



The Bible, Greek Fathers Testimony

The Apostolic Fathers: (50-100 AD)

Some of the Apostolic Fathers are listed below.

Clement of Rome: 30-100 AD. Wrote the Epistle to the Corinthian church called “First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians in 96 AD. He cites references to the books of Matthew, Luke, Acts, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, and Peter. This is translated in full in “The Ante-Nicene Fathers,” Vol. 1, pp. 5-21.

Ignatius of Antioch: 30-107 AD. Tradition says he was a disciple of the Apostle John. At Smyrna, he wrote four letters to the Ephesians, Magensians, Trallians, and Romans. At Troas, he wrote three letters to the Philadelphians, Smyrnaians, and to Polycarp. He refers to all 13 Epistles and uses Matthew, John and possibly Luke.

Polycarp: 69-155 AD. He became the Bishop of the Church of Smyrna, possibly the one of Revelation 2 & 3. He had an interesting death. He was to be burned. He was bound and placed on the pile of wood. The wood was ignited, wind caused it to form an arc over his body. The executioner ordered him to be pierced with a dagger. This was done and blood gushed out and extinguished the fire. The fire was rebuilt and consumed the lifeless body. His Writings: He wrote a number of letters. Only one is left, the Epistle to the Philippians. The epistle came to us in Greek and Latin. It is translated in English in “The Ante-Nicene Fathers,” Vol. 1, pages 31-36. This epistle contains about 50 quotations from Matthew, Luke, John, Acts, 1 Peter and 10 of Paul’s Epistles.

The Didache, also known as The Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles by the Twelve Apostles, or The Teaching of the (Twelve) Apostles is basically a handbook or manual of Christian ethical instruction and church order (Holmes, Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments, p. 301).

The Epistle of Barnabas is an early second century document concerned with showing that Christians are the true heirs of God’s covenant. Its author remains anonymous.

The Shepherd of Hermas was a popular document in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. It’s significance rests in that it sheds light on the Christian situation at Rome in the mid-2nd century. The author(s) is unknown.

Ante-Nicene Fathers: 150-325 AD

Some of the Ante-Nicene Fathers are listed below.

Justin Martyr: 100-165 AD. He uses the teachings of Jesus. Alludes to passages in Romans, 1 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians and mentions Revelation. Patron saint of philosophers in the Roman Catholic Church. Justin identified the concept of the Son of God as the life-giving Word that implants truth in the minds of all people. He also identified Christ as “The New Adam” and Mary as “The New Eve” in whom creation is made new - while Adam and Eve precipitate the fall of man by eating from a tree, Christ regenerates man by dying on one. This concept would prove important for later writers. Justin was executed in the reign of Marcus Aurelius after refusing to sacrifice to the pagan gods. He was scourged and beheaded, earning the surname Martyr.

Irenaeus: 120-192 AD. He was a Polemist: a defender against heresy. He wrote five books refuting Gnosticism; we have some in Greek fragments, all in Latin. He referred to the entire New Testament, first writer to do so, some 1,800 quotations and references. Quotes 1,000 times from the Gospels. The



theology of Irenaeus was one of the single most important contributions to what would become orthodox Christianity in the future.

Clement of Alexandria: 150-217 AD. He was trained in Greek literature and its systems of philosophy. Became a believer, then pastor in Alexandria. At 190 AD, he became president of the first Bible and Missionary Training Institute in Alexandria. His writings: “Exhortations to the Heathen,” was Evangelistic. “The Pedagogus, or Instructor,” was 3 books on Christian Morality and Living.

“Stromata,” seven books covering history, poetry, philosophy, Christian truth and pagan error. He quotes from the New Testament more than 2,400 times and every book except Philemon and James and 2 Peter are used. He quotes the Gospels over 1,000 times.

Origen: 185 – 254 AD. Origen was one of the most significant early apologists of the Christian faith. He was an important theologian who had a large influence on the development of eastern Christianity, though he would be the subject of persistent attacks as he was allegedly ordained a priest illegitimately. Origen believed in the concept of universal salvation (including the future salvation of Satan). Origen’s importance lies in two primary areas - in Biblical interpretation, he pioneered the concept of the three-fold interpretation of Scripture: literal, ethical, and spiritual. By literal is meant the face meaning of the words on the text; ethical means what the text teaches about the relation of man to man and man to God; by spiritual is meant the inner, divine meaning. All three levels exist simultaneously in the text. In Christology, Origen presented the idea that the Father is “more divine” than the Son. This has been perceived as the origin of the heresy of Arianism, and Origen himself was condemned as a heretic for this view.

Tertullian B: 160 - 225 AD. A controversial theologian widely considered the founder of western, Latin Christian theology, Tertullian was originally a pagan who converted to Christianity. Tertullian was a major opponent of the heresy of Marcionism, and was the first to work out a systematic doctrine of the Trinity. He was a significant proponent of purism in that he rejected any attempts to make Christian theology dependent on external sources such as Academic philosophy, leading him to argue the principle of sufficiency of Scripture. Ironically, Tertullian became closely associated with the heresy of Montanism later in life.