



# KATOOMBA

— BAPTIST CHURCH —

## CHRIST'S CHURCH THROUGH THE AGES

### LESSON 16: JUSTIN MARTYR (PART 2)



## **FIRST APOLOGY**

- Written c. A.D. 155-157
- Addressed to the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius.
- Given his extensive philosophical education, Justin naturally sees the importance of defending Christianity in biblically sound philosophical terms.
- May have been written in response to Polycarp's martyrdom (A.D. 155), as there is a heavy focus on punishment by fire (he was burned at the stake).
- Broadly speaking, Justin writes concerning three areas:
  - ADDRESSING CRITICISMS OF CHRISTIANITY
  - JESUS CHRIST AS THE LOGOS
  - EXPLAINING CHURCH CUSTOMS & PRACTICES

## **ADDRESSING CRITICISMS**

- In the opening chapters, Justin addresses the primary criticisms levelled against Christians: particularly, atheism, immorality, and treason against the Empire.
- He argues that Christians being charged, abused, or executed merely because they're a Christian is unjust.
- He explains that they are 'atheists' regarding false gods, but *"not with respect to the most true God, the Father of righteousness... free from all impurity."* (ch.6)
- In doing so, Justin argues for separating the Christian name from individuals who happen to have committed legitimate crimes.
- He systematically demonstrates that such charges of atheism are based on false Roman traditions/doctrines derived from demons, not from reasonable truth derived from a logical analysis of the facts.
- He compares such charges to that levelled at Socrates.

## **JESUS CHRIST THE LOGOS**

- Justin goes to considerable lengths to demonstrate that Christianity is philosophically rational.
- He shows that Christianity provides sound moral teachings for its' adherents, and that the histories ethics and virtues contained in Scripture share some commonalities with the famous pagan stories
- He explains that it is, therefore, irrational for pagans to persecute it as some unique 'evil' in society.
- One of the most foundational arguments Justin makes is that Jesus Christ *is* the Logos, so long and so often spoken of in ancient Hellenistic culture.
- He argues that Jesus is the incarnation of the Logos ('the Word made flesh').

- He primarily points to the fulfilment of prophecy as demonstrating that Christ truly is as the Christians have been claiming since the beginning.
- Justin's argumentation alone these lines provided the first detailed Christian apologetic work for Christ as the Logos - especially upon such robust and sophisticated philosophical grounds.
- Drawing upon his extensive philosophical training, he explains that such schools only give a partial truth about the Logos, because they are only connected in part to the Logos, yet remain ultimately separate.

### **CHURCH PRACTICES**

- Justin provides one of the most comprehensive accounts of customs and practices in the Early Church.
- He explains, in detail, the nature and administration of the Sacraments (Baptism and Eucharist), as well as the weekly worship of God conducted by Christians.
- He points to the reality that such is in obedience to Christ, and in imitation of the Apostles, to whom the crucified and resurrected Lord appeared.

*"We continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration." (ch. 67)*