

5-3-1 Assignment- Gonzalez, Essential Guide, Chapter 1

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Questions

1. What was the vast Jewish contingent that spread far beyond the borders of Palestine?
2. The main intellectual task of the apologists was to clarify the relationship between Christian faith and the ancient _____ culture.
3. What was the third main belief that Gnosticism denied after creation and the doctrine of incarnation?
4. What was the other “heresy” that posed a serious challenge to Christianity alongside Gnosticism?
5. The origin of the concept of _____ succession was the pointing to the uninterrupted line of leaders in the main churches—lines which could be drawn back to the apostles themselves.

Answers

1. The vast Jewish contingent that spread far beyond the borders of Palestine was the Jewish “Diaspora” or Dispersion.
2. Greco-Roman
3. The third main belief that Gnosticism denied after creation and the doctrine of incarnation was the final resurrection.
4. The other “heresy” that posed a serious challenge to Christianity alongside Gnosticism was the doctrine of Marcion.
5. apostolic

Terms

Stoicism- a philosophical doctrine that promoted high moral values.

“Gnosis”- a notion that such salvation was attained through a special knowledge that consisted in escaping from matter.

Baptism- the rite of initiation and grafting into the Christian community.

Summary

The early church faced many persecutions and internal threats especially in the form of heresies. Before combatting heresies, the early church had to find its new identity “vis-à-vis the Jewish tradition in which it was born”, and later on, it dealt with its new relationship with the state, surrounding cultures, and political and social institutions (25). Some apologists directly attacked the pagan cultures, but some held that certain values from the culture were valuable and redeemable and connected it to the gospel. The greatest fruits from the struggles of the early church were the canonizing of the New Testament, Apostles’ Creed, line of apostolic succession, and celebration of central acts of worship- communion and baptism.