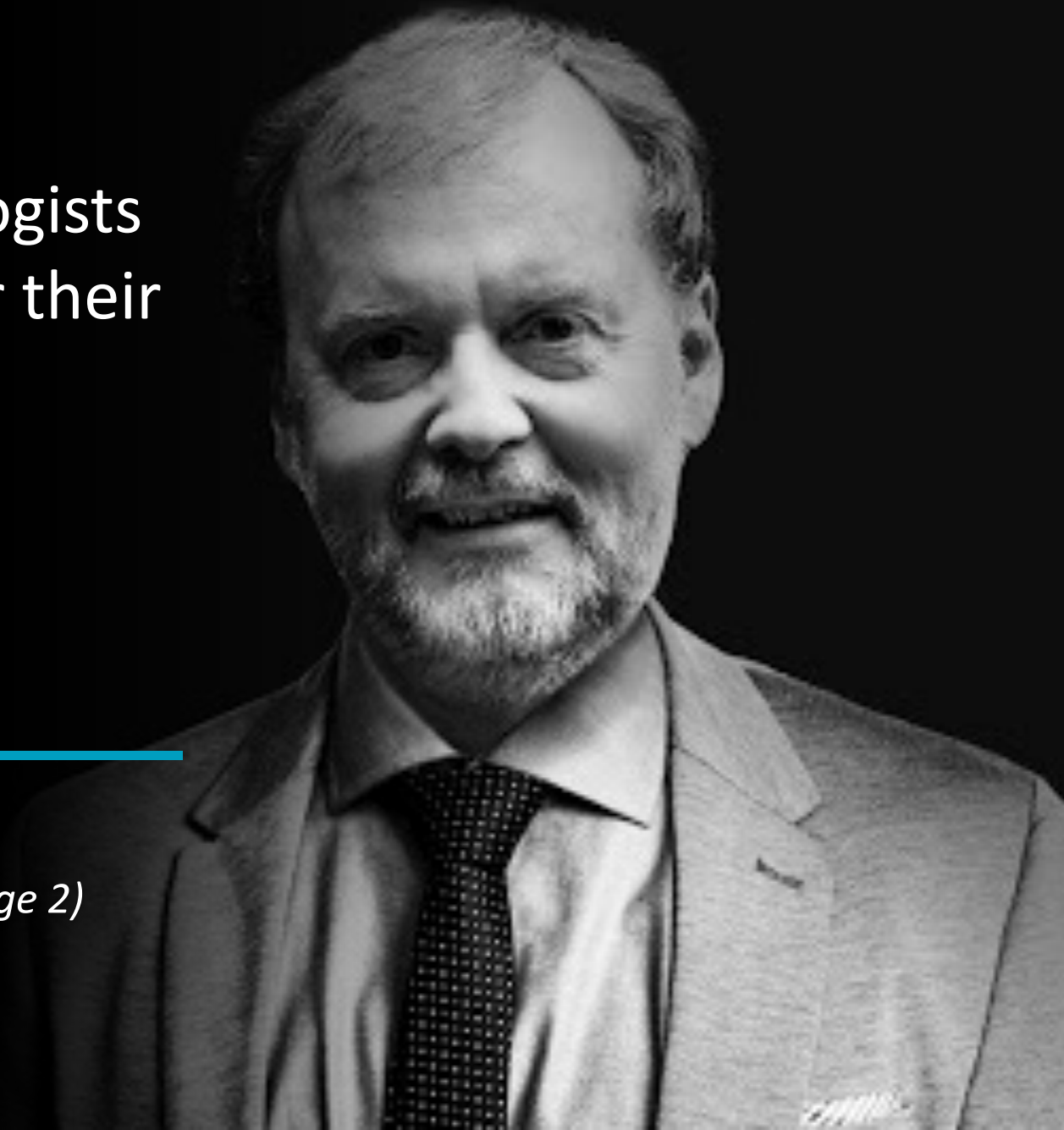
What other kind of things would have made the Gospel difficult to accept?

“Christian Apologists  
had to argue for their  
lives.”

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**LARRY HURTADO**

*Destroyer of the gods (page 2)*



# Key Takeaways

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1

The Gospel was **radically counter-cultural** in the first century:

1. Treatment of women (especially as sources)
2. Belief in exclusive worship of Jesus as God
3. Belief in Jesus despite the shame of crucifixion

2

The church **faced immediate & serious persecution:**

1. Jewish leadership (where the church began)
2. Roman empire (the superpower of the day)

3

**Jesus' resurrection is the best explanation** for the radical growth of the church