



# Discussion - Apologetic Fathers

Grade 9 - Patristics - Unit 3

## Passage 1 - Letter to Diognetus

*“Christians are not distinguished from the rest of humanity by country, language, or custom. 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. They live in their own countries, but only as nonresidents. They marry like everyone else, and have children, but they do not expose their offspring. They share their food but not their wives. They live on earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws; indeed in their private lives they transcend the laws. They love everyone, and by everyone they are persecuted. They are poor, yet they make many rich; they are in need of everything, yet they abound in everything. They are cursed, yet they bless; they are insulted, yet they offer respect. When they do good, they are punished as evildoers; when they are punished, they rejoice as though brought to life. In a word, what the soul is to the body, Christians are to the world. The soul dwells in the body, but is not of the body; likewise Christians dwell in the world, but are not of the world.”*

### Discuss:

- What is this passage saying?

### Summary:

- This passage is trying to convey the message that the Christians are not evil, but in fact they are even more law-abiding than non-Christians. They obey the law and yet they go the extra mile. They offer love and protection to their neighbors and protect the children you expose! They live among you on earth; they dress like you and speak like you, but their eyes are really on heaven! They are the ones doing good and you are the ones persecuting them! These are not cannibals or atheists!

## Passage 2 - *First Apology*, by St. Justin Martyr

*“To the Emperor Titus Aelius Augustus Caesar, and to his son Verissimus, and the natural son of Caesar, and the adopted son of Pius, a lover of learning, and to the sacred Senate, with the whole People of the Romans, I, Justin, the son of Priscus and grandson of Bacchius, natives of Flavia Neapolis in Palestine, present this address and petition in behalf of those of all nations who are unjustly hated, myself being one of them. We demand that the charges against the Christians be investigated, and that, if the charges are proven, the Christians are punished as they deserve; [or rather, indeed, we ourselves will punish them.] But if no one can convict us of anything, true reason forbids you, for the sake of a wicked rumor, to wrong blameless men.”*

### Discuss:

- Who is St Justin addressing here? *The emperor, the court, the senate and all the Roman people*
- Who is he speaking on behalf of? *Of everyone who is suffering (here he means the Christians)*



*including himself.*

- *What is he asking? That the charges against the Christians (like atheism, cannibalism, infant sacrifice, etc.) should be investigated fairly. He says, you can't just torture us if you hear bad rumors about us! Be fair!*
- *What else? He says if these charges are true, then of course you should punish any Christian. Actually, we will punish them first. But you should build your judgment on facts not on rumors.*

In the remainder of the letter, St. Justin goes on to refute the charges one by one. He says the Christians are not atheists, he explains what happens in the Eucharist, how Christians help everyone else.