

Apostolic Fathers

Clement of Rome (c. 35-99 AD): Possibly mentioned by Paul in Philippians 4:3. Considered by Roman Catholics as the fourth Pope, after Peter, Linus, and Anacletus.

- *1 Clement*: Authentic epistle written to the Corinthian church, rebuking them for improperly removing presbyters from office (no mention of bishop). Frequently cites the OT as Scripture; alludes to several NT letters but doesn't explicitly call them Scripture. Probably earliest non-canonical Christian writing.
- *2 Clement (c. 95-140 AD)*: Not actually written by Clement. The earliest extant Christian homily/sermon. Quotes the words of Jesus as Scripture.

Didache (c. 100-150): Full title is "The Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles by the Twelve Apostles." Early Christian catechism/church orders. Contains three sections: ethics, liturgy/rituals (such as Baptism and Eucharist), and church organization. Includes the Lord's Prayer. Prefers baptism by triple immersion, but allows affusion (pouring). Requires fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays. Gives instructions to appoint bishops and deacons, but no mention of presbyters. Mentions ministries of itinerant apostles and prophets as "chief priests," although these ministries are apparently becoming obsolete.

Shepherd of Hermas (late 1st-mid-2nd c.): Named after the freed slave Hermas, who receives a series of visions, including one of an angel in the form of a shepherd. Deals with problem of post-baptismal sin, emphasizing the restoration of the church through believers' repentance. Christology is vague, but appears to be an unorthodox mixture of Binitarianism (the Holy Spirit and the Son are identical) and proto-Nestorianism (the Holy Spirit takes possession of the human Jesus).

Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35-107): Bishop who wrote a series of letters while under Roman custody en route to his martyrdom in Rome. High view of Christ as "God in the flesh." Sets the pattern for "monarchical episcopate," in which a single bishop exercises authority over church presbyters. Refutes the heresy of Docetism, while describing the Eucharist as Christ's flesh.

Polycarp (c. 69-156): Bishop of Smyrna. Assisted Ignatius during the latter's travels through Asia Minor en route to his martyrdom in Rome. Wrote an epistle to Philippi, mentioning their council of presbyters but no bishop. Condemned the heresies of Docetism and Marcionism. The account of his martyrdom is the oldest recorded in church history, second only to Stephen's in Acts 7. His final prayer was an early reference to the Trinity: "I glorify You, along with the everlasting and heavenly Jesus Christ, Your beloved Son, with whom, to You, and the Holy Ghost, be glory both now and to all coming ages. Amen."

Papias of Hierapolis (c. 60-130): Bishop in Asia Minor and companion of Polycarp. An early proponent of "chiliasm" or premillennialism, the belief that saints will reign with Christ on earth for a thousand years after the defeat of the Antichrist. Our earliest source on the composition and authorship of the Gospels of Matthew (which Papias claims was originally written in Hebrew/Aramaic) and Mark.

Epistle of Barnabas (c. 100-131): Once considered to have been written by Paul's traveling companion, but this is unlikely. A theological refutation of Jewish "literal" interpretation of the OT in favor of spiritualized/typological interpretations (sometimes very far-fetched!). High christology, with earliest reference to a Christological interpretation of "let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1:26).

Epistle to Diognetus (c. 130-late 2nd c.): A Greek *apologia* (defense) for Christians in time of persecution, arguing for the superiority of Christianity over paganism and Judaism. An early reference to the doctrine of double imputation: "O the sweet exchange... that the sinfulness of many should be hidden in the one righteous person, while the righteousness of One should justify many sinners" (9:5)!