

APOLOGETICS

IN ONE LESSON

↑
almost

Ai1L.net

Lesson 9

How Not to Start a Religion

Key Takeaways (review)

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

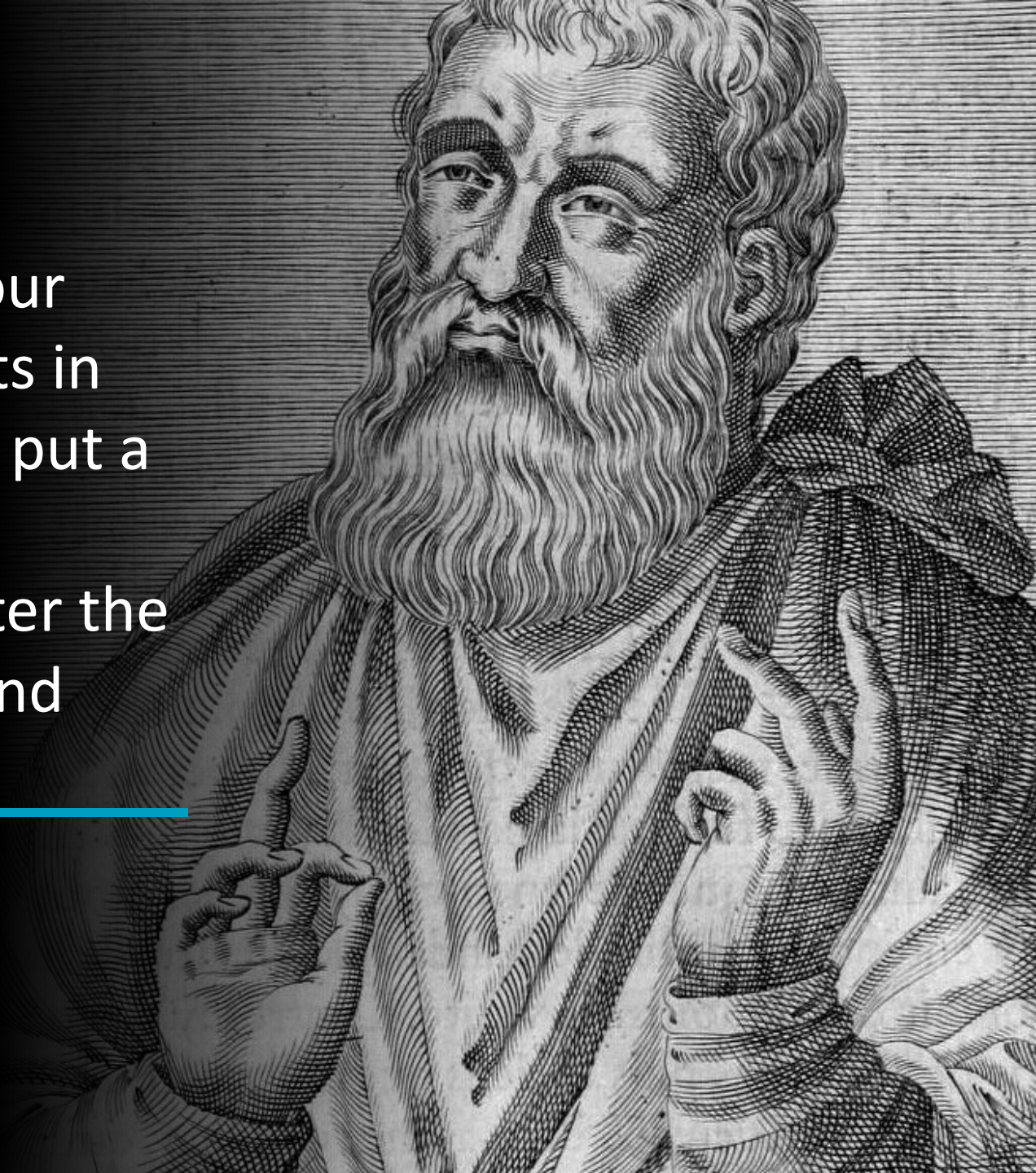
- | | |
|--------------|--|
| What? | Discuss the distinctive attributes of Christianity (such that it got criticism from the culture) |
| Why? | To show that a naturalistic explanation of the church's growth is insufficient, and that Jesus' resurrection is the best explanation |
| How? | By showing the church was counter-cultural: <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Treatment of women (especially as sources)2. Belief in exclusive worship of Jesus as God3. 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”

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.**”

THE NEW YORKER

The woman behind the camera at Abu Ghraib

By Philip Gourevitch and Errol Morris

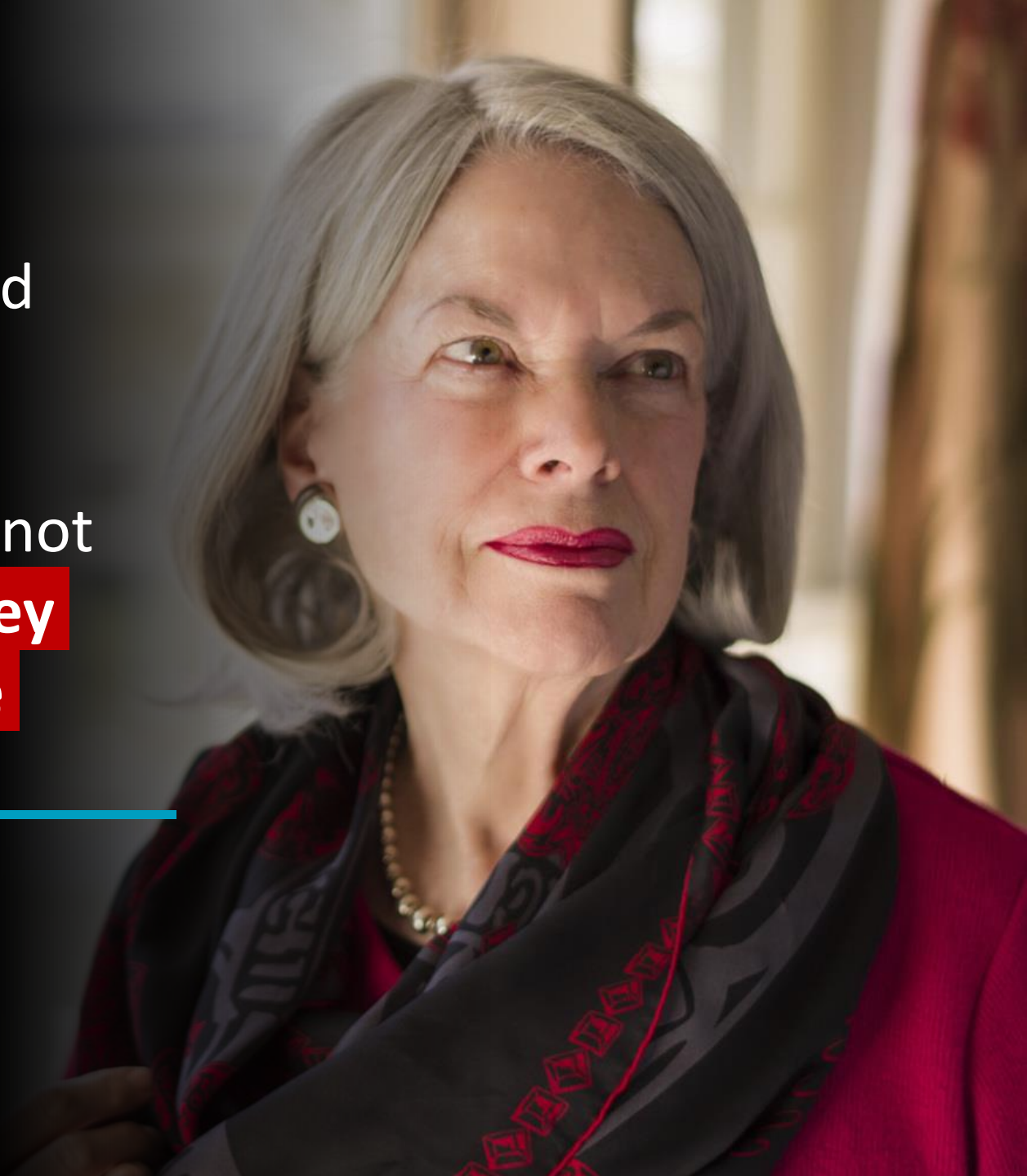
March 17, 2008



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

FLEMING RUTLEDGE

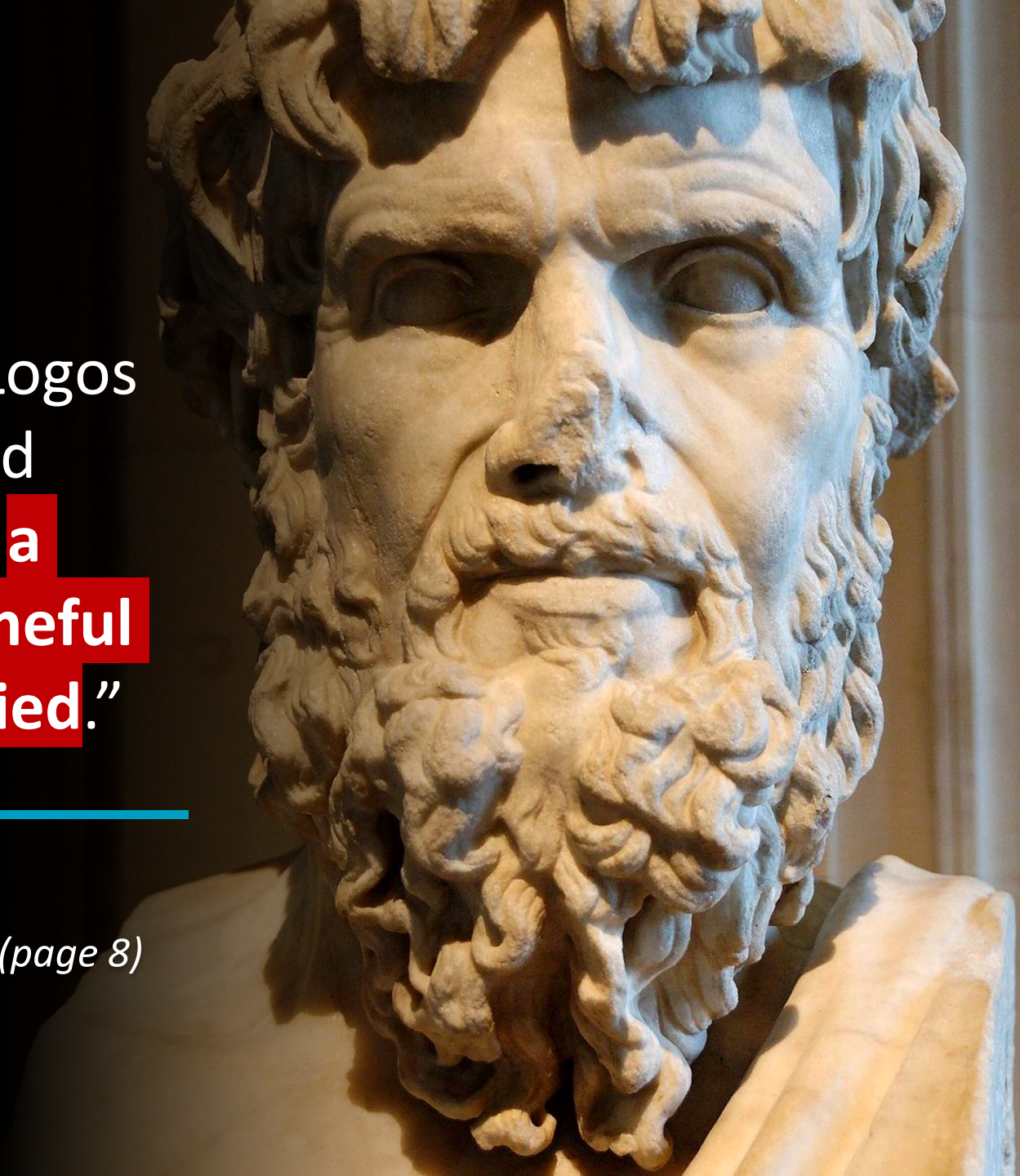
The Crucifixion (page 92)



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

CELSUS

The Fragments of Celsus (page 8)



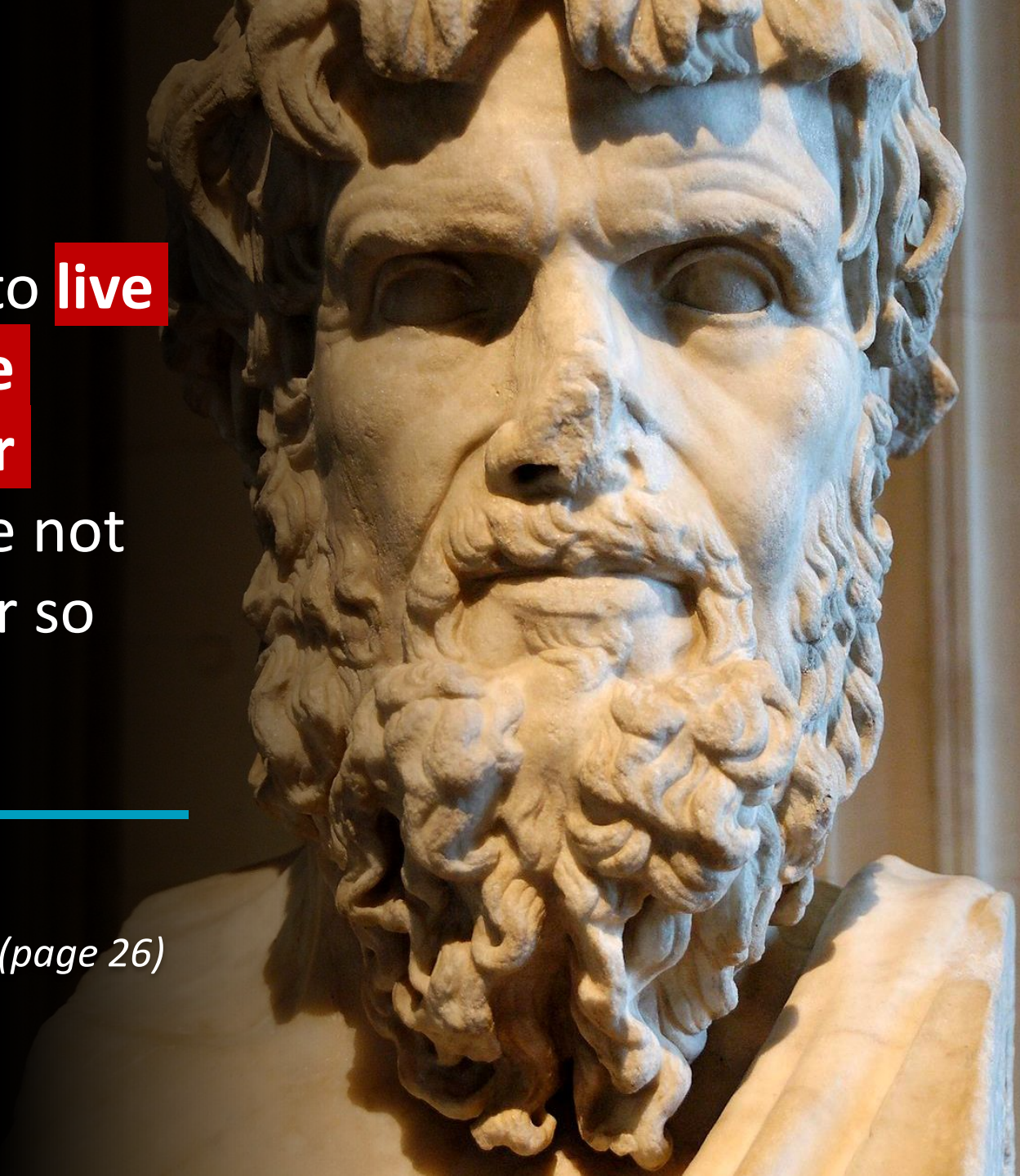
2

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.”

CELSUS

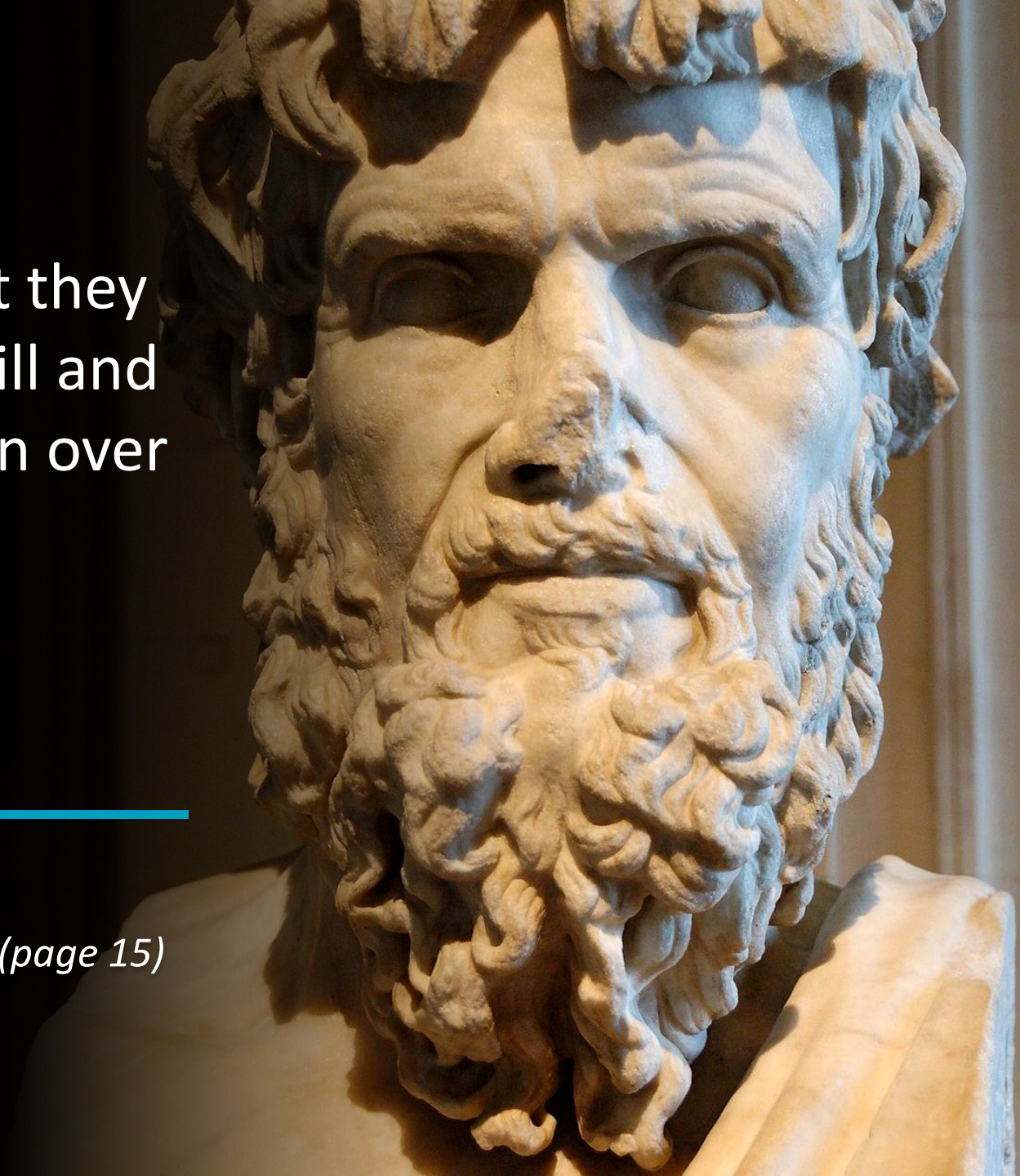
The Fragments of Celsus (page 26)



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

CELSUS

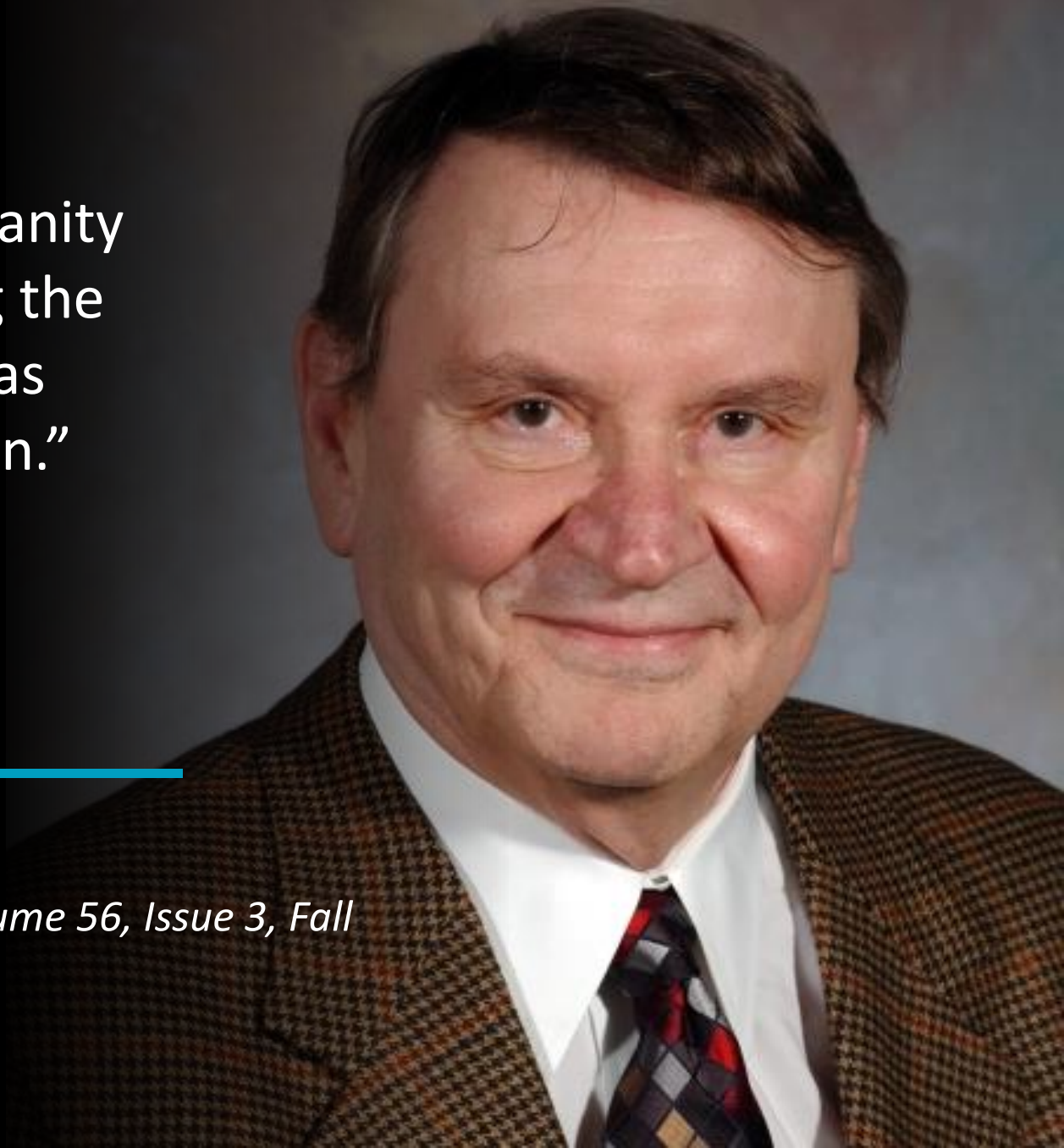
The Fragments of Celsus (page 15)



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

RODNEY W. STARK

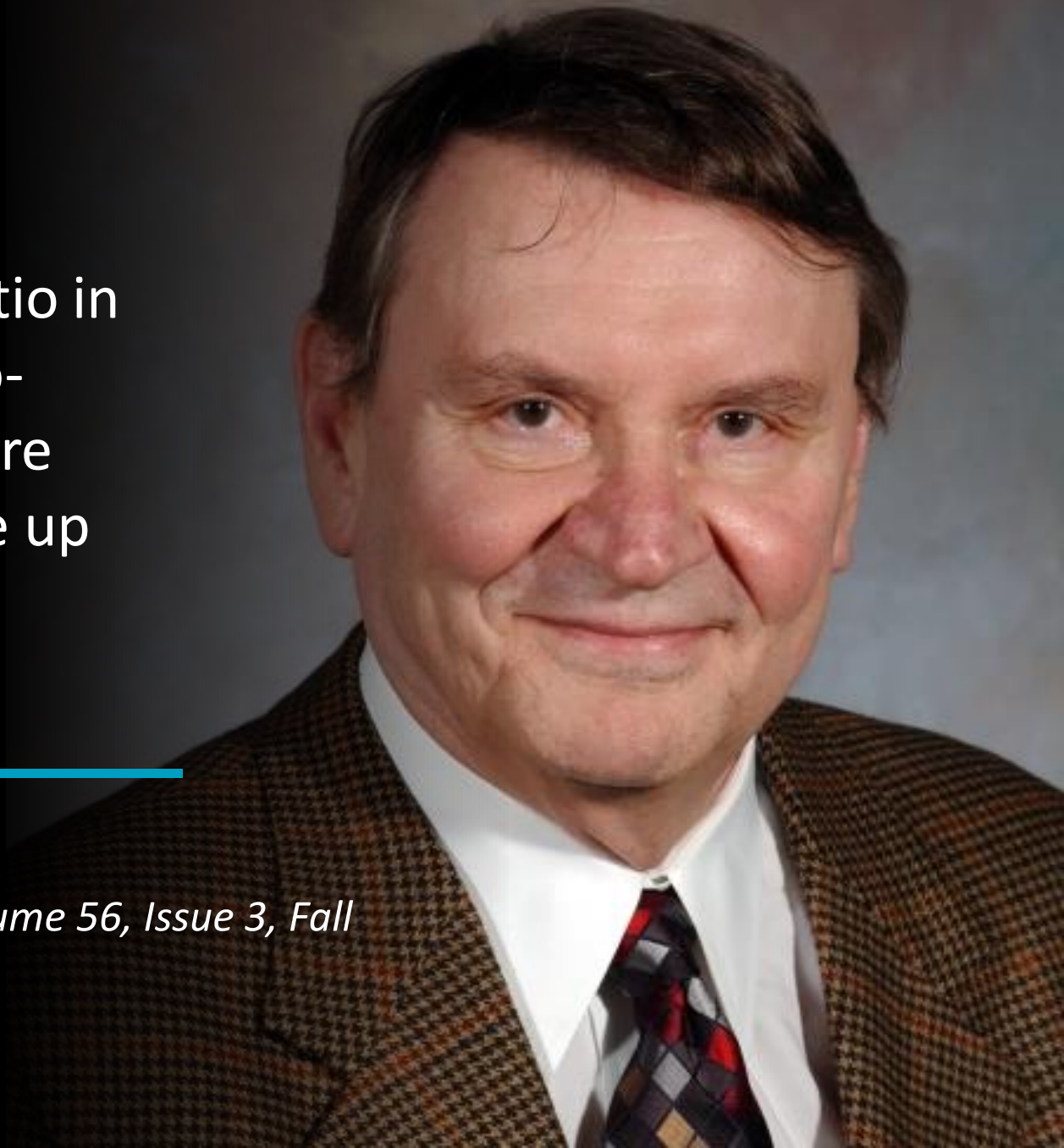
Sociology of Religion, Volume 56, Issue 3, Fall 1995, Pages 229–244



“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.”

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.**”

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”

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.”

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”

FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

Antiquities of the Jews, 4.8.15



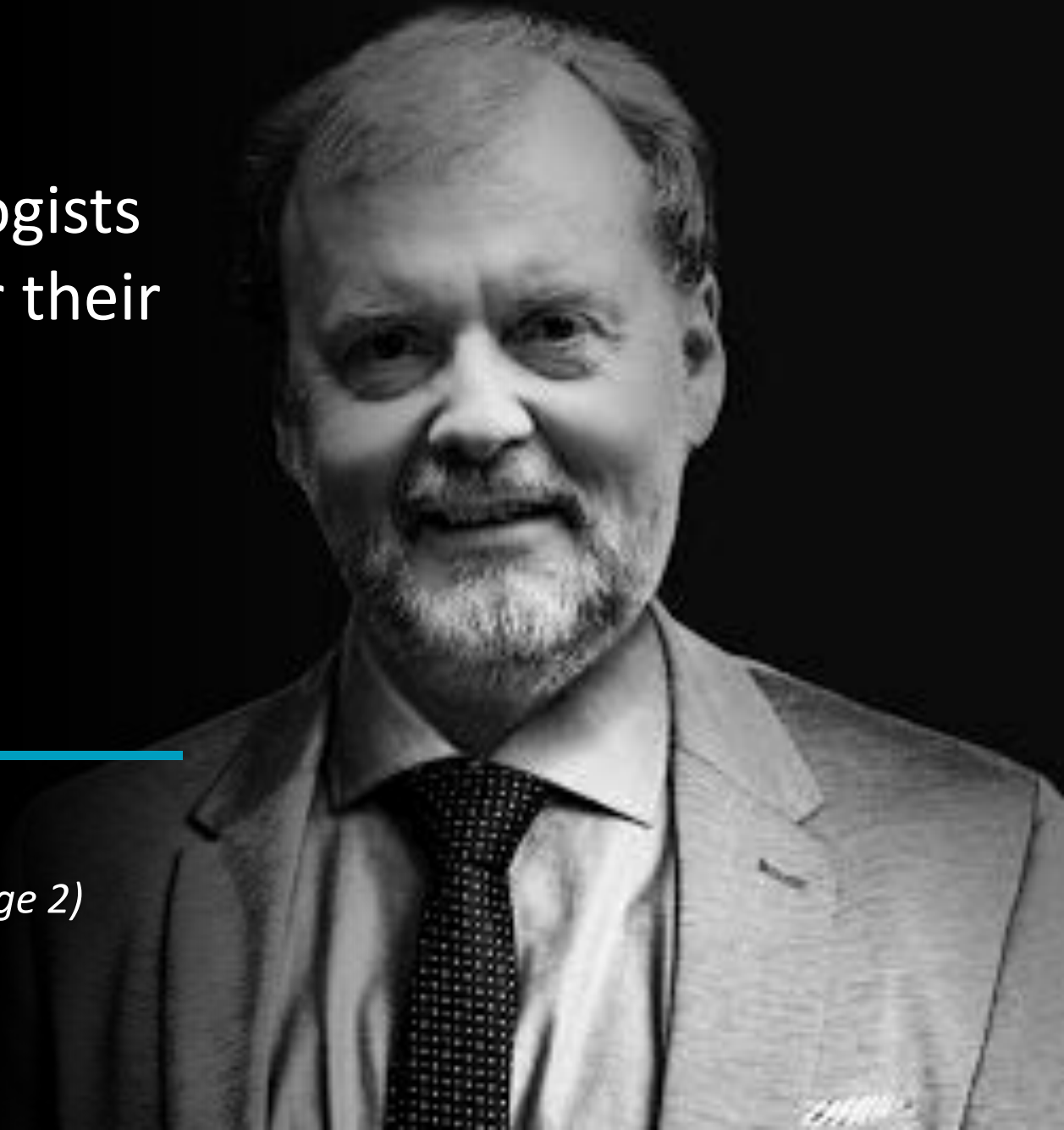
5

What other kind of things would have made the Gospel at the time?

“Christian Apologists
had to argue for their
lives.”

LARRY HURTADO

Destroyer of the gods (page 2)



Key Takeaways

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