

Colt Emswiler

5-3-1 Ancient Church - Gonzalez

QUESTIONS

1. What were the various parties and religious groups represented in Palestine?
2. Who were the people groups primarily persecuting the early Christian church?
3. What were the main reasons Christians were persecuted?
4. What major apologetic argument did Justin Martyr provide the Church?
5. What took place which led to the establishment of the canon of the New Testament and the Apostles Creed?

ANSWERS

1. Some of the prominent groups in Palestine were Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, and Essenes
2. The religious leaders were the primary persecutors of the Church at first, but over time the Roman Empire led the attack on Christians. Emperors, such as Nero, were venomously opposed to the Church.
3. Persecution of Christians was based mostly on rumors and opinions. Some claimed that the Christians were immoral and others that their ideas and doctrines made no sense.
4. Justin Martyr made significant apologetic contributions during his lifetime and specifically he taught on the "Logos" or Word of God. He taught that the Logos of God illuminates all who come into the world, even preceding the incarnation of the Word in Jesus. The Logos was the source of all truth.
5. The development of various heresies, such as Gnosticism and the doctrine of Marcion, led to the formation of the canon and creeds.

TERMS

Hellenism – The influence of Greek culture brought by Alexander the Great in the areas he took over. This was a combination of Greek culture and the ancient cultures which were in the regions he conquered.

Diaspora – The large number of Jews that lived outside of Palestine in places such as Egypt, Asia Minor, Rome and beyond.

Apostles Creed – A Christian creed which was a confession of faith which was created to bring clarity to Christian faith during an age of heresies. The document provided clarity on key tenants of the faith including the Trinity.

SUMMARY

1. Gonzalez chapter titled "The Ancient Church," provides a brief overview of the ideas and people groups which influenced the early church. Gonzalez details the religious, philosophical, and governmental pressures of that era. These elements

are the context for the initial spread of the gospel and development of the church. Gonzalez paints a high-level picture of the early church fathers and the heresies and persecutions they overcame for the sake of the Gospel.