



KATOOMBA

— BAPTIST CHURCH —

CHRIST'S CHURCH THROUGH THE AGES

LESSON 11: THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS (PART 2) IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH



BIOGRAPHY

- Ignatius was born in the Province of Syria.
- Θεοφόρος (*Theophoros* - 'bearing/carrying God')
- Converted to Christianity at a young age.
- Later in life, he is appointed Bishop of Antioch.
- Much of what is known about him comes from the context of his martyrdom in AD 108/140.
- Produced seven epistles, written to various subjects.
- Martyred in Rome - death by *damnatio ad bestias*
- There were four primary legal reasons given for killing Christians:
 1. Guilty of high treason (*majestatis rei*)
 - a. *collegium illicitum* & *coetus nocturni* equated with riot.
 - b. For their refusal to honour images of the emperor by libations and incense.
 2. Dissenters from the State gods (*ἄθεοι, sacrilegi*)
 3. Followers of magic prohibited by law (*magi, malefici*)
 4. Confessors of a religion unauthorized by the law (*religio illicita*), according to the Twelve Tables).
- During the journey to Rome, Ignatius and his escort of ten soldiers made a many lengthy stops in Asia Minor, deviating from the most direct land route from Antioch to Rome.
- Scholars generally agree on the following reconstruction of Ignatius' route of travel:
 1. He first travelled from Antioch to Asia Minor (it is uncertain whether he travelled by sea or by land)
 2. He was then taken to Smyrna, via a route that likely passed through Philadelphia.
 3. He then travelled to Troas, where he boarded a ship bound for Neapolis in Macedonia.
 4. He then passed through Philippi.
 5. After this, he took either a land or sea route to Rome.
- The soldiers seem to have allowed Ignatius to meet with entire congregations of Christians while in chains.
- Multitudes of Christian visitors and messengers were allowed to meet with him - even on a one-on-one basis.
- These messengers allowed Ignatius to send six letters to nearby churches, and one to Polycarp of Smyrna.

THE SEVEN EPISTLES

1. The Epistle to the Ephesians
2. The Epistle to the Magnesians
3. The Epistle to the Trallians
4. The Epistle to the Romans
5. The Epistle to the Philadelphians
6. The Epistle to the Smyrnaeans
7. The Epistle to Polycarp (Bishop of Smyrna)

ON ECCLESIOLOGY

“In like manner, let everyone respect the Deacons as they would respect Jesus Christ, and just as they respect the Bishop as a type of the Father, and the Presbyters as the council of God and college of Apostles. Without these, it cannot be called a Church.”

(Chapter 2, Epistle to the Trallians)

ON CHRISTOLOGY

“But our Physician is the Only true God - the very unbegotten and unapproachable, the Lord of all, the Father and Begetter of the only-begotten Son. We also have as a Physician the Lord our God, Jesus the Christ, the only begotten Son and Word, before time began, but who afterwards became also man, of Mary the virgin. For ‘the Word was made flesh’. Being incorporeal, He was in the body; being impassable, He was in a passible body; being immortal, He was in a mortal body; being life, He became subject to corruption, that He might free our souls from death and corruption, and heal them, and might restore them to health, when they were diseased with ungodliness and wicked lusts.”

(Chapter 7, Epistle to the Ephesians)

ON THE EUCHARIST

“I have no taste for corruptible food nor for the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, who was of the seed of David; and for drink, I desire his blood, which is love incorruptible.”

(Chapter 7, Epistle to the Romans)

“Take note of those who hold heterodox opinions on the grace of Jesus Christ which has come to us, and see how contrary their opinions are to the mind of God... They abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer because they do not confess that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, flesh which suffered for our sins and which that Father, in his goodness, raised up again.”

(Chapter 6, Epistle to the Smyrnaeans)