



Patristics and Christian Learning with Dr. Jordan Wood

Lecture 2: Faith and Philosophy: The First Christian Apologists

Outline:

Faith and Philosophy: The First Christian Apologists

- Major thinkers in the century before the New Testament:
 - Philo: “The logos became flesh.” Through this divine logos the world was created. Philo had already said this.
- Second century comes with the need for the first Christian apologists.
 - An apology is a defense.
 - When Christians sit down to write an apology, they were trying to write about what was misjudged.
 - What is this Christian thing all about? Why is this not hostile to the governing authorities?
 - Plato’s Apology was the most famous apology for Christians.
 - Socrates gives a rational account for why he has arrived at the point that he has arrived at.
 - What kind of accusations are being hurled at Christians in the second century?
 - Christians are atheists (relative to which god the person believes in).
 - Christians are incestuous (Christians were calling each other brother and sister).
 - Christians are cannibalistic (Rumors of gathering to eat flesh and drink blood).
 - There was a charge that Christianity is “new”.
- Saint Justin Martyr’s ideas about the revelation of divine wisdom and human striving after wisdom and knowledge in the world:
 - He lived from 100 AD – 167 AD.
 - He was born a Samaritan.
 - He had migrated between four different schools of philosophy before he becomes a Christian.
 - He tries to bring his Christianity together with his study of philosophy.
 - Two big ideas:
 - Relentless and fearless pursuit of the truth.
 - The idea of the sowing logos – There is a sense that there has got to be more to this life than I immediately encounter. This is a sign of the Logos’ sowing presence.
 - Jesus of Nazareth the whole Logos is there.



- Justin makes a claim about Christians before Christ, such as Socrates.
 - Socrates was put on trial falsely, accused falsely, and put to death falsely.
 - Justin thought that this prefigured Christ.
- Saint Justin Martyr's most famous claim:
 - **All truths belong to Christians.**
- The catacombs of Rome:
 - This was a burial space that evolved into places of worship.
 - They also would commune with the dead.
 - This is also the place where the first Christian art arises. Death is the mother of beauty.
 - When the Christians made their first art, they looked around at the culture and took what was common and transformed it.
 - They transformed the meaning of the image itself.
 - Christ is often depicted as Orpheus.
 - The Christians who came there did not have to be told what Orpheus was doing. Christians who knew Christ as the whole logos, and they could detect the partial logos in the myth.