

Epistle to Diognetus



Epistle to Diognetus

- Section I. – Occasion of the Epistle.
- Section II. – The Folly of Pagan Idolatry.
- Section III. – The Folly of Jewish Worship and Customs.
- Section IV.
- Section V. – The Distinctiveness of Christians.
- Section VI.
- Section VII.
- Section VIII. – God's son as Revealer and Savior.
- Section IX.
- Section X. – Call to Imitate God.
- Section XI. – A Homily on the Word.
- Section XII.

Epistle to Diognetus

Why is this treatise written?

1 Since I see most excellent Diognetus, that you are extremely interested in learning about the religion of the Christians and are asking very clear and careful questions about them-**specifically, what God they believe in and how they worship him, so that they all disregard the world and despise death, neither recognizing those who are considered to be gods by the Greeks nor observing the superstition of the Jews; what is the nature of the heartfelt love they have for one another; and why this new race or way of life has come into the world we live in now and not before**-I gladly welcome this interest of yours, and I ask God, who empowers us both to speak and to listen, that I may be enabled to speak in such a way that you will derive the greatest possible benefit from listening, and that you may listen in such a way that the speaker will have no regrets.

Epistle to Diognetus

In Section 2 what does the author say to Diognetus about pagan gods?

In Section 3 what does the author say about the folly of Jewish worship?

"For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

Hosea 6:6

¹⁰ Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah.

¹¹ To what purpose *is* the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.

¹² When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

¹³ Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

¹⁴ Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear *them*.

¹⁵ And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

¹⁶ Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

¹⁷ Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.

Isaiah 1:10-18

Epistle to Diognetus

What does the author say about the lifestyle of Christians?

5 For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of humanity by country, language, or custom. ² For nowhere do they live in cities of their own, nor do they speak some unusual dialect, nor do they practice an eccentric way of life. ³ This teaching of theirs has not been discovered by the thought and reflection of ingenious people, nor do they promote any human doctrine, as some do. ⁴ But while they live in both Greek and barbarian cities, as each one's lot was cast, and follow the local customs in dress and food and other aspects of life, at the same time they demonstrate the remarkable and admittedly unusual character of their own citizenship. ⁵ They live in their own countries, but only as nonresidents; they participate in everything as citizens, and endure everything as foreigners. Every foreign country is their fatherland, and every fatherland is foreign. ⁶ They marry like everyone else, and have children, but they do not expose their offspring. ⁷ They share their food but not their wives. ⁸ They are in the flesh, but they do not live according to the flesh. ⁹ They live on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. ¹⁰ They obey the established laws; indeed in their private lives they transcend the laws. ¹¹ They love everyone, and by everyone they are persecuted. ¹² They are unknown, yet they are condemned; they are put to death, yet they are brought to life. ¹³ They are poor, yet they make many rich; they are in need of everything, yet they abound in everything. ¹⁴ They are dishonored, yet they are glorified in their dishonor; they are slandered, yet they are vindicated. ¹⁵ They are cursed, yet they bless; they are insulted, yet they offer respect. ¹⁶ When they do good, they are punished as evildoers; when they are punished, they rejoice as though brought to life. ¹⁷ By the Jews they are assaulted as foreigners, and by the Greeks they are persecuted, yet those

Epistle to Diognetus

What does the author say about God's son in section 7?

What is the primary function of God's son in sections 8 & 9?

How does one imitate God in section 10?

The Rest of the Writings of the “Apostolic Fathers”

A.D. 70

Didache (?)

A.D. 90

1 Clement (?)

2 Clement (?)

A.D. 110

Ignatius of Antioch

Epistle of Barnabas (?)

A.D. 130

Epistle to Diognetus (?)

Fragments of Papias(?)

A.D. 150

Polycarp, Letter & Martyrdom

Shepherd of Hermas (?)