

Bio for
Justin Martyr
(AD ~100 – ~165)

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- Justin was one of the first apologists,¹ who defended the reasonableness of the Christian faith.
- He is the first sub-apostolic author. That is, all of the Apostles were dead at the time of his birth.
- Justin was a Gentile, born in Samaria.
- He studied philosophy, particularly that of Socrates and Plato, and was eventually converted by an old man who convinced him of what Plato was missing.
 - He continued to wear his “philosopher’s gown” after his conversion.
 - He founded a school of Christian philosophy in Rome, (which was attended by Irenaeus, one of Polycarp’s disciples.)
- Justin wrote many works, some of which are lost to us today. Others exist in fragments.
 - Three complete works that are almost universally accepted as his are:
 - *The First Apology*
 - *The Second Apology*
 - *The Dialog with Trypho*
 - The two *Apologies* were written to the Roman emperors.
 - His first apology includes early descriptions of second century church life.
 - In *The Dialog of Trypho*, Justin describes a (most likely fictional) conversation between himself and a Jew.
 - Justin was a believer in a literal millennium/1000-year reign of Christ, while he admits that not all Christians agreed with him on this issue.
 - He wrote a lot about the work of demons and how they deceive the world.
 - He believed that demons were the result of the sin of angels mating with women as possibly described in Genesis 6 and explicitly stated in the Book of Enoch.
 - He further believed that many of the pagan myths actually happened, such as the god Zeus being a real demon who actually appeared to men at some point in history.
 - He claims that the apostles reproduced the sayings of Jesus accurately and quotes from all of the four Gospels.
 - He thought that the book of Revelation was authentic and written by John the Apostle.
- He was beheaded during the reign of Marcus Aurelius in AD 165 for not sacrificing to Roman gods. This was when he was given his title “Martyr”.

Sources:

<http://www.earlychurch.org.uk>

<http://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.html>

http://www.religionfacts.com/christianity/history/church_fathers.htm

¹ His works are the first for which we have complete manuscripts.