



## GENTILE SOURCES - LUCIAN

Background:

- 2nd Century
- Greek Satirist
- Criticized the Christians: gullible people – they donate money to their teachers.

In his mockery he reveals facts to us concerning Jesus and Christians:

*“The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day): - the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account .... You see these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are Immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then It was Impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on faith, With the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property”*

(Lucian, The Death of Peregrine, 11-13, in The Works of Lucian of Samosata, transl. by H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949), vol. 4.)

**Conclusions from this Passage about Jesus and early Christians:**

- We are told that Jesus was worshiped by Christians.
- It is also related that Jesus introduced new teachings in Palestine.
- That he was crucified because of these teachings. Jesus taught his followers certain doctrines:
  - All believers are brothers from the moment they convert to Christianity
  - denying the Greek gods
  - they worship the sage Jesus, who...
  - ...was crucified
  - they live according to his laws
- Lucian says the Christians call Jesus as a “sage”, which in Greek context means a Philosopher or a wise teacher
- Christians are the followers of Jesus,
- They believe they are immortal
- They accepted Jesus’ teaching by faith, and
- They practiced their faith by their disregard for material possessions, by sharing their common property.

A portion of Lucian that is not included here adds more points:

- The Christians had "sacred writings" which were frequently read.
- Then something affected their community, "they spare no trouble, no expense."
- However, Lucian notes that Christians are easily taken advantage of by unscrupulous individuals.