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Week 14 Assignment

December 2, 2017, Bi-103 Synoptic Gospel, Professor Armstrong

Apostolic Fathers

The term "apostolic fathers" represents a diverse fragment of a small and struggling church, even though they were dispersed in the Empire, they still enjoyed the fruits of the ministry of the apostles and the work of the Holy Spirit among them. The following is a quick run-down of the leading writers and their contributions that are traditionally contained in this category.

- Clement of Rome. A Presbyter (elder) in Rome wrote an epistle to the Corinthians, c. 96-97, traditionally called I Clement, even though II Clement is now known not to have been written by him. Emphasizes the orderliness of the appointment of ministers.
- Ignatius wrote seven epistles as he traveled to Rome to suffer martyrdom after a persecution in Antioch. Bishop" of Antioch or of Syria Around 110A.D. He is the first person of whom we have record of espousing the doctrine that there is one bishop in each church.
- Polycarp wrote one epistle to the Philippian church, around 110. Occasion of epistle is unclear, but it was apparently written after the receipt of letters from Ignatius. Mostly it is an exhortation to righteousness and perseverance. There is also the regret about one of the elders in the Philippian church who seems to have become corrupt and immoral.
- Epistle of Barnabas written not by the Barnabas who worked with Paul. Writer was probably an Alexandrian Jewish Christian. He Emphasizes the replacement of Judaism by Christianity, and the necessity to avoid Jewish errors.

- Papias is said to have known the apostle John personally. Only fragments of his writings remain. He was one of the church fathers known to have been a premillennialist.
- Hermas; somewhere between 140 – 160 A.D.; Had one writing called “The Shepherd of Hermas”,preached the availability of repentance.

By the end of this time period we see several developments in the teaching: the conception of the bishop as separate from the elders (still found only in Ignatius); the concept of Catholic or universal as distinguished from heretic; the concept of needing special forgiveness for post-baptism sins.