

Justin Martyr, *Second Apology*

Duke Divinity School, Church History I Seminar

**Objectives:**

- SWBAT answer the following question: according to Justin Martyr in his *Second Apology*, who seeks the truth, what happens to those who do, and why?
- SWBAT identify quotations that are paradigmatic to the author's argument on particular topics.
- SWBAT synthesize the author's claim on connected topics in order to articulate the author's overarching argument.

**Activity:**

- Students are divided into five groups to identify paradigmatic quotations that represent Justin's claim for the assigned topic. Students will record two quotations, a synthesis of the claim, and a question.

**Group Topics & Chapter Numbers**

- A1 Pagens & Truth, 8, 10
- A2 Partial Truth & Whole Truth, 13, 9
- B Consequences of (Seeking/Speaking) Truth, 2, 4, 11, 12
- C1 (Cause of Consequences?) The Demons, 5, 8, 11
- C2 (Cause of Consequences?) Fate & Free Choice, 7, 9

**Exemplar Answer:**

Everyone who lives "according to reason" seeks the truth. Thus Socrates, Heraclitus, Musonius, and the Stoics participated in the Logos, since a seed of the Word has been sown in every race of humanity. Such truth-seekers have repeatedly been hated, slandered, and killed, and Christians suffer this hostility still more intensely because they possess not merely a share in the Logos but the Logos in his fullness. For Justin, this persecution is not the result of fate but of the free choices of angels and human beings and, above all, of the active malice of demons, who disguise vice as virtue and work through those who have been deceived and fail to live according to reason. Yet persecution does not ultimately triumph: death comes to all human beings, while persecutors condemn themselves to eternal fire and those who possess and pursue truth go "to the Father and King of the heavens." Justin therefore writes not simply to defend Christians but to save their persecutors by bringing them into fuller participation in the Logos, Christ—the fullness of Reason—whose work heals humanity, defeats the demons, and restores the world.

**For Justin, who seeks the truth, what happens to those who do, and why?****A1 · PAGANS & TRUTH**

**Text:** Focus on Chapters 8 and 10

**Research:**

In your chapters, find the two quotations that show most clearly how Justin thinks about truth among the pagans — and what work this idea is doing in his answer to our question.

**Record:**

On your poster, compose three sections:

Section 1 — TWO QUOTATIONS. Copy them exactly, with the chapter and page number. Only two. Choose the ones where Justin's thinking about your topic is most visible — the ones your argument could not do without.

Section 2 — ONE SENTENCE, filling in this frame:

**“Justin argues that \_\_\_\_\_ — and this matters for our question because \_\_\_\_\_.”**

Section 3 — ONE QUESTION your group could not settle, addressed to the class, not to me.

**Guiding questions** (these are just to help you along if you feel stuck)

- Does Justin think that any truth does exist among the pagans? If so, how much? Where did they get it? (What is the pagan source of truth?)
- What are the pagans missing?
- Does he give a test for telling when someone is lacking truth?

**For Justin, who seeks the truth, what happens to those who do, and why?****A2 · PARTIAL TRUTH & WHOLE TRUTH**

**Text:** Focus on Chapter 13 (primarily); 9

**Research:**

In your chapters, find the two quotations that show most clearly how Justin thinks about the difference between having partial truth and having the whole truth— and what work this topic is doing in his answer to our question.

**Record:**

On your poster, compose three sections:

Section 1 — TWO QUOTATIONS. Copy them exactly, with the chapter and page number. Only two. Choose the ones where Justin's thinking about your topic is most visible — the ones your argument could not do without.

Section 2 — ONE SENTENCE, filling in this frame:

**“Justin argues that \_\_\_\_\_ — and this matters for our question because \_\_\_\_\_.”**

Section 3 — ONE QUESTION your group could not settle, addressed to the class, not to me.

**Guiding questions** (these are just to help you along if you feel stuck)

- Justin keeps comparing what the philosophers had with what Christians have. Where does he describe that difference most precisely?
- What exact words does he use for each side of the comparison? Write them down as a pair.
- Is he describing a difference in amount or quality?

**For Justin, who seeks the truth, what happens to those who do, and why?****B · CONSEQUENCE OF (SEEKING/SPEAKING) TRUTH**

**Text:** Focus on Chapters 2, 4, 11, and 12

**Research:**

In your chapters, find the two quotations that show most clearly how Justin thinks about what happens to a person who tells the truth — and what work this idea is doing in his answer to our question.

**Record:**

On your poster, compose three sections:

Section 1 — TWO QUOTATIONS. Copy them exactly, with the chapter and page number. Only two. Choose the ones where Justin's thinking about your topic is most visible — the ones your argument could not do without.

Section 2 — ONE SENTENCE, filling in this frame:

**“Justin argues that \_\_\_\_\_ — and this matters for our question because \_\_\_\_\_.”**

Section 3 — ONE QUESTION your group could not settle, addressed to the class, not to me.

**Guiding questions** (these are just to help you along if you feel stuck)

- In the trial scene, what exactly is the charge? What is Ptolemæus convicted of doing?
- How does Justin describe the act of confessing — what kind of act is it for him?
- For a Christian, what is the result of confession, trial, and death? What is its meaning and significance?

**For Justin, who seeks the truth, what happens to those who do, and why?****C1 · (Cause of Consequences?) THE DEMONS**

**Text:** Focus on Chapters 5, 8, and 11

**Research:**

In your chapters, find the two quotations that show most clearly how Justin thinks about the demons — and what work this topic is doing in his answer to our question.

**Record:**

On your poster, compose three sections:

Section 1 — TWO QUOTATIONS. Copy them exactly, with the chapter and pagenumber. Only two. Choose the ones where Justin's thinking about your topic is most visible — the ones your argument could not do without.

Section 2 — ONE SENTENCE, filling in this frame:

**“Justin argues that \_\_\_\_\_ — and this matters for our question because \_\_\_\_\_.”**

Section 3 — ONE QUESTION your group could not settle, addressed to the class, not to me.

**Guiding questions** (these are just to help you along if you feel stuck)

- What is the origin & cause of the hatred and persecution of good people?
- How do demons operate? (What are their methods? How do they make bad things look good?)
- Is everyone good hated to the same degree?

**For Justin, who seeks the truth, what happens to those who do, and why?****C2 · (Cause of Consequences?) FATE & FREE CHOICE**

**Text:** Focus on Chapters 7 and 9

**Research:**

In your chapters, find the two quotations that show most clearly how Justin thinks about free choice— and what work this idea is doing in his answer to our question.

**Record:**

On your poster, compose three sections:

Section 1 — TWO QUOTATIONS. Copy them exactly, with the chapter and page number. Only two. Choose the ones where Justin's thinking about your topic is most visible — the ones your argument could not do without.

Section 2 — ONE SENTENCE, filling in this frame:

**“Justin argues that \_\_\_\_\_ — and this matters for our question because \_\_\_\_\_.”**

Section 3 — ONE QUESTION your group could not settle, addressed to the class, not to me.

**Guiding questions** (these are just to help you along if you feel stuck)

- If demons are behind the persecution, is any human being still responsible for it?
- Think about: who is Justin writing to and what are his aims? (What kind of evidence would persuade a Roman senate?)

**Teacher Key**

**For Justin, who seeks the truth, what happens to those who do, and why?**

**A1. Truth & Pagans**

§8: pagans were sometimes right about some things: “on account of a seed of logos implanted in every race of men and women” (p. 79)

§10: “whatever either lawgivers or philosophers uttered well, they elaborated according to their share of logos by invention and contemplation. But since they did not know all that concerns logos, who is Christ, they often contradicted themselves.” (p. 80)

**A2. Truth: Partial & Whole**

§13: the teachings of pagan philosophers are NOT “different from those of Christ, but... are not in every respect equal... For each person spoke well, according to the part present in him of the divine logos, the Sower, whenever he saw what was related to him... But they who contradict themselves... appear not to have possessed the hidden understanding and irrefutable knowledge.” (p. 83).

§13: “For all writers were able to see realities darkly, through the presence in them of an implanted seed of logos. For the seed and imitation of something, imparted according to capacity, is one thing, and another is the thing itself, the part possession and imitation of which is effected according to the grace coming from Him.” (p. 84)

[§9: “right reason, having come, proved that not all opinions nor all teachings are good, but that some are evil, while others are good.” (p. 80) – less helpful quotation I think]

**B. Consequences of Seeking/Speaking Truth**

§2: “And he [Lucius] gave thanks, knowing that he was delivered from such wicked rulers, and was going to the Father and King of the heavens.” (p. 75)

§11. “death [is] a debt due from every person who has been born. Wherefore we give thanks when we pay this debt.” (p. 81).

**C1. Demons**

§8: “For, as we intimated, the demons have always effected that all those who ever so little strived to live by logos and to shun vice be hated. And it is not astonishing that the demons are proved to cause those to be much worse hated those who lived not by a part only from logos, the Sower, but by the knowledge and contemplation of the whole logos, who is Christ.” (p. 79)

§11: “For Vice, veiling her actions in the beauties which properly belong to Virtue... enslaves groveling people... But those who understand the beauties belonging to true existence become themselves incorruptible by means of Virtue.” (p. 82) \*\*\* *This connects to Justin’s PURPOSE for writing his APOLOGY*

**C2. Fate & Free Will**

§7: “But neither do we affirm that it is by fate that people do what they do, or suffer what they suffer, but that each by free choice acts rightly or sins; and it is according to the working of wicked demons that earnest people... suffer persecution and are in bonds...” (p. 78)

§7: “But since God made the race of angels and men in the beginning with free will, in eternal fire they will justly suffer the punishment of whatever sins they have committed. And this is the nature of all that is made—to be capable of vice and virtue. For neither would any of them be praiseworthy unless there was also power to turn to both.”

[i.e., “virtue” would not exist as a good if there was not the possibility to *choose* it—otherwise, it’s

meaningless; there is no “good” if everything is just fate, no choice—then everything is just indifferent]

[Maybe – §9: “the wicked are punished in eternal fire... if this is not so, God does not exist; or if He exists He does not care for men and women” (p. 80)]