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Suffering for Our Sakes: 
The Soteriological Thought Process of Ignatius of Antioch

James B. Leavenworth

Doctor of Philosophy in 
New Testament and Christian Origins 
University of Edinburgh 
2022
Declaration

This is to certify that the work contained within has been composed by me and is entirely my own work. No part of this thesis has been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

James B. Leavenworth

________________________________________  __________________________
Signature                                      Date
Abstract of Thesis

This thesis provides a comprehensive account of the understanding of salvation in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch. Ignatius' surviving writings date from the first quarter of the second century and are some of the few surviving writings from that period. They are indispensable for tracing developments in Christian thought and the evolution of theological ideas between the writings of the New Testament and the much better documented times of the third and fourth centuries. Since Ignatian soteriology has rarely been the focus of scholarly investigation, the present thesis examines the soteriological language employed by Ignatius of Antioch with the goal of weaving the dominant threads into a comprehensive and clear presentation of Ignatian soteriology. The argument of the thesis is therefore developed in three main sections with each arranged thematically to address a basic soteriological question. Part I opens by explaining why Ignatius believed humanity required salvation. Humanity's threefold predicament with sin (Chapter 2), with the forces of evil (Chapter 3), and with death and the wrath of God (Chapter 4) all necessitated deliverance. Chapter 5 concludes by examining the way Ignatius segmented humanity based on one's response to the incarnational gospel narrative that, if ignored, could result in misinterpreting many of the warning passages in the letters. Next, Part II addresses the question of what salvation entailed for Ignatius. After exploring Jesus Christ as the central savior figure in Chapter 6, Chapter 7 presents Ignatius' varying descriptions of salvation. Chapter 8 then explores Ignatius' primary conception of salvation as the reception of life. Part III concludes by examining how salvation
was obtained. After exploring Ignatius' description of faith as the means of salvation, the section concludes by evaluating several theories regarding additional avenues of salvation.
Lay Summary

This thesis provides a comprehensive account of the understanding of salvation in the letters of Ignatius of Antioch. Ignatius' surviving writings date from the first quarter of the second century and are some of the few surviving writings from that period. They are indispensable for tracing developments in Christian thought and the evolution of theological ideas between the writings of the New Testament and the much better documented times of the third and fourth centuries. Since Ignatius’ doctrine of salvation has rarely been the focus of scholarly investigation, the thesis examines the language employed by Ignatius of Antioch that relates to human salvation with the goal of weaving the dominant threads into a comprehensive and clear presentation of Ignatius’ doctrine of salvation. The argument of the thesis is therefore developed in three main sections that are arranged thematically to address a basic question regarding Ignatius' understanding of salvation. Part I opens by explaining why Ignatius believed humanity required salvation. According to Ignatius, humans required salvation due to their threefold predicament with sin (Chapter 2), with the forces of evil (Chapter 3), and with death and the wrath of God (Chapter 4). Next, Part II addresses the question of what salvation entailed for Ignatius. After exploring Jesus Christ as the central savior figure in Chapter 6, Chapter 7 presents Ignatius' varying descriptions of salvation. Chapter 8 then explores Ignatius' primary conception of salvation as the reception of life. Part III concludes by examining how salvation was obtained. After exploring Ignatius' description of faith as the means of salvation, the section concludes by evaluating several theories regarding additional avenues of salvation.
Acknowledgements

Fearing that I will forget to thank someone who played a key role in the completion of this thesis, it is with great hesitation that I pen this final and, surprisingly difficult, section. After several years of intense study I can truly say that I have been standing on the shoulders of giants.

First I would like to acknowledge those who first inspired this amazing journey. During my time at Dallas Theological Seminary two people introduced me to a group of writings previously unknown to me. While translating selections from the Apostolic Fathers, Dan Wallace first exposed me to the amazing letters written by Ignatius of Antioch. This fascination was furthered by interactions during an independent study with Michael Svigel who supervised my ThM thesis on Ignatius. I can safely say that without these two men, my ignorance of Ignatius and the rest of the Apostolic Fathers would have continued and I certainly would not have been accepted into a PhD program.

While researching potential PhD programs, I heeded the advice of those who cautioned that choosing a PhD supervisor was a decision that could make or break the entire experience. I can joyfully say that Professor Paul Foster has been an absolute joy to work with and I am greatly enriched in viewing him not only as a supervisor, but as a friend. Paul's deep concern for his students, his ridiculously quick and in-depth responses to submitted work, and his wealth of knowledge have guided this project from day one. Paul, without you this project would never have been completed!
PhD work can become tiresome and so my thanks goes out to the following friends from New College who helped me remember to breathe and enjoy life in Scotland: to Jacob Peterson, Brian Bunnell, Matt Sharp, Ryan Coleman, Charles Cisco, Timm Heim, thanks for your friendship and for helping me put aside the thesis for an hour or two to just enjoy life. My thanks also go to Mark Arvé and Mark Shannon for keeping in touch with me from afar and for your constant and unswerving words of encouragement.

To my daughters Shelby and Leah, I am sorry for dragging you away from your friends for the last four years and I hope that one day you can look back on this as a positive experience. To my oldest, Kaity and Riley, thanks for coming to visit us in Scotland and for your support as well. To my wife Julie, words cannot express my gratitude and love for selling everything and moving overseas so that I could pursue God's calling in my life. I hope this was an enriching time for all of you and that we can one day fully comprehend God's sovereign hand in bringing us along on such a journey. For my Dad, words cannot express how much I wish you were still with us. I am so thankful that your faith, like Ignatius', was centered on the Lord Jesus Christ who died for us so that we might be saved (Smyrn. 2.2). Believing in the resurrection, I will see you again. To Mom, I love you so very much and hope you know that your continued support and love has meant so much to me, especially over the last few difficult years.

My hope for this thesis is that it will inspire others to delve into the theology of the Church Fathers and that, ultimately, it will bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Soli deo gloria.*
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List of Abbreviations

1 Apol. Justin, *First Apology*
1 Macc 1 Maccabees
2 Apol. Justin, *Second Apology*
1 Clem. 1 Clement
2 Clem. 2 Clement
2 Esd 2 Esdras
3 Macc. 3 Maccabees
4 Macc. 4 Maccabees
A Armenian version of the Middle Recension
Am Armenian version of Ignatius’ martyrdom
ACW Ancient Christian Writers
ANRW *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
*Autol.* Theophilus, *Ad Autolycum*
B Arabic version of the Middle Recension (Ms. Sin. ar. 505)
Bar Baruch
Barn. *Letter of Barnabas*
BETL Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
C Coptic version of the Middle Recension
CFHB Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae
CFMM Church of the Forty Martyrs– Mardin, Turkey
*Chron.* John Malalas, *Chronographia*
*Cl/Q* *Classical Quarterly*
ConBNT Coniectanea Biblica New Testament Series
DCass Dio Cassius, *Roman History*
*Dial.* Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho*
Did. The Didache
Diogn. The Epistle of Diognetus
ECL Early Christianity and Its Literature
*Eph.* Ignatius, *To the Ephesians*
<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>Septuagint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Martyrdom of Ignatius by Metaphrastes (10th cent.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magn.</td>
<td>Ignatius, To the Magnesians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mart. Pol.</td>
<td>Martyrdom of Polycarp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MJOT</td>
<td>Midwestern Journal of Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS(S)</td>
<td>Manuscript(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICNT</td>
<td>New International Commentary on the New Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NovTSup</td>
<td>Supplements to Novum Testamentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odes. Sol.</td>
<td>Odes of Solomon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OT</td>
<td>Old Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Berlin Papyrus codex 10581 (Middle Recension containing Smyrn. 3.3–12.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phld.</td>
<td>Ignatius, To the Philadelphians</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMS</td>
<td>Patristic Monograph Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pol.</td>
<td>Ignatius, To Polycarp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pol. Phil.</td>
<td>Polycarp, To the Philippians</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPS</td>
<td>Popular Patristics Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praescr.</td>
<td>Tertullian, De praescriptione haereticorum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prax.</td>
<td>Tertullian, Adversus Praxeum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pss. Sol.</td>
<td>Psalms of Solomon</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTS</td>
<td>Patristische Texte und Studien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ref.</td>
<td>Hippolytus, Refutatio omnium haeresium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RelSRev</td>
<td>Religious Studies Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rom.</td>
<td>Ignatius, To the Romans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Syriac version (including the combined testimony of Sf and SR)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBEC</td>
<td>Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBG</td>
<td>Studies in Biblical Greek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBR</td>
<td>Studies of the Bible and Its Reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBT</td>
<td>Studies in Biblical Theology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCS</td>
<td>Septuagint Commentary Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEÅ</td>
<td>Svensk exegetisk årsbok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECA</td>
<td>Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sf</td>
<td>Fragments of the Syriac version of the Middle Recension</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir</td>
<td>Sirach/Ecclesiasticus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sm</td>
<td>Syriac version of Ignatius' martyrdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smyrn.</td>
<td>Ignatius, To the Smyrnaeans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNTSMS</td>
<td>Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPCK</td>
<td>Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>Short Recension (Curatian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAC</td>
<td>Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StBibLit</td>
<td>Studies in Biblical Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>StPatr</td>
<td>Studia Patristica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strom.</td>
<td>Clement of Alexandria, <em>Stromateis</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Codex Taurinensis (13th cent. MS of Ign. <em>Rom.</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLG</td>
<td><em>Thesaurus Linguae Graecae</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tob</td>
<td>Tobit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trall.</td>
<td>Ignatius, <em>To the Trallians</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSEC</td>
<td>Texts and Studies in Eastern Christianity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td><em>Vigiliae Christianae</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCSup</td>
<td><em>Vigiliae Christianae, Supplement Series</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vir. ill</td>
<td>Jerome, <em>De viris illustribus</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WGRW</td>
<td>Writings from the Greco-Roman World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wis</td>
<td>Wisdom of Solomon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WUNT</td>
<td>Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZAC</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für Antike Christentum</td>
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sometime in the first quarter of the second century Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, was arrested for unspecified reasons and taken under guard to Rome for execution. During the journey Ignatius wrote multiple letters intended to exhort Christians to remain true to apostolic doctrine and practice.¹ This relatively small collection of letters, which in its Middle Recension (MR) form is approximately five percent the size of what would later coalesce into the New Testament (NT), was likely written within the short span of a few weeks. Yet despite its small footprint, the letters have been the subject of extensive scholarly debate. Rarely have so few

¹ Noting scholarship’s reluctance to employ the terms ‘Christian’ or ‘Christianity’, Robinson remarked that such terms, along with ‘Judaism’, were used precisely in Ignatius’ era and that “proposed solutions, instead of offering clarity and precision, have driven scholars into an almost hopeless terminological quagmire.” – Thomas A. Robinson, *Ignatius of Antioch and the Parting of the Ways: Early Jewish-Christian Relations* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2009), 203–4. Thus, the “crucial issue is whether there was a distinctive Christian self-understanding, not whether a group in question had a particular label, for a community need not have a distinctive term for itself in order to have a clear sense of its separate and distinctive identity.” – ibid., 205–6. Ignatius is often credited with coining Χριστιανισμός (*Magn. 10.1, 3; Rom. 3.3; Phil. 6.1*) to contrast with Ἰουδαϊσμός – Judith Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek? Constructing Early Christianity*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016), 70–1. The terms ‘Christian’ and ‘Christianity’ will be used throughout to describe Jesus’ followers.
words generated so many comments, or to put it more accurately, so many diverging conclusions.

One such example centers on the nature of Ignatius’ arrest. Even though the letters do not reveal the specific reasons for his incarceration, except for generic statements such as being ‘bound because of our shared name and hope’ (Eph. 1.2), nevertheless, existing theories are difficult, if not impossible, to prove. Furthermore, debates focusing on the identity and doctrine of Ignatius’ opponents have likewise produced several theories that lack a firm consensus. Did Ignatius oppose two distinct groups (Judaizers and Docetists) or did he polemicize against a single group that incorporated both viewpoints? Michael Svigel summarized the quandary surrounding Ignatius:

Ignatius has often been conscripted to serve in various theological or scholarly conflicts. Finding Ignatius on one’s side of a debate was always a boon….students of the New Testament have been interested in what, if any, New Testament writings

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2 The most primitive theory derives from the Antiochene version of the Acts of Martyrdom of Ignatius that claims Ignatius was arrested in the ninth year of Trajan for confronting the emperor who was in Antioch during a campaign (Mart. Ign. Ant. 2). Lightfoot noted that the Antiochene Acts, most likely produced in Antioch in the fifth or sixth century, has “no claim to be regarded as an authentic narrative. But the possibility remains that they may have embodied some earlier document and thus may preserve a residuum of genuine tradition” – J. B. Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers, Part II: Ignatius & Polycarp, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1989; repr., 1889), 389–91. While I disagree with Bakker’s suggestion that Ignatius was an example of voluntary martyrdom, a good discussion on the theories regarding Ignatius’ arrest and condemnation can be found in the “Historical Reconstruction” section of “Exemplar Domini: Ignatius and His Martyrological Self-Concept” (Ph.D. diss., University of Groningen, 2003), 17–58.

were known by Ignatius. Churchmen debated the nature of Ignatius's ecclesiology—whether his form of episcopacy was a new and limited development or a long-established order. The nature of the sacraments in Ignatius has been another attraction for theological and practical inquiry. And in the last hundred years, his writings have been the focus of several studies attempting to advance or rebut accounts of the history of orthodoxy and heresy, the history of religions thought, and the rise of catholic Christianity.⁴

Yet despite the differences of opinion, many would agree that Ignatius wrote multiple letters revealing himself as one who was passionately concerned about Christian unity.⁵ Many would also concur that Ignatius strongly desired to die a martyr's death, although with differing conclusions regarding his underlying state of mind and reasoning for doing so.⁶ This seems, however, to be the extent of the scholarly consensus on Ignatius.

⁴ Michael J. Svigel, *The Center and the Source: Second Century Incarnational Christology and Early Catholic Christianity*, Gorgias Studies in Early Christianity and Patristics 66 (Piscataway: Gorgias, 2016), 53-4. Svigel's footnotes contain numerous references to some of the major works in each area.


1.1 Filling an Important Soteriological Lacuna

How is it possible that this remote historical figure has occupied the attentions of both historian and theologian alike for such an extensive period of time? Two primary factors may have contributed to this perplexing fascination. First, Ignatius' prominent place in early-Christian history must be kept in mind. Glanville Downey described Antioch as a “meeting point of the Greek and the Oriental civilizations...one of the three largest cities of the Roman Empire, and one of the great commercial centers of the ancient world.” The book of Acts likewise attests to the city’s centrality in the growth of Christianity as it spread rapidly (Acts 11:19–27; 13:1–2; 15:30–6; 18:22–23).

Ancient sources identify Ignatius as the second (or possibly third) bishop in Antioch following Evodius. Therefore, as one of the earliest Antiochene bishops, Ignatius held a crucial position in one of the most important centers of the early-Christian movement. This is

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8 J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers, Part II: Ignatius & Polycarp, vol. 1*, 2nd ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1989; repr., 1889), 28–30. See Origen (*Hom. Luc. 6.4*) and Eusebius (*Hist. eccl. 3.22.1; 3.36.2*). Early sources are somewhat ambiguous with respect to Ignatius’s position in the line of succession in the city. Origen described Ignatius as “the second bishop of Antioch after the Peter” (*Hom. Luc. 6.4*, episcopum Antiochiae post Petrum secundum) and Eusebius, though initially appearing to agree (*Hist. eccl. 3.36.2*), presented a potentially contradictory picture with Evodius as the first bishop and Ignatius the second (*Hist. eccl. 3.22.1*). Alternatively, if Origen viewed Peter as an apostle/founder of the church, and not as the bishop, then it is possible that the unnamed Evodius was first bishop after Peter and that Ignatius was second. This becomes likely when Eusebius’ comments about the succession in Rome are taken into consideration. For example, just prior to mentioning Antioch, Eusebius described Clement as ‘the third that held the episcopate after Paul and Peter’ (*Hist. eccl. 3.21.2b*). When viewed in isolation, this could indicate that Eusebius viewed Paul and Peter as the first two bishops of Rome and that Clement was the third. However, the next clause (3.21.2c) clarifies his meaning: ‘And Linus was the first, and after him Anencletus.’ For a thorough discussion of the issues concerning the succession of the episcopacy in Antioch see Downey, *A History of Antioch*, 281–7; 583–6.
especially true if the traditional Eusebian dating for Ignatius' martyrdom in the middle of the 
Trajan's reign is accurate (i.e., 98–117 CE). If the text dates to the early second century, then 
Ignatius functioned as bishop of Antioch during a crucial time when apostolic teachings were 
being passed on to a new generation of leaders and theologians. This matches Eusebius' 
description of Ignatius as the one who had passed down to the church ‘apostolic doctrine’ 
(ἀποστολικῆς διδασκαλίας). Despite such uncertainties, Ignatius' prominent position in 
nascent Christianity means that his letters can potentially shed valuable light on how the 
early church interpreted apostolic doctrine and practice. Thomas Robinson summed up the 
attraction:

Ignatius's writings speak forcefully to almost every issue in our contemporary debates 
about the early Christian movement, from the shaping of Christian self-understanding 
and its perception of the “parting of the ways” from Judaism to the question of the 
diversity of early Christian assemblies, to the numerous developments that came to 
characterize the Christian movement by the mid-second century."

Schoedel likewise commented that the letters “are among the few pieces of evidence that 
appear to provide a firm point of departure for the understanding of Christianity early in the 
second century.”

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9 The proposed date is based on inexact statements made by Eusebius in his Chronicon, written originally in Greek circa 311 CE but surviving in Jerome's Latin translation, a ninth-century Greek manuscript, and in Armenian and Syriac witnesses. As Mosshammer warned, “Reconstruction of the original remains an implausible project that would inevitably reflect primarily the bias of its author.” – The Chronicle of Eusebius and Greek Chronographic Tradition (London: Associated University Presses, 1979), 32; see also Mellink, Death as Eschaton, 45. The dating for Ignatius will be covered in §1.3.

10 Hist. eccl. 3.37.4–38.1.

11 Robinson, Parting of the Ways, 5.

The interest in Ignatius is therefore understandable. However, a review of Ignatian scholarship reveals that a high percentage of the scholarly treatments of the epistles focus primarily on historical aspects of the text. Even though elements of Ignatian theology have garnered attention, treatments that delve specifically into Ignatian soteriology are notably uncommon. On the rare occasion that Ignatius’ soteriological views have been addressed, the results are often incomplete and colored by anachronistic conclusions and confessional presuppositions.\(^3\)

With the following challenges and limitations in mind, the present study seeks to fill this lacuna in Ignatian scholarship by examining the major soteriological themes interwoven throughout the letters. The methodology employed throughout will be predominately exegetical and descriptive and, though at times historical-critical methodologies will be utilized, the grammatico-historical approach will dominate. Through a close and contextual reading of the Greek MR text, this thesis will examine the salvific language utilized by Ignatius with the goal of weaving the dominant threads into a clear presentation of Ignatian soteriology.

\(^3\) Donald Winslow went so far as to suggest that Ignatius “has...undergone a ‘second martyrdom’...at the hands of his theological interpreters” who have dealt with his soteriology – “The Idea of Redemption in the Epistles of St. Ignatius of Antioch,” *GOTR* 11 (1965): 119–20.
1.2 Challenges and Limitations

Such a study naturally faces certain challenges and limitations that should be acknowledged at the outset. It should first be noted that Ignatius wrote during an arduous journey to Rome while in chains and under the watchful eye of a squad of soldiers who apparently mistreated him (Rom. 5.1). Such trying circumstances were certainly not conducive to producing systematic and focused writings akin to that of Irenaeus of Lyon or any of the late second or third century theologians. As Corwin eloquently stated, “[t]he theology of St. Ignatius of Antioch was wrought in struggle, not in the study.” Therefore any treatment of Ignatian theology must recognize that the occasional nature of his letters precludes a complete and systematic treatise on any subject.

On a related front, the primary aim of the letters, contra Wilkens, was not to outline the doctrine of soteriology per se. Instead, the chief aim was to exhort the churches towards unity in the face of false teachers who threatened to interject divergent and aberrant beliefs that Ignatius understood to subvert the true incarnational gospel narrative. Nevertheless, as the subsequent analyses will demonstrate, soteriological topics are addressed throughout and with such a frequency that warrants, at least in its broadest features, a reconstruction of Ignatian soteriology.

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14 Corwin, St. Ignatius, vii.
Because there is a real danger in contrasting Ignatius' soteriological views with others, this study will endeavor to provide an in-depth and focused examination of Ignatian soteriology in its own right. For instance, Ignatius' soteriological views have often been dismissed as a departure from those expressed by NT writers (especially Paul) simply because Ignatius expressed his views with different lexical choices and forms of expression.\footnote{For examples see Thomas F. Torrance, The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1996; repr., 1948), 66–72.} Such comparisons likewise risk imposing on Ignatius concepts or issues that he may not have addressed. For example, with the letters clearly exhibiting an awareness of Paul and some of his epistles (Eph. 12.2; Rom. 4.3), Ignatius' shared use of δικαιοσύνη in Rom. 5.1 and Phld. 8.2 has led many to conclude, with differing theological conclusions, that Ignatius was therein referring to the doctrine of justification.\footnote{For more detail on the scholarly discussion, see §1.4 n. 114.} However, a close and contextual examination demonstrates that this relatively common verb was not being used as a soteriological descriptor. Instead, Ignatius simply stated that he 'had not been vindicated' (ἀλλὰ οὐ παρὰ τούτῳ δεδικαιώμαι) with reference to the accusation of being a Christian (Rom. 5.1), as well as the Judaizers' challenge that his Christological viewpoints could not be derived from the OT archives (Phld. 8.2).

To limit this problem, even though canonical material will at times be referenced, for instance when Ignatius and such sources share the use of certain terms in a soteriological context, nevertheless, the present study will focus primarily on Ignatius' own soteriological language and viewpoints in relative isolation from others. Though this examination will attempt to describe and categorize Ignatius' soteriology using his own expressive terminology,
nevertheless, for the sake of simplicity the thesis will at times employ classical western theological categories and descriptors. For example, despite the fact that Ignatius rarely used terms from the ἁμαρτ– word grouping, his creative discussions about being ‘blameless’ and ‘having a good conscience,’ as well as his references to the underlying human spiritual ‘sickness’ that necessitated treatment from the ‘one physician Jesus Christ,’ are directly related and will hence be discussed in Chapter 2 under the umbrella category of Humanity's Predicament with Sin. However, despite the occasional departure from Ignatius' specific terminology, I have sought throughout to describe Ignatius' soteriology with language that matches his own form of expression.

It should also be acknowledged at the outset that no modern treatment of an ancient text and its theology is capable of achieving completely neutrality that is completely devoid of bias or presupposition. Thus Darrell Bock rightly warned,

What a reader sees and how a reader reads is determined not only by what is in the text but how the reader is prepared to read by his or her culture, theological perspective, personal background, and appreciation of the text’s setting. As much as we may wish to try, we cannot make ourselves blank slates as readers when approaching a text.  

Just so. Even though I have sought to expound Ignatius' soteriological schema apart from my own personal convictions, I recognize the danger of imposing my own beliefs and theological convictions upon the text. As a committed Christian from the Protestant tradition, I have

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endeavored to expound Ignatius’ soteriological viewpoints without imposing my beliefs and convictions upon the text. My hope and prayer is that I have succeeded in this endeavor and I leave that for the reader to decide.

Unfortunately, as the following section will demonstrate, since we no longer possess the original letters, not all scholars are confident that the foundations of the Ignatian text are as “firm” as often assumed.

1.3 The Ignatian Problem: Authenticity & Dating

Those who seek to explore the doctrinal beliefs of an ancient author such as Ignatius are faced with numerous obstacles that must first be successfully navigated before any true investigation begins. For instance, questions relating to the authenticity of a text, as well as the accuracy of its surviving manuscripts to the original, are of vital importance. Martin West highlighted this issue by warning that

[textual criticism is not the be-all and end-all of classical scholarship....But it is an indispensable part of it. By far the greater part of our knowledge of that civilization comes to us from what the ancients wrote. In almost all cases those writings have survived, if they have survived at all, only in copies many stages removed from the originals, copies of which not a single one is free from error. Often the errors are so great that it is no longer possible to tell what the author meant to say. It follows that anyone who wants to make serious use of ancient texts must pay attention to the uncertainties of the transmission; even the choral odes that he admires so much may turn out to have an admixture of editorial guesswork in it, and if he is not interested in]
the authenticity and dependability of details, he may be a true lover of beauty, but he is no serious student of antiquity.\textsuperscript{20}

West's warnings are especially pertinent to this study. Before Ignatius' doctrinal beliefs are examined, it must first be established, within reason, what he actually wrote.

\subsection*{1.3.1 Slicing...or Unraveling the Gordian Knot?}

Modern scholarship predominantly recognizes Ignatius to have written a seven-letter collection commonly referred to as the Middle Recension (MR). Since the publication of Theodore Zahn's \textit{Ignatius von Antiochien} in 1873 and J. B. Lightfoot's highly influential three-volume work covering the writings of Ignatius and Polycarp in 1885, the MR has been regarded by most as the authentic Ignatian corpus.\textsuperscript{21} Others have deftly traced the detailed history of how this general consensus emerged and it is not my intention to repeat that well-known account here.\textsuperscript{22} Instead, before examining Ignatius' soteriological beliefs, the goal will be to briefly outline why the MR is still the most satisfactory solution to the Ignatian problem.

As the following will highlight, the current status of the text underlying the modern editions is admittedly more complex than is often assumed. Mark Edwards rightly noted that “[m]ost twentieth-century writing on Ignatius of Antioch has accepted without demur the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Martin L. West, \textit{Textual Criticism and Editorial Technique} (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1973), 7–8.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Those who cover the emergence of the consensus on the MR include: Lightfoot, \textit{Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. i, 70–430}; Mellink, \textit{Death as Eschaton}, 5–50; Svigel, \textit{Center and the Source}, 59–2 n. 9 For a more recent and extensive survey see James Given's “Ignatius of Antioch and the Historiography of Early Christianity” (PhD Thesis, Harvard University, 2019).
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
authenticity of the so-called ‘Middle Recension’. More recently, James Given posited that scholarship has become too easily assured of the authenticity of the Ignatian epistles. Given suggested that

the external witnesses are few and tell us virtually nothing about Ignatius's letters before the fourth century, while the extant manuscripts give us very little assurance that we can discern a verifiably ancient version of the collection....the available textual evidence suggests a widespread and long-lasting tradition of re-writing and re-arranging the letters of Ignatius, a tradition inadequately described by the scholarly consensus model.

Candida Moss similarly described the MR solution as “a beguilingly simple proposal that severs, rather than unravels, a textual Gordian knot.” While I agree with both Moss and Given that scholarship has often oversimplified, and at times even ignored the complex textual issues surrounding the Ignatian text, as the following sections will hopefully demonstrate, I disagree that the 'knotty' issues surrounding the text require a radical rejection of the notion that the MR is the closest approximation to the original form of the letters. In distinction from Given, it seems possible, despite the obvious enlargement of the corpus over time, to identify a “verifiably ancient version of the collection.”

Over the last four centuries, scholarship gradually acknowledged that the Ignatian letters had existed in at least three recensions. The short recension (SR), consisting of three

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Syriac manuscripts, contains abridged versions of the epistles to Polycarp, Ephesus, and Rome, as well as a segment from the Trallian letter appended to *Romans*. This recension is commonly viewed as a later abridgment of the MR. The MR, written originally in Greek but subsequently translated into Latin, Syriac, Armenian, Coptic, and Arabic versions and fragments, contains lengthier editions of the three SR letters as well as four further letters to Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, and Smyrna. The long recension (LR), written in Greek but later translated into Latin, consists of thirteen letters containing expanded versions of the

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26 The SR was originally published by William Cureton, *The Antient Syriac Version of the Epistles of Saint Ignatius to St. Polycarp, the Ephesians, and the Romans* (London: Rivingtons, 1845). For a fuller treatment see William Cureton, *Corpus Ignatianum: A Complete Collection of the Ignatian Epistles, Genuine, Interpolated, and Spurious* (Berlin: Asher and Co., 1849). Lightfoot believed Zahn had “dealt a fatal blow” to Cureton’s position and observed that “no serious champion has come forward to do battle for them” – Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers, Part II*, vol. 1, 284; Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochien*. Markus Vinzent, while denouncing the MR solution, recently argued for the priority of the SR as the closest attainable solution to the problem (Markus Vinzent, *Writing the History of Early Christianity: From Reception to Retrospection* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 289, 291). Vinzent’s arguments, however, are overly skeptical and not convincing. Vinzent places too much emphasis on the fact that pre-Eusebian writers quote from the three SR letters and fails to demonstrate that such quotes are distinctive to the SR and could not have come from the MR. The quotes from the three letters could be attributed to (1) the particular attraction of each of the three letters to early Christians (i.e., *Ephesians* is the longest/most theological; the emphasis on martyrdom in *Romans*; and a letter written to the famous martyr-bishop Polycarp) as well as (2) the paucity of manuscripts dated to the first half of the second century. Additionally, it is hard to imagine that a collection of three authentic letters would be completely dethroned in such a short time span (several decades?) and, unlike the MR, had not been copied into Armenian, Latin, Coptic, or Arabic. To date, no SR manuscript has been discovered.


28 The Latin version, based on two manuscripts (*Montacutianus* now lost and *Caiensis 395* housed in Caius College, Cambridge), was first published in 1644 by James Ussher – *Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae* (Oxford, 1644). The first printed edition of the Greek text was published two years later by Isaac Vossius – *Epistolae genuinae S. Ignatii Martyris: quae nunc primum lucem vident ex Bibliotheca Florentina* (Amsterdam, 1646). This edition, based on the eleventh-century *Codex Mediceo-Laurentianus 57,7*, lacks *Romans* most likely due to “the loss of some sheets” – Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers, Part II*, vol. 1, 74. The missing Greek version of *Romans*, published by Thierry Ruinart (*Acta Martyrum Sincera*, Paris 1689), was based on a manuscript housed in Paris (*Codex Parisiensis-Colbertinus 1451*). As Foster notes, since then three additional manuscripts of the MR *Romans* have been discovered as well as a single fragment of * Smyrnaians 3.3–12.1* (Berlin Papyrus, *Codex 10581*) – Paul Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius of Antioch,” in *The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers*, ed. Paul Foster (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 83.
seven MR epistles along with six additional letters: Mary of Cassobola to Ignatius; Ignatius’ reply to Mary of Cassobola; to the Tarsians; to the Antiochenes; to Hero; and to the Philippians. This recension held sway as the authentic corpus until the seventeenth century when scholars recognized that the text had previously existed in the shorter MR configuration.29

During the Middle Ages an additional four letters also circulated, bringing the total to seventeen potential letters. This grouping of letters, existing solely in Latin and most likely written sometime between the eighth to the eleventh century contained two letters between Ignatius and John the Evangelist, a letter from Ignatius to the Virgin Mary, and the Virgin Mary’s reply to Ignatius.30 Despite their popularity in the Middle Ages, Protestant and Roman Catholic scholars alike agreed they were late forgeries and likely represented a second stage of the LR.31

Despite the usefulness of the three-recension model, Given is probably correct to suggest that the model does not equate perfectly with reality.32 Nevertheless, even though

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29 This recognition is largely attributed to James Ussher who, after discovering two Latin manuscripts that contained a shorter form of the seven epistles, published the MR for the first time in 1644—Ussher, Polycarpi et Ignatii epistolae.


other ‘recensions’ could possibly be added to the list, the threefold model sufficiently represents the fact that the corpus had expanded over time.

Evidence of redaction is just one of the many difficulties in resolving issues of authenticity and dating. Scholarship has also wrestled with (1) the paucity of Greek manuscripts supporting the MR; (2) the relatively late dating of the majority of Ignatian manuscripts;\(^3\) (3) the probability that Romans had experienced a separate transmission history from the remaining six letters;\(^4\) (4) supposed anachronistic wording, evidence of intertextuality, and advanced theological topics that suggest a date later into the second century and beyond; and (5) the added complexity of analyzing a text that, in its differing recensions, currently exists in numerous translational versions (Greek, Syriac, Armenian, Arabic, Coptic, Latin) with expected textual variation.

1.3.2 Reasons for Upholding MR Authenticity

While discussing Ussher’s attempts to refute LR authenticity, Lightfoot misjudged the impact of his own work with the following prediction: “critics have boldly stepped forward from time to time and endeavored to reinstate the shattered idol [i.e., LR authenticity]….probably the

\(^3\) For example, the MR’s primary Greek witness, Codex Mediceo-Laurentianus 57.7 (G), dates to the eleventh century. The four Greek manuscripts for Romans range in dating between the tenth and thirteenth century. A fifth-century manuscript (Berlin papyrus codex 12581) contains a majority of the Smyrnaean letter (3.2–12.1). The single Latin witness for the MR (Caiensis 395) is likewise dated to the thirteenth century. The Armenian version is potentially dated to the fifth century whereas the Syriac fragments are from the seventh, tenth and thirteenth centuries (Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers, Part II*, vol. 1, 86–94). The Arabic version, which will be discussed later in this chapter, has been essentially ignored despite its strong witness to the MR.

\(^4\) Bammell noted that the separate transmission of Romans was just one possible explanation – “Ignatian Problems,” *JTS* 33 (1982).
succession will be kept up at long intervals till the end of time. The battles over Ignatian authenticity have indeed continued as envisioned, however, contra Lightfoot’s prediction, they have not focused on reestablishing LR priority. The overwhelming majority continues to view the LR as a late fourth century redaction of the MR. Even though several motivational factors behind the creation of the LR have been proposed, since the publication of Lightfoot’s monumental work its status as an authentic Ignatian corpus has not garnered any serious reconsideration. Most challengers have sought instead to dethrone the MR by attributing most, if not all, of the seven letters to the hand of a forger or to a heavy-handed redactor of an even smaller original corpus.


37 A possible exception is Reinoud Weijenborg’s proposal that the MR is an abbreviation of the LR produced after 360 CE by Evagrius of Antioch – Reinoud Weijenborg, *Les letters d’Ignace d’Antioche* (Leiden: Brill, 1969). As others have noted, Weijenborg’s theory fails to account for the external evidence prior to the fourth century (Polycarp, Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius) and his creative arguments based on limited comparisons between the LR and MR (specifically the letter to Ephesus) are often counter intuitive and backwards. For example, concerning his suggestion that the MR was derived from the LR in order “to perfect the literary expression of the Ignatian letters and to give them an even more archaic character” (ibid., 401.), Mellink rightly countered: “If the MR has a more archaic character, why oppose its priority? Can there be found any other example of such a revision in the ancient world?” – Mellink, *Death as Eschaton*, 14. Others who rebut Weijenborg include J. Rius-Camps, *The Four Authentic Letters of Ignatius* (Rome: Pontificio Instytutem Orientalium Studiorum, 1980), 24–5; Schoedel, “Are the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch Authentic?,” 196–7; Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 5; Allen Brent, *Ignatius of Antioch: A Martyr Bishop and the Origin of the Episcopacy* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 95–100.

As others have previously demonstrated, none of the challenges to the MR have gained widespread support. What I suggest—in opposition to Moss, and more recently, to Given and Vinzent—is that the evidence actually shows that the ‘Gordian Knot’ has been essentially unraveled (with residual issues) and not carelessly severed as suggested. Since others have already gone to great lengths to do so, this section will not address each of the specific challenges to the MR that have arisen since the publication of Lightfoot’s defense.

Instead, it makes more sense to briefly discuss the reasoning for viewing the MR as the closest recoverable representation of the original Ignatian corpus. As the following will demonstrate, most MR challenges rely on several common assumptions that are not always well founded. In general, the following four points represent a rationale for continuing to uphold the MR as the earliest recoverable stage of the corpus.

— (1) Polycarp’s Letter to the Philippians —

Lightfoot already highlighted the critical link between Polycarp’s letter to the Philippians and the Ignatian epistles: “No Christian writings of the second century, and very few writings of antiquity, whether Christian or pagan, are so well authenticated as the Epistles of Ignatius, if

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39 Holding to MR authenticity does not mean that the LR is worthless to scholarship. Several others have convincingly demonstrated that an examination of the LR can shed light on fourth-century doctrinal disputes. For example, see Paul Gilliam’s Ignatius of Antioch and the Arian Controversy, VCSup 140 (Leiden: Brill, 2017); Foster, “The Ignatian Problem,” 5–50.

the Epistle of Polycarp be accepted as genuine.” Nearly all subsequent discussions concerning Ignatian authenticity have been forced to evaluate the references to Ignatius in Polycarp’s letter to the Philippians (9.1–2; 13.1–2). The reasoning is clear. As Holmes suggests, the letter is customarily dated within a few weeks (or at most a few months) of the time of Ignatius's death” and therefore “provides the earliest testimony to the existence of Ignatius’s letters....Those who argue against the authenticity of Ignatius’s letters typically find it necessary to displace Polycarp's testimony.

Thus Joly commented, ‘If we want to reopen the file of Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp is the place to start.” Both Joly and Lechner likewise highlighted the important link between Ignatius and Polycarp with lengthy opening chapters dedicated to Polycarp's letter. Brent likewise stressed the importance of Pol. Phil. by deeming it “the crown witness for the authenticity of the [Ignatian] letters.”

Such arguments are typically based on perceived inconsistencies in the letter between Pol. Phil. 9.1–2, which suggests that Polycarp understood Ignatius' martyrdom to have already occurred, and Pol. Phil. 13.1–2, which seemingly contradicts by suggesting that Polycarp was not aware of Ignatius' fate. Such scholars hold that either (1) the otherwise genuine letter to the Philippians had been interpolated in both chapters in order to authenticate the Ignatian

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letters, or (2) the entire letter had been created by the same person who forged the Ignatian epistles. If this theory could be proven, it would amount to a dismissal of the most primitive witness to a genuine collection of Ignatian letters.

The interpolation/forgery theories have several weaknesses and inconsistencies that are difficult to reconcile. For example, considering Rius-Camp’s theory, it makes little sense for the forger of the Ignatian letters, who supposedly promoted a monarchial episcopate, to interpolate a letter such as Pol. Phil. which, as Hartog noted, “lacks completely [the emphasis upon the episcopate].” It is also puzzling how scholars attribute the references to Ignatius in Pol. Phil. to the hand of a forger/interpolator, while at the same time claiming that the references in 9.1–2 and 13.1–2 are contradictory. As Schoedel rightly noted, “if there is in fact a

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46 This position was initially proposed by Jean Daillé, De Scriptis quae sub Dionysii Areopagitae et Ignatii Antiocheni nominibus circumferuntur libri duo (Geneva: Sumptibus Ioannis Antonii & Samuelis de Tournes, 1666). Dehandschutter listed several proponents of this view in “Polycarp’s Epistle to the Philippians: An Early Example of ‘Reception’,” in The New Testament in Early Christianity, ed. Jean-Marie Sevrin, BETL 86 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), 277 n. 10, 11. Joly noted that the supposed forger’s “motive is clear: it is a question of launching under the authority of Polycarp, the apocryphal corpus of the Letters of Ignatius.” (“le mobile est clair: il s’agit de lancer sous l’autorité de Polycarpe, le corpus apocryphe des Lettres d’Ignace”) – Joly, Le dossier d’Ignace d’Antioche, 28.

47 For example, Rius-Camps presents an elaborate theory involving a forger who created seven letters from an original Ignatian corpus of four letters (to Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Rome). To add to the appearance of authority, the forger added references to Polycarp, forged the Ignatian letters to Polycarp and Smyrna, and also interpolated the sections of Pol. Phil. that mention Ignatius – Rius-Camps, The Four Authentic Letters of Ignatius, 139.

contradiction here, one could expect better of an interpolator.** How could a forger produce such a serious blunder in two short verses?

Since it is difficult to imagine that Pol. Phil. had been interpolated or forged during Polycarp’s lifetime, proponents of such theories must situate the work to a date subsequent to his death which seems to have occurred in 155/156 CE. The earliest reference to Pol. Phil. in antiquity was by Irenaeus (ca. 180 CE) who apparently knew Polycarp personally and also acknowledged the existence of “a very forceful letter of Polycarp written to the Philippians” (Haer. 3.3.4). The result is that the available timeframe in which the possible forgery could have taken place becomes extremely tight (155–180 CE) the later one situates Polycarp’s death. This compressed timeline makes it difficult to envision sufficient time for the forger to craft and circulate both the Ignatian epistles and Polycarp’s letter, and apparently deceive Irenaeus who quoted from Ign. Rom. 4.1 in Haer. 5.28.4 and was certainly familiar with Pol. Phil.

There have been two major counter-proposals that endeavored to rebut the unreliability of Polycarp’s letter as an witness to the authenticity of the Ignatian letters. The

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* For a detailed examination of the extensive debates about dating Polycarp’s death, see Harrison, Polycarp’s Two Epistles to the Philippians, 269–283 who concluded that 155 or 156 CE was the most likely timeframe. See also Sara Parvis, “The Martyrdom of Polycarp,” in The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers, ed. Paul Foster (London: T&T Clark, 2007) who argued for 156 CE. Dating the letter to the 160s or 170s is problematic– see ibid., 129. See also Boudewijn Dehandschutter, “The Martyrium Polycarpi: a Century of Research,” ANRW 2.27.1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1993), 497–502.

* This date is based on Irenaeus’ comment (Haer. 3.3.3) that Eleutheros was bishop of Rome (174–189 CE). See Mary A. Donovan, “Irenaeus,” ABD 3.457–61: 3.457.

first, proposed by Harrison in 1936, suggested that Pol. Phil., as it now stands, had originally existed in the form of two letters. Harrison proposed that

Polycarp wrote to the Philippians at different times two letters, which were copied out at an early date on to the same papyrus roll, and so fused into one. The first, consisting of our thirteenth chapter, possibly also the fourteenth, was a short covering note...along with a batch of Ignatian Epistles....it was dispatched probably within a fortnight of Ignatius's departure from Philippi....The second Epistle, consisting of the first twelve chapters, was written after the name of Ignatius had become a blessed memory....[t]he date of this second Epistle would thus fall towards the end of Hadrian's reign.  

Even though Harrison's conflation theory has been upheld by many with varying degrees of confidence and slight modification, it is not the most convincing solution to the perceived inconsistencies. Less problematic are solutions that view the letter as a unified and internally consistent document. While Pol. Phil. 9.1–2 does seem to indicate that Polycarp had been informed, or at least expected, that Ignatius had already been executed, nevertheless, a plain reading of Pol. Phil. 13.2 does not necessarily indicate his unawareness of Ignatius’ demise. It seems possible that sufficient time had elapsed for Polycarp to be certain that the Romans had executed Ignatius (9.2) and that he simply awaited a more definitive description of the events from witnesses who had yet to return to Smyrna (13.2). Perhaps Polycarp simply sought to know the manner in which Ignatius had died, especially since he

53 Harrison, Polycarp’s Two Epistles to the Philippians, 15–6.
55 Harrison, Polycarp’s Two Epistles to the Philippians, 35. See also Hartog, Polycarp’s Epistle, 33.
had exhorted the Philippians to follow Ignatius’ example and ‘endure’ in the manner exhibited by recent and notable martyrs (9.1). Ignatius’ own fears of failing to endure his martyrdom faithfully (Rom. 3.2; 7.2) likewise suggest that even if Polycarp believed Ignatius had been martyred (Pol. Phil. 9.1–2), he wanted to be assured that Ignatius had achieved his goal of dying faithfully (Pol. Phil. 9.1–2). This seems to be a more natural and unforced solution than theories involving forgery or interpolation.

Since the supposed inconsistencies can be convincingly explained, skeptical tendencies have led to the far too hasty dismissal of Polycarp’s early testimony. Moreover, as Mellink suggests, the supposed discrepancies are “not striking enough to challenge the integrity of Polycarp’s letter.” Brent likewise noted, the “genuineness...of Polycarp’s references to the collection of the Ignatian letters...would point to a date for Ignatius before Polycarp’s martyrdom...the traditional date...23 February 155.” Therefore, Pol. Phil. provides a key and early witness to a body of letters written by Ignatius who had been martyred most likely in the first quarter of the second century.

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56 Scholars have proposed other solutions. Thus Lightfoot, referring to the Latin of Pol. Phil. 13.2 (qui cum eo sunt, ‘who are with him’), suggested that it was an incorrect translation of the original Greek (no longer extant) which “in the original was doubtless neutral as regards time, probably τοῖς σὺν αὐτῷ”– Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 3, 349. Others note that the ‘interpolations’ and the rest of the letter possess the same style and character – Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 1, 621–3; Harrison, Polycarp’s Two Epistles to the Philippians, 58; Hartog, Polycarp’s Epistle, 28; Paul Hartog, Polycarp and the New Testament: The Occasion, Rhetoric, Theme, and Unity of the Epistle to the Philippians and its Allusions to New Testament Literature, WUNT 2.134 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 161–2.

57 On a similar note, even though many modern scholars likewise dismiss Eusebius’ testimony regarding the date of the Ignatian epistles, Mellink rightly indicated that “there is no compelling reason to presume that Eusebius was the first to date Ignatius’ death somewhere around the tenth year of Trajan’s reign. For a fuller treatment see Mellink, Death as Eschaton, 45–9.

58 Ibid., 28.

59 Brent, Second Sophistic, 317.
Attempts to situate Ignatius in the latter half of the second century tend to rely on literary dependencies that, when examined more closely, cannot be established with reasonable certainty. A few examples will suffice to establish this line of thought.

Rius-Camps concluded that Ignatius had written four letters at the end of the first century (Eph., Magn., Trall., Rom.) and that an unknown Philadelphian bishop in the third century, desiring to “prop up his authority...with the authority of the martyr Ignatius”, had dissected and interpolated the letters to Ephesus and Magnesia in order to produce the forged letters to Philadelphia, Smyrna, and Polycarp. To make his case, Rius-Camps suggested that the forger had extracted analogies and specific terminology from the early third-century Didascalia Apostolorum and incorporated them into the forged MR. The problem with this theory is that it cannot be sustained on the basis of comparisons between the two texts.

Additionally, dependencies in favor of the priority of the Didascalia are assumed, but not proven. Instead of the Ignatian forger borrowing from the Didascalia, it seems more likely that the dependency went in the opposite direction with writer of the Didascalia gleaning ideas from the MR.

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61 Ibid., 147–243.
62 Even Rius-Camps acknowledged this view when he described the parallel between Did. 2.27.1–2 and Ign. Magn. 7.1, Trall. 2.2, Phld. 7.2 (‘do nothing without the bishop’) as “so evident that Funk goes on to exclaim that the writer of the Didascalia ‘without doubt borrowed it from Ignatius’.” – ibid., 239.
Hübner made another claim to literary dependency by arguing that the Ignatian letters were forged ca. 170–180 CE by a follower of Noetus of Smyrna in order to counter gnostic heresies. This theory describes the forger modifying late second-century creedal material written by Noetus (or his followers) which has been preserved in *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (Ref. 9.10.9–10; 10.27.1–2). Hübner cited certain antithetical pairings used to describe God in *Refutatio* (9.10.9–10; 10.27.1–2) as the forger’s source material for creating similar pairings in the Ignatian epistles (Ign. Eph 7.2; Pol. 3.2).

This theory is problematic on multiple fronts. First, it has not been established with certainty that Noetus or any of his followers were responsible for writing *Refutatio*. Second, when the texts are examined alongside one another it quickly becomes apparent that the supposed antithetical pairings are not particularly close. Mellink opposed Hübner by noting that only one of the parallels is “remarkable” (γεννητόν...ἀγένητον) and that both sets of writings contained multiple antithetical pairings not shared by the other writer. Edwards concluded that Hübner’s theory “can have little weight when much of the relevant literature has perished.” The fact that so little survives from the first half of the second century should give any scholar pause when attempting to prove theories involving supposed literary dependencies based on only a few select words or phrases. In reality, even if the case for

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63 Hübner, “Thesen zur Echtheit und Datierung,” 64; Mellink, *Death as Eschaton*, 18.
64 This work was originally attributed to Origen, however, later scholars suggest it was written by Hippolytus. As Litwa suggests, “questions about the *Refutation’s* authorship have yet to be settled.” – M. David Litwa, *Refutation of All Heresies*, ed. Joshua L. Langseth, WGRW 40 (Atlanta: SBL, 2016), xxxii.
literary dependency could be established, it is just as likely that Noetus or his followers utilized the Ignatian epistles to establish their arguments, especially since, as Edwards pointed out, Noetus was an inhabitant of Smyrna where the Ignatian letters were most likely first collected.\(^67\) It is also possible that that both writers may have independently employed some form of traditional hymnic material in their texts that was commonly available to both.\(^68\) Consequently, the claim for dependency cannot be established.

Brent and others have thoroughly critiqued the arguments for situating the Ignatian letters in the latter half of the second century due to Ignatius’ utilization of texts that supposedly did not exist in the first half of the century.\(^69\) As already suggested, many of the arguments against MR authenticity are based on textual and conceptual links that are fragile at best. In contrast, most scholars would agree that the MR contains clear intertextual links to certain Hebrew bible texts, as well as from texts that later coalesced into the New Testament.\(^70\) The sparse use of introductory formula (i.e., \(\gamma\varepsilon\gamma\rho\alpha\pi\tau\alpha\)) and the relatively infrequent number of direct citations from both the Hebrew bible and the NT gives the appearance of being

\(^67\) Ibid., 218–9.
\(^69\) Brent, Ignatius of Antioch: A Martyr Bishop, 95–143.
composed prior to the middle of the second century. This would seem to counter the forgery theory and strengthen the case for authenticity. This is especially evident when the MR is contrasted with the LR which contains an overabundance of explicit references to early-Christian scriptures. It is hard to imagine a forger creating a corpus that rarely mentioned past Christian leaders (other than Peter and Paul) and did not make numerous explicit references to texts that by the end of the fourth century were clearly viewed as authoritative and canonical. Foster’s concluding remarks are appropriate:

The composition of the seven letters that form the middle recension were not the products of measured literary reflection, but were produced while the writer was en route to his martyrdom (if the testimony of the epistles themselves is accepted as genuine). Such circumstances in all probability prevented Ignatius from consulting those texts which he might have had at his disposal in Antioch.⁷¹

The MR does not give the appearance of a forgery. The grammatical anomalies, lack of references to a fourfold Gospel, and the infrequent citations of scriptural texts, especially when contrasted with the LR, all suggest a date in the first half of the second century.

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⁷¹ Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 185. Brent similarly concluded that if the “letters emanated from the last quarter of the second century, they would have looked far more like the longer recension – minus, admittedly the Trinitarian emendations. We should also have expected quotations, like those of Justin Martyr, from the canonical Gospels, the Epistles, and the Old Testament” – Brent, Ignatius of Antioch: A Martyr Bishop, 143.
Much like the previous section, those who reject the early dating of the MR tend to base their judgments on the presence of certain theological concepts and doctrines that cohere with the latter half of the second century and not with the traditional dating for the letters.

For example, in their respective rebuttals to Ignatian authenticity, Hübner and Lechner both highlighted an anti-Valentinian polemic in the supposed Ignatian forger’s use of certain terms and phrases that shift the dating of Ignatius’ letters into the latter half of the second century (165–175 CE). However, such arguments suffer from several assumptions. First, the fact that the MR contains a few select words and phrases that were also utilized by Gnostic writers does not indicate that the MR was pseudonymously crafted as an intentional polemic against a late Valentinian form of Gnosticism. Second, as others have already noted, since the Valentinian teachings Ignatius was supposedly countering cannot be conclusively traced to the late second century, and may actually have existed as early as the first century, they may actually be pre-Valentinian.

Referencing Magn. 8.2, which describes Christ as the ‘eternal word that came not forth from silence’ (λόγος ἀῤῥητός οὐκ ἀπὸ σιγῆς προελθὼν), Hübner concluded that the MR composer

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73 Edwards, in his reply to Hübner’s article, discussed Magn. 8.2 and the suggestion that it referred to Valentinian Gnosticism. Edwards noted that “even if the text were less disputable, the allusion to Valentinus would be too oblique for most readers, and in any case we have no report that he ever spoke of silence as the mother of the Word.” – Edwards, “Ignatius and the Second-Century,” 216. For the possible early dating to the form of Gnosticism that MR detractors claim Ignatius was polemicizing against (i.e., Sethian) see Brent, Ignatius of Antioch: A Martyr Bishop, 129–34.
intentionally countered late Valentinian perspectives since “Sige can only be a figure from the Valentinian Pleroma” and that this “brings us in any case to the time after 155/160.” The basis for such a conclusion is flimsy at best. Hübner’s conclusion, along with Lechner’s and Joly’s, is based on maintaining a textual variant that Ehrman described as “probably the best-known instance of an ‘orthodox corruption’” in the Apostolic Fathers. In contrast, arguments in favor of the authenticity of the shorter version of the phrase (‘who is his word that came forth out of silence’) are persuasive and have solid scholarly backing. Therefore, Gilliam is probably correct to conclude that ἄνδιος οὐκ “was added by orthodox scribes concerned with Gnostic connotations of the more authentic reading.”

Other arguments are based on supposedly anachronistic references to an ecclesiological order that is deemed far too advanced for the early dating. Both Joly and Lechner contend that the MR’s delineation of church leadership into the threefold structure of

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74 “Die Sige kann nur eine Figur aus dem valentinianischen Pleroma sein. Damit kommen wir in jedem Fall in die Zeit nach 155/160.” – Hübner, “Thesen zur Echtheit und Datierung,” 52. Lechner agreed with Hübner without any substantial interaction – Ignatius adversus Valentinianos?, xxiii. Hübner and Lechner seem to follow Joly’s previous assertion that the ἄνδιος οὐκ variant can only be seen as an anti-Valentinian polemic (“la variante ἄνδιος οὐκ ne peut s’expliquer autrement que comme une critique de Valentin”) – Joly, Le dossier d’Ignace d’Antioche, 73.


76 Joly suggested that the negated variant (ἀνδιος οὐκ) is supported by better manuscripts (G, L, and 5th-century Timothy Aelurus), whereas the shorter variant is supported only by the Armenian version and the 6th-century Severus of Antioch (Le dossier d’Ignace d’Antioche, 71–2). What Joly and others miss is that the shorter variant is also supported by the oft-overlooked Arabic MR version (Ms. Sin. ar. 505, discussed later in the chapter) which reads “who is His Word, coming forth from silence” – English translation of Ms. Sin. ar. 505, unpubl.

77 Gilliam III, Ignatius of Antioch and the Arian Controversy, 30–31. Ehrman agreed that some of Ignatius’ language was “incautious at best” and that “it would make good sense that his text was changed to avoid its misuse by Gnostics in support of their own doctrines.” – Ehrman, “Textual Traditions Compared,” 24.
bishop, presbyters, and deacons, with the lone monarchial (ruling) bishop at its head, did not exist in the early second century and instead corresponds to the late second century when bishops lists, such as found in Irenaeus and Hegesippus, were being used to impart legitimacy to those claiming apostolic succession.\(^7\) This view, however, is not universally accepted. Advocates for such claims must demonstrate that (1) the MR ecclesiological order could not have existed in the first half of the second century and that (2) the church order presented in the MR better corresponds with the last quarter of the same century.

Concerning the first point, some posit that the early-Christian ecclesial structure had transformed over time in response to outside pressures and threats and that such changes may not have occurred at the same rate in each locale. Thus, while discussing 1 Clement, Raymond Brown opined that

the threefold order of single-bishop, with subordinate presbyters and deacons, was not in place at Rome at the end of the first century; rather the twofold order of presbyter-bishops and deacons, attested a decade before in I Peter 5:1–5, was still operative. Indeed, the signal failure of Ignatius (ca. 110) to mention the single-bishop in his letter to the Romans (a very prominent theme in his other letters), and the usage of Hermas, which speaks of plural presbyters (Vis. 2.4.2) and bishops (Sim. 9.27.2), make it likely that the single-bishop structure did not come to Rome till ca. 140–150.\(^7\)

Based on the varied testimony from early Christian writings, Sullivan's conclusion aligned with Brown:

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\(^7\) Joly, *Le dossier d'Ignace d'Antioche*, 75–84; Lechner, *Ignatius adversus Valentinianos?*, xx, 112.

There is a broad consensus among scholars that the historical episcopate developed in the post-New Testament period, from the local leadership of a college of presbyters...sometimes also called *episkopoi*, to the leadership of a single bishop. Scholars also agree that this development took place sooner in the churches of Antioch and of western Asia Minor than in those of Philippi, Corinth and Rome.83

The fact that the MR and the allegedly-interpolated Pol. *Phil*, both supposedly created by the same forger, lack a strong emphasis on the monarchial episcopate or on apostolic succession, and instead widely testify to the authority of not only the bishop but also that of the presbyters and the deacons, suggests that the clerical structure of the MR is not quite as advanced as some suggest.81 Brent’s conclusion is telling:

[T]here is no fit between late second century views of apostolic order and succession, and Ignatius’ view of the threefold Order. His particular view of ecclesial order would have appeared enigmatic and idiosyncratic as much to his contemporaries as to Irenaeus later....it is not simply that Ignatian church order does not fit with that of Polycarp and his circle in the early to mid second-century: the problem is that it does not fit with that of Irenaeus later.82

Whether one views Ignatius as the crafter of a new church order, or as the lone surviving witness to a developing ecclesial structure, the testimony of the MR seems to fit between the earliest Christian texts, which evidence a two-fold structure of bishop-elders and

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81 Corwin, *St. Ignatius*, 82; Robinson, *Parting of the Ways*, 96–7; Edwards, “Ignatius and the Second-Century,” 215. As several have noted, it is not a stretch to shift from the two-fold structure that describes a plurality of presbyter-bishops, assisted by the deacons, to the three-fold structure found in the MR. The MR clearly indicates that the church was to submit not only to the bishop, but also to the presbyters and the deacons (for example, see *Eph*. 2.2; 20.2; *Magn*. 2.1; 6.1; 7.1; 13.1; *Trall*. 2.1–2; 3.1; 7.2; 13.2; *Phld.* inscr; 4.1; 7.1; 10.2; *Smyrn*. 8.1; 12.2; *Pol*. 6.1).

82 Brent, *Second Sophistic*, 22.
deacons, and a three-fold structure with a single monarchical bishop, elders and deacons.\textsuperscript{83} MR ecclesiology is therefore not conclusive proof that the letters date to the late second century. Instead, the MR structure, which could easily be situated somewhere between the two poles, seems to be a slightly more developed form of the former twofold structure with the bishop emerging from within a group of presbyters.

Numerous other supposedly anachronistic concepts have been identified by Joly, Hübner, Lechner, and others. Hartog noted that Hübner “revived the theory that the Ignatian corpus is a wholesale forgery...fabricated in the late second century” by identifying “‘anachronisms’ such as the prevalent use of θεός as applied to Christ, the coining of Χριστιανισμός and καθολική, and a developed martyr theology.”\textsuperscript{84} With respect to the use of such terms, Hartog, Edwards, Lindemann and others have rightly pointed out that the existence of such terms in the MR can be explained simply by earlier precedents in the writings of the NT and Apostolic Fathers, and that their existence in the MR implies neither inauthenticity or a later dating.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{83} B. H. Streeter suggested that Ignatius found 1 Clement to be “one of the chief weapons...in a lifelong battle for ecclesiastical discipline” – Streeter, \textit{Primitive Church}, 155. Thus Streeter concluded that the monarchical episcopacy had already existed at least twenty years prior to Ignatius but had only recently emerged in Asia – ibid., 155–9.


\textsuperscript{85} Edwards, “Ignatius and the Second-Century,” 217-22; Hartog, \textit{Polycarp’s Epistle}, 28-30. Focusing on the use of θεός, Lindemann critiqued Lechner for not acknowledging the possibility that the Ignatian references to Jesus Christ as θεός are a recognizable development based on previously-written NT texts – Andreas Lindemann, “Review of Thomas Lechner, Ignatius adversus Valentinianos?,” \textit{ZAC} 6 (2002): 160; Lechner, \textit{Ignatius adversus Valentinianos?}, 187. Focusing on the use of μαρτυρίου in \textit{Eph} 1.2, Hübner agreed with Joly that the term was used in the technical sense of ‘martyr’ and, therefore, must have been written in the late second century – Hübner, “Thesen zur Echtheit und Datierung,” 51; Joly, \textit{Le dossier d’Ignace d’Antioche}, 70–1. Both Joly and Hübner based their decisions on a doubtful textual variant and disagreed with Lightfoot’s
Overall, arguments focusing on supposed anachronisms suffer from one glaring problem. While critiquing Joly’s work, Bammel identified the issue:

An important part in...Joly’s argumentation is played by the investigation of Ignatius’ vocabulary...which show the advanced state of its development....This phenomenon might be taken as providing an indication of Ignatius’ date, if we possessed a large body of Christian literature deriving from the same milieu. As it is, we only possess a very small proportion of the Christian writings which were produced in the second century, and what we do have derives from a variety of different backgrounds.86

In summary, arguments focusing on supposed anachronisms lose their persuasiveness for two primary reasons: (1) we do not possess a sufficient body of early second-century literature to be relatively assured that the usage of a particular term was either novel or commonplace; and (2) such arguments often ignore the likely suggestion that some of the MR terminology was derived from early Christian writings dated to the first century or early second century.

— (4) New Evidence to Consider —

Based on the evidence available, Lightfoot’s conclusions were sufficiently persuasive to convince the majority that the MR provided the closest representation of the original Ignatian decision to side with the versional mss (L, S, A) which has been noted to better represent the original text against the Greek. Even Joly recognized that of all the uses of μαρτυρ- related language in the MR, the use in Eph. 1.2 is the only one that he could cite that supposedly employed μαρτυρίου in the technical sense (ibid., 71). A brief scan of Ms. Sin. ar. 505, the Arabic version of the MR, indicates that μαρτυρίου was not in the Syriac original. Mellink concluded that Ignatius never uses the μάρτυς- grouping “in the context of the execution of Christians by pagan authorities or other antagonists of the Christian faith.” – Mellink, Death as Eschaton, 55.

corpus. Since that time, additional evidence has surfaced that further solidifies the MR position. What follows is a brief discussion focusing on two pieces of evidence which were not available during Lightfoot’s era.

In 1968, Basile Basile published an important article highlighting the existence of a previously unknown Arabic manuscript (Ms. Sin. ar. 505) that is a key piece of evidence in the authenticity debate. Basile posited that the Arabic versional testimony to Ignatius (which included fragments known to Lightfoot) had largely been ignored by scholarship. Basile deemed it odd that scholarship did not suspect that an Arabic manuscript version of the MR had existed, especially since it had long been suspected that the existing Syriac fragments of the letters betrayed the probable existence of a complete Syriac version that had yet to surface. Basile announced, “What critics didn’t even suspect, we were fortunate to find. The Arabic version that we are going to present is complete, the seven letters of the middle recension appear perfectly there.” In essence, what Basile published was a thirteenth-century Arabic MR manuscript that, when analyzed, appears most likely to have been translated from an earlier Syriac Vorlage.

Since the publication of Basile’s article, very few have taken notice of the potential impact of this discovery. Schoedel simply acknowledged the manuscript’s existence without

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87 Basile Basile, “Un ancien témoin arabe des lettres d'Ignace d'Antioche,” Melto 4.2 (1968). My thanks to Dr Timothy Sailors for bringing this manuscript to my attention.

88 Ibid., 115.

89 “Ce que les critiques n’ont pas même soupçonné, nous avons eu la chance de le trouver. La version arabe que nous allons presenter est complete, les sept lettres de la collection moyenne y figurant d’une manière parfait.”– ibid., 115–6.
any discussion regarding its significance." Mellink briefly hinted at its value: "This Arabic version contains only the seven letters mentioned by Eusebius....Thus, it bears testimony of a textual tradition of the MR independent of the LR."90 More recently, Markus Vinzent seems to have misunderstood the contents of the manuscript when he claimed that "[s]o far, no Arabic translation of the middle recension has been found."91 Vinzent appears to have mistakenly believed the manuscript included only Ignatius' Romans and did not realize that Ms. Sin. ar. 505 actually contained all seven Eusebian letters.92 Only Given appears to have recognized the significance when he commented that the manuscript "presents the only extant collection of Ignatius's letters that exclusively includes the seven letters known to Eusebius."93

What is significant is that Ms. Sin. ar. 505 is the only manuscript known to scholarship that contains only the seven Eusebian letters in MR form without any LR letters. The discovery has several implications. Basile's analysis of the Arabic text conclusively proved, in his estimation, that a Syriac Vorlage had been used to produce the Arabic manuscript.94 The discovery and analysis led Basile to several important conclusions that further strengthen the MR position. First, this finding provides compelling evidence that the theoretical Syriac

91 Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 4 n. 23.
92 Mellink, Death as Eschaton, 13 n. 42.
93 Vinzent, Writing the History of Early Christianity, 293 n. 118.
94 Vinzent listed all three manuscripts published by Basile (in two separate articles) but mistakenly identified the contents of Ms. Sinaii ar. 505 as only containing the MR form of "IgnRom" – ibid., 429. Basile also found two additional Arabic manuscripts that contained Ign. Rom. (Ms. Sin. ar. 443 and 482) and Vinzent seemingly did not realize that Ms. Sin. ar. 505 was different. For a discussion about these two additional witnesses, see Basile Basile, "Une autre version arabe de la lettre aux Romains de saint Ignace d'Antioche," Melto 5.2 (1969): 269–87.
95 Given, "Ignatius of Antioch and the Historiography of Early Christianity," 32.
version of the MR long sought by scholarship most likely existed. As Basile suggested, “the Armenian version which depends on it, and the Arabic version which is only a literal translation, testify in an apodictic way for the veracity of such an assumption.” Furthermore, from a text critical perspective, the addition of a complete MR form in Arabic provides an additional data point to consider when analyzing MR textual variants. Thus, Basile suggested that the combined authority of the Syriac, Armenian, and Arabic versions is indisputable when they report the same meaning; so that when SAB agrees with one another in opposing the Greek text (G), their testimony is considered authentic; therefore, it is the later which prevails. From there we realize the importance of our Arabic version (B) which comes to lend a hand to S and A to put the Ignatian studies in a new light.

Another consideration that has recently come to light focuses instead on the Syriac versional evidence. Aside from the three manuscripts of the SR, Lightfoot considered an additional four fragments (Sf) as well as manuscripts containing Ign. Rom. as found in the

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96 Ibid., 125–6. – “la version arménienne qui en depend, et la version arabe qui n’en est que la traduction littérale témoignent d’une manière apodictique pour la vérité d’une telle hypothèse.”

97 Having obtained a grant from the University of Edinburgh, I recently had Ms. Sin. ar. 505 translated into English and will reference the manuscript when necessary in an attempt to shed light on applicable variants.

98 Basile used S to denote the combined testimony of the Syriac to include the Syriac fragments (S1 through S3) and the SR (which he designated as K): Basile, “Un ancien témoin arabe,” 130. As the following section demonstrates, the Syriac witness to Ignatius is growing and scholarship requires a new designation to avoid confusion. For this thesis, S will denote the combined Syriac testimony which includes the fragments (Sf) known to Lightfoot (S1 through S4) plus the SR. Any further manuscript evidence, such as the new manuscripts identified in the next section, will be referred to by individual manuscript names.

99 Ibid., 128. – “Mais nous aurions tort, tout de même, de regarder SAB comme des sources différentes; elles son ten effet complémentaires et leur autorité est incontestable lorsqu’elles rapportent le même sens; de sorte que lorsque SAB s’accordent entre elles en s’opposant au texte grec G, c’est leur témoignage qui est considéré comme authentique; par consequent c’est lui qui prévaut. De là nous nous redons compte de l’importance de notre version arabe B qui vient donner un coup de main à S et à A pour mettre dans un nouveau jour les études ignaciennes.”
Syriac version of the *Antiochene Acts of Martyrdom*. Most recently, Dan Batovici published an assessment of four new witnesses for the MR. Batovici thereby doubled the testimony of the Syriac fragments from four to eight and provided further versional evidence for the Ignatian text in *Eph.* 5.3–6.1; 13.1–2; 15.1a; *Magn.* 5.2–6.1; *Trall.* 2.1–3.1; 5.2–7.1; *Pol.* 3.1; 6.1; *Phld.* 3.2–4.1; 7.1–2; 10.1–2; *Smyrn.* 8.2–9.1; *Magn.* 6.2–7.1; *Trall.* 8.1; 9.1–11.2; and *Pol.* 7.1–3. Even though this may seem insignificant at first glance, Batovici notes that his research is “telling for the promise for the future that the HMML manuscript repository holds.” Ultimately, he predicts that “we will probably see many works emerge in the process of cataloguing and assessing the impressive total of microfilmed and digital manuscripts [which] approaches 200,000 items.”

Whereas Lightfoot’s S, Syriac fragment was based on one single manuscript (BnF Syr. 62), Batovici demonstrated that there are now “as least eight known witnesses of this recension” and that it “seems to have been more widely transmitted and preserved” than Cureton’s SR.

To summarize, new manuscript discoveries such as those highlighted by Batovici only strengthen the case for MR priority.

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101 The four manuscripts = [HMML CFMM 309 (8th c.); HMML CFMM 310 (8th c.); HMML CFMM 337 (19th c.); and HMML CFMM 322 (20th c.)].

102 Ibid., 135–6.
1.4 History of Research

Works dedicated to researching Ignatian soteriology are few in number. The following will briefly outline some of the scholarly contributions to this aspect of Ignatian theology.

1.4.1 Previous Short Treatments

Several abbreviated treatments of Ignatian soteriology warrant mention. First is Donald Winslow’s 1965 article “The Idea of Redemption in the Epistles of St. Ignatius’ of Antioch” which sought to “examine what was for Ignatius the experienced fact of redemption.”\(^\text{104}\) Even though Winslow provided a fair and interesting treatment of Ignatius’ conception of redemption, nevertheless, due to its brevity the discussion was superficial in nature and ignored much of the complexity of Ignatius’ soteriological thought. Winslow’s primary contribution was limited to his discussion regarding Ignatius’ understanding of his own martyrdom and whether his death served as a means to “justify himself, or to save himself.”\(^\text{105}\) This issue will be further examined in §11.3.

Next, Victor Downing’s unpublished thesis—“The Doctrine of Regeneration in the Second Century”—likewise narrowed the focus by exploring a single “facet of soteriology” regarding the doctrine of regeneration in the second century.\(^\text{106}\) Though the thesis is relevant to this study, the treatment of Ignatius amounted to a mere twelve pages that only briefly

\(^{104}\) Winslow, “Idea of Redemption,” 120.

\(^{105}\) Ibid., 128.

addressed Ignatius’ soteriological perspective. The overall conclusion that the “spiritual life of God” is dispensed primarily through “the Church, the sacraments and the mystical pursuit of the imitatio Christi” seems to go farther than a plain reading of the epistles while, at the same time, ignoring other crucial aspects of Ignatius’ soteriology.

Perhaps the most coherent and complete, albeit one of the shortest, investigations into Ignatian soteriology is Charles Guth’s unpublished dissertation—“The Relationship of Faith and Works in the Soteriologies of the Apostolic Fathers.” Guth sought therein to examine the interplay between faith and works in the Apostolic Fathers. Even though the current thesis has some similar aims as Guth, his extremely abbreviated treatment of Ignatius did not address several key themes that are addressed in the present study. Therefore, since the anthropological predicaments underpinning Ignatius’ call for salvation were not treated in Guth’s dissertation, the topic will be explored extensively in Part I. Furthermore, the lack of discussion regarding the eucharist’s potential role in salvation will be explored in §11.2.

Another critique applies to the inadequate and, at times contradictory, depth of treatment of soteriological concepts. For example, after concluding that Ignatius held to a salvation appropriated by “believing in the work of Christ—specifically his death—which brought escape from death to mankind,” he then hinted that “non-participation in the church removes

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107 Ibid., 142.
108 For example, Downing does not discuss the reasoning behind salvation in Ignatius and does not discuss in any appreciable degree the role of faith. For a further treatment of the role of the eucharist and the idea that Ignatius viewed his martyrdom as having salvific benefit see §11.
one from a relationship with God. The issue of salvation's security and the focus on the eschatological outcome of faith will therefore be examined in §10.2.

Perhaps one of the most widely-cited treatments of Ignatian soteriology was provided by Thomas Torrance's *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers.* Torrance ultimately concluded that Ignatius' doctrine of grace and his understanding of human salvation was a drastic departure from that of the NT. Torrance's largely negative analysis of Ignatius' understanding of grace and its relation to salvation should be criticized for several reasons. First, by failing to account for the occasional nature of the letters and the context in which Ignatius wrote, Torrance falsely evaluated the letters as if they were intended to provide a fully systematic treatise on Ignatian soteriology. It should also be noted that instead of evaluating Ignatius' theology in its own right, Torrance instead interpreted any terminological or expressive differences between Ignatius and the NT as an indication that Ignatius' theology was sub-apostolic. Overall, Torrance's work, which seems to have been designed to uphold the purity of the NT writings, in contrast to what he viewed as the debasing influences of early Catholicism in the second century, is both misleading and anachronistic. The current thesis will attempt to evaluate Ignatius' soteriological thoughts as much as possible based on his own unique form of expression and lexical choice.

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\(^{102}\) Ibid., 143, 132.  
\(^{111}\) Torrance, *Doctrine of Grace.*  
\(^{112}\) Ibid., 66–8, 70, 72–3, 77.  
More recently, Brian Arnold’s *Justification in the Second Century* included a lengthy section examining Ignatius’ letters concerning the doctrine of justification.\(^{114}\) Such an investigation, however, seems to impose on Ignatius doctrinal categories and concerns that were foreign to his agenda in the early second century. While it is true that Ignatius does emphasize the concept of salvation through faith (§9), a contextual examination of his use of δικαιο- language in the letters shows that he utilized such language in a non-soteriological context that does not specifically address the doctrine of justification.\(^{115}\)

Multiple others treat Ignatius’ soteriology either tangentially or in part. For example, H. E. Turner’s *The Patristic Doctrine of Redemption* parallel’s Gustav Aulén’s *Christus Victor* in seeking to understand the primitive doctrine of redemption.\(^{116}\) Even though Turner, in contrast with *Christus Victor*, does at times refer to Ignatius, the infrequent references lack any


\(^{115}\) Though opinions vary, the overwhelming majority of scholars who have examined Ignatius’ use of δικαιονω believe that his use of the verb in Rom. 5.1, and especially in Phld. 8.2, is the key to understanding his doctrine of justification. A close reading that focuses on the epistolary context and rhetorical strategy of each letter suggests otherwise. In neither case did Ignatius use δικαιονω in the context of being ‘justified’ before God. Instead, in both verses he referenced the notion of ‘being vindicated/exonerated’ with reference to accusations raised against him. In the case of Rom. 5.1, the ‘injustices’ (ἀδικήµασι) brought on him by his Roman guards were not enough for him to ‘be vindicated’ (δεδικαίωµα) of the accusation of being a Christian and so the ‘wild beasts’ were required to demonstrate the validity of Rome’s accusation. The context of Phld. 8.2 is similar. Ignatius’ Philadelphian opponents had accused him of being burdensome (6.3) and secretly divisive (7.1–2), and had charged him with propagating a gospel message they believed to be false derived from the OT scriptures (8.2). By reiterating the essential elements of his gospel message, Ignatius asked his readers to pray that he ‘be exonerated’ (δικαιωθῆναι) of the charge of disseminating an unscriptural gospel message. Thus Ignatius’ use of δικαιονω does not appear to be the solid exegetical foundation upon which to reveal a latent doctrine of justification.

substantial interaction with the letters. Furthermore, Turner's improbable suggestion that Ignatius sought to act as “an alternative channel of reconciliation" which “could avail to atone for sin" will be ultimately rejected in §11.3.¹⁷ Cyril Richardson’s *The Christianity of Ignatius of Antioch* explores some soteriological concepts. Yet, like several other treatises, his conclusion that Ignatius viewed his martyrdom as salvific and that ‘life' was conditioned on one’s perfection in love will be challenged in §11.2–3.¹₈ Charles Brown and Michael Svigel's monographs, while not focusing exclusively on soteriology, both provide solid and in depth examinations into Ignatius' treatment of the gospel narrative that will aid in the discussion in Chapter 9 when Ignatius' conception of faith is explored.¹⁹ However, since their chief concern was not on the structure of Ignatius' soteriological thought, they will be addressed primarily when discussions concerning the object of Ignatian faith are at the fore. Tarvainen’s oft-neglected treatise on Ignatius’ favored ‘faith-love’ pairing, while not providing a thoroughgoing treatment of soteriology, likewise provides valuable insights with regard to the dyad's relationship to salvation in the epistles which will be elaborated on in §11.1.²₀ In addition to the above-mentioned works, several commentaries dedicated to Ignatius, while not focusing on soteriology, occasionally address the topic with varying conclusions.²¹

²₀ Tarvainen, *Faith and Love*.
1.4.2 Extended Treatments

More in depth examinations of Ignatian soteriology are extremely rare. Despite the promising title, Thomas Wilkens’ unpublished Ph.D thesis—“The Soteriology of Ignatius of Antioch”—relegates less than half the thesis to directly addressing Ignatian soteriology and instead allots a significant portion to preliminary and peripheral issues that rarely contribute to an understanding of Ignatius’ views.\textsuperscript{122} When Wilkens finally addresses the topic he seems to interpret Ignatius’ entire soteriological schema through an anachronistic lens that reflects later theological discussions. Several weaknesses regarding Wilkens’ treatment will be challenged in this thesis. First, the suggestion that Ignatius presented human salvation (i.e., life) as a status that, once attained, could be forfeited due to ill conduct seems to result from a failure to recognize that such warnings most likely addressed a class of persons that Ignatius believed were not genuine Christians (§5.3, 4). Ignatius’ views on the security of salvation will be specifically addressed in §10.2. An alternative conclusion will also be offered in §11.2 to address Wilkens’ conclusion that Ignatius presented the eucharist as a means of salvation.\textsuperscript{123}

On a similar note, the intimation that Ignatius’ martyrdom somehow provided a salvific benefit for the church will also be countered in §11.3 due to a lack of evidence in the letters.\textsuperscript{124}

\textsuperscript{122} Wilkens, “Soteriology of Ignatius.”
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 219, 30.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 298, 301, 312.
It should also be noted that Wilkens’ inadequate treatment of the human predicament behind Ignatius’ call for salvation, especially as it relates to the problem of sin and evil, will be remedied in Part I.\textsuperscript{125}

More recently, Gregory Vall’s \textit{Learning Christ: Ignatius of Antioch & the Mystery of Redemption} was written in order to demonstrate that Ignatius “articulates a cohesive, penetrating, and relatively comprehensive vision of the economy of redemption.”\textsuperscript{126} Even though other areas of Ignatian theology are explored (i.e., ecclesiology, Jewish-Christian relations, eschatology, pneumatology, etc.) soteriological concepts are discussed throughout. Even though Vall succeeds in presenting Ignatius as a coherent and insightful theologian, Foster rightly critiques his portrayal of Ignatius as “more akin to theologians from the late second and third centuries than as figure who fits remarkably well within the context of the first half of the second century.”\textsuperscript{127} A second critique is that Vall’s conclusions about Ignatius’ theological views are frequently supported by stringing multiple quotes from disparate sections of the letters that sometimes do not clearly address the topic at hand.\textsuperscript{128} In contrast with the current study (§5.3; 10.2), Vall, like Wilkens, viewed Ignatius’ portrayal of human

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{125} Wilkens merely hinted at the human predicament with sin and evil – ibid., 154–5.
\footnote{128} For example, Vall wrote “In order to be ‘saved,’ [Smyrn. 2.1; Pol. 1.2; Phld. 5.2 in footnote] one must be ‘sanctified’ (Eph. 2.2), ‘perfected’ (31), and ‘found blameless’ at the judgment (Tral. 13:3). Those who are ‘reprobated’ by God (Rom. 8:3) or ‘found reprobate’ (Tral. 12:3), however, ‘will not inherit the kingdom of God’ but instead ‘depart into unquenchable fire’ (Eph. 16:1–2).”
\end{footnotesize}
salvation as something that lacked security and that was therefore in danger of forfeiture.\textsuperscript{129}

The present study will therefore diverge from Vall at several key interpretative points.

1.5 Overview of the Discussion

The following ten chapters are divided into three major parts that seek to layout Ignatian soteriology in a logical arrangement based on the following three basic questions—Why salvation? What is salvation? How is salvation accomplished? In Part I—\textit{Ignatius and the Theological Predicament}—the goal will be to address three specific reasons why Ignatius believed humanity required salvation. According to the letters, humanity's predicament with sin (Ch. 2), the forces of evil (Ch. 3), and with death and the wrath of God (Ch. 4) combine to necessitate God's intervention in order to procure salvation. Chapter five concludes Part I by examining the way Ignatius segmented humanity based on their response to God's salvation that, if ignored, could result in misinterpreting many of the warning passages in the letters.

Part II then shifts to address what salvation entailed for Ignatius. With Jesus Christ as the central savior figure (Ch. 6), Chs. 7 and 8 sift through the language Ignatius used to describe salvation with the goal of understanding what salvation accomplished for humanity. Part III then concludes by examining how salvation was obtained. The concept of faith will be elaborated on in Ch. 9 whereas Ch. 10 describes the outcomes of faith. In the final chapter (Ch. 11), several theories regarding additional means of salvation will be evaluated.

\textsuperscript{129} Vall, \textit{Learning Christ}, 190–2.
PART I

IGNATIUS AND THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL
PREDICAMENT
Part I: Introduction

The bible portrays the act of ‘salvation’ with a wide array of lexical choices in an equally wide variety of literary contexts.¹ However, despite the extremely varied contextual circumstances, the verses which speak of salvation and deliverance typically contain clues that identify a danger, threat, or undesirable circumstance from which a person or group was being delivered or rescued. For example, the biblical writers used salvation language to speak of people being delivered from war (1 Sam 11:9), from physical violence (Deut 22:27), out of destitution and poverty (2 Sam 14:4), from shipwreck and drowning (Matt 8:25; Acts 27:20), from blindness and sickness (Luke 8:48; 18:42), just to name a few.

The definition of the word ‘salvation’ implies the existence of a problem necessitating intervention. BDAG’s two extended definitions for σῴζω illustrate this observation: (1) “to preserve or rescue fr. natural dangers and afflictions”; (2) “to save or preserve from transcendent danger or destruction.”² The same is true for the nominal forms σωτηρία (“one who rescues”) and σωτηρία (“deliverance, preservation” or “salvation”).³ Ignatius utilized this word grouping eight times in his authentic letters to describe Christians as those who ‘were saved’ (Phld. 5.2– ἐσώθησαν), Christ as the one who died so that they ‘might be saved’ (Smyrn. 2.1– σώζομεν), and ‘all people’ as those who ‘might be saved’ (Pol. 1.2– σώζωνται). Ignatius equated

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¹ For example, the idea of ‘salvation’ is often conveyed in the OT with the nominal terms הֵעָשָׁה (“help, salvation”); וֹשְׁפָה (“help, deliverance, salvation”); and מַעַשֶּׁה (“help, deliverance, salvation, victory”). The NT frequently utilized σωτηρία (“deliverance, preservation, salvation”).
² BDAG, 982.
³ BDAG, 985–86.
the cross of Christ with ‘salvation’ (σωτηρία) in Eph. 18.1 and labelled Christ as ‘Savior’ (σωτήρ) in Eph. 1.1, Magn. inscr, Phld. 9.2, and Smyrn. 6.2. This call for salvation and deliverance found in the Ignatian letters naturally leads to questions regarding why Ignatius believed humanity required salvation.

Therefore, before delving into other aspects of Ignatian soteriology it makes sense to first investigate whether Ignatius elaborated on any underlying problem(s) that necessitated salvation. Hence, the goal of this section will be to uncover the anthropological predicament(s) behind Ignatius’ calls for salvation. A close reading of the letters reveals three potential reasons why Ignatius believed humanity was in need of salvation. Chapters Two to Four will examine the anthropological plights underlying Ignatius’ call for salvation. Chapter Five will then explain how Ignatius seems to have categorized humanity into three distinct soteriological subgroups based on the individual’s response to the gospel message.

The Anthropological Predicament

As the following three chapters demonstrate, a close reading of the letters reveals Ignatius’ belief that humanity required deliverance from at least the following three related predicaments:

1. Humanity’s predicament with sin (Smyrn. 6.2).

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4 This is not to suggest that the selected words are the only way Ignatius spoke of the need for salvation/deliverance. Thus Chapter 7 will introduce other Ignatian synonyms for salvation.
2. Humanity's predicament with evil (Eph. 7.1–2; 9.1–10.3; 16.1–17.2; 19.1–3; Trall. 6.1–11.2; Phld. 2.1–3.3; Smyrn. 4.1–8.1).

3. Humanity's predicament with death and the wrath of God (Eph. 11.1; 16.1–17.2; 19.3; 20.2; Magn. 5.1–2; Trall. 2.1; Phld. 3.3; 8.1; Smyrn. 6.1; 7.1).

These three concepts are presented here separately for heuristic purposes even though it is likely that in Ignatius' thought-world they were closely intertwined and inseparable components of the human predicament undergirding the salvation he proposed. The following three chapters will explore each predicament in turn with the goal of exposing the reasons why Ignatius believed humanity required salvation.
CHAPTER 2

HUMANITY’S PREDICAMENT WITH SIN

2.0 Introduction

The first area of exploration centers on a topic that has frequently been the source of disagreement amongst early-Christian scholars. There is no scholarly consensus regarding Ignatius’ understanding of human sin and for how the concept integrated into his soteriological beliefs.¹ This seems to be due in part to the existence of only one clear reference to sin as the causal reason for salvation in the letters (Smyrn. 6.2).² For example, in his

¹ For the purposes of this paper I will use the threefold definition of sin found in Jeffrey S. Siker, Jesus, Sin, and Perfection in Early Christianity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 26–27: (1) sin entails thought and/or action; (2) sin involves the violation of a normative standard of behavior that has been prescribed by God; (3) sin is inherently relational. It involves the violation of the intended relationship between a human agent and God, as well as the violation of the proper relationship between humans.

monumental work on the doctrine of grace in the Apostolic Fathers, Thomas Torrance tentatively concluded that Ignatius’ theology was deficient due to his “failure to realize that in relation to sin and guilt the death of Christ is a finished work, on the ground of which by a judgment of grace we pass from death to life.” According to Torrance, Ignatius’ conception of sin was out of focus since

[m]uch more is made in the Epistles of Ignatius of the devil and the Prince of this world than of the power of sin or guilt. It may be that sin is actually understood when evil powers are spoken of; but on the whole it appears to be evil and not sin that is under consideration.

If Torrance’s interpretation is correct, then Ignatius understood humanity to be in need of deliverance from the powers of evil (i.e., Satan) and not from sin. The problem with this type of analysis is that it is based on the volume of references to sin instead of apprehending the significance of what Ignatius actually stated.

Virginia Corwin similarly commented that Ignatius’ “analysis of the plight of men is somewhat more individual” and that “his conception differs sharply from that of Paul, for the lively awareness which Paul has of the sinfulness of human beings is almost lacking.” Even

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3 Torrance, *Doctrine of Grace*, 66.
4 Ibid., 61–2.
5 Corwin, *St. Ignatius*, 160. González argues similarly that “Jesus has come to make God known to us rather than to save us from the bonds of sin. In this, Ignatius differs from Paul, for whom the great enemy of man is sin, which enslaves him, and who sees salvation, above all, as a liberation. In fact, in the epistles of Ignatius the word ‘sin’ appears only once.” González, like Corwin, concluded that Ignatius understood humanity’s primary enemies to be “death and division”, as well as the “the Devil”— Justo L. González, *A History of Christian Thought*, vol. 1, 2nd ed. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1987), 76.
though Corwin agreed with Torrance that sin was not the central issue warranting salvation in
the Ignatian letters, she focused on a completely different line of reasoning:

[I]ncredibly enough only twice in the letters does the word ‘sin’ occur...the absence of
the notion of sin arises from a rather different view of the constitution of man. For
him ‘flesh’ is not, as in Paul’s thought, doomed almost by necessity.  

Corwin continued, “What makes men dependent upon God for salvation is their tendency
toward division...his view of the predicament of humanity stresses not sin but division.”
Corwin therefore concluded that Ignatius understood humanity's basic dilemma as the
“separation of individual and community from God.” This conclusion raises a crucial
question: if Ignatius understood humanity's separation from God to be its most fundamental
problem, why was humanity separated from God in the first place?

Both scholars miss the significance of Ignatius’ direct references to sin by placing too
much emphasis on the rare employment of the ἁμαρτία– word grouping. Others appear to hold
a more nuanced view which recognizes that the problem of sin, though not as central to
Ignatius' thought, was nevertheless still present in his theology. It must be remembered that
Ignatius wrote to churches comprised primarily of what he considered to be faithful believers
(Eph. inscr; 1.1; 6.2; 8.1; 9.1; Magn. 11.1; Trall. 1.1; 8.1; Rom. inscr; Phld. inscr; 2.2–3.1; Smyrn. inscr;

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6 Corwin, St. Ignatius, 160. Schoedel similarly commented that “a concern for ‘sin’ is rare in Ignatius” (i.e.,
only Eph. 14.2 and Smyrn. 6.2) – Ignatius of Antioch, 76 n. 7.
7 Corwin, St. Ignatius, 162, 247.
8 Ibid., 248.
9 For example, see Richardson, The Christianity of Ignatius, 23–24; Arnold, Justification in the Second
Century, 66 n. 115.
1.1; Pol. 1.1; 7.3) and that the letters were not designed to be mission-oriented treatises intended to convince audiences of their need for conversion.

Scholars are correct to note that Ignatius rarely utilized the ἁμαρτ– word grouping. However, extending this observation to conclude that he was either not concerned about sin, or that he did not understand humanity's fundamental problem to be sin-related, goes beyond a plain reading of the letters. The following contextual examination of the letters therefore demonstrates that Ignatius was well aware of, and most definitely concerned about, the human predicament with sin. Indeed, the letters frequently refer to sin both directly and indirectly and, more specifically, to how sin affected the early second-century churches with whom he conversed. Therefore the following analysis briefly surveys Ignatius' direct and indirect references to sin.

2.1 Direct References to Sin

When the NT writers wished to speak directly about the notion of sin or sinning they utilized a wide array of terms to do so:

Figure 1– New Testament Sin Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ἁμαρτία (sin)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἁμαρτάνω (to sin)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>σκανδαλίζω (cause to sin, stumble)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἁμάρτημα (sin)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>παράβασις (transgression)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἁμαρτωλός (sinner)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>σκάνδαλον (temptation)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>προαμαρτάνω (sin beforehand)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>παράπτωμα (offense, wrongdoing, sin)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἀναμάρτητος (without sin)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ὑπερβαίνω (to trespass, sin)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>παράπτωμα (offense)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἀναμάρτημα (sin)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In contrast with the NT, the Ignatian letters make use of a much more limited subset of such language. For example, of the twelve NT terms listed in Figure 1, Ignatius used only three: ἁμαρτία, ἁμαρτάνω, and σκάνδαλον (Smyrn. 6.2; Eph. 14.2; 18.1 respectively). Nevertheless, a closer examination of the context of each passage suggests that the list should be shortened further. For example, even though ‘temptation to sin/enticement’ is a possible translation for σκάνδαλον, Eph. 18.1 will be dropped from the investigation given that Ignatius borrowed the Pauline term (1 Cor 1:23) to indicate that unbelievers viewed the cross of Christ as an ‘object of offense or revulsion’ and not as a ‘temptation to sin.’

With respect to the direct references that utilize the ἁμαρτ– word grouping, scholars rightly point out that there is limited data to analyze. In contrast with the NT, which predominately used the grouping to communicate the concept of sin, Ignatius employed this lexical category only twice, once in Eph. 14.2 where the verbal form ἁμαρτάνω is found, and once in Smyrn. 6.2 where he used the nominal form ἁμαρτία. The verse in the Ephesian letter is located in the midst of a section constructed to demonstrate that the true Christian’s profession of faith should be validated by that person’s perseverance in good works (Eph. 14.1–15.1). Ignatius’ statement, ‘No one professing faith sins’ (οὐδεὶς πίστιν ἐπαγγελλόμενος ἁμαρτάνει), need not be interpreted as promoting the possibility of a Christian’s attainment of sinless perfection since Ignatius’ warnings throughout the letters indicate that he understood

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10 BDAG, 926. The conceptual link between 1 Cor 1 and Ign. Eph. 18.1 has been well established. Foster noted that, “the source of the second half of Ign. Eph. 18.1 is almost certainly the material in 1 Cor 1 and not that of Isaiah. Moreover, the term σκάνδαλον also occurs in the same context in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians” – Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 165.
those within the bounds of professing Christianity to be capable of committing a wide variety of sins (Eph. 5.3; 10.1–2; Trall. 4.1, 2; 7.1; 8.2; Rom. 7.1, 2; Phld. 8.1, 2; Smyrn. 6.1; Pol. 2.1). Instead, Eph. 14.2 appears to simply state that those who professed faith in Christ should not be characteristically sinning, or, if the continual aspect of the present tense is to be emphasized, that they should not be continually, iteratively, or habitually sinning. What is important to note at this point is Ignatius’ contention that genuine Christians should be noted for their righteousness and not for sinful behavior. Additionally, the single use of ἁμαρτάνω in Eph. 14.2 suggests Ignatius’ belief that Christians benefited from some sort of victory over sin.

What remains to be seen is whether Ignatius identified sin as the underlying cause that necessitated salvation. The second usage from the ἁμαρτ– grouping in Smyrn. 6.2 provides such a connection: ‘the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins’ (τὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν παθούσαν). Even though scholars have debated the meaning of the eucharistic language in this passage (§11.2), what needs to be recognized at this point is the link between Christ’s suffering and human sin. A survey of the references to Christ’s suffering reveals that Ignatius often used such language as a form of shorthand to signify the crucifixion. For example, Phld. 9.2 sums up the Ignatian conception

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For example, consider the following: Eph. 18.2– ‘He was born and he was baptized so that by suffering (τῷ πάθει) he might cleanse the water’; Magn. 11.1– ‘but to be fully convinced in the birth, and in the suffering (τῷ πάθει), and in the resurrection’; Trall. 11.2– ‘the cross...through/by which he calls you in his suffering (ἐν τῷ πάθει αὐτοῦ)’; Phld. inscr – ‘exulting in the suffering of our Lord (ἐν τῷ πάθει τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν) without waverin, and having been fully convinced in his resurrection’; Smyrn. 2.1– ‘For he suffered all these things so that we might be saved (ἔπαθεν δὴ ἡμᾶς ἵνα σωθῶμεν); just as also he truly raised himself’; Smyrn. 12.2– ‘Jesus Christ...in his flesh and blood, in [his] suffering (πάθει) and also [his] resurrection; ‘the one not subject to suffering who suffered for our benefit (τὸν ἀπαθῆ, τὸν δὲ ἡμᾶς παθητόν).’
of the gospel of Christ. In this verse, Ignatius appears to view τὸ εὐαγγέλιον as being comprised of three distinct phases: it is (1) τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ σωτῆρος, κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; (2) τὸ πάθος αὐτοῦ; and (3) τὴν ἀνάστασιν. For Ignatius, the gospel by definition encompassed the arrival/advent, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of Christ.

The language of Smyrn. 6.2 next identifies the crucifixion as the remedy for human sin. The key to understanding the purpose for the suffering of the ‘flesh of our savior Jesus Christ’ (σάρκα...τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ...παθοῦσαν) is found in the prepositional phrase that adverbially modifies the participle παθοῦσαν. The assertion is that Christ physically suffered ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν. Murray J. Harris’s Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament defines ὑπέρ, when combined with the genitive, with the following four primary meanings which are representative of current lexical sources:¹²

1. “On behalf of, for the benefit of"
2. “Concerning, in reference to”
3. “Because of, for the sake of”
4. “In the place of”

¹² Murray J. Harris, Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012), 209–10. Even though the four definitions are fairly common, some of the lexica list them differently. For example, LSJ includes three basic meanings: (1) “over” (Genitive of place); (2) “in defence of, on behalf of”; and (3) “concerning.” Murray’s third and fourth definitions (“Because of, for the sake of” and “In the place of”) are sub listed by LSJ under their second main category, “in defence of, on behalf of” – H. G. Liddell et al., eds. and trans., A Greek-English Lexicon, 9 ed., with supplement (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 1857–8. BDAG also lists four main definitions for the genitive pairing: (1) “a marker indicating that an activity or event is in some entity’s interest, for, in behalf of, for the sake of”; (2) “marker of moving cause or reason, because of, for the sake of, for”; and (3) “marker of general content...about, concerning.” This is essentially the same as Harris’s breakdown with the exception that the notion of “in the place of” (i.e., substitution) is embedded in BDAG’s first definition (BDAG, 1030–1).
No matter which sense(s) were in Ignatius' mind when he wrote the letters, his selection of ὑπὲρ shows that Christ's suffering was intended to rectify humanity's fundamental struggle with sin. Even those who propose that Ignatius was not focused on humanity's predicament with sin have noted that the concept of atonement for sin is implied in Smyrn. 6.2. For example, while commenting on the verse, Corwin seemingly contradicted her previous conclusion that Ignatius' “view of the predicament of humanity stresses not sin but division” by stating,

When Ignatius considers the passion and crucifixion as the deliberate act of Christ...it is a sacrifice. Nothing else can explain the emphasis that they were done ‘for us.’ He suffered ‘for our sins’ (Smyr. 7.1).

Similarly, despite his earlier conclusion that Ignatius was more concerned with evil than with sin, Torrance decided that “[w]ithout doubt there is some notion of vicarious atonement” in Smyrn. 6.2. These conclusions are backed by the various lexica which demonstrate just how rich in meaning ὑπὲρ could be when paired with a genitive and when used in the context of Christ's sacrificial suffering and death.

The identical phrase used by Ignatius—ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν—was likewise employed elsewhere in two of the undisputed Pauline letters (1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4) as well as in

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13 Corwin, St. Ignatius, 247.
14 Ibid., 171. Note that Corwin versified this as Smyrn. 7.1.
15 Torrance, Doctrine of Grace, 62.
16 It should be noted that the phrase in Gal 1:4, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, may very well have originally been περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν. For a thorough and recent discussion of the variants, see Stephen C. Carlson, The Text of Galatians and Its History, WUNT 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015), 143–45. Carlson rightly points out that the choice of preposition is “at best subtle. Normally ὑπὲρ means ‘on behalf of’ and περὶ means
some other early-Christian sources (1 Clem. 16.3; Pol. Phil. 1.2). Scholars have long recognized that this phrase shows signs of having been sourced from an early Christian creedal formula:

In christological sayings ὑπὲρ is used to show the thrust of the work of salvation....The death and passion of Christ are for men and accrue to their favour. This employment of the preposition finds its NT starting point in a formula of faith and confession which belongs to the oldest strata of Christian tradition.¹⁷

Simply counting occurrences from the ἁμαρτία–word grouping in the letters will not produce either a complete or an accurate picture of Ignatius’ understanding of human sin. If hamartiological belief is to be evaluated solely on one’s use of the ἁμαρτία–word grouping then even Paul could have been considered deficient apart from his heavy usage of the grouping in Romans.¹⁸ When the lexical search is broadened beyond this extremely limited selection, a

¹⁷ The writer of 1 Clement is quoting from Isa 53.1 when he wrote 1 Clem. 16.3–‘and the Lord delivered him up for our sins’ (καὶ κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτίων ἡμῶν). Polycarp, who incidentally knew Ignatius, wrote in Pol. 1.2–‘our Lord Jesus Christ, whom God raised’ τὸν κύριον ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, ὃς ὑπέμεινεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτίων ἡμῶν ἐως δακτύλων καταντῆσαι, ὃν ἤγειρεν ὁ θεός.


¹⁹ A review of the word grouping’s use in the NA28 reveals 91 occurrences in the thirteen epistles that bear Paul’s name (81 times in the non-disputed epistles). If Romans, which contains 60 of the 91 occurrences (66%), is removed from the discussion one could get the impression that Paul was not concerned about human sin. For example, the rest of the undisputed epistles contain relatively few occurrences from the word grouping: 1 Corinthians (12); Galatians (5); Philippians (0); 1 Thessalonians (1); and Philemon (0). When the disputed texts are considered the numbers do not increase substantially: Ephesians (2); Colossians (1); 2 Thessalonians (2); 1 Timothy (5); 2 Timothy (1); and Titus (1). The fact that the word-grouping is not found at all in three epistles (Philippians; 2 Thessalonians; Philemon), and only once in four epistles (Colossians; 1 Thessalonians; 2 Timothy; Titus) may actually indicate that the frequent use in Romans and 1 Corinthians (which contain 79% of the occurrences) simply indicates that Paul had a different purpose for writing those letters.
A wealth of data surfaces that illuminates Ignatius' understanding of the anthropological predicament that spurred humanity's need for deliverance. Vall rightly notes that Ignatius "is keenly aware of the problem of sin—emphasizing vices such as pride, anger, selfishness ambition, and lust." Contrary to what some have suggested, by listing the numerous verses where Ignatius referenced specific sins without using ἁμαρτάνω-related words, Table 1 demonstrates that Ignatius was certainly aware of humanity's struggle with sin and for how it affected those inside, as well as outside, professing Christianity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referenced Sin</th>
<th>Verse(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrogance</td>
<td>Eph. 5.2–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposing established church leadership</td>
<td>Eph. 5.2–3; Magn. 4.1; Trall. 7.2; Smyrn. 6.1–2; 9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maliciousness</td>
<td>Eph. 7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deceit</td>
<td>Eph. 7.1; 10.2; Trall. 6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causing dissension in the Church</td>
<td>Eph. 8.1; Phld. 8.1; Smyrn. 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting carnally/fleshly/worldly</td>
<td>Eph. 8.2; Rom. 7.1; Pol. 4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching/holding to false doctrine; corrupting the faith</td>
<td>Eph. 9.1; 16.1–2; Magn. 8.1; 11.1; Trall. 6.1–2; Trall. 10.1–11.2; Rom. 7.1; Phld. 2–3; 6–7; 8.2; Smyrn. 4; 6.1–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Eph. 10.2; Phld. 1.2; 8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boastful talking/pride</td>
<td>Eph. 5.2–3; 10.2; 18.1; Trall. 4.1; 7.1; Smyrn. 6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blasphemy/Slander</td>
<td>Eph. 10.2; Trall. 8.2; Smyrn. 5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruelty</td>
<td>Eph. 10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatred</td>
<td>Eph. 14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicing magic/sorcery</td>
<td>Eph. 19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envy</td>
<td>Trall. 4.2; Rom. 7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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While most of the verses are found in sections warning church members against the possibility of sinning, a few focus on sins committed by non-Christians (Eph. 10.2; Trall. 8.2; 10.1; Smyrn. 2.1; 5.2–3). As §5.3–4 will demonstrate, many of these references seem to be levelled against a group of supposed believers who, despite their professions of faith, did not appear to be genuine Christians in Ignatius’ estimation.

In summary, Ignatius directly engaged the concept of sin in two primary ways, first by using the ἁμαρτ– word grouping in two key passages, and second, by repeatedly identifying specific sins confronting humanity. The clarity and importance of the phrase τὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν παθοῦσαν in Smyrn. 6.2 should not be diminished or negated simply because such a statement was made only once. The fact that this is the sole instance where Ignatius unequivocally identified the crucifixion of Christ as the remedy for human sin should not be taken as an indication of Ignatius’ apathy towards human sin. On the contrary, when the two verses where he employed the ἁμαρτ– word grouping are viewed in light of the repeated and direct references to specific sins confronting humanity, a more complete picture begins to emerge. The rich and varied set of descriptors employed by Ignatius demonstrates that humanity’s predicament with sin(s) had been resolved somehow by the cross (Smyrn. 6.2)
and, as a result, those who professed faith in Christ should be known as those who lived in
light of such victory and not as those who continually struggled with sin (Eph. 14.2). These
direct references demonstrate that Ignatius was more focused on humanity's battle with sin
than has previously been suggested.

2.2 Indirect References to Sin

In addition to the direct references, the Ignatian letters also contain numerous other passages
that indirectly signify the concept of sin. These references can be grouped into at least three
conceptual categories focusing on the concepts of (1) blamelessness; (2) the conscience; and
(3) disease and illness. Each will be briefly examined in turn.

2.2.1 Blamelessness

Ignatius used the adjective ἄµωµος seven times (Eph. inscr; 4.2; Magn. 7.1; Trall. 1.1; 13.3; Smyrn.
inscr; Pol. 1.1) and the adverbial form ἄµωµως once (Rom. inscr) in his short corpus as a way to
describe both himself and other Christians. Ignatius' fondness for this term becomes clearer
when one recognizes that the word grouping is found in all but one letter (To the
Philadephians) and with a much higher frequency than utilized in many of contemporary
writings. For example, NT writers used the ἄµωµ— word grouping twice more than Ignatius
(Eph. 1:4; 5:27; Phil. 2:15; Col 1:22; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2 Pet 3:14; Jude 24; Rev. 14:5) despite the
fact that the NT is over eighteen times larger than the Ignatian epistles. An examination of the
LXX and the rest of the Apostolic Fathers produces similar results. Despite being roughly 75
times larger than the Ignatian epistles, a search for ἄµωµος in the LXX (including the apocryphal material) reveals only 83 uses.21 The non-Ignatian Apostolic Fathers, approximately eight times larger than Ignatius, contain only ten occurrences [1 Clem. (7)];22 Pol. Phil. (1); Mart. Pol. (1); Herm. Vis. (1)]. The frequent use of ἄµωµος in such a relatively small collection of letters therefore deserves a closer examination to discern what Ignatius meant to communicate with this descriptor.

The lexica generally define ἄµωµος as something without defect or blemish in either (1) a cultic/sacrificial sense, or (2) a moral sense.23 Another way to view the difference between the two is that the former sense refers to something without a physical blemish, whereas the latter signifies something, or someone, devoid of any moral/spiritual fault. In general, the LXX use predominately falls into the former category where a sacrifice’s “physical perfection” was emphasized as the “presupposition of cultic use.”24 By contrast, the NT shifted its focus more heavily into the latter category where the spiritual/moral sense is typically in view.25 With the

22 The possible exception is 1 Clement where ἄµωµος is found with a similar frequency to the Ignatian epistles despite being only 39% larger. Unlike Ignatius, however, four of the seven instances are used to describe God (1 Clem 33.4; 35.5; 36.2; 37.1). The remaining three describe the Christian’s ‘blameless/faultless’ conscience (1.3); the ‘spotless/faultless’ resolve of Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael (c.f., Dan 3:8–30); and the desire and petition of Christians ‘to be found blameless’ before God’s mercy.
23 For example, BDAG divides ἄµωµος into two senses: (1) pert. to being without defect or blemish and (2) pert. to being without fault and therefore morally blameless (BDAG, 56). Similarly, TDNT defines ἄµωµος as “One who is without reproach,’ ‘blameless,’ either physically...or morally.” (Friedrich Hauck, “Ἁµωµός,” TDNT 4:830).
24 Ibid.
25 See Eph 1:4; 5:27; Phil 2:15; Col 1:22; Heb 9:34; 1 Pet 1:19; Jude 24; Rev 14:5.
possible exception of Rev 14:5, the NT largely employed ἁμώμος to signify those who were viewed as blameless in God's sight due to their lack of moral/spiritual faults or blemishes. The question turns to Ignatius. In what sense did he employ ἁμώμος and does this word choice contribute to a better understanding of his hamartiology? When compared with that of the NT, Ignatius' use of the word grouping reveals the mind of a somewhat independent thinker. Even though his use aligns more closely with the NT's spiritual/moral sense, which focuses predominately on Christians appearing as 'blameless' before God, Ignatius used the term with more variety. For example, in the prescript of three letters he customized the popular epistolary greeting (πλεῖστα χαίρειν) by using ἁμώμος/ἁμώμως modifiers to seemingly indicate that he could not be 'faulted' for his exuberant greetings to the three churches based on their great faithfulness and love. Even though the use in the greeting sections does not seem to contribute towards an understanding of his hamartiology, the remaining five verses, which shift the focus from Ignatius to his audience, are worth considering.

It should be evident that terms such as ἁμώμος, by referring to something that is without fault or blemish (i.e., blameless), implicitly suggest the potential for faults or blemishes, and thus, actions or characteristics deserving of blame. Much like the NT, all five of the remaining instances of ἁμώμος refer to either a person, or a characteristic of that person, as faultless or blameless in a moral or spiritual sense. For example, in Pol. 1.1 Ignatius rejoiced

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27 Eph. inscr; Rom. inscr; Smyrn. inscr.
that he was ‘considered worthy of [seeing] Polycarp’s blameless persona/character’ (τοῦ προςώπου σου τοῦ ἁμώμου). This most likely indicates that Ignatius was unaware of any spiritual or moral blemish or faults (i.e., sins) that could cast blame on Polycarp’s character. Despite the fact that Ignatius does not specifically indicate the basis for Polycarp’s ‘blameless’ status, the immediately preceding participial phrases likely reveal the basis for his declaration. In other words, Polycarp’s ‘godly mindset’ (θεῷ γνώμην) ‘had been firmly fixed’ (ἡδρασμένην) upon an ‘unmovable rock’ (ἐπὶ πέτραν ἀκίνητον), most likely a reference to Christ and his gospel as the basis for his blameless conduct. In this context, Ignatius used the adjective to point out that Polycarp’s manner of life, and his firm stance on Christian doctrine, displayed a life that was not characterized by faults or blemishes (i.e., his life was not characterized by known sin). Ignatius therefore used an adjective outside the ἁμαρτ– word grouping to indirectly reveal his beliefs about sin. For Ignatius, it was a great source of joy to witness a

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28 Even though πρόσωπον can be defined as the literal ‘face’ of a person, the lexica consistently show that the noun could signify an actual person, or possibly the outward appearance or character of something or someone (see 2 Cor 5:12; Jas 1:1; BDAG, 887–88; LSJ, 1532; TDNT, 768–88). Ignatius seems to have used πρόσωπον predominately to indicate a person’s ‘outward appearance/character’ that manifested their true inner nature (see Eph. 15:3; Magn. 6:3; Rom. 1:1; Pol. 1.1). Thus Stewart translated in Pol. 1.1 τοῦ προσώπου σου τοῦ ἁμώμου as “your blameless character” – Alistair Stewart, Ignatius of Antioch: The Letters, trans. Alistair Stewart, PPS 49 (NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2013), 101.

29 Even though Ignatius does not specifically indicate who or what the πέτραν ἀκίνητον was, a comparison to similar references in the rest of the epistles strongly suggests that it is a reference to Christ and the gospel message. For example, even though this is the only time Ignatius used πέτρα in the letters, the NT precedent of referring to Christ/the message of Christ as πέτρα was probably familiar to Ignatius (Matt 7:24–25; 16:18; Luke 6:48; Rom 9:33; 1 Cor 10:14; 1 Pet 2:8). Additionally, the letters are filled with other terms that similarly describe people holding/being firmly fixed to Christ and/or the message of Christ: ‘fully convinced’ (πληροφορεῖν – Magn. 8:2; 11:1; Phil. inscr; Smyrn. 1.1); ‘firmly established, fixed, settled’ (ἐξάθραξαν – Phil. inscr; Smyrn. 1.1); ‘nailed to the cross of Christ’ (καθηλωότας – Smyrn. 1.1); ‘Be eager to be firmly established/committed’ (βεβαιότας – Magn. 13:1).
believer whose actions and character appear to be spotless and who therefore was not acting in a manner worthy of blame. He clearly believed that Christian lives, when firmly affixed to Christ and his gospel, should be markedly different and not characterized as blameworthy (i.e., not sinful).

Due to the hurried nature of the writing, Ignatius does not elaborate any further. Nevertheless, it seems clear that, by Ignatius' estimation, one's 'blameless' status was susceptible to being tarnished. Three of the remaining uses of ἄμωμος contain potential warnings that add uncertainty to a professed Christian's blameless status. This includes his stern warning levelled against those who failed to maintain Christian unity (Eph. 4.2):

‘Therefore it is advantageous for you to be in spotless/faultless unity (ἐν ἄμωμῳ ἑνότητι), so that you may also always partake of God (ἵνα καὶ θεοῦ πάντοτε μετέχητε).’ Even though scholars have struggled to understand the subjunctive clause, a failure to maintain church unity somehow equated with an inability to 'partake of/have a share in God.'

Even though Ignatius does not fully explain this assertion, the following section (5.1–2) may provide clarification for what was meant by the ἵνα clause in 4.2. In other words, when unity faltered, it revealed those who were ‘missing out on (ὑστερεῖται) the bread of God.’

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30 The notion of ‘partaking in God’ has led to vigorous scholarly discussion. For example, Torrance objected to such terminology and concluded that this sort of language demonstrated that Ignatius viewed the church as a means of salvation and therefore as a departure from the NT (Torrance, Doctrine of Grace, 72). Contrastively, as a Roman Catholic, Gregory Vall concluded that scholars such as Torrance, Schoedel, and Richardson do not allow the “full force” of such verses (Eph. 4.2) which he believed presented the church as “an organism whose principle of life is infused grace” [Vall, Learning Christ, 319; c.f. Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 53].

31 Scholars have tended to understand Ignatius to be referring throughout the letters to two categories of humanity: (1) those who are Christians (i.e., believers) and (2) those who are not Christians (i.e., non-
may always partake of God’ in 4.2, and ‘missing out on the bread of God’ in 5.2, seem synonymous. Both invoke an eating metaphor to warn that a lack of Christological unity (cf. 4.1) indicated that someone in some way missed out on the being of God. The fact that Ignatius defined τοῦ ἄρτου τοῦ θεοῦ as ‘the flesh of Jesus Christ’ in Rom. 7.3 strongly points to the same meaning in Eph. 4.2. No matter how one interprets this verse, the clear assertion is that a failure to maintain spotless unity (i.e., unity without sinful interruptions) produced drastic consequences.

The last two uses of ἄµωμος are perhaps the most intriguing and revealing with regard to Ignatius’ hamartiological views. Apart from the inscription, the first and last verses of the Trallian epistle both utilize the adjective as seemingly-intentional bookmarks that summarize the entire letter:

I found out that you that you have a blameless/spotless understanding (‘Ἄµωμον διάνοιαν’)...not by habit but by nature (οὐ κατὰ χρήσιν ἀλλὰ κατὰ φύσιν – Trall. 1.1)

Jesus Christ...in whom may you be found blameless (ἐν ὧν εὑρεθείητε ἄµωμοι – Trall. 13.3)

It makes sense that in a letter written to counter docetic viewpoints (6.1–11.2) Ignatius praised the Trallians (1.1) for their ‘spotless mind/understanding/mode of thinking’ (‘Ἄµωμον διάνοιαν’). What is intriguing is the fact that the dual use of κατὰ in the phrase—οὐ κατὰ

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Believers). This section is a good example of what will be discussed in Chapter 5, Ignatian Anthropological Categories. In other words, it is possible that Ignatius was referring to those who professed to be true Christians (i.e., partakers of God) but whose true identity as pseudo-believers was revealed by their opposition to church leadership and by their divisive behavior (cf. Eph. 5.1–9.1).

32 BDAG, 234 s.v. διάνοια, defn. 1, 2.
Negatively stated, the Trallians’ ‘spotless mind and unshakeable perseverance’ were ‘not based on a loan’ (οὐ κατὰ χρῆσιν). This indicates that their blamelessness was not temporary in nature, i.e., it was not borrowed. Positively stated, their spotless unity and perseverance were ‘based on [their] nature’ (κατὰ φύσιν). After acknowledging the potential links to gnostic sources, Schoedel rejected such a notion and suggested instead that Ignatius may have employed such terminology as a polemic against the gnostic position:

The Gnostic does not think of his spirituality simply in terms of a disposition that has become ingrained in his nature; rather he thinks of it as inseparable from his nature. It is a permanent possession...Ignatius, then, refutes the Gnostic claim that Christian piety is artificial by adopting Gnostic terminology to the effect that Christians possess a blameless mind ‘not as a loan’ but ‘by nature’.

The Trallians’ ‘blameless understanding and perseverance’ were therefore the result of a change in their core being, their very nature.

The last instance of ἄµωµος to consider is in the final verse of the Trallian letter. After opening the letter with an observation that the Trallians were steadfastly persevering in their faith with a ‘spotless mind/understanding’, Ignatius closed the letter with a prayer that presents a slightly different perspective (13.3): ‘Jesus Christ...in whom may we be found blameless (ἐν θεῷ εὐφρενεῖµεν ἄµωµοι).’ The fact that Ignatius selected the optative mood in a

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33 BDAG, 512–13 s.v. κατὰ defn. B.5.a. 8; see also LSJ, 883 defn. B.IV.1.
35 The MR text of Trall. 13.3 contains a variant at this point. Both variants use the aorist passive optative form of εὐφρένισκω, however, the second-person plural form is found in G and in the Latin/Coptic versions,
time when it had almost entirely been absorbed by the subjunctive should neither be overlooked nor overstated. No matter how encouraged Ignatius was regarding the Trallians’ demonstrated blamelessness (1.1), the fact that he closed with such a prayer, especially in light of several verses which warn about the danger of not persevering (e.g., Eph. 16.1–2; 17.1), suggests the possibility that he feared not all the Trallians were assured of being found faithful at the end.36

Commenting on the opening and closing verses (1.1 and 13.3), Isacson pointed out that the use of ἄµος was “hardly accidental” and that the difference between the two uses “gives a perspective on the letter as a whole: the Trallians are blameless and the sender hopes that they might remain so.”37 Ignatius used the passively voiced εὑρεθῆναι on numerous occasions in the letters to point to the ultimate validation of one’s profession of faith at the end. Perhaps the best example is Eph. 11.1: ‘[These are] the last times...let us be found (εὑρεθῆναι) in Christ Jesus.’38 In Trall. 13.3, he simply attached another descriptor for the genuine Christian in the eschaton: using ἄµος, he prayed that they would be revealed before God as blameless (i.e., without sin) and then relied on his belief that ‘the Father is faithful in Jesus Christ to fulfill [his] prayer’ (13.3b).

36 For more on this potential tension, see §10.2.3.
37 Mikael Isacson, To Each Their Own Letter: Structure, Themes, and Rhetorical Strategies in the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch, ConBNT 42 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2004), 120.
38 See also Eph. 12.2; 14.2; Rom. 3.2; 4.1; Pol. 7.1.
Ignatius had evidently broadened his vocabulary beyond the simple ἁµαρτ– word grouping. In this case he chose to use ἄµωµος/ἀµώµως to refer to the Christian ideal of being spotless and without blame with respect to sin. As we have seen, at times he simply used the descriptors in a non-theological way that did not refer to the concept of sin (i.e., his joy concerning his addressees could not be faulted—Eph., Rom., Smyrn. inscrs). Even so, the remaining uses of the adjective seem to give some indication of his hamartiological beliefs. To his Christian audience, Ignatius used ἄµωµος with notes of both praise and warning. It brought him joy when Christians demonstrated, through their spotless actions and their blameless character, that sin had been conquered in their lives (Pol. 1.1; Trall. 1.1). The reference in Trall. 1.1 is perhaps the most illuminating in the way it suggests that this ability to overcome sin was viewed as an inherent part of Christian nature. Ehrman’s translation illustrates this point: “I have learned that your way of thinking is blameless and unwavering in endurance, not by force of habit but by your very nature.”39 However, even though Ignatius seems optimistic about this progress, all throughout the letters he also warned that amongst those who professed to be Christian were some who could no longer be characterized as blameless. His confident prayer was that all would continue to remain so (Trall. 13.3).

2.2.2 The Conscience

In addition to discussions involving ‘blamelessness,’ Ignatius’ admittedly infrequent references to the human conscience may also contribute to a further understanding of

39 Ehrman, Apostolic Fathers, 257.
Ignatian hamartiology (*Magn.* 4.1; *Trall.* 7.2; *Phld.* 6.3). Whereas the previous section focused on Ignatius' conception of someone appearing as blameless when viewed from the outside, i.e., from the vantage point of other human beings or even God, the current section shifts the focus inwardly by examining Ignatius' scant references to the human conscience. The current section will examine two related words used in the epistles that indicate the human conscience, συνείδησις and εὐσυνείδητος.

Even though the noun συνείδησις is fairly common to this time period, Ignatius used the word only once in *Trall.* 7.2. In the immediately preceding section, he warned the Trallians about those who privately thwarted the efforts of church leadership by propounding what he considered to be non-Christian doctrinal views that directly contradicted the pure teachings of the apostles (c.f., 6.1–7.2). Ignatius then described those who operated outside the bounds of the established church leadership structure as not being 'clean with respect to conscience' (**7.2b**– οὗτος οὐ καθαρός έστιν τῇ συνειδήσει).

Συνείδησις can indicate a person's awareness of something (i.e., consciousness), their moral ability to distinguish right from wrong, or their conscientiousness to some sort of obligation. With *Trall.* 7.2 in mind, it seems best to consider the possibility that Ignatius intended συνείδησις to carry more than one of the senses listed in the lexica. For example, συνείδησις could indicate a moral ability to distinguish right and wrong (see BDAG defn. 2), while at the same time, a dedication or conscientiousness to fulfill a moral obligation (BDAG defn. 3). With respect to the attached καθαρός modifier, the lexica consistently list the term as

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40 BDAG, 967–8.
denoting someone or something that was either physically or metaphorically free from impurity or blemish. The following lexical entries for καθαρός seem to best match the context of *Trall.* 7.2. BDAG 3a lists *Trall.* 7.2 as an example where καθαρός indicates “being free from moral guilt, pure, free fr. sin” whereas LSJ 3b similarly shows that the term symbolized something or someone as being morally “free from pollution...free from guilt or defilement.” By negating καθαρός, Ignatius therefore described the dissenters' conscience as being tarnished with respect to guilt or defilement.

When the lexical possibilities of both words are matched to the surrounding context, Ignatius' warning is evident. The inward testimony (i.e., ‘conscience’) of those who attempted to poison the church (6.1) and defy the authority of the established church leadership (7.1) should have been 'unclean' based on their own sinful actions. The phrase οὐ καθαρός τῇ συνείδησι may also suggest Ignatius' belief that those who subverted the church operated with a broken moral compass, i.e., an inability to not sin. Ignatius had just described the Trallians as possessing a 'blameless understanding' ingrained into their very nature (1.1). Now in 7.2, it appears that those who operated outside the bounds of the assembly and in contradiction to what Ignatius considered to be valid Christian truth suffered from the opposite problem: their natural, inward inclination was to sin.

In two other verses, Ignatius referenced the human conscience but with the rarer form εὐσυνείδητος. As others have noted, Ignatius may have been the first Christian writer to utilize

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BDAG, 489.

LSJ, 859.
the term." Immediately after warning the Magnesians about those who called themselves Christian, but who did ‘everything without [the bishop],’ Ignatius explained that ‘such ones do not appear to have a good conscience’ (σὺν εὐσυνείδητοι) ‘because they are not gathering validly according to the commandment’ (Magn. 4.1). The lexica define εὐσυνείδητος as “with a good conscience,” or as having either a “good conscience” or a “pure conscience.” The fact that Lampe’s A Patristic Greek Lexicon gives a second definition as “blameless” suggests that εὐσυνείδητος conveys the same meaning as the non-prefixed usage in Trall. 7.2 (καθαρός τῇ συνειδήσει). In other words, having a good conscience was most likely the same as being clean in conscience since both indicate that one’s conscience, or inner witness, had nothing blameworthy attached to it.

In contrast with the previous two verses where Ignatius referred negatively to one’s conscience (i.e., ‘not having a clean conscience’ and ‘not with a good conscience’), Ignatius referenced his own conscience positively in Phld. 6.3: ‘I give thanks to my God that I have a

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43 Brown, Authentic Writings of Ignatius, 16. A search of TLG reveals that the adjectival form was used as early as the mid first century BCE in Bruti Epistulae 56, however, the dating and authenticity of the response sections of these letters has been clouded with much speculation [see R. E. Smith, “The Greek Letters of M. Junius Brutus,” CLQ 30, no. 3-4 (1936): 194 and Christopher P. Jones, “The Greek Letters Ascribed to Brutus,” HSCP 96 (1994): 196–202]. Additionally, the noun and adverbial forms are found in two verses in another set of heavily debated texts, the Pseudo-Clementines (Homilies 2.36.3; 17.11.3). Both texts are dated in TLG in the first century CE, however, as with the Bruti Epistulae, they are likewise clouded with much speculation and it is not a certainty that they predated Ignatius. Jan Bremmer noted, “As the Homilies displays Arian sympathies…[it] can hardly be dated that much earlier” than 360 CE [see Jan N. Bremmer, “Pseudo-Clementines: Texts, Dates, Places, Authors and Magic,” in The Pseudo-Clementines, ed. Jan N. Bremmer, Studies on Early Christian Apocrypha 10 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 9]. With the speculation surrounding both texts, it is possible that Ignatius was not only the first Christian to use the term, but possibly the originator.

44 BDAG, 415; LSJ, 733.

45 PGL, 577.

46 BrillDAG, 868.
good conscience (ὅτι εὐσυνείδητός εἰμι ἐν ὑμῖν) among you.' Like the other two verses, the use of εὐσυνείδητός comes in a polemical section aimed at refuting the actions of judaizing factions who had apparently accused Ignatius of being burdensome to the church and of improperly basing his Christological beliefs on the OT scriptures (c.f., 6.1–8.2). Ignatius’ conscience testified to him that, despite their accusations, there was nothing that could be held against him.

This short survey of Ignatius’ references to the conscience has revealed several important points about the anthropological basis for his soteriology. All three verses which discuss the human conscience are found in polemical sections of the letters that warn about those who sought to undermine the doctrinal and ecclesiastical unity of the Christian church. The previous section, which discussed Ignatius’ use of the term ‘blameless,’ focused on the notion of observing the lives of those who professed faith in Christ from an outside perspective. In other words, when an outside observer (i.e., God or another human) examined a professed believer’s life, the expected verdict was that the person’s actions should demonstrate that they were blameless with respect to sin. However, the examination of Ignatius’ references to the conscience shifted the focus of the testimony from the outside to the inside. For those who professed to be Christian, but who sought to undermine church leadership by introducing what he considered to be non-Christian doctrines, Ignatius levelled a serious warning: those who sought such disunity possessed what he deemed to be a flawed or unclean inner testimony (i.e., conscience) that was either unable or unwilling to guide them in making correct moral choices befitting a Christian. Similar to Ignatius’ discussions
involving blamelessness, the references to the conscience were indirect references to sin. A cleansed conscience was able to correct and guide from within, yet a defiled conscience was incapable of doing so.

2.2.3 Disease & Illness

Scholars have offered varying assessments of Ignatius' rhetorical ability and form. His writing style, for example, has been variously, and somewhat conflictingly described as “dense” and yet “colorful,”47 as well as “passionate in his exclamations...and sometimes...florid and obscure.”48 Despite these contrasting appraisals, many scholars share a common thread of agreement regarding his choice of words. William Schoedel represents this consensus by describing Ignatius' ‘Asianic’ style as being “characterized by unusual diction and poetic color” and by “figures of speech of all types.”49 Many others have similarly recognized Ignatius' ability to paint a picture with intense passion and vivid imagery. As this study has attempted to demonstrate, Ignatius' descriptions of humanity's struggle with sin involved both direct and indirect references. The following section adds another layer to this discussion in the form of medical metaphors involving the concepts of disease and illness (Eph. 7.1–2; Pol. 1.3–2.1).50

47 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 174.
48 Trevett, A Study of Ignatius, 16.
49 Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 8.
50 Another verse that could easily be added to this discussion is Eph. 20.2: ‘breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality, the antidote by which we do not die but live forever in Jesus Christ.’ This verse, however, will be dealt with instead in the section on the Eucharist (§11.2).
Much like the previous two sections, Ignatius appears to have use disease-related imagery to indirectly illustrate the concept of sin.

The first passage, Eph. 7.1–2, follows a section where Ignatius warned the Ephesians not to be misled by those who acted outside the bounds of the established congregation and its leadership (5.2–3) in an apparent attempt to introduce what he considered to be heretical teachings (6.2–αἵρεσις). In 7.1–2, a medical analogy is employed to warn the Ephesians to avoid the malicious and deceitful ‘wild beasts’ whom he further identified as ‘raving dogs’ (κύνες λυσσώντες) that bite.51 That he further described the group as ‘those who bite in secret’ (λαθροδῆκται) illustrates the particularly dangerous nature of their subversive efforts. The fact that he utilized terminology that was frequently found in the medical discourse of his era suggests that the metaphor would most likely have been familiar to his readers.52 One fitting example is found in Galen's Constitution of the Art of Medicine. Employing some of the same terms, Galen provided a second-century medical description of the dangers of such a wound:

For whenever...a destructive power develops in the body, there is danger as never before that the person will fall ill and sometimes even come into the ultimate risk. Such causes are difficult to diagnose (δυσδιάγνωστοι) because they do not yet cause pain, just as, for example, the poison of a dog with rabies (ὁ τοῦ λυττῶντος κυνός), of

51 BDAG, 605 provides only one definition, “be raving, be mad” whereas LSJ, 1067 seems to split the meaning into two primary senses, the first pointing to a person who is either ‘raging’ (as in battle) or going mad (i.e., insane), whereas the second refers to a dog suffering from rabies.
52 Images involving a raving dog who bites would likely have been well known in the second century. For example, the mid first-century Greek physician Dioscorides Pedanius wrote about giving medicine ‘to those who have been bitten by a rabid dog’ (De materia medica 1.100.3–τοῖς ὑπὸ λυσσώντος κυνός δηχεῖσθαι). Similarly, Thessalus of Tralles, a Roman physician in the late first century, described what to do ‘if someone has been bitten by a rabid dog’ (De virtutibus herbarum 1.10.4–ἐὰν δὲ ὑπὸ κυνός λυσσώντος δηχθῇ τις). In addition, Rufus of Ephesus, indicated his knowledge of someone who died as a result of being bitten by a rabid dog (Quaestiones Medicinales 47), Others include Pse-Dioscorides, Lucianus, and Philumenus.
which no particular sign is contained in the body before the one who was bitten (τὸν δηχθέντα) comes close to madness (λύτης).\textsuperscript{53}

Galen’s late second-century description is clear: the bite of a raving (i.e., rabid) dog was particularly dangerous because it was difficult to detect and diagnose and, if left untreated, would almost certainly result in madness and ultimately death. By employing the same vocabulary, Ignatius created a metaphor that should have effectively warned the Ephesians concerning the dangers of associating with those who taught what he considered to be heretical and divisive doctrines.

At the end of Eph. 7.1, after describing the dissenters as ‘raving dogs who secretly bite’, Ignatius further warned, ‘concerning whom you must be on guard’ (οὕς δεῖ ὑµᾶς φυλάσσεσθαι) against them. It is at this point that translations are divided on how to interpret the participial phrase, ὄντας δυσθεραπεύτους. Some understand the phrase as modifying the ‘bite’ wound (e.g., ‘for their bite is hard to heal’), whereas others apply the phrase to the ‘rabid dogs’ who inflicted the bite (e.g., ‘for they [i.e., the rabid dogs] are hard to heal’).\textsuperscript{54} With the participle


\textsuperscript{54} Those who understand the phrase to be modifying the bite wound include: Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 189 – “for their bite is hard to heal”; Charles H. Hoole, The Apostolic Fathers: The Epistles of S. Clement, S. Ignatius and S. Polycarp together with The Martyrdom of S. Ignatius and S. Polycarp, 2nd ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1885), 123 – “since their bite is hard to cure”; Rick Brannan, ed. and trans., The Apostolic Fathers in English (Bellingham: Lexham, 2012) – “as their bite is hard to cure”; Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 2, 47 – “whose bite is hard to heal” [it should be noted that Lightfoot’s work contains both translations in different sections]. Those who understand the phrase to modify the ‘rabid dogs’ include ibid., 545 – “for they are hard to heal”; Edward Burton, The Apostolic Fathers: The Epistles of St Ignatius and St Polycarp, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1909), 75 – “as men hardly to be cured”; Lake, Apostolic Fathers, 181 – “for they are scarcely to be cured”; Edgar J. Goodspeed, The Apostolic Fathers : An American Translation (London:
matching in gender and number (masculine plural), it seems best to view the phrase to be attributively modifying κύνες. The doctrinal wounds inflicted by Ignatius’ opponents would certainly require treatment; however, the text indicates that the deceivers themselves required medical attention. The analogy is further extended in 7.2 where the difficult prognosis for the rabid dogs is contrasted with Ignatius’ declaration that ‘there is one physician’ (ἐἷς ἵατρός ἐστιν). Despite some substantial variation in the text, after the long list of creedal proclamations, the identity of the ‘one physician’ is revealed as ‘Jesus Christ our Lord’. Brown’s summary seems correct: “Jesus the one physician”—whether the title is an Ignatian invention or a received tradition—serves as a metaphorical figure to express the εὐαγγέλιον message of salvation in response to unacceptable preaching by outsiders. Therefore, Ignatius’ medical analogy is clever and fitting to the situation. The Ephesians were warned to avoid those whom he believed were speaking untruthfully about Christ (6.2, cf. 7.1). And yet, the ‘rabid dogs,’ as the source of the problem, were the ones requiring treatment. The deceivers’ symptoms were plainly described as those who promoted ‘heresy’

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56 Brown, Gospel and Ignatius, 160.
by not ‘speaking truthfully about Christ’ (6.2), ‘bearing the name [of Christ] with wicked deceit’ (7.1), and thus attempting to deceive the church (7.1–8.1). All such descriptors were plain references to sinful activities within the established church. According to Ignatius, the only physician able to heal them was ‘Jesus Christ our Lord’ (7.2). The call for healing therefore metaphorically represented the need for salvation. That Ignatius may not have considered the ‘rabid dogs’ to have been genuine Christians will be explored later (§5.3).

Suffice it to say at this point that Ignatius viewed the sinful acts of the dissenters to indicate their need for healing (i.e., salvation). Based on this passage, Howell rightly commented that “[c]onceiving of sin and its effects as a disease, the fathers see the church as a hospital for sinners with Christ as the chief physician.” Sin, in this case in the form of heretical doctrines that failed to teach truthfully about Christ, was likened to the rabies virus which, if left untreated, produced madness and spiritual death.

The next section to be considered is found in the pastoral letter to Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna (Pol. 1.3–2.1). After urging Polycarp to ‘appeal to everyone that they might be saved’ (πάντας παρακαλεῖν ἵνα σώζωνται), Ignatius again crafted a mixed metaphor in 1.3–2.1:

Endure, as a fully-developed athlete (ὡς τέλειος ἄθλητής), the diseases (τὰς νόσους) of all. Where [there is] much discomfort, [there is] much gain. If you love good disciples, there is no special thanks for you. Rather with gentleness you must bring the plagued ones (τοὺς λοιμοτέρους) into submission. Not every wound (τραύμα) is healed (θεραπεύεται) with the same plaster/treatment (ἐμπλάστρῳ). Relieve attacks of fever (παροξύσμῳ) with cold compresses (ἐμβροχαίς).

Howell, Ignatius of Antioch, 61 n. 29.
Here Ignatius metaphorically described the ideal bishop with a metaphor that was heavily laden with athletic and medical imagery. As God’s champion-physician, Polycarp was charged with healing \((\text{θεραπεύεται})\) the diseases \((\text{τάς νόσους})\), wounds \((\text{τραύμα})\), and attacks of fever \((\text{παροξυσμός})\) of everyone in his care with gentleness and an assorted array of appropriate treatments \((\text{ἐμπλάστρῳ/ἐμβροχαίς})\). The metaphor represents the need to treat certain spiritual illnesses. While he does not elaborate in detail on the specific nature of the sickness(es) threatening the church, the primary issue seems to have been a lack of unity most likely caused by those who taught what Ignatius considered to be divisive doctrinal views. For example, the encouragement in 1.2d to ‘[f]ocus on unity \((\text{ἐνώσεως})\)’ points to disunity as one of the key symptoms of the disease.\(^{58}\) If ‘disunity’ was the symptom, then the following section \((\text{Pol. 2.3–3.1})\) seems to indicate that the actual ‘disease’ affecting the assembly was the ‘divisive teaching’ \((\text{ἐτεροδιδασκαλοῦντες})\) of ‘those who only seemed to have been faithful’ \((\text{Οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄξιόπιστοι εἶναι})\). This conclusion is further bolstered by the fact that the exhortation in 1.3—to ‘[e]ndure the diseases of all’—is followed immediately by the clarification that Polycarp would be deemed worthy of credit if he loved not only the ‘good disciples’ \((\text{καλοὺς μαθητάς})\), but also the ‘plagued ones’ \((\text{τοὺς λοιμικότερους})\).

\(^{58}\) The idea of a corrupting and divisive influence rising from within the church is frequently expressed in the letters. Of particular interest is \textit{Trall. 6.1–2}: ‘Therefore I exhort you, not I but the love of Jesus Christ, partake of only Christian food, but keep away from strange plants, which is heresy. Those who claim to be believers mix Jesus Christ with themselves, like a deadly drug \((\text{θανάσιον φάρμακον})\) which is mixed with honey, which the ignorant one without fear and with evil pleasure receives unto death.’ This noun \textit{φάρμακον} seems refer to something that is expected to be a “healing remedy, medicine, remedy, drug” but which actually turns out to be a “deadly poison” \((\text{BDAG, 1050})\).
It is at this point where most translations mask the potential impact of the imagery Ignatius seems to have intentionally invoked. For example, Michael Holmes’ translation of Pol. 2.1 represents the majority of translations: “If you love good disciples, it is no credit to you; rather with gentleness bring the more troublesome ones into submission.”

The substantival adjective τοὺς λοιμωτέρους is usually translated as ‘the troublesome ones’ despite the fact that the lexicons denote its fundamental meaning as that of someone or something regarded as ‘pestilent, pestential, or plagued.’ Even though the translation “troublesome” seems possible, the fact that it was used in a text which was heavily laden with medical terms referring to illness and disease, and especially to ‘attacks/convulsions of fever’ (τοὺς παροξυσμοῦς), strongly suggests that the translation ‘the plagued ones’ better aligns with Ignatius’ intended imagery. The mere mention of the ‘plague’ would have certainly instilled fear and panic in Ignatius’ readers who lived in an empire that had periodically suffered from devastating outbreaks of infectious diseases. For example, early in the second century during the reign of Trajan, Rufus of Ephesus referred to a plague which had been observed in Libya,

59 Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 265. The ‘more troublesome ones’ (italics mine) translation and other similar translations are also found in the following: Howell, Ignatius of Antioch, 118; Goodspeed, Apostolic Fathers, 233; Burton, Apostolic Fathers, 117; Hoole, Apostolic Fathers, 169; Lake, Apostolic Fathers, 269; Grant, Ignatius of Antioch, 153; Brannan, ed. and trans., Apostolic Fathers; Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 262.

60 BDAG, 602; LSJ, 1060; MM, 380; BrillDAG, 1252.


62 Antioch itself appears to have suffered from the devastating Antonine plague within a few decades of Ignatius’ death: “In December A.D. 165, the Roman forces...were stricken with an epidemic disease...for fifteen years it ran through the whole Roman world, causing many deaths...[Antioch] was the first large center of population which the infected army reached, and the loss of life among the civil population may have been considerable.” Downey, A History of Antioch, 227.
Syria, and Egypt. Others such as Aelius Aristides, in his oration The Sacred Tales, disclosed that Smyrna itself had been ravaged by the devastating Antonine plague not long after Ignatius’ era in 165 CE.

The people about whom Ignatius warned Polycarp to discipline seem to have been more than simply ‘troublesome.’ Instead, Ignatius portrayed them as more akin to a devastating plague that could spread and bring widespread death within the church! The metaphor is clear: Ignatius equated disunifying sins in the church with the potentially devastating infectious diseases that has periodically devastated the known world.

2.3 Summary

The conclusion that Ignatius was not concerned about sin, or that he neglected the topic, fails to account for what emerges from a close reading of the letters. The analysis has shown that, with a wide variety of both direct and indirect references, the seven-letter Ignatian corpus communicates a deep concern for how sin affected the early church and its doctrine. Ignatius made direct reference to human sin through the use of words from the ἁµαρτ—grouping, as well as through his frequent references to a variety of named sins. For Ignatius, since the crucifixion of Christ was performed on behalf of human sins (Smyrn. 6.2), there should be a visible difference in the lives of those who professed to be Christian (Eph. 14.2). Unfortunately,

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64 Ibid., 66.
Ignatius’ repeated references to specific vices (i.e., causing dissension in the church, acting carnally, corrupting the faith, anger, etc.) testify to his conclusion that humanity's struggle with sin was not necessarily resolved for all those who claimed to be Christian.

When the examination was broadened beyond the direct references, a more fully developed picture of Ignatian hamartiology emerged. In an indirect and yet creative manner, Ignatius described the awareness of sin in one's life from both an internal and an external perspective. When viewed from the external vantage point of other people or from God, the Christian was expected to appear ‘blameless’ or ‘without blemish’ (ἀμώμος) with respect to sinful activity. When viewed from the internal perspective, the Christian’s own conscience, or inner testimony, should be able to guide and correct one’s behavior from within. The fact that much of the letters are polemically aimed at those who professed to be Christian, but whose actions demonstrated that they were far from blameless, indicates that Ignatius was concerned that all was not as it should be. For Ignatius, sin amongst the ranks of professing Christianity was akin to the plague that at times swept mercilessly through the Roman Empire. In summary, humanity's predicament with sin is just one of three potential reasons why Ignatius believed humanity was in need of salvation. The next chapter will explore a second directly-related foci.
CHAPTER 3

HUMANITY'S PREDICAMENT WITH EVIL

3.0 Introduction

With characteristic variety of expression, Ignatius scattered throughout the epistles numerous references to evil entities in both spiritual and human form. Scholars have consistently highlighted Ignatius' concern for how the fledgling church could be adversely influenced by those who opposed God by working to corrupt the church from within. However, for the purposes of this study, the question is whether a predicament with evil resided in the

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1 For example: ‘Satan’ (Σατανάς – Eph. 13.1); ‘the ruler of this age’ (ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ αἰὼν τοῦτού – Eph. 17.1; 19.1; Trall. 4.2; Magn. 1.2; Rom. 7.1; Phld. 6.2); the ‘devil’ (διάβολος – Eph. 10.3; Trall. 8.1; Rom. 5.3; Smyrn. 9.1); a ‘demon’ (δάμας – Smyrn. 3.2).

2 For example: ‘weed of the devil’ (τοῦ διάβολου βοτάνη – Eph. 10.3); ‘evil plants’ (τῶν κακῶν βοτανῶν – Phld. 3.1); someone who ‘corrupts faith in God by evil teaching’ (ἐν κακῇ διδασκαλίᾳ – Eph. 16.2; cf. 9.1); ‘wicked offshoots’ (τὰ κακὰς παραφυάδας – Trall. 6.1).

background of Ignatius’ call for human salvation. Corwin certainly believed this to be the case:

Ignatius has a vivid sense that the salvation which has come to the world is sorely needed. The world was ripe for this saving act, for men and powers alike are caught in situations from which they cannot emerge without divine help. From a cosmic point of view the world is harassed and tormented by the Evil One.

In other words, do the Ignatian letters demonstrate that the plight(s) driving humanity’s need for salvation can be understood not only as a struggle with sin, but also as a deliverance from the influence of the evil forces opposing God? In order to do so it will be important to find instances where Ignatius identified the evil entities, or their teaching, as deterrents that somehow either disrupted or prevented human salvation. Additionally, the argument will be strengthened if the Christ event is portrayed as the means by which these forces were defeated.

Ignatius’ clear warnings about evil forces who had already begun, or at least threatened, to undermine the Christian church are evident within the text. First, the letters show that when Ignatius exposed the attempts to infiltrate the church with doctrine that he believed to be false, he described such false teachers (Eph. 10.3; Trall. 6.1; 11.1; Phld. 3.1), as well as the content of their teaching (Eph. 9.1; 16.2; Magn. 10.2; Phld. 2.1), as characteristically ‘evil’

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5 Corwin, St. Ignatius, 155.
(κακός). Additionally, it seems evident that Ignatius understood the ‘evil’ nature of their teaching to have been incited by demonic forces (Eph. 10.3; 13.1; 17.1; Trall. 8.1; Rom. 7.1; Phld. 6.2; Smyrn. 9.1). However, the letters portray Ignatius as more than simply worried about evil’s influence upon the churches. In several passages, he described a segment of the church that was in danger of being captured by evil forces and, ultimately, of dying while in captivity and somehow failing to obtain eternal life. It appears that he felt that some were in need of salvation from the forces of evil who worked against such deliverance.

3.1 The Risk of Capture

Ignatius warned the Ephesians about the dangers of allowing subversive elements to influence their assembly by means of teaching that he described as ‘evil’ (9.1; 16.1) and satanically-influenced (13.1; 17.1). Those who propagated such views within the church were vividly described as ‘ beasts’ (θηρία– 7.1), ‘rabid dogs’ (κύνες λυσσῶντες– 7.1), and ‘destroyers of households’ (οἱ οἰκοφθόροι– 16.1). Despite his frequent praising of the Ephesians for being predominately faithful (Eph. inscr; 1.1, 3; 4.1; 6.2; 8.1; 9.1–2; 11.2), the serious warnings found in 16.1–17.1 reveal his fear that some of them would not remain so.

Incarcerated and on his way to Rome for execution, Ignatius’ personal situation may have colored the rhetoric he employed to describe the fate of those influenced by the false teachers. For instance, by adopting the ‘evil teaching’ of ‘the ruler of this age’ (τοῦ ἄρχοντος τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ), they ran the risk of being ‘taken as prisoners’ (μὴ σίχμαλωτίση ύμᾶς– Eph. 17.1).
Similarly, in response to a near-identical spiritual dilemma, the Philadelphians were directed in *Phld.* 2.2 to ‘flee from division and evil teaching’ (τὰς κακοδιδασκαλίας) lest they be ‘taken captive’ (αἰχμαλωτίζουσιν) by ‘believable wolves’ (λύκοι ἀξιόπιστοι). In both letters, Ignatius used the verb αἰχμαλωτίζω which is defined in the lexica as ‘causing someone to be taken prisoner, captured, or enslaved.’

As a literal prisoner of Rome himself, Ignatius cautioned his readers to avoid succumbing to evil teaching and, by doing so, to evade capture by demonic forces. In both passages, Ignatius indicated that the means by which one entered spiritual captivity was by adopting what he considered to be corrupt and false teachings. Thus he wrote, ‘Do not be besmeared with the filth of the teaching of the ruler of this age lest he capture you…’ (Eph. 17.1; cf. 16.2); ‘Therefore as children of the light of truth flee from division and false teaching....For many believable wolves attempt....to take captive the runners in God’s race’ (Phld. 2.1–2). As a current prisoner of war, Ignatius appears to have intentionally evoked the image of being captured in war to embolden his audience to elude spiritual slavery at the hands of the false teachers and their corrupt teaching.

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7 BDAG, 31; LSJ, 45; BrillDAG, 61; *PGL*, 54.
3.2 The Danger of Dying in Captivity

Regarding his own imprisonment, Ignatius appealed to the Roman Christians to not seek his release. Instead, Ignatius desired to endure his imprisonment and pending execution (Rom. 1.2–2.2; 4.1; 6.2–7.2; 8.3). In typical paradoxical fashion, his personal acceptance of his ultimate fate stood in stark contrast with the warnings levelled on his audience. As one who had embraced his physical chains—his ‘spiritual pearls’ (Eph. 11.2)—he warned his readers who were threatened with spiritual capture to do the opposite—to flee. Once again, the reasoning behind such statements seems to be intentionally related to his own immediate circumstances. In other words, those who were captured by means of adopting the divergent views of the evil forces, could expect, much like Ignatius, to perish in captivity.

Seemingly to make his point, in the passages where he cautioned against being spiritually incarcerated, Ignatius also warned that capture would ultimately lead to death. Hence in Eph. 17.1 he warned that those who were captured by the ‘ruler of this age’ (i.e., who adopted his ‘evil’ teaching) would be ‘taken prisoner away from the life lying before them’ (µὴ αἰχμαλωτίσῃ ὑμᾶς ἐκ τοῦ προκειμένου ζῆν). Despite the fact that this phrase has been understood as referring to Ephesians being led away from ‘their current life in the church community’, and therefore to a loss of eschatological life, the immediately-preceding verse

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8 For example, Mellink argues that the ‘incorruptibility’ imparted on the church in 17.1a “is obviously a present reality for the Christian community.” Based on this he concluded that “the participle προκειμένο[ν] does not have the connotation ‘which lies in the future’ but ‘which is present’.” [Mellink, Death as Eschaton, 333]. Mellink’s argument is not convincing for several reasons: first, the verb used to describe the Lord ‘breathing incorruptibility’ on the church is in the subjunctive mood and therefore the present time should not be emphasized. Secondly, as I mentioned above, the warnings in 16.1–2 and 17.2 which point to divine punishment suggest a more serious danger.

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(16.2) indicates that Ignatius referred to a more ominous fate: those who used evil teaching to corrupt the ‘faith in God for which Jesus Christ was crucified…will go to the inextinguishable fire’ (τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον) along with ‘the one who listens to him.’ The threat of a fiery end, when combined with the questions posed in the very next verse (17.2)—‘Why are we not all becoming wise…by receiving God’s knowledge, which is Jesus Christ? Why are we foolishly perishing by ignoring the gracious gift the Lord has truly sent?’—demonstrates that Ignatius forewarned the Ephesians about the danger of eternal punishment. In essence, the point seems to be that those who became spiritual prisoners-of-war should expect an eternal punishment.

The Trallians received a similar warning couched in a botanical–pharmaceutical metaphor (6.1–2):

I exhort you...make use of only Christian food, but abstain from strange plants (ἄλλοτριὰς βοτάνης), which is heresy (αἵρεσις). Those who claim to be believers mingle themselves with Jesus Christ—in the same way they administer a deadly drug (θανάσιµον φάρµακον) with honeyed wine, which the ignorant one confidently receives with evil delight, to death.

Later in the letter, after warning of the possibility of being snared in the ‘ambushes of the devil’ (τὰς ἐνέδρας τοῦ διαβόλου – 8.1), he continued the metaphor begun in 6.1–2: ‘Therefore flee the evil offshoots (τὰ κακὰς παραφυάδας) which produce death-dealing fruit (καρπὸν θανατηφόρον), concerning which, if anyone tastes it, he dies on the spot (παραυτὰ ἀποθνήσκει).’

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9 The text varies: G = παρ’ αὐτα (‘from them’); g & JnD (Sacra Parallela Reperfucaldina [PG 96:508c]) = παραυτικα (‘immediately, on the spot’); and Lightfoot’s emendation of παραυτα (‘immediately, on the spot’). The oft-ignored Arabic (Ms. Sin. ar. 505) suggests strongly that either παραυτα or παραυτικα was original “He who eats some instantly dies.” (English translation of Ms. Sin. ar. 505, unpubl).
(11.1). Ignatius’ warning is plain: those who failed to guard against what he considered to be heretical views risked dying at the hands of their ‘evil’ captors who administered what appeared to be harmless and pleasant, but which was a poisonous concoction capable of producing a swift death for willing partakers.

As already noted, the Philadelphians were likewise warned to flee from the ‘wolves’ who sought to capture them (Phld. 2.2) and to avoid the ‘evil plants’ not planted by Jesus Christ (3.1). Much like with the Ephesians and Trallians, Ignatius spelled out the consequences for the Philadelphians should anyone be captured by evil forces: those who failed to avoid the ‘schismatic’ (σχίζοντι), and who adopted their ‘alien views’ (ἀλλοτρίᾳ γνώµῃ)—had essentially been captured (2.2) and would ‘not inherit the kingdom of God’ (3.3).10 The fact that Ignatius paralleled the warning ‘those who corrupt households will not inherit the kingdom of God’ (Eph. 16.1) with ‘those...who by evil teaching...corrupt faith in God...will go to unquenchable fire’ suggests that the warning of not inheriting the kingdom of God in Phil. 2.3 carried the same meaning and was probably equivalent in his estimation.11

10 It should be noted that the reference to the ‘kingdom’ in Phld. 3.3 (μὴ πλανᾶσθε...βασιλείαν θεοῦ οὐ κληρονομεῖ) was almost certainly textually sourced from Paul’s reference in 1 Cor 6:9 (θεοῦ βασιλείαν οὐ κληρονομήσουσιν... μὴ πλανᾶσθε), Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 164–65; Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 198.

11 The notion of equating the two consequences—i.e., of not inheriting the kingdom of God and of receiving divine eschatological punishment—does not appear to have been invented by Ignatius. Similar equations are found in Matthew’s gospel where the notion of ‘inheriting the kingdom’ is the linked to entering into eternal life and, conversely, failing to enter or inherit the kingdom is equated with eternal punishment (Matt 5:20–22; 13:47–49; 25:31–46). Donfried recognized the possible equation of the notions of ‘not inheriting the kingdom of God’ and finding oneself in ‘eternal fire’ in Matt 25:34, 41: “Obviously if one is to be thrown into the eternal fire one will not inherit the kingdom.” – Karl P. Donfried, “The Kingdom of God in Paul,” in The Kingdom of God in 20th-Century Interpretation, ed. Wendell Willis (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987), 186.
Despite his apparent confidence in their proven ability to avoid such deception and captivity, Ignatius presented evil, in the form of its proponents and its teaching, as a force which sought to prevent human salvation through the two-fold ‘capture-and-kill’ strategy. Thus far, the scheme seems to have been unsuccessful. Ultimately, as one who refused to be released or escape from his own physical captivity, Ignatius warned his readers not to follow his example. Instead, they were to do everything in their power to escape spiritual captivity and the resultant spiritual death. However, if the danger of finding oneself in eternal fire and of forfeiting entrance into the kingdom of God were merely hypothetical, it is difficult to make sense of Ignatius' passionate warnings. Ignatius certainly seems to have feared that the salvation of his readers was in jeopardy if they became enslaved by the forces of evil and their poisonous doctrines.

3.3 The Means of Escape

The previous two sections demonstrated that Ignatius viewed evil, and its associated teaching, as something that threatened his audience's salvation. This was demonstrated primarily in the way he described the evil entities, and their teaching, as somehow inhibiting salvation. Whether Ignatius portrayed the Christ event as the means by which to defeat such evil forces and their influence will now be investigated. In other words, do the Ignatian epistles portray the work of Christ as the means of escape from evil and its influence? By examining the texts where Ignatius referred to evil's attempts to capture and kill humanity, it
will be shown that all was not lost in his estimation. Ignatius identified several strategies for dealing with those who were divisive: they could either be avoided or, if that failed, the better solution would be to (1) disarm or (2) deliver them.

3.3.1 Disarming Evil

According to Ignatius, the false teachers’ primary method of attack was to create dissenting factions within the fledgling Christian congregations (αἵρεσις – Eph. 6.2; Trall. 6.1; µερισμός– Phld. 2.1; 3.1; 7.2; 8.1; Smyrn. 8.1; and σχίζω– Phld. 3.3). Scholars have long sought to identify the number and nature of the sects that Ignatius opposed. However, whether comprised of Docetists, Judaizers, or a single group that shared both characteristics, one thing is certain: the offending doctrine(s) were deemed to be divisive and aberrant because Ignatius felt they contradicted the nature and work of Christ as taught by the apostles.

When faced with evil opposition, Ignatius’ first suggestion was to completely avoid contact with any teacher he labeled as false or evil. For example, in Trall. 11.1 he stated, ‘Therefore flee from evil offshoots who are producing death-dealing fruit’. The same tactic was emphasized throughout (Eph. 6.2; 7.1; 9.1; Trall. 11.1; Phld. 6.1–2; 7.2; Smyrn. 7.2; 8.1). The following verses in Table 2 reveal a discernible pattern. When the avoidance tactic failed, the appropriate option was to disarm the opposition by presenting a united faith most likely in the form of unifying doctrine.

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12 See Ch. 1 n. 3 for more details.
13 Brown, Gospel and Ignatius, 197; Svigel, Center and the Source, 169–71.
Peace and unity alone, however, were not the goal. Instead, the unity that Ignatius sought was focused and, at times, seems to have been defined, in the form of a unifying doctrine centered on the Christ event.\textsuperscript{14} The epistles to Ephesus and Philadelphia contain examples where Ignatius described this focus. Thus, after warning the Ephesians that ‘the ruler of this age’ intended to employ ‘evil teaching’ (17.1b; 16.2a) to capture and rob them of life (17.1b), he immediately followed with two questions apparently designed to demonstrate how this was even possible, especially after having just indicated in 17.1a that he believed the church had been divinely-intended to be ‘incorruptible’ (\textit{ἀφθαρσίαν}):

\begin{quote}
Now why are not all becoming wise by receiving the knowledge from God, which is Jesus Christ? Why are we foolishly perishing, being ignorant of the gracious gift which the Lord truly has sent? (Eph. 17.2)
\end{quote}

The call for a unified faith (13.1) was in danger precisely because of the lack of unity incited by a segment of the church who had not ‘become wise by receiving the knowledge from God,

\begin{table}[ht]
\centering
\caption{The Method of Countering Evil Forces/Evil Teaching}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Attack} & \textbf{Counter-Attack} \\
\hline
‘The powers of Satan are overpowered and his destruction is destroyed...’ (Eph. 13.1) & ‘...by the unity of your faith’ (Eph. 13.1) \\
\hline
‘all warfare among those in heaven and those on earth is abolished’ (Eph. 13.2) & ‘by...peace’ (Eph. 13.2) \\
\hline
‘many believable wolves with wicked pleasure are capturing the runners in God’s race...’ (Phld. 2.2a) & ‘...but in your unity, they will not have a place’ (Phld. 2.2b) \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

\textsuperscript{14} For more detail see §9.3.
which is Jesus Christ’. Instead, such people were ‘foolishly perishing due to ignorance concerning the gracious gift which the Lord had truly sent’ (17.2). Taken together, the two statements show that, for Ignatius, unity was achieved by all who had received the gift of knowing God through the Christ event, while those who remained ignorant of the gospel were destined to foolishly perish.

Similarly, after warning the Philadelphians in 3.3a to ‘keep away from evil plants’ lest they become divided and forfeit their inheritance in ‘the kingdom of God’, he defined the central problem regarding this lack of unity in 3.3b: ‘if anyone behaves with an alien mindset, this one is not in agreement with the passion’ (τῷ πάθει). For Ignatius, Christ’s πάθος, most likely denoting the crucifixion, when repeatedly paired with references to his resurrection (ἀνάστασις), serve as intentional bookends that defined the unifying gospel message.¹⁵

Schoedel made such a connection:

The terms passion and resurrection appear closely conjoined...[and] sometimes appear as one polarity among others to express totality and to emphasize the unity of the church....Passion and resurrection also stand out...as the heart of the Christian gospel and the ground of faith.¹⁶

Using τῷ πάθει as a synonym for the gospel itself, the message seems clear: for Ignatius, unity could only be achieved by those who were in agreement with Christ’s gospel.

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¹⁵ In the letters, Ignatius used the noun πάθος fifteen times. In all but one of those instances (i.e., the suffering of the church in the Eph. inscr) the noun clearly refers to Christ’s suffering/death on the cross (Eph. 18.2; 20.1; Magn. 5.2; 11.1; Trall. inscr; 11.2; Rom. 6.3; Phld. inscr; 3.3; 9.2; Smyrn. 1.2; 5.3; 7.2; 12.2). In nine of the fourteen references to Christ’s suffering, Ignatius paired πάθος with ἀνάστασις to form bookends that summarize the gospel message (see Eph. 20.1; Magn. 11.1; Trall. inscr; Phld. inscr; 9.2; Smyrn. 1.2; 5.3; 7.2; 12.2.).

¹⁶ Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 27.
All the passages reviewed in this section have shown that the Christ event—i.e., the gospel—was the means by which Ignatius sought to disarm the opposing forces who attempted to introduce teaching that he deemed to be ‘evil.’ Disunifying doctrine was thus to be countered by adhering to unifying doctrine. Ignatius mitigated the consequences of not heeding his warnings about being captured and killed by countering with a unified faith specifically centered on Christ and his gospel message. When evil forces threatened to capture runners in God’s race, Ignatius’ plan was to flee in order to avoid any contact with what he considered to be evil teaching. If this effort failed, he then sought to thwart evil’s attempts to capture others by countering their disunifying ‘alien views’ with the unifying message of the gospel.

3.3.2 Delivering the Deceived

Ignatius chose to fight the influx of evil teaching by countering with what he considered to be true and apostolic doctrine. Despite this, several passages indicate that his desire was not merely to counter such doctrine. Disarming the enemy of its divisive doctrine could succeed in preventing future captures, and yet Ignatius seems to have envisioned a bolder plan to rescue those who had already succumbed to doctrinal capture. In other words, when resistance failed, redemption was the next logical step.

One of the clearest passages is Phld. 2.2–3.3. As already noted, the attempts by ‘believable wolves’ to ‘take captive the runners in God’s race’ had thus far failed (2.2). However, in 3.1 Ignatius changed the analogy by warning the Philadelphians to ‘keep away
from evil plants not cultivated by Jesus Christ' because they were ‘not the Father's planting.’ In this section, he emphasized the core problem which required a solution. Despite the ‘wolves’ believable appearance (λύκοι ἀξιόπιστοι), he alleged that such teachers were not actually Christians (3.1).\(^7\) Ignatius reasoned that, if they were genuine Christians (i.e., if they indeed belonged to God), this would be evidenced by their unity with the church and its leadership (3.2).

The evil teachers therefore required spiritual deliverance since ‘all those who repent and enter into the unity of the church will belong to God’ (3.2). Even though Ignatius did not elaborate on the nature of the repentance sought, the statement in 3.3b—‘if anyone behaves with an alien mindset, this one is not in agreement with the passion’—suggests that ‘the evil plants’ needed to change their minds (μετανοέω) with regard to some aspect of the gospel message (i.e., they had yet to ‘agree with the passion’). Later in the letter, while confronting their ‘division and anger’ Ignatius asserted that the ‘Lord, however, forgives all who repent, if in repenting they return to the unity of God and the council of the bishop’ (Phld. 8.1).

Similar statements are found elsewhere in the letters. As already discussed in §2.2.3,\(^8\) even though he initially described the ‘rabid dogs’ who sought to corrupt the church as ‘being difficult to heal’ (οὐντας δυσθεραπεύτους),\(^9\) he then prescribed for them the solution in the form of ‘the one physician...Jesus Christ our Lord’ (Eph. 7.1–2). The same remedy applied to the

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\(^7\) This topic will be treated separately in §5.3.3.

\(^8\) There it was concluded that the text referred to the ‘mad dogs’ as in need of healing as opposed to those who had been bitten, as some translations suggest.

\(^9\) The adjective δυσθεραπεύτους refers to “being difficult to restore to a sound and healthful condition” and thus “hard to cure” (BDAG, 265; LSJ, 457).
Smyrnaeans. After relating how difficult (δύσκολον) it would be for the ‘wild beasts in human form’ to repent, Ignatius proposed that ‘Jesus Christ, our true life, has authority over this’ (Smyrn. 4.1).

To summarize, Ignatius described his readers as those in danger of being spiritual captured by evil forces and dying as a result. Ignatius’ language suggests that one way to deal with the Philadelphian ‘wolves’, the Ephesian ‘rabid dogs’, and the Smyrnaean ‘wild beasts’ was to counter their ‘evil’ message with the true incarnational gospel message. The letters also reveal another more direct strategy: since he clearly believed that such false teachers were not saved, it was possible that they could be healed (saved) by the one physician, Jesus Christ.

3.4 Summary

Ignatius’ concern for how evil sought to corrupt and imprison the early church is undisputed. However, for the purposes of this study, the question under investigation was whether this predicament with evil stood in the background of his call for salvation. Ignatius presented evil (in the form of its proponents and teaching) as a force intending to prevent human salvation through a twofold ‘capture-and-kill’ strategy. The fact that the letters contain several passages where Ignatius identified evil, and its teaching, as an influence that sought to lead unsuspecting victims into eternal punishment suggests that any form of deliverance in this

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Similarly to δοσοδεράπευτος, the adjective used in Smyrn. 4.1, δύσκολον refers to something that is difficult: “pert. to that which is difficult to fulfill or do, hard, difficult” (BDAG, 265).
case would constitute salvation for the deceived. Additionally, in multiple places Ignatius countered such divisive doctrines with a unified faith centered on Christ and his gospel. For those who failed to avoid such evil viewpoints, and who thus adopted its principles, only one solution was presented: according to Ignatius, the only physician who could heal—i.e., save—those destined for the ‘inextinguishable fire' was Jesus Christ. It seems that the salvation Ignatius called for dealt not only with human sin, but also with evil and its deceptive influence upon humanity.
CHAPTER 4

HUMANITY’S PREDICAMENT WITH DEATH & THE WRATH OF GOD

4.6 Introduction

Thus far Ignatius’ call for salvation seems to have been based on humanity’s predicament with sin and with the forces of evil that worked to counter human salvation. The investigation now turns to explore a third related reason in the form of humanity’s predicament with death and the wrath of God. Corwin concluded that no such anthropological quandary is evidenced in the letters. Elaborating on the “curious incompleteness of Ignatius’ thought about redemption,” she commented that

the notion of reconciliation with God is absent...Christ brought life, he died as sacrifice, his suffering was an expression of love. But he did not atone to God on behalf of sinning man. Paul on the contrary sums up the whole work of Christ as reconciliation—“God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself”—and with that insight he achieves a depth that Ignatius misses....This shift in emphasis is a subtle one not to be explained as a result of any single factor. Most obviously it follows from Ignatius’ anthropology, which included no very lively belief in the sinfulness of
man, and hence his estrangement from God. The separateness and self-will that mark men are rather their misfortune than an affront to God.¹

If Corwin is correct to suggest that humanity's predicament with sin is absent in the letters, then it would make sense for her to conclude that a predicament with God necessitating reconciliation would also be absent. However, contra Corwin, the examination has thus far shown that the letters reveal in Ignatius a deep concern for human sin and for how it adversely affected the early church. While Corwin is certainly correct that the letters reveal no fully-developed doctrine of reconciliation, several verses contradict her conclusion. The letters suggest that behind humanity's predicament with sin and evil lurked a subsequent problem concerning a broken relationship with God that would ultimately result in spiritual death and the experience of God's wrath. The following sections explore three related themes that briefly describe humanity as suffering from a ruptured relationship with God that resulted in death:

(1) Humanity's spiritual death (Elect. 16.1–17.2; 19.3; 20.2; Magn. 5.1–2; 9.1–2; Trall. 2.1; Phld. 6.1; Smyrn. 5.2; 7.1).

(2) Expected judgment and wrath from God (Elect. 11.1; 16.2; Smyrn. 6.1).

(3) The need for divine forgiveness (Phld. 8.1).

Ultimately, what must be decided is whether or not the idea of spiritual death, described specifically as judgment in the form of God's wrath, contributed to Ignatius' call for salvation.

¹ Corwin, St. Ignatius, 172–3.
4.1 Humanity’s Death

In a wide variety of contexts, Ignatius frequently raised the topic of humanity’s problem with death. Some have concluded that he was abnormally preoccupied, or perhaps even obsessed, with his own physical death in the Roman arena.² And yet, apart from the letter to the Romans, the testimony of the remaining letters reveals that Ignatius was more focused on the spiritual-eternal death of others than with his own physical death.³ Nowhere does he elaborate concerning when or how death became such a problem for humanity. It may be that much of what was not said on the matter was simply assumed to have been part of his original Christian audience’s conceptual framework. After exploring Ignatius’ general conception of death, this section will refocus on Ignatius’ conception of death as it relates to the notion of salvation by answering two related questions: (1) Do the letters portray death as a

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² For example, B. H. Streeter suggested that everything Ignatius said must be interpreted in light of his "neurotic temper" – *Primitive Church*, 163. Streeter further described Ignatius as “exaggerated”, "over-enthusiastic", "high-minded", hypersensitive, "of abnormal psychology", full of “pride” and therefore a man with a “will to power” resulting from “a subconscious sense of inferiority due to some humiliating experience or experiences in early life” ibid., 164–8. See also W. H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (James Clarke & Co., 2008; repr., 1965), 197. Such analyses are far too speculative to be convincing. Morris rightly identified a problem with such pessimistic conclusions: “Twentieth century scholars, with their penchant for psychologizing historical figures, have tended to criticize Ignatius’s desire for martyrdom as symptomatic of a borderline personality, but such a categorization can only be considered anachronistic—particularly when it fails to locate Ignatius’s understanding of martyrdom in the overall theology of his letters and the dynamic of an effective Christian apologetic in the post-apostolic period” – Morris, “Pure Wheat of God,” 25. For a thorough coverage of this topic, see Mellink, *Death as Eschaton*, 91–115.

³ Ignatius repeatedly refers to his own physical death in the Roman letter (*Rom.* 1.1, 2; 2.1, 2; 3.2, 4; 4.1–3; 5.2–3; 6.1–3; 7.2; 8.1, 3; 9.2), however, Ignatius rarely made reference to his expected death outside this letter. In contrast, he frequently referred to the physical and spiritual/eschatological death of others (*Eph.* 7.1–2; 11.1–2; 12.2; 16.1–17.2; 19.3; 20.2; *Magn.* 5.1–2; 9.1–2; *Trall.* 2.3; 6.2; 9.1–2; 11.1; *Phld.* 6.1; *Smyrn.* 3.2; 5.1–2; 7.1).
predicament requiring salvation and, if so, (2) did Ignatius understand spiritual death as a form of punishment and judgment from God?

4.1.1 Ignatian Death Categories

It will be helpful to first observe the range of meaning associated with the idea of ‘death’ in the letters. Despite the fact that Ignatius was not functioning as a systematic theologian, his death-related comments seem to loosely fit into a systematic framework that is conceptually divided into the following two general categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3– Primary Ignatian Death Categorizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eph. 12.2; Magn. 9.1; Trall. 2.1; 9.1; 9.2a; 10.1; Rom. 2.2; 3.2; 4.1–2; 5.2–3; 6.1; 7.2; Smyrn. 3.2; 4.2; Pol. 7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Physical Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eph. 16.2; 17.1–2; 19.3; 20.2; Magn. 5.1, 2; 9.1–2; Trall. 2.1; 6.2; 9.2b; 11.1; Rom. 6.2; Phld. 6.1; Smyrn. 3.2; 5.2; 7.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several conclusions can be drawn from this selection. First, the data shows that the references to death can be firmly divided into physical and non-physical categories. For example, in light of the Docetists’ denial of Christ’s physical sufferings, Ignatius’ exclamation in Trall. 10—‘Therefore I am dying without a purpose’—only makes sense as a reference to his own physical death. The same can be said for the remainder of the verses in the first section of Table 3. The second thing to note is that Ignatius frequently discussed the physical and non-physical aspect of death in the same immediate context. Perhaps one of the most fitting examples is Trall. 2.1 where Jesus Christ is identified as ‘the one who died (τῶν...ἀποθανόντα) on
our behalf, so that by believing in his death \( (τὸν \ δανεῖν \ αὐτοῦ) \) you might escape death \( (τὸ \ ἀποθάνειν \ ἐκφύγητε) \).’ In other words, the physical death of Christ was the avenue of escape for those seeking to escape their own spiritual/eternal (non-physical) death.

Since the vast majority of the verses could easily carry both meanings simultaneously, it becomes difficult to further refine Ignatius' non-physical death category into potential references to ‘spiritual death’ or ‘eternal death.’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4– Ignatian Non-Physical Death Categories</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Death</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eternal Death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual &amp; Eternal Death</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though the Table 4 divisions are by no means exhaustive or absolutely conclusive, nevertheless, they do suggest that Ignatius understood humanity to struggle with a form of spiritual death that seems unrelated to the presence or absence of physical life. The ‘Spiritual Death’ category in Table 4 therefore includes statements that emphasize humanity's spiritual deadness, despite the fact that they were physically alive at the time. In other instances, the context appears to signify one's eternal death which, for the purposes of this thesis, is defined as death in the form of an unending eschatological punishment.

Perhaps one of the best examples of spiritual death is found in *Phld.* 6.1 where Ignatius labelled anyone who spoke untruthfully about Jesus Christ as ‘monuments and tombs of the dead’ \( (στῆλαι...καὶ \ τάφοι \ νεκρῶν) \). Since grave markers indicated the presence of a dead body,
therefore in Ignatius' mind, false Christological views denoted the presence of those who were physically alive and yet spiritually dead. Similarly in Smyrn. 5.2, Ignatius, with seemingly intentional irony, described the Docetists as those failing to confess that Christ ‘wore flesh’ (σαρκοφόρον) while they themselves ‘were clothed in a corpse’ (νεκροφόρος). The point is clear. Ignatius believed that the Christologically-deficient doctrinal views of the Docetists (Smyrn. 5.2), as well as the proponents of Judaism (Phld. 6.1), were an indication of their lack of spiritual life and, hence, their spiritual deadness. According to Ignatius, those who were spiritually dead were then either unable or unwilling to believe what he viewed as the true incarnational revelation about Jesus Christ.⁴

4.1.2 Salvation from Death

The question now turns to examine whether or not Ignatius described death as a factor that underscored humanity’s need for salvation. Despite the fact that his references to death are not always easy to categorize, it is nevertheless evident that the incarnational narrative about Christ was denoted throughout as the solution for humanity’s predicament with death. Nearly half of the verses in Table 4 directly testify to Ignatius’ belief that (1) the work of Christ was intended to solve humanity’s predicament with death (Eph. 19.3; 20.2; Trall. 2.1; Smyrn. 3.2), and that (2) eternal death would be the result of rejecting Christ’s incarnational work (Magn. 5.1–2; 9.1–2).

⁴ Trall. 11.1 likewise indicates the danger of ingesting (believing) the false doctrines offered by the ‘wicked offshoots’ since that resulted in death.
One of most compelling pieces of evidence in support of this first point is Eph. 19–20. In the beginning of the section, Ignatius referred to the Christ event by mentioning the bookend events that summarized his incarnational work—‘And the virginity of Mary and her giving birth escaped the notice of the ruler of this age, likewise also the death of the Lord’ (19.1). As the text continues in 19.3, the outcomes resulting from Christ’s incarnation and death are described to include the destruction of magic, every shackle, evil ignorance, etc. However, in the latter half of the verse Ignatius employed a definitive causal statement that explicates one of the primary reasons for the incarnation: —‘because the dissolution of death was being undertaken’ (διὰ τὸ μελετάσθαι θανάτου κατάλυσιν). Thus, according to Ignatius, the incarnational work of Christ inaugurated the abolition of death itself. Additional evidence follows in Eph. 20.2 where Ignatius referred to ‘breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality (φάρμακον ἀθανασίας), the antidote we take in order not to die (μὴ ἀποθανεῖν) but to live forever in Jesus Christ.’ Decisions on interpreting this passage will be reserved for later in the thesis (§11.2); for now it is appropriate to note that, much like 19.3, the enfleshment of Jesus Christ is presented as the solution for humanity’s predicament with spiritual death.

Additional evidence derives from Trall. 2.1 where Jesus Christ was deemed ‘the one who died on our behalf’ (τὸν δὲ ἡμᾶς ἀποθανόντα), ‘so that by believing in his death’ (ἵνα

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5 There are significant textual problems with this portion of the text that require analysis beyond the scope of this thesis. Despite this, all textual options in the first half of Eph. 19.3 would still lead to the conclusion that Ignatius was referring to Christ’s gospel as a defeat of magic, evil, etc. Additionally, the last half of the verse that speaks about the defeat of death is devoid of textual problems and is even more certain.

6 Thus Grant acknowledge that the “essential purpose of the work or plan of God in Christ is set forth in the ‘mythical’ passage in Ephesians 19” – *Ignatius of Antioch*, 10.
πιστεύσαντες εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ) ‘you might escape death’ (τὸ ἀποθανεῖν ἐκφύγητε).’ This verse is perhaps the clearest statement identifying belief in the death of Christ as the direct solution for humanity’s predicament with death. According to this verse, the physical death of Christ was the designated means for escaping the bonds of humanity’s spiritual/eternal death. The same solution is later repeated in Trall. 9.2; however, this time the verse includes an explanation for what spiritual death entailed: ‘[Christ’s] Father will likewise also raise up in Christ Jesus us who believe in him. Apart from him we do not have true life.’ Having already provided a somewhat elaborate Christological creedal confession in Trall. 9.1, the solution for overcoming one’s spiritual death was to ‘believe in’ Christ’s sacrificial death.7

As this analysis has briefly shown, the solution for humanity’s death is sometimes prescribed as belief in Christ’s death; and yet in a few passages belief in the entire incarnational event is presented. This difference in emphasis will be explored more deeply in §9.3. For now, what seems evident is that the entire Christ event was the designated solution for humanity’s problem with spiritual/eternal death. Negatively stated, those who rejected such ‘truths’ about Christ were spiritually dead and would therefore, as the following section will demonstrate, ultimately face eternal death. If belief in the incarnate Christ provided the solution for humanity’s death, one would expect Ignatius to proclaim that those who rejected such a claim remained in a state of spiritual death that would ultimately culminate in their eternal death. This concept will now be explored.

7 For more detail on the object of Ignatian faith, to include a discussion of his creedal statements, see §9.3.
4.2 Expected Judgment & the Wrath of God

Two questions were presented at the outset of this section, the first dealing with whether the letters portrayed death as a predicament requiring salvation. Based on the evidence presented, it was concluded that Ignatius did in fact speak of humanity’s deliverance from spiritual-eternal death through belief in the incarnational narrative.\(^8\) The investigation now shifts to address the question of whether Ignatius described this predicament with death as a form of judgment or punishment from God. The following will show that the letters contain a few explicit statements that seem to link the concept of eternal death with the judgment and wrath of God.

A few verses testify to Ignatius’ belief that at least a segment of humanity faced a divine reckoning in the after-life. Thus Ignatius warned that those who attempted to undermine the visible bishop, but who in reality vainly sought to deceive the unseen bishop (i.e., God – *Magn. 3.1–2*), would ultimately be required to give ‘an account’ (\(\lambda \dot{o}g\dot{o}z\))\(^9\) ‘before God’ (\(\pi\rho\dot{o}z \theta\epsilon\omicron\omicron\)) and not ‘before any fleshly authority’ (\(\pi\rho\dot{o}z \sigma\acute{a}r\rho\acute{a}k\alpha\)). Subsequently, Ignatius then appears in 5.1 to refer to the eschatological consequences facing all humanity when he

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\(^8\) The term “incarnational narrative” is borrowed from Michael Svigel who used the term to counter the suggestion that Christianity lacked a distinctive sense of catholic identity until the late second century. Instead, Svigel views Ignatius as evidence that a mature and widely-accepted Christological belief system, focusing on aspects of Christ’s incarnation, served as the center of the early-Christian identity. See Svigel, *Center and the Source*, 1–174; James B. Leavenworth, review of *The Center and the Source: Second Century Incarnational Christology and Early Catholic Christianity*, by Michael J. Svigel, *JTS* 70 (2019): 846–9.

\(^9\) The use of \(\lambda \dot{o}g\dot{o}z\) to indicate one’s ‘reckoning’, ‘plea’, or ‘account’ is widely recognized (BDAG, 600–1, defn. 2a; LSJ, 1057, defn. III.1. This sense is also employed in the NT (Matt 12:36; Luke 16:12; Acts 19:40; Rom 14:12; Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 4:5).
described the individual's eternal destiny utilizing terminology reminiscent to other early-Christian 'two way' sayings:  

all matters have an end, and two things are simultaneously lying before us, one death (Θάνατος) and the other life (ζωή), and each person is about to go away to his own place.

It seems likely then that Ignatius understood those who opposed God to ultimately face a form of eschatological death that would require them to give an accounting (λόγος) of their actions before God once physical life had ended.

Similarly for the Smyrnaeans, while referring to docetic proponents who denied the reality of Christ’s incarnation and resurrection (5.1–3), Ignatius warned about the consequences of their deception:

Let no one be deceived. Even the heavenly beings and the glory of the angels, and the visible and even the invisible rulers, if they do not believe in the blood of Christ, for those ones there is judgment (κρίσις). (Smyrn. 6.1)

The implication is that such judgment involved death (cf. 7.1– ‘they will perish in their contentiousness’). The fact that this post-death judgment could befall ‘even the heavenly beings and the glory of the angels’ also indicates that God was likely in view as the one to execute divine justice. In other words, the opponents’ current state of spiritual death, if not reversed through belief in the true incarnation and resurrection of Christ, would result in their judgment in the form of a permanent, eschatological death.

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10 For near contemporary accounts of the two-way doctrine see Did. 1.1–6.2 and Barn. 18.1–20.2.
The Ephesian letter likewise links the concept of death with that of God’s pending judgment in two primary passages (11.1; 16.1–2). In contrast with the previously-discussed passages, the threat of judgment in Eph. 10.1–11.1 does not appear to have been intended solely for Ignatius’ opponents. Following a lengthy section warning about the influence of the false teachers (Eph. 6.2–10.2), Ignatius widened the focus in 10.1 by exhorting the Ephesians to ‘pray continually on behalf of the rest of humanity (ὑπὲρ τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων), for there is in them the hope of repentance that they may reach God.’ Regarding the identity of τῶν ἄλλων...ἀνθρώπων, the phrase likely referred to non-Christians.“ Ignatius appears therein to be distinguishing between faithful Christians (cf. 9.2) and the rest of humanity (10.1). After describing how Christians should act in the presence of the non-Christians (10.1–3), Ignatius made the following curious statement regarding God’s wrath in 11.1:

[These are] the last times. For the remainder [of time] let us be ashamed, let us be afraid of the forbearance of God, so that it will not turn into judgment for us. For let us either fear the coming wrath (τὴν µέλλουσαν ὀργὴν)12 or let us love the grace that has already come, one of the two; only let us be found in Christ Jesus unto true life.

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“Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 2, 57; Grant, Ignatius of Antioch, 41; Corwin, St. Ignatius, 223 n. 4, 228; Isacson, To Each Their Own Letter, 56; Paulsen, Die Apostolischen Väter II, 36. Schoedel understood the phrase to include ‘pagans’ but not the false teachers—“Ignatius now speaks of all other people. The change in attitude is remarkable. False teachers are all but incurable (7.1), but there is still hope of repentance for pagans (10.1)”—Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 69. Contrary to what Schoedel suggested, Ignatius indicated in Eph. 7.2 and Smyrn. 4.1 that false teachers could be cured (i.e., saved). It is possible that when Ignatius referred to the ‘rest of humanity’ in Eph. 10.1, he simply differentiated between faithful Christians and everyone else, to include both unbelievers and professing Christians who he deemed as counterfeits. The idea that Ignatius split humanity into three groupings (i.e., true believers, non-believers/pagans, and false believers) will be developed in the Chapter 5.

12 Even though the verbiage is close to Matthew and Luke (cf. Ign. Eph. 11.3—τὴν µέλλουσαν ὀργὴν φοβηθῶµεν; Matt 3:7/Luke 3:7—φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς µελλούσης ὀργῆς—‘to flee from the coming wrath’) the verbal parallels are not close enough to conclude with certainty that Ignatius was textually dependent on either
Scholars are divided on how to interpret this passage. Thus, according to Corwin’s estimation, Ignatius was undecided about whether judgment would be experienced (1) before death when a person “turns away” from the “merciful act of sending the Gift which is Christ”, or (2) after death in an eschatological punishment.\(^\text{13}\) Disagreeing with Corwin, Vall suggested that Ignatius is not offering his readers two different doctrines or concepts of eschatology and leaving it up to them to choose the one they prefer....Rather, he is offering them two different ways to motivate themselves to live out an authentic Christian life.\(^\text{14}\)

It seems possible to lean towards the eschatological focus of the text and interpret Ignatius’ statement as a description of two different, and yet correct, Christian viewpoints based most likely on differing stages of spiritual maturity. Representing this view, Vall stated, “Fear of judgment is the primary motivation of novices in the faith, whereas the proficient are motivated more and more by love of God, until finally ‘perfect love casts out fear’ (1 Jn 4:18).”\(^\text{15}\)

It also seems possible that fear and love represented two emotional responses simultaneously occurring at conversion. In other words, though one’s predicament with sin and evil (§2–3) initially led to ‘fear’ of God’s pending judgment, the realization that Christ’s incarnational work (i.e., ‘the grace that has already come’) resolved such issues then led to a response of

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\(^{15}\) Vall, *Learning Christ*, 365; Torrance concluded similarly regarding Eph. 11.1: “It almost amounts to a distinction between a religion of fear for the weak, and a religion of love for the strong.” Torrance, *Doctrine of Grace*, 75.
'love.' Either way, whether one's conversion experience emphasized one response more than the other, Ignatius' point seems evident: as long as a person was found in Christ, true life was the result and, consequently, death was no longer a factor.

As chapter five will demonstrate, Ignatius' use of the first person plural pronoun to warn the Ephesians to fear the coming wrath need not be an indication that he expected the faithful Ephesians to one day face God's judgment. Instead, §5.3 will argue that such warnings, especially those found in the Ephesian letter, were aimed at a segment of the church that had professed faith in Christ without becoming genuine Christians in his estimation. Thus far, the Ephesians had prevented such weeds from being sown (σπείραι) among them (Eph. 9.1). It seems that, regardless of the Lord's extended patience (11.1a), the chances increased that the devil would insert ‘weeds' into the assembly. Hence the need for the warning to fear in 11.1.

The link between death and judgment becomes most explicit later in Eph. 16.1–2. Despite scholarship’s lack of consensus regarding the specific referent behind Ignatius' use of οἰκοφθόροι in the Eph. 16.1 analogy, the conclusion is nevertheless clear in 16.2. If there was sufficient cause to execute those who corrupted temporal households or temples,

how much more (πόσῳ μᾶλλον) if someone by evil teaching corrupts the faith of God on behalf of which Christ was crucified (πίστιν θεοῦ ἐν κακῇ διδασκαλίᾳ φθείρῃ, ὑπὲρ ἤς

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Schoedel believed that οἰκοφθόροι referred to ‘those who destroy households by committing adultery’ (Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 79). In contrast, Bauer felt that the term described those who defiled a temple, especially given the context of Eph. 15 (see Bauer, Die Briefe des Ignatius, 40; BDAG, 700 s. v. οἰκοφθόρος). Either interpretation fits the analogy used here given that the church was often described utilizing both household and temple analogies.
Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἐσταυρώθη. Such a person, turning out to be unclean, will depart into unquenchable fire (εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον), in the same way also the one hearing him.\(^\text{17}\)

Even though an intertextual link with the canonical gospels cannot be definitively established, the eschatological image picturing the unrighteous being excluded from the kingdom of God and departing into eternal or everlasting fire, is nevertheless reminiscent of numerous passages in the NT and other early-Christian texts.\(^\text{18}\) Much like the NT, Ignatius proclaimed a death sentence upon those who corrupted faith in Christ. The key point to note is that the sentence of death—i.e., being excluded from the kingdom of God (16.1) and being thrown into ‘inextinguishable fire’ (17.2)—is best explained as a form of punishment from God. While it is possible to understand Ignatius’ ‘house corrupters’ to be excluding themselves from the kingdom, it is hard to envision their potential death in ‘the unquenchable fire’ (τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον) as anything other than a form of punishment from God, especially given that Ignatius had just warned about the need to fear the wrath to come (11.1). Similar expressions that utilize either the adjectival (ἄσβεστος) or the negated verbal form (οὐ + σβέννυμι) to describe someone departing into ‘unquenchable fire’ (τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον) predate Ignatius

\(^{17}\) The genitive in πίστιν θεοῦ is likely either objective (‘faith in God’) or possessive (‘God’s faithful ones’).

\(^{18}\) For example, see the following passages where the context involves a forfeiture of the Kingdom of God/Heaven along with the notion of the wrath of God and death: Matt 8:1–2; 13:24–30; 13:36–43; 47–50; 18:3–9; 21:42–4; 22:2, 11–4; Mark 9:42–9; Luke 13:23–30; 19:31–27; Eph 5:5–10. For the Apostolic Fathers, such language can be found in several passages: 2 Clem. 7.6 used a similar analogy as Ign. Eph 16.1–2 when it suggested that those who cheated in the ‘heavenly contest’ would be punished much more severely than those who cheated in an ‘earthly contest’, i.e., where τὸ πῦρ αὐτῶν οὐ σβεσθήσεται; see also 2 Clem. 16.3; 17.5–7; Mart. Pol. 2.3; 11.2; Herm. Vis. 3.2.9 [10.9] c.f. 3.7.2 [15.2]; Herm. Sim. 4.4 [53.4]; Diogn. 10.7–8.
and were often used in contexts involving eternal judgment. The idea of being thrown into the ‘inextinguishable fire’, especially when combined with the notion of being ‘robbed of life’ (17.1) and of ‘foolishly perishing’ (17.2), decisively indicates that Ignatius believed that a subset of humanity would ultimately experience the wrath of God.

In summary, much like the concept of sin in the letters, scholars are correct to conclude that there is not much evidence to work with regarding Ignatius' understanding of God's divine judgment upon humanity. Despite this, at least two passages (Eph. 11.1; Smyrn. 6.1), testify to Ignatius' belief that unredeemed humanity would face God's wrath post-death and that the Christ event was the means to avert such judgment. Additionally, since Ignatius apparently viewed the false teachers as pseudo-Christians (§5.3), the verses that deal specifically with their judgment (Eph. 16.1–2; Phld. 3.3; cf. Eph. 5.3) add additional evidence regarding Ignatius' understanding of the identity of those who should expect divine wrath.

4.3 The Need for Divine Forgiveness

If Ignatius understood humanity's related predicaments with sin and evil to warrant God's punishment in the form of an eternal death, then it would make sense for him to indicate humanity's need for forgiveness and reconciliation at some point in the letters. Unfortunately,

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9 Ignatius was not the first to speak of 'inextinguishable fire' in an eschatological context. The same or similar constructions are found in the synoptic Gospels where the chaff is burnt (πυρί ἄσβεστον—Matt 3:12; Luke 3:17) and where sin caused one to be cast into eternal fire (εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον—Mark 9:43; τὸ πῦρ ὁ ἄσβεστον—Mark 9:48). The expression is also used within the context of eternal judgment in 2 Clem. 7.6; 17.5, 7. Isaiah 66:24 LXX also contains the same expression (τὸ πῦρ κύτων ὁ ἄσβεστον). Ignatius most likely relied on his memory of either oral tradition or possibly written gospel sources.
scholarly treatments dealing with Ignatius’ understanding of divine forgiveness have essentially followed the same line of reasoning exhibited when discussing his views of human sinfulness. In other words, the fact that Ignatius rarely elaborated on the subject has led some to the conclusion that he was unconcerned with the need for divine forgiveness. For example, Schoedel commented that Ignatius “interprets redemption primarily in terms of victory over death….There is little about sin and forgiveness in Ignatius.”

While discussing the relationship between the death of Christ and ecclesial unity, Torrance went further:

It might be argued that this represents the death of Christ as bringing about a reconciliation between God and man. No doubt this is what Ignatius intends, but it is a reconciliation of a different sort from what we find in the New Testament. It is not reconciliation as forgiveness, but reconciliation as attaining to God and becoming like Him....the particular way in which the death of Christ is grasped in these epistles puts Ignatius more or less in the same category as the other Apostolic Fathers; in a failure to realise that in relation to sin and guilt the death of Christ is a finished work, on the ground of which by a judgment of grace we pass from death to life.

Therefore in Torrance’s estimation, if the concept of sin was absent in Ignatius’ writings, then it follows that there would be no need for divine forgiveness. The problem with this analysis, as already demonstrated, is that Torrance’s conclusion regarding Ignatius’ apathy with respect to sin is inaccurate. In the same way that Ignatius could speak about sin without utilizing the ἁμαρτωλός-word grouping (§2.1–2.2), he seems to have at least been able to briefly mention the notion of divine forgiveness, even though he clearly did not satisfy the semantic expectations of Torrance. While it is true that Ignatius used ἀφίέναι only once to refer to the idea of

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forgiveness (Phld. 8.1),²² there are echoes of this concept found throughout the letters. For example, in Eph. 10.1–3 Ignatius called Christians to respond to non-Christian hostility in imitation of Christ’s divine ἐπιείκεια (‘forebearance’ or ‘clemency’).²³ This passage seems to convey the need for divine forgiveness at least in a derivative sense: as Christ forgave, so also should his followers. From a purely human standpoint, forgiveness is probably implied in Magn. 6.2 where the Magnesians were urged to ‘love one another always’ but to do so not ‘just in human terms’ (κατὰ σάρκα) but ‘in/by Jesus Christ’ (ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ). The same is found in Trall. 8.2 where the Trallians were exhorted to not ‘hold something against’ their neighbors. Human forgiveness, patterned after divine forgiveness, seems to be in the background of each text.

As previously suggested, the fact that an ancient writer did not use an expected semantic word choice, or that the writer did not use the word with the frequency exhibited by other contemporary authors, does not necessarily translate into either ignorance or indifference. Ignatius’ use of ἀφίημι in Phld. 8.1 appears to be the sole instance where the verb was used in the context of divine forgiveness: ‘The Lord is forgiving (ἀφίει) to all those who repent, if they repent with respect to the unity of God and the bishop’s council.’ Without any significant interaction with the verse, Torrance simply dismissed the idea that divine forgiveness or reconciliation between God was related to the death of Christ:

²² Ignatius used ἀφίημι twice in the letter to the Romans (4.1; 6.2) with the semantic sense of ‘to allow’ or ‘to permit’ someone to do something (BDAG, 157; LSJ, 290).

²³ The definition put forward by BDAG suggests that forgiveness was involved: “the quality of making allowances despite facts that might suggest reason for a different reaction, clemency, gentleness, graciousness, courtesy, indulgence, tolerance (BDAG, 371). See also BrillDAG, 764; LSJ, 632.
The death of Christ works counter to the death of men incurred by evil and error....it must be noted that apparently the death of Christ is not brought into relation with forgiveness. Forgiveness he does speak of but probably not on the ground of Christ's death.\footnote{Torrance, \textit{Doctrine of Grace}, 62, 63, 66.}

This conclusion, however, does not match a plain and contextual reading of Phld. 8.1. Ignatius wrote to churches comprised of professing Christians. The primary sin Ignatius repeatedly decried focused on the spread of disunity in the form of aberrant Christological doctrines within the churches (\textit{Eph.} 5.1–3; 4.1; \textit{Magn.} 6.1–8.1; 13.2; 15; \textit{Trall.} 10–11.2; 13.2; \textit{Phld.} 2.1–4.1; 6.2; 7.1–8.2; \textit{Smyrn.} 8.1–2; \textit{Pol.} 1.2). The group that needed to repent were those who created divisions by introducing such aberrant viewpoints. It will be argued later in the thesis that Ignatius most likely viewed such dissenters as false Christians (§5.3). For now, what is clear is that Ignatius indicated that sinful disunity could be reversed. In other words, based on Phld. 8.1, Ignatius evidently believed that God would forgive the dissenters if they repented of their disunifying efforts and false doctrinal beliefs.

The context of 8.2 strongly suggests that the action of returning to ‘the unity of God’ in 8.1 would be achieved if the dissenters adopted what he considered to be the true Gospel message. Torrance's suggestion that forgiveness in this passage is not granted on the ground of Christ's death is speculative and contradicts the immediate context. For example, the last part of the same sentence (8.1c) actually implies the opposite: ‘I believe in the grace of Jesus Christ, who will free you from every bond (δεσµόν).’ It seems likely that Ignatius intended to warn the Philadelphian opponents who did not agree with the gospel message that their sin of...
divisiveness (cf. 7.2; 8.2) could be forgiven by God. Even though Ignatius does not mention whether or not other specific sins could be forgiven, the fact that the primary sin addressed in the letters was deemed to be forgivable by God strongly suggests that other sins would most likely be viewed in the same light. Mackinnon came to the same conclusion when discussing Phld. 8.1: “If he directs his remarks on this subject specially to the heretics, he doubtless regarded repentance and forgiveness as an essential of the Gospel for others besides his theological opponents.”

4.4 Summary

To summarize, Ignatius seems to have pictured death with at least three distinct, and yet sometimes overlapping, categories. Despite the common perception amongst scholars that Ignatius was preoccupied with his pending physical death, a close reading of the letters demonstrates that Ignatius was more focused on the spiritual-eternal form of death that plagued humanity. Even though they were physically alive, Ignatius considered his docetic (Phld. 6.1) and judaizing (Smyrn. 5.2) opponents to be spiritually dead and awaiting an eternal death. At other times, the emphasis was on a post-physical, perhaps eschatological, death that, on at least a few occasions, is attributed to God’s pending judgment and wrath (Eph. 11.1; 16.1–2; Magn. 5.1; Smyrn. 6.1 cf. 7.1). In other words, if the opponents’ Christological beliefs

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were not rectified, their current spiritual death would extend beyond physical death into an endless death in the form of a divine, eternal punishment. In conclusion, the letters portray death as a predicament necessitating salvation. In a few select passages, Ignatius clearly referred to those who rejected the incarnational Gospel narrative as in need of salvation lest they ultimately experience God’s coming wrath.
CHAPTER 5

IGNATIAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL CATEGORIES

5.0 Introduction

Having established humanity’s underlying problems with sin, evil, and therefore with spiritual death and the expectation of an after-life encounter with God’s wrath, the focus of the investigation switches now to a different aspect of Ignatius’ anthropology that could potentially affect how his soteriological beliefs are subsequently interpreted. Ignatius was particularly descriptive in how he segmented humanity. For example, the letters occasionally sift humanity into a Jew–Gentile dichotomy (Smyrn. 1.2– εἴτε ἐν Ἰουδαίοις εἴτε ἐν ἔθνεσιν; Phld. 6.1– ‘circumcised’ and ‘uncircumcised’ (παρὰ ἀνδρὸς περιτομήν...ἡ παρὰ ἀκροβύστου). The text also differentiates at times between ‘Jews’ and ‘Christians’ (‘we’ versus Ἰουδαϊσμός in Magn. 8.2; Χριστιανισμός versus Ἰουδαϊσμός in Magn. 10.3 and Phld. 6.1).

Despite these distinctions, the primary trait used by Ignatius to differentiate between people groups focused more on their understanding of, and response to, certain aspects of the
incarnational narrative of Jesus Christ. Thus, in a few verses, Ignatius appears to reference a class of people who were not Christian, and who apparently had never made such a claim. At other times, he described a portion of humanity he deemed to be non-Christian, even though they themselves may have identified as such, or possibly had previously done so. A failure to recognize the identity of the group(s) towards whom Ignatius directed his warnings and exhortations could potentially result in a mischaracterization of his soteriology views. For this reason, the goal of this chapter will be to explore three potentially significant anthropological categories found in the letters. Drawing these observations together, it will be shown that Ignatius segmented all of humanity into one of the following three categories: (1) non-Christians; (2) Christians; and (3) pseudo-Christians. The chapter will conclude with an example of how a misidentification of the object(s) of Ignatius’ warnings could lead to erroneous conclusions regarding his soteriological views.

5.1 Non-Christians

With characteristic style, Ignatius utilized a wide range of descriptors to identify a subgroup of humanity who were not Christian. As we will see, in many cases his ambiguous language precludes making a clear determination whether those he described considered themselves to be Christians, or whether they had ever claimed the title. The following are the clearest

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1 This concept will be explored in detail in §9.3.
examples where he described those who were not Christian and, most likely, had never made such an assertion themselves.

In the first instance (Trall. 3.2) a group of non-Christians is mentioned without any explanation other than that they were ‘the godless’ (τοὺς ἄθεους). From a lexical standpoint, ἄθεος denoted someone who was “without a relationship to God” or who “disdains God or the gods and their laws.” Interestingly, Kleinknecht noted that the term in antiquity was one of the “favorite weapons in the conflict between different faiths” and that “Αἶρε τοὺς ἄθεους was the anti-Christian battle-cry of the heathen mob.” The Martyrdom of Polycarp thus employed the term in this manner twice, once by the Roman crowd and proconsul to denounce the Christians (Mart. Pol. 3.2; 9.2), and a second time by Polycarp to condemn the mob (Mart. Pol. 9.2). Justin Martyr and Athenagoras similarly addressed the issue of whether the term could rightly be applied to Christians in 1 Apol. 5–6; 13 and Leg. 4 respectively. Hence, Ignatius seems to have used the term in the same manner to describe the pagans in the polytheistic community of Tralles as those who lacked a relationship with the one true God.

Ignatius also utilized a variety of additional descriptors to reference those outside the bounds of professing Christianity. For example, after exhorting his readers in Magn. 10.1 to ‘live in accordance with Christianity’ (κατὰ Χριστιανισμόν), he concluded that ‘whoever is addressed with a name other than this does not belong to God’ (Magn. 10.1). While this is

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2 BDAG, 24. This term is used once in the NT to describe the Gentiles prior to their conversion as being ‘without God’ (Eph. 2:12).

3 TDNT 3:121.

4 So also Paul in Eph 2:11 ‘remember that you were... without God (ἄθεοι) in the world.’
almost certainly a polemical remark directed against Judaism, Ignatius would likely include therein any group that did not refer to itself as ‘Christian.’ Similarly, after mentioning the false teachers who attempted to spread ‘evil doctrine’ amongst the Ephesians, who had thus far faithfully refused to receive such false doctrine (Eph. 9.1–2), Ignatius then identified a distinct group of non-Christians: ‘But pray unceasingly on behalf of the rest of humanity (τῶν ἄλλων δὲ ἀνθρώπων) for there is in them the hope of repentance that they may reach God’ (10.1). The Trallians were likewise warned in 8.2 not to allow God to be blasphemed in front of ‘the pagans’ (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν).

The previously-mentioned verses contain the clearest descriptions of the segment of humanity that had most likely never claimed to be Christian. However, even though Ignatius seems to have non-Christians in view, the ambiguous language of multiple passages makes it less clear whether or not those he critiqued considered themselves Christians. The possibility of the existence of this pseudo-Christian group will be explored in detail in §5.3; for now it should be noted that the following descriptors that are attached to this ambiguous group strongly suggest that Ignatius did not view them as Christians, at least when he wrote his letters.

Ignatius’ conception of what constituted essential Christian beliefs will be explored further in Part II. The important thing to note at present is that one of his favorite ways of describing non-Christians was to refer to them as ‘unbelievers’ (Eph. 8.2– ἡ ἀπιστία; 18.1– τοῖς ἀπιστοῦσιν; Magn. 5.2– οἱ ἀπιστοὶ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου; Trall. 10 and Smyrn. 2.1– ἀπιστοὶ; 5.3– ἀπιστα). Whether one concludes that Ignatius countered one heresy, two heresies, or any
combination thereof, it seems evident that some aspect of his opponents' theological beliefs precluded him from regarding them as genuine Christians.⁵ In a similar vein, he also appears to focus on the non-Christian grouping when he described certain people who were ‘unclean’ (Trall. 7.2) or whose false beliefs caused them to appear as ‘rotten’ and to emit an ‘odor’ (Magn. 10.2). A non-Christian group is likely in view since he described them as not being in submission to Christian leadership and of operating outside the bounds of the established church (Eph. 5.2–3; Magn. 4; Trall. 6.1–7.2; Phld. 3–4; 7.1–8.1; Smyrn. 6.2–9.1). Lastly, Ignatius characterized this group as being dominated by the flesh (‘those who are carnal’ – οἱ σαρκικοί) and who therefore were unable to do spiritual things (Eph. 8.2).

5.2 Christians

While it is true that Ignatius spoke frequently about non-Christians, it should come as no surprise that his letters, written solely to Christian audiences, contain numerous references to those he regarded as Christians. Once again, the letters demonstrate that Ignatius used a wide variety of expressions to signify those he viewed as genuine Christians. In contrast with the non-Christians, labelled in Magn. 10.1 as those who were ‘called by another name than this’, it is not surprising that Ignatius used the appropriate term Χριστιανός in several places (Eph. 11.2;

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⁵ For more detail on the scholarly discussion surrounding the identity of Ignatius’ opponents, see Ch. 1 n. 3.
Magn. 4; Rom. 3.2; Pol. 7.3). Christians were also frequently labelled as Christ's 'students/disciple(s)' (Eph. 1.2; 3.1; Magn. 9.1, 2; 10.1; Trall. 5.2; Rom. 3.1; 4.2; 5.1, 3; Pol. 2.1; 7.1). On two occasions, familial language was employed to describe Christians as 'members of his Son' (μέλη δοντας του υιοι αυτου – Eph. 4.2), 'members of the his Father' (δοντας μελη αυτου [πατρος] – Trall. 11.2), and as 'fellow Christians' (αδελφοι – Eph. 16.1; Rom. 6.2; Phld. 3.3; 5.1; 11.2; Smyrn. 12.1; 13.1; Pol. 5.1).

In direct opposition to the non-Christians, whom he described as being 'unbelievers' (see §5.1), Ignatius contrastively portrayed Christians as 'believers' and 'the faithful' who adhered to the truths about Christ (η πιστις– Eph. 8.2; των...πιστων– Eph. 21.2; οι...πιστοι– Magn. 5.2; 10.3; Smyrn. 1.2). This group had made a definitive profession of faith in Jesus Christ (πιστιν επαγγελλονος– Eph. 14.2, cf. 14.1; τους πιστευοντας αυτω [in Christ]– Trall. 9.2) and had been 'fully convinced' of his incarnation and resurrection (Magn. 11.1; Phld. inscr; Smyrn. 1.1–2; cf. Magn. 8.2; cf. 1 Clem. 42.3). In contrast with those causing divisions in the church due to their erroneous Christological beliefs, Ignatius indicated that Christians were those 'who truly possess[ed] the word of Jesus' (Eph. 15.2) and who bore 'an uncritical Spirit, which is Jesus

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6 It is fitting that Ignatius, as bishop of Antioch, frequently used the term Χριστιανος to describe the followers of Christ, especially in light of Acts 11:26 – 'and so it was in Antioch that the disciples were first identified as Christians (Χριστιανος).'

7 I understand the modern convention of translating the Christian use of αδελφοι as 'brothers and sisters', however, in the Ignatian epistles the translation of 'fellow Christians' seems more accurate. See BDAG, 18 defn. 2a – "one who shares beliefs"; LSJ, 23 – "brother (as a fellow Christian)." Beutler noted that "the prevailing sense in Paul is that of fellow Christian" (EDNT 1:30). Others similarly show that, in "a more general sense, αδελφοι in the NT denotes fellow-Christians' or 'Christian brothers'" (TDNT 11:45). It should be noted as well that Ignatius distinguished between Christian 'brothers' and 'sisters' once in Pol. 5.2 where he exhorted Polycarp to instruct 'my sisters (τας αδελφας μου) to love the Lord and to be satisfied with their husbands' and for 'my brothers (τοις αδελφοις μου) to love their wives'.
Christ’ (*Magn. 15*). Additionally, he variously described them as ‘righteous’ (*Magn. 12*), ‘saints’/‘holy ones’ (*Phld. 5.2; Smyrn. 1.2*), and as ‘children of the light of truth’ (*Phld. 2.1*). Lastly, in contrast with the non-Christians who did not ‘belong to God’ (*Magn. 10.1*), Ignatius indicated that Christians did belong (*Eph. 8.1; Phld. 3.2; cf. Rom. 6.2*).

Thus, when referring to the Christian group, Ignatius appears confident that they were genuine and had been predominately true to the Christian faith. His words make it clear that he believed the majority of his addressees had not succumbed to the divisive efforts of those who attempted to pollute the churches with doctrines he viewed as inconsistent with the essential teachings of Christianity (see §9.3 – *Eph. 1.1; 4.1; 6.2; 8.1; 9.1–2; 11.2; Magn. 1.1; 3.1; 11.1*; 12.1; 14.1; *Trall. 1.1–2.2; 8.1; Rom. inscr; 2.1; 3.1; Phld. inscr; 2.2–3.1; 11.1; Smyrn. inscr; 1.1; 4.1; Pol. 1.1–2; 4.1; 7.3*).

### 5.3 Pseudo-Christians

A statement found in the middle of the Magnesian letter would seem at first glance to suggest that a Christian–non-Christian dichotomy adequately explained Ignatius’ segmentation of humanity:

> Therefore, since events have an end, and two things lie simultaneously before us, both death and life, and each person is about to go away to one’s own place, for just as there are two coins, the one of God and the other of the world, and each has its own impression pressed upon it, the unbelievers [have] the world’s but the believers in love [have] the impression of God the Father through Jesus Christ... (*Magn. 5.1–2*).
In other words, humanity's destiny, whether unto life or death, depended on whether one bore the image of the world or the image of God. Simply put, it seems that Ignatius was suggesting that either one was, or was not, a Christian. Nevertheless, several passages in the letters imply that this dual division was further refined to include a third categorization that included those he considered to be much more dangerous than the Roman guards who currently abused him.

Technically, as the analysis will show, this group could be considered a subset of the non-Christian grouping previously discussed in §5.1. However, they will be treated here separately since Ignatius seems to have singled them out as a distinct grouping and classification in their own right. The non-Christian grouping predominately dealt with those who had likely never claimed to be Christian. Despite Ignatius' description of them in non-Christian terms, the factor that stands out to make this third potential classification of humanity distinct is the language and context of several key passages suggesting that the opponents regarded themselves as Christians. If this is the case, Ignatius was alerting the early church about the presence of a group of pseudo-Christians who he believed were falsely disguising themselves as genuine. It is to this third category that the examination now turns.

5.3.1 Those Who Seem to be Trustworthy

Ignatius sought to make one thing abundantly clear to his predominately faithful audience. Just because a person claimed to be Christian did not automatically indicate the truth of the assertion. Therefore, in several places in the letters, Ignatius warned about those who
professed to be Christian, but whose appearance betrayed such a claim. The following verses contains the three most prominent warnings highlighting this danger (*Phld*. 2.2; *Trall*. 6.2; *Pol*. 3.1).

The first examination is based on Ignatius’ use of the adjective ἀξιόπιστος. The following lexical entries highlight the consistent semantic range of the word:

- (1) pert. to being deemed worthy of credence, *trustworthy*; or (2) pert. to having the appearance of being trustworthy, *betraying confidence, pretentious, specious*.  
- (1) *trustworthy*; (2) of evidence, *trustworthy*; or (3) in bad sense, *plausible*.  
- (A) *trustworthy*; or (B) *able to believe*.

The general sense of the word then refers to something or someone that gives the appearance of being trustworthy or believable, despite whether or not such confidence was warranted. Even though the word could be used positively to refer to people or things that were indeed trustworthy or believable, Ignatius used the adjective solely within a negative context to identify those whom he felt were garnering unwarranted trust.

For example, immediately after referring to the Philadelphians as ‘children of the light of truth’ (*Τέκνα…φωτὸς ἀληθείας*) and ‘sheep’ (*πρόβατα*) who should be following ‘the shepherd’ (*ὁ ποιµήν*– *Phld*. 2.1), Ignatius continued the shepherding metaphor by warning

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8 BDAG, 93.  
9 LSJ, 171.  
10 PGL, 167.  
11 Despite the textual variation here, the conclusion of this section will not be altered whether the original reading was ‘children of light of truth’ (G, L, g), ‘children of light and truth’ (A) or simply ‘children of truth’ (Lightfoot’s emendation).
about the presence of ‘seemingly trustworthy wolves’ (λύκοι ἀξιόπιστοι) in their midst (2.2). Translating the phrase as ‘pretentious wolves’ misses the impact of Ignatius’ choice of ἀξιόπιστος. Instead, translations such as ‘seemingly trustworthy wolves’ or ‘specious wolves’ better highlight the danger of being infiltrated by those whose faithful and trustworthy façade masked their true identity as wolves. By using ἀξιόπιστος to describe those he deemed to be ‘wolves,’ Ignatius emphasized that the situation was dangerous precisely because the wolves gave the false appearance of being trustworthy and faithful. Such a description leaves little doubt about Ignatius’ views regarding their true nature. Those who attempted to ‘capture God’s runners with wicked delight’ (2.2), who did not ‘belong to God’ (3.2), and who created divisions in the churches due to some sort of fundamental disagreement with ‘the passion’ narrative (3.3), were non-Christians in disguise. As Rius-Camps noted, the ‘wolves trying to pass as believers’ were ‘false missionaries.’

12 A similar warning and construction is found in the Epistle to Diognetus where the reader is warned to beware of the ‘empty and foolish words’ of ‘the seemingly trustworthy philosophers’ (τῶν ἀξιοπίστων φιλοσόφων) – Diogn. 8.2. Like Ignatius, the author indicated that trust in such philosophers was misplaced.

13 See BDAG, 93; Svigel, Center and the Source, 131. The word ‘pretentious’ seems overly interpretive since the word denotes someone attempting “to impress by affecting greater importance, talent, culture, etc., than is actually possessed” – New Oxford American Dictionary, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1384. The context of the passages in Ignatius indicates someone giving the false impression of being trustworthy.


16 Rius-Camps, The Four Authentic Letters of Ignatius, 141. Hatch likewise commented that the heretics “are also rated as ‘unbelievers’ because their faith is partial or defective.” – “The Idea of Faith in Christian Literature: From the Death of Saint Paul to the Close of the Second Century” (Université de Strasbourg, 1925), 80.
Ignatius again utilized ἄξιόπιστος to warn Polycarp about those whose actions betrayed their outwardly trustworthy appearance (Pol. 3.1). Thus Polycarp was encouraged to ‘stand firm’ against ‘those who seemed to be trustworthy’ (Οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄξιόπιστοι εἶναι) but who were ‘teaching divergent doctrines’ (ἐτεροδιδασκαλοῦντες). Even though Ignatius did not expound on the content of their erroneous teaching, nevertheless, the crucial point to note is that any perceived trustworthiness was apparently misplaced due to their divergence from what he considered to be the true Christian faith.  

Regarding the nature of his opponents in both passages (Phld. 2.2; Pol. 3.1), even though Ignatius does not seem to view them as Christians, the opponents apparently made such a claim. The Philadelphian warning would make little sense if the opponents themselves did not believe (or at least pretend) to be Christians. To conclude otherwise fails to explain why Ignatius referred to them as falsely giving the appearance of being trustworthy or why he felt the need to warn the Philadelphians that they were in danger of being deceived. Additionally, Ignatius’ depiction of them in the following verses as ‘evil plants not cultivated by Jesus Christ’ and, thus, ‘not the Father’s plants’ (Phld. 3.1, see §5.3.2), leaves little doubt that he viewed them as Christian in name only.

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17 Unlike the letters to Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, and Smyrna, the letter to Polycarp does not expound on any specific doctrinal errors. Since the Smyrnaean letter was clearly written to counter docetic doctrine, the use of the term ἑτεροδιδασκαλοῦντες in the letter to Polycarp could be seen to reference docetic views, however, there is no way to know with certainty what Ignatius was referring to with regard to the ‘other doctrines.’
In the final passage (Trall. 6.2), Ignatius utilized the similar, but prefixed, verbal form καταξιοπιστεύομαι which is defined as “imposing by profession of honesty”\(^\text{18}\) or to “claim belief for”\(^\text{19}\) something. The negative sense of the passage is plain. According to Ignatius, “Those who mingled Jesus Christ with themselves, while seeming to be worthy of trust (καταξιοπιστεύομαι)” were akin to someone who drugged the ignorant and thus brought death to anyone who willingly partook of their false teachings.\(^\text{20}\) Much like the previous two passages, these descriptions hardly seem to indicate wayward Christians. Instead, Ignatius once again chose a word that demonstrates his belief that his opponents, despite their claims, were not actual Christians.

5.3.2 Those Not Planted by God

In several other passages, Ignatius utilized a botanical metaphor to denote the pseudo-Christian grouping. For example, after warning the Philadelphians to flee from the ‘wolves’ (Phld. 2.2), he switched metaphors and provided a two-fold reason for avoiding such ‘evil

\(^{18}\) BDAG, 523.

\(^{19}\) LSJ, 903.

\(^{20}\) The known manuscripts mention Jesus Christ being ‘mingled’ with various things such as ‘themselves’ (S’, A, Arabic = οἱ ἑαυτοῖς), ‘the times’ (G = οἱ καιροί), or ‘poison’ (g). The Arabic version of the Middle Recension, reads “who mix up themselves...with Jesus Christ” (English translation of Ms. Sin. ar. 505, unpubl). Additionally, the later part of the verse containing the verb καταξιοπιστεύομαι also contains variants (S’, A, C, JnD Sacra Parallela Reperfulcaldina [PG 96:508c] = καταξιοπιστευόμενοι; G = καταξίαν πιστεύομενοι; L = missing). Additionally, the Syriac, Armenian and Coptic versions, along with a quotation of the verse in the writings of John of Damascus (or possibly an unknown writer a century earlier around 614–641 CE, see Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 1, 220) suggest that the 11th-century variant in G perhaps resulted from an accidental splitting of καταξιοπιστεύομαι into καταξίαν πιστεύομενοι. All available readings, however, would essentially produce the same sense and do not affect the discussion of the text at this point. For Ignatius, mingling Jesus Christ with anything produced death.
plants’ (τῶν κακῶν βοτανῶν): (1) they were neither planted by the Father (διὰ τὸ τὰς ἐναυτὸς φυτείαν πατρός) nor (2) ‘cultivated by Jesus Christ’ (οὐ γεωργεῖ Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς). The almost identical phrasing is also found in the Trallian letter where non-Christians are described as ‘unbelievers’ and ‘atheists’ (Trall. 10.1, see §5.1). Immediately following this description, Ignatius continued his characterization in Trall. 11.1 by warning the Trallians to ‘flee from wicked offshoots’ (τὰ κακὰς παραφυάδας) who were ‘not the Father’s plants’ (οὗτοι γὰρ οὐκ εἰσι φυτεία πατρός) since their ‘deadly fruit’ (καρπὸν θανατηφόρον) brought immediate death.

Ignatius’ choice of wording suggests that those who acted in this manner belonged to the pseudo-Christian category. The lexical meaning of the noun παραφυάς—something ‘growing off the side, offshoot, side growth’—certainly aligns with such an interpretation. Lexically, the noun could simply signify an expected and natural ‘bud’ sprouting from a plant. And yet the description of the offshoots in Trall. 11.1 seems to refer to non-Christians sprouting up alongside and amongst genuine Christians. Even though this grouping likely considered themselves Christian, Ignatius’ warning about their aberrant Christological doctrines indicates his disagreement, especially since he further explained that if they had been planted by God (i.e., if they were genuine Christians), they would ‘appear as branches of the cross, and their fruit would be imperishable’ (11.2).

Even though the Ignatian epistles used the term only once, the Shepherd of Hermas used παραφυάς positively eight times to refer to buds as an indication of spiritual life (Herm. Sim. 8.1.17 [67.17], 18 [67.18]; 8.2.1 [68.1], 2 [68.2]; 8.3.7 [69.7]; 8.4.6 [70.6]; 8.5.2 [71.2], 5 [71.5], 6 [71.6]). Hermas seems to have focused on the health of the stick which produced the buds instead of the growths themselves.
To conclude, Ignatius does not appear to be describing wayward Christians who simply needed to change their beliefs to a more acceptable form. Instead, the description of the antagonists as wicked offshoots who had not been planted or nourished by either the Father or Christ, and whose deadly fruit brought death to those who adopted their beliefs, indicates that he feared the early church was threatened by a subgroup of professing Christians who deceived others with a false sense of genuineness.

5.3.3 Those Who Fail the Tests of Genuineness

In the face of the pseudo-Christian group's false appearance of genuineness, Ignatius did not leave his audience without recourse. Several times in the letters, specific tests are presented so as to help uncover the true identity of those who falsely claimed to be Christian. Even though the following tests seem to flow naturally from the text, this does not mean that they are the only ones identified in the letters, or that they were separated in Ignatius' conception. Several passages identify a clear overlap between the various tests described in the following sections. For example, the fruit test found primarily in Eph. 14.2 could easily be understood to include the others as subsets. The following four tests are simply a way for the reader to conceptualize the various assessments mentioned in the letters that Ignatius utilized to aid in differentiating between those who were genuine and those who belonged to the pseudo category.
Unlike the letters to Philadelphia, Smyrna, and Polycarp, the Ephesian letter does not make use of ἀξιόπιστος, καταξιοπιστεύομαι, or any related cognate. Nevertheless, Ignatius expressed similar concerns in the letter that suggest the Ephesians faced a similar deception. For example, in Eph. 5.2 he warned about being misled by those who had apparently been acting in direct opposition to the established ecclesial authorities. Later in 7.1, he specifically identified a group that sounds remarkably like the ἀξιόπιστος faction: ‘some, with wicked deceit bear the name [Christian],’ but are doing things unworthy of God.’ As if that was not enough, Ignatius compounded the negative description by portraying them as ‘beasts’ (θηρία) and ‘rabid dogs’ (κύνες λυσσῶντες). As already noted in §2.2.3, the medical analogy concerning the ‘rabid dogs’ who could only be cured by the one physician Jesus Christ strongly indicates that the group lacked salvation in his eyes (Eph. 7.1–2).

Apparently, Ignatius did not want to leave the Ephesians without a means to identify such dissenters. In 14.1 he therefore presented what will be referred to as ‘the fruit test’:

No one professing faith is sinning, neither does the one who has acquired love hate. ‘The tree [is] made plain by its fruit.’ In the same way, those who profess to be Christ’s will be noticed by their practices. For the work [is] not a present promise, but if one is found at the end by the power of faith.

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23 It has been commonly recognized that the use of ‘the name’ (τὸ ὄνομα) in this passage refers to the name of Christ and simply means ‘Christian.’ Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 59; Rius-Camps, The Four Authentic Letters of Ignatius, 285—“Ignatius alludes to...[those] who deceitfully try to pass themselves off as Christians”; Paulsen, Studien, 98 n. 29—“In den Texten geht ὄνομα deutlich auf Namen als zusammenfassende Bezeichnung des Christentums.”; Grant, Ignatius of Antioch, 38.
Even though Ignatius’ specific source(s) for the phrase, ‘the tree [is] made plain by its fruit’ is debatable, the focus of the passage is plain. In the same way that fruit reveals the nature of the tree, so the works produced by those who claim to be Christian would likewise reveal their true nature. Thus any proclamation of faith in Christ should be validated through perseverance and through actions that matched such a claim. It seems that the opponents’ attempts to indoctrinate the Ephesians with what he considered to be false doctrine (9.1) were proof that their claims were false. In sum, for Ignatius, actions spoke louder than words.

— The Love Test —

Even though this second test seems to be a subset of the ‘fruit test’, its specific nature warrants a separate treatment. The notion of faith manifesting itself in love is a constant theme in the letters (see §11.1). Hence in Smyrn. 6.2, Ignatius indicates that the genuineness of one’s profession of faith could be validated through loving actions directed towards others. After warning the Smyrnaeans not to be misled by the false notion that position or place, presumably within the church, was the goal of the Christian life, in 6.1 he cautioned that they should not inflate their sense of importance and that ‘faith and love’ were the true priority.

The next verse provides the crucial test for how to differentiate between genuine and illegitimate faith:

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24 Scholars debate the potential source behind φανερὸν τὸ δένδρον ἀπὸ τοῦ καρποῦ αὐτοῦ (‘the tree is made plain by its fruit’). Some understand Ignatius to have been dependent on Matt 12:33 and/or Luke 6:44 (or possibly Matt 7:20). Others propose that he referred to Q. For a fuller treatment of the possibilities, see Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 181–2.
But notice how those who hold sectarian opinions (τοὺς ἑτεροδοξοῦντας) with respect to the grace of Jesus Christ that came to us, how opposed they are to the mind of God. There is no concern in them for love, none for widows, none for orphans, none for those oppressed, none for those who have been bound or the one released, none for those hungry or for those who thirst. *(Smyrn. 6.2)*

By subsequently indicating in 7.1 that such people were ‘perishing while being contentious’, and that it would be ‘better for them to love so that they might rise up’, Ignatius highlighted their lack of genuineness despite the fact that they seemed to have claimed some sort of Christian affiliation. Therefore the group’s heterodox beliefs, especially when paralleled by their notable lack of tangible love for others (especially those in need), was corroborating evidence to Ignatius that their ‘faith’ was invalid.

--- *The Unity Test* ---

Ignatius prescribed yet another potential method of identification. Scattered throughout the letters is the call for Christian unity based on correct doctrinal beliefs as well as ethical practice. Ignatius’ warning on this issue is plain. Those who failed to operate within the bounds of the established church, or who secretly worked to corrupt it from within, destroyed unity and thus signaled that they likely belonged to the pseudo-Christian category. Focusing on Ignatius’ emphasis on ὁµοοίᾳ (‘concord’), Lotz concluded that Ignatius taught that such unity in the churches “defined who belonged to God and who didn’t” and thus “validate[d] the believer’s union with God *(Ign. Eph. 4).*"^{25}

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A clear form of unity test seems to be consciously applied in several passages. The first instance is found in Magn. 4 where Ignatius introduced a specific example of those who were referred to as Christians, but who did not appear to actually be so in reality:

Therefore, it is fitting to not only be called Christian, but to be [Christian]. *Just like* (ὁσπερ) some people who on the one hand call [a man] bishop, but do everything apart from him. *(Magn. 4)*\textsuperscript{26}

The comparative conjunction ὡσπερ, functioning as a “marker of similarity between events and states”,\textsuperscript{27} thus serves here as the demarcation between the genuine and the pseudo. In other words, the description of those who consistently acted in opposition to the established church demonstrated by their actions the falsity of their claim to be Christian. Explaining further in Magn. 4, Ignatius described the dissenting element as lacking ‘a good conscience’ (οὐκ εὐσυνείδητοί) and not ‘gathering validly according to the commandment.’ As previously suggested, the absence of a clean conscience implies that the sectarians’ predicament with sin had yet to be remedied (see §2.2.2). A near identical statement is made in Trall. 7.2 where the ‘unclean conscience’ of the dissenters was evidenced by a lack of unity with, and direct opposition to, the ‘bishop…presbyters and deacons.’ In these instances, Ignatius concluded that those who claimed to follow the bishop, but who acted independently of such authority,

\textsuperscript{26} A similar statement is found in Rom. 3.2 where Ignatius seems to apply the same test to himself: ‘Only pray for strength for me, both inward and also outward, that I not only speak [about being martyred] but I also desire [it], so that I might not just be called a Christian, but also that I be found [to be a Christian].’ This does not necessarily indicate that Ignatius was afraid he would be uncovered as a pseudo-Christian if he recanted (although that is a possible interpretation, see §10.2.3). Instead, the context of the passage may indicate his desire that he would be revealed to others as a faithful Christian by going through with the execution and not recanting.

\textsuperscript{27} BDAG, 1106–7; BrillDAG, 2428; LSJ, 2340.
had not been cleansed (most likely referring to their sins) and were Christian in name only since their disunifying efforts betrayed their true nature.

In addition to the ‘love test’, the ‘unity test’ seems also to be implied in Smyrn. 6.2. Concerning those who held sectarian opinions (τοὺς ἑτεροδοξοῦντας), Ignatius indicated that, in addition to their failure to love others, the accusation that they ‘keep away from the Eucharist and prayer’ could potentially signal that their faith was illegitimate.²⁸ The dissenters’ apparent refusal to meet and worship with the established church, along with his description of them as ‘perishing while disputing/arguing’ (συζητοῦντες ἀποθνήσκουσιν), is a clear indication of disunity. In addition to being unloving towards others, this pseudo-Christian group gave evidence of their false claim to Christianity through their disunifying beliefs and practices.

Numerous other verses could be added to support Ignatius’ description of disunity as an indication that appearance betrayed reality (Eph. 16.1; Phld. 2.1–3.1; 3.2–3, etc.). At this point, it should be evident that Ignatius felt the need to provide his readers with an additional way of recognizing when wolves had infiltrated the flock. Anyone who refused to assemble with the church, and who acted in direct opposition to the established church leadership, exhibited by their disunifying actions that they were not genuine Christians.

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²⁸ As previously noted in §2.0, n. 2, this is sometimes versified as Smyrn. 7.1.
The final test involves whether one’s doctrinal beliefs aligned with Ignatius’ conception of what constituted authentic Christian doctrine. For the purposes of this discussion, this will be deemed the Truth Test, or possibly more accurately, the Apostolicity Test. In other words, Ignatius frequently warned the early church of the need to test the validity of a person’s profession of faith by examining the contents of their belief system. Much like the unity test, this test is referenced both directly and indirectly throughout the letters. For the purposes of establishing the presence of the test in the corpus, only a few of the more prominent examples will be provided (Trall. 6.1–2; Phld. 3.3; Pol. 3.1).

Even though the Trallian letter has already been shown to contain evidence in support of the unity test (Trall. 7.2), certain passages also present a form of doctrinal test. For example, the exhortation in 6.1 to ‘partake only of Christian food’ (χριστιανῇ τροφῇ) and to avoid the deadly alternative of consuming an ‘alien plant, which is heresy’ (ἀλλοτρίας...βοτάνης...ἡτις ἐστὶν αἵρεσις), indicates that Ignatius was concerned that false doctrines were threatening Tralles. Despite the clear corruption of the text in Trall.6.2, it seems evident that Ignatius was concerned that whenever the truth about Christ was being ‘mingled’ (παρεμπλέκουσιν Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν) with anything foreign, the narrative had been

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29 Ignatius’ conception of the elements of saving faith will be explored in Chapter 9.

30 The point to underscore is that no matter which variant is correct (assuming that one of them is original), the context indicates Ignatius’ warning that Jesus Christ mixed with anything else is false. For a thorough discussion on the variants see §5.3.1, n. 20.
falsified. In the last part of the verse, a test is provided that could be used to reveal the true nature of those who sought to introduce additional elements into the doctrine about Christ.

As already noted in §5.3.1, by referring to the corrupters in 6.2 as ‘those seeming to be trustworthy’ (καταξιοπιστευόμενοι), Ignatius demonstrated that the group most likely viewed themselves as Christian. The fact that they apparently failed the unity test (Trall. 7.2) is further evidence that their actions denied the validity of their claim to be Christian in his estimation. After warning about those who diluted the doctrine of Christ into a death-dealing concoction, Ignatius presented the solution in the form of an implied apostolicity test. Thus, the way to guard against such people was by ‘being inseparable’ (οὖσιν ἀχωρίστοις) not only from Jesus Christ and ‘the bishop’ but also from ‘the edicts of the apostles’ (διαταγμάτων τῶν ἀποστόλων).

This implies that those who deviated from apostolic doctrine by mixing the teaching about Christ with elements of falsity thus demonstrated their pseudo-Christian nature.

A similar discussion is found in Phld. 2.1–3.3 which, in addition to containing the unity test, also presents a form of the truth test. Philadelphians 2.2 warns about the infiltrating efforts of the ‘seemingly trustworthy wolves’ (λύκοι ἀξιόπιστοι). Division and false teaching (2.1) were the apparent signs that those who seemed to be trustworthy were, in reality, wolves in the midst of the sheepfold (2.2). In 3.3b, Ignatius presented a simple test to disclose such wolves: ‘if anyone conducts themselves [most likely within the church] with an alien mindset (ἐν ἄλλοτρίῳ γνώμῃ), this one is not in agreement with the passion.’ Thus, those who claimed to be sheep, but whose alien beliefs differed from the authentic and apostolic passion
narrative espoused by Ignatius, demonstrated their underlying wolfish nature. Referring to this passage, Svigel suggested that the wolves seem to have been “an active, external threat” and that “these pretenders were not genuine Christians.” While I agree that with the assertion that the opponents were not genuine Christians, it is not clear that they existed outside the boundaries of the church. It seems likely that the seemingly trustworthy wolves who gave the false appearance of being insiders, and probably considered themselves to be Christian, had been attracted to and influenced by Jewish elements outside the church who encouraged them to abandon crucial aspects of the gospel message.

Lastly, in the letter to Polycarp Ignatius exhorted his fellow bishop in Pol. 3.1 to ‘Stand firm’ against ‘those who seem to be trustworthy’ but who contradicted this assessment by promoting ‘heterodox doctrines’ (ἑτεροδιδασκαλοῦντες). The verb ἑτεροδιδασκαλέω refers to the act of teaching something that is ‘contrary to standard instruction’ and which is therefore divisive. Without specifying the nature of the doctrinal departure, Ignatius simply warned that the group’s believable appearance was betrayed by the fact that they diverged from what

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31 The fact that Ignatius’ contention with his opponents in Philadelphia was centered on the very nature of the gospel message is clearly evidenced in 8.1–2. Ignatius believed strongly that his gospel message (i.e., 8.2–‘his cross and death and his resurrection, and the faith that comes through him’) was plainly evidenced in the texts of the OT, whereas his opponents simply replied that he had not proven his case (8.2).

32 Svigel, Center and the Source, 132.

33 The use of the term ἄξιόπιστοι when applied to λύκοι could indicate an internal threat. Additionally, in both Phld. 7.2 and 8.2 Ignatius seems to have interacted with this group in a real debate about the content of his preaching in Philadelphia which apparently had offended them and was based on an interpretation of the OT with which they strongly disagreed.

34 This will be more fully explored later in §9.3.

35 See BDAG, 399. LSJ, 701 simply defines the verb as to “teach differently, teach false doctrine” (see also BrillDAG, 832 – “to teach in a different way, i.e. a false doctrine” and PGL, 552– “teach false doctrine.”
he considered to be standard Christian doctrine. Even though other passages could be used to establish this point, the above-mentioned passages clearly indicate that a failure to align oneself with the truths about Christ as established by the apostles was an indication to Ignatius that the person was a pseudo-Christian.\textsuperscript{36}

\section*{5.4 The Danger of Mistaken Identity}

As a way of preparation for the examination of Ignatius' soteriological viewpoints, the goal of this chapter was to examine how Ignatius categorized humanity into three classes based on each group's understanding of, and response to, the incarnational gospel message. The chapter explored three potential categories used by Ignatius: (1) those who were non-Christian; (2) those who were Christian; and (3) those who were pseudo-Christian.

A failure to recognize the existence of this third category in the letters could potentially lead to misunderstandings concerning Ignatius' soteriological views. At this point, just one brief example from recent scholarship will help illustrate this problem. In one of the most recently published monographs solely devoted to Ignatius and his theology, Gregory Vall interpreted Ignatius' soteriological views to indicate that

\textsuperscript{36} Ignatius elsewhere indicated that the churches needed to be in agreement with the apostles. For instance, he praised the Ephesians for having 'always been in agreement with the apostles' (\textit{Eph. 11.2}); \textit{Magn. 13.1}. He also encouraged the Magnesians to 'be firmly grounded in the doctrines of the Lord and the apostles (ἐν τοῖς δόγμασιν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων) so that you may prosper in whatever you are doing'. See also \textit{Phld. 5.1}.
Eternal life ‘lies before us’ as a goal yet to be achieved, and there is a very real danger that the devil may divert us from the path to it. (Eph. 17:1)\textsuperscript{37}

According to Vall’s interpretation of Eph. 17.1, since Ignatius’ warning was written to the church, verses such as this must indicate that genuine Christians were in danger of forfeiting their faith and, therefore, of losing their salvation. Ignatius’ views on the Christian’s perseverance in salvation will be more fully explored later in the thesis (§10.2); however, for now it should be noted that when the variegated nature of Ignatius’ audience is taken into consideration, another more likely interpretation arises. In other words, warnings such as found in Eph. 17.1 may have been directed at the possibility of admitting pseudo-Christians into the assembly who, despite their claims to be Christian, had yet to be saved since eternal life was still lying before them.\textsuperscript{38} Keeping this potentially variegated audience in mind throughout the remainder of this thesis could alter how some of Ignatius’ somewhat harsher statements should be interpreted.

5.5 Summary

The goal of this chapter was to explore the ways in which Ignatius segmented humanity into one of three primary groups based on their individual responses to what he considered to be the key element(s) of Christian truth (i.e., the gospel). Figure 2 below represents how Ignatius

\textsuperscript{37} Vall, \textit{Learning Christ}, 196.

conceived of humanity based on their response to the gospel. At the broadest level, humanity could be divided into two segments.

If the proper response to the Christ event had been elicited (§9–10), then Ignatius considered that person to be Christian. Conversely, those who had either rejected, or had not yet responded to, the core aspects of the Christian message were deemed to be non-Christian. This binary representation would possibly have been sufficient had not Ignatius encountered elements within the early church that he considered to be both divisive and, ultimately, non-Christian. In an apparent effort to warn the churches along his route, Ignatius' conception of the non-Christian category was further refined by subdividing it into two distinct sub-groups. In Figure 2, the 'Pagan' category (τοῖς ἔθνεσιν—Trall. 8.2; Smyrn. 1.2), which does not garner much attention in the letters beyond a few scattered references, represents those with no
claim to be Christian. In contrast, the pseudo-Christian category, which is frequently described throughout, is a non-Christian sub-group representing those who, in direct contrast to the pagans, claimed to be Christian but whose lives suggested to Ignatius that they were not genuine.

Ignatius cautioned that this pseudo-Christian group would be difficult to detect, and therefore dangerous for several reasons. First, despite having an initial appearance of being genuine and therefore worthy of trust, the group had not been placed in the assembly by God. As a result, Ignatius put forth several related tests that, if adhered to, could potentially unmask the duplicitous nature of the pseudo-Christians. In other words, those who were genuinely trustworthy were expected to manifest their faith through correspondingly trustworthy actions (Eph. 14.2) which included love exhibited for others (Smyrn. 6.2), unity with the church and its leadership (Magn. 4; Trall. 7.2; Smyrn. 6.1–2; 9.1), as well as adherence to the truths about Christ that had been handed down by the apostles (Trall. 6.1–2; Phld. 3.3; Pol. 3.1). Ignatius warned that those who failed such tests demonstrated by their actions and beliefs that they were, despite their claims, not genuine Christians. If this tri-fold breakdown is not recognized, scholarship runs the risk of misunderstanding Ignatius’ soteriological views.

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39 Technically, Jews would be included in the non-Christian category if they had not converted to Christianity.
PART II

THE IGNATIAN CONCEPTION OF SAVIOR & SALVATION
Introduction

Having already analyzed the three-fold set of issues undergirding why Ignatius believed humanity required salvation, the investigation now turns to explore questions involving who and what. The following chapters will demonstrate that Ignatius used various descriptors to communicate the notion of human salvation. Essentially, Part II will review the type of language that Ignatius utilized to communicate the concept of salvation. The examination will begin with Ignatius' description of Christ the Savior as the one who served as humanity's deliverer (Chapter 6). Following this, Chapter 7 will present the primary synonyms utilized to describe what salvation meant to Ignatius. It will be shown that salvation incorporated the notion of being rescued (§7.1), of fleeing (§7.2), of being redeemed (§7.3), as well as being spiritually manumitted (§7.4). Having already explored humanity's primary predicament with spiritual death and the expectation of encountering the wrath of God, Part II will close in Chapter 8 by exploring what is perhaps the most central idea of salvation found in the letters—salvation as the reception of life from the dead.
CHAPTER 6

CHRIST THE SAVIOR

6.0 Introduction

As already suggested, Ignatius never appears to have been slavishly tied to the lexical choices of his Christian predecessors. Nevertheless, when soteriological concepts are discussed he does, at times, use terms commonly employed by others. Chapters 6 and 7 will therefore review some of the most direct references to ‘salvation’ found in the Ignatian epistles which utilize σῶζω and its related cognates. This examination will begin in the current chapter by first examining Ignatius’ conception of the ‘savior’ (σωτήρ) before moving on to Chapter 7 to review the remainder of the uses of σῶζω and its related cognates (i.e., σῶζω, σωτηρία). The goal will be to understand what Ignatius intended to communicate when he utilized such terms.
6.1 Christ Jesus, the Savior

The term σωτήρ was certainly coined long before Christianity applied the designation to Jesus Christ. Lexically, σωτήρ has been consistently defined as “the one who rescues”, and thus translated with glosses that include "savior", "deliverer", and "preserver." At the time of writing, the term was generally employed to refer to either humans or god(s) who protected others from various dangers and potentially destructive situations. If the traditional Eusebian dating for Ignatius’ death is correct (i.e., the ninth or tenth year of Trajan’s reign, 107–8 CE), a near contemporary account related by Downey provides a fitting example. In the wake of a devastating earthquake in 115 CE where Trajan was nearly killed in Antioch, Downey described the reaction of the survivors:

The shocks continued for several days and nights, and the destruction, both in Antioch and Daphne, appears to have been considerable. Many people were killed….Trajan himself escaped with a few slight injuries….After the disaster, the survivors, in gratitude for their preservation, built a temple to Zeus Soter in Daphne.²

The sixth-century chronicler John Malalas related the same event and provided the inscription in Chron. 11.8 – οἱ σωθέντες ἀνέστησαν Διὶ Σωτῆρι (“Those who were saved erected this to Zeus the Savior”).³ It is interesting to note that Malalas’ Chronographia (see Chron. 11.10)

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¹ BDAG, 985; see also BrillDAG, 2075 – "savior, protector, deliverer"; LSJ, 1751 – "savior, deliverer"; PGL, 1368–9 – "saviour."
² Downey, A History of Antioch, 214.
³ The Greek text is from Ioannes Thurn, ed., Ioannis Malalae Chronographia, CFHB 35 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000), 208; For the English translation see Elizabeth Jeffreys, Michael Jeffreys, and Roger Scott, eds. and trans., The Chronicle of John Malalas: A Translation (Melbourne: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1986), 145.
is the source of the traditional account that Ignatius had been arrested in the aftermath of the earthquake because “the bishop had used improper language concerning him [i.e. Trajan].”

With regard to human saviors, the term was applied to philosophers, physicians, statesmen, and even to the Roman emperors. The oral and literary sources available during Ignatius’ lifetime certainly contained discussions about those who functioned to save and deliver the human race from a variety of problems. For example, even though σωτήρ was utilized occasionally in the LXX to refer to human deliverers, such as the judges (Judg 3:9, 15; 12:3), the designation was predominately applied to God as ‘the savior.’ Even though the LXX is replete with references to God as σωτήρ, a search for phrases identifying the Messiah as such are more difficult to identify. As Balz and Schneider noted, “the Messiah is never unequivocally referred to as σωτήρ in the LXX” and, in their estimation, “Zech 9:9; Isa 49:6; 4 Ezra 13:26 can at most be understood as allusions” to a savior-messiah figure.

The NT, most likely reflecting the influence of the LXX, likewise applied the term to describe God as savior. However, despite this initial agreement, the NT represents a

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6 Of the roughly 38 uses of σωτήρ in the LXX, depending on which version is examined, only five verses (13%) seem to indicate a non-divine deliverer/savior (see Judg 3:9; 3:15; 12:3; some texts contain σωτήρ and others the participle of σῴζω; 2 Esdr 19:27; Esth 8:12n). The majority of the occurrences of σωτήρ (approximately 87%) refer to God: Deut 32:15; 1 Kgs 10:19; Esth 5:1a; Jdt 13:10; 1 Macc 4:33; 3 Macc 6:29, 32; 7:16; Psa 23:2; 24:5, 26:1, 9; 61:3, 7; 64:6, 78:9; 94:4; 10:1; Odes Sol. 2:15; 418; 9:47; Wis 16:7; Sir 51:1; Pss. Sol. 3:6; 8:39; 16:4; 17:3; Mic 7:7; Hab 3:18; Isa 12:2; 17:10; 45:21; Bar 4:22.
9 For example, Luke 1:47 refers to ‘God my σωτήρ’ (τῷ θεῷ τῷ σωτήρι μου). Even though the specific term is not used in the non-disputed Pauline letters, the disputed Pauline letters frequently apply the term to God as ‘our savior’ (1 Tim 1:1; 2:3; Tit 1:3; 2:10; 3:4) and to ‘God...the savior’ (1 Tim 4:10).
theological advancement over the LXX in that it never applies the designation to a mere human agent. Stated otherwise, where the OT seems at best to allude to the Messiah as a savior figure, the NT, by frequently attributing the title to Jesus Christ, clearly affirms such an association (Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:21; 13:23; Eph 5:23; Phil 3:20; 2 Tim 1:10; Tit 1:4; 2:13; 3:6; 2 Pet 1:1; 1:11; 2:20; 3:2, 18; 1 John 4:14; Jude 25).  

Turning to the Ignatian epistles, the designation σωτήρ is found in four of the letters (Eph. 1:1; Magn. inscr; Phld. 9.2; Smyrn. 6.2). While commenting on the Ignatian use of the term, Brown concluded that “[a]s in the NT, with respect to Jesus as Savior, one is immediately struck by the relatively few instances in which Ignatius directly refers to Jesus with this title.” This is perhaps not as striking as it first appears. If the NT is broken down based on perceived authorship, then Brown’s line of reasoning would lead to the conclusion that a majority of the NT was written by authors who did not present the notion of Christ as savior as a key aspect of their kerygma. The fact that Ignatius used the term four times is significant when it is recognized that the NT, a collection almost twenty times larger than the Ignatian epistles, utilized the term only 24 times. Similarly, the same can be said for the non-Ignatian portions of the Apostolic Fathers which collectively employ σωτήρ only seven times, despite

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10 It should be noted that in two of the passages (Tit 2:13; 1 Pet 1:1), the title σωτήρ applies simultaneously to both God and Jesus Christ. However, the Granville Sharp construction in both passages indicates that the terms ‘God’ and ‘Savior’ refer to the same, and not two distinct, personages. For more information on such constructions see Daniel B. Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: an Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 270–90; Daniel B. Wallace, Granville Sharp’s Canon and Its Kin: Semantics and Significance, SBG 14 (New York: Peter Lang, 2009).

11 Brown, Gospel and Ignatius, 144; see also Wilkens, “Soteriology of Ignatius,” 114–5.

12 Approximately 65% of the books of the NT do not include the title σωτήρ (Matthew, Mark, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 & 3 John, Revelation).
being eight times larger than the MR.\textsuperscript{13} As previously emphasized, counting the number of occurrences of a particular term used by an author does not necessarily indicate its importance in that person’s theological belief system. In other words, it matters more what Ignatius actually said as opposed to how many times he said something, or how many times he used a particular word. The relative scarcity of \textit{σωτήρ} in the Ignatian epistles may simply indicate that the idea of Christ as the savior had already become so widely-accepted that his early second-century audience needed no further convincing or elucidation on the association.

The first two uses of \textit{σωτήρ} are located in the greeting sections written to Ephesus and Magnesia:

I praise in God your much-loved name, which you have obtained by reason of your righteous nature, which is in conformity with faith in and love of \textit{Christ Jesus our Savior (Eph. 1.1 – Χριστῷ Ιησοῦ τῷ σωτήρι ἡμῶν)}.

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to her who has been blessed by the grace of God the Father in \textit{Christ Jesus our Savior (Magn. inscr – Χριστῷ Ιησοῦ τῷ σωτήρι ἡμῶν)}.

Several scholars have glossed over the two instances since they appear to function simply as formulaic expressions. Brown therefore dismissed the importance of both verses in favor of the more theologically pregnant occurrences in \textit{Phld. 9.2} and \textit{Smyrn. 6.2}: “Aside from being part of opening greetings, this usage [i.e., \textit{Eph. 1.1, Magn. inscr}] tells us little else.”\textsuperscript{14} Schoedel, 149

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\textsuperscript{13} The seven non-Ignatian uses of \textit{σωτήρ} in the Apostolic Fathers include six references to Christ as savior (2 Clem. 20.5; Mart. Pol. 19.2; Diogn. 9.6; FPap. 3.10, 11 [Hist. eccl. 3.39,10, 11]) and one to God as savior (1 Clem 59.3).

\textsuperscript{14} Brown, \textit{Gospel and Ignatius}, 144.
Foerster, Longenecker, and others likewise concluded that all four Ignatian uses were formulaic and, thus, do not allow for any further elaboration. Paulsen likewise concluded that “der titular Gebrauch gegenüber dem inhaltlichen Verständnis überwiegt.”

These somewhat dismissive conclusions seem unwarranted. Although the designation σωτήρ appears to have become formulaic by the time the letters were penned, this does not indicate by default that Ignatius did not intend to communicate something specific through the use of the title. At the very least, he considered it to be an apt description that his audience would recognize. Given that κύριος is one of Ignatius’ preferred titles for Jesus Christ, he could have just as easily chosen that designation, nevertheless, on four occasions Ignatius selected σωτήρ instead. Dibelius and Conzelmann explain that σωτήρ “gradually became...a substitute for ‘Jesus’” and that later Christians such as Ignatius who applied the designation to Christ “simply wanted to attest to his divinity.”

While there is certainly some truth to this assertion, the fact that Ignatius frequently and unambiguously attested elsewhere, and more directly, to Jesus Christ as ‘our God’ (Eph. inscr; 15.3; 18.2; Rom. inscr twice; 3.3; Pol. 8.3), ‘my

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16 Paulsen, *Die Apostolischen Väter II*, 25 – “the titular use outweighs the understanding of the contents.”

17 The designation κύριος was used in the middle recension 34 times with 18 instances clearly referring to Jesus Christ (Eph. 7.2; 10.3; 17.1; 19.1; Magn. 7.1; Trall. 8.1; 10.1; Phld. inscr; 1.1; 4.1; 9.2; 11.2; Smyrn. 1.1 twice; 4.2; 5.2; Pol. inscr; 5.2). The referent(s) for the remaining instances is less certain, although they could easily be applied to Jesus Christ (Eph. 6.1; 15.3; 17.2; 20.2; 21.1; Magn. 13.1; Rom. 4.2; Phld. 8.1; 11.1; Smyrn. 10.1; Pol. 1.2; 4.1; 5.1 twice; 5.2; 8.3). In six of the passages where κύριος was used to describe Christ, Ignatius used it as a part of the fuller title for Christ—‘Lord Jesus Christ’ (Phld. 1.1; 4.1; 9.2; 11.2; Smyrn. 1.1; Pol. inscr).

God’ (*Rom. 6.3*), ‘God come in the flesh’ (*Eph. 7.2*), ‘God appearing in human form’ (*Eph. 19.3*), and the God who suffered and bled (*Rom. 6.3; Smyrn. 1.1*), suggests that the use of σωτήρ was intended to emphasize more than Christ’s deity. In other words, the use of the previously-accepted formulaic σωτήρ may indicate that the NT use had solidified into the widely-accepted view that Christ was the savior who procured salvation for humanity.

In fact, the occurrence in *Phld. 9.2* seems to support such a conclusion. In the immediately preceding verses, Ignatius referred to a dispute between himself and a portion of the Philadelphian church who apparently disagreed with his version of the gospel message which they felt could not be supported by the available OT texts (*Phld. 8.1–9.2*). After claiming that the archives (i.e., the OT scriptures) were Christ-centered, in 9.2 he identified the crucial aspect of his gospel message that set it apart from the OT scriptures:

> But the gospel contains *something which is distinctive, namely, the coming of the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ* (τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ σωτῆρος, κυρίου ἡµῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), his suffering, and the resurrection. For the beloved prophets proclaimed him, but the gospel is the *completion of immortality*.

It is beyond the scope of this study to explore the possible texts Ignatius may have had in mind when he explained that ‘the beloved prophets proclaimed him’. Yet, despite the apparent misgivings of his opponents in Philadelphia, Ignatius clearly viewed the gospel

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message as ‘unique’ and ‘distinctive’ (ἐξαιρετός) because it represented the fulfillment of the OT prophetic announcements regarding the coming savior. Therefore, it seems likely that Ignatius intended to emphasize that the ‘savior-God’ referred to repeatedly in the LXX had become fully revealed in Jesus Christ, the σωτήρ. Specifically, this revelation occurred in the incarnational gospel message of the NT which he himself communicated. Whereas the OT had only hinted at a coming savior figure, Ignatius, apparently in full agreement with the NT, proclaimed the arrival of such a savior in the person of Jesus Christ.

Another distinctive difference between the OT and Ignatius’ understanding concerning the expected σωτήρ is that where the OT merely hinted at the suffering, death and resurrection of this redeemer figure, Ignatius proclaimed such a notion. In other words, by referring to the ‘advent…suffering…and the resurrection’ of the savior in Phld. 9.2, Ignatius identified the entire incarnational event as the distinctive aspect of his gospel. At this point, it should be noted that Ignatius described Jesus Christ as the savior who fulfilled what had

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20 Lexically, ἐξαιρετός describes something/someone that is removable and can therefore be taken out of something else. Hence it can indicate something chosen and, in this case, something that simply stands out from the rest. The glosses that seem to fit best here are “special, singular, remarkable” (LSJ, 581) or “exceptional, special, extraordinary” (BrillDAG, 710).

21 Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 211.

22 For example, Zech 9:9 LXX, despite not using σωτήρ, did use σῴζω to reference the coming king who brought salvation: ‘Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion. Proclaim aloud, daughter of Jerusalem, for behold your king is coming to you, he [is] righteous and saving (σῴζων), humble and mounted on a donkey, even a young foal.’ Compare this to Matt 21:5-7 and John 12:13-5 where the NT writers interpreted Jesus Christ’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem prior to the crucifixion as a fulfillment of this passage. Similarly, Isa 52:10 LXX refers to the time when ‘all the farthest regions of the earth will see the salvation from God (τὴν σωτηρίαν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ).’ See also Isa 62:11-2; Jer 23:5-6.

23 Schoedel similarly commented that “What makes the gospel distinctive is that it represents the ‘completion’ of what the prophets could only foresee. What has been brought into being is ‘immortality’ (cf. Eph. 17.1).”– Ignatius of Antioch, 210.
only been promised by the OT prophets. Hence from Ignatius’ perspective, what the OT
anticipated, the gospel clearly provided.

The final passage containing σωτήρ (Smyrn. 6.2) summarizes many of the previously-
discussed ideas about the coming savior. The preceding verse (6.1), despite its potential barb
against the emperor (i.e., ‘even the rulers...are subject to judgment if they do not believe in the
blood of Christ’), was certainly directed against docetic viewpoints that denied the physical
sufferings of Christ. Smyrnaeans 6.2 next added a key element that helps illuminate what
Ignatius intended by referring to Christ as σωτήρ:

They [i.e. those who do not believe the gospel and whose actions show no concern for
the welfare of others]...refuse to acknowledge that the Eucharist is the flesh of our
savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins (Smyrn. 6.2)

Thus far I have suggested that Ignatius, in agreement with the NT, presented Jesus Christ as
the expected savior figure whose purpose was to deliver humanity. However, until now none
of the references to Christ as σωτήρ offered any specific clues regarding the nature of the
deliverance envisioned. As already proposed, in identifying Christ as σωτήρ, Phld. 9.2
highlights the distinctive aspect of Ignatius’ gospel in that it portrayed the σωτήρ whose
physical existence, suffering (i.e., death,) and resurrection somehow procured imperishability.
Smyrnaeans 6.2 provides the missing element that explains the context of the salvation
wrought by the σωτήρ. At the end of the verse, Ignatius indicated the reason for the incarnate
savior’s passion: ‘the flesh our savior Jesus Christ...suffered ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν.’24 As

24 As noted in §2.0, n. 2, this is sometimes versified as Smyrn. 7.1.
previously argued in chapter two, this is one of the clearest statements in support of the idea that Christ’s death served to atone for humanity’s sins (see §2.1).

An additional point to consider is whether these references to Christ as savior are evidence that Ignatius intentionally polemicized against the imperial cult. As several scholars have recognized, during the late first to early second century, σωτήρ was at times applied to the Roman emperors.\footnote{Larry W. Hurtado, \textit{Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity} (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 517–8. See also \textit{EDNT} 3:326; \textit{TDNT} 7:1010–2.} Dibelius and Conzelman suggested that “‘God, the Savior’ (θεὸς σωτήρ) became a technical term...in the cult of the ruler.”\footnote{Dibelius and Conzelmann, \textit{Pastoral Epistles}, 102.} Frances Young, in her commentary on the Pastoral letters, specified that “the title ‘Saviour’ or ‘Saviour of the world’ was bestowed on Julius Caesar, Augustus, Claudius, Vespasian, Titus, Trajan, Hadrian and other emperors in Eastern inscriptions.”\footnote{Frances M. Young, \textit{The Theology of the Pastoral Letters} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 64.} Even though the letters do not appear to be generally directed against the empire, at least the following few verses seem to contain a polemical element directly aimed at the emperor and his rule:

\begin{quote}
God had judged the bishop from Syria worthy to be found in the West, after having \textit{summoned him} from the East. (Rom. 2.2)
\end{quote}

Ignatius therein seems to intentionally belittle the emperor by arguing that he travelled to Rome not based on the emperor’s summons, but on God’s. Additionally, even though the Roman emperors ruled over the ‘ends of the earth’ in the second century and beyond, Ignatius'
comments in *Rom.* 6.1 demonstrate that he believed such far-reaching rule was ultimately useless in the grand scheme of life:

> Neither the ends of the world nor the kingdoms of this age will be of any use to me. It is better for me to die on account of Jesus Christ *than to rule over the ends of the earth.*

Finally, regarding *Smyrn.* 6.1, even though he was the one destined to receive Rome’s judgment and punishment, to Ignatius, the opposite was the greater reality: the emperor himself, as the most prominent ‘visible ruler’ of his day, was ultimately the one who would be subject to judgment if he did not believe the gospel.

> Let no one be misled. *Even…the rulers,* both visible and invisible, even they *are subject to judgment,* if they do not believe in the blood of Christ.

If the above-mentioned verses represent intentional statements directed against Rome and its emperor, it seems likely that by applying σωτήρ to Jesus Christ, Ignatius may have intentionally countered the popular notion of viewing the emperor as a savior figure. Hurtado rightly concluded that the idea of Jesus being called “the one true universal savior….can only have been seen as calling into question the validity of the equivalent claims of the Roman emperor cult which was emphasized more in the late decades of the first century and thereafter.”

> Even though Hurtado’s comments were directed to the use of σωτήρ

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28 Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ*, 517. For a more in depth examination of Ignatius’ supposed polemical thrust against the Imperial see Brent, Allen. “Ignatius of Antioch and the Imperial Cult.” *VC* 52 (1998): 30–58; Brent, Allen. *The Imperial Cult and the Development of Church Order: Concepts and Images of Authority in Paganism and Early Christianity before the Age of Cyprian.* VCSup 45. Leiden: Brill, 1999. While I agree with Brent that Ignatius at times seems to disparage the Roman Empire and its Emperor, I do not follow his suggestion that Ignatius’ journey to martyrdom is an elaborate and sophisticated choreographed performance designed to counter the Imperial Cult. The occasional nature of the letter and the circumstances in which Ignatius wrote seem to preclude such an elaborate and intentional scheme.
in the Pastorals, they could just as easily apply to the Ignatian epistles, especially given that Ignatius was most certainly influenced by 1 and 2 Timothy.²⁹

In summary, the examination of Ignatius’ application of the term σωτήρ to Jesus Christ shows that the association was not simply the product of rote, formulaic usage. Instead, even the scant use in the Ignatian epistles seems to have been more intentional. In a society that sought reprieve from both human and divine savior figures, Ignatius’ σωτήρ, Jesus Christ, was the unique fulfillment of the OT which had frequently described God as the savior and had at times hinted at the notion of a coming savior figure. Unlike the various emperors and gods, who were expected to deliver humanity from their earthly troubles, the role of Ignatius’ savior, the God in the flesh, was to suffer for ‘our sins’ (Smyrn. 6.2) and to die as the ‘consummation of immortality’ (Phld. 9.2). Thus Ignatius’ σωτήρ, in contrast with the rival saviors of his day, seems to have had a soteriological purpose for his existence. The following chapters will begin to explore Ignatius’ understanding regarding the saving work of his σωτήρ.

²⁹ Paul Foster concluded that “a sure case can be made for Ignatius’ use of Ephesians and 1 and 2 Timothy.” For specific parallels, see Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 170–2.
CHAPTER 7

IGNATIAN SYNONYMS FOR SALVATION

7.0 Introduction

Since the Ignatian corpus nowhere presents a systematic reflection on the concept of salvation, a more inductive approach is required. This section will begin by reviewing the most direct references to human salvation with the goal of analyzing Ignatius' view of salvation. This will be accomplished by sifting through the corpus for words that, from a lexical standpoint, seem to be synonymous with the notion of salvation. The following table provides some of the more common lexical options used in early Christianity to describe the transforming work of Christ in human salvation. It is helpful to note that the semantic range of each term often communicates the idea of being saved, rescued, or delivered.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexical Category (incl. related cognates)</th>
<th>Definition &amp; Glosses¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ῥῶομαι</td>
<td>to save, rescue, deliver, preserve²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐξαιρέω</td>
<td>to deliver someone from a perilous or confining circumstance, set free, deliver, rescue³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐξαγοράζω</td>
<td>to deliver, liberate⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>σῴζω</td>
<td>to save, deliver someone⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>φεύγω</td>
<td>to seek safety in flight, flee or to become safe from danger by eluding or avoiding it, escape⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>λυτρόω</td>
<td>to free or liberate someone from an oppressive situation by paying a ransom, set free, rescue, redeem⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἐλευθερόω</td>
<td>to cause someone to be freed from domination and bondage, free, set free⁸</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>λῶ</td>
<td>set free someone tied or constrained, set free, loose, untie⁹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ All definitions and associated glosses in Table 5 match those listed in BDAG and LSJ.
² Matt 6:13; 27:43; Luke 17:4; Rom 7:24; 11:26; 2 Cor 11:10; Col 1:13; 1 Thess 1:3; 2 Thess 3:2; 2 Tim 3:11; 4:17–18; 2 Pet 2:7, 9; 1 Clem. 18.14; 22.7; 35.11; 60.3; 2 Clem. 6.7; 16.4; Did. 8.2; 10.5.
³ Gal 1:4; 1 Clem. 39.9; 52.3; 56.8.
⁴ Mart. Pol. 2.3; Herm. Sim. 1.8 [50.8].
⁵ This category includes cognates such as σωτήρ, σῶς, σωτηρία, σωτήριος, and διασώς. For example, see 1 Clem. 2.4; 7.4, 6, 7; 18.12, 14; 21.8; 35.12; 36.1; 37.8; 38.1; 39.9; 45.1; 58.2; 59.3, 4; 60.4; 2 Clem. 1.1, 4; 2.5, 7; 3.3; 4.1, 2; 8.2, 9.2, 5; 13.1; 14.1; 21.15; 17.2, 5; 19.1, 3; 20.5; Pol. Phil. inscr; 1.3; Mart. Pol. 1.2; 9.3; 17.2; 19.2; 22.1; Did. 16.5; Barn. 1.3; 2.10; 4.1; 5.10; 8.6; 12.3, 7; 14.8; 16.10; 17.1; 19.10; 21.9; Herm. Vis. 1.21 [21.1]; 2.25 [6.5]; 2.32 [7.2]; 3.35 [11.5]; 3.61 [14.1]; 3.76 [15.6]; 3.83 [16.3]; 4.24 [23.4]; Herm. Mand. 3.3 [28.3]; 4.37 [31.7]; 7.1 [37.1]; 8.8 [38.8]; 9.6 [39.6]; 10.12, 3 [40.2, 3]; 10.21, 4 [41.1, 4]; 12.3.6 [46.6]; 12.6.3 [49.3]; Herm. Sim. 1.11 [50.11]; 5.7.3 [60.3]; 6.1.1 [61.1]; 6.5.7 [65.7]; 8.6.1 [72.1]; 8.9.4 [75.4]; 8.11.1 [77.1]; 9.12.3 [89.3]; 9.23.4 [100.4]; 9.26.8, 8 [103.6, 8]; Diogn. 7.4; 9.6; 12.9.
⁶ This category would include φεύγω (to flee, escape), ἀποφεύγω (to escape from), διαφεύγω (to escape), and ἐξεφεύγω (to run away/from, escape from sm.). For example, see 1 Clem. 28.2; 58.1; 2 Clem. 10.1; 18.2; Mart. Pol. 2.3; Did. 3.1; Barn. 4.1, 10; Herm. Vis. 4.2.3, 4.5 [23.3, 4, 5]; 4.3.4 [24.4]; Just. 1 Apol. 60; 61; 68; 2 Apol. 11; Dial. 72; 110: 193; 138.
⁷ 1 Clem. 12.7; 2 Clem. 17.4; Did. 4.6; Barn. 14.5, 6, 7, 8; 19.2, 10; Diogn. 9.2.
⁸ Ignatius used this root to refer to being freed in two primary passages: Rom. 4.3 and Pol. 4.3.
⁹ Technically, λύτρων and its related cognates derive from λῶ, however, they will be treated separately here. See Ign. Eph. 13.1; 19.3; Magn. 12.1; Philid. 8.1; Smyrn. 6.2.
A close analysis reveals that Ignatius did not use any of the first three roots listed in Table 5. However, all five of the remaining terms were utilized periodically in relation to the context of human salvation. Having already explored Ignatius’ utilization of the noun σωτήρ, this chapter will begin by examining the remainder of the σῴζω cognates (to save, keep from harm, preserve, rescue).11 Since Ignatius’ understanding of salvation was not limited to this primary lexical group, the examination will be expanded by reviewing his use of φεύγω, λυτρόω, ἐλευθερόω, and λύω.

At this point, caution should be exercised. A study of Ignatius’ conception of salvation should not be limited to a simple lexical investigation or word study. Carson highlighted the danger of relying on such a limited study:

as important as word studies are, it is very doubtful if profound understanding of any test or of any theme is really possible by word studies alone...the heart of the issue is that semantics, meaning, is more than the meaning of words. It involves phrases, sentences, discourse, genre, style.11

In his classic work on biblical semantics, Barr levelled a similar warning:

It is now time to say something of a better way to approach biblical language in its relation to theology. It seems to me that the connection between the two must be made in the first place at the level of the larger linguistic complexes such as the sentences. It is the sentence (and of course the still larger literary complex such as the complete speech or poem) which is the linguistic bearer of the usual theological statement, and not the word (the lexical unit) or the morphological and syntactical connection.12

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11 These glosses are representative of most lexicons. See BDAG, 982; LSJ, 1748; BrillDAG, 2072; PGL, 815–6, 1261.
Therefore, Ignatius’ use of soteriological terms will be examined in their immediate, as well as the wider context of each individual letter and the corpus as a whole. By doing so, the thesis will seek to avoid the mistake of making theological judgments based on how many times Ignatius used, or did not use, a particular lexeme.

7.1 Ignatian Use of Σωζ Cognates

A search for σωζ and its related cognates yields little data. Wilkens therefore observed that “At first glance, it would appear that Ignatius exhibited little interest in either salvation or the coming of a savior. The term ‘saviour’ (σωτήρ) occurs only four times in his letters, ‘to save’ (σωζειν) three times, and ‘salvation’ (σωτηρία) just once.” This breakdown is accurate. The verb σωζ is found in only three letters (Phld. 5.2; Smyrn. 2.1; Pol. 1.2) and there is only one occurrence of the nominal form σωτηρία in the entire corpus (Eph. 18.1). And yet, despite initial appearances, much like with his use of σωτήρ, the fact that Ignatius employed this lexeme only a select handful of times does not warrant the conclusion that he was indifferent towards the need for human salvation.

From a lexical standpoint, the following definitions, along with their associated glosses, represent the relatively consistent semantic range of σωζ:

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13 Wilkens, “Soteriology of Ignatius,” 114–5. Wilkens made this statement while recognizing that the idea of salvation, despite the scant use of its related cognates, is of utmost importance to Ignatius’ theology. See also Cyril Richardson who noted in that “Salvation is a term that figures little in the Ignatian Epistles.”—The Christianity of Ignatius, 23.
1. “to preserve or rescue from natural dangers and afflictions, save, keep from harm, preserve, rescue”

2. “to save or preserve from transcendent danger or destruction, save/preserve from eternal death”

As previously noted, understanding the particular context of a passage is a critical step in determining whether the basic meaning of ‘to save or rescue’ applied to either (1) a physical situation, or (2) a spiritual situation. Consequently, it should be noted that the mere use of σῴζω does not automatically indicate that a passage was being used theologically in reference to human spiritual salvation. For example, when Acts 27:20 describes Paul and his companions as giving up ‘all hope of...being saved (σῴζεσθαι)’, the context referred to the prospect of being rescued from shipwreck and physical death and had nothing to do with Paul’s desire to be saved spiritually.

With context in mind, Ignatius’ scant use of σῴζω will now be examined. It is interesting to note that when the three uses of σῴζω are viewed from a chronological perspective they appear to refer to salvific events that had happened in the past (Phld. 5.2), that were occurring in the present (Smyrn. 2.1), and that would ultimately take place in the future (Pol. 1.2). Unlike the previous example from the book of Acts, the three uses in Ignatius do in fact portray a transcendent, spiritual form of salvation.

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14 BDAG, 982–3. See also LSJ, 1748; BrillDAG, 2072; PGL, 1361–2.

15 It should be recognized that it is possible for the verb to simultaneously refer to deliverance from both physical and spiritual issues. Nevertheless, most uses seem to fall predominately in one of the two primary categories.
7.1.1 Σώζω in Philadelphians 5.2

The first occurrence is located in a section where Ignatius discussed how the OT prophets should be understood from a Christian perspective. In Phld. 5.2, Ignatius indicated that, in addition to fleeing to the gospel and the apostles,

we also should love the prophets, because even they had announced the gospel and hoped in him and expected him; because they also believed in him, they were saved (ἐσώθησαν) being in the unity concerning Jesus Christ.

Though the identity of ‘the prophets’ has been a point of some scholarly debate, with a few suggesting that τοὺς προφήτας referred to NT-era prophets, the heavy contrast between Judaism and Christianity in the following chapters (Phld. 6–9) points strongly to the Hebrew Bible prophets as the likely referent. Ignatius does not elucidate in any appreciable detail when or how these prophets ‘were saved’ other than that the event had occurred in the past and that it happened as a result of their belief in the coming savior for whom they expectantly hoped. In an attempt to establish the context of the prophets’ salvation, Svigel appealed to Magn. 9.2—‘the one for whom they rightly awaited raised them from the dead when he

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16 For example, David Aune referred to Phld. 5.2 as the only place where Ignatius “refers to Christian prophets” – Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 291. Lake similarly decided that Ignatius “probably means the Christian prophets” – Lake, Apostolic Fathers, 243 n. 1. Trevett cautioned that the referent “is not clear” and that while “it is tempting...to read Phld. 5.2 as referring to contemporary Christian prophets...he may have been describing prophets of the past.” – Trevett, A Study of Ignatius, 132.

17 Corwin, St. Ignatius, 99; Isacson, To Each Their Own Letter, 138; Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 201.

18 The means of salvation will be more fully explored in Part III, however, it is interesting to note that the participle πιστεύσαντες seems to function as an adverbial participle of cause (‘they were saved because they believed’). Schoedel's suggestion that this verse “virtually eliminates any distinction between the saints of the two testaments” may be somewhat of an overstatement since Ignatius did not elaborate on what the prophets had believed that resulted in their salvation – Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 201.
came’—by suggesting that Ignatius “may have held that the prophets and saints of the Old Testament era believed in Christ upon his descent to the place of the dead” and that they “had to believe in Jesus and become part of the church in order to be saved.” While this is certainly plausible, Ignatius does not provide enough detail to validate such a theory. When viewed in isolation from the rest of the letter, the proclamation of salvation in *Phld*. 5.2 is devoid of any extensive explanation. The context of the passage does not mention the need for deliverance from any sort of physical calamity. Instead, it seems that Ignatius had a form of spiritual salvation in mind. Nevertheless, at least one explicit point regarding the salvation of the Hebrew Bible prophets is evident: Ignatius considered belief in Christ to be an essential element in their salvation.20

Despite the lack of clarifying details, when the verse is viewed in its wider context, some additional elements regarding Ignatius’ understanding of salvation come to light. While it is possible that Ignatius had visited some of the churches with which he corresponded, aside from Smyrna (where he penned the letters to Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, and Rome) and Troas (where he wrote to Philadelphia, Smyrna, and Polycarp), it appears that the only other locale that he had personally visited was Philadelphia.21 The letter strongly suggests that Ignatius’ visit with the Philadelphian church had met with Jewish-centered opposition and

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20 This relation of faith to Ignatius’ soteriology will be fully explored later in Chapters 9–10.

21 See Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 11; Mellink, *Death as Eschaton*, 3; Lotz, *Ignatius and Concord*, 169. It is also possible that Ignatius had first-hand knowledge of the other churches since he could have visited them prior to his arrest and subsequent journey to Rome.
had concluded with a sharp disagreement over how the OT should be interpreted in relation to Christ and the elements of the gospel message (6.1–9.2).

The first thing to notice is that, from Ignatius’ perspective, the opponents suffered from at least two of the predicaments previously identified in Part I. First, their problem with evil was evident since they were described as ‘evil plants’ (3.1, κακῶν βοτανῶν) who were heavily influenced by ‘evil’ teaching (2.1, κακοδιδασκαλίας) and the ‘ruler of this age’ (6.2). In addition, their predicament with God’s pending judgment is likewise evident since they did not ‘belong to God’ (3.1–2) and would therefore ‘not inherit the kingdom of God’ (3.3). Ignatius went so far as to indicate in 6.1 that, despite being physically alive, they were actually spiritually dead. The most likely explanation for such language is that Ignatius considered his opponents, in contrast with how they likely viewed themselves, as pseudo-Christians who had yet to experience salvation (see §5.3).

22 The nature of Ignatius’ Philadelphian opponents has been the source of much debate. Schoedel suggested that they were “Gentile Christians” who “were fascinated with the Scriptures” and who employed an “allegorical interpretation” that, despite being theologically harmless, threatened Ignatius’ lack of exegetical skill – Schoedel, “Ignatius and the Archives,” 97–106; Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 203, 207–9. Judith Lieu disagreed in part: “more is at stake than a competition over skill in Old Testament exegesis” – Lieu, Image and Reality, 48. Nevertheless, Lieu similarly suggested that “there is little trace of any serious doctrinal problems that can be spelt out and denied; only a sense that in some way the clear proclamation of Jesus Christ is being obscured.” – ibid., 50. In general, the letters to Magnesia and Philadelphia indicate that the primary opposition came from a group that had attempted to influence the church to return to its Jewish roots. However, Ignatius unfortunately does not provide any substantial elaborating details. I disagree with both Schoedel and Lieu since I detect in the letters a more serious problem inciting Ignatius to write against his opponents. Lieu is correct to recognize that Ignatius warned that the “clear proclamation of Jesus Christ” was at issue, however, the evidence suggests that he feared the opponents were doing more than simply ‘obscuring’ the gospel. It seems evident that he understood their teaching as a denial of a fundamental aspect of the gospel message.

23 Svigel concluded the same, “these pretenders were not genuine Christians and therefore caused divisions (3.2).” – Center and the Source, 132.
The reference to the salvation of the Hebrew prophets in Phld. 5.2 seems to have been an intentional juxtaposition of the prophets’ correct understanding, regarding the Christ they expected, with his opponents’ false understanding of the Christ that had already come. The central point of contention between Ignatius and his Jewish-leaning opponents does not appear to have been limited to their supposed desire to incorporate the practice of circumcision or Sabbath worship as some suggest. Instead, the core issue centers on their contrasting opinions about Jesus Christ. The OT prophets’ belief in Christ produced salvation, whereas the Philadelphian opponents’ failure ‘to speak about Jesus Christ’ revealed their true nature as ‘dead men walking’ (6.1b). In direct contrast to the OT prophets who had ‘believed in him [i.e., Christ]’ (5.2), Ignatius’ Jewish-leaning opponents operated with an ‘alien or hostile mindset’ (3.3, ἀλλοτρίᾳ γνώµῃ) that demonstrated that they were ‘not in agreement with the passion’ (3.3, τῷ πάθει οὐ συγκατατίθεται). The central problem then appears to be more

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24 For example, Judith Lieu commented that “When he [Ignatius] wants to explain what distinguishes the two [i.e., Judaism and Christianity] he does not enter into any theological argument; for him Judaism is circumcision and Sabbath. Christianity is the absence of these.” – Lieu, Neither Jew nor Greek?, 44.

25 Several of the available translations are overly interpretive when translating συγκατατίθημι in Phld. 3.3. For example, Holmes’ translation focuses the middle voice by translating the phrase οὗτος τῷ πάθει οὐ συγκατατίθεται as “they disassociate themselves from the passion” (Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 239). See also Rick Brannan, The Apostolic Fathers: A New Translation (Bellingham: Lexham, 2017), 104 – “this one has no part in the Passion”; Lake, Apostolic Fathers, 243 – “he has no part in the Passion”; and Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 2, 564 – “he hath no fellowship with the passion.” The verb συγκατατίθημι, when used outside of legal connotations, is consistently defined by the lexica as: to “agree with, consent to” (BDAG, 951); “to express approval, agree” (BrillDAG, 1985); to “put down the same vote or opinion with another, agree entirely with” (LSJ, 1663). The plain meaning of Ignatius’ comment is that ‘an alien mindset’ was defined as ‘not being in agreement with the passion’ (i.e., the gospel narrative).
serious than some have proposed.\textsuperscript{26} Ignatius’ issue with his opponents centers on their failure to agree with him regarding the content of the incarnational narrative itself.

When viewed in both its immediate and wider contexts, this first use of $\sigma\varphi\zeta\omega$ in \textit{Phld.} 5.2, when contrasted with the unbelief of the opponents in Philadelphia, demonstrates that having true faith in Christ meant that one agreed with Ignatius’ interpretation of the passion narrative. In addition, the wider context of the passage also implies that the salvation envisioned by Ignatius would resolve his opponents’ predicaments with evil and with God’s pending judgment (eternal death) already highlighted in Part I.

\textit{7.1.2 Σώζω in Smyrnaeans 2.1}

The second instance of $\sigma\varphi\zeta\omega$ (\textit{Smyrn.} 2.1), occurs in a letter that was polemically crafted to refute a form of docetic teaching that Ignatius believed was threatening the doctrinal purity and unity of the early Christian community. Similarly to his use of $\sigma\varphi\zeta\omega$ in \textit{Phld.} 5.2, the direct mention of ‘being saved’ in this verse, when viewed in isolation from the rest of the epistle,

\footnote{\textsuperscript{26} For example, Schoedel’s seems to miss the serious tone of Ignatius’ language: “The discussion about the ‘archives’ indicates that Ignatius thinks that his opponents as paying too much attention to the Bible. Could it be that they simply lost themselves in exegesis?...Ignatius, who seems to have known precious little about the Scriptures, may have tried to prove that the Bible had rendered itself obsolete in some respects and perhaps did not have the skills of the author of Hebrews or of Barnabas in finding the passages in the Old Testament to prove it.” (Schoedel, “Ignatius and the Archives,” 104–5). This argument does not satisfy on numerous fronts: first, the conversation in \textit{Phld.} 8.2 does not appear to be a comprehensive dialogue indicating the entirety of the conversation. In other words, there is no way to know exactly how Ignatius argued his points and what scriptures (if any) he countered with. Second, it seems out of character for Ignatius to pronounce such dire consequences on those he felt were better at exegesis and more committed to scripture! Lastly, I would contend, contra Schoedel and others, that Ignatius’ central disagreement with the opponents was that their interpretation of the OT lacked certain critical aspects of the gospel message. Ignatius’ basic message in \textit{Phld.} 8.2 was that the ‘archives’ (OT) foreshadowed the gospel message.}

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does not contribute greatly towards a fuller understanding of Ignatian soteriology. However, when the scope is widened, some potentially significant details begin to emerge.

Ignatius once again employed the passive voice of σῴζω in Smyrn. 2.1, albeit this time referring to those who were 'being saved' in his own timeframe:

> For he suffered all these things for our sakes (δι’ ἡμᾶς), so that we might be saved (ἵνα σωθῶμεν); and he truly suffered just as he truly raised himself—not, as certain unbelievers are saying, that he [only] seemed to have suffered.

By employing the prepositional phrase δι’ ἡμᾶς in the sentence—ἐπαθεν δι’ ἡμᾶς ἵνα σωθῶμεν—Ignatius indicated that Christ’s sacrifice served as a representative act of atonement for humanity (‘He suffered for us so that we might be saved’). Ignatius’ atonement-related language will be evaluated later in §7.3; however, what seems evident to note here is that the use of σῴζω in Smyrn. 2.1 is similar to Phld. 5.2 in that both verses demonstrate that Christ’s passion and resurrection were accomplished for the benefit of those who believed. Smyrn. 2.1 also adds the anti-docetic emphasis on the reality of Christ’s physical suffering and resurrection as a necessary element of such belief.²⁹

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²⁷ It should be noted that the purpose clause (ἵνα σωθῶμεν) is found in G, L, and in Severus of Antioch (circa 520 CE), however, critical editions note its absence in g and C (Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 250; Ehrman, Apostolic Fathers, 297; Lindemann and Paulsen, eds., Die Apostolischen Väter, 226). It is interesting to note that all of Severus’ citations from the Ignatian corpus listed by Lightfoot appear to come from the middle recension. With respect to this variant, Lightfoot’s translation of the Syriac supports the presence of the ἵνα clause, “so that we might be saved” (Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. I, 180, 182). Additionally, the clause seems to have been present in the manuscripts used to produce the oft-neglected 13th-century Arabic manuscript Sin. ar. 505 which translates as “that he might raise us to live with him.” (English translation of Ms. Sin. ar. 505, unpubl).
²⁹ To be elaborated on in §9.3.1.
However, throughout the letters Ignatius contrastingly described the Docetists as those who lacked salvation: Smyrn. 2.1c–‘just as they are thinking it will also happen to them, being bodiless and like phantoms’; 4.1–‘wild beasts in human form...pray...that somehow they might repent...Jesus Christ, our true life, has power over this’; 5.1–‘they are advocates of death rather than life’; 6.1–‘unless they believe in the blood of Christ, there is judgment’; 7.1–‘those opposing/refusing the gift of God are dying while being contentious.’ Much like the preceding analysis of σῴζω in Phld. 5.2, the wider context of Smyrn 2.1 demonstrates that the docetic opponents faced the same predicaments previously identified in Part I. In other words, their predicament with sin (Smyrn. 6.2; 7.1) and with evil (8.1; 9.1) would result in them experiencing God’s judgment in death (5.1–2; 6.1).

Thus far, both uses of σῴζω in Phld. 5.2 and Smyrn. 2.1 coincide in identifying faith as an essential factor in the salvation process (see §9). Additionally, the δι’ ἡμᾶς reference made in Smyrn. 2.1, and elsewhere in the letters (Trall. 2.1; Rom. 6.1; Smyrn. 1.2; 6.2; Pol. 3.2), indicates a primitive doctrine of atonement. By implication, the wider contexts of both references to salvation also contain numerous indications that the predicaments identified in Part I precluded salvation for Ignatius’ opponents.

7.1.3 Σώζω in Polycarp 1.2

In the final use of σῴζω in the letters, the reference to ‘being saved’ shifts to a future timeframe relative to Ignatius. Here Ignatius employed the present tense and subjunctive mood form of σῴζω to encourage Polycarp in Pol. 1.2 to exhort all people ‘so that they might be saved (ἵνα
σώζονται). Like Smyrn. 2.1, by pairing ἵνα with the subjunctive mood form of σῴζω, Pol. 1.2 conveys the purpose, and possibly also the result, of the exhortation to be saved. Thus Ignatius urged Polycarp to exhort others so that those who had not yet become Christian could ‘become saved.’ With the letter functioning as a pastoral letter to a fellow bishop, it is not surprising that the exhortation was devoid of any explanatory detail regarding why salvation was required or, for that matter, how it was to be accomplished. Explaining human salvation was not the primary purpose of the letter and, presumably, Ignatius felt that Polycarp required no such reminders regarding the specific details. Ignatius simply expressed the need for Polycarp to endeavor to encourage others to be saved.

7.1.4 The Use of Σωτηρία in Ignatius

Ignatius employed the nominal form σωτηρία only once in Eph. 18.1. The scarcity of the term is perhaps curious given that many of his early-Christian predecessors and near contemporaries used the term with a somewhat greater relative frequently. From a lexical standpoint, the nominal form σωτηρία seems to follow the dual-sense meaning shared by its verbal partner σῴζω which, depending on context, refers to either (1) “deliverance, preservation, w[ith] focus on physical aspect”, or (2) “salvation, w[ith] focus on transcendent aspects.”

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39 Wallace and others note that the subjunctive can sometimes function like a future indicative (Wallace, Greek Grammar, 463). The present tense suggests that Ignatius was encouraging Polycarp to continually and regularly urge others to be saved in the future.

39 Compare to the following rates of usage: NT (once per 3,125 words); undisputed Pauline (once per 1,724 words); disputed Pauline (once per words 2,083 words); 1 Clem. (once per 1,960 words); 2 Clem. (once per 751 words); Barn. (once per 2,222 words); Herm. (once 7,142 per words).

39 BDAG, 985–6; see also PGL, 1569 – “A. preservation...in sickness...in health...B. salvation”; BrillDAG, 2075.
section demonstrated, when Ignatius used the verbal form σῴζω, he seemed content simply to
proclaim that some had been saved or needed to be saved. Nevertheless, the immediate
context surrounding the solitary use of the nominal form σωτηρία in Eph. 18.1 directly
incorporates much of what was found in Part I in a way that begins to more fully explain
Ignatius’ conception for what ‘salvation’ entailed.

When viewed in its surrounding context, Eph. 18.1a is perhaps the closest
approximation of an Ignatian definition for the term ‘salvation’:

My spirit [is] a humble by-product of the cross, which [i.e. the cross] is an offense to
unbelievers, but [it is] salvation and eternal life (σωτηρία καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος) to us.

33 H. E. W. Turner’s apt advice rings true here and should be remembered when dealing with a work such as this: “the Apostolic Fathers….Their main purpose was practical or devotional instruction rather than theological exposition. Even S. Ignatius, the most theological of them all, is in no sense a systematic thinker. It would...be a grave error in historical perspective to expect from them more than is actually there—a simple exposition of the practical content of the Christian faith.” – Patristic Doctrine of Redemption, 43–4.

34 The neuter-singular relative pronoun ὁ does not follow normal convention in matching its masculine-singular antecedent (τοῦ σταυροῦ) in gender and number. Brown, while analyzing Ignatius’ grammar, recognized this mismatch and suggested that “his use of ὁ ἐστιν in referring to substantives of any gender” was a particular habit that marks “his style.” – Brown, Authentic Writings of Ignatius, 82. Since the mismatch occurs elsewhere in the letters (Eph. 15.3; 17.2; 20.2) Brown’s conclusion is certainly possible, however, the fact that the antecedent agrees elsewhere in gender and number (Eph. 9.1; 14.1) seems to counter this conclusion. The manuscript evidence demonstrates that scribes recognized and attempted to fix mismatches they viewed as erroneous (for example, see Eph. 20.2 where g and l read ὁ but G reads ὅς).

Nevertheless, gender mismatch between relative pronouns and their antecedents was not unique to Ignatius and appears to have been a fairly normal occurrence where “sense agreement” was superseded by “syntactical agreement (constructio ad sensum).” – Wallace, Greek Grammar, 337. The phrase ὁ ἐστιν is sometimes referred to as a “formulaic phrase used without reference to the gender of the word explained or to that of the word which explains....Yet the gender is readily assimilated to the predicate where there is identification.” – Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk, eds., A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 73. Regarding Eph. 18.1 then, the most likely reason for the mismatch is that the relative pronoun’s gender, which would normally agree with the masculine-sg antecedent τοῦ σταυροῦ, was attracted by the neuter-sg predicate nominative σκάνδαλον, possibly for emphasis – see Graydon F. Snyder, “The Text and Syntax of Ignatius ΠΡΟΣ ΕΦΕΣΙΟΥΣ 20:2c,” VC 22 (1968): 9.
Despite the uncertainty whether the first clause (Περίψημα τὸ ἐμὸν πνεῦμα τοῦ σταυροῦ) should be understood as an indication that Ignatius viewed his pending martyrdom as an atonement for others (to be evaluated in §11.3), for now it suffices to note that from a grammatical standpoint, Ignatius utilized the copula ἐστιν to link his subject (i.e., τοῦ σταυροῦ) to a dual predicate that illustrates how he believed the crucifixion should be understood, first from the perspective of unbelievers, and lastly from the perspective of those who believed. Figure 3 illustrates the grammatical structure:

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Figure 3: Grammatical Diagram of Ign. Eph. 18.1

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35 Despite the fact that the second half of Eph. 18.1a referred simply ‘to us’ (ἡμῖν), the parallel in the first half of the verse, which was explicitly directed towards τοῖς ἀπιστοῦσιν, implies that those who viewed the cross as ‘salvation and eternal life’ were believers.
Ignatius’ textual dependence on 1 Corinthians has been widely recognized.\(^{36}\) A plain reading of Ign. Eph. suggests that Ignatius shared similar concerns for the Ephesians that Paul did for his Corinthian audience. For example, whereas Paul rebuked the Corinthians for their factiousness and disunity (1 Cor 1:10–17), Ignatius seems to have been preemptively warning his predominately faithful Ephesian audience (Eph. 6.2; 8.1) to remain unified despite the destabilizing efforts of certain factions that had previously attempted to indoctrinate them with what he deemed to be false (Eph. 7.1; 9.1) and inherently ‘evil’ teaching (Eph. 16.2; 17.1).\(^{37}\)

In the midst of such a discussion, a two-pronged definition for how the cross was understood emerges. According to Ignatius, the crucifixion of Christ could be defined in one of two ways by his second-century audience. In the first half of the dual predicate in 18.1, Ignatius borrowed from 1 Cor 1:23 to explain the cross from the perspective of the ‘unbelievers’ (τοῖς ἀπιστοῦσιν) who deemed its message to be σκάνδαλον, a term signifying something causing “offense or revulsion” and that “results in opposition.”\(^{38}\) The language Ignatius employed to describe those who viewed the cross in this manner shows that he rejected their perspective.

Despite its scarcity, the single use of σωτηρία in Eph. 18.1a is pregnant with meaning. As the following demonstrates, the context of the section (Eph. 16.1–17.2) aligns with at least two

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\(^{36}\) That Ignatius had 1 Cor 1:8, 20, 23 in mind when he wrote Eph. 18.1 is well attested. For example, see Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 165; Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 84; Inge, “Ignatius,” 64.

\(^{37}\) The identity and nature of the opposition is not as clear in the Ephesian letter when compared to the letters to Magnesia/Philadelphia (Judaizers) or Tralles/Smyrna (Docetists). Even though some sense an anti-docetic polemic in the Eph. 7.2 and 18.2 (Robinson, *Parting of the Ways*, 118), the lack of specificity may be due to Ignatius’ lack of awareness of any specific attack against the Ephesian church.

\(^{38}\) BDAG, 926.
of the anthropological predicaments previously identified in Part I. Immediately prior to the
mention of σωτηρία, Ignatius listed a variety of problems confronting his opponents and their
followers: they ‘will not inherit the kingdom of God’ (16.1), will die in ‘inextinguishable fire’
(16.2), will ‘be taken captive/robbed of life’ (17.1), and ‘foolishly perish’ (17.1–2). Additionally,
their corrupting influence is causally linked to the ‘the ruler of this age’ and his ‘evil teaching’
(16.2; 17.2). It seems evident from the text that Ignatius believed his opponents, along with
their followers, required salvation due to (1) the influence of evil (see Ch. 3) and (2) the
resultant threat of God’s eternal punishment (see Ch. 4).

From a negative standpoint, in the first half of the predicate in 18.1a, Ignatius
identified the reason why some who claimed to be followers of Jesus Christ were not
becoming wise and instead remained ignorant of God’s gift (17.2). According to Ignatius, those
who he identified as ‘unbelievers’ (τοῖς ἀπιστοῦσιν) defined ‘the cross’ (τοῦ σταυροῦ) as an
‘object of offense’ or ‘revulsion’ (σκάνδαλον). The opposite assessment, stated in a positive
manner, follows in the second half of the verse (18.1b) where Ignatius utilized an additional
predicate through an implied ἔστιν: ‘But to us (by implication, to ‘believers’), the cross [is]
salvation and eternal life.’

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A case could be made for recognizing the opponents’ predicament with sin as well (see Ch. 3). Ignatius’
use of 1 Corinthians in Eph. 18.1 suggests that the ‘boasting of those who are called intelligent’, but who
unwisely oppose God, was sinful in his mind. Scholars have recognized Ignatius’ near quotation of 1 Cor 1:20
in Ign. Eph. 18.1b where he modified Paul’s ποῦ σοφός; ποῦ γραμματεύς; ποῦ συζητητὴς τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου by
eliminating the reference to the ‘scribe’ and instead adding ποῦ καύχησις τῶν λεγοµένων συνετῶν. The
mention of ‘boasting’ by those thought to be ‘intelligent’ seems to be a reappropriation of 1 Cor 1:19
where God promised to ‘confound the intelligence of those intelligent’ (σύνεσιν τῶν συνετῶν) and 1 Cor 1:28–29
where Paul warned that the ‘despised’ were chosen by God ‘so that all flesh should not boast (µὴ καυχήσηται)’ in his presence’. Ignatius’ language elsewhere suggests that ‘boasting’ was a sinful activity that brought
destruction (Trall. 4.1; Pol. 5.2).
By paralleling σωτηρία with ζωή αἰώνιος, Ignatius appears to define salvation as the reception of eternal life for those who believed the passion narrative. When viewed in context, the salvation proclaimed in 18.1 solves the problems mentioned immediately before and after the verse. Ignatius pronounced eternal death on those who corrupted the faith in God that centers on the crucified Christ (Eph. 16.2), while simultaneously warning that anyone who adopted the ‘evil’ and ‘corrupt’ teachings propagated by evil (i.e., the ‘ruler of this age’) would likewise be eternally punished (Eph. 16.2–17.2). Perhaps the clearest example of this is found in the verse immediately following the proclamation of salvation. In 19.3, Ignatius stated that the act of ‘God appearing in human form’ was intended ‘for the purpose of [bringing] the newness of eternal life’ as well as ‘the abolition of death.’ In other words, Ignatius understood human salvation as the deliverance from evil and the resultant divine death penalty (Eph. 19.3).

7.1.5 Summarizing the Ignatian use of Σώζω Cognates

In general, the three uses of σῴζω in the letters focus more on proclamation than explanation. This again suggests that Ignatius may have felt that his predominately Christian audience did not require a reiteration of basic soteriological concepts which had already been taught to

40 Aune labelled the use of σωτηρία in Eph. 18.1 as a ‘synonym for everlasting life’ – The Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology in Early Christianity, NovTSup 28 (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 164. The notion of ‘salvation as the reception of life from the dead’ will be fully explored in Chapter 8.

41 While analyzing Ignatius’ grammar and style, Brown noted that the preposition εἰς, as used in the phrase εἰς καινότητα αἰδίου ζωῆς, was very often “elliptical in expressions of purpose, as in Eph. 19.3: ‘God manifesting himself as man εἰς καινότητα αἰδίου ζωῆς,’ i.e., for the purpose of giving ‘newness of eternal life.’ Often too, εἰς points to its object as the expected or realized result of an action or condition” – Brown, Authentic Writings of Ignatius, 70.
them and, most likely, had already embraced as part of their belief system. Nevertheless, Ignatius’ utilization of σῴζω does reveal a few details that will be more fully explored later in the thesis. First, Ignatius viewed human salvation as something that was received as a result of believing in a set of truths about Jesus Christ. Thus, according to Ignatius the OT prophets had been saved by believing in, and hoping expectantly for, the coming σωτήρ (Phld. 5.2). On the other hand, the early-Christian community, comprised of both Jews and Gentiles, was presently ‘being saved’ by believing that the promised σωτήρ had not only arrived, but that he had physically suffered and died for them (Smyrn. 2.1). Indeed, the fact that Ignatius identified the advent and suffering of the σωτήρ as the distinctive aspect which set his gospel apart from the OT highlights this difference (Phld. 9.2). In the final use of σῴζω, Ignatius’ exhortation to Polycarp demonstrated that he recognized that Christians bore the missional responsibility to exhort the rest of humanity (i.e., those not yet Christian) to ‘be saved’ (Pol. 1.2). Finally, the single use of σωτηρία in Eph. 18.1 seemed to function as an embryonic definition for Ignatius’ conception of salvation as the defeat of evil, the remedy for spiritual death and, consequently, the reception of eternal life for those who believed.43

42 In this verse, Ignatius clearly highlighted the distinctiveness of the gospel in relation to the ‘archives’ (cf. 8.2): ‘But the gospel has something exceptional, [namely] the coming of the savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, his suffering, and resurrection.’ In the later part or the same verse Ignatius indicated that the gospel was the ‘imperishable completion of what had been anticipated by the OT prophets’ preaching.

43 This final aspect will be more fully explored in Chapter 8.
7.2 Salvation as Fleeing: The Ignatian Use of Φεύγω Cognates

Early-Christian writings contain numerous examples where φεύγω and its cognates were employed to exhort one another to ‘flee’ from sin and the influence of evil. Indeed, φεύγω and its related lexical terms were sometimes used in a way that defined salvation as an ‘escape’ from certain perils that threatened their eternal state. For example, the synoptic tradition records John the Baptist denouncing the Pharisees and Sadducees with the warning:

‘You offspring of snakes! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come (φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς)?’ (Matt 3:7; Luke 3:7).

Similarly, the author of 1 Clement alerted the Corinthian church of the need to

fear him [i.e., God] and let us leave behind the wretched lusts of evil works, in order that we may be sheltered by his mercy from the coming judgments. For where can any of us escape (φυγεῖν) from his [God’s] mighty hand? (1 Clem 28.1–2)

For the author of 1 Clement, this was much more than a simple admonition to avoid lust and evil. Instead, the use of the verb demonstrates that salvation was sometimes conceived as an

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44 See §7.0 n. 6 for examples.

45 The warning found in Matt 3:7 and Luke 3:7 ‘to flee from the coming wrath’ (φυγεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς μελλούσης ὀργῆς) is similar to Ignatius’ warning in Ign. Eph. 11.1 to ‘fear the coming wrath’ (τὴν μέλλουσαν ὀργὴν φοβηθῶμεν). While it is tempting to suggest that Ignatius was textually dependent on a written form of either Matthew or Luke’s gospel, James Dunn is probably correct to assert that this most likely represents a dependence on synoptic tradition instead. Referring to the phrase in Ign. Eph. 11.1, Dunn noted that the “phrase, originated by the Baptist, may simply have become part of Christian exhortation, or could be attributed to a wider knowledge of or impact of the oral tradition of the Baptist’s preaching. Specific knowledge of a Q document as such or of Matthew in particular is not required to explain Ignatius’ use of the phrase.” – James D. G. Dunn, Neither Jews Nor Greeks: A Contested Identity, Christianity in the Making, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 421. The fact that it is difficult to detect a direct dependence on written gospel texts in the letters can be explained in one of two ways: (1) Ignatius’ dire situation on his march to Rome precluded access to written texts, and/or (2) Ignatius depended on oral gospel tradition. The second of the two options suggests a date in the early second century. As previously asserted, if the MR was a later forgery one would expect to find more quotes from written NT sources.
'escape' from God and his pending judgment on sin and evil. Even Justin Martyr at times used φεύγω in a way that seems to parallel the notion of 'being saved'. For example, in both his *Dialogue with Trypho* and *First Apology*, Justin gave the following warnings:

they who prepare themselves and repent of their sins *shall escape* (ἐκφεύξονται) the future judgment of God. *(Dial. 138.3)*

For we warn you that you *will not escape* (οὐκ ἐκφεύξεσθε) the coming judgment of God if you remain in wrongdoing. *(1 Apol. 68.2)*

The expressed need ‘to flee’ from not only sin and evil, but also from God’s impending judgment, therefore seems to have been relatively common in early-Christian writings.

The Ignatian letters appear to have been written in a similar vein. Ignatius was certainly troubled about those who attempted to influence the early church to stray from the what he perceived to be foundational truth. While he himself clearly refused ‘to escape’ from

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48 For example, see Matt 23:33 – ‘You snakes, you offspring of snakes! How will you escape (φυγεῖτε) from the judgment of Gehenna?'; Luke 21:36 – ‘escape (ἐκφυγεῖν) all these things (i.e., wrath, sword)...and to stand before Son of Man’; Rom 2:3 – ‘do you think...that you will escape (ἐκφεῦξῃ) God’s judgment?'; 1 Thess 5:3 – ‘sudden destruction will overtake them...and they will never escape (οὐ μὴ ἐκφυγόσων, cf. the Day of the Lord); Heb 2:3 – ‘how shall we escape (ἐκφευξόμεθα) if we neglect so great salvation?'; Heb 12:25 – ‘if they did not escape (οὐκ ἐξέφυγον) while refusing the one who warned them upon the earth, much less we by rejecting the one from heaven’; Did. 3.1 – ‘flee (φεῦγε) from every evil’; Barn. 4.1 – ‘Let us flee (φυγώμεν) completely from every work of lawlessness’; 1 Clem. 58.3 – ‘escaping (φυγόντες τὰς) the threats...to those who disobeyed’; 2 Clem. 10.1 – ‘Let us flee (φυγώμεν) impiety/ungodliness lest evil overtake us’; Mart. Pol. 2.3 – ‘they were setting before their eyes to escape (φυγεῖν) from that eternal and never quenchable [fire]’; Just. 1 Apol. 60.3–4; 1 Apol. 61.6 – ‘how those who have sinned but who are repentant will escape from their sins (φεύξονται τὰς ἁμαρτίας)’ – text from ibid., 238. My translation (see above) differs from the editors’ who translated φεύξονται in the passive voice “will be separated from their sins” – ibid., 239.
those who were determined to assault him physically, even to the point of death (Rom. 4.1, 6.2–8.3), Ignatius used φεύγω several times to exhort his readers 'to flee' from those who would harm them eternally. In other words, his readers were being warned to escape from the spiritual assault perpetrated by those who opposed the early Christian message (Magn. 1.2; Trall. 2.1; 11.1; Phld. 2.1; 6.2; 7.2; Smyrn. 8.1; Pol. 5.1).

The first thing to notice is that, with one possible exception (i.e., Trall. 2.1), Ignatius used φεύγω and its cognates to speak predominately about the need 'to flee' from evil and its divisive impacts. For example, the recipients of his letters were to 'flee' from 'every abuse of the ruler of this age' (Magn. 1.2), 'evil side growths' (Trall. 11.1), 'evil teaching' (Phld. 2.1), 'evil activities' (Phld. 6.2; Pol. 5.1),49 'the ambushes of the ruler of this age' (Phld. 6.2), 'divisions' (Phld. 7.2),50 'divisions as the beginning of evils' (Smyrn. 8.1), and 'divisions and evil teaching'...
While it is possible that Ignatius was simply formulating generic warnings about the possibility of evil forces inciting Christians to becoming divided over varied and benign issues (i.e., *Phld.* 6.2; *Pol.* 5.1), a closer examination reveals that Ignatius feared that following his opponents resulted in a much more sinister outcome.

### 7.2.1 Fleeing Doctrinal Captivity (*Phld.* 2.1)

The first example is located in *Phld.* 2.1–2 where a shepherding metaphor, similar to those found in other early Christian texts, was utilized to not only encourage the Philadelphians to follow the shepherd (i.e., Jesus Christ), but to simultaneously flee from the divisive teaching perpetrated by ‘wolves’ (λύκοι) who sought to ‘take [them] captive’:

> Therefore, as children of the light of truth, flee (φεύγετε) from division and evil teaching. Where the shepherd is, there follow like sheep.  For many seemingly trustworthy wolves (λύκοι ἀξιόπιστοι) attempt, by means of wicked pleasure, to take captive the runners in God’s race; but in your unity they will find no opportunity.

Even though the stated direct object of the imperative ‘flee’ (φεύγετε) is identified in *Phld.* 2.1a as ‘division and evil teaching’ (τὸν µερισµὸν καὶ τὰς κακοδιδασκαλίας), the reason for the command is introduced by an explanatory γάρ in the following verse (2.2): any sheep who failed to follow the shepherd (2.1b) risked being captured by the numerous ‘wolves’ who gave the false appearance of being trustworthy (λύκοι ἀξιόπιστοι). Ignatius therefore warned that

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8.1) suggests that Ignatius would most likely have identified evil as the source behind the parallel call to flee divisions in *Phld.* 7.2.

his lupine opponents sought to do much more than simply cause disruptions. Instead, their goal was to ‘capture’ God’s race-runners by propagating what Ignatius considered to be ‘evil teaching’ (τὰς κακοδιδασκαλίας) intended to create catastrophic fissures in the early church. For Ignatius, ‘being captured’ by the wolves meant that one had adopted the wolves’ schismatic belief system which stood in direct opposition to the established leadership and the accepted kerygma of the church. As the following section will demonstrate, the wider context of this verse, along with Ignatius’ further use of φεύγω cognates elsewhere in the letters, combine to show that the ultimate outcome of failing to avoid capture would result in drastic eschatological consequences.

7.2.2 Fleeing Eschatological Death (Trall. 2.1; n.1)

As the previous section highlighted, Ignatius, without being specific, at times simply provided generic warnings for his readers to flee from evil and its influence. According to Ignatius, those who failed to escape would become imprisoned by adopting the ‘evil’ and ‘filthy’ teachings inspired by the devil, the ‘ruler of this age’ (Eph. 17.1; Phld. 2.2). This section reveals that Ignatius sometimes used φεύγω and its cognates to state more explicitly what was at stake if his readers failed to comply with his warnings. Ignatius had literally been captured. Paralleling his own captivity to the Roman authorities, Ignatius revealed what he understood to be the underlying spiritual reality that his readers faced if they allowed themselves to

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52 In the only other use of the verb αἰχμαλώτιζω (‘to make prisoner’) in the letters, ‘the ruler of this age’ was described as the one who sought to ‘take [them] captive’ by introducing teaching that Ignatius unsparingly described as ‘filth’ (δυσωδίαν, Eph. 17.1).
become spiritual prisoners of war. Ultimately, if they allowed themselves to be captured, their spiritual lives were at great risk. This can be clearly seen in two of the verses where Ignatius warned about ‘fleeing’ from spiritual/eschatological death (*Trall*. 2.1; 11.1).

Employing a botanical metaphor in *Trall*. 11.1a, Ignatius urged the Trallians to ‘flee’ (φεύγετε) from those he likened to an infestation of deadly, poisonous offshoots (τὰ κακὰς παραφυάδας). By denoting the offenders as παραφυάδας, ‘offshoots’ growing on the side of a plant, Ignatius indicated that the false teachers had arisen in parallel alongside the ranks of Christianity. However, as previously argued in §5.3, the context in which he used the term clearly suggests their illegitimacy. This is especially evident given that he added the κακὰς modifier and indicated in the second half of the verse (11.1b) that such offshoots were ‘not the Father’s plants’ (οὔκ εἰσιν φυτεία πατρός). Thus Schoedel agreed that “the image expresses Ignatius’ view of the false teachers as illegitimate offshoots of the Christian community.”

And yet the focus of the warning is not on the status of the deceivers *per se* but on the disastrous consequences expected to befall anyone who followed them. Ignatius’ warning is plain: ‘if anyone tastes it [i.e., their deadly fruit] that one dies on the spot’ (οὗ ἐὰν γεύσηταί τις, παραυτά

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53 BrillDAG, 1572 – “descendant, offshoot”; BDAG, 772–3 – “someth. growing off the side, offshoot, side growth”; LSJ, 1330 – “side-growth, 1. in plants, sucker, offshoot”, “2. Branch of a vein”, “3. metaph., of branches of a discussion.” That the use of the term does not necessarily imply illegitimacy is clearly shown in the Shepherd of Hermas’ *Parable of the Willow Tree* where multiple passages use παραφυάς to refer to spiritual fruit budding from a genuine Christian’s life (Herm. Sim. 8.1.17, 18 [67.17, 18]; 8.2.1, 2 [68.1, 2]; 8.3.7 [69.7]; 8.4.6 [70.6]; 8.5.2, 5, 6 [71.2, 5, 6]).

54 Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 156. Grant similarly noted that in *Trall*. 11.1, “Ignatius’ main concern is with the contrast between the cross as the tree of life planted by the Father (cf. Smyrn. 1:2), with branches consisting of true Christians” – Grant, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 79. Corwin likewise suggested that when speaking of being part of the church, and specifically being referred to as God’s plants in *Trall* 11.1 and *Phld*. 3.1, Ignatius used the figure [i.e., the botanical metaphor] “negatively to deny that the false teachers have any such status.” – Corwin, *St. Ignatius*, 199.
ἀποθνήσκει). It is evident that Ignatius described therein the danger of a person’s spiritual, non-physical death.

When *Trall.* 11.1 is considered alongside his earlier comments, the point of the comment regarding the death of those who would be poisoned by the opponents’ aberrant doctrines comes more sharply into focus. The verse in question, *Trall.* 2.1, is perhaps one of the clearest soteriological passages in the entire corpus. According to Ignatius, Jesus Christ was the one who

...died for us so that by believing in his death you might escape death (Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, τὸν δι’ ἡµᾶς ἀποθανόντα ἵνα πιστεύσαντες εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν ἐκφύγητε)

Several ideas come quickly to the fore. First, it was already suggested in §7.1.2 that the use of the prepositional phrase δι’ ἡµᾶς, when paired with σῴζω in *Smyrn.* 2.1 (‘he suffered all these things for us [δι’ ἡµᾶς], so that we might be saved’ [ἵνα σωθῶµεν]), once again conveys the notion of a representative atonement. Second, in the same way that was previously noted in the examination of the σῷζω cognates (*Eph.* 18.1; *Phld.* 5.2; *Smyrn.* 2.1), Ignatius again highlighted his understanding of salvation as being procured by believing in the events of the gospel narrative. As with *Trall.* 11.1, a person’s physical death does not seem to be view in *Trall.* 2.1. Instead, the verse demonstrates that Ignatius identified belief in the crucified Christ as the solution for humanity’s predicament with spiritual/eschatological death. Specifically, salvation is here conceived of as humanity’s *escape* from such a fate. Additionally, faith in the gospel events is proposed as the means of escape (see Part III).

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55 Ignatius’ conception of faith will be further explored in Chapters 9–10.
7.2.3 Fleeing to the Gospel (Phld. 5.1)

By using the prefixed form ἐκφεύγω in Trall. 2.1, Ignatius focused the exhortation on the problem his readers were to flee from (i.e., spiritual/eschatological death). Shifting to Phld. 5.1, we find that Ignatius utilized another prefixed form of φεύγω that seems to emphasize quite the opposite:

I have found mercy, having fled for refuge to (προσφεύγων τῷ) the gospel as to the flesh of Jesus Christ and to the apostles as to the council of elders of the church.

Having already indicated that his readers were to ‘flee from’ spiritual/eschatological death, in Phld. 5.1 he presented the Philadelphians with a new goal to ‘flee/escape to’ the gospel (τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ). With ἐκφεύγω emphasizing the need to flee from death, the use of προσφεύγω therefore shifted the emphasis on the solution to ‘flee to’ the gospel.

When both verses (Trall. 2.1; Phld. 5.1) are compared, it seems evident that Ignatius likened salvation to an escape from spiritual/eschatological death that was achieved by one’s fleeing to (i.e. belief in) the salvific plan of God as displayed in the gospel narrative. When viewed in the light of these two passages, especially considering the call to ‘flee from’ those who sought to poison them with ‘death-dealing fruit’ (Trall. 11.1a), the general warnings to ‘flee’

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56 Lexically, ἐκφεύγω denotes the action of ‘fleeing from’ some peril or danger: “to seek safety in flight, run away” or “to become free from danger by avoiding some peril, escape” (BDAG, 312); “flee out or away, escape”, “escape out of” (LSJ, 525); “to run away, escape, flee”, “to flee, avoid, of pers. and things” (BrillDAG, 651).

57 The verb προσφεύγω is consistently defined: “to flee toward, resort to the help of” (BrillDAG, 1832); “to flee to, flee for refuge to” (BDAG, 886); “flee for refuge to” (LSJ, 1530). The term is rare and is not found in the NT. Apart from Ignatius, the term is used in the Apostolic Fathers only by 1 Clem. 20.11 where it refers to how God does good things especially for “us who have fled to (προσπεφευγότας) his compassionate mercies through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
from division and false/evil teaching take on a whole new meaning (Magn. 1.2; Phld. 6.2; 7.2; Smyrn. 8.1; Pol. 5.1). The early church was evidently dealing with aberrant teachings that departed from what was regarded as the true gospel and Ignatius therefore warned of the need to escape from such deadly viewpoints. The gospel, on the other hand, solved that problem. In this sense, salvation for Ignatius meant that one "fled from" poisonous teachings by fleeing to (i.e. believing in) the true gospel.

7.3 Salvation as Redemption: The Ignatian Use of Λυτρόω

The early Christians, potentially influenced by their OT roots, as well as by contemporary usage, had two primary word groupings—ἀγοράζω and λυτρόω — which were frequently used to convey the notion of someone or something being ‘redeemed’, ‘purchased’, or ‘ransomed’.\(^58\) For example, the Gospel of Mark plainly utilized λύτρον in such a fashion by specifying that the ‘Son of Man came...to give his life as a ransom for many’ (Mark 10:45—HELLHEN...DOUINAI TIH PSIKHIN AUTOI LUTRON ANTI POLLON).\(^59\) Later writings, such as the late first-century to early second-

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\(^59\) For a parallel passage, see Matt 20:28.
century Epistle of Barnabas,\textsuperscript{60} employed \(\lambda\upsilon\tau\rho\omicron\omega\) with a similar salvific focus when it described the redemptive work of God as follows:

> the Father commanded him [Jesus Christ] to prepare for himself a holy people, \textit{having redeemed} us from the darkness (\(\lambda\upsilon\tau\rho\omega\sigma\acute{\alpha}\mu\epsilon\nu\nu\ \eta\mu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \epsilon\kappa\ \tau\omicron\ \sigma\kappa\tau\omicron\tau\omicron\varsigma\)) \textit{\textit{(Barn. 14.6)}}

Many early-Christian documents indicate that \(\lambda\upsilon\tau\rho\omicron\omega\) and its cognates were often used in a way that was noticeably synonymous with salvation.\textsuperscript{61} From a lexical standpoint, the term is regularly defined as “to free by paying a ransom, \textit{redeem}” or to be “liberated from an oppressive situation, \textit{set free, rescue, redeem}.”\textsuperscript{62} While some have denied that the term, by definition, should always be understood to contain the idea of a ransom payment, Leon Morris suggested that

\begin{quote}
[i]t is important to realize that it is this idea of payment as the basis of release which is the reason for the existence of the whole word-group. Other words were available to denote simple release. Men could (and often did) go on using \(\lambda\upsilon\omega\), or \(\rho\acute{\omicron}\mu\alpha\varsigma\), etc. When they chose to use \(\lambda\upsilon\tau\rho\omicron\nu\) (or its cognates) it was because they wanted a term which expressed in itself, and not simply by inference from the context, the idea of release by payment.\textsuperscript{63}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{60} Holmes suggested a date range sometime between the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (70 CE) and before Jerusalem was rebuilt by Hadrian following the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–135 CE)–Apostolic Fathers, 373; Paget proposed the same dating brackets–James Carleton Paget, “The Epistle of Barnabas,” in The Writings of the Apostolic Fathers, ed. Paul Foster (London: T&T Clark, 2007), 75.

\textsuperscript{61} Some additional early-Christian texts that use \(\lambda\upsilon\tau\rho\omicron\omega\) and its cognates to speak of salvation include Matt 20:28; Luke 1:68–9; 2:38; 21:28; 24:21 (eschatological focus); Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 17, 14: 4:30; Col 1:14; 1 Tim 2:6; Tit 2:14; Heb 9:12, 15; 1 Pet 1:18; 1 Clem. 12.7; 2 Clem. 17.4; Did. 4:6; Barn. 14.5, 6, 7, 8, 19.2; 1910; Herm. Vis. 4.17 [22.7]; Diogn. 9.2.

\textsuperscript{62} Definitions from BDAG, 606. The verb is similarly defined elsewhere as "release on receipt of a ransom, hold to ransom" (LSJ, 1067), "act. To set free, by means of payment of a ransom" (BrillDAG, 1262).

\textsuperscript{63} Morris, Apostolic Preaching, 12.
Perhaps recognizing the potential that this might not always be the case, Morris further commented that

[e]tymological considerations are, of course, not final. Usage must be our final criterion. But it is worth noting at the beginning that the very existence of this word-group is due to the desire to give precise expression to the conception of release by payment. 64

With the warning in mind, this leads to the question of whether any such language can be found in the Ignatian epistles and, if so, whether its use contributes to a fuller understanding of Ignatius’ soteriological beliefs.

A survey of letters shows that the MR did not utilize the ἀγοράζω word grouping and that λυτρῶ was employed a single time in Phld. 11.1b:

But may those who shamed them be redeemed (λυτρώθεισαν) by the grace of Jesus Christ (ἐν τῇ χάριτι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ)

The context of the passage involves a discussion concerning how two of Ignatius’ companions [i.e. the deacon Philo and Rheus Agathopus] had been treated by the Philadelphian church, which had apparently been kind to them, and the judaizing opponents in Philadelphia, who were negatively described as ‘those who had shamed (ἀτιµᾶσαντες) them.’ Most seem to agree that οἱ ἄτιµᾶσαντες (‘those who dishonored them’) should be interpreted as pointing to the judaizing group warned about throughout the letter. 65 However, interpretations vary regarding

64 Ibid.
65 Schoedel, when speaking about those who ‘dishonored’ them, concluded that “Ignatius expresses the same hopes for these critics as he does for the Philadelphian Judaizers, namely, that by divine grace they may be freed from their delusion....No doubt we are dealing with the same group.” – Ignatius of Antioch, 214.
what Ignatius meant when he expressed his desire that such people ‘be redeemed’

(λυτρωθείσαν).66

Opinions fall into one of two primary categories. The first includes those who imply that the verse may have salvific significance but do not provide any substantial explanation for this interpretation. For example, in one of the only works dedicated to Ignatian soteriology, Wilkens, without any significant interaction, simply stated that Jesus was the one “whose grace can ransom even those opposed to Him (IPhld. 11:1).” Winslow’s article, “The Idea of Redemption in Ignatius”, much like Wilkens, referred to the verse once without providing any further explanation: “redemption is ‘by grace of Jesus Christ’ (Phil. 11.1).”68 Even though both authors seem to imply that there is a soteriological overtone here, neither delves any further despite the soteriological focus of each study. Without specifically commenting on the use of λυτρόω, Corwin’s work nevertheless focused on the soteriological significance of the verse due to the use of the phrase ἐν τῇ χάριτι: “Grace is thus essentially a soteriological word, for it means the divine help extended to men for their salvation. Sometimes it is loosely used

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66 Note the rare optative mood form of λυτρόω used here (λυτρωθείσαν). Wallace suggests that since the use of the optative had become “absorbed by the subjunctive in the Koine period” any use of the optative was most likely intentional—Greek Grammar, 480. Ignatius’ somewhat frequent use of the optative (fourteen occurrences— Eph. 2.2; 11.2 [twice]; 12.2; Magn. 2.1; 11.1; 12.3; Trall. 13.3; Rom. 5.2; Phld. 11.1; Smyrn. 5.3; Pol. 1.1; 6.1 [twice]) may seem initially significant until one recognizes that all but two of the instances contain set formulaic expressions such as γένοιτο and ὄναθην. This would suggest that the two non-formulaic uses in Trall. 13.3 and Phld. 11.1 should be viewed with their full Attic emphasis.


68 Winslow, “Idea of Redemption,” 128. Without commenting on the verb, Isacson likewise noted briefly that the group referred to in 11.1 “is probably the opponents” previously mentioned and that “they too may be redeemed by the grace of Jesus Christ.”—To Each Their Own Letter, 152.
as the equivalent for the whole saving event (Phld. 11.1). Despite this, Corwin nowhere commented on how to interpret λυτρωθείσαν.

In the second category are those who conclude that the verse was not referring to someone who needed to 'be redeemed' in the sense of 'being saved.' For example, while commenting on Phld. 11.1, Schoedel stated that “Ignatius expresses the same hopes for these critics as he does for the Philadelphian Judaizers, namely, that by divine grace they may be freed from their delusion (cf. Phd. 8.1).” In agreement with Schoedel’s analysis, Michael Svigel likewise concluded:

Apparently, Ignatius regarded the error of the dissenters as redeemable, as he engaged in no severe or harsh criticisms or rebukes and did not use the terms ‘heresy’ or ‘false teaching’ to describe their error….there were no indications of gross rejection of essential Christological assertions….It appears that the problems in Philadelphia related to bucked authority, interpretational disputes, and Judaizing tendencies that all had the potential of unraveling into heresy if such schismatics followed false teachers.

Even though Svigel here refers to “the error of the dissenters”, and not the dissenters themselves, as being in need of redemption, the text actually seems to suggest the opposite. Svigel’s assertion makes sense if the text presents those who shamed Ignatius’ companions (11.1) as a distinctly separate group from the dissenters described throughout the letter (2.1–3.3; 6.1–2; 6.3–9.2). Ignatius’ acidic remarks indicate his skepticism as to their salvation. Indeed, referring to them as ‘wolves’ (2.2), ‘evil plants’ who are not the ‘Father’s plants’ (3.1),

69 Corwin, St. Ignatius, 164.
70 Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 214.
71 Svigel, Center and the Source, 143 n. 36.
‘schismatic[s]’ who ‘will not inherit the kingdom of God’ (3.3), those who ‘expound Judaism’ and fail to ‘speak about Jesus Christ’ (6.1), ‘tombstones and graves’ (6.1) and those inspired by the ‘ruler of this age’ (6.2) are hardly indicative of a redeemed status. When the letter is read in its entirety, those described in 11.1 appear to be the same group that had been condemned throughout the entire epistle. There are no indicators in the text which suggest that a different group was in focus.

The dissenters’ problems appear to have been much more serious than Svigel and Schoedel have suggested. Instead, the archives passage (8.2–9.2) presents a contrasting picture with the opponents refusing to adhere to certain key aspects of the gospel narrative since they could not establish them from their own interpretation of the OT scriptures (8.2). In other words, Ignatius considered the opponents’ divisiveness to be particularly dangerous because it was centered on a faulty perception of what constituted the gospel narrative.

To summarize, the previous examinations (see §7.1–2) have shown that Ignatius, through the use of σῴζω (Eph. 18.1; Phld. 5.2; Smyrn. 2.1) and φεύγω cognates (Phld. 2.1; Trall. 2.1), viewed salvation as something that was procured by ‘believing’ in the events of the gospel. The context of the call for the opponents’ redemption in Phld. 11.1 makes sense when viewed in light of these observations. For the letter to Philadelphia specifically, Ignatius’

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72 Svigel suggested that “though likely, we cannot be absolutely certain that this group [i.e. those described in the archives passage (8.2)] was the same as those who secretly caused the divisions described earlier.” – ibid., 139.

73 Svigel disagrees with the idea that the dissenters’ main problem was Christological to the point of falling into heresy – ibid., 139–140, 143 n. 36. Schoedel likewise concluded “that Ignatius’ opponents in Philadelphia were relatively harmless theologically. They probably represented a threat to the authorities simply because they surpassed them in exegetical expertise.” – Ignatius of Antioch, 209.

74 See Chapter 9 for more details on Ignatian faith.
soteriological scheme becomes evident: salvation was simultaneously conceived of as both a ‘fleeing from division and evil teaching’ (*Phld.* 2.1) and a ‘fleeing to the gospel’ through belief (*Phld.* 5.1). With this in mind, Ignatius’ somewhat cryptic wish that the opponents ‘be redeemed by the grace of Christ’ makes good sense, especially considering the language of condemnation utilized against them. The opposition needed to ‘be redeemed (i.e., saved) by the grace of Christ’ (*Phld.* 11.1) because they evidently had rejected some key aspect of the true gospel message that produced such salvation (8.2–9.2). For Ignatius, it appears that salvation was conceived of as the redeeming act of God’s grace that was appropriated by believing in the gospel.

As the next section will attempt to demonstrate, it is possible that the ‘redemption’ referenced here by Ignatius may have also included the notion of spiritual manumission. Even though there is no explicit mention of a redemption price being paid, by modifying λυτρωθείησαν with the prepositional phrase ‘by the grace of Jesus Christ’ (ἐν τῇ χάριτι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ), Ignatius seems to have implied that the redemption price had been paid at the cross. This is certainly suggested by the numerous δι’ ἡμᾶς and ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν phrases utilized throughout that indicate Christ’s passion served as a substitute for others (*Trall.* 2.1; *Rom.* 6.1; *Smyrn.* 1.2; 2.1; 6.2; *Pol.* 3.2).
7.4 Salvation as Spiritual Manumission

As previously noted, Ignatius’ letters reveal himself as one who frequently adopted metaphors to enhance his arguments. Since Martin is probably correct to point out that “[i]n the early Roman Empire people could see slaves everywhere they looked,” as the ex-bishop of one of the largest cities in the Roman Empire, it is therefore not surprising that Ignatius employed a slavery-freedom metaphor which likely reflected his audience’s familiarity with such a practice.

Himself a prisoner of Rome, Ignatius made numerous references to literal ‘chains’ (δεσμός – Eph. 11.2; Magn. 1.2; Trall. 12.2; Smyrn. 11.1; Pol. 2.3), to ‘bondage’ (δέω – Eph. 1.2; 3.1; 21.2; Magn. 12.1; Trall. 1.1; 5.2; 10.1; Rom. 1.1; 4.3; 5.1; Phld. 5.1; 7.2; Smyrn. 4.2; 6.2; 11.1), to ‘slaves’ (δοῦλος/δούλη – Rom. 4.3; Pol. 4.3), and to the act of ‘being enslaved’ (δουλεύωτως – Pol. 4.3).

At the same time, the opposite notion of ‘freedom’—of ‘being loosed’ or ‘freed’ from such literal bondage, enslavement, and chains—is rarely mentioned in the letters, apart from Ignatius’ own plea to the Roman church to (apparently) not seek his release (Rom. 1.2–2.1; 4.1).

Aside from this allusion, the only other references to being freed from physical bonds are found in Smyrn. 6.2 where the Docetists were said to have ‘no concern...for ‘the one who has

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75 At times, Ignatius even employed more than one metaphor at the same time (i.e., the shepherding/athletic metaphors in Phld. 2).

been bound’ (δεδεμένου) or ‘the one who has been loosed’ (λελυμένου), and in Pol. 4.3 where Ignatius warned Polycarp about the potential for slaves to develop a fervent desire ‘to be freed’ (ἐλευθεροῦσθαι) ‘by [payment] from the common fund’ (ἀπὸ τοῦ κοινοῦ).

Each reference signifies physical bondage and freedom and therefore does not directly address anything spiritual. However, the frequent comments about physical bondage and freedom certainly indicate that the two contrasting ends of the spectrum (i.e., freedom and bondage) were fresh in Ignatius’ mind. It seems appropriate therefore that in a few select portions of the letters Ignatius used the same type of language to describe spiritual bondage and freedom in a way that contributes to a greater understanding of his soteriological views.

Scholars have frequently pointed out that one of the means by which the Romans acquired slaves was by taking prisoners during warfare. As Glancy noted,

In contrast to those who were raised as slaves, men and women who were kidnapped or captured in war experienced the shock of moving from free to slave status...Rome’s great wars of expansion had slowed down by the first century, when Christianity appeared. Nonetheless, occasional wars throughout the provinces and at the edges of the Empire meant a continuing, if episodic, supply of captives as slaves.77

When compared to slaves who had been born into bondage, those who had been captured through either warfare or kidnapping, faced a much starker reality where “[k]idnapping...tapped into a primal fear harbored by free persons: violent reduction to the status of a slave, whose body belonged to another.”78 Even though Ignatius frequently referred to his own physical incarceration at the hand of his Roman captors, at least a few times he warned his

77 Glancy, Slavery in Early Christianity, 77.
78 Ibid., 79.
audience, who he viewed as being spiritually free, to not allow themselves to be captured spiritually. Earlier in the chapter, it was argued that Ignatius periodically conceived of salvation as a fleeing from doctrinal captivity and the resultant eschatological death (§7.2.1–2).

At the same time, Ignatius encouraged his listeners to flee to the gospel for refuge (§7.2.3). The following sections will therefore examine the letters for language related to the slavery-freedom dichotomy with the goal of determining whether Ignatius conceived of salvation as a form of spiritual manumission. Having previously described humanity's plight with sin and evil in Chapters 2–3, it is not surprising that at least a few times Ignatius described such problems with language that seems to have intentionally evoked the image of slavery in his readers' minds.

7.4.1 Spiritual Enslavement to Worldly Desires

The first example is found in the letter to Polycarp in the midst of a long list of pastorally-focused and somewhat disconnected imperatives. In Pol. 4.3, Ignatius instructed Polycarp on how to deal with slaves in the church who were apparently seeking their physical manumission at the church’s expense:

> Do not treat male slaves (δούλους) or female slaves (δούλας) disdainfully, but neither should they be puffed up; instead, let them perform the duties of a slave (δουλεύετωσαν) even more to the glory of God, so that they may obtain a better freedom (κρείττονος ἐλευθερίας) from God. They should not be passionately longing to be freed (ἐλευθεροῦσθαι) from the common fund, lest they be found to be slaves of desire (δούλαι...ἐπιθυμίας).
As highlighted in the above quotation, this passage, along with Rom. 4.3, contains the highest concentration of slavery-freedom related terms found in the letters. Schoedel’s conclusion that Ignatius was worried about the possibility of freed slaves falling into prostitution does not seem to match the context. Based on the use of the phrase δοῦλοι ἐπιθυµίας in numerous texts written in the fifth century BCE up to the time of Ignatius, Harrill rejected the notion that the use of the phrase in Pol. 4.3 should be interpreted as a warning against slaves falling into prostitution. Instead, he proposed the following:

Classical authors from Isocrates to Plutarch employ the ‘slave of greed’ metaphor as a common *topos* of derision against the utterly unfree person, who is anxiously self-seeking. Early Christian writers from the author of Titus to composers of the apocryphal acts appropriated this philosophical concept.

Harrill consequently rejected the idea that the phrase δοῦλοι ἐπιθυµίας should be interpreted to signify a descent into sexual sins and instead understood it to refer more broadly to an “anxiously self-seeking” person who was enslaved to their “bodily appetites” because they “lacked self-control.” While I agree with Harrill that Ignatius employed the ‘slave of greed’

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79 Differing viewpoints, however, exist for understanding why Ignatius did not support the notion of freeing Christian slaves out of the church’s ‘common fund’. Schoedel, for example, believed that what Ignatius feared was manumitted slaves would turning to the “evil arts” mentioned in the next imperative (5.1) and thus becoming prostitutes (*Ignatius of Antioch, 270–1*). While this seems possible, the staccato and somewhat disconnected use of each imperatival statement in this section makes the connection between 4.3 and 5.1 doubtful and unnecessary. Disagreeing with Schoedel, Harrill presented the more convincing argument that the phrase “δοῦλοι ἐπιθυµίας is a rhetorical commonplace found in various literary contexts generally to characterize a person enslaved to his or her material wants” – J. Albert Harrill, *The Manumission of Slaves in Early Christianity*, HUT 32 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995), 167.

80 Ibid., 165. This matches Ignatius’ exhortations elsewhere for his audience to resist focusing on fulfilling their material desires and to instead shift their attention to their underlying and more pressing spiritual needs (*Eph. 8.2; 9.2; Magn. 5.2; Rom. 6.2; 7.1–3; Pol. 5.2*).

81 Ibid.
metaphor, I do not concur with his suggestion that Ignatius did so to prevent the materialistic slaves from threatening his own episcopal authority. 82

These theories do not address another more likely reason for why Ignatius did not advocate for the corporate manumission of slaves. As previously emphasized, Ignatius repeatedly warned about ‘wolves’ and ‘evil plants’ who sought to infiltrate the church and to pollute it with aberrant doctrinal perspectives (Chapter 3). 83 Additionally, it was also proposed that Ignatius was concerned that some in the church were actually false believers (§5-3).

Indeed, just prior to the discussion about the manumission of slaves, Ignatius warned Polycarp in Pol. 3.1 to ‘stand firm like an anvil’ in the face of ‘those who seemed to be trustworthy’ (Οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄξιόπιστοι εἶναι) but who were ‘teaching divergent doctrines’ (ἐτεροδιδασκαλοῦντες). Contra Schoedel, Ignatius does not appear to be worried about slaves falling into prostitution and, contra Harrill, neither was he concerned that their manumission posed a threat to his own episcopal authority. Instead, it seems more likely that Ignatius was afraid that if non-Christian slaves joined the church for the sole purpose of gaining manumission at the churches’ expense spiritual and doctrinal problems would become rampant and unity would be destroyed. Harrill briefly acknowledged this possibility:

82 Harrill viewed Ignatius’ warning against using corporate funds to manumit slaves because the practice posed “dangers to his episcopal authority” and his attempts to “consolidate control over these various house churches [in Antioch] and to create one common chest.” (ibid., 187) This analysis lacks persuasiveness for two reasons: (1) the monarchical episcopate is assumed and not proven; and (2) as an ex-bishop and a prisoner being transported to Rome for execution, it makes no sense for Ignatius to have been consolidating any control whatsoever as he had no authority or opportunity to do so. Antioch was no longer under his control and he expected to be executed shortly.

83 Some of the more appropriate verses include Eph. 7.1; 9.1; 16.1–17.2; Trall. 6.1–11.2; Phld. 2.1–3.3; Smyrn. 4.1–8.1.
Baptisms based upon self-seeking ἐπιθυμία, baptisms only for the manumission money, brought (to Ignatius' mind) undesirable converts to Christianity. In this manner, Pol. 4.3 reflects concerns comparable to those of other Roman and Hellenistic religions, such as the Isis cult, which preached against hollow conversions of believers who had impure thoughts about, and selfish motivations for, joining the cult.\textsuperscript{84}

To press Harrill’s suggestion further, Ignatius most likely would have viewed suchempty conversions by self-seeking “converts” as illegitimate.\textsuperscript{85} According the Pol. 4.3, slaves in the church should have been more concerned about obtaining from God a spiritual freedom that was far superior to any form of physical manumission. Those who focused solely on their material desires (i.e., in this case their literal freedom), and who therefore sought to be freed at the church’s expense, would be ‘found out’ (εὑρεθῶσιν) to be ‘slaves of desire’. The verb εὑρίσκω frequently denoted the action of discovering something either by accident or by intentional investigation.\textsuperscript{86} The use in Pol. 4.3 suggests that slaves who wished to join the church, but who strongly expressed a desire to be set free at the church’s expense, exposed their true nature as those who remained enslaved to their materialistic desires. To borrow from the language of Chapter 3, such slaves had yet to find a resolution for their predicament with sin by obtaining ‘a better freedom from God’ (κρείττονος ἐλευθερίας ἀπὸ θεοῦ).

\textsuperscript{84} Harrill, Manumission, 166. Glancy likewise suggested that “[s]uch a policy would not only rapidly consume limited funds but might offer a problematic motivation for slaves for joining the church.” – Slavery in Early Christianity, 151.

\textsuperscript{85} By commenting that “Christians must guard against becoming ‘slaves of desire [ἐπιθυμία]’ ([Rom] 4:3),”, Vall interpreted this as a warning for Christians and not a warning against admitting non-Christians into the church – Learning Christ, 172–3.

\textsuperscript{86} (1) “to come upon someth. either through purposeful search or accidentally, find”, (2) “to discover intellectually through reflection, observation, examination, or investigation, find, discover”, (3) “to attain a state or condition, find (for oneself), obtain” – BDAG, 411.
Even though Ignatius’ comments are instructive for exploring how the practice of manumission was viewed in the early church, the physical and spiritual slavery-freedom dichotomy is more pertinent to this study of Ignatian soteriology. Instead of focusing on literal manumission, Ignatius’ emphasis was aimed towards what he felt was the more pressing issue at hand: the spiritual manumission of humanity. It seems that he feared that some slaves had been attracted to Christianity with the sole purpose of obtaining the means to secure their release from physical bondage. Ignatius rejected such a practice due to the danger of admitting false converts into the church who would have remained enslaved to their earthly passions at the expense of their true spiritual manumission. Using the social construct of slavery to make his point, salvation is portrayed then as an emancipation from selfish passions and wants (i.e., sins) and the reception of a far more superior spiritual freedom from God (i.e., salvation).

7.4.2 Spiritually Enslaved by Evil

The previous section demonstrated that Pol. 4.3 described those who were enslaved to their materialistic desires and passions (δοῦλοι ἐπιθυµίας). Ignatius’ additional comments in Rom. 7.1

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87 This passage, along with Paul’s comments in 1 Cor 7:21 and the letter to Philemon, have been the source of discussion amongst scholars as the earliest testimonies about the practice of manumitting slaves in the early Church. With respect to Ign. Pol. 4.3, Harrill concluded that this passage “cannot be used as a text proving that the early church was generally opposed to the manumission of Christian slaves” – Harrill, Manumission, 9. Instead, he suggested that “[h]ere the bishop shows care not about the general manumission of slaves, only the corporate manumission of slaves.” (ibid., 160.; see also Combes, The Metaphor of Slavery, 61). Others, such as Jones, suggest that the verse testifies to Ignatius’ “affirmation of the legal, commonplace slavery of everyday life” and that he “implicitly accepted the fact of slavery” – Lawrence P. Jones, “A Case Study in ‘Gnosticism’: Religious Responses to Slavery in the Second Century CE” (PhD Thesis, Columbia University, 1988), 132. This also seems to go farther than Ignatius’ brief comment allows.
contribute to this discussion in at least two ways: (1) by supporting the prior suggestion that his use of the term ἐπιθυμίας in the phrase δοῦλοι ἐπιθυμίας (Pol. 4.3) most likely referred to a person’s enslavement to their materialistic/worldly-focused wants; and (2) while agreeing that one could be enslaved to materialistic needs, Rom. 7.1 adds to the discussion by indicating that a person could be enslaved by the forces of evil.

In Rom. 7.1, Ignatius commented on two mutually exclusive and contradictory mindsets for those who professed to be Christian:

The ruler of this age desires to abduct (διαρπάσαι) me and to corrupt my godly mindset. Therefore, none of you who are present should provide aid to him....Do not speak of Jesus Christ but lust after the world (κόσμον...ἐπιθυμεῖτε).

The first thing to notice is that these remarks correspond to what was said in Pol. 4.3 concerning those in danger of being enslaved to their worldly desires (particularly in the context of physical emancipation). However, in Rom. 7.1 Ignatius referred to the danger that he, along with those he wrote to, could fall prey to lusting after worldly desires in general (i.e., the κόσμος). The context of both verses is nearly identical. In Pol. 4.3, the focus was on slaves craving manumission, whereas in Rom. 7.1 the Roman church’s efforts to secure his own emancipation was akin to ‘lusting after the world’. Presumably, if Ignatius accepted such a proposal, this would mean that his ‘godly mindset’ had become corrupted and he had fallen prey to his own worldly passions.

Yet in the first part of the verse, Ignatius adds an a detail not present in Pol. 4.3. While both speak of being enslaved to worldly passions, Rom. 7.1 adds the identity of the abducting force as ‘the ruler of this age’ (i.e., Satan). For Ignatius, ‘speaking about Jesus Christ’ and
‘lusting after the world’ were mutually exclusive goals.\textsuperscript{88} According to Ignatius, those who were enslaved to their earthly passions had been abducted (i.e., enslaved) by Satan, the ruler of this age.

\textbf{7.4.3 Christ the Liberator}

The idea of spiritual bondage is found elsewhere. In the Philadelphian letter, Ignatius employed the image of a person being ‘taken prisoner/captured’ in the non-literal sense (\textit{Phld} 2.2–\textit{αἰχμαλωτίζω}). As some lexica indicate, \textit{αἰχμαλωτίζω} was sometimes used figuratively to mean “to enmesh, enslave” someone.\textsuperscript{89} Specifically, Ignatius warned his audience to avoid ‘being captured’ by the ‘seemingly trustworthy wolves’ whose ‘evil teaching’, if followed, would prevent their entry into the ‘kingdom of God’ (\textit{Phld}. 2.2; 3.3). After extensively describing the judaizing elements who disagreed with his understanding of the gospel message, Ignatius then made the following claim regarding their opportunity for repentance and the potential for them to obtain God’s forgiveness:

\begin{quotation}
The Lord forgives (\textit{ἀφιέει}) all those who are repentant, if in repenting they return to the unity of God and the council of the bishop. I believe in the grace of Jesus Christ, who \textit{will loose from you every fetter/chain (ὅς λύσει ἀφ’ ὑμῶν πάντα δεσμόν}). \textit{\textit{(8.1b–c)}}
\end{quotation}

The abrupt switch from the third person ‘they’ in 8.1b to the second person ‘you’ in 8.1c does not necessarily indicate that Ignatius believed his entire audience somehow lacked God’s

\textsuperscript{88} This seems to agree with Combes’ assessment that the slavery “metaphor may be adapted to describe an individual as the slave of sin, either in the more philosophical sense of one being enslaved by abstract forces such as fear or greed, or to Satan himself” – \textit{The Metaphor of Slavery}, 103.

\textsuperscript{89} BrillDAG, 61.
grace and forgiveness. Instead, the promise that Jesus Christ, by his grace, ‘will free you from every fetter’ seems to have targeted a smaller segment comprised of those who he repeatedly referred to as ‘certain people’ who disagreed with him about the essential elements of the gospel message (Phld. 8.1–9.2).99 The warning against being abducted, followed by the mention of being bound in spiritual fetters, would most likely have evoked in the minds of his second-century readers the image of someone in danger of being enslaved by enemy forces. Additionally, the fact that Ignatius identified ‘the grace of Christ’ as the means by which his opponents’ bonds were broken, along with the idea of receiving God’s forgiveness in the process, steers the context of the passage into the soteriological realm. In short, Ignatius warned the Philadelphians to avoid spiritual human traffickers who employed aberrant Christological traps designed to enslave them spiritually (Phld. 2.2; 6.2; cf. Magn. 11.1) and thus thwart their ultimate salvation. If they failed to heed such warnings, this would demonstrate that they were spiritually dead (Phld. 6.1), that they did ‘not belong to God’ (Phld. 3.2), and that they would ultimately fail to enter into ‘the kingdom of God’ (Phld. 3.3).

The fact that Ignatius mentioned repentance and ‘contentiousness’ (8.2a) in the midst of a discussion on avoiding ‘division…anger’ (Phld. 8.1a) suggests that the opponents needed to repent with respect to a variety of sins that prevented them from becoming the benefactors of God’s forgiveness. The point that needs to be made here is that Ignatius seems to indicate that the application of the ‘grace of Jesus Christ’, presumably in the reception of the gospel

99 For example, see Phld. 7.1– ‘some who wanted to deceive me; 7.2– ‘those who suspected [him]’; 8.2– ‘For I heard some people say....'
message, was synonymous with the idea of freeing someone from their spiritual ‘fetters’ (8.1c). Despite the passage’s admitted ambiguity, the fact that Ignatius later called for the opponents to ‘be redeemed by the grace of Jesus Christ’ (11.1–λυτρωθείσαν ἐν τῇ χάριτι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) supports this observation. As previously noted in §7.3, the verb λυτρῶσυ frequently signified the act of freeing someone, oftentimes through the provision of a ransom payment. Ignatius’ sprinkling of terms that refer to people in danger of being abducted (Phld. 2.2) and then subsequently having their shackles removed (8.1), possibly through the use of a payment (11.1), and especially when linked to the ‘grace of Jesus Christ’, demonstrates that he conceived of salvation, at least for the Philadelphian opponents, as an act of spiritual manumission from one’s slavery to sin(s) perpetrated by the enslaving forces of evil. In essence, this passage portrays Christ as the liberator who unshackles every spiritual chain.\(^{91}\)

7.4.4 The Freedperson of Christ

Combes observed that the slavery metaphor could appear in different forms in writings from the patristic era:

> There are the ideas of the slave of God, the slave of evil, the transition from one form of slavery to another and the transition from slavery to freedom....The second important form of the metaphor of slavery throughout patristic literature is that which

\(^{91}\) Regardless of how the textual variants are resolved, Eph. 19.3 indicates that the Christ event (i.e., ‘God appearing in human form’) resulted in either the ‘loosing’ or ‘vanishing’ of either ‘every bond’ or ‘every evil bond.’ The mentioning of ‘bonds/chains’ which are associated with evil, death, and the ‘ancient kingdom’ suggests that this is related to humanity’s enslavement by evil forces. This is certainly in line with what is described here in Phld. 8.1.
describes the transition a believer must undergo upon conversion and as a part of spiritual growth. Slavery to evil is contrasted with a better slavery to God or freedom.\footnote{Combes, The Metaphor of Slavery, 95–6, 103.}

It was previously suggested (§7.4.1) that Ignatius used the metaphor in Pol. 4.3 to indicate that human beings could be enslaved to sin (i.e. to their selfish desires). Additionally, Rom. 7.1 indicated that Ignatius understood such enslavement to have been incited by evil forces (§7.4.2). The previous section (§7.4.3) highlighted Ignatius’ belief that Christ was the liberator who unshackled such chains. In other words, Ignatius’ slavery metaphor included the idea that spiritual enslavement was reversible and not fixed.

In a few passages, Ignatius described certain Christians, though unshackled by Christ, as having simply transitioned from one form of slavery to another. For example, even though the link to God or Christ is never explicitly mentioned, Ignatius’ references to various deacons as his ‘fellow slaves’ (σύνδουλος– Eph. 2.1; Magn. 2.1; Phld. 4.1; Smyrn. 12.2) implies that he believed they had transitioned from being the slaves of sin and evil to being the slaves of God or Christ. Indeed, a brief examination of early-Christian texts demonstrates that Christians were often described as δοῦλος θεοῦ or δοῦλος Χριστοῦ.\footnote{Clearly there are other ways this was referred to in early Christian texts. The same phrase could be rendered by replacing θεοῦ or Χριστοῦ with κυριοῦ, or with Christ’s full or abbreviated name. Additionally, the genitive could be replaced by a dative (i.e., 1 Clem. 45.7– δουλεύοντας τῷ θεῷ). For a list of some common permutations, see ibid., 17. The phrase was fairly popular in the first and second centuries. For example, ‘slave(s) of God’ – Acts 16:17; Tit 1; Rev 73:15; 3: twice in Herm. Vis. 1.2.4 [2.4]; 4.1.8 [29.8]; 4.3.4 [31.4]; 5.2.1, 2 [34.1, 2]; 6.2.4, 6 [36.4, 6]; 8.4, 5, 6, 10 [38.4, 5, 6, 10]; 9.9 [39.9]; 10.1.2 [40.2]; 11.1 [43.1]; 12.1.2, 3 [44.2, 3]; 12.2.1, 2 [45.1, 2]; 12.3.1 [46.1]; 12.5.2, 4 [48.2, 4]; 13.1.10 [50.1, 10]; 2.2.4 [51.2, 4]; 5.4.2 [57.2]; 5.5.3 [58.3]; 6.2.1 [62.1]; 6.5.6, 7 [65.6, 7]; 8.6.5 [72.5]; 8.10.3 [76.3]; 9.13.7 [90.7]; 9.19.1, 3 [96.1, 3]; twice in 9.20.2 [97.2]; 9.24.2 [100.2]; 9.26.3 [103.3]; 9.27.2 [104.2]; 9.33.1 [110.1]; 10.3.4 [113.4]; 1 and 2 Clement prefer the verb + dative construction (δεύτερα) – 1 Clem. 45.7; 2 Clem. 11.1; 17.7; 18.1.} However, aside from his use of σύνδουλος, which may imply such a relationship, Ignatius never explicitly identified Christians
as the slaves of God or Christ. Yet it should be noted that Pol. 4.3 hints at the notion since it refers to Christians who were literal slaves as those who should be ‘performing the duties of a slave (δουλευέτωσαν) even more to the glory of God so that they may obtain a better freedom (κρείττονος ἐλευθερίας) from God.’

In Rom. 4.3, Ignatius described another potential status change on the slavery–freedom continuum that is potentially relevant to the present discussion:

I am not giving orders to you like Peter and Paul. They [are] Apostles, I [am] a condemned man (κατάκριτος). They [are] free, but up to this point I [am] a slave (δοῦλος). But if I suffer, I [will be] a freedman (ἀπελεύθερος) of Jesus Christ, and I will rise up free (ἐλεύθερος) in him. For now, I am learning as one who is bound (δεδεμένος) to lust after nothing.  

By referring to himself as a literal δοῦλος, Ignatius does not appear to indicate, as Vall seems to suggest, that he feared he was “still in danger’ of losing his salvation and thus thought it would be presumptuous to assume the tone of authority on par with the apostles who had already ‘attained God.”  

94 Much of the confusion regarding this verse stems from the fact that translators have supplied the past tense for the implied copulas that reference the apostles and the present/future for Ignatius. Thus Ehrman translated as “They were apostles, I am condemned; they were free, until now I have been a slave” (emphasis mine) – Ehrman, Apostolic Fathers, 275; see also Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 229. I disagree with those who understand Ignatius to have been seeking in his death the freedom that the apostles supposedly had in life. For example, Schoedel concluded that “Ignatius differs from the apostles in that only through martyrdom can he become as they were.” – Ignatius of Antioch, 177. This suggestion will be explored in §11.3.

95 Learning Christ, 330. Vall here seems to view δοῦλος as a deprecatory term signifying ‘one who was not yet assured of salvation’ and ἀπελεύθερος as a reference to someone who through death had achieved salvation. Aune similarly viewed Ignatius’ soteriology as highly conditional and based on successfully meeting five conditions (i.e. having faith, partaking of the eucharist, pursuing a life according to Christ, submitting to church leadership, and imitating Christ in martyrdom [if required]) – Cultic Setting, 160. Harrill likewise concluded that “by exhibiting loyalty to his true, divine master, the bishop hoped to gain ‘spiritual’ manumission as a reward.” – Manumission, 185. The supposed conditionality of salvation in the letters will be addressed in Chapter 11.
Ignatius self-identified as “a servus poenae (penal slave), a free person who became a slave and thus lost any citizenship through condemnation with capital punishment.”\(^{96}\) It seems evident, therefore, that Ignatius’ description of himself as a δοῦλος simply meant that, as one who had been physically ‘bound’ and ‘condemned’ (δεδεµένος... κατάκριτος) by Rome, he had been, for all intents and purpose, reduced to the status of a literal δοῦλος.\(^{97}\)

The potential relationship between Ign. Rom. 4.3 and 1 Cor 7:22 has been noted by scholars. For example, Foster identified the link between the two passages as “light” but strong enough to conclude that “dependence is not improbable.”\(^{98}\) Nevertheless, Ignatius’ acknowledged familiarity with the letter, when tied with his use of the phrase ἀπελευθέρως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (cf. 1 Cor 7:22–ἀπελευθέρως κυρίου), suggests that he was most likely aware of Paul’s description of Christians as those who had been freed by Christ and who therefore functioned as his slaves. When contrasted with Paul, Ignatius’ focus seems to be more future oriented. Whereas Paul appears to have been describing the Christian’s current status as ‘the Lord’s freedman’ in 1 Cor 7, in Rom. 4:3 Ignatius emphasized the future where his martyrdom would serve as a transition from his current physical status as a literal δοῦλος of Rome to his future spiritual condition as the ἀπελευθέρως of Jesus Christ.

It remains to be seen how Ignatius understand his martyrdom to transform his status from δοῦλος to ἀπελευθέρως. In what way would Ignatius become a freedperson? One aspect

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\(^{96}\) Manumission, 185.

\(^{97}\) Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 176.

\(^{98}\) Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 167; see also Inge, “Ignatius,” 65 where the two texts are assigned a “c” probability of dependence (which is between a ‘high’ and ‘possible’ level). Harrill overstates the dependence by suggesting that “Ign. Rom. 4.3 has direct verbal parallels to 1 Cor 7:22.” – Manumission, 185.
seems clear: Ignatius’ physical death would certainly free him from the abuses perpetrated by his Roman captors. Additionally, much like Pol. 4.3 where materialistic slaves were in danger of being exposed as ‘slaves of desire’, Ignatius indicated that since he ‘had been bound’ he was ‘learning to crave after nothing’ (νῦν μανθάνω θε δεμένος μηθέν ἐπιθυμεῖν). The context of this verse, along with the remaining portions of Ign. Romans, strongly communicates Ignatius’ desire to be freed from the worldly materialistic desires that threatened his godly mindset:

I do not want you to be people pleasers, but to please God (Rom. 2.1)

Better for me to die in Christ than to rule of the ends of the earth (6.1)

Do not give to the world the one who wants to belong to God, neither should you entice [him] with material things (6.2)

The ruler of this age desires to abduct me and to corrupt my godly mindset. Therefore, none of you who are present should provide aid to him….Do not speak of Jesus Christ but lust after the world (7.1)

My passion (ἔρως) has been crucified and there is no fire for material things within me (7.2)

I take no pleasure in corruptible food or the pleasures of this life (7.3)

No longer do I desire to live according to human standards (8.1)

The repeated warnings against falling prey to worldly desires and pleasures, most likely due to the influence of Satan as the ruler of this age (7.1), serve as the probable backdrop behind Ignatius’ desire to become the ‘freedperson of Jesus Christ’. While it is true that the physical abuses would cease when the martyrdom was complete, nevertheless, Rom. 4.3 seems to
describe Ignatius’ personal victory over the carnal desires that plagued him.\footnote{Schoedel understood Ignatius to mean that he “is learning, then, to ‘desire nothing,’ that is, to give up attachment to this world (cf. Rom. 7.1).” – Ignatius of Antioch, 177.} In this sense, Ignatius understood his martyrdom as the final act in his spiritual emancipation process.

To summarize, Ignatius’ comments suggest that he viewed humanity’s salvation as the transformational process of moving from one form of slavery to another. According to Ignatius, those who once selfishly served themselves by satisfying their own earthly passions (\textit{Pol.} 4.3) at the behest of the ruler of this age (\textit{Rom.} 7.1; \textit{Phld.} 2.2), if they repented, would be ‘freed of all shackles’ through Christ’s grace (\textit{Phld.} 8.1) to serve thereafter as slaves for God’s glory (\textit{Pol.} 4.3) in expectation of their ultimate transformation into the \textit{ἀπελευθερωτης} of Jesus Christ (\textit{Rom.} 4.3).
CHAPTER 8

SALVATION: THE RECEPTION OF LIFE FROM THE DEAD

8.0 Introduction

Even though the letters describe Ignatius as one who expected a horrific death, it is interesting
to note that, aside from the letter to the Romans, Ignatius did not dwell extensively on the
concept of physical death. Instead, the focus lies elsewhere. With Ignatius' scant use of σῴζω
cognates in mind, C.C. Richardson rightly noted that the word Ignatius “most commonly uses
to express the moral and religious transformation of the believer is ‘life.’”1 Thomas Wilkens
similarly concluded that Ignatius spoke “much more frequently about life (ζωή - six
occurrences) and living (ζάν – twenty occurrences) than about salvation (σωτηρία – one
occurrence) or being saved (σώζεσθαι – three occurrences).”2 Having already identified
Ignatius' emphasis on spiritual/eternal death as the primary reason undergirding humanity’s

1 Richardson, The Christianity of Ignatius, 23.
260–1; There are actually seven occurrences of ζωή (Eph. 7.2; 14.1; 18.1; 19.3; Magn. 5.1; 9.1; Pol. 2.3) and 22
occurrences of ζάω (listed by Wilkens as ζάν) found in the letters (Eph. 3.2; 6.2; 8.1; 11.1; 17.1; 20.2; Magn. 1.2;
5.2; 8.1; 9.1; 2; 10.1; Trall. 2.1; 9.2; Rom. 6.2; 7.2 (2); 8.1; Phld. 1.2; 3.2; Smyrn. 4.1).
need for salvation, it seems natural then for Ignatius to emphasize ‘life’ as the corresponding solution to humanity’s problematic situation.

An examination of the epistles for terminology referring to ‘life’ and ‘living’ reveals that Ignatius, as expected, once again employed a variety of expression. As others have previously noted, terms such as βίος and ζωή (and related cognates) were used with differing emphases throughout. For example, Wilkens concluded that Ignatius “maintains a distinction between ζωή and βίος” with the former serving as a “broadly inclusive, existential word pertaining to life as relationship with God” and the latter functioning more narrowly to represent “the vicissitudes of man’s earthly sojourn.” Even though at first glance this appears to be generally true, it is nevertheless somewhat of an oversimplification given that, in at least a few verses, Ignatius used both terms synonymously to refer to a person’s physical, earthly existence. Nevertheless, with few exceptions, Ignatius largely employed ζωή cognates to signify a transcendent, spiritual life that occurred in relationship with God.5

As the following chapter will demonstrate, the language used in the letters demonstrates that Ignatius predominantly described human salvation as the overturning of death and, therefore, as the consequent reception of true or eternal life.

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3 Wilkens, “Soteriology of Ignatius,” 157. βίος is found in Eph. 9.2; Rom. 7.3; Phld. 11.1.
4 For example, the verb ζάω in Rom. 7.2 refers to the fact that though writing to them while he was ‘living’ (ζῶν), he strongly desired ‘to die’ (ἀποθανεῖν). The mention of his rejection of ‘the pleasures of this life’ (ἡδοναῖς τοῦ βίου τούτου) seems to overlap with this use.
5 Verses with use clearly ζάω cognates to indicate spiritual life include (Eph. 3.2; 7.2; 11.1; 14.1; 17.1; 18.1; 19.3; 20.2; Magn. 1.2; 5.1, 2; 9.1; Rom. 6.2; Smyrn. 4.1; Pol. 2.3) whereas the following seem to simultaneously convey the idea of being spiritually alive or dead while physically alive (Eph. 6.2; 8.1; Magn. 8.1; 2; 9.1; 2; 10.2; Trall. 2.1; Rom. 7.2; 8.1; Phld. 1.2; 3.2).
8.1 Salvation: The Choice of Destiny

As Part I indicated, Ignatius believed that humanity’s struggle with sin and with evil, if left unchecked, would ultimately result in punishment in the form of a transcendent/spiritual death. Consequently, in a few select verses, Ignatius addressed the issue by exhorting his readers to ensure that they were currently on what he considered to be the correct path that would secure a positive soteriological outcome.

The first example is found in the letter to Magnesia where, despite his overall confidence in the Magnesians’ faithfulness (Magn. 1.1; 3.1; 11.1; 14.1), Ignatius nevertheless warned of the possibility that unbelievers could influence some to reject the basic tenets of Christianity (i.e., the gospel message—Magn. 11) and to revert back to the teachings of Judaism (Magn. 8.1–9.2; 10.2–3). Without specifying the solution, Ignatius indicated that such a decision had eternal consequences: ‘Therefore, since [such] deeds/matters have an end, two things lie before us, death and life (θάνατος καὶ ἡ ζωή), and each is about to go away to his own place’ (Magn. 5.1). In essence, Ignatius cautioned that anyone who ‘turned away’ from the hope of Christ (Magn. 11.1) essentially rejected the path that led to life by selecting the path that terminated in transcendent death.

The letter to Ephesus provides a similar two-way example where salvation is presented as a decision with life and death consequences. Whereas the Magnesians were being warned about elements of Judaism supplanting the gospel message, the Ephesian letter
is vague regarding the nature of the threat.\textsuperscript{6} Like the Magnesians, the Ephesians had remained predominately faithful to the apostolic teachings (\textit{Eph.} inscr; 1.1–2; 4.1; 6.2; 8.1; 9.1–2; 11.2). Despite this, it appears that a group, whose aberrant actions and beliefs seem to have suggested to Ignatius that they were not genuine Christians (7.1; 8.1–2; 10.3; 14.2), threatened the early-Christian community by operating in opposition to the authority of the bishop (3.2; 4.3; 5.3) and by propagating ‘evil’ doctrines which, if adopted, would sentence its recipients to eternal fire (9.1; 16.1–2). In the subsequent section (\textit{Eph.} 17.1–2), Ignatius warned of the possibility that not all would select the appropriate destination or outcome. When faced with the corrupting influences of the ‘ruler of this age’ (16.2–17.1) a person would be confronted with a choice to either (1) reject such teaching and thus choose ‘the life lying before’ them (17.1—τοῦ προκειμένου ζῆν), or (2) unwisely allow themselves to be captured and ‘foolishly perish’ (17.2—μωρῶς ἀπολλύμεθα).

In summary, the message for the Magnesians and the Ephesians was nearly identical. Ignatius portrays humanity as confronted with the need to choose between two paths and two corresponding destinies. One path led to eternal life, whereas the parallel path terminated in unquenchable fire.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
  \item Even though the Ephesian letter does not contain a clear and unambiguous polemic against any specific opponent, some have detected “hints” of a possible argument against docetic teaching (see Robinson, \textit{Parting of the Ways}, 118).
\end{itemize}
8.2 The Ignatian Description of Life

Earlier in Chapter 4, Ignatius' conception of death was fully explored. The discussion now turns to the proposed solution to the problem. What did Ignatius intend when he encouraged his audience to select life? The following sections will therefore more fully examine several themes extracted from the letters regarding Ignatius' conception of life.

8.2.1 Life Without End

As previously noted, Ignatius frequently used βίος to signify humanity's earthly, physical existence. Yet with few exceptions, the noun ζωή was primarily utilized to denote a transcendent form of life not necessarily tied to one's earthly existence. In order to more fully understand what he intended to convey when he encouraged his audience to choose 'life,' it would be helpful first to examine any descriptors utilized to modify terms such as ζωή. One category of such descriptors that was employed several times in the letters refers to life qualitatively as something eternal or without end.

For example, mirroring several other early-Christian texts, Ignatius attached the adjective αἰώνιος to ζωή on two occasions. In Eph. 18.1, the products of the cross (τοῦ σταυροῦ) were defined solely for believers as 'salvation and eternal life' (ζωή αἰώνιος). Near the end of the letter in his well-known star hymn (19.1–3), Ignatius described the various effects

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7 The adjective αἰώνιος was commonly used in early-Christian writings to describe the endless character of life for those who had experienced redemption (Matt 19:16, 29; 25:46; Mark 10:17, 30; Luke 10:25; 12:25, 50; 17:2, 3; 13:46, 48; Rom 2:7; 5:21; 6:22, 23; Gal 6:8; 1 Tim 1:16; 6:12; Tit 1:2; 3:7; 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20; Jude 21; 2 Clem. 5.5; 8.4; Mart. Pol. 14.2; Did. 10.3; Herm. Vis. 2.3.2 [7.2]; 3.8.4 [16.4]; 4.3.5 [24.5]).
produced by the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ. Despite textual variants and grammatical uncertainties that present difficulties for interpreting Eph. 19.3, the participial phrase in the middle of the verse—εἰς καινότητα ἀϊδίου ζωῆς—appears to be stable from a textual and grammatical standpoint. It seems appropriate to interpret εἰς + accusative as denoting the purpose and result of the incarnational event. Thus when Ignatius coupled the relatively rare term ἀϊδίος with ζωῆ, he indicated that the incarnation and crucifixion of Jesus Christ resulted not only in the ‘abolition of death’, but also in ‘the newness of eternal life’. Similarly, Pol. 2.3 designates the expected prize for Polycarp’s endurance in the face of opposition as ‘eternal life’ (ζωή αἰώνιος). Finally, when viewed in light of the previously-discussed three verses, the literal translation of Magn. 1.2, which described Jesus Christ as the one ‘who is our continual life’ (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ διὰ παντὸς ἡμῶν ζῆν), seems to be another example where life without end was linked to Jesus Christ.

8.2.2 New Life

The second descriptor that helps to expand on Ignatius’ concept of life focuses on the characteristic of newness. Even though Eph. 19.3 has been shown to indicate that the incarnational event produced eternal life, the verse also specifies that eternal life was a new phenomenon. By modifying ἀϊδίος ζωῆς with καινότητα, Ignatius described eternal life as a

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8 Wallace, Greek Grammar, 569; BDAG, 290, defn. 4e, f.

9 The adjective ἀϊδίος is used twice in the NT and in neither case modifies ‘life’ (Rom 1:20 – ‘eternal power’; Jude 6 – ‘eternal chains’). The only time it is found in the Apostolic Fathers is Ign. Eph. 19.3. A search of TLG reveals that the pairing of ἀϊδίος and ζωῆ is extremely rare (Philo of Alexandria, On Flight and Finding 97.4).
‘new’ and ‘novel’ phenomenon, something that seems not to have been available prior to Christ’s incarna
tional work.\textsuperscript{10} Thus, because of Christ’s incarnation, humanity had the
potential to experience ‘life’ as a new status.

In light of the previous discussion, the frequent references to death make more sense.
In Ignatius’ estimation, prior to the incarnational event humanity had been characterized by
death. However, Eph. 19.3 makes it evident that those who had been saved were no longer
under the threat of death and, consequently, they now benefitted from a new status of being
spiritually alive. This is especially true when the last clause of Eph. 19.3 is considered. ‘From
that point onwards’ (ἔνθεν) life had become a new characteristic for humanity ‘because the
destruction of death was being pursued’ (διὰ τὸ μελετᾶσθαι θανάτου κατάλυσιν). Therefore the
‘life’ that Ignatius proposed was not only continuous (eternal), but since he appears to have
understood all humanity to be spiritually dead prior to salvation, life was also a new trait for
those who had been delivered from sin and evil.

\textbf{8.2.3 True Life}

One of the primary purposes for writing the letters was to counteract certain errors that
Ignatius believed had begun to corrupt the doctrine and practice of the early church.

Previously in §4.2 the conclusion was reached that Ignatius believed his docetic and judaizing
opponents, despite their claims to be genuine Christians, and despite the fact that they were
physically alive, were actually spiritually dead (Phld. 6.1; Smyrn. 5.2). In other words, Ignatius

\textsuperscript{10} BDAG, 497; LSJ, 858.
held that those who propagated doctrines that he believed were evil and corrupt falsely believed that they were spiritually alive, when in reality they were spiritually dead.

On four occasions in the letters, and most likely in response to the danger of this false mindset, Ignatius used the adjective ἀληθινός to modify 'life'. The first two examples are found in the letter to Ephesus. Immediately after describing his opponents as malicious and deceitful ‘wild beasts’ and ‘mad dogs’ who themselves were ‘hard to cure,’ Ignatius defined Christ as the ‘sole physician’ who was ‘true life in death’ (Eph. 7.2 – ἐν θανάτῳ ζωὴ ἀληθινή). This illustrates Ignatius’ opinion that the mad dogs were ‘dead’ and that the only physician capable of rectifying their terminal condition was the one who brought actual (true) life. The opponents were physically alive, and though they most likely claimed to be spiritually alive, Ignatius characterized them as lacking in true life. In essence, Jesus Christ is portrayed as the only physician capable of providing true life to those who yet suffered from spiritual death.

This matches the statements made later in Eph. 11.1:

We should either fear the wrath to come or love the present grace, one of the two; only let us be found in Christ Jesus, which results in true life (εἰς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ζῆν).11

Statements in the Trallian and Smyrnaean letters similarly link true life intrinsically to Jesus Christ. The constant repetition of the adverb ἀληθῶς in the semi-creedal statements of Trall.

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11 As previously argued in §2.2.3, the translation here disagrees with the majority of modern translations that understand this to refer to the difficulty of healing the bite wounds inflicted by the false teachers. The grammar of the passage seems to indicate that the healing of the false teachers themselves was the difficult task that only Christ could accomplish.

12 Similarly to what was suggested regarding the prepositional phrase utilizing εἰς in Eph. 19.3 (§8.2.2), the εἰς τὸ + infinitive clause most likely indicates purpose and result here. See Wallace, Greek Grammar, 611.
9.1–2 demonstrates Ignatius’ emphasis on the fallacious nature of the docetic interpretations regarding Christ’s nature:

Jesus Christ...was truly (ἀληθῶς) born...was truly (ἀληθῶς) persecuted by Pontius Pilate, was truly (ἀληθῶς) crucified and died....was truly (ἀληθῶς) raised from the dead.

Repeatedly emphasizing the falsity of docetic claims, the point seems to be that by denying the incarnational kerygma—the physical birth, death, and resurrection of Christ—the Docetists evidenced their lack of true life:

Christ Jesus...apart from whom we have no true life (τὸ ἀληθινὸν ζῆν οὐκ ἔχομεν – Trall. 9.2)

By referring to the Docetists as ‘advocates of death rather than truth’ in Smyrn. 5.1 and ‘corpse-bearers’ in 5.2, Ignatius clearly regarded them as spiritually dead. Consequently, he indicated that the natural solution for the spiritually dead was to ‘repent’ of their aberrant beliefs and to turn to ‘Jesus Christ, our true life’ (τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἡμῶν ζῆν) who ‘has power over this’ (Smyrn. 4.1).

In essence, Ignatius held that those who denied the physical reality of the incarnational event were under the false belief that they possessed spiritual life when, in reality, they were actually spiritually dead. According to Ignatius, Jesus Christ, as the only source of true life, was the sole avenue of healing.

8.2.4 Christ’s Life

Thus far Ignatius described salvation as the reception of life that was endless, new, and in contrast with the false claims of the opposition, a life that was true. The final aspect of
Ignatius’ conception of life to be discussed deals specifically with its source. In *Magn. 9.2*, Ignatius challenged the Magnesian church with a rhetorical question that frames this final characteristic of life: ‘how can we possibly live without him...?’ It is likely that Ignatius expected his audience to reply with an emphatic denial of the possibility.

In five verses located in multiple letters, ‘life’ is intrinsically linked to Jesus Christ. For example, *Eph. 3.2* denotes Jesus Christ as the source of one’s ‘unwavering’ life (τὸ ἀδιάκριτον ἡμῶν ζῆν). Later in *Eph. 7.2*, Ignatius depicted Jesus Christ as the only physician who is ‘true life in death’ (ἐν θανάτῳ ζωὴ ἀληθινή). Similarly for Magnesia and Smyrna, Christ was both their ‘endless life’ (Magn. 1.2 – Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ διὰ παντὸς ἡμῶν ζῆν) as well as their ‘true life’ (Smyrn. 4.1 – Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἡμῶν ζῆν). Several times Ignatius referred more specifically to Christ’s crucifixion and death as the source of humanity’s transcendent life. The prime examples include *Eph. 18.1*, where the cross was equated with ‘salvation and eternal life’ (τοῦ σταυροῦ, ὅ ἐστιν...σωτηρία καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος), and *Magn. 9.1*, where Ignatius exclaimed that ‘our life arose (ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν ἀνέτειλεν) through him and his death (which some deny)’.

To summarize, when the hypothetical question of *Magn. 9.2*—‘how can we possibly live without him?’—is reconsidered in light of the previous statements, Ignatius’ answer seems to have been independently provided in *Trall. 9.2* where he stated that ‘apart from

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13 Even though BDAG defines ἀδιάκριτος with two primary senses: (1) not being judgmental, non-judgmental, not divisive, impartial or (2) not being uncertain, unwavering (BDAG, 19), Ignatius seems to use the term (along with the adverbial form ἀδιάκριτως) with the latter sense of being ‘unwavering’ (*Eph. 3.2; Magn. 15.1; Trall. 1.1; Rom. inscr; Phld. inscr*). See *TDNT* 3:950–1.

14 Ignatius occasionally referred to the incarnation of Christ as the source of life. For example, see *Eph. 19.3* where ‘the newness of eternal life’ was attributed to ‘God being made known in human form’ (θεοῦ ἀνθρωπινῶς φανερουμένου εἰς καινότητα ζωῆς).
whom [Jesus Christ] we do not have true life’ (ο זקוקς το αληθινον ζην ουκ έχομεν). This intrinsic link between Christ and humanity’s transcendent life is perhaps the most central aspect of Ignatius’ conception of ‘life.’ According to Ignatius, apart from Jesus Christ and his work, death reigned and therefore spiritual life did not truly exist.

In contrast to his scant use of terms that describe salvation using σῴζω and cognates, what this section demonstrates is that Ignatius frequently described salvation using terms that instead related to life. According to his conception, salvation was a choice of destinies with one branch leading to life, and the other to death. Such life was described as being endless (eternal) and as something that had previously not been possessed by humanity (newness). In contrast to his opponents, who most likely considered themselves to be spiritually alive, the life Ignatius encouraged was true, and most importantly, it was a life that was intrinsically linked to the person and work of Jesus Christ as its sole source.
PART III

THE MEANS OF SALVATION
Introduction

A short review of the findings of Parts I and II will help set the stage for what naturally follows in Part III. Thus far this examination has answered three important questions regarding Ignatian soteriology. Part I—*Ignatius and the Anthropological Predicament*—focused on the *why* of Ignatius’ salvific scheme. In short, the discussion centered on why Ignatius believed humanity required deliverance. The conclusion was that humanity suffered from a predicament with both sin (Chapter 2) and evil (Chapter 3) that would ultimately result in the experience of an eschatological death at the hands of a wrathful God (Chapter 4). Part I concluded with a description of Ignatius’ categorization of humanity based on their response to the Christ event (Chapter 5). According to Ignatius’ salvific schema, Christians had been delivered from the dual predicaments of sin and evil; therefore, humanity’s spiritual death problem had been cured. However, those who had yet to become Christian remained in a state of spiritual deadness that would ultimately culminate in God’s judgment (§4.2). Finally, Ignatius warned that those who claimed to be Christian, but who failed the various tests of genuineness, were not Christians in his estimation and would ultimately experience eschatological punishment if not redeemed (§5.3). Part II—*The Ignatian Conception of Savior & Salvation*—continued to build upon Part I by focusing on the type of language Ignatius used to address the issue of who performed the saving work and what salvation accomplished. In addition to his scant use of Σῶζω and its cognates, Ignatius’ creative description of salvation as the process of (1) fleeing from sin and evil and fleeing instead to the gospel, (2) being
redeemed, and (3) becoming spiritually manumitted by Christ from worldly desires (i.e., sin) and evil was explored in Chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 8 completed Part II by describing the primary way in which Ignatius described salvation as the reception of life for those who were spiritually dead.

The focus now shifts in Part III—The Means of Salvation—to explore a related soteriological issue by examining in more detail how salvation was accomplished in Ignatius’ schema. Chapter 9 will investigate Ignatius’ conception of faith as the primary means of salvation with particular attention paid to the object(s) of Ignatian faith. Once accomplished, Chapter 10 will delve into the ontological and eschatological outcomes of faith in the lives of individuals. Before summarizing Ignatian soteriology in Chapter 12, Chapter 11 will briefly explore some of the other potential means of faith identified by previous scholarly treatments of Ignatian soteriology.
CHAPTER 9

THE SEMANTICS & SENSE OF FAITH

9.0 Introduction

Not long after Ignatius’ death, Polycarp indicated to his Philippian audience that much could be gleaned from Ignatius’ letters regarding, among other topics, the notion of faith and perseverance:

The letters of Ignatius which had been sent to us by him...we sent to you....They are attached to this letter; from them you will be able to benefit greatly, for they contain faith and patient endurance and every kind of edification that relates to our Lord. (Pol. Phil. 13.2).\(^1\)

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\(^1\) These statements have led some to suggest that Polycarp was responsible for the original collection of the Ignatian epistles (apart from the letter to Rome which appears to have had its own separate transmission journey). Of course, this depends on whether one views Pol. Phil. 13 to be authentic to the original letter. Whether this is true or not cannot be proven with complete certainty, nevertheless, what is certain is that this passage is the earliest testimony to the existence of a collection of Ignatian epistles – Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 276. For a thorough discussion on the authenticity issue see Paul Hartog, ed., Polycarp’s Epistle to the Philippians and the Martyrdom of Polycarp: Introduction, Text, and Commentary, Oxford Apostolic Fathers (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 26–40.
Unlike many scholarly treatments of the letters which frequently deal with other topics such as martyrdom, ecclesiological structures, and even Ignatius' supposed state of mind, it is interesting that Polycarp's focus was more theological. Despite this, several scholars have examined and discussed Ignatius' understanding of faith, especially as it was incorporated into his favored expression ‘faith and love.’ Yet as Vall rightly summarized, Ignatius' conception of faith “is usually judged to be a theologically decadent version” of the Pauline epistles.

Thomas Torrance represents a segment of scholarship that has sharply criticized the supposed differences between the Ignatian and Pauline notions of faith. For example, when referring to Ignatius' crane metaphor in Ign. Eph. 9 and the “relation of faith to the Christian salvation and life” found therein (to be analyzed in §9.3), Torrance concluded that the difference between Ignatius and the NT—specifically referring to Eph 2–4 (NT)—amounted to more than a mere shift in emphasis. Instead, according to Torrance, what Ignatius taught was a “remarkable contrast” to Pauline soteriology. In essence, Torrance interpreted the description of faith, with the ‘crane’ lifting human beings into the temple of God, to indicate that Ignatius had abandoned the Pauline teaching that faith affected salvation:

Here faith is...the windlass...which hoists the stones of the...members of the Church...into the building or the body of Christ. That is the road that the Christian travels. He is not already a stone placed in the temple; he is not yet justified. Right here we see how far Ignatius is from the New Testament....The idea that faith must

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2 Ignatius' faith-love pairing will be explored in §11.1.
3 Vall, Learning Christ, 160.
4 Torrance, Doctrine of Grace, 68, 68 n. 5.
still secure its position in love before ‘attaining’ is a serious defection from the N.T. Gospel, and can only indicate a grave misapprehension of the idea of grace.\(^5\)

Wagner likewise commented that

Ignatius did not employ distinctive Pauline ideas such as law and gospel, justification by faith through grace without works, human corruption, or the conflict of flesh with spirit. It seems that Paul was regarded as a hero but disregarded as a shaper of Christian teaching, at least in Syria and Asia.\(^6\)

Given the widely varying conclusions with respect to Ignatius’ idea of faith, and for whether or not he had abandoned the teachings of Christ as elaborated in the writings that coalesced into the NT, it seems best to focus instead on the Ignatian letters themselves. Therefore, the goal will be to examine afresh what Ignatius wrote about faith and its role in human salvation, apart from any distracting comparisons. The issue of whether Ignatius adhered to Pauline theology, or that of any other early-Christian writer-theologian, will therefore not be addressed directly. Instead, the goal will be to avoid unwarranted conclusions frequently based on anachronistic analyses and to instead seek to understand Ignatius’ particular position on the role of faith in human salvation as elaborated in the Ignatian letters themselves.

The chapter will begin by examining the language which Ignatius used to describe the notion of faith. It will be shown that when faith is mentioned, Ignatius, in his typically creative fashion, frequently broadened his vocabulary choices beyond the expected lexical categories.

\(^5\) Ibid., 68.
Recognizing that faith can be viewed with multiple senses, the subsequent discussion will focus on the sense(s) Ignatius implied by using such language. In other words, what did Ignatius intend when he exhorted his readers to exercise faith? After providing multiple examples of the Ignatian sense(s) of faith, the focus will shift to categorize the objects of Ignatian faith which often appear in the form of semi-creedal statements. In essence, the goal will be to explain what Ignatius desired his audience to believe or trust.

9.1 The Language of Faith

Given the frequency with which Ignatius employed the πίστις lexical category in the letters, it makes sense to begin the investigation concerning Ignatius' understanding of 'faith' by first exploring this lexical grouping along with related terms. The Ignatian epistles utilize the πίστις category at a rate that rivals or exceeds other early-Christian texts. One interesting exception is the letter of Polycarp to the Philippians which, though less than one-third the size of the Ignatian epistles, used the πίστις category at a rate of 9.64/1,000 words compared to Ignatius' 6.4/1,000.¹ One could entertain the notion that Polycarp had taken to heart his own suggestion that the Philippians glean from Ignatius' discussions involving 'faith and endurance' (Pol. Phil. 13.2).² The utilization rate of the NT, when viewed collectively, is also lower than Ignatius at

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¹ There are 14 instances of the πίστις category in Pol. Phil. and 51 in Ignatius. The frequency analysis was produced by using Accordance Bible Software version 13.1.3.
² See Pol. Phil. 1.2 (2x); 2.1 (2x); 3.2; 4.2, 3; 5.2; 6.1; 8.2; 9.1, 2; 13.2. Additionally, although several of the 19 uses are non-theological, the Epistle of Diognetus likewise contains a similarly high concentration that rivals Ignatius (7.26/1,000 words).
roughly 3.99/1,000.\(^9\) In order to get a fuller picture of Ignatian faith, the investigation will broaden beyond the πιστ- category to include related semantic terms. Thus, Table 6 will serve as the lexical basis for the subsequent analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faith-Related Term</th>
<th>Verses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>πιστεύω (19)</td>
<td>Magn. 6.1; 9.1; 10.3 (2x); Trall. 2.1; 9.2; Rom. 7.2; 8.2; 10.2; Phld. 5.2; 8.1; 2; 9.1 (2x); 9.2; Smyrn. 3.1; 2; 6.1; Pol. 7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πίστις, εως, ἦ (27)</td>
<td>Eph. 1.1; 3.1; 8.2 (2x); 9.1; 10.2; 13.1; 14.1 (2x); 14.2 (2x); 16.2; 20.1, 2; Magn. 1.1, 2; 6.1; 13.1; Trall. 8.1; Rom. inscr; Phld. 8.2; 11.2; Smyrn. inscr; 1.1; 6.1; 13.2; Pol. 6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πιστός, ἤ, ὢν (5)</td>
<td>Eph. 21.2; Magn. 5.2; Trall. 13.3; Rom. 3.2; Smyrn. 1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἀπιστέω (1)</td>
<td>Eph. 18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἀπιστία, ας, ἦ (2)</td>
<td>Eph. 8.2 (2x)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἀπιστός, ὢν (4)</td>
<td>Magn. 5.2; Trall. 10.1; Smyrn. 2.1; 5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καταξιοπιστεύομαι (1)</td>
<td>Trall. 6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἂξιόπιστος, ὢν (2)</td>
<td>Phld. 2.2; Pol. 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ἀπειθέω (1)</td>
<td>Magn. 8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πείθω (4)(^10)</td>
<td>Trall. 3.2; Rom. 7.2; Smyrn. 5.1; Pol. 2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πεισμονή (1)</td>
<td>Rom. 3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>πληροφορέω (4)</td>
<td>Magn. 8.2; 11.1; Phld. inscr; Smyrn. 1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>χωρέω (2)</td>
<td>Trall. 5.1; Smyrn. 6.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^9\) NT letters exhibiting a higher frequency include Rom (8.57), Gal (12.08), 1 Thess (9.43), 2 Thess (12.11), 1 Tim (20.7), 2 Tim (10.47), Titus (16.64), Heb (7.87), Jam (10.87), 1 Pet (6.54), and Jude (6.52).

\(^10\) Technically, πείθω may have originally derived etymologically from the πιστ- category (Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, LEED 10 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), v. 2, 1162 s.v. πείθω).
9.2 The Senses of Faith

9.2.1 Relational Trust or Cognitive Assent?

Referring to past studies involving the use of πίστις in the NT, Teresa Morgan observed that they often share a common problematic framework:

One thing almost all studies of the New Testament pistis, and Christian faith in general, have in common is that they are deeply influenced by Augustine of Hippo. Augustine's division of faith into fides quae creditor and fides qua creditor, 'the faith which is believed' (the propositional content of faith) and 'the faith by which it is believed' (that which takes place in the heart and mind of the believer), has dominated western thinking since the fifth century.¹¹

Ignatian studies seem to have experienced the same phenomenon with some suggesting that when Ignatius discussed ‘faith’ and its role in the Christian life he simply referred to intellectual assent to a list of objective facts about Christ and that his focus lacked the more desirable subjective or relational sense of faith supposedly found in the Pauline epistles. For example, Torrance concluded that ‘faith’ in Ignatius “takes on the connotation of holding for true a sum of holy traditions...more so than in any of the other Apostolic Fathers. Faith has to do with...the objective facts of the Gospel.”¹² Richardson, who viewed Ignatian faith in a more favorable light, nevertheless concluded that Ignatius had strayed from the notion of “pure Pauline trust” and that Paul's distinctive conception of ‘faith’ as the “complete receptivity’ of


¹² Torrance did acknowledge that the relational sense could be found in Ignatius, however, he seems to have dismissed it since he believed such uses of faith “pass[ed] over into a moral activity which issues in goodness and is perfected in love.” Torrance, Doctrine of Grace, 68.
the believer" was lacking in the Ignatian epistles. In an attempt to explain this supposed shift of emphasis, Richardson referenced contextual factors concerning Ignatius' predicament and concluded that "[i]n an attempt to defend certain doctrines against the disagreement of the heretics, a tendency naturally arose to identify faith with a specific list of propositions requiring intellectual assent."

At the opposite end of the spectrum are those who conclude that Ignatius emphasized the subjective–relational aspect of faith. Thus, Hatch declared, "In the Epistles of Ignatius, as in those of the Apostle Paul, the religious element is uppermost. It is trust rather than mere belief....Πίστις in Ignatius is always subjective. It never has the objective sense of fides quae creditor." Morgan identified the problematic nature of such studies by recognizing that ancient authors who used the term need not have intended, and those who heard or read it may not have expected, to understand a single meaning in any one context. Rather than trying to isolate specific meanings of the lexicon in particular passages, we should do better to work with the elasticity and multivalency of the concept.

Corwin likewise warned that

There is among some in our time a tendency to look with suspicion on the rational aspect of faith, and ‘faith-belief’ is contrasted to its own disfavor with ‘faith-trust,’ which is held to be the only vital meaning of the word. To judge Ignatius on these

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grounds is to miss both the desperateness of the situation which he faced, and the fact that faith-belief for him is meaningless apart from trust.\textsuperscript{17}

From an exegetical standpoint, it is neither helpful nor sound to limit an ancient source’s use of a particular lexical term or grouping to one particular sense, especially if that term was used with a much wider semantic range within contemporary literature. The advice given by Nijay Gupta in his recent study of the Pauline language of faith is particularly appropriate for the current study: “It is helpful to think of the meaning of πίστις not in isolated zones, but rather along a kind of spectrum” between the “cognitive” (i.e. πίστις as belief) and the “socially active” (πίστις as faithfulness).\textsuperscript{18} Thus, conclusions based on seemingly unintended binary distinctions between either subjective trust or objective assent do not appear to represent the Ignatian conception of faith. Instead, the following section will demonstrate that when Ignatius utilized faith language, he used such terms with a plurality of shades of meaning which frequently incorporated both senses simultaneously.

9.2.2 The Ignatian Conception of Faith as Believing Faith

Despite the warning, a plain reading of the letters reveals that Ignatius periodically focused on one particular sense or the other. Occasionally the relational sense appears predominant. For example, the Trallians were assured that their prayers would be answered because ‘the Father [is] faithful/trustworthy’ (Trall. 13.3 – πιστὸς ὁ πατήρ). Similarly in Rom. 3.2, Ignatius indicated that if he endured martyrdom, and thus demonstrated that he was truly a Christian, the result

\begin{footnotes}
\item[17] Corwin, St. Ignatius, 239.
\end{footnotes}
would be that ‘[he] would be faithful (τότε πιστὸς εἶναι) when...no longer visible to the world.’

The relational (trust) aspect is also at the forefront in *Phld.* 9.1 where Ignatius indicated that the Jewish high priests described in the Hebrew bible had been entrusted (πεπιστευµένος) with the ‘Holy of Holies’ as well as ‘the hidden things of God’ (πεπίστευται).

A similar focus can be gleaned from *Eph.* 1.1, 3.1, *Magn.* 6.1, *Trall.* 6.2, *Phld.* 2.2, *Smyrn.* 13.2, and *Pol.* 3.1. At other times, Ignatius used the πιστ- grouping in a generic and apparently formulaic fashion that is difficult to categorize with any degree of certainty. Indeed, ‘faith’ is frequently listed as a Christian virtue with little to no explanation in the greeting and closing sections of the letters, as well as in multiple of the faith-love pairings employed throughout the letters. For example, in *Eph.* 3.2 faith is recorded alongside a string of other descriptors: ‘I need to be anointed by you with faith (πίστει), instruction, steadfastness, and endurance.’ A similar description is found in *Phld.* 11.2: ‘on him [Christ] they hope in flesh, in soul, in spirit, in faith (πίστει), in love, and in harmony.’ Utilizing his favored faith-love pairing (§11.1), Ignatius congratulated the Ephesians for their ‘righteous nature’ (φύσει δικαίᾳ) which was characterized by their ‘faith in and love for Jesus Christ our Savior’ (*Eph.* 1.1 –κατὰ πίστιν κἀ ἀγάπην ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). Similar generic uses are found in *Magn.* 6.1, *Smyrn* inscr, 13.2, and *Pol.*

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9 Compare to John 2:24, ‘Jesus...did not entrust himself to them’ (Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔπιστευεν αὐτὸν αὐτοῖς).

20 Richardson indicated that *Smyrn.* 10.2 also employed the relational sense, however, this conclusion is based on the unlikely textual variant that included πιστίς (ἡ τελεία πιστίς, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός), whereas the more likely form of the original text referred to ‘hope’ and not ‘faith’ (ἡ τελεία ἐλπίς, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός). The πιστίς variant is supported by G and L, whereas the ἐλπίς variant is attested to by the fifth-century P, A, g, as well as the oft-ignored Arabic (Ms. Sin. ar. 505) which reads “the perfect hope, Jesus Christ” (English translation of Ms. Sin. ar. 505, unpubl). The earlier dating and wider attestation of the ἐλπίς variant leans heavily in its favor as the original reading. Ignatius’ characteristic use of the terms also points towards ἐλπίς as the original reading. Nowhere in the letters is Christ likened to ‘faithfulness’, however, Christ is frequently identified as ‘the hope’ for Christians (*Eph.* 21.2; *Magn.* 7.1; 11.1; *Trall.* inscr; 2.2; *Phld.* 11.2).
6.2. Despite their generic appearance, at first glance, most of these instances seem to have been used with the sense of relational trust.

At the other end of the semantic spectrum are verses where Ignatius’ faith language seems to express the intellectual aspect. A few examples will suffice. With the Roman congregation’s efforts to interfere with his execution most likely in mind, Ignatius spoke in Rom. 7.2 of the possibility of changing his mind regarding his determination to go through with his execution. He stated that, when finally present with them, they should ‘not be persuaded (πείσθητέ) by me, but instead rather believe (πιστεύσατε) the things I am writing to you.’ The manuscript evidence is split regarding Ignatius’ faith language in 7.2. The evidence would suggest that the original either contained πείσθητε in both verb slots (g, Sm, A, Am), or that he had switched the second verb to πιστεύσατε (G, H, T, L, C, M). Regardless of the decision, both verb choices convey the same meaning. In other words, if by chance he succumbed to his fears and changed his mind and decided to accept their advocation to either change or overthrow his death sentence, when he finally reached them, they should not to ‘be persuaded’ (πείσθητε) by his pleas and instead were to ‘believe’ (πιστεύσατε) his true desire to be executed as communicated in the present letter. This is a prime example where Ignatius’

21 From a text critical perspective, the πείσθητε...πιστεύσατε variant seems to be the most likely original reading. It makes more sense for a later scribe to harmonize the literary flow of the sentence by keeping the same verb πείσθητε in both slots. Additionally from a lexical perspective, it makes sense that the πείσθητε...πιστεύσατε verb pattern was intentional.

22 Ignatius’ view of his upcoming martyrdom will be examined more closely in §11.3. For now, it should be noted that scholarship has oftentimes unfavorably portrayed Ignatius as being fanatically and morbidly in love with the notion of being martyred. Thus W. H. C. Frend concluded that the “letters display a state of exaltation bordering on mania” – Martyrdom and Persecution, 197. B. H. Streeter likewise dismissed Ignatius as a “neurotic” and concluded that his desire to be martyred was an admixture of a noble desire to “serve God” contradicted by his “desire to attain the glory of martyrdom.” – Primitive Church, 163–78.
faith language, though employed in a non-theological context, demonstrates a broad use of
the πιστ- lexical category. The Roman believers were either to ‘be persuaded’ by the truth of
his verbal plea to accept their offer of clemency or they were to ‘believe’ his previously-written
request to go through with the execution. Both involved believing Ignatius’ stated desire to die
as a martyr. Likewise, the intellectual (or propositional) sense seems to be intended in Rom.
8.2, where his readers were to ‘believe [him]’ (πιστεύσατε μοι) that he was speaking ‘truly’
(ἀληθῶς λέγω) about his desire to be martyred, and in Rom. 10.2, when he indicated his ‘belief’
(πιστεύω) that the Roman congregation had information about those who preceded him to
Rome. In the above-mentioned verses it seems evident that the intellectual sense of the πιστ-
category was primary.

However, in several verses Ignatius used the intellectual or propositional sense of the
πιστ- category theologically. For example, in Smyrn. 2.1 his docetic opponents were described
as ἄπιστοι because they denied the veracity of Christ’s humanity. The ending of the verse
solidifies the propositional sense: ‘And just as they are thinking (φρονοῦσιν), it will also come
to pass for them.’ Much like the previous discussion involving persuasion, Ignatius’ reference
to ‘faith’ here utilized πιστ- and other related terms to indicate his conviction that a failure to
believe the propositions put forward regarding the incarnational narrative amounted to a
rejection of what he regarded as truth.23 His own belief in the incarnation is plainly declared in
the next verse (3.1): ‘For I know and believe (οἶδα καὶ πιστεύω) he was in the flesh even after
the resurrection.’ Faith here again involved belief in aspects of the incarnational narrative.

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23 Note the repeated use (five instances) of ἀληθῶς in Smyrn. 1.1–2.
By contrast, it can be shown that in the majority of instances where the πιστις-grouping was employed, both senses were simultaneously intended. This is precisely where some previous conclusions about Ignatius’ faith language have missed some important contextual data. As Corwin rightly commented, “faith-belief for him [Ignatius] is meaningless apart from trust.”\textsuperscript{24} To suggest that Ignatius emphasized right belief in a set of doctrinal facts about Christ without simultaneously encouraging personal trust in the God who he described as revealing such knowledge, or for that matter, the Son who had acted out the events that the ‘facts’ represented, does not match the overall context of the letters. In other words, Ignatius’ discussions about faith do not exhibit a divorce between the propositional (fides quae creditor) and relational sense of faith (fides qua creditor). Indeed, Mackinnon rightly noted that “Faith is, indeed as in the Fourth Gospel, often belief in the divine-human Christ….But it is not exclusively identical with the reception of right theological doctrine. It is also equivalent at times to trust in the grace of Christ.”\textsuperscript{25}

In many cases, when one sense of faith appears at the forefront, the other sense is likely present. This aligns perfectly with Gupta’s analysis of the Pauline language of faith:

“There are times (I would argue many times) where we must recognize a meaning of πιστις in Paul that tries to encapsulate both of these polarized values. We can call this ‘trusting faith.’\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24} Corwin, St. Ignatius, 239.

\textsuperscript{25} Mackinnon, Gospel in the Early Church, 273. See also Richardson who noted that “the intellectual element by no means exhausts Ignatius’s idea of faith” – The Christianity of Ignatius, 11; see also Schoedel who acknowledged both the subjective and objective aspects of faith in the letters, Ignatius of Antioch, 26.

\textsuperscript{26} Gupta, Paul and the Language of Faith, 22.
It is my intention to demonstrate that Ignatius conceived of Christian faith in the same way.\textsuperscript{27}

In other words, faith for Ignatius was ‘belief’ in the propositional content of the Gospel narrative that likewise produced ‘faith’ or ‘trust’ in God/Christ.

\textit{— Examples of Believing Faith —}

Several key verses have been selected to outline Ignatius’ conception of ‘believing faith.’ Throughout the letters, Ignatius indicated that the faith of the early-Christian churches had been under attack from external as well as internal entities (\textit{Eph}. 5.2–3; 7.1–8.1; 9.1; 16.1–2; 17.1; 18.1–2; \textit{Magn}. 4.1; 8.1; 9.1; 11.1–2; \textit{Trall}. 6.1–11.1; \textit{Phld}. 2.1–3.1–3; 6.1–2; 8.2; \textit{Smyrn}. 2.1; 4.1; 5.1–7.2; 9.1; \textit{Pol}. 2.1; 3.1). In almost every instance, the dissenters had threatened church unity by introducing doctrinal perspectives that Ignatius believed were contrary to his understanding of the true Christian faith. What follows are a few examples where Ignatius indicated that faith, in the sense of trusting God or Christ, was being threatened by those who imposed aberrant beliefs.

For instance, he warned the Ephesians of those who opposed the bishop and thwarted unity (5.2–3; 7.1–8.1; 9.1) for the simple reason that they sought to ‘corrupt the faith of God (\(\pi \iota \sigma \tau \iota \nu \theta \varepsilon \omicron \omicron \)) with evil teaching’ (16.2; cf. 9.1). Despite the debates over how to interpret the genitive construction \(\pi \iota \sigma \tau \iota \nu \theta \varepsilon \omicron \omicron \), it seems clear that no matter how the genitive case was

\textsuperscript{27} Gupta came to the same conclusion: “Many theologians (like Clement and Ignatius) use \(\pi \iota \sigma \tau \iota \nu \) in a way that I find similar to the nature and breadth of Paul’s own usage.” – ibid., 47.
intended, the focus of the threat was still the same.\textsuperscript{28} Whether one translates πίστιν θεοῦ as ‘the faith about God’ (objective genitive), ‘the faith from God’ (genitive of source), or ‘God’s faith’ (possessive genitive indicating God’s faithful church) makes little difference: each describes the danger of violating trust in God by corrupting the teachings related to God.\textsuperscript{29} Ignatius’ stated desire for the Ephesians was that they continue to exhibit ‘faithfulness’ (10.2; 14.1) and to be united in the faith (13.1); yet this could only be achieved if the church rejected the ‘evil’ doctrines that threatened to disrupt the believing community (9.1; 17.1). In other words, 
faithfulness to Christ could only be achieved by maintaining the beliefs about Christ as taught by the Apostles (11.2). Hence, at this point in the Ephesian letter, the dual senses of trust in Christ and beliefs about Christ were concomitant and together constituted ‘believing faith’ for Ignatius.

As the Magnesian letter opens (1.1), Ignatius indicated that he wrote in order to ‘speak to [them] with respect to the faith of Jesus Christ’ (ἐν πίστει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). As the topic of address, πίστει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ appears to reference the faith system, or the ‘teachings about Jesus Christ’, and not the ‘faithfulness of Christ’ as has been suggested.\textsuperscript{30} While analyzing the


\textsuperscript{29} In his study of the use of the Πίστις Χριστοῦ construction in the Apostolic Fathers, Whitenton rightly noted that “a decision between attributive, possession, and source does not affect much since the meaning of πίστει as ‘body of teaching’ is constant.” – Whitenton, “Πίστις Χριστοῦ,” 92 n. 32.

\textsuperscript{30} In response to Yong’s assertion that the subjective sense was not intended since “there is no clear and explicit reference to Jesus’ faith or faithfulness elsewhere in the letter”, Whitenton countered that the silence on the issue in the remainder of the letter “should not exclude a subjective construal for Ign. \textit{Magn.} 1.1.” – ibid., 96 n. 45; Kukwah P. Yong, “The Faith of Jesus Christ: An Analysis of Paul’s Use of ΠΙΣΤΙΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ” (Ph.D Thesis, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2003), 96. After acknowledging that
structure of the letter, Isacson noted that the prescript revealed a dual purpose in writing: first, to acknowledge the “orderliness” of the Magnesians’ “godly love” (i.e., their faithfulness), and second, that they would “endure...and escape ‘the ruler of this age’ ” and ultimately reach God. Indeed, interspersed throughout the epistle are numerous references that highlight the danger of adopting false Christological viewpoints (4.1; 5.1; 8.1; 9.1; 11.1–2). Therefore, Ignatius indicated that the faith of the Magnesians was susceptible to becoming malformed into something he deemed to be false.

As the following demonstrates, one of the primary threats to the Magnesians’ faith in Christ was propositional in nature. After confronting those he regarded as pseudo-Christians (§5.3) who operated outside the authority of the bishop (3.1–4.1) and whose duplicitous actions revealed their true nature as οἱ ἄπιστοι (5.2), Ignatius concluded with a clause at the end of 5.2 that is difficult to translate. The following translations of ἐὰν µὴ αὐθαίρετως ξῆμεν τὸ ἀποθανεῖν εἰς τὸ αὐτοῦ πάθος demonstrate the passage’s difficulties: God the Father’s ‘life is not in [them]’ unless they:

- “voluntarily choose to die into his suffering”\(^{32}\)
- “do not choose to die voluntarily in his suffering”\(^{33}\)

Ignatius was addressing the Magnesians “in the faithfulness of Jesus Christ” it is curious that the lack of further references to Christ’s faithfulness in the remainder of the letter did not seem to concern Whitenton. If Ignatius intended to speak to them about the ‘faithfulness of Christ,’ as Whitenton suggested, then by not returning to that topic in the rest of the letter it seems that Ignatius had forgotten to fulfill his purpose in writing the letter.

\(^{32}\) Isacson, To Each Their Own Letter, 80–1.

\(^{33}\) Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 85; Brannan, Apostolic Fathers.
• “willingly embrace dying for his passion”\textsuperscript{34}

The clause has been viewed as an exhortation for Christians to imitate Christ through martyrdom even though evidence for this view is absent in the letters.\textsuperscript{35} Several scholars detect a Pauline influence and view this as a reference either to the spiritual death of the ‘old man,’ or to the need to function as an \textit{imitatio Christi}.\textsuperscript{36} At first glance it is certainly possible to view \(\tau\omicron\alpha\pi\omicron\sigma\theta\alpha\nu\epsilon\iota\nu\) as a reference to either the spiritual or physical death of the Christian. Yet a few factors combine to suggest that this should instead be understood as a reference to Christ’s death.

First, translations of the main verb and its object (\(\epsilon\chi\omega\mu\nu\epsilon\nu\tau\omicron\alpha\pi\omicron\sigma\theta\alpha\nu\epsilon\iota\nu\)) as ‘choose to die’ seem to be without firm lexical support given that nowhere in the lexica is ‘to choose’ listed as an option for \(\epsilon\chi\omega\). In contrast, the lexica indicate that the basic meaning of ‘having’ or ‘holding’ can signify the process of grasping or holding onto something mentally. The following lexical entries indicate this sense:

• “of holding fast to matters of transcendent importance”; similarly, “to have an opinion about someth., \textit{consider, look upon, view}”\textsuperscript{37}
• to “possess mentally, understand” something\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{34} Howell, \textit{Ignatius of Antioch}, 76.
\textsuperscript{35} Aune, \textit{Cultic Setting}, 157, 160.
\textsuperscript{36} Lightfoot suggested that the “language of Ignatius is moulded on that of S. Paul; comp. Rom. 6:5, 8:17, 29, 2 Cor. 4:10, Phil. 3:10, 2 Tim 2:11.” – \textit{Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 2}, 118. Brannan, apparently referencing Lightfoot, cited “Rom 6:5; 8:17, 29; 2 Cor 4:10, Phil 3:10; 2 Tim 2:2” – \textit{Apostolic Fathers}, 85 n. g. (Brannan’s reference to 2 Tim 2:2 should be 2 Tim 2:3). Grant likewise suggested that “[t]hey must die into or toward his passion so that they may also share in his resurrection. This idea is Pauline; cf. Paul, Romans 6:3–11; Philippians 3:10–11.” – \textit{Ignatius of Antioch}, 60.
\textsuperscript{37} BDAG, 421 s.v. \(\epsilon\chi\omega\), defn. 3c, 6.
\textsuperscript{38} LSJ, 749 s.v. \(\epsilon\chi\omega\), defn. A19.
• “to hold in one's mind, know, understand”, “to possess in one's mind, know, understand”, “to keep firm with one's mind, know”
• to “hold to be, consider” or to “hold, think”

Additionally, spatial translations of εἰς (‘to die in/into his passion’) make little sense of the passage. On the other hand, if the prepositional phrase is viewed as indicating ‘with respect to’ or ‘with reference to’ then the translation would become: 'Jesus Christ, concerning whom, unless we willingly hold fast to (i.e., grasp mentally) the death as it relates to his passion, his life is not in us.' This translation makes good contextual sense since Ignatius repeatedly tied the reception of life to a proper understanding of the actuality of the gospel events. That Ignatius seems to have used εἰς with this meaning elsewhere in the letters is further evidence that this translation may better represent what Ignatius intended to convey.

Regardless of the interpretation, the clause clearly was intended to differentiate between the ἀπιστοί, who exhibited the ‘imprint of the world’ (χαρακτῆρα), and the πιστοί, who exhibited the ‘imprint of God the Father through Jesus Christ’ (5.2). Thus, those who attempted to disrupt the faith system of the early church oftentimes did so by altering its doctrine. This passage represents what is found in the remainder of the epistle where Ignatius’ references to faith, by placing more emphasis upon the intellectual sense, stressed the need

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39 BrillDAG, 885–6 s.v. ἔχω, defn. 1D.
40 PGL, 589, s.v. ἔχω, defn. 7, 8.
41 Similar uses are also found in the NT (Matt 12:18; Rom 16:19; 2 Cor 2:9; Phil 1:5; 2:22; 1 Tim 3:9; 2 Tim 1:13; 2 Pet 1:8, 17; Rev 6:9; 12:17; 19:10). For lexical support see BDAG, 291 s.v. εἰς, defn. 5. For grammatical support see Wallace, Greek Grammar, 369; Harris, Prepositions and Theology, 85.
42 The verses that clearly use εἰς to signify ‘with reference to/with respect to’ someone or something include Eph. 20.1, Magn. 5.2, Phld. 9.2, Smyrn. 1.1, 5.3, 6.2. Other verses, such as Eph. 12.2, 14.1, Trall. 3-3, Rom. 7.1, Phld. 1.2, Smyrn. 8.1, seem to likewise fit into this category.
for correct Christological belief. However, the final mention of faith in the letter’s closing
(Magn. 13.1) seems to switch the focus of faith towards the ‘trust’ aspect and simply restates
the letter’s purpose statement:43 ‘Therefore be diligent to be strengthened in the doctrines (ἐν
tοῖς δόγμασιν) of the Lord and of the Apostles, so that...you may prosper...in faith (πίστει) and
love’. Since the stated object of πίστις is ‘in the Son and the Father and the Spirit (ἐν υἱῷ καὶ
πατρί καὶ ἐν πνεύματι), it would seem that Ignatius emphasized the relational aspect of
exercising trust in the triune God.

Ignatius’ concept of ‘believing faith’ is therefore displayed in the Magnesian letter’s
structure. Sandwiched between the bookend exhortations to maintain their ‘trust’ in God
(Magn. 1.1; 13.1) are several specific appeals to do so by maintaining their propositional beliefs
about Christ (5.2; 8.2; 9.1; 10.3; 11.1–2). Once again, both senses of faith seem evident as trust in
Christ was maintained by holding to accurate beliefs about Christ.

The Trallian letter likewise contains evidence for the notion of believing faith. In Trall.
6.1, Ignatius doubted whether an unnamed group ‘who seem to be faithful’
(καταξιοπιστεύοντες)44 were genuine Christians. Once again resorting to medical imagery,
Ignatius highlighted the danger they posed. Such false teachers ‘blended’ (παρεμπλέκουσιν) Jesus Christ ‘with themselves’45 while simultaneously adding ‘honeyed wine’ (παρεμπλέκουσιν)

43 Isacson, To Each Their Own Letter, 98.
44 This interesting term appears in our literature here for the first time and may have been coined by
Ignatius.
45 Translations that indicate the opponents were mixing Christ with ‘poison’ are based on Lightfoot’s
emendation. For more information on the variants, see §5.3.1, n. 20. As previously stated, none of the known
variants alter Ignatius’ warning that whenever the doctrine of Christ was mingled with anything else,
whether it be ‘poison’, ‘themselves’, or ‘the times,’ the θανάσιμον φάρμακον would result in spiritual death.
so that the poisonous nature of the admixture would remain masked and undetected. This served as a likely warning concerning docetic proponents whose ‘heretical’ interpretations departed from what Ignatius considered to be Christian truth (cf. 6.1 ‘partake only of Christian food’). Even though the Trallians had thus far avoided these ‘snares of the devil’ (8.1a), nevertheless, depending on which textual variant is original, Ignatius encouraged them either to ‘regain [their] strength in faith’ or to ‘create [themselves] anew in faith’ in 8.2b. Either way, the situation was dangerous because the Trallians’ continued trust in Christ was threatened.

In response, Ignatius once again emphasized the propositional aspect of faith as the solution. With the ‘seemingly trustworthy’ false teachers adding foreign elements to the Christ kerygma, the Trallians were advised instead to reject such offerings and to consume only ‘Christian food’ (6.1). That the offenders were diluting his conception of proper Christian doctrine is clear not only from this passage but also from what follows. Thus in 7.1, by exhorting them to be ‘inseparable from Jesus Christ…the bishop…the Apostles’, Ignatius referred to the notion of adhering to the Christological instruction that had been passed down from the Apostles through the bishop. Similarly, in response to the call to ‘be deaf’ to docetic teachings that spoke ‘apart from Jesus Christ’ (9.1a), the Trallians were presented with a somewhat extended section of creedal elements in 9.1–2 that were evidently intended to

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46 The primary Greek manuscript G, along with C, show that Ignatius used ἀνακτίσασθε, whereas Lightfoot concluded that the original text most likely read ἀνακτήσασθε — Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers, Part II*, vol. 2, 171. Modern editions are split with Holmes opting for ἀνακτήσασθε — “regain your strength in faith” (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 221)—and Ehrman siding with ἀνακτίσασθε—“create yourselves anew in faith” (Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, 263).
counter such aberrant teachings about Christ. Here again, as in the previous sections, the Ignatian concept of believing faith involved *trust in* Christ that was maintained by *belief in* Christ. The two senses appear again as inseparable elements of Ignatian faith.

The Philadelphians faced an identical situation. They were to ‘flee from division and evil teaching’ offered by the ‘seemingly trustworthy wolves’ (2.1–2), to ‘stay away from evil plants’ neither ‘cultivated by Christ’ nor ‘planted by the Father’ (3.1), and to ‘flee from the evil designs and snares of the ruler of this age.’ Ignatius presented the solution in 8.1: ‘I trust (πιστεύω) in the grace of Jesus Christ, who will free you from every restraint.’ The object of Ignatian faith will be more fully explored in §9.3; however, at this point it should be noted that the stated object of faith in 8.1 is personal in nature and centered on the character of Christ. Though Ignatius’ ‘belief’ in the Christ kerygma is plainly manifest in the letters, yet the use of πιστεύω in 8.1 rings primarily with the relational sense of the word. Decisions concerning how πιστεύω should be translated are divided with many opting for ‘I believe in the grace of Christ,’47 while other scholars prefer ‘I have faith in the grace of Jesus Christ.’48 The relative clause that follows, ‘who will release every bond from you’ (ὃς λύσει ἀφ ὑμῶν πάντα δεσμόν), is further evidence that the object of πιστεύω is personal and that Ignatius most likely emphasized the need to ‘trust’ Christ based on his gracious nature.49

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49 This is not to say that the propositional aspect of πιστεύω was absent here, only that the relational sense appears at the fore.
However, much like the situation in the previously-examined letters, the focus of the dissenters' dispute was doctrinal in nature and thus threatened to overturn the Philadelphians' 'trust' by confounding their belief system. In contrast to the Philadelphians who had been 'fully convinced' (πεπληροφορημένη) in his [Christ's] resurrection' (Phld. inscr), the 'seemingly faithful' opponents held to a form of 'evil teaching' (2.1) that created 'schism[s]' (σχίζοντι) based on their 'strange mindset' (ἀλλοτρίᾳ γνώµη) that 'disagreed with the passion' (3.3). The central problem with those who sought to 'interpret Judaism' to them was that they failed to 'speak about Jesus Christ' (6.1) and they taught contrary to the 'teachings of Christ' (8.2). In this letter, as in those previously examined, Ignatius' conception of trusting in Christ simultaneously incorporated the idea of holding to proper beliefs about Christ.

The Smyrnaean letter opens with two uses from the πιστ- category that seem to be positioned closer the relational end of the spectrum. The Smyrneans were lauded for 'having been filled with faith' (πεπληρωμένη ἐν πίστει – inscr) and for 'having been established in an immovable faith' (κατηρτισμένους ἐν ἀκινήτῳ πίστει – 1.2). The reason for Ignatius' positive assessment regarding their displayed faithfulness immediately follows. Their beliefs had been firmly affixed to the correct doctrinal target. For example, using the crucifixion imagery, Ignatius described them as 'having been nailed to the cross of...Christ' (1.1), as well as being 'fully convinced' regarding a rather extensive creedal description of Jesus Christ in 1.1–2.1a. In contrast, what set the docetic opponents apart from the faithful Smyrneans, and thus incited

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50 This will be more fully developed in §9.3.1 under the subsection entitled Being Fully Convinced of the Coming of the Christ.

51 More specifics will be provided in §9.3.2 regarding the nature of Ignatius' stated object of faith.
Ignatius to term them as ἄπιστοί, was their belief that Jesus Christ’s ‘suffering was in appearance only’ (2.1b).

In summary, Ignatius held that the faithful believed rightly and the unfaithful either did not believe, or believed incorrectly. While it is true that Ignatius firmly emphasized the need to maintain correct propositional beliefs throughout, it is inaccurate to suggest that his conception of faith incorporated this sense alone. It is also incorrect to propose that Ignatius emphasized intellectual assent to a mere list of facts without simultaneously stressing the need to exercise faith in Christ. The letters demonstrate that when Ignatius used faith language, though often leaning towards the propositional sense, he predominately used both senses simultaneously. From a contextual perspective, it is perfectly reasonable for the intellectual aspect of faith to be frequently emphasized. Morgan thus commented that Ignatius’ assertion in Smyrn. 6.1 suggests “in the context of disputes among Christians—that propositional belief can be treated increasingly as an intrinsic part of pistis but even in some sense as definitive of it.”

Similarly, Corwin asserted that “there is sound reason for Ignatius’ emphasis on right belief, for the docetic teachers were denying the reality of these events by ‘spiritualizing’ them.” Nevertheless, Corwin was certainly correct to acknowledged that both senses were present throughout the letters. Therefore, faith as ‘trust’ and faith as ‘belief’

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52 Morgan, Roman Faith and Christian Faith, 514.
53 Corwin, St. Ignatius, 238–9. Richardson similarly remarked that “it is always important to bear in mind the actual situation which he confronted. His letters are written with a living interest in the Church and reflect the needs and difficulties of the early second century….He is confronted on one hand with the growth of a heresy…and on the other with the practical difficulties of church dissensions.” – The Christianity of Ignatius, 7–8.
54 Corwin, St. Ignatius, 239.
appear to have been inseparably linked in the letters. To Ignatius, exercising *proper faith in* Christ by necessity involved clinging to the *proper beliefs about* Christ. To separate the two senses renders the letters nonsensical. Faith in the Ignatian epistles is therefore properly defined as believing faith.

### 9.3 Objects of Ignatian Faith

With Ignatius’ conception of believing faith in mind, the following will serve as a short investigation into whether any discernable objects of such faith can be detected in the letters. If the ‘faith-trust’ aspect of believing faith is in view then the proper object of faith should focus on the ‘who’ or ‘what’ Ignatian faith was directed towards (i.e., trust in who or what). If, on the other hand, the ‘faith-belief’ aspect is primary then the object would shift to the specific content of belief (i.e., believe what). Regarding the former, Richardson suggested that even though the Ignatian epistles mirror the Pastoral epistles’ infrequent reference to a personal object of faith, the constant theme of personal devotion to Jesus Christ, along with the repeated use of the phrase ‘in Jesus Christ,’ suggests that the reader is justified in viewing Christ as the implied, personal object of Ignatian faith.\(^{55}\) Indeed, in at least a few passages, Ignatius explicitly identified God or Jesus Christ as the object of the Christian’s trust.\(^{56}\) In other passages, the propositional aspect of faith, in the form of certain doctrinal teachings about

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\(^{55}\) Richardson, *The Christianity of Ignatius*, 12.

\(^{56}\) See Eph. 1.1–‘faith...in Christ Jesus’, 14.1–‘faith...in Jesus Christ’, Magn. 1.1–‘the faith about Christ Jesus’, 10.3–‘faith...in Christ Jesus’; Magn. 13.1–‘faith...in the Son and Father and in the Spirit’. Eph. 16.2, 20.2, and Rom. inscr could also be viewed this way depending on how the genitive construction is understood.
Christ, serves as the object of belief. In the following sections, the relevant passages will be examined with the goal of further defining the elements of belief that Ignatius focused upon and stressed. This will be accomplished in two ways. First, the most direct statements that include a clearly stated object of belief will be examined thematically. Second, the content of the most prominent quasi-creedal statements found throughout the letters will also be analyzed. The purpose will be to understand the content of Ignatian faith.

9.3.1 Explicitly-Stated Objects

When referencing the concept of belief, in all but a few instances and with varying levels of explicitness, Ignatius supplied an object of belief. Several times throughout he did so in a non-theological way to indicate what he or others were, or should have been, believing. For example, in Rom. 7.2 (cf. 8.2) the Roman church was encouraged to ‘be persuaded’ (πιστεύσατε/πείσθητε) about ‘the things [he] was writing to them’ (i.e., his desire to go through with the execution). Romans 5.2 likewise indicates that he ‘believed’ (πιστεύω) they had knowledge concerning those preceding him to Rome from Syria. Aside from a few similar instances (Rom. 8.2, Trall. 3.2, Pol. 7.3), when Ignatius used such language he did so in a theological manner that relates to Christian trust or belief.

Even a cursory examination of the epistles reveals that in multiple sections of the letters declarations of faith identify discernible objects of belief. At times, the stated object is

57 See Magn. 8.1; Trall. 9.2; Phld. 5.2.

58 The analysis will include Eph. 7.2; 18.2; Trall. 9.1–2; Smyrn. 1.1–2.

59 For a discussion regarding the textual variants in Rom. 7.2 see §9.2.2.
generic and somewhat vague. Thus in *Phld.* 5.2 Ignatius simply described the Hebrew prophets as ‘believing in him [i.e., Christ]’ (ἐν δὲ καὶ πιστεύσαντες). The same formula, ‘believe in him [Christ],’ is also found in *Trall.* 9.2. On a similar note, while discussing the contrast between Judaism and Christianity in *Magn.* 10.3, and after stating that ‘Judaism had believed in Christianity’ and not the reverse, Ignatius declared that ‘every tongue was brought together ‘by believing in God’ (πιστεύσασα εἰς θεὸν συνήχθη). Unfortunately, the lack of specificity in all three cases means little can be inferred from these examples. Despite these isolated instances, as the following sections will demonstrate, in almost every other situation where his readers were exhorted ‘to believe,’ Ignatius identified a more precisely-stated object of faith. This permits a deeper appreciation of Ignatius’ understanding of the concept of belief. What follows is a thematic categorization of such descriptions.

— *Faith in the Death of Christ* —

In several verses the object of belief is described as the physical death of Christ. For example, in *Trall.* 2.1 Ignatius explained that ‘by believing in his [i.e., Jesus Christ’s] death (πιστεύσαντες εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ) they themselves ‘would escape death.’ As the anti-docetic context of the letter later demonstrates (*Trall.* 9.1–10), this clearly signifies the requirement to believe in the physical death of Christ. Likewise in *Smyrn.* 6.1 the anti-docetic emphasis is evident when Ignatius warned that judgment awaited those who ‘did not believe in the blood of Christ’ (µὴ πιστεύσωσιν εἰς τὸ αἷμα Χριστοῦ). In the same verse, Ignatius broadened outside of the πιστι-grouping to exhort his readers concerning the need to ‘comprehend’ and ‘accept’ Jesus Christ’s
physical death (i.e., the shedding of his blood)—‘Let the one who can comprehend this, accept it (ὁ χωρῶν χωρεῖτω).’

Likewise in Magn. 9.1 the death of Christ is indirectly identified as the object of belief. After stating that ‘our life arose through him and his death,’ Ignatius immediately followed with the warning that some denied this assertion. The contrast is plain. According to Ignatius, the judaizing group rejected the death of Christ as having salvific effect. By contrast, Ignatius indicated that belief in the efficacy of Christ’s death was the means of salvation. If the prior analysis and retranslation of Magn. 5.2 argued in §9.2.2 is accurate, this is yet another example where the death of Christ functioned as the object of belief: ‘Jesus Christ, concerning whom, unless we willingly hold fast to (i.e., grasp mentally) the death as it relates to his passion, his life is not in us.’

— Faith in the Physical Passion of Christ —

Elsewhere Ignatius revealed an additional element to his belief system, namely the physical passion of Christ. Obviously Christ’s death and passion are related ideas, and yet since they are not coterminous, for the sake of precision they will be treated separately. Thus, in Trall. 10.1, with an apparent citation from his docetic opponents, Ignatius denounced the ‘godless’

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61 Even though χωρέω was used elsewhere with the sense of moving from one place to another (Eph. 16.2; Magn. 5.1; 7.2), in Trall. 5.1 and Smyr. 6.1 the verb figuratively indicates the need to accept/comprehend/understand the physical death of Christ [see BDAG, 1094 s.v. χωρέω, defn. 3.b.δ; LSJ, 2015 s.v. χωρέω, defn. III “to be big enough to grasp, taken in (mentally); PGL, 1537 s.v. χωρέω, defn. C.4 “of spiritual and intellectual capacity, take in, comprehend”]. Despite attempts to establish a literary dependence by Ignatius upon Matt. 19:12, Foster is probably correct to suggest that dependence is improbable – Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 179–80.
(ἀθεοὶ) and ‘unbelievers’ (ἀπιστοὶ) who suggested that Christ’s ‘suffering was in appearance only’ (τὸ δοκεῖν πεπονθέναι αὐτὸν). The exact phrasing is paralleled in Smyrn. 2.1 where Ignatius once again attributed this denial to those he described as ἀπιστοὶ. At times, the letter reveals the same object of belief by negatively stating what content Ignatius felt was invalid and that Christians should therefore reject. An example of this is found in Smyrn. 5.3 where Ignatius warned about ‘unbelievers’ (ἀπισταὶ) who needed to ‘change their minds with respect to the passion’ (μετανοῆσωσιν εἰς τὸ πάθος) of Christ. The context indicates that Ignatius viewed their understanding of the passion to be problematic since it rejected the physical aspect of Christ’s suffering (5.1–2). Thus through the description of unbelief (ἀπιστα-) Ignatius presents the inverse of what correct or true belief entailed.

In a discussion surrounding the identity of Ignatius’ docetic opponents and their respective views, Stewart is certainly correct to note that scholarly conclusions on the matter have often exceeded what can be definitively gleaned from the Ignatian epistles. Robinson’s warning is apt at this point:

Does Ignatius view the opposition as neat, identifiable groups, each easily labeled and refuted, or is his focus more clearly on what he holds as true, from which perspective he dismisses everything that does not measure up? I suggest that Ignatius works with a

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61 Alistair Stewart noted that the two verses are “the only times when a direct citation is made” in the letters – Alistair Stewart, “Ignatius “Docetists”: A Survey of Opinions and Some Modest Suggestions,” in Docetism in the Early Church: The Quest for an Elusive Phenomenon, ed. Joseph Verheyden et al., WUNT 402 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 143.

62 Stewart demonstrates this by examining the various arguments that have sought to identify the specific docetic proponent Ignatius polemicized against, see ibid., 147–64.
simple dualism: one is either in the bishop’s church or outside it, one is either on
God’s side or on the side of the prince of this world.⁶³

For the purposes of the present study, it matters little whether the opponents promoted an
angel-Christology, phantasmal Docetism, or even whether a specific proponent such as
Basilides, Cerinthus, or Valentinus was in view.⁶⁴ What seems evident is that Ignatius
encouraged belief in not only the physical reality of both Christ’s death but also in the
physical reality of his suffering and crucifixion. For Ignatius then, it was necessary to believe
that Jesus Christ experienced not only a physical death, but also physical suffering in his
crucifixion. As Eph. 18.1 emphasized, those who opposed Christianity ‘stumbled over the cross.’
Specifically, in the above-mentioned cases, Ignatius determined that any attempt to deny the
physical aspect of either the suffering or the death of Christ, no matter in what form of
argument, was to be rejected as an invalid and thus ineffective object of faith.

— Faith in the Resurrection of Christ —

And yet elsewhere in the letters the object of belief centered instead on the resurrection of
Jesus Christ. Thus, Ignatius praised the Philadelphians for having been ‘fully convinced...in his

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⁶³ Robinson, Parting of the Ways, 124–5. Even though Robinson’s work is aimed primarily at the issue of
judaistic opponents, his warning is still appropriate to the docetic side of the discussion.
⁶⁴ For a recent attempt to classify Ignatius’ conception of Docetism see Stewart, “Ignatius’ “Docetists”,” 144–
73. Hall’s suggestion of the possibility that Ignatius intentionally contrasted “the views of his docetic
opponents with those of the rebellious angels” based on perceived parallels between Ignatius and the
Ascension of Isaiah is not convincing – Robert G. Hall, “Astonishment in the Firmament: The Worship of
Jesus and Soteriology in Ignatius and the Ascension of Isaiah,” in The Jewish Roots of Christological
154–5.
resurrection’ (Phld. inscr – ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει αὐτοῦ πεπληροφορημένη). Since this statement is found in a letter that has been widely recognized for its polemical focus against judaizing influences, the question emerges on how Christ’s resurrection fits into this issue. Though some have detected an anti-docetic element to this statement, the absence of references to the ‘flesh’ suggests that docetic teachings were not necessarily in view. If the opponents were not objecting to the physical aspect of the resurrection, it remains to be seen exactly what they could have been disputing. It is possible that the judaizing opponents rejected the historicity of the resurrection.

The focus on the physical aspect of the resurrection is found in Smyrn. 3.1 where Ignatius, unlike the Phil. inscr, clearly intended to counter docetic teaching: ‘I know and believe (σῶσα καὶ πιστεύω) that he was in the flesh (ἐν σαρκί) even after the resurrection (μετὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν).’ In the following verse (Smyrn. 3.2), Ignatius attributed a certain saying to

65 Those who view the verb as intransitive attach ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει αὐτοῦ to the verb ἀγαλλιωμένη. Thus Stewart translates, ‘rejoices in the passion of our Lord without distinction, as in his resurrection, which is fully satisfied in all mercy’ – Stewart, Ignatius of Antioch, 79. While this is possible, the emphasis on the resurrection and its distinctiveness in Phld. 8.2–9.2, especially when contrasted with the apparent views of the opponents, suggests that disputes over the validity of the resurrection were part of the dispute over how to interpret the ‘archives’ (i.e., the OT). Lightfoot’s translation is similar to Stewart’s: ‘rejoiceth...in His resurrection without wavering, being fully assured in all mercy’ – Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 2, 563. However, Lightfoot indicated that “there is no objection to the construction πληροφορεῖσθαι ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει” – ibid., 250. Even in Lightfoot’s translation, the object of the full assurance seems to be the resurrection. Additionally, Ignatius’ description of his readers in the preceding statement as ‘unwaveringly rejoicing in the suffering of our Lord’ shows that the object of faith could be focused on both the suffering and the resurrection.

66 Schoedel indicated that the reference to the ‘blood of Christ’ here “suggests that he again has in mind the dangers of docetism” – Ignatius of Antioch, 194. The mere mention to the ‘blood’ however is not sufficient evidence to conclude that Docetism was in view. Schoedel also detected anti-docetic language in Phld. 3.3, 6.1, 8.2, and 9.2 – ibid., 200. However, none of these passages contain language that supports such a notion. Lieu similarly interpreted Magn. 9 and 11 as anti-docetic and the product of Ignatius’ “harmonizing rhetoric” which did not match the reality of the actual situation – Lieu, Image and Reality, 43.
Christ that had been directed to Peter and the other apostles: ‘Handle me and see that I am not a bodiless spirit.’ Here Ignatius may have appealed either to Luke 24:39 or, more likely, to an unnamed oral or written gospel source. Regardless of the quotation’s origin, by emphasizing that the resurrected Christ could be touched (3.2), as well as eat and drink (3.3), Ignatius’ point is manifest: the Christian belief system must incorporate the conviction that Jesus Christ experienced a physical resurrection. In a letter directed against docetic views, it makes sense to stress the physical qualification; however, in the Philadelphian letter which is tinged with a judaizing polemic, Ignatius did not emphasize the requirement to believe in the physical aspect of Christ’s resurrection. What can be safely emphasized at this point is that the letters require belief in Christ’s resurrection as a historical and physical event.

— Faith in the Incarnational Event —

Thus far, it has been shown that when Ignatius identified a specific object of faith, he typically referred individually to either the death, the passion, or the resurrection of Christ. However, in one interesting verse, Ignatius merged two of these elements, while adding a related third, to

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67 The similarities between Ign. Smyrn. 3.2 and Luke 24:39 are identical in the beginning of the verse with each opening with ψηλαφήσατε με και ἴδετε δτι ‘Handle me and see that...’. The objects are stated differently in both texts with Ignatius reading ‘that I am not a bodiless spirit’ and Luke ‘that a spirit does not have flesh and bone as you have observed that I have.’ Discussions regarding Ignatius’ source began in antiquity with Eusebius unsure of the backing source (Hist. eccl. 3.36.11), Jerome suggesting that the source was derived from a Gospel account he had recently translated (assumed to be the Gospel of the Hebrews, see Vir. Ill. 2, 16), and Origen indicating that it came from the apocryphal work entitled, The Doctrine of Peter (Fr. Prin. 8). Inge believed the similarities amounted to a possible allusion at best (Inge, “Ignatius,” 79–80) while Foster viewed the arguments for the possible link to Luke as unconvincing (Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 181).

68 This shift in emphasis will be discussed later in the chapter.
create a more comprehensive and inclusive belief statement. Thus, the Magnesians were warned not to ‘get caught on the fishhooks of delusion’ but instead to ‘be fully convinced (Magn. 11.1 – πεπληροφορήσαι) about the birth and the suffering and the resurrection.’ With Ignatius already focusing specifically on the events surrounding the crucifixion (i.e., the passion and death), the addition of Christ’s birth to the list of required elements brackets the entire incarnational event into one comprehensive and mandatory belief statement. As some have noted, this broadening of the object of faith beyond the events of the passion narrative seems to be an Ignatian emphasis. Hartog rightly highlighted this aspect of Ignatius’ teaching: “The incarnational coming (through the virgin birth) was thus an integral aspect of Ignatius’ kerygma. God’s plan in the ἐυαγγέλιον began with Jesus’ birth and was fulfilled in his passion and resurrection.”

Much like the previous section where the resurrection was the focus of belief (Phld. inscr), the Magn. 11 exhortation to believe in the totality of the incarnational event did not specify any fleshly requirements and, contrary to what some have suggested, does not seem to be aimed at countering docetic viewpoints. Instead, as the following will argue, it is likely

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69 Cf. 1 Tim 6:9.
72 Schoedel concluded that denial of Christ’s death in Magn. 9.1, along with Ignatius’ emphasis that the gospel events ‘truly’ occurred (ἀληθῶς), are clear indications that the passages were intentionally stated in anti-docetic language so as to discredit his opponents...even though “no docetism was actually involved.” – Schoedel, “Ignatius and the Archives,” 102. Such language however is not conclusively anti-docetic.
that Ignatius feared the Magnesian church could be affected by those who had yet to become convinced about the historicity of Christ's incarnation.

— Being Fully Convinced of the Coming of the Christ —

Even though the object of Ignatian faith regularly centered on aspects of the incarnational narrative, at times Ignatius mentioned other crucial aspects of belief. In the letters addressed to counter docetic-like teachings, such as in the correspondence written to Tralles and Smyrna, it makes sense that the physical aspect of Christ's existence was the focal point. In contrast, the letters to Magnesia and Philadelphia have traditionally been viewed as being primarily directed to counter the influence of Judaizers.73 Regarding the wide array of interpretations, Robinson highlighted the complexity of the debate by noting that “opinions differ considerably regarding the composition of the Judaizing group—from native-born conservative Jewish Christians to Essene Christians, to proselytes or God-fearers, to Gentiles with an interest in the Jewish heritage of Christianity.”74 In essence, scholarship has yet to achieve a consensus regarding the specific identity of Ignatius' Magnesian/Philadelphian opponents or the nature of their own belief system.

Some posit that Ignatius viewed the judaizing influence as a minor issue, something akin to either a mere disagreement over interpretive methods or to an imbalance in exegetical skillsets between Ignatius and his opponents. For example, regarding the apparent dispute

73 Judith Lieu's suggestion that "interpretations of the character of this Judaizing vary greatly" is true, if somewhat of an understatement – *Neither Jew nor Greek?*, 146.
with his opponents on how to interpret the OT ‘archives’ (Phld. 7.1–9.2), Schoedel suggested that the “opponents in Philadelphia were relatively harmless theologically” and that “they probably represented a threat to the authorities simply because they surpassed them in exegetical expertise.” The text actually seems to portray a contrasting picture with Ignatius describing his opponents as wolves’ (Phld. 2.2), ‘evil plants’ (3.1), ‘tombstones and graves of the dead’ (6.1) who employed Satanically-inspired ‘evil tricks and traps’ (6.2), and who caused divisions (7.1–2). This hardly equates to the designation of ‘harmless.’

Trevett went further by suggesting that Ignatius “had shown himself less capable in debate of this kind than were his judaizing Philadelphian opponents. He was not well versed in the Scriptures.” Barclay likewise concluded that “Ignatius “was not only out of his depth intellectually but also on uncomfortable ground theologically.” Such conclusions do not match the tone of Ignatius’ rhetoric and seem to be based on the idea that Ignatius viewed the gospel (in oral form) as the ultimate authority over against the written OT ‘archives.’ However, Ignatius’ concluding comment in the archive debate, ‘But for me, the ‘archives’ are Jesus Christ’ (Phld. 8.2) can easily be interpreted as meaning ‘But for me, the OT is about Jesus Christ (i.e., the archives contain the Christological elements that the opponents rejected).’

Ignatius appears to have had no personal contact with Magnesia and his description of any potential opposition is significantly less acidic when compared with Philadelphia.

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76 Trevett, *A Study of Ignatius*, 175.
Nevertheless, for Ignatius any adherence to ‘strange doctrines’ (ἑτεροδοξίαις) and ‘useless ancient myths’ (μυθεύμασιν τοῖς παλαιοῖς ἀνωφελέσιν οὖσιν) of Judaism was akin to an admission that one had ‘not received grace’ (Magn. 8.1). The thrust of the debate in both letters appears therefore to have been much deeper and more theological in nature than has been suggested. The following discussion will seek to demonstrate that both letters contain an element of dispute that scholarship has yet to fully consider. Without exploring all propositions regarding the specific identity of such opponents, a tentative suggestion will be explored based on Ignatius’ description of the opposition’s supposed viewpoints.78

Some conclude that Ignatius’ opponents were members of the addressed churches. Yet the letters do not conclusively support this conclusion,79 especially since Ignatius related that both churches had remained firm and had not yet succumbed to any divisive efforts (Phld. inscr; 3.1; Magn. 1.1; 11.1). While it is possible that both churches were fraught with disunifying internal factions, and that Ignatius’ positive language was simply part of a rhetorical strategy to endear himself to his readers or to avoid confrontation, there is no firm evidence for this in the letters. Such a tactic does not match Ignatius’ direct and somewhat

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79 For example see Stephen G. Wilson, Related Strangers: Jews and Christians 70–170 C. E. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 165.
abrupt manner of speaking. Moreover, Ignatius does not employ a non-confrontational rhetorical tactic elsewhere in the letters when tackling positions he regarded as deviant.

Contrary to what has been suggested, if Ignatius' comments accurately reflect the situation in Magnesia and Philadelphia, then the source of the threat may have originated through external agents. Ignatius' statements imply that the opposition in Philadelphia had once been part of the assembly but at some point prior to his arrival had been ‘filtered out’ (ἀποδιϋλισµόν – Phld. 3.1). Schoedel, without substantiating his assertion, doubted that the divisive element had been removed prior to Ignatius' visit and concluded that the schismatics were current members of the Philadelphian church. Ignatius' later description of a personal dispute with the Philadelphian dissenters (6.3–8.2) may justify Schoedel's conclusion. However, his mention of ‘the division caused by certain people’ in 7.1 could indicate that divisions had occurred outside of the Philadelphian church. In other words, Ignatius may have been warning against outsiders who at the time of writing had yet to secure any adherents in Philadelphia. Another possible explanation was that the filtered-out schismatics, who previously were part of the church, had returned to hear Ignatius speak and, while attempting

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82 Schoedel's suggestion that Ignatius' claim that there were no divisions in Philadelphia (3.1) was a correction to his previous assertion that the church was divided (2.1–2) is overly speculative and not convincing – Ignatius of Antioch, 198.

82 Svilgel, Center and the Source, 132.

82 Lightfoot commented that the “false teachers had been at Philadelphia; but the Philadelphian Christians had strained out these dregs of heresy. They had separated themselves from the heretics.” – Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 2, 256. So also Grant, Ignatius of Antioch, 191.

82 Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 198, 205. Isacson’s suggestion that the text shows that the 'filtering out' of the divisive elements was "a continuing and uncompleted process" and that Philadelphia was "in a process of getting rid of elements which do not belong to it" is a possible explanation, however, the grammar (aorist tense) of the text and the comment that he had found no divisions suggests that the filtering was complete – Isacson, To Each Their Own Letter, 133.
to enlist his support for their dissenting views (7.1), had instead found themselves in the midst of an unexpected exegetical dispute with him regarding their Christological interpretation of the OT.\textsuperscript{84}

Before any suggestions are made regarding the potential identity of such external opposition, it will be helpful first to examine the nature of their doctrinal disputations. While Schoedel and others are justified in suggesting that the dispute in Philadelphia involved exegetical differences, nevertheless, it appears that the problem resided in their contrasting interpretations of the OT ‘archives’ and not with their respective exegetical abilities.

Regarding the situation in Philadelphia, the polemical statements directed against the schismatics (3.3; 6.1) rightly frame the source of Ignatius’ anxiety:

the opponents’ deceptive schisms or ‘alien views’ were defined as ‘not being in agreement with the passion’ narrative (3.3);\textsuperscript{85}

such teachings, whether propagated by Jew or gentile, ‘failed to speak about Jesus Christ’ and were therefore in direct contrast with the Hebrew prophets whose preaching ‘anticipated the gospel’ and who expectantly ‘waited for him’ [i.e., Christ] (5.2);

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\textsuperscript{84} It is also possible that the filtering had occurred subsequent to Ignatius’ preaching where the Spirit had uncovered the secret divisions (7.2).

\textsuperscript{85} Wilson suggested that a docetic Christology is potentially referenced in \textit{Phld.} 3.3 as well as in 4.1. However, Ignatius’ statement that the ‘schismatics...are not in agreement with the passion’ does not appear to imply docetism – Wilson, \textit{Related Strangers}, 165. Instead, the reference could simply indicate that the schismatics did not believe that a particular aspect of the gospel account had occurred.

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the schismatics rejected aspects of the gospel narrative (Christ's 'cross...death...resurrection) because they could not find exegetical support for such a narrative in the OT 'archives' (8.2).\footnote{A similar interchange is found in Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho where Trypho's rebuttal of Justin's exegesis—'All the words of the prophecy you repeat, sir, are ambiguous, and have no force in proving what you wish to prove' (51.1)—sounds remarkably similar to Philadelphian opponents' rebuttal of Ignatius. After Ignatius attempted to prove that the gospel narrative could be found in the OT archives (literally, 'it is written'), his opponents replied 'That lies before us' (Ign. Phld. 8.2).}

The archives passage thus displays the heart of the debate between Ignatius and the schismatics. Schoedel's conclusion that there was nothing 'extraordinary' about Phld. 8.2 or 9.2, or that the difference of opinion between Ignatius and the schismatics 'could not have been a Christological matter,' lacks exegetical support.\footnote{Schoedel, "Ignatius and the Archives," 104.} A plain reading suggests quite the opposite. Even though the disputed element(s) of the gospel narrative are not explicitly stated, the following statement in 9.2 may disclose the central issue. After mentioning key figures and features found in the Hebrew scriptures (9.1–‘priests...High Priest...Abraham and Isaac and Jacob...the prophets’) Ignatius immediately highlighted the distinctive feature of the gospel that set it apart from the Hebrew scriptures: 'But the gospel possesses something distinctive (ἐξαίρετον—‘special, singular, remarkable’),\footnote{LSJ, 581 s.v. ἐξαίρετος, defn. II.3.} namely, the coming of the Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ, his suffering, and resurrection’ (9.2). In contrast with the views of the opposition, who did not make the same exegetical connection between the gospel narrative and the Hebrew scriptures, Ignatius believed that what had been ‘anticipated’ in the OT had been ‘finished’ (i.e., fulfilled) in the gospel narrative: ‘For the beloved prophets announced (κατήγγειλαν) him, but the gospel is the imperishable completed work’ (9.2).
While it is possible that Ignatius corresponded with Magnesia to address a different problem, the letter actually seems to portray a similar, if not identical, situation as the Philadelphian letter. Both sets of opponents appear to have rejected the gospel narrative as understood by Ignatius. After opening with an extensive section promoting unity around the established ecclesial leadership (*Magn. 1.1–7.2*), Ignatius explicated his apparent reasons for doing so. The apparent problem was that some had been ‘living in accordance with Judaism (8.1 – Ἰουδαϊσµόν).’ While the details are not completely clear, nevertheless, key statements made in the subsequent section stand to clarify Ignatius’ intent. For example, the seemingly intentional bracketing of the entire section contrasting Judaism and Christianity with warnings about those who claimed to be Christian, but who had yet to ‘be fully convinced’ about key elements of the Christian kerygma, is telling (8.2; 11.1). Thus, at the beginning of the warning section (8.2) Ignatius implied that some had yet to be ‘fully convinced (πληροφορηθῆναι) that there is one God who revealed himself through Jesus Christ his Son’.

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89 Wilson similarly commented: “what alarmed Ignatius most about the Judaizers was that they blurred the boundaries between Judaism and Christianity and thus compromised the distinctive identity of the latter (*Phld. 8:2; 9:1–2; Magn. 10:2*).” – Wilson, *Related Strangers*, 165. This does not go far enough, however, since Ignatius essentially equated Judaizing with a rejection of the historic basis and salvific effect of the gospel narrative.

90 Donahue’s suggestion that ‘living in accordance with Judaism’ in 8.1 was a warning against “adopting the ritual observances of the Mosaic law” is not convincing and seems to miss the immediate context where Ignatius emphasized the need to be ‘fully convinced’ about the revelatory and salvific aspects of the incarnation of Christ (*Magn. 8.2; 9.1; 11.1*) – Paul J. Donahue, “Jewish Christianity in the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch,” *VC 32* (1978): 84. Hence it appears that Ignatius rebutted errant views about Christ and not about the Law.

91 Arguments that Ignatius countered a single heresy in the form of docetic Judaism are highly speculative and not convincing. For example, because Lightfoot detected an anti-Judaizing polemic in *Magn. 8–10* and an anti-docetic element in *Magn. 9* and 11, he labeled Ignatius’ opponents as adhering to ‘Doceto-Judaism’ (Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers, Part II*, vol. 2, 124–5). While the Judaizing element is certainly present, the exhortation in *Magn. 11* to ‘be fully convinced about the birth…suffering and the resurrection,’ which he
At the end of the discussion, he restated the problem by forewarning them to ‘not get snagged on the fishhooks of delusion but to instead by fully convinced (πεπληροφορῆσθαι) about the birth and the suffering and the resurrection’ (11.1).

It seems that the opponents were not convinced of the gospel narrative. The echo of the Shema in the declaration that ‘there is one God’ (8.2) would likely present no obstacle to either Jew or Christian. Yet Ignatius’ claim that the one God ‘revealed himself through Jesus Christ his Son’ would certainly elicit a rebuttal from Jewish proponents. Further comments interspersed between the two bookend statements provide additional data regarding the opposition and its objections:

those who lived in this manner had been ‘deceived by strange doctrines or antiquated fables’ (8.1),

had denied that on ‘the Lord’s day…life…arose though him [Jesus Christ] and his death’ (9.1),

and were ‘called by another name’—most likely indicating Ἰουδαϊσμός rather than Χριστιανισμός (10.1, cf. 10.3).

described as truly occurring during ‘the governorship of Pontius Pilate,’ does not appear to be anti-docetic and could be a simple rebuttal to Jewish proponents who denied the gospel events had even occurred.

92 The allusion to 1 Tim 1:3–5 here, along with several other probable allusions, suggest with a high degree of probability that Ignatius had read 1 Timothy – Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 173–2; Inge, “Ignatius,” 71–3. Paul’s warning against ‘teaching divergently nor paying attention to myths and endless genealogies’ (μὴ ἐτεροδιδασκαλεῖν μηδὲ προσέχειν μύθοις καὶ γενεαλογίαις ἀπεράντοις) is similar to Ignatius’ warning to not be deceived by ‘divergent teachings nor ancient myths which are useless (ταῖς ἑτεροδοξίαις μηδὲ μυθεύμασιν τοῖς παλαιοῖς ἀνωφελέσιν οὖσιν). Without firm evidence, some understood Ignatius’ reference to ‘myths’ as evidence that he countered a form of gnostic Judaism – Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. i, 374–6; Dibelius and Conzelmann, Pastoral Epistles, 3. However, Donahue rightly countered that it is “unsound...to assume automatically that a reference to myths is a reference to Gnosticism....there is no hint that the heretics deny the reality of the incarnation” – Donahue, “Jewish Christianity,” 83.
The docetic opponents mentioned in the Trallian and Smyrnaean letters clearly objected to the fleshly aspects of the gospel narrative. In contrast, the letters to Magnesia and Philadelphia indicate that the contentious element of the gospel narrative seems to have been its historicity and thus, its salvific significance. Instead of succumbing to what he described as ‘worthless opinions’, Ignatius emphasized the historical aspect of the gospel narrative:

‘be fully convinced about the birth and the suffering and the resurrection, which took place during the time of the governorship of Pontius Pilate. These things were truly and certainly accomplished by Jesus Christ...from which may none of you ever be turned away’ (11.1).

Furthermore, Ignatius’ question—‘How are we able to live without him?’ (9.2) implies that the opposition sought to influence Christians to do just that.

Contra Schoedel, the issue as described by Ignatius appears to have been entirely Christological and much more theological than just a mere difference in exegetical skillsets. In the same vein is Lieu’s suggestion that ‘[w]hen Ignatius wants to explain what distinguishes the two [i.e., Christianity over Judaism] he does not enter into any theological argument; for him Judaism is circumcision and Sabbath. Christianity is the absence of these.’93 Both suggestions miss the import and seriousness of Ignatius’ objections. In other words, Ignatius held that Christianity was the fulfilment and rightful continuation of OT prophecy that he and, according to his interpretation, the Hebrew prophets regarded as ‘looking forward’ to the

93 Lieu, *Neither Jew nor Greek?*, 44.
coming of the Christ. As such, Ignatius’ contention with ‘living according to Judaism’ does not focus on Sabbath observance or circumcision since both concepts rarely and only tangentially enter the discussion. Instead, when taken together both letters reveal that the underlying influence behind those who were attracted to Judaism (most likely gentiles) were Jews who disagreed that Jesus Christ was the valid historical and salvific fulfillment of messianic expectation. This is supported as well in one explicit verse at the opening of an extensive creedal segment (Eph. 18.2) where Ignatius highlighted not only the deity of Christ, but also that he was ‘the Christ’ (ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς).

In addition to Ignatius, other near contemporary texts reveal similar disputations between Jews and Christians. For example, Justin Martyr’s second-century Dialogue with Trypho, whether representing an historical occurrence or, more likely, a fictitious one that served as an example of such encounters, argues similarly to Ignatius. In Dial. 8.4, after suggesting that the messiah had yet to arrive, Trypho insists that Christians “have believed this foolish rumor, and...have invented for yourselves a Christ for whom you blindly give up your lives.” Later Trypho rejected the notion of Jesus as messiah since the Jews “doubt whether

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94 Ignatius has long been a central figure in the Parting of the Ways scholarly debate. However, when his own comments are read in context, his position could be reframed as the Proper Interpretation of the Way, or more accurately, as the Fulfillment of the Way. In addition to the cited works above by Lieu and Schoedel, for discussions on this matter see also Lieu, Image and Reality, 23–39; Robinson, Parting of the Ways; Donahue, “Jewish Christianity,” 81–93.

95 For baptism see Eph. 18.2, Smyrn. 1.1, 8.2 and Pol. 6.2 and for circumcision (Phld. 6.1).


97 Falls, Saint Justin Martyr, 161. Later in Dial. 89, Trypho explicitly states that the Jews “all look forward to the coming of the Christ” – ibid., 290.
the Christ should be so shamefully crucified, for the law declares that he who is crucified is to be accursed. Even though Dialogue indicates that Trypho accepted the scriptural interpretation that messiah would suffer, Ignatius' opponents apparently went further still in their rejection of the entire incarnational narrative that included his passion.

Additionally, the fact that many identified Bar Kosiba as the messiah within a few decades after Ignatius' death, along with evidence that Christians had been coerced to denounce Jesus as messiah, bolsters the suggestion that Ignatius may have encountered a similar situation. It makes sense that early second-century Jews who still awaited the arrival of a messianic figure would reject the Christian claim for Jesus' messiahship. Seemingly for Ignatius, his Philadelphian interlocutors had rejected this as a primary feature that distinguished the gospel from the Hebrew scriptures, namely, τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ σωτῆρος, κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Phld. 9.2). In contrast with other early Christian texts that used παρουσία to signify the expected second coming of Jesus, Ignatius employed the term instead to signify the Christ's first coming.

Since Ignatius' Magnesian–Philadelphian opponents appear to have rejected the παρουσία of Jesus, along with his suffering and resurrection (9.2), it seems likely that this was the focus of Ignatius' warnings to the two locales. When faced with docetic opposition in Tralles and Smyrna, Ignatius emphasized the requirement to believe in the physical aspect of the gospel narrative. Even though the gospel narrative is also central in the letters to Magnesia

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98 Ibid. Justin, Dial. 89 cf. Deut 21:23; Acts 5:30; 10:39; Gal 3:13. This aligns with Paul's estimation that the message of 'Christ crucified' was an object of offense or revulsion (σκάνδαλον) to the Jews (1 Cor 1:23).
and Philadelphia, however, instead of highlighting the physical aspect of the narrative, Ignatius instead underscored the requirement to believe that Jesus Christ was the son of God and the valid, historic fulfillment of Hebrew prophecy.

Judaizing for Ignatius then amounted to a rejection of the Christological interpretation of Hebrew prophetic discourse (Magn. 8.2; 9.2; Phld. 8.2), an abandonment of the gospel distinctives (Phld. 9.1–2), and a denial that Jesus was God's son whose suffering and death proffered salvation for humanity (Magn. 8.2; 9.1). For Ignatius, it was ‘absurd to speak of Jesus Christ and to judaize’ (Magn. 10.3) primarily because judaizing for him was akin to a complete rejection of the historicity of the passion narrative and its salvific intent. According to Ignatius, those who claimed to be Christian must believe not only in the physical aspect of the passion narrative but also its historic Jewish basis and salvific purpose.100

9.3.2 The Focus of Ignatian Creedal Scraps

Unlike the author of 1 Clement, who referenced a κανών of tradition (1 Clem. 7.2), and unlike later figures such as Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria, who each described in their own words a form of regula fidei (Irenaeus, Haer. 1.9.4; 1.22.1; 2.27.1; 2.28.1; 3.11.1; 3.12.6;...

100 Ignatius' rhetoric seems also to disagree with those who blur (or remove) the boundary between Judaism and Christianity in the early-Christian era. This section has demonstrated that Ignatius understood there to be a fundamental and distinctive difference between Judaism and Christianity (i.e., belief in the incarnational and redemptive work of the Son of God). For example, the letters do not support the notion that Judaism and Christianity were “subsystems of one religious polysystem” [Daniel Boyarin, Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 92] and that the boundaries between the two were “artificial” – Daniel Boyarin, Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 1. For a thorough review of positions on these boundary distinctions see Robinson, Parting of the Ways, 203–41.
3.15.1; 4.35.4; Tertullian, *Prax.* 2; *Praescr.* 13; Clement, *Strom.* 4.15.98; 6.15.131), Ignatius simply wove concise but focused creedal scraps into his discourse. It has been astutely noted that creeds were not “written in the quiet periods of history but in those moments of historical intensity when the Church has been engaged by foes from without, or when its mission or life has been endangered from within.” The Ignatian corpus certainly fits this description. As such, it is no wonder that semi-creedal patterns frequently have been detected in the Ignatian epistles.

Schoedel, for example, identified creedal material broken down into “(1) lists of Christological antitheses (*Eph.* 7.2; *Pol.* 3.2), (2) lists of the events of salvation in the ministry of Jesus (*Eph.* 18.2; *Tr.* 9; *Sm.* 1.1–2),” as well as “(3) summary Christological formulae (*Mag.* 11; *Phd.* 9.2) and (4) the ὑπὲρ (‘on behalf of’) formula and related matter (see on *Rom.* 6.1; *Sm.* 7.1).” Grant sensed a somewhat abbreviated list with “only three passages in Ignatius’ letters which could be deemed credal” (*Eph.* 18.2; *Trall.* 9.1–2; *Smyrn.* 1.1–2). At the other end of the spectrum is Vall who perhaps overly ambitiously detected “at least one solemn creedal statement about Jesus Christ” in “each of his seven letters” (*Eph.* 7.2; 18.2; 20.2; *Magn.* 6.1; 7.2;

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104 Grant, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 10. Kelly also noted three of Ignatius’ “most noteworthy quasi-creedal passages” (Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, 68). Svigel listed the same three passages as most often identified in the Ignatius as ‘creedal’ or ‘semi-creedal’ (Svigel, *Center and the Source*, 58 n. 26).
8.2; Trall. 9.1–2; Rom. 6.1; 7.3; Phld. 9.2; Smyrn. 1.1–3.3; Pol. 3.2). Corwin arrived at the opposite conclusion by suggesting that there is no evidence that Ignatius knew a creed or that the above-mentioned sections should be viewed as creedal. Instead, she theorized that some of the passages were sourced by Ignatius from “hymns or canticles that were used liturgically.”

The presence of creed-like statements in such a short corpus indicates that Ignatius and the early-Christian communities he communicated with most likely had access to traditional confessional material that had already begun to solidify. The early church had apparently begun to summarize the essential elements of Christian belief into stereotypical summary statements which were utilized in worship as well as in addressing aberrant beliefs. Despite the differences regarding which sections should be considered ‘creedal’, or whether the content had originally been crafted for catechetical, baptismal, liturgical, or other purposes, what seems evident is that Ignatius utilized such traditional formulae to counter what he considered to be heretical viewpoints about Jesus Christ by highlighting a set of non-negotiable, and thus essential, Christological tenets of belief.

105 Vall, Learning Christ, 97, 97 n. 18. In addition to this summary list, Vall also identified the following as creedal (Magn. 11; Rom. 6.3; 8.2; Phld. inscr. 9.1; Smyrn. 6.2 – ibid., 59–61, 73, 164, 165 n. 18, 165 n. 18). Several of the passages listed by Schoedel and Vall could be viewed as creedal. Yet verses such as Magn. 6.1, 7.2, 8.2, Rom. 6.1, 7.3, Phld. 9.2 could just as easily have been crafted by Ignatius ad hoc.

106 Corwin, St. Ignatius, 80.

107 Brown, Gospel and Ignatius, 107.

108 Thus Kelly, while discussing the polemical use of creedal material, concluded that “the anti-heretical note is audible from time to time, it is shrilly emphatic in some passages of St Ignatius” – Kelly, Early Christian Creeds, 65.
The suggestion that Ignatius had an active role in at least modifying such traditional material is likely. Nevertheless, it seems evident that Ignatius made reference to previously-known confessional statements so as to strengthen the faith of his readers by addressing aberrant Christological views. Kelly's observation that the “context, rhythm and general pattern” of the longer post-NT creedal fragments “betray...that they derive from community tradition rather than from the writer's untrammelled invention” seems applicable to Ignatius. Thus, instead of viewing these creedal statements as spontaneous Ignatian compositions, it seems likely instead that such expressions preexisted and were being recalled from memory. As Table 7 demonstrates, several rather extended passages, which frequently have been identified as ‘creedal’ (Eph. 7.2; 18.2; Trall. 9.1–2; Smyrn. 1.1–2), evidence Ignatius' emphasis on the need to hold as true certain aspects of the incarnational narrative in order to procure one’s salvation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect of Belief</th>
<th>Textual Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Deity of Jesus</td>
<td>'spirit...unborn, God in man...from God' (Eph. 7.2); 'our God, Jesus...from the seed...of the Holy Spirit' (Eph. 18.2); 'his Father' (Trall. 9.2); 'Jesus Christ, the God...Son of God' (Smyrn. 1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The True Humanity of Jesus</td>
<td>'flesh...born...from Mary' (Eph. 7.2); 'conceived by Mary...from the seed of David' (Eph. 18.2); 'the son of Mary, who really was born...ate and drank...really died' (Trall. 9.1); 'of the family of David according to the flesh' (Smyrn. 1.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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111 With the exception of *Magn. 11*, this grouping is identical to the passages listed by Jefford as the “[e]arly creeds used by Ignatius” (Eph. 7.2; 18.2; *Magn. 11.1*; *Trall. 9.1–2*; *Smyrn. 1.1–2*) – Clayton N. Jefford, *Reading the Apostolic Fathers: A Student's Introduction*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 54–5. Ignatius' statement in *Magn. 11* may have been based on a known creedal formula, however, it could easily have been crafted by Ignatius' as a summary statement regarding the incarnational event.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Virgin Birth of Jesus</th>
<th>‘conceived by Mary...the virginity of Mary’ (Eph. 18.2–19.1a); ‘truly born of a virgin (Smyrn. 1.1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Davidic Descent/Messianic Status of Jesus</td>
<td>‘Jesus the Christ (Ἰησοῦς δ Χριστός)...from the seed of David’ (Eph. 18.2); ‘of the family of David’ (Trall. 9.1); ‘truly of the family of David’ (Smyrn. 1.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Reality/Fleshly aspect of Jesus’ Passion</td>
<td>‘first subject to suffering’ (Eph. 7.2); ‘really was persecuted under Pontius Pilate...really was crucified and died’ (Trall. 9.1); ‘truly nailed in the flesh for us under Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch’ (Smyrn. 1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Reality/Fleshly aspect of Jesus’ Resurrection</td>
<td>‘really was raised from the dead’ (Trall. 9.2); ‘raise a banner for the ages through his resurrection’ (Smyrn. 1.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Salvific Intent of Jesus’ Passion</td>
<td>‘true life in death’ (Eph. 7.2); ‘born...baptized so that by his suffering he might cleanse the water’ (Eph. 18.2); ‘his Father will...raise up...us who believe in him. Apart from him we have no true life.’ (Trall. 9.2); ‘we [are] from its fruit, that is from his divinely blessed passion...his resurrection for his saints and faithful people’ (Smyrn. 1.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though Ignatius varies between two and three-member confessional formulas throughout,\(^\text{112}\) the main emphasis of each of the creedal segments in Table 7 focuses primarily on the Christ kerygma. All four passages bear a Christological theme that helps solidify the content of Ignatian faith and, apparently, that also of the early Christian communities to which he wrote.\(^\text{113}\) Hence Svigel posited that

the various proto-creedal statements and narrative summaries...as well as the depth to which the incarnational narrative seems to have penetrated Ignatius’s worldview and

\(^{112}\) Two-member references are numerous and with few exceptions refer to the Father and to Jesus Christ (see Eph. inscr; 2.1; 3.2; 4.2; 5.1; 20.2; 21.2; Magn. inscr; 1.2; 3.1; 5.1; 7.1; 2; 8.2; 13.2; Trall. inscr; 3.1; 9.2; 11.1–2; 12.2; 13.3; Rom. inscr; 2.2; 3.3; 7.2–3; 8.2; Phld. inscr; 1.1; 3.1–2; Smyrn. inscr; 1.1; 3.3; 6.2; 8.1; Pol. inscr) whereas three-member are less frequent (Eph. 9.1; 18.2; Magn. 13.1; Phld. inscr; 7.2). It should be noted that numerous verses that refer to ‘God’ and ‘Jesus’ could be added to the binitarian list, however, since the Ignatian epistles often refer to Jesus as ‘God’ they could be one-member references instead (see Magn. 10.3 for example).

\(^{113}\) Aune similarly noted that in Ignatius’ creedal statements “we have a vital relationship to the way or ways in which the benefits of salvation were conceptualized by Ignatius and his contemporaries.” Cultic Setting, 140.
rhetoric suggests that the incarnational narrative could not have been a recent development in Ignatius's thought.\textsuperscript{114}

Additionally, the wide circulation of the letters suggests a broader reception for such ideas than just in Antioch. By examining the prominent Ignatian creedal scraps, one can detect a primitive Christian confession which provides evidence that belief in the totality of the incarnational event was considered a requirement for salvation in the early church.

Specifically for Ignatius, this listing of creed-like elements, to include his virgin birth, deity, Davidic descent, true humanity, as well as the reality of his physical suffering, death, and resurrection, was for him a list of non-negotiable Christian beliefs that must be adopted for salvation to occur.\textsuperscript{115}

9.4 The Source of Faith

Ignatius at times implied that God was the possible source or originator of the individual believer's faith. Hatch nevertheless denied such an assertion, claiming instead that “faith is not, as it is in Paul, a divine gift. It is simply an exercise of the individual's will.”\textsuperscript{116}

Notwithstanding the scarcity of supporting data, the letters nevertheless seem at least to imply that God was the originator of human faith.

\textsuperscript{114} Svigel, \textit{Center and the Source}, 170.


\textsuperscript{116} Hatch, “The Idea of Faith,” 78.
The first example is located in Magn. 9.1. After describing the Christian’s life as having arisen on the Lord’s day, Ignatius proclaimed that this is ‘the mystery by which we received faith’ (δι’ οὗ μυστηρίου ἐλάβομεν τὸ πιστεύειν). Translations vary depending on how ἐλάβομεν is defined and how the infinitive τὸ πιστεύειν functions. Regarding λαμβάνω, Ignatius used the verb predominately with the sense of ‘receiving’ something from another (Eph. 4.2; 17.1, 2; 19.3; Magn. 6.2; 8.1; Trall. 3.2; 6.2; Rom. 1.1; 6.2).\(^{117}\) The translation ‘came to believe’ in Magn. 9.1 seems to miss the meaning of ἐλάβομεν as well as the apparent use of the infinitive τὸ πιστεύειν as its direct object.\(^{118}\) Lake’s translation—“and by this mystery we received faith”—seems truer to Ignatius’ lexical and grammatical choices.\(^{119}\) It is therefore possible to interpret this statement to indicate that Ignatius viewed faith as a gift that had been received as a result of an encounter with the incarnational gospel narrative.

A second text provides further clarity. While arguing that crucial aspects of the incarnational gospel narrative were to be found prophetically in the OT archives (Phld. 8.1–2; cf. 9.1–2), Ignatius listed the following as one of its central aspects: ‘the faith which is through/by him [i.e. Christ]’ (ἡ πίστις ἡ δι’ αὐτοῦ). Regarding this phrase, Corwin noted that “[e]ven belief can be said to come ‘through’ Christ, as the result of his acts.”\(^{120}\) Possibly adding to the idea of faith as a gift of God is the discussion in Smyrn. inscr–1.1. Therein, Ignatius congratulated the Smyrnaeans for being mercifully endowed with ‘every spiritual gift’ and

\(^{117}\) An exception is Smyrn. 3.2 where the verb indicates taking something.

\(^{118}\) Those who translate as “we came to believe” see Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 209; Ehrman, *Apostolic Fathers*, 251; Brannan, *Apostolic Fathers*, 87.


\(^{120}\) Corwin, *St. Ignatius*, 239.
therefore ‘not lacking in any gift’. Sandwiched between the dual references to ‘gifts’ is the apparent explanation that this giftedness comprised of ‘having been filled with faith’ (πεπληρωμένη ἐν πίστει) as well as love. The passive voice supports the idea that Ignatius viewed faith as a divine gift.

9.5 Summary

It has been shown that Ignatius utilized a broadened pallet of lexical choices to richly convey the concept of faith while simultaneously incorporating the sense of relational trust as well as cognitive assent to the Christ kerygma. Therefore, unlike previous suggestions, the use of faith language in Ignatius was not strictly restricted to the notion of cognitive assent to a list of propositions. Instead, believing faith indicated that one’s trust in Christ was based on believing certain core aspects of the incarnational gospel narrative. Additionally, the common focus of the quasi-creedal scraps evidenced in the letters suggests that the incarnational gospel narrative had coalesced and congealed at that point into a more fixed and widely-accepted form which would later contribute to the production of the more official Christological creeds. In the end, Ignatius’ clear and explicit statements involving faith in both creedal and non-creedal forms demonstrate his conviction that this dual sense of faith, believing trust, was required for salvation to occur. At the same time, it is possible that Ignatius viewed faith as a divine gift. Consequently, it can be stated, that for Ignatius trust in Christ, based on belief in the historicity and physicality of the incarnational Christological narrative, was viewed as the means of salvation.
CHAPTER 10

THE OUTCOMES OF FAITH

10.0 Introduction

Having explored Ignatius' object of faith, the discussion now shifts to focus briefly on his description of what occurred once a person exercised faith. As the following will demonstrate, Ignatius indicated that faith, when exercised towards its proper Christ-centered object, produced several significant after-effects in the lives of those he deemed faithful. In general, it will be shown that Ignatius described the Christian, the one who possessed true faith in Christ, as benefiting from (1) ontological changes which naturally led to ethical changes in behavior. Additionally, the letters also describe faith as ultimately producing (2) eschatological and, thus permanent, changes.
10.1 Ontological & Ethical Outcomes

On multiple occasions Ignatius described believers in a way that distinguished them from those who had yet to believe. Such descriptions indicate that he understood there to be a fundamental and ontological difference between the two groups. The following sections describe Ignatius’ view regarding the changes in the nature of a person who had exercised proper belief in Christ and the ethical evidences for such a transformation.

10.1.1 The Possession of Spiritual Life

Chapter 4 argued that Ignatius understood humanity to be in need of salvation ultimately due to its spiritual death and the expectation of encountering the wrath of God to come. Chapter 8 likewise made clear that Ignatius equated Christ with life (Eph. 3.2; 7.2; Magn. 1.2; Smyrn. 4.1) and that eternal life was promised only to those who believed the gospel narrative (Eph. 1.1; 14.1; 18.1; 19.3; Magn. 5.2; 9.1; Trall. 9.2; Pol. 2.3). Nevertheless, the question posed by some revolves around whether the life promised would be realized prior to death or whether it could only be expected in the eschaton or, depending on how one interprets Ignatius’ eschatological beliefs, at the moment of one’s physical death.¹

Since the letters do not appear to have been crafted to specifically address the finer points of eschatology, scholarly investigations concerning Ignatius’ eschatological views have

¹ Along with Mellink, the fact that Ignatius does not seem to refer to an intermediate state leads to the conclusion that for him physical death and ‘eschaton’ were practically the same – Mellink, Death as Eschaton, 339–43. In support of the idea is Rom. 2.2 where he indicated that he must ‘set from the world to God’ (i.e., die) in order to rise to him.’ Later in Rom. 4.3 he also indicated that through martyrdom he would become ‘the freedperson of Jesus Christ’ and ‘rise up free in him.’
frequently been at odds with one another. Bultmann, for example, concluded that Ignatius believed that the resurrection, though clearly future, was also “paradoxically present” in the life of the believer. At the other end of the spectrum is Aune who, taking issue with Bultmann’s conclusion, asserted instead that life “as a soteriological concept is always future-oriented in the thought of Ignatius” since “[p]articipation in true life, eternal life, was realized conditionally. This condition was (in sum) whether or not an individual remained ‘in Christ Jesus’ until the end of life.”

The issue of whether or not Ignatius believed additional conditions were necessary to augment faith in order for salvation to occur will be addressed later in Chapter 11. At this point, the focus is on whether Ignatius viewed the problem of death as having been resolved in the present life of the Christian, or whether he insisted that death’s resolution was strictly future oriented. Without fully entering the debate, it should be noted that Ignatius periodically referred to a future eschatological achievement of salvation in some sense. Thus in Trall. 9.2, the future aspect is prevalent when Ignatius adopted the future tense to state that the ‘Father likewise will raise up (ἐγερεῖ) us who believe in Christ Jesus.’ A similar phenomenon is found in Pol. 2.3 where Polycarp was reminded of the future ‘prize’ (θέμα) of

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3 Aune, Cultic Setting, 165.

4 It is possible to view Eph. 11.1 as stressing the future aspect of salvation as well.
‘incorruptibility and eternal life’ (ἀφθαρσία καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος) that presumably awaited a future fulfillment.⁵

Occasionally ‘life’ is mentioned in ways that demonstrates Ignatius’ belief that exercising proper faith in Christ produced ontological and thus transformative benefits in the present. Even Trall. 9.2, with its emphasis on a future resurrection, exhibits a present focus in the subsequent clause where Ignatius switched to the present tense and concluded that apart from Christ ‘we do not have (σῶκ ἔχομεν) true life (τὸ ἀληθινὸν ζῆν).’ It seems evident that Ignatius understood the individual believer’s predicament with spiritual death to have already been resolved and, therefore, that spiritual life had become a present reality for those who believed. In other words, though the final physical resurrection was yet future, Ignatius considered the believer to have already been rescued from death and to presently possess true life, albeit not in its final resurrected form. This concept is evident in Ephesians:

faith and love toward Jesus Christ. For these are the beginning and end of life: faith is the beginning (14.1)

when God was revealed in human form for the purpose of/resulting in the newness of eternal life...from then on all things were being stirred up because the abolition of death was being carried out (19.3)⁶

With Eph. 14.1 providing direct evidence for Ignatius’ belief that spiritual life began at the moment of faith, it is curious that neither Bultmann, who concluded that Ignatius conceived of the believer’s life as being paradoxically present alongside a future resurrection, nor Aune

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⁵ Mellink, Death as Eschaton, 329.
⁶ For a discussion regarding how to interpret the prepositional phrase εἰς καινότητα αἰώνιου ζωῆς see Chap 7, n. 41.
and Mellink, who both rejected such a notion, dealt in any meaningful way with Ignatius’ assertion that life began at faith (Eph. 14.1). Aune’s suggestion that soteriological life is always future in Ignatius’ scheme does not seem valid. The same teaching point is found in Magn. 9.1 where the aorist tense was utilized to declare that on ‘the Lord’s day...our life arose (ζωὴ ἡμῶν ἀνέτειλεν) through him and his death (which some deny).’

If Ignatius held that life could be forfeited by a failure to meet certain conditions (other than belief), it is strange that he equated Jesus Christ directly, as well as indirectly through the cross, as ‘our unwavering/unshakeable life’ (Eph. 3.2 – τὸ ἀδιάκριτον ἡμῶν ζῆν),

‘our everlasting life’ (Magn. 1.2 – τοῦ διὰ παντὸς ἡμῶν ζῆν), ‘our true life’ (Smyrn. 4.1 – τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἡμῶν ζῆν), as well as referencing the cross of Christ as ‘salvation and eternal life to us’ (Eph. 18.2 – τοῦ σταυροῦ, ὅ ἐστιν...ημῖν δὲ σωτηρία καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος). Belief then seems to have been the demarcation line between those who possessed life and those who yet resided in a condition of spiritual death. The fact that Ignatius went so far as to shock his readers by describing non-believers as ‘the walking dead’ bolsters this conclusion. Thus anyone, whether Jew or Gentile, who failed to speak properly (i.e., falsely believed and taught) about Jesus Christ were described in Phld. 6.1 as ‘tombstones’ (στῆλαι) and ‘graves of the dead’ (τάφοι νεκρῶν). Likewise, in an apparent play on words in Smyrn. 5.2, Ignatius warned that the

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7 Aune relegated the verse to a terse footnote where he briefly stated that “Faith can therefore be spoken of as a past event...and as the beginning of life (Eph. 14.1).” – *Cultic Setting*, 149 n. 1. In his section covering the Bultmann-Aune debate—*The Present and Future Aspect of Eschatological Salvation*—Mellink did not interact with the verse other than to refer to ‘faith’ and ‘love’ as “conditions to participate in new life” – *Death as Eschaton*, 328. Curiously, neither did Bultmann mention the verse, though it would have bolstered his argument – “Ignatius and Paul,” 267–77.

8 See §8.2.4, n. 13 for a discussion of the meaning of ἀδιάκριτον.

9 To this list could be added Eph. 7.2 which described Christ as ‘true life in death’.
docetic advocates who failed ‘to confess that Jesus Christ was clothed in flesh (σαρκοφόρος)’
were themselves likened to νεκροφόρος, ‘those clothed in a corpse.’\footnote{Similarly, by referring to his docetic opponents in Smyrn. 2 as ‘bodiless’ (ἀσωματοῖς) and ‘phantoms (δαμοσικοῖς) Ignatius seems to contrast the Smyrnaeans’ true spiritual existence with the Docetists’ lack thereof.}

In summary, even though Bultmann’s argument at times appears to ignore some of
the stronger supporting statements in the corpus (Eph. 14.1), his assertion that Ignatius held, at
least in part, to a realized eschatology appears accurate. Thus, according to Ignatius, those
who exercised proper faith in Christ were spiritually alive even though they yet awaited a
physical resurrection in the future. By contrast, according to Ignatius unbelievers were
spiritually dead and could only expect divine punishment. Therefore believers had passed
from death to life at the moment of faith (Eph. 14.1; Trall. 2.1) and unbelievers remained
animated corpses.

10.1.2 Exhibiting a Righteous Nature

In addition to enjoying spiritual life, Ignatius indicated elsewhere that believers had
experienced a change in nature that produced an ethical transformation (i.e., righteousness)
not evident in the lives of those who had yet to exercise faith in the proper Christ-centered
object. For example, even though Eph. 1.1 has been variously translated,\footnote{Lightfoot’s textual emendation is based on the Syriac and Armenian texts: “well-beloved name, which ye bear by natural right [in an upright and virtuous mind] by faith and love in Christ” – Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 2, 543. Ms. Sin. ar. 505, the Arabic version of the Middle Recension, reads “which you have acquired by the perfect habit of justice and truth” – English translation of Ms. Sin. ar. 505, unpubl.} Ignatius described
the Ephesians as possessing a ‘much loved name’ because of their ‘righteous nature’ (φύσει

\footnote{Lightfoot’s textual emendation is based on the Syriac and Armenian texts: “well-beloved name, which ye bear by natural right [in an upright and virtuous mind] by faith and love in Christ” – Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 2, 543. Ms. Sin. ar. 505, the Arabic version of the Middle Recension, reads “which you have acquired by the perfect habit of justice and truth” – English translation of Ms. Sin. ar. 505, unpubl.}
δικαια that was characterized by faith in and love for Christ Jesus our savior.’ As Schoedel noted, this indicates Ignatius’ belief that the Ephesians possessed “a godly disposition” that had “become second nature to them.” Elsewhere Schoedel further clarified that “[r]ighteous behaviour is ingrained in their nature. It is an authentic part of their being. There is nothing artificial about it.” As others have noted, this passage closely parallels Trall. 1.1 where Ignatius likewise praised the Trallians for exhibiting a ‘blameless disposition and an unwavering steadfastness not based on a loan (οὐ κατὰ χρῆσιν) but by nature (κατὰ φύσιν).’ Schoedel’s suggestion that Ignatius’ juxtaposition of the prepositional phrases served as an intentional rebuttal to Gnostic teachings is both contextually possible and convincing. However, regardless of the background situation that kindled Ignatius’ comment, what seems evident is that, like Eph. 1.1, such language suggests Ignatius’ belief that the Trallians’ blamelessness and perseverance were manifest because their core being had been altered after conversion.

Corwin thus concluded that the result of this orientation in faith is a radical change in the life of the Christian....There is real ethical change....The transformation is so deep that an abyss can almost be said to yawn between the faithful and the unfaithful—those related to Christ and those alien to him.

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12 Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 41.
14 Ibid., 309; Grant, Ignatius of Antioch, 30–1.
16 Schoedel seems to come close to this conclusion. Yet the equation of φύσιν with “second nature” could indicate something that had once been produced by habitual practice that eventually became natural. This does not appear to be what Ignatius intended.
17 Corwin, St. Ignatius, 240.
The evidence of *Eph.* 8.2 and 14.1 certainly supports this conclusion. Corwin nevertheless seemingly retracted the logic of her own reasoning by suggesting that with “these affirmations about transformation Ignatius expresses hope more than fact.” Despite Corwin’s disclaimer, the testimony of the letters indicates that Ignatius understood the believer to have undergone a radical transformation in nature that, by necessity, produced some sort of ethical effectiveness.

If Ignatius understood true believers to benefit from a new nature that in turn enabled ethical obedience and perseverance, thus warranting the description of ‘blameless,’ then it makes sense for Ignatius to indicate the opposite for those who had not exercised faith. In fact this is precisely what Ignatius did. After exhorting the Smyrnaeans to avoid judgment by believing in the blood of Christ (6.1), Ignatius in turn described the ethical inabilities of those who held ‘heretical opinions’ (τοὺς ἑτεροδοξοῦντας) concerning the grace of Jesus Christ: ‘they have no concern for love…for the widow…for the orphan…the oppressed…for the prisoner or the one set free…for the hungry or the thirsty. They abstain from the eucharist and prayer.’ (*Smyrn.* 6.2). The ethical (and ecclesiological) failures were attributed to those who held heterodox views and, specifically, those who did ‘not believe in the blood of Christ.’

What should be noted in these passages is that Ignatius described not only a life-death distinction between believers and unbelievers, but also a consequent distinction in nature

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88 Ibid.

89 For a comparison, see *Eph.* 10.2 where Ignatius contrasted the expected ethical differences between the believing Ephesians and the ‘rest of humankind’. Believers were to respond to the non-believers’ ‘anger…boastful talking…slander…deception…wild behavior’ by being ‘gentle…humble…prayerful…firm in the faith…kind’.
which in turn produced a marked difference in ethical obedience. Accordingly, if Ignatius understood believers to partake of spiritual life in their earthly existence, then it follows that those who possessed new life and a righteous nature would experience positive ethical changes during their life (cf. Eph. 14.1 & §5.3.3 The Fruit Test). As Winslow rightly concluded concerning Ignatius, “Faith does, indeed, produce in us a radical ethical change....Faith is the origin of spiritual and moral life (Eph. 8.2).”

The question now turns to the potential source of such a transformative alteration in the Christians’ nature and ethical obedience.

10.1.3 Being Indwelt & Empowered by God

Ignatius alludes to the source of this transformative change in the life of believers. In several passages and with varying explicitness, Ignatius’ description of the believer as being indwelt by God or Christ alludes to the source of this radical change in nature. For example, in Eph. 15.3 Ignatius reminded the Ephesians that they should be doing everything as if he [the Lord] is dwelling in us (ἐν ἡµῖν κατοικοῦντος), in order that we may be his temples, and he [may be] our God in us, just as indeed he is, and this will be revealed before us. Because of these things let us justly love him.

21 See Eph. 15.3; Magn. 12.2; 14; 15; Rom. 7.2.
22 Incidentally, several translations of Eph. 15.3 could be interpreted to indicate that ethical and spiritual success is causally linked to the divine indwelling. Thus Lightfoot’s translation: “God dwells in us now, and this fact will be made clearly manifest to our eyes hereafter from our deeds of love towards Him” – Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 2, 70. Lake, Holmes, and Stewart translate similarly – Lake, Apostolic Fathers, 190; Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 195; Stewart, Ignatius of Antioch, 39. However, such translations are grammatically suspect. Lookadoo seems correct to translate: “we may be his temples and he our God in us, which indeed he is and which will be revealed before us. On account of these things, let us love him rightly.” For a more detailed look at the grammatical issues in Eph. 15.3, see Lookadoo’s analysis of Eph. 15.3 in The
Yet in a few key passages, Ignatius delved further by indicating that the Christian’s obedience and ethical success were causally linked to the notion of being indwelt by God. Thus in Magn. 12.1, the reason why (γάρ) the Magnesians ‘had not been puffed up with conceit’ (οὐ φυσιοῦσθε), and were instead ‘respectful,’ was due to the indwelling presence of Christ working within them (Χριστὸν ἔχετε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς). Such language led Richardson to conclude that undergirding faith’s “power to transform the moral life of the believer is the testimony of the indwelling Christ.” Similarly in Magn. 14, Ignatius explained that the reason he had not exhorted the Magnesians more severely was due his awareness that they were already ‘filled with God’ (θεοῦ γέμετε).

Thus, Ignatius attributed the ethical transformation of the individual to the power of the divine indwelling presence. What is interesting is that Wilkens highlighted a distinction in Ignatius between the notion of God dwelling among Christians corporately (i.e., in the church) and God dwelling within them individually. According to Wilken’s interpretation, Ignatius attributed the church’s corporate exclusion of “heresy” and the individual Christian’s avoidance of “strife, conceit, envy, division and anger” to the power of Christ’s dwelling among his people corporately. Yet at the same time, he understood Ignatius to teach that Christians

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23 The close of the verse where Prov 18:17 is quoted (LXX – ‘the righteous one [is] his own accuser’), provides further evidence that Ignatius believed them to have benefited from a change in nature.

24 Richardson, The Christianity of Ignatius, 16. Richardson seems to read Ignatian soteriology correctly up to this point, however, as §11.3 will show, his suggestion that Ignatius viewed martyrdom as a means to his own salvation is unsubstantiated – ibid., 24.

bore “His name and His presence individually” unless “by their conduct they forfeited His presence.” This seems to be precisely the opposite of Ignatius’ argument. It makes little sense to attribute ethical obedience to God’s indwelling power while simultaneously demanding that ethical failures forfeited the very indwelling that supposedly produced such obedience. Nowhere in the letters does Ignatius indicate that the divine indwelling was effective in guiding and directing the corporate body, while at the same time remaining ineffective while working within the individual. Neither did Ignatius suggest that the divine indwelling could be forfeited through ill conduct. The numerous personal examples of the Spirit’s empowering work in Ignatius’ own life likewise demonstrate his belief that the believer’s ethical successes and perseverance in the faith were attributed to the enabling power of the indwelling God. 

Seemingly related to the notion of being indwelt are the verses where Ignatius described believers as belonging to God. Thus in the face of apparent deception by outsiders, Ignatius reasoned that the Ephesians were not deceived because they ‘belonged wholly to God’ (Eph. 8.1 – ὅλοι ὄντες θεοῦ). This matches what follows in 9.1 where Ignatius claimed that the Ephesians had not adopted such ‘evil doctrine’ because they were stones prepared crafted beforehand to be placed in God’s temple. Furthermore in the Philadelphian letter, Ignatius causally linked the attainment of Christian unity to the notion of belonging to God. Thus, after utilizing a botanical metaphor where those ‘not cultivated by Jesus Christ’ were dubbed ‘evil plants’ (Phld. 3.1), Ignatius explained in the next verse (3.2) that ‘those who are God’s and Jesus

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26 Ibid., 276.
27 See Phld. 5.1; 7.1–2; Rom. 6.3; 7.2.
Christ’s are with the bishop.’ By indicating that God’s people are ‘with the bishop’, Ignatius certainly included the idea of being in doctrinal unity with regard to Christian beliefs as well as holding to proper beliefs in the bounds of the church community (cf. Eph. 4.2; 16.1; Trall. 7.2). Negatively stated, the same point is made in Trall. 11.1 where the Trallians were exhorted to flee the ‘wicked offshoots’ that produced death-dealing fruit (i.e., false doctrines) because such people ‘are not the Father’s plants’ (οὐκ εἰσιν φυτεία πατρός).\(^{28}\) It is further explained that if such people had been planted by God they would ‘appear as branches of the cross’ and their spiritual offspring would be imperishable (11.2).

In summary, multiple statements in the letters demonstrate Ignatius’ belief that those who believed rightly enjoyed a certain spectrum of related ontological benefits that by necessity enabled and produced ethical success. The defeat of death and the consequent possession of spiritual life belonged only to those who exercised believing faith in the incarnational work of Christ on their behalf. Additionally, those endowed with spiritual life were also described as possessing a righteous nature that, through the empowerment of the indwelling God, produced ethical obedience. Richardson was certainly correct to conclude that “Faith, in Ignatius as in Paul, transcends the merely intellectual and becomes a moral and religious power to transform believers.”\(^{29}\)


\(^{29}\) Richardson, *The Christianity of Ignatius*, 11.
10.2 Eschatological Outcomes

Frequently it has been suggested that Ignatius outlined a salvation that, once initiated, was not final and therefore insecure. Aune therefore proposed that, in Ignatius’ salvific scheme, eschatological salvation was “unconditional and irrevocable” only within the “cultic community” (i.e., the church). However, with respect to the individual’s salvation “the present possession of the benefits of eschatological salvation” was conditional and thus uncertain.\(^3\) Vall similarly concluded that the letters describe “the attainment of salvation” as something that “cannot be finalized prior to biological death.”\(^3\) Despite the suggestion that Ignatius viewed salvation as conditional, a topic to be examined in more detail in Chapter 11, the letters themselves resist such an assertion.

That Ignatius believed a Christian must persevere unto the end is evident (Smyrn. 9.2; Pol. 6.2). What is unclear is whether he viewed perseverance as a condition to obtain eternal life, or whether he understood perseverance as evidence that life had already been secured. The following will seek to demonstrate that, from an eschatological perspective, Ignatius viewed Christian perseverance as a byproduct of faith and not as a condition of life.

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\(^{3}\) Aune, *Cultic Setting*, 165.

\(^{3}\) Vall, *Learning Christ*, 363.
10.2.1 The Perseverance of Faith

The exhortation in Eph. 14.2—‘the tree is known by its fruit’—is a prime example of Ignatius’ view of faith as something that should be validated by its outcomes. The passage's context is clear: faith was the beginning, but love was the ultimate goal, of spiritual life (Eph. 14.1). In the subsequent verses, Ignatius described how to recognize whether one truly was, or was not, a Christian. Thus in 14.2, after declaring that those who promised to be Christ’s would be recognized by their actions, Ignatius introduced the idea that perseverance functioned as evidence that life was already present. Hence, in addition to a simple promise or proclamation of faith, true Christianity required that one ‘be found (εὑρεθῇ) at the end in the power of faith.’ Thus perseverance appears not as a condition to obtain life but as evidence that spiritual life had already begun.

The Magnesia letter contains another series of statements that relate to the concept of perseverance. In Magn. 9.1, Ignatius established an explicit causal link between faith and perseverance: they persevered (διὰ τούτο ὑπομένουμεν) because they had received faith (ἐλάβομεν τὸ πιστεύειν) in the mysterious teaching that ‘our life arose though him [Christ] and his death.’ Exercising faith in the mysterious death of Christ was therefore both the basis and cause of the Magnesians’ perseverance. Hence, Ignatius indicated here that salvation secured perseverance and not the reverse. It has already been argued that Ignatius considered Christians to possess a new nature that enabled ethical transformation. Yet in Trall. 1.1 he

32 This source of this saying is uncertain and may have been drawn from Matthew 12:33, Luke 6:44, or possibly a Q source.

33 Thus perseverance could be added to the tests of faith’s genuineness in §5.3.3.
referred to their ‘unwavering perseverance (ἀδιάκριτον ἐν ὑπομονῇ) as an additional byproduct of this new faith-engendered nature. In other words, in addition to ethical obedience, a believer’s perseverance in the faith was ultimately attributed to their faith in Christ which had produced new life and a new nature.

It is possible to view Ignatius’ comments in Smyrn. 9.2 to indicate that Ignatius viewed perseverance as a salvific condition. By translating the participle ὑπομένοντες conditionally, the preponderance of modern editions suggest that Ignatius viewed salvation as not fully assured prior to the eschaton: “God is your reward; if you endure (ὑπομένοντες) everything for his sake, you will reach him” (δι’ ὅν πάντα ὑπομένοντες αὐτοῦ τεύξεσθε). Such a translation could be interpreted to indicate that salvation was only assured to the extent that one persevered in the face of abuse and persecution. Though this translation is possible, the participle does not demand conditionality and could simply indicate the manner in which one reached God. Ignatius appears to simply inform his addressees to expect persecution and that those who endured persecution would be rewarded by reaching God’s presence.

Additionally, how the prepositional phrase δι’ ὅν is understood influences the meaning of the passage. Despite most translating as ‘for his sake,’ nevertheless, this is not the only possibility since διὰ combined with an accusative object often indicates the means or efficient cause of an

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34 Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 257. Ehrman likewise translated as “if you endure all things for his sake, you will attain him” – *Apostolic Fathers*, 305). Others who translate conditionally include Brannan, *Apostolic Fathers*, 113 and Stewart, *Ignatius of Antioch*, 95. The concept of ‘attaining to God’ (τεύξεσθε) and its potential salvific significance will be briefly discussed in §11.3.3.

35 This concept will be developed and discussed in more detail in §10.2.3.

36 Even though Brannan translates the participle conditionally (“if you endure everything”), he indicated in a note that the translation reads “literally ‘enduring all things through him’” – Brannan, *Apostolic Fathers*, 113 n. e.
action. With this in mind, the verse would translate as ‘because of whom/thanks to whom’ (δι' ὃν = θεός) ‘after enduring all things’ (πάντα ὑπομένοντες) ‘you will reach him’ (αὐτοῦ τεύξεσθε). Therefore, as in the previous passage, Smyrn. 9.2 seems to attribute successful perseverance to God's enabling power. Thus God is both the cause and the reward for successful perseverance. Contextually, this translation matches Ignatius' comments about the indwelling God (see §10.1.3) as well as earlier statements that explicate the means by which Ignatius himself endured the myriad of perils facing him in the form of ‘chains’, ‘death’, ‘fire’, ‘swords’, ‘beasts’, and ‘suffering’ in general. Thus in Smyrn. 4.2 he explained that he was ‘enduring everything because he himself [i.e., Jesus Christ], the perfect human being, is empowering me’ (πάντα ὑπομένω, αὐτοῦ μὲ ἐνδυναμούντος τοῦ τελείου ἄνθρωπον). In other words, Ignatius specifically attributed his perseverance up to that moment to Jesus Christ's indwelling power.

Additionally, the parallel passage in Magn. 1.2 likewise attributes Christian perseverance to the empowerment or enabling affected by the indwelling God. Much like Smyrn. 9.2, the translations largely interpret the participle ὑπομένοντες conditionally. Thus Ehrman translated, “If we endure in him all the abusive treatment of the ruler of this age and escape, we will attain to God.”

The employment of ‘in Christ’ language in the form of the

37 BDAG, 226 s.v. διά, defn. B.2.d.; LSJ, 389 s.v. διά, defn. B. III.1 – ‘of persons, thanks to, by the aid of.’

38 It should be noted that Ignatius used the διά + Accusative (as well as Genitive) construction predominately to indicate cause/means/agency (see Eph. 2.1; 4.1; 9.2; 14.2; 15.2; Magn. 7.1; 9.1; Trall. 1.2; 8.2; Rom. 4.1; 8.2; 10.1; Phld. 1.1; 8.2; 9.1; Pol. 7.3). The only clear uses of διά + Genitive to indicate ‘on our behalf’ are the texts where he used the specific διά ἕμας construction (Trall. 2.1; 6.1; Smyrn. 2.1; Pol. 3.2).

39 Ehrman, Apostolic Fathers, 243.
prepositional phrase ἐν ὧν could easily be understood similarly to the use of ὡς ἐν in Smyrn. 9.2. Therefore, Christians who persevere despite the abuses perpetrated by the ruler of this age (i.e., Satan) were described as doing so ‘in him’, i.e., in Christ. If the phrase was intended to show agency, then perseverance, much like in Smyrn. 9.2, seems to be attributed to the empowerment of Christ. Since the meaning of the ‘in Christ’ language varies widely in Ignatius, much like the Pauline corpus, it is difficult to ascertain with certainty whether Ignatius intended to convey the means of perseverance. Nevertheless, regardless of the intended sense(s), the overall result is much the same in that Christian perseverance is attributed strictly to those who are ‘in Christ’.41 Lastly, depending on how the genitive construction functions, the closing statement in the Roman letter—‘Farewell until the end in Jesus Christ’s perseverance’ (ἐν ὑπομονῇ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ)—further highlights Ignatius’ confidence that Jesus Christ himself seems to be the causal agent in the Christian’s faithful perseverance unto the end.42

40 The density of ‘in Christ’ language in Ignatius rivals that of the Apostle Paul. Harris noted that the prepositional phrase is found 170 times in the Pauline corpus – Prepositions and Theology, 122. By my own count, Ignatius used the phrase 36 times (Eph. inscr; 1.1; 3.1, 2; 8.2; 10.3; 11.1, 2; 12.1; 20.2 twice; 21.2; Magn. 1.2; 6.2; 10.2; 13.1; Trall. 1.1 twice; 2.2; 9.2; 13.2 three times; Rom. inscr twice; 1.1; 2.1; 4.3; 8.2; Phld. 5.1, 2; 7.2; 10.1, 2; 11.2; Pol. 8.3). Given that the MR is approximately one-quarter the size of the Pauline corpus, the relative frequency of the term is almost identical in both collections.

41 Harris included incorporative union, agency, mode, cause, location, and sphere of reference as the range of available senses (ibid., 123–4.). Whether the phrase denoted being in union with Christ/being Christian (incorp. union/sphere of reference), or being accomplished by/through Christ (agency/mode), or because of Christ (causal), all such senses highlight endurance as the work of God.

42 This assumes that Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is to be taken as a subjective genitive thus emphasizing that Jesus Christ was the one exhibiting perseverance. Lightfoot, while noting this possibility, believed the phrase referred instead to ‘the patient waiting for Christ’ – Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 2, 234. BDAG lists both senses of ὑπομονῇ as possibilities for Ign. Rom. 10.3 – BDAG, 1039–40.
To summarize, the letters appear to describe perseverance not as a means of salvation, but as an expression of constancy in faith which attests that believers already benefited from salvation. According to Ignatius' salvific scheme, true faith in Christ produced perseverance. Those who did not persevere in the faith therefore demonstrated by their aberrant beliefs and actions that they were not Christians (Eph. 14.2) for, if they were, their continued ethical successes and doctrinal stability would reveal the presence of the indwelling God who was at work within them to enable such vitality and perseverance.

10.2.2 Additional Statements of Security

In addition to the above-mentioned verses that specifically address Christian perseverance, sprinkled throughout the letters are descriptors that likewise emphasize the certainty of faith. For example, having already established that Ignatius equated Jesus Christ with life, several of the descriptors associated with such life seem to add permanence to the concept. Thus Jesus Christ is paralleled with 'our unwavering life' in Eph. 3.2 (Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, τὸ ἀδιάκριτον ἡμῶν ζῆν) and 'our continual life' in Magn. 1.2 (Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ διὰ παντὸς ἡμῶν ζήν).43

Adding to the permanence of spiritual life are comments related to incorruptibility or imperishability found throughout the corpus. Perhaps one of the most interesting statements supporting this notion is Trall. 11.1–2 where Ignatius described how to differentiate between the false teachers ('evil offshoots') and those who had actually been planted by the Father (11.1). According to Ignatius, if 'the tree is manifest by its fruit' (cf. Eph. 14.2) it follows that the

43 The concept of the Eucharist and how it relates to Ignatian soteriology will be discussed later in §11.2.
health of one's spiritual fruit would be a prime indication of a person's salvific status.

Therefore Trall. 11.2 states that those who had been planted by God naturally resemble the 'cross' and their fruit would be 'imperviousness to corruption and death' (ἄφθαρτος).

Additional examples strengthen this notion. By 'breathing incorruptibility' (ἀφθαρσίαν) into the church, and presumably upon its members, Ignatius seemingly implied a resistance to corruption (Eph. 17.1). Indeed, church unity, most likely in the form of members obeying and following established church leadership, is described as providing 'an example and lesson of incorruptibility.' It matters little whether this referred to members who unified with leadership, or to the established leadership themselves as the example to emulate, the point is the same. What Ignatius seems to convey is that successful ecclesial unity serves as an example (τύπος) of the incorruptible status of the church and its constituents bestowed on it by Jesus Christ (cf. Eph. 17.1).

Finally, a few final statements regarding the security of faith warrant mention. In Smyrn. 1.1 Ignatius utilized the passive tense to described the Smyrnaeans' faith with a graphic image. They 'had been crafted' or 'fashioned' (κατηρτισμένους) in a 'fixed,' and thus 'immovable' (ἀκίνητος) faith just as if they 'had been nailed to the cross of the Lord Christ' (καθηλωμένους ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ). The fact that they had 'been fully convinced' with regard to creedal elements focusing on the incarnational Christological narrative (see §9.3.2) further

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44 BDAG, 155–6 s.v. ἄφθαρτος.
45 Some understand the passage to refer to the community leaders themselves as the example to follow (Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 115; Mellink, Death as Eschaton, 330–1) whereas others conclude that unity with the bishop is the cited example – Aune, Cultic Setting, 161; Grant, Ignatius of Antioch, 60.

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highlights the fixedness of faith. Therefore perseverance in the Christian life depended on whether one had been fully convinced of the gospel narrative. The string of passive tense participles likewise reveals the work of God behind the scenes to enable such perseverance. The Phld. inscr is similar from a grammatical perspective and produces the same sense. Once again, Ignatius utilized multiple perfect passive participles to describe the work of God in firmly settling the Philadelphians' faith: they 'had been fixed (ἡδρασμένη) in godly harmony', were 'unwaveringly (ἀδιακρίτως) rejoicing' about the Lord's passion, and 'had been fully convinced (πεπληροφορημένη) about his resurrection.'

10.2.3 Resolving the Epistemological Tension

Thus far it has been argued that Ignatius viewed salvation as a present ontological reality for those who had exercised faith in the proper Christ-centered object. According to Ignatius, the true believer's possession of both spiritual life (10.1.1), as well as a changed nature (10.1.2), were evidenced by ethical behavior along with successful perseverance in the faith (10.2.1). Ultimately, the letters attribute such accomplishments to the enabling power of the indwelling God (10.1.3). And yet, this perceived soteriological security appears to be at odds with several warning statements made elsewhere in the letters that portray a potentially contradictory scenario.

The clearest example is found in Pol. 6.2 where Ignatius employed a military metaphor utilizing the Greek transliteration of the Latin desertor to caution Polycarp about the possibility that some would abandon Christianity: 'Let none of you be found out to be a
deserter (δεσέρτωρ).’ A similar warning is given in Magn. 11 where Jesus Christ is described as
‘our hope, from which may none of you ever be turned away (ἐκτραπῆναι).’ It has already been
argued that Ignatius warned about a form of doctrinal apostasy committed by those he
described as unbelievers who had deviated from the true gospel narrative (§5.3; 9.3). However,
the focus of Pol. 6.2 seems to highlight the issue of individuals abandoning Christianity
altogether. This is especially evident when Ignatius’ fears of recanting under pressure are
considered (Rom. 7.2).

Before discussing the options, it should be noted that the presence of such warnings
may be attributed to the influence of the NT as well as to historical instances of apostasy.47
Since it is highly probable that Ignatius was acquainted with Matthew’s gospel,48 Jesus Christ’s
warning in Matt 10:33 may have influenced his thinking—‘whoever denies me before people, I
will deny him before my Father in heaven.’ Jesus subsequently indicated that, when faced
with persecution and false teaching, ‘the one who endures to the end will be saved’ (Matt
24:13). The fact that several of these warnings are found in NT texts that Ignatius evidently
knew only bolsters their potential influence on Ignatius (Matt 13:20–1; 1 Cor 10:12; 1 Tim 1:19;
4:1–2; 2 Tim 1:15; 2:16–9; 4:1–4). Evidence indicating that some Christians recanted during
persecution further strengthens the suggestion that such encounters framed his outlook.

Cor 10:32; Col 1:23; 1 Tim 1:19; 4:1; 2 Tim 1:15; 2:16–9; 4:1–4; Heb 2:1–3; 3:12; 4:1; 6:4–6; 10:26–39; 2 Pet 1:3; 20–1;
1 John 2:19; Rev 3:8; Mart. Pol. 4; 1 Clem. 11:1–2; Did. 16:1–5; Herm. Vis. 1.4.2 [4.2]; 2.3.2 [7.2]; Sim. 8.6.4–6
[72.4–6]; 8.9 [75]; 9.19.1–3 [96.1–3]; Dial. 47; Haer. 1.13.7; 1.16.3; 1.27.4; 1.28.1.

48 Foster concluded that “it is most likely that Ignatius knew Matthew’s gospel” – Foster, “The Epistles of
Ignatius,” 185. Inge likewise noted that “Ignatius was certainly acquainted either with our Matthew, or with
the source of our Matthew, or with a Gospel very closely akin to it.” –“Ignatius,” 79.
Ignatius certainly would not want anyone to emulate the actions of Hymenaeus and Alexander who ‘shipwrecked their faith’ (1 Tim 1:19–20) or Quintus who ‘when he saw the beasts turned coward’ and was ‘persuaded to swear an oath and offer a sacrifice’ (Mart. Pol. 4).

A natural question arises: if Ignatius viewed salvation as a secure status, why then did he find it necessary to warn his audience about the dangers of apostasy? One possible explanation is that he viewed salvation as an unsettled state of being that could not be fully secured prior to physical death. Thus, according to Vall, Ignatius described “the attainment of salvation” as something that “cannot be finalized prior to biological death.”⁴⁹ Hence, “a person must ‘believe with love’ and persevere to the end in order to be saved.”⁵⁰ Aune similarly suggested that Ignatius viewed salvation as a status that, once attained, was thereafter required to be maintained conditionally.⁵¹ According to this view, salvation could be forfeited due to a change in one’s belief system, a rejection of the bishop-sanctioned eucharist, a refusal to submit to the established ecclesial leadership, or even a failure to “imitate Jesus’ Passion in martyrdom, should such be necessary.”⁵² Per this view, salvation was secure only as long as the Christian maintained such conditions. Even though this perspective provides a plausible explanation for the warning passages, yet it seems to be at odds with the point argued in §10.2.1 that perseverance is for Ignatius an evidential byproduct, and not a condition, of salvation (Eph. 14.2; Magn. 9.1; Trall. 1.1).

⁴⁹ Vall, Learning Christ, 363.
⁵⁰ Ibid., 364.
⁵¹ Aune, Cultic Setting, 163, 165.
⁵² Aune, Cultic Setting, 160. For more details on this see Chapter 11.
However, another potential resolution is to recognize that there exists in the letters a tension between the ontological reality of one's salvation and the epistemological realization of such. Thus far, the thesis has argued that Ignatius described a certain segment of Christianity who claimed to be Christian despite doctrinal and ethical signals that indicated otherwise to him (§5.3–4). Since these false believers failed the tests of genuineness (§5.3.3), any self-confidence with regard to their salvation would likely be viewed by Ignatius as misplaced.53 In other words, if Ignatius believed that a person could be deceived in this life regarding their own personal standing before God then his statements about apostasy may have been generically intended to encourage obedience and to warn everyone who claimed to be Christian about the possibility of ultimately being revealed as a pseudo Christian.

According to this view, the reality of one’s salvation was not at issue. Instead, the aspect of uncertainty seems to center on the epistemological notion of a person’s realization of their salvific status (i.e., assurance). Vall is therefore correct to assert that Ignatius believed “there can be no certitude of salvation prior to biological death” since the validity of a person’s claim to be Christian was manifested phenomenologically throughout life.54 This is not to say that Ignatius did not believe his audience had been saved. Indeed, Ignatius repeatedly expressed his confidence with respect to the worthiness of those he corresponded with (Eph. inscr; 1.3; 2.1; 4.1; 12.2; Magn. 2.1; 13.1; Trall. inscr; Rom. inscr; 10.1–2; Phld. 5.2; 10.2; Smyrn. inscr; 9.2; Pol. 7.2; 8.1).

53 Relatedly, Ignatius may have viewed genuine Christians as ontologically secure with respect to their saved condition, regardless of whether they had matching feelings of epistemological certainty.

54 Vall, Learning Christ, 196.
However, Ignatius' comments about his own situation and feelings may shed light on the epistemological tension in the text. The letters are replete with instances of Ignatius using self-deprecating language. On a personal level, Ignatius repeatedly vacillates between the poles of his own 'worthiness' (Eph. 9.2; 21.2; Magn. 1.2; 2.1; Rom. 2.2; Pol. 1.1) and 'unworthiness' (Eph. 2.2; 20.1; Magn. 12.1; 14.1; Trall. 4.2; 12.3; 13.1; Rom. 1.1; 9.2; Smyrn. 11.1). With a gruesome and torturous execution in his near future (Rom. 5.3), it is not surprising that Ignatius was unsure of how he would react when he ultimately faced the beasts. Despite his initial rejection of the Roman church's offers to either acquit him, or at least to commute a lesser sentence (Rom. 1–2), later in the letter he hints of the possibility that he might recant under pressure: Rom. 7.2–

‘And if upon my arrival I myself should appeal to you, do not be persuaded by me; believe instead the things that I am writing to you.’ The fear is evident: Ignatius seems to realize that succumbing to one's fears and denying Christ had grave consequences.

From an unlikely source comes a possible explanation for Ignatius' fears and sense of unworthiness. In his letter to Trajan, Pliny described what was expected of those accused of being Christian and who wished to avoid execution: they would be dismissed if they “denied that they were or ever had been Christians” and “repeated...a formula of invocation to the gods and had made offerings of wine and incense to your [Trajan’s] statue...and furthermore had reviled the name of Christ” [Ep. Tra. 10.96 (Radice, LCL)]. After listing the above-mentioned avenues of escape, Pliny provided the following observation: “none of which things, I understand, any genuine Christian (vera Christiani) can be induced to do.” The basis for such

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55 For a more thorough review of such language see Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 13–4.
an opinion is not given in the text; however, it makes sense that previously-examined Christians were the source of his conclusion that genuine Christians could not be forced to abandon Christ.

If Christianity by definition involved persevering to the end in the face of persecution (Eph. 14.2), it appears that Ignatius agreed with Pliny’s assessment that those who recanted under pressure were pseudo Christians. According to this view, those who could be induced to deny Christ revealed themselves as false Christians whose lack of perseverance confirmed their status. Even though Ignatius seems to believe that he was genuine and that his successful perseverance, thus far, was to be attributed to the indwelling God working within him (Smyrn. 4.2), it seems possible that he may have held the view that those who recanted during persecution revealed their true nature as pseudo Christians. In summary, those who had placed their faith in the true gospel narrative benefitted from a new nature and the presence of the indwelling God within to empower them to continue in the faith until the bitter end.

10.3 Summary

Ignatius described believers as profiting from several benefits that derived from faith. In short, those who had exercised proper faith in Christ benefited from being released from spiritual death and, consequently, receiving true spiritual life. The new nature enjoyed by believers through the empowerment of the indwelling God thus permitted ethical obedience, while at the same time empowered perseverance in the faith until the end. By further describing Christians as being incorruptible and imperishable, and as those whose faith was immovable and firmly fixed, Ignatius seems to have intentionally conveyed the notion that Christians
persevered by default. This is one of the key claims of this discussion. Those who possessed spiritual life and who were indwelt by God demonstrated by their ethical obedience and their ultimate perseverance that spiritual life had already begun. In contrast, those who failed to persevere demonstrated their underlying nature as false Christians. As Mellink noted, such concepts ‘refer to the present aspect of the eschatological salvation….Like for all believers, ‘life’ is already a present reality for him.'

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56 Mellink, *Death as Eschaton*, 331.
CHAPTER 11

ADDITIONAL MEANS OF SALVATION

11.0 Introduction

Conclusions regarding Ignatius' conception of the means of salvation have tended to gravitate in polar opposite directions. At one end of the spectrum are conclusions suggesting that Ignatius viewed humanity as being justified by faith. Thus Arnold recently identified *Phld.* 8.2 as evidence that Ignatius believed that “the Gospel message of justification” was “by faith in the person of Jesus Christ.” At the other end are proposals suggesting that Ignatius viewed faith as the necessary, but not sole, means of salvation and that for salvation to occur additional means were required. Hence Aune listed the following as “links in the chain of salvation” which, if broken, would result in damnation: (1) baptism and the eucharist, (2) belief in the actuality of the gospel events, (3) union with the local church, (4) following the example of Jesus, and (5) obedience to the commands of Jesus and the Apostles.¹

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¹ Arnold, *Justification in the Second Century*, 60. See §1.4, n. 115 for more details.
The purpose of this chapter will be to explore the notion that Ignatius described salvation as being obtained by means other than faith in the incarnational gospel narrative. Several common themes found throughout the letters will be explored. First, Ignatius’ frequent use of the faith-love pairing will be examined. Following this, the investigation will explore Ignatius’ view of the eucharist and evaluate the notion that he attributed a salvific role to the rite. Finally, the chapter will close by examining the proposal that Ignatius viewed his own martyrdom as a means of salvation for either himself or others.

11.1 Faith and Love

The repeated use of the πίστις-ἀγάπη pairing throughout the letters has been recognized widely by scholars as a prominent Ignatian theme.\(^3\) Multiple verses indicate that Ignatius viewed ‘faith and love’ as the essential attributes of the Christian life: ‘Everything with respect to nobility follows them’ (Eph. 14.1), indeed, they are ‘everything’ and ‘nothing is preferrable to them’ (Magn. 1.2; Smyrn. 6.1). Even though their importance to Ignatius is well established, yet their relationship to eternal life is a separate issue that will be addressed herein. A brief review of the focus of love in the letters is first necessary.

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11.1.1 The Object of Love

The object of the nominal ἀγάπη (when paired with faith) varies in the letters. Sometimes ἀγάπη is described as love for Jesus Christ or God (Eph. 1.1; Magn. 13.1; Rom. inscr; Phld. 11.2), while at other times it centers on either Jesus Christ’s love for others (Eph. 20.1), or the Christian’s love for other believers (Magn. 6.1). On multiple occasions the object is unspecified (Eph. 9.1; 14.1, 2; Magn. 1.2; 5.2; Trall. 8.1; Phld. 9.2; Smyrn. inscr; 1.1; 6.1; 13.2; Pol. 6.2).

Nevertheless, based on his examination of the verbal form ἀγαπάω, Schoedel concluded that ἀγάπη is primarily an expression of “loving unity” within the Christian church.⁴ Therefore the concept of love in the letters appears then to function as the ethical outcome of faith in the form of love for Christ and for other believers, frequently expressed in the context of Christian unity (cf. Phld. 7.2 – ‘Love unity’). However, to be more precise, Ignatius’ conception of ‘love’ encompasses more than a simple expression of love for Christ or other people. As Tarvainen noted, “Love determines the manner and way in which the faithful lead their daily life.”⁵ In this sense, Ignatius’ exhortation to love could be construed as an exhortation to Christian works in general.

11.1.2 Love’s Soteriological Role

At times, it has been suggested that Ignatius understood ‘faith and love’ to constitute the required conditions for “the gaining of eternal life.”⁶ Aune, for instance, proposed that the two

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⁵ Tarvainen, Faith and Love, 5.
“spell out the way in which the salvific benefits of the gospel can be appropriated.”

Regarding the relationship of the dyad to salvation, Richardson’s conclusions are somewhat contradictory. After surmising that the issue of “whether we are saved by works or by faith, does not appear to have been present to the mind of Ignatius”, he then concluded that “ἀγάπη seems to be a condition of life” since the Christian’s perfection in love “requires the constant striving and endeavor” in order to “remain in the Christian life.” Vall similarly determined that “faith can in no way achieve its goal apart from love” and that “faith working through love is the way to arrive at this final justification, and there can be no certitude of salvation prior to biological death.”

According to Vall’s interpretation, even though Ignatius viewed faith as a necessary cause of salvation, yet “one is not justified sola fide” because “[f]aith alone is not sufficient but must be completed by love, which is to say, by works.”

That Ignatius viewed believing faith (πίστις) in the incarnational gospel narrative as a condition of life has already been established in Chapter 9. Furthermore, the idea that Ignatius regarded ‘love’ as a mandatory aspect of the Christian life and, consequently, that the absence of such ‘love’ was an indication that one lacked salvation is likewise evident. Thus after declaring that ‘faith and love is everything’ (Smyrn. 6.1), Ignatius immediately followed with a warning that those holding to heterodox Christological viewpoints (Smyrn. 6.2 – τοὺς

7 Aune, *Cultic Setting*, 142.
8 Richardson, *The Christianity of Ignatius*, 91 n. 21.
10 Ibid., 193.
ἑτεροδοξοῦντας[^12] could be identified by their unconcern for love (περὶ ἀγάπης οὐ μέλει αὐτοῖς) towards ‘widows...orphans...the afflicted...the imprisoned...the ones set free...the hungry or the thirsty’, as well as for their refusal to participate in the ‘eucharist and prayer’.[^13] The fate of such people is explained in the following verse (7.1): ‘Therefore those contradicting the good gift of God, they are perishing while arguing. But it would be profitable for them to love, that they might also rise up.’ This short section is instructive regarding Ignatius’ understanding of faith–love’s impact on salvation. Regarding faith and love, those who did not ‘believe on the blood of Christ’ would experience judgment (6.1), while at the same time those who circumvented love would bypass the resurrection (7.1).

Even though scholars are certainly correct to note that Ignatius considered both elements of the pairing to be “complementary and inseparable,”[^14] “the primary expressions of the Christian life,”[^15] and that they “are able to render entirely and completely the whole content of the Christian message,”[^16] nevertheless, it is not a bygone conclusion that he understood both elements to have a causal role in salvation. Vall astutely framed the issue regarding the controversial role of ἀγάπη in Ignatius’ soteriological thought process: “Is love strictly necessary to salvation as the perfection and ‘form’ of faith, or is it necessary only in the

[^12]: Versified as Smyrn. 7.1 in some editions (see §2, n. 2).
[^13]: The opponents’ rejection of the eucharist is most likely due to their docetic denial of the physical aspects of the incarnational narrative and not due to their refusal to acknowledge any particular view regarding the presence of Christ in the elements. Instead, the idea of perishing as a result of rejecting the ‘gift of God’ does not seem to reference the eucharist but the physical ‘flesh of...Jesus Christ, which suffered for...sins and which the Father...raised up’ (7.1).
[^14]: Vall, Learning Christ, 176.
[^16]: Tarvainen, Faith and Love, 1.
sense of demonstrating faith’s genuineness?"? Contra Vall and others, who opted for Ignatius’
selection of the former, the letters themselves seem to indicate the latter.\(^ {17}\) Ephesians 14.1–2
represents perhaps the closest approximation to a definitive set of statements regarding
Ignatius’ understanding of ‘faith and love’ in the entire corpus:

\[
\text{nothing escapes your notice, if you have faith and love } (\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota \kappa\lambda \tau \eta \nu \alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta\nu) \\
\text{completely with respect to Jesus Christ. Which is the beginning and goal of life } (\eta\tau\iota\varsigma \\
\text{\epsilon\sigma\tau\iota \alpha\varphi\chi\eta \zeta\omicron\eta\upsilon \kappa\alpha \tau \tau \epsilon\omicron\lambda\omicron\varsigma). \text{ Faith is the beginning } (\alpha\varphi\chi\eta \mu\epsilon\nu \pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma) \text{ but love is the goal } \\
(\tau\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma \delta\epsilon \alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta). \text{ And the two, when they have become harmonious it is divine.}
\]

Faith (\pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma) is solely described therein both as the initiator of life (\alpha\varphi\chi\eta \zeta\omicron\eta\upsilon\varsigma) as well as the
motive power behind the successful attainment of life’s goal (\tau\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma) to exhibit love. This is
akin to Ignatius’ metaphorical description where \pi\iota\sigma\tau\iota\varsigma was likened to a ‘crane’ that ‘lifts [one]
up’ into God’s temple, and \alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta was denoted as the ‘way of life’ (\delta\delta\omicron\varsigma) leading towards God
\((\text{Eph. 9.1).}\) Regarding the phrasing, Torrance pressed the chronological details of Ignatius’
crane metaphor further than necessary by suggesting that since the one lifted by faith “is not
already a stone placed in position in the temple...he is not yet justified” and therefore Ignatius’
idea that “faith must secure its position in love before ‘attaining’ is a serious defection from
the N.T. Gospel.”\(^ {19}\) A simpler and more natural explanation is that Ignatius viewed ‘faith’ as the

\(^{17}\) Vall, Learning Christ, 195.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 196. Based on his analysis of Smyrn. 6.2, Downs initially appears to tie the Docetist’s lack of
benevolence toward others causally to their denial of the incarnational event: “Ignatius intimates that his
opponents neglect love for the bodies of the destitute because they neglect the soteriological importance
of the body of Christ.” However, later in his conclusion he seems to suggest that Ignatius attributed a
“meritorious and atoning value” to benevolent acts – David J. Downs, “Almsgiving and Competing
Soteriologies in Second-Century Christianity.” Religions 9 (2018). As argued in §5.3.3, Ignatius appears to
have viewed benevolent acts as evidence that one’s faith was genuine.

\(^{19}\) Torrance, Doctrine of Grace, 68.
cause of salvation and that ‘love’ functioned as the resultant, ethical way of life. In other words, loving actions were the confirmation that faith had produced life.

Furthermore, the last phrase of Eph. 14.1 adds weight to the argument: ‘when the two (i.e., faith and love) have become harmonious, this is divine’ (τὰ δὲ δύο ἐν ἑνότητι γενόμενα θεὸς ἐστιν). Even though translations of this clause have clouded the issue somewhat,20 Ignatius’ intentions are nevertheless straightforward with the clause reading ‘when the two [faith and love] are in harmony, there is God [at work].’ In other words, when a person’s faith was displayed by loving actions, this provided evidence of divine enablement and life within. The notion that faith should be evidenced by love is further strengthened in the subsequent verse (Eph. 14.2):

No one professing faith is sinning, neither does the one who has acquired love hate. ‘The tree [is] made plain by its fruit.’ In the same way, those who profess to be Christ’s will be noticed by their practices. For the work [is] not a present promise, but if one is found at the end by the power of faith.

According to the metaphor, just as a tree is identified by the fruit it bears, so also the validity of a person’s salvific identity will be evidenced by whether or not they continued to sin, (i.e.,

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20 For example see the following: “when they exist in unity, are God” – Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 195; “the two together in unity are God” – Ehrman, Apostolic Fathers, 233; “the two having come together in unity are God” – Brannan, Apostolic Fathers, 78. It has been noted that anarthrous preverbal predicate constructions in the NT (such as that found here in Ign. Eph. 14.1) “function primarily to express the nature or character of the subject.” – Philip B. Harner, “Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1,” JBL 92, no. 1 (1973): 75. See also Wallace, Greek Grammar, 259. Regarding the 68 times Ignatius used this construction, 75% appeared to be qualitative in nature. It follows then that Eph. 14.1 indicates the divine character or enablement behind exhibitions of love.
hate) and whether they persevered ‘by the power of faith until the end.” The last phrase again highlights the motive power of faith in this process. By this interpretation, Ignatius viewed love as a demonstration of the reality of one’s spiritual life. Svigel’s analysis fits this conclusion: “The consistency of inward and outward realities governed Ignatius’s ethic.”

In the face of divisive doctrines and practices, a simple ‘promise’ of faith was insufficient. Instead, according to Ignatius, a person’s profession must be validated by their perseverance in love (i.e., in works). Ignatius comes close to describing ‘love’ as a condition of life is Smyrn. 7.1 where he indicated that it would be better for the disputers to love in order for them to rise up. However, with the Eph. 14 passage guiding, Ignatius most likely viewed the disputers as pseudo-Christians whose professions of faith were invalidated by their lack of demonstrated love. For Ignatius, life began at the moment of faith. Once begun, life would be evidenced by imitating Christ in loving works.

11.2 The Eucharist and Salvation: The Medicine of Immortality

Ignatius has long been the focus of scholarly investigations into the eucharistic theology and practice of the early church. Unfortunately, the letters do not delve deeply into the topic and what is said is not particularly clear. Specifically this section of the chapter seeks to evaluate

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21 The same type of argument was also used in Magn. 5 where Ignatius utilized a coinage metaphor to indicate that ‘believers’ (οἱ...πιστοὶ) and unbelievers (οἱ ἄπιστοι) could be differentiated based on what type of image was stamped into them (χαρακτῆρα). In other words, just as coins were identified by the image pressed upon them, in the same manner genuine Christians would be identified by bearing God’s stamp and unbelievers by the stamp of the world.

22 Svigel, Center and the Source, 79.
the suggestion that Ignatius viewed participation in the eucharist as a necessary condition to one's salvation. However, before examining this debated issue, a brief review of Ignatius' eucharistic language is first necessary.

With typical variance, Ignatius touched on the topic by utilizing both εὐχαριστεῖω terms as well as several references to 'the bread' (ἄρτος). In each instance where the verbal form εὐχαριστέω is found, it functions as a simple expression of gratitude or 'thanks' to the Lord (Eph. 21.1 – 'I write to you, giving thanks to the Lord'; Phld. 6.3 – 'I give thanks to my God'; Phld. 11.1 – 'I give thanks to God'; Smyrn. 10.1 – 'Philo and Rheus Agathopous...who also give thanks to the Lord). Even though some view the use of the nominal form εὐχαριστία in Eph. 13.1 as a reference to the Eucharistic celebration, the noun seems to be utilized instead in the similar manner to the verbal passages— 'make every effort to come together in order to give thanks and glory to God (εἰς εὐχαριστίαν θεοῦ καὶ εἰς δόξαν).

However, in several verses εὐχαριστία is employed as a technical term to denote the ritualistic eucharistic celebration (Phld. 4.1; Smyrn. 6.2; 8.1). When Ignatius' evident polemic against his theological opponents is considered, several aspects of his understanding of the eucharist become apparent. For example, the Phld. 4.1 warning—'make every effort to use one Eucharist (μιᾷ εὐχαριστίᾳ')—is likely aimed to counter the competing and theologically aberrant eucharists practiced by the 'evil plants' and 'schism-makers' who disagreed with the passion narrative (3.1–3). Even though Ignatius does not elaborate on the specific aspect(s) of the judaizer's understanding of the eucharist that he disagrees with, the evidence in the letter

to Smyrna is much clearer.\textsuperscript{24} Thus in \textit{Smyrn.} 6.2, Ignatius warned the Smyrnaean church about the docetic proponents who

\begin{quote}
abstain (ἀπέχονται) from the eucharist and prayer because they do not confess the eucharist to be the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ (µὴ ὡμολογεῖν τὴν εὐχαριστίαν σάρκα εἶναι τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) which suffered for our sins (τὴν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν παθοῦσαν), which the Father raised up by his goodness (ἡν τῇ χρηστότητι ὁ πατὴρ ἐγείρεν).\textsuperscript{25}
\end{quote}

Some have detected in this passage, as well as in \textit{Phld.} 4.1 and \textit{Rom.} 7.3, the idea of sacramental realism. Thus Bradshaw commented that “the letters certainly attest...his [Ignatius’] conviction of the eucharistic presence of Christ.”\textsuperscript{26} Corwin likewise concluded that \textit{Smyrn.} 6.2 was “affirming a realistic doctrine about the nature of the elements” and that ‘those who have strange opinions’ do not come to the eucharist because “it is the very ‘flesh.’”\textsuperscript{27}

Corwin further suggested that any attempt “to answer the question of whether he [Ignatius] speaks realistically or symbolically is doomed to defeat, for the fact is, he does both.”\textsuperscript{28}

As previously argued in §9.3.1–2, Ignatius’ docetic opponents certainly denied the physical aspect of Christ’s passion and resurrection. That much is evident from the letters. However, viewing \textit{Smyrn.} 6.2 as a polemical statement against the docetic opponents’ rejection of the presence of Christ in the eucharist is just one possible interpretation. From a

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{24} One could speculate that the judaizers, who seem to have been influenced to reject certain aspects of the gospel narrative (see sections of thesis that discuss this), may have incorporated a eucharist that simply mirrored the Passover.}
\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{25} Note this some editions versify this as \textit{Smyrn.} 7.1.}
\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{26} Paul F. Bradshaw, \textit{Eucharistic Origins} (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2012), 87.}
\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{27} Versified as \textit{Smyrn.} 7.1. Corwin, St. Ignatius, 208.}
\footnotetext{\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
lexical and syntactical perspective, the language of Smyrn. 6 allows another possibility. Hence, a brief analysis of the syntax follows.

Grammatically, the clause ὠ̱ ὁ ὁμολογεῖν τὴν εὐχαριστίαν σάρκα εἶναι τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἔησοῦ Χριστοῦ functions to reveal indirect discourse that describes what the docetic proponents failed to confirm, i.e., that τὴν εὐχαριστίαν σάρκα εἶναι τοῦ σωτήρος ἡμῶν Ἔησοῦ Χριστοῦ. In order to understand what Ignatius intended, the function of the copulative εἶναι must be determined. First, it should be noted that since εἶναι does not necessarily indicate equivalence, a metaphysical relationship between εὐχαριστίαν and σάρκα is not, by default, what is intended. From a lexical perspective, it has been shown that εἶναι could denote an explanatory relationship between subject and predicate. Thus BDAG lists the use of εἶναι in “explanations...to show how someth. is to be understood is a representation of, is the equivalent of” where “we usually translate mean.”

The immediate context of this debated verse is also instructive in that it utilizes similar language to 6.2 that seems to clarify the later statement. The issue with the docetists, highlighted in 5.2, was that they ‘were not confessing that he [was] flesh-bearing (μὴ ὁμολογῶν αὐτὸν σαρκοφόρον). The point of contention focuses here on their rejection of the incarnational narrative and not with anything related to their viewpoints about sacramental realism in the eucharist. The opponents had not been persuaded by the gospel that Christ bore flesh (5.1–2). Thus, since they rejected the incarnational narrative, such ‘unbelievers’ and ‘blasphemers’ needed to ‘change their mind with regard to the passion’ (5.3). Additionally, if the docetic

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29 BDAG, 284 s.v. εἰμί, defn. 2.c.2.
proponents failed to ‘believe in the blood’ they faced judgment (6.1). The issue seems to be focused on the reality of Christ’s incarnation and not whether or not he was present in the elements of the eucharist.

With the context in mind, along with the potentially explanatory meaning of εἶναι incorporated, the following translation of 6.2 is possible: the docetists ‘abstain from the eucharist and prayer because they do not confess that the eucharist is a representation of the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ which suffered for our sins, and by which the Father raised up by his goodness.’ In other words, the docetists rejected the eucharist because it was intended to represent the body of Christ. While it is certainly possible that Ignatius believed that Christ was somehow present in the eucharistic celebration, the Smyrn. 6.2 text, when viewed in its context, seems instead to focus on the reality of Christ’s incarnation. Interpreters should be careful to not exceed what is clear in the passage. The docetic proponents evidently rejected the incarnational narrative, and therefore abstained from the bishop-sanctioned eucharist (cf. Smyrn. 8.1) because such an act communicated the physical nature of Christ’s suffering and death. Since there is an evident link between eucharistic theology and practice, Ignatius viewed only the bishop-sanctioned eucharist as valid (Smyrn. 8.1) and therefore considered any rival eucharist as unacceptable; indeed, its participants were ‘missing out on the bread of God’ (Eph. 5.2). Beyond these simple observations, the details of Ignatius’ view of the eucharist are not clear enough to come to definitive conclusions regarding his understanding of sacramental realism.
However, it should be noted that even if Ignatius believed in a form of sacramental realism, this does not necessarily relate to his soteriology. Thus, for the purposes of this thesis, the issue of sacramental realism will not be further addressed since it is not directly related to the investigation into Ignatian soteriology. Instead, this section will examine the Ignatian view of the eucharist from a salvific standpoint.

11.2.1 Divergent Views

Explorations into Ignatius' eucharistic language often conclude that he viewed the rite as having a salvific effect on its participant(s). Thus, according to Aune, Ignatius viewed “[p]articipation in the eucharist” as “an indispensable means for the appropriation of salvation.” 30 Aune concluded that Ignatius’ eucharist was one of the ‘links in the chain of salvation which binds a man to God” and therefore the “salvific benefits of the death of Jesus are...appropriated” not only by faith, but also “by participation in the eucharist (Eph. 20:2).” 31 In like fashion, Vall viewed the attainment of life as mediated not only through the word and the hierarchy of the church, but also “through the eucharist, which is the ‘medicine of immortality’ (Eph. 20.2).” 32 By commenting that “the eucharist is to everlasting life what medicine is to biological life” Vall seems to suggest that the life, which began at faith, was maintained by participation in the eucharist. 33

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31 Ibid., 148, 60. It should be noted that Aune lists the following additional links in the Ignatian chain of salvation: obedience to Christ’s commands, submission to the bishop/presbyters, and imitation of Christ.
In opposition to this view, others disagree that Ignatius attributed salvific effects to the rite. Hence Löhr, speaking of the reference to ‘the medicine of immortality’ in Eph. 20.2, concluded that even though Ignatius “seems to ascribe saving power to the use of the sacramental elements”, nonetheless, it “belongs in the context of the graphic ecclesiological language of the author and can hardly be understood in the sense of an actual sacramental soteriology.” Löhr, speaking of the reference to ‘the medicine of immortality’ in Eph. 20.2, concluded that even though Ignatius “seems to ascribe saving power to the use of the sacramental elements”, nonetheless, it “belongs in the context of the graphic ecclesiological language of the author and can hardly be understood in the sense of an actual sacramental soteriology.”

Likewise without any extensive examination, Mellink similarly concluded that “Ignatius does not present the eucharistic bread as a magical medicine working immortality.”

It is tempting to interpret Ignatius’ comments about the eucharist through the lens of one’s own theological pre-understandings. As such, all interpreters (myself included!) must constantly be alert to the tendency to interpret any relevant passage in light of such commitments and must strive to allow both the contents and the limitations of the Ignatian text to guide interpretation. Discussions over the potential role the eucharist played in Ignatian soteriology inevitably center around the Eph. 20.2 description of the ‘breaking one bread’ (ἕνα ἄρτον κλώντες) as ‘the medicine of immortality (ὅ ἐστιν φάρµακον ἄθανασίας), ‘the antidote so as not to die but to live forever in Jesus Christ’ (ἀντίδοτος τοῦ µῆ ἀποθανεῖν ἀλλὰ ζῆν ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ διὰ παντός).

Based predominately on this verse, many have concluded that Ignatius attributed to the eucharist a causal role in human salvation. As the following will demonstrate, several issues must be resolved in order to interpret this difficult passage.

35 Mellink, Death as Eschaton, 331 n. 54.
11.2.2 Exegetical Difficulties

Those who exegete Eph. 20.2 face several obstacles. The first challenge to be aware of one’s own theological presuppositions which can result in over-reading into Ignatius’ argument concepts that are based upon later theological developments not established by the text itself. Additionally, Ignatius’ unfavorable writing circumstances evidently hindered him from consistently producing a well-developed and clear presentation. Many portions of the letters, including Eph. 20, appear somewhat rushed. Additionally, the use of metaphorical imagery oftentimes complicates a plain reading of the text. Interpretation is also hampered by the presence of a textual variant at the most critical junction of Eph. 20.2 that impacts the interpretation of what Ignatius meant by the ‘medicine of immortality’ (φάρμακον ἀθανασίας).

While it is possible that Ignatius attributed a salvific role to the eucharist in Eph. 20.2, yet, as the following seeks to demonstrate, the combination of several syntactical and contextual factors strongly supports an alternative conclusion.

— Syntactical Factor —

The first issue deals with the relative pronoun in the phrase ἕνα ἄρτον κλώντες ὅ ἐστιν φάρμακον ἀθανασίας. The pronoun is variously presented in the surviving texts in both neuter (ὁ) and masculine (ὃς) forms. If the masculine was original then it seems reasonable to associate the φάρμακον ἀθανασίας with the physical bread. However, if Ignatius utilized the neuter form, the antecedent of the φάρμακον ἀθανασίας may have broadened beyond the physical bread itself to the whole set of preceding referents.
Even though scholarship is divided on which form represents the original, a solid case can be made for the neuter variant. Grammarians note that when the gender of the relative pronoun (ὁ in this case) does not match that of the supposed antecedent (masculine ἄρτον) then the neuter relative refers either to a verbal idea, or possibly to the entire preceding clause or sentence. By examining eleven occurrences in the letter where Ignatius used ὅ ἐστιν, Snyder observed that in nine instances Ignatius “does not intend a direct antecedent for ὅ, but an action.” Therefore, Snyder concluded that the φάρμακον ἀθανασίας was “not an element of the eucharist but an action of the Christian community which produces and designates ecclesiastical unity.” The antecedent to the ‘medicine of immortality’ would then broaden beyond the breaking of the bread alone to the actions described in the remainder of the verse. Hence the Ephesians were to ‘assemble together...obey the bishop and presbytery...and break bread,’ and they were to do so with certain conditions that suggested

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36 For example, Holmes noted both variants but opted for ὅ whereas Ehrman lists ὅς but did not note the variation – Holmes, Apostolic Fathers, 198; Ehrman, Apostolic Fathers, 240.  
37 Lightfoot, Apostolic Fathers, Part II, vol. 2, 87. Lightfoot argued for the Latin version’s value in deciding text critical issues due to the version’s “extreme literalness” along with the fact that the version appears to have been based on manuscripts “superior to the existing MSS of the Greek” – ibid., 79. The neuter variant’s support in both the Latin and g adds weight to the reading’s authenticity. The masculine variant is supported solely by G. Snyder likewise argued for the neuter’s originality based on Ignatius’ predominant use of ὅς to denote the personal relative ‘who’ – Snyder, “Text and Syntax of Ignatius,” 8–9.  
39 Snyder, “Text and Syntax of Ignatius,” 10. Snyder lists one clear exception in Eph. 18.1 where ὅ, though referring to the masculine antecedent (τοῦ σταυροῦ), is nevertheless attracted to the neuter case of the predicate (ὅ ἐστιν σκάνδαλον). The other technical exception is Smyrn. 5.3 where ὅ indicates the neuter antecedent (τὸ πάθος, ὅ ἐστιν ἡμῶν ἀνάστασις). Snyder’s conclusion, however, is slightly overstated since in three of the occurrences of ὅ ἐστιν (Eph. 17.1; Magn. 10.2; Trall. 11.2) the text varies between ὅ and ὅς exactly as it does for Eph. 20.2.
the need for unity. Ultimately, as the following section will demonstrate, syntax alone cannot determine meaning. The context of the passage, as well as that of the entire letter, provides crucial keys to understanding the role of Ignatius’ φάρμακον ἀθανασίας.

— Contextual Factors —

With the previous discussion regarding the possibility of a broader antecedent to the φάρμακον ἀθανασίας in mind, the following will examine Eph. 20.2 in light of the purpose and major themes of the entire letter, as well as with regard to the context of Ignatius’ other use of φάρμακον in the epistles (Trall. 6.1).

It is important first to note the identity of those Ignatius described as in danger of spiritual death. As previously noted, Ignatius repeatedly described a group of people whose claim to be Christian was not backed by valid beliefs and actions (see §5.3–4). Consequently, their refusal to assemble and partake of God’s bread, along with their arrogant attitude towards leadership, earned for them God’s opposition (Eph. 5.2–3). Additionally, their failure to ‘speak truthfully about Jesus Christ’ meant that they required healing (salvation) from the ‘one physician, Jesus Christ’ (Eph. 7.1–2). Likewise, their propagation of ‘evil doctrine’ indicated their need to ‘repent and find God’ (Eph. 10.1). In essence, those who attempted to corrupt the churches, who viewed the cross as ‘offensive’ and thus rejected the gospel

40 It must be acknowledged that, from a syntactical perspective, it is possible that Ἔ refers to the ἄρτον but that the pronoun was attracted to the gender of the neuter φάρμακον. Ultimately, as the following section demonstrates, syntax alone does not determine meaning and that the context of the passage and letter as a whole are crucial.

41 For a discussion about why the heretics themselves are in need of healing (and not their bite wounds) see §2.2.3.
narrative, were, according to Ignatius, destined to ‘foolishly perish’ in ‘unquenchable fire’ (*Eph. 16.1–18.1*). All such descriptions in the letter regarding those in danger of dying and in need of salvation appear to be directed towards those Ignatius described as false believers who operated outside the boundaries of the bishop’s authority in order to corrupt the faithful Ephesian church.

The second point to consider is the apparent relationship between *Eph. 20.2* and the letter’s purpose statement written in *Eph. 3.2–4.2*:

> for this reason I have anticipated the need to encourage you, so that you may be in agreement (*συντρέχητε*) with God’s way of thinking (*τῇ γνώμῃ τοῦ θεοῦ*). For even Jesus Christ, our inseparable life, [is] the mindset (*γνώμη*) of the Father, as also the bishops who have been appointed throughout the world are in the mindset (*γνώμη*) of Jesus Christ. Therefore it is fitting for you to be in agreement with the bishop’s way of thinking (*συντρέχειν τῇ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου γνώμῃ*).

With the Ephesians facing satanic (13.1; 17.1; 19.1), Christologically-defective, and thus disunifying doctrinal viewpoints that resulted in spiritual death (*Eph. 7–10; 13; 16–18*), Ignatius’ exhortation was intended to ensure their continued alignment with God’s way of thinking (*τῇ γνώμῃ τοῦ θεοῦ*). Being thus minded is described therein as ‘being in agreement’ (*συντρέχειν*) with ‘the bishop’s way of thinking’ (*γνώμη*) because the bishop derivatively represented ‘the mindset of Christ’ (*ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ γνώμῃ*), who in turn embodied ‘the mindset (*γνώμη*) of the Father.’ With γνώμη likely signifying the knowledge and intentions of God, Ignatius attributed

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*Isacson, To Each Their Own Letter, 39–42.*
to the bishop the task of guarding unity with regard to both doctrine and praxis.\textsuperscript{43} Utilizing a choral metaphor, Ignatius encouraged such like-mindedness by metaphorically describing the church as an entity intended to sing a harmonious, Christ-centered melody (confession) to the Father (4.2). The purpose statement closes in 4.2 with a crucial statement. Christ-centered unity, described here as ‘blameless unity’ (ἀμώμως ἑνότητι), was the key to always ‘sharing/participating in God’ (Ἰνα καὶ θεοῦ πάντοτε μετέχετε).

Restating his purpose mid-letter (13.1), Ignatius repeated the solution for countering the influence of such aberrant and deadly viewpoints: ‘when you gather together frequently the powers of Satan are destroyed and his destruction is brought to an end by the unanimity of your faith (ἐν τῇ ὁμονοίᾳ ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως).’ Ignatius therefore appears to advocate for a corporate prescription designed to ward off death and maintain spiritual life. To do so, the Ephesians were to gather together continually under the protection of the bishops to whom Ignatius attributed the role of safeguarding right doctrine and practice. Only by doing so would the disunifying viewpoints be nullified (13.1) and the Ephesians remain confident that their assembly would, in its entirety, ‘always share in God’ (4.2). In essence, Ignatius warned the Ephesians that if they admitted false Christians and their aberrant views into the assembly, their corporate Christological confession (‘song’) would become discordant and, consequently, adversely affect the church’s corporate fellowship with God. The solution for

\textsuperscript{43} This matches other comments where Ignatius denounced operating outside the authority and guidance of the bishop (Eph. 5.3; Magn. 3.1–2; 4.1; 7.1–2; Trall. 2.1; 7.1; Phld. 2.1; 3.1–4.1; 7.1–2; 8.1; Smyrn. 8.1–9.1; Pol. 5.2; 6.1).
maintaining such a relationship was to uphold Christological unity under the protective umbrella of the guardian bishop.

In the face of diverging Christological doctrines that amounted to a rejection of the incarnational narrative, the emphasis in Eph. 20.2 parallels that of the Eph. 3.2–4.2 purpose statement, as well as the mid-letter restatement in 13.1. At the core of Eph. 3.2–4.2 and 13.1 is a key Ignatian theme that is central to not only this letter, but to the entire corpus as well: continually gathering together in Christ-centered unity is the remedy that nullifies the disunifying efforts of the false teachers and thus ensures the church’s relationship with God.

As Table 8 demonstrates, Eph. 20.2 essentially amounts to a hastily-crafted reiteration of the same solution:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Eph. 3.2–4.2</th>
<th>Eph. 13.1</th>
<th>Eph. 20.2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Run together/be in agreement</td>
<td>Come together frequently...</td>
<td>Gather together...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>w/mind of God (= Jesus Christ through bishops)...in your unanimity...Jesus Christ is sung...be in blameless unity...</td>
<td>so that the unanimity of your faith...</td>
<td>in one faith and [one] Jesus Christ... physically of David, son of man, son of God...obey...with an undistracted mind, breaking one bread...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so that you may always share in/participate in God.</td>
<td>overturns Satanic powers and destructiveness.</td>
<td>so as not to die but live forever in Jesus Christ.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the pronoun likely broadening beyond the physical bread, the ‘medicine of immortality’ seems to encompass more than simple obedience to the directed actions of ‘gathering together...obeying the bishop...breaking bread.’ Ephesians 3.2–4.2 highlighted Christ-centered
like-mindedness with God as the requirement for the Ephesians to always participate in God. Similarly, Eph. 13.1 indicated that their unanimous faith was the cure for Satanic destructiveness. The same concepts are presented in Eph. 20.2, but in a broader format. The emphasis on the incarnational narrative and the repeated stressing of its singularity (‘one faith and Jesus Christ...breaking one bread’), especially when combined with the creedal explanation in the verse that Christ was ‘physically a descendent of David, son of man and son of God’, suggests that the Ephesians faced competing faiths, alternative Christs, and multiple eucharists that were all Christologically defective. In short, Eph. 20.2 simply restates the central message in the form of a prescription for the corporate maintenance of life.

The medicine that ensured immortality involved more than the consumption of the eucharistic bread. Instead, the Ephesian church in its entirety could be assured of its immortality, and its ability to ward off the death-dealing efforts of the heretics, by maintaining a united faith concerning the nature of Christ. The reference in Eph. 20.1 to being obedient to the bishop and elders ‘with an undistracted mind’ (ἀπερισπάστῳ διανοίᾳ) recalls the original purpose statement in 3.2–4.2 where continued participation with God was based on being in Christological agreement with the mindset of the bishop who represented the mindset of God. The Ephesians were to reject multiple faiths, multiple Christs, and multiple eucharists because the aberrant views undergirding them were Christologically defective.
Equally applicable to understanding the φάρμακον in Eph. 20.2 is the parallel usage of φάρμακον in Trall. 6.1.\footnote[1]{Linking the two verses, Grant commented that “the medicine of immortality” in Eph. 20.2 “is no more literal than the ‘deadly drug’ in Trall 6.2” – Grant, Ignatius of Antioch, 53. So also Mackinnon who noted that “it is questionable whether he meant them to be literally construed.” – Gospel in the Early Church, 275.} Both verses utilize a medical analogy involving the ingestion of a ‘drug’ (φάρμακον), but with differing effects. The Trall. 6 passage was intended to counter docetic teachings (‘strange plants’) that Ignatius deemed to be non-Christian and thus heretical (6.1). Instead of ingesting false doctrine, the Trallians were urged to partake only of ‘Christian food’ and to avoid the deadly φάρμακον that had been diluted with ‘honeyed wine’ so as to make it less threatening (6.2). These two passages (Eph. 20.2 and Trall. 6.2) therefore form an important parallel. Ignatius utilized φάρμακον in both cases to represent doctrinal viewpoints that were intended to affect the recipient(s) either positively (Eph. 20.2) or negatively (Trall. 6.2). Since the prescribed φάρμακον in Trall. 6.2 consisted of a death-dealing concoction of truth mixed with error (‘mixing Christ with themselves’), then it appears that the life-giving φάρμακον of Eph. 20.2 represented the opposite in the form of unifying teachings designed to counter the invalid Christological beliefs and practices. Sheerin thus concluded that Eph. 20.2 was Ignatius’ idea of the “sovereign cure for factionalism.”\footnote[2]{Daniel Sheerin, “Eucharistic Liturgy,” in The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies, ed. Susan Ashbrook Harvey and David G. Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 714.} Snyder similarly commented that the φάρμακον of Eph. 20, in direct contrast to that of Trall. 6.2, was “unifying rather than schismatic.”\footnote[3]{Snyder, “Text and Syntax of Ignatius,” 12–3.} Clearly the φάρμακον prescribed in Eph. 20.2 was intended to produce spiritual life, whereas the φάρμακον of Trall. 6.1, if taken, would result in eternal death. Put another way,
Svigel noted what he referred to as “the explicit confessional function of the eucharist” based on “the confession of the incarnational narrative.”

As applied to Eph. 20.2, Svigel concluded:

Without downplaying the significance of eucharistic worship, it seems best, given Ignatius’s thought, not to limit the φάρμακον ἀθανασίας simply to the consecrated bread itself, but to the entire scheme of unity in all its aspects—enduring union under the headship of the bishop and presbyters and around the true confession of Christ. These things are literally embodied in the confessional nature of eucharistic worship.

In a corpus where salvation is repeatedly tied to believing faith in the incarnational gospel narrative (Eph. 14.1; 18.1; Magn. 9.1; Trall. 2.1; 9.2; Phld. 5.2; 8.2; 9.2; Smyrn. 2.1–3.2; 5.3–6.1), if the eucharist functioned as an indispensable means of salvation, it is strange that this connection was not made elsewhere.

The combined weight of syntax along with the overall context of the letter suggests that Eph. 20.2 cannot be adduced as conclusive evidence that Ignatius viewed the consumption of the eucharistic bread as a salvific act for individuals. Instead, a more compelling reading is that the verse provides yet another example from the corpus where Christological unity is presented as the cure to death-dealing heretical viewpoints. The letter attests to Ignatius’ warning that a group of false Christians (§5.3.3) were attempting to infiltrate and influence the faithful Ephesians with their aberrant Christological viewpoints.

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48 Svigel, Center and the Source, 85.
49 It should be noted that some have interpreted the warning about ‘refusing the gift of God’ in Smyrn. 7.1 as an indication that Ignatius viewed the eucharist as salvific. Thus Wilkens concluded “The gift of God – Christ’s sacramental presence given in the eucharistic flesh – meets obstinate refusal.” – Wilkens, “Soteriology of Ignatius,” 228. However, the reference to the ‘gift’ in this verse seems to refer to the actual and historic ‘flesh of our savior Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins and which the Father...raised up.’
and practices. If such false Christians were admitted into the assembly, corporate purity would be forfeited and, in Ignatius’ estimation, death would be admitted in the form of death-dealing viewpoints. Therefore, it seems that the Ignatian φαρμακον, the prescription designed to ward off death and to ensure life, was to maintain their corporate unity regarding the incarnational narrative.

11.3 Salvation Through Martyrdom

Moss noted that “[t]hroughout the history of interpretation, readers of the acta martyrum have sought to answer the question, Why do martyrs die?” Ignatius’ own views on martyrdom have long been a popular topic of scholarly investigation and varying opinions have been offered to explain his own particular motives. A smaller subset of such research focuses on the potential relationship between Ignatius’ theology of martyrdom and his soteriology. Specifically, some detect from the letters an expiatory significance to Ignatius’ pending martyrdom. For example, Bakker and others have concluded that Ignatius “was a rival of Jesus” who, by “imitating Jesus...effects atonement for his church.” Young similarly

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58 For example, some have utilized modern psychoanalytical theories to conclude that Ignatius’ mental state was unstable and neurotic led to his desire for martyrdom – Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution, 197; Streeter, Primitive Church, 163–76. For a review of such theories see Mellink, Death as Eschaton, 91–115. Others speculate that Ignatius was overcome with a sense of failure due to his inability to maintain unity in the church of Antioch and thus sought vindication through martyrdom. For a review of such theories see the Mellink reference above as well as Bakker, “Exemplar Domini,” 59–79.

commented that Ignatius’ “sacrificial death....is clearly expiatory for the sins of others, and not just for his own: he dies for the Church.”

Therefore, it is necessary to ask whether it possible, as Moss stated, that Ignatius “viewed Christ’s death as the first, rather than the only, salvifically valuable death?”

Since several scholars are persuaded by this reasoning, the purpose of this section will be to examine the relationship between martyrdom and salvation in the Ignatian epistles. Based upon this analysis, the discussion will propose an answer to the question, what did Ignatius intend to accomplish by going through with his pending martyrdom? In order to shape the discussion it is noted that those who attribute a soteriological significance to Ignatius' martyrdom largely base their conclusions on two related evidential threads. These two factors are (1) Ignatius' supposed reliance on the text of 4 Maccabees, and (2) the use of certain sacrificial terms throughout the letters. Each will be analyzed in turn.

11.3.1 Evaluating Ties to IV Maccabees

In two primary passages, the text of 4 Maccabees describes the Jewish martyrs' sufferings and deaths as a means of expiation for the sins of the nation. Thus, 4 Macc. 6.29 depicts Eleazar during his execution as praying to God to make his 'blood their cleansing' (καθάρσιον αὐτῶν ποιήσον τὸ ἐμὸν αἷμα) and to take his 'life in exchange for their life (ἀντίψυχον αὐτῶν λαβὲ τὴν


54 Moss, *Other Christs*, 77.
ἐμὴν ψυχήν. Later in 4 Macc. 17.21–22, the martyrdoms of a Jewish mother and her seven sons functioned to ‘cleanse (καθαρισθῆναι)’ the homeland as ‘an exchange for the sin of the nation’ (ἀντίψυχον...τῆς ἐθνοῦς ἁμαρτίας) and their blood to serve as their ‘atonning sacrifice (ἵλαστηρίου).’ Based on these passages, deSilva concluded that the text clearly attributes redemptive efficacy to the Jewish martyrs’ sufferings and deaths.

On the basis of similar terminology, it had been argued that Ignatius was textually dependent upon 4 Maccabees, and hence may have derived his conception of martyrdom directly from the text. Thus Frend concluded that Ignatius “takes up the theme of innocent, expiatory suffering” and based his “imitation of the Passion [of Christ] on “the model of that performed for Israel by the ‘Maccabean’ martyrs.” Young likewise described Ignatius’ sacrificial death as “expiatory for the sins of others, and not just for his own; he dies for the Church as the Maccabean martyr had died for Israel.” Frend and Young are certainly not alone in linking Ignatius’ conception of martyrdom, both textually and contextually, to 4 Maccabees. If it can be proven beyond a reasonable doubt that Ignatius was directly dependent upon 4 Maccabees, the case for viewing his martyrdom’s salvific role might be strengthened (although that would not follow automatically).

55 Text from Rahlfs and Hanhart, eds., Septuaginta, 1166. All translations my own.
56 Ibid., 1182.
58 Frend, Martyrdom and Persecution, 199.
59 Young, Sacrificial Ideas, 109.
60 Others who attribute a salvific role to Ignatius' martyrdom include Wilkens, “Soteriology of Ignatius,” 298–9; Mellink, Death as Eschaton, 113 n. 171; Brown, Gospel and Ignatius, 47; Torrance, Doctrine of Grace, 67; Richardson, The Christianity of Ignatius, 24.
Yet several factors combine to cast doubt on the intertextual link between the two texts. The first issue centers on the uncertain dating and provenance surrounding 4 Maccabees. Regarding the text’s provenance, deSilva’s cautioned: “For a work that is attached to no known author, connected with no known location, tied to no particular occasion, and devoid of references to contemporary events, one might look in vain for greater specificity than that.” With regard to dating, while some propose a date of composition in the mid-to-late first century CE, others have argued for a date well into the second century and beyond. If the later dating option is correct, then, depending on how one dates the Ignatian epistles, it becomes highly problematic to assert that Ignatius utilized the text of 4 Maccabees.

Even more speculative are proposals of an Antiochene provenance for 4 Maccabees due to a lack of any strong confirmatory evidence. DeSilva notes that scholars have been tempted to locate 4 Maccabees in an Alexandrian or Antiochene setting simply because both locations supported a large Jewish population. Consequently, the lack of consensus regarding the text’s date and provenance mitigates against establishing an intertextual link with the

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63 Recognizing the difficulty in dating 4 Maccabees with any certainty, Van Henten and others have suggested a date of composition around 100 CE or later in the second century. For a thorough review of the debate surrounding the dating of the text see J. W. Van Henten, *The Maccabean Martyrs as Saviours of the Jewish People*, JSJSup 57 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 73–82.

64 deSilva, *4 Maccabees*, 18–21.
Ignatian epistles. Perhaps the best that can be said is that it is possible that 4 Maccabees was written prior to Ignatius.

A second and more conclusive data set centers on the perceived linguistic parallels between the two writings. Othmar Perler's influential article, which compared the vocabulary and style of each body of writings, has long served as the primary voice in favor of Ignatius' reliance on 4 Maccabees. Following Perler, Joly went so far as to suggest that Ignatius either knew that text by heart, or that he had a borrowed or personal copy of it with him. The weakness of such claims is that they are based on a narrow group of similar words and shared concepts. With the possible exception of the potential link between Ign. Pol. 2.3 and 4 Macc. 17.12, 15, every one of Perler's intertextual cross references reveals no more than a single shared word. In fact, sometimes there is no verbal correspondence at all. Even though Perler admitted that the individual cross references do not have a strong resemblance, nevertheless he concluded that the cumulative effect was “auffallend” ('striking'). Williams similarly remarked that “[t]aken alone, none of these parallels is significant; taken together, they point

67 Even though the two verses share some similarities, there is not enough correspondence to verify intertextuality: Ign. Pol. 2.3 reads 'Be sober, as God’s athlete. The prize [is] immortality and eternal life' (νήφε, ὡς θεοῦ ἀθλητής· τὸ θέμα ἀφθαρσία καὶ ζωῆ αἰώνισι) whereas 4 Macc. 17.12 describes the martyrs as ἀθλητάς in v. 15 and as receiving 'the victory prize of immortality in long life' (τὸ νίκος αφθαρσία ἐν ζωῆ πολυχρονίω).
68 For example see Ign. Magn. 7.1; Smyrn. 9.1 (Εὐλογος) // 4 Macc. 5.22 (εὐλογιστικας); Ign. Rom. 5.1 (λεόπαρδος) // 4 Macc. 9.28 (οἱ παρθάλεοι); and Ign. Rom. 5.1 (τοκετός) // 4 Macc. 15.16; 16.13 (ὡδίν; ἀνατίκτω).
69 Perler, “Das vierte Makkabäerbuch,” 57.
rather clearly to the probability that Ignatius was familiar with IV Maccabees.70 Yet one might ask whether a chain of implausible arguments makes for a plausible overall case, or whether the overall argument remains as fragile as its weakest link. Therefore, despite the confidence, these arguments are not convincing. It is hard to follow the notion that the act of combining numerous examples of weak, or even non-existent similarities somehow transforms into a clear case for intertextuality. The opposite seems more likely. When the supposed parallels are examined closely, the case for Ignatius' dependence on 4 Maccabees essentially disappears.71

When context is considered, the argument weakens further. If Ignatius was motivated by the text of 4 Maccabees in formulating a theology of martyrdom it would make sense that in the places where he adopted Maccabean language that he would do so in the context of martyrdom. Yet in almost every instance where Ignatius supposedly borrowed from 4 Maccabees, the Ignatian context is devoid of anything related to martyrdom. This is a telling counterargument. For example, the author of 4 Maccabees used the term ἀθλητής in 4 Macc. 6.10, 9.8, and 17.15 to clearly refer to the Jewish martyrs as the 'champions' who defeated the tyrant through martyrdom. One would expect Ignatius to mimic this notion. Yet in every instance where Ignatius used ἀθλητής he referred to Polycarp as the one serving as God's champion to protect his church in the battle against the false teachers (Pol. 1.3; 2.3; 3.1).

70 Williams, apparently in isolation from Perler's work, identified several additional points of comparison between Ignatius and 4 Maccabees. However, much like with Perler's work, when the comparisons are examined there is little or no correspondence between the texts – Sam K. Williams, Jesus' Death as Saving Event: The Background and Origin of a Concept (Missoula: Scholars Press for Harvard Theological Review, 1975), 236.

71 For others who have questioned the link between Ignatius and 4 Maccabees see G. W. Bowersock, Martyrdom and Rome (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 77–81; Brent, Ignatius of Antioch: A Martyr Bishop, 116–8.
Nowhere in the letters, not even in Romans where the notion of martyrdom dominates, did Ignatius refer to himself, or anyone connected with martyrdom, as an ἀθλητής.

In nearly every supposed reference given by Perler, the level of shared language is not only limited to a single word (at most), but the context of the Ignatian use is completely different than 4 Maccabees. From a rhetorical perspective, it makes little sense then for Ignatius to rely on a text that supposedly “inspired Christian enthusiasm for martyrdom”\(^{72}\) and, at the same time, fail to apply nearly every supposed reference to the book in the context of martyrdom. Instead of viewing Ignatius as dependent on 4 Maccabees, it seems more likely, as Bowersock suggested, that Ignatius and the author of 4 Maccabees were “both as children of their age.”\(^{73}\) Thus, it seems better to evaluate Ignatius on his own without tying him to a book with which his writings demonstrate no evidence of intertextual dependence.

**11.3.2 Interpreting Ignatian Sacrificial Language**

Having found the case for dependence on 4 Maccabees wanting, the logical next step is to examine the letters for instances where Ignatius referred to his pending martyrdom with sacrificial language. Based on Ignatius’ use of such terms, Moss concluded that “Ignatius’s death was sacrificial in character and served a concrete atoning purpose not only for himself but for the members of his church in Antioch.”\(^{74}\) After reviewing the sacrificial language found

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\(^{73}\) Bowersock, *Martyrdom*, 78.

\(^{74}\) Moss, *Other Christs*, 83–4.
in the letters, Bakker likewise concluded that Ignatius “viewed his death as a sacrifice that augmented Jesus’ death...because he saw himself as a ‘scapegoat’ and a ‘ransom’, his death has salvific significance.”

Thus in Rom. 2.2, Ignatius utilized the language of libation to express his desire to be ‘poured out like a drink offering to God (σπονδισθῆναι θεῷ), while an altar (θυσιαστήριον) is still prepared.’ Even though these statements ring with pagan overtones, some suggest that Ignatius appropriated Pauline language akin to Phil 2:17—‘I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the altar (σπένδοµαι ἐπὶ τῇ θυσίᾳ) of your faith’. Since the desire to become a martyr-sacrifice is also clearly stated in Rom. 4.2, the issue then is not whether Ignatius viewed himself as a sacrifice, instead, what remains to be seen is what Ignatius sought to accomplish through his sacrificial martyrdom.

It has been suggested that Ignatius attributed to his martyrdom an expiatory role since he referred to himself as an ἀντίψυχος for others (Eph. 21.1; Smyrn. 10.2; Pol. 2.3; 6.1). However, from a lexical perspective, Ignatius’ references to himself as ‘your ἀντίψυχον’ do not automatically imply expiation. Though scholars are quick to compare Ignatius’ references to ἀντίψυχος with the clear expiatory context of 4 Maccabees (6.29; 17.21), several near-contemporary uses of the term were employed in a much different context. Thus in a second-

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75 Bakker, “Exemplar Domini,” 189.
77 The language is reminiscent of 2 Tim 4.6, a letter most likely known to Ignatius: ‘For I am already being poured out as a drink offering (σπένδοµαι)’ – Foster, “The Epistles of Ignatius,” 185.
78 Moss, Other Christs, 83–4. See also Young, Sacrificial Ideas, 198–9; 223–7; Bakker, “Exemplar Domini,” 187–9.
century satirical work, Lucian described a prisoner who feared not being able ‘to give money in place of [his] life’ (Lex. 10 – χρήματα ἀντίψυχα διδόναι).\(^{79}\) Similarly, Dio Cassius records the vow of two Romans who pledged ‘to give their lives in place of’ (ἀντίψυχοι) the dying emperor if only he would survive (DCass 59.8.3).\(^{80}\) From a lexical perspective, ἀντίψυχος is consistently defined as something or someone that is substituted in place of another person’s life in order to satisfy a demand.\(^{81}\) Context then should aid in determining the purpose for the exchange and the identity of the party being reCOMPEnSed or satisfied.

For example, the clear soteriological clues found in the 4 Maccabean passages, where the ἀντίψυχος functioned to ‘cleanse (καθαρισθῆναι)’ the homeland as ‘an exchange for the sin of the nation’ (ἀντίψυχος ...τῆς τοῦ ἔθνους ἁμαρτίας), are notably absent in Ignatius. Unlike 4 Maccabees, Ignatius nowhere indicated a soterific purpose for his martyrdom. The identity of those for whom Ignatius served as ‘their ἀντίψυχος’ is likewise revealing. Ignatius functioned as the ἀντίψυχος: (1) for the faithful Ephesians (cf. Eph. 1.1–2.1; 6.2; 9.1–2; 11.2) and for their loyal messengers sent along to Syria (Eph. 21.1); (2) for the humble Smyrnaeans God would not be ashamed of (Smyrn. 10.2); (3) for the diligent and faithful Polycarp who had already ‘been persuaded about immortality and eternal life’ (Pol. 2.3); and lastly, (4) for those who were obedient to church leadership (Pol. 6.2). From a contextual perspective, it makes little sense...
for Ignatius to view his pending martyrdom as having expiatory significance for those he consistently described as faithful.

To what purpose then did Ignatius identify himself as their ἀντίψυχος? Even though Isacson seems correct to note that, unlike 4 Maccabees, “the term ἀντίψυχον is not used in any contexts focusing on sin, death or purification”, yet his conclusion that the term may have functioned as a simple “expression of gratitude” seems to fall short of Ignatius’ apparent intentions. Due to the absence of soteriological markers, it is more plausible to suggest that Ignatius viewed his martyrdom as a literal substitute for the physical lives of the faithful. In the place of others, Ignatius bore the chains and would face the beasts in the arena alone. His faithful audience would remain free.

In addition to ἀντίψυχος, the use of περίψηµα has also been cited as evidence that Ignatius sought to effect atonement for the sins of others. The lexica define περίψηµα as “that which is removed by the process of cleaning, dirt, off-scouring”; “anything wiped off, offscouring.” Additionally, it has been recognized that περίψηµα could function as a form of polite address by denoting a “contemptible thing” or a “devoted servant.” Alongside this, a

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82 Isacson, To Each Their Own Letter, 72. See also Williams who concluded that “ἀντίψυχον obviously does not bear the same theological weight that it does in IV Maccabees” and that it “may... be little more than an expression of devotion.” – Williams, Jesus’ Death, 237 n. 83.

83 Ignatius “sees in his death a ransom (ἀντίψυχον, Eph., 21, 1; Sm., 10, 2; Pol., 2, 3; 6, 1) for his fellow-believers, and he does so, indeed in the sense that he goes to death vicariously for the many others who are spared in the persecution.” – Gustav Stählin, “περίψηµα,” TDNT 8:508–9.

84 Bakker, “Exemplar Domini,” 182–7; Brent, Ignatius of Antioch: A Martyr Bishop, 48–9; Brent, Second Sophistic, 222–3; Paulsen, Die Apostolischen Väter II, 34.

85 BDAG, 808. See also BrillDAG, 1653 – “filth, uncleanness, ordure.”

86 LSJ, 1394.

87 PGL, 1078.
minority of lexical studies have suggested that the term could represent “one who dies vicariously, the ‘scapegoat’ or ‘expiatory offering’.” Hence Bakker commented that Ignatius is a “scapegoat-along-with-Christ.” Opinions regarding the Ignatian use of περίψημα tend to polarize between two extremes with Ignatius either describing himself (1) in a deprecatory manner as something akin to ‘trash’ or even a ‘humbly devoted servant’ or (2) as the ‘scapegoat’ who through martyrdom bore the sins of others. In two verses to the Ephesians, Ignatius referred to himself as a περίψημα:

I [am] the lowest of you (περίψημα ύμων) and I am dedicated for you Ephesians (ἀγνίζομαι ύμων Ἑφεσίων), a church of eternal renown. (8.1)

‘My spirit [is] the lowest servant of the cross (Περίψημα τὸ ἐμὸν πνεῦμα τοῦ σταυροῦ), which is an offensive object to unbelievers, but salvation and eternal life to us (ἡμᾶς δὲ σωτηρία καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος). (18.1)

Arguments for viewing περίψημα as a deprecatory expression are more convincing than as a means of expiation. First, it should be noted that Ignatius' repeated statements of unworthiness and of being the ‘least’ of those around him certainly support this interpretation (Eph. 3.1; 2.2; 21.2; Magn. 11.1; 12.1; 14.1; Trall. 3.3; 4.2; 12.3–13.1; Rom. 1.1; 4.3; 9.2; Smyrn. 11.1). While some texts admittedly use the term to denote a sacrificial and expiatory function, the ‘scapegoat’ sense does not seem to be derived lexically from περίψημα but by additional clues typically found within such texts. For example, Photius' lexical entry for περίψημα details the

89 Bakker, “Exemplar Domini,” 185.
90 See Schoedel, Ignatius of Antioch, 64. Bakker, however, denies this interpretation – Bakker, “Exemplar Domini,” 185.
account of casting a young boy, referred similarly as περίψημα ἥμων, into the sea. This text’s expiatory tone is not derived primarily from περίψημα but from the numerous soteriological clues employed in the passage. Thus the boy’s drowning was a ‘sacrificial payment in full’ (θυσίαν ἀποτιννύντες) given ‘to Poseidon’ (τῷ Ποσειδῶνι) in order to achieve ‘salvation and deliverance’ (σωτηρία καὶ ἀπολύτρωσις) for the community.91 By contrast, both of the Ignatian uses of περίψημα, in common with several other near-contemporary uses (Tob 5.19 LXX; Jer 2:28 LXX; Barn. 4.9; 6.5; 1 Cor 4:1392), are devoid of any clear soteriological indicators.

The third-century CE festal letter from Dionysius bishop of Alexandria, as related by Eusebius in Hist. eccl. 7.22.7, reveals that even though the term περίψημα had become a ‘popular saying’ (τὸ δημῶδες ῥήμα) which seems to have functioned as an expression of ‘friendliness’ (φιλοφροσύνης), nevertheless, in describing the Christians who died tending to plague-ridden victims as ‘αὐτῶν περίψημα’, Dionysius suggested a deeper meaning for the expression.93 These Alexandrian Christians, like the martyrs before them (cf. Hist. eccl. 7.22.8)

91 Christos Theodoridis, Photii Patriarchae Lexicon (N-Φ), vol. 3 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 594; BDAG, 808 s.v. περίψημα.

92 Ignatius’ certain familiarity with 1 Corinthians suggests the possibility that 1 Cor 4:13 influenced his use of περίψημα in the Ephesian letter. However, it should be noted that scholarship is divided on whether Paul depicted himself as a ‘scapegoat’ therein. The context of the Pauline passage, like that of Ign. Eph. 8.1 and 18.1, is devoid of soteriological clues that would signal the scapegoat interpretation. Instead Paul’s intent seems to contrast the boastful Corinthian attitude with the requisite need for God’s servants to be humble, ‘like the scum of the world (περικαθάρσις τοῦ κόσμου), the refuse of all things (πάντων περίψημα).’ Referring to the Pauline use of the term in 1 Cor 4:13 Fee noted that “the lexical evidence is not strong enough as its proponents make it out to be, and the ordinary usage to refer to what is contemptible fits the context without the need for expiatory overtones.” – Gordon D. Fee, The First Epistle to the Corinthians, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 180; see also Anthony C. Thielson, The First Epistle to the Corinthians (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 364–5.

considered themselves, quite literally, as something ‘worthy to be removed’ (i.e., die) so that others could remain (i.e., live). Ignatius therefore seems to have utilized περίψημα in a similar fashion to ἀντίψυχος. By giving his ‘life for their lives’ (ἀντίψυχος), Ignatius, as one ‘condemned’ and on the ‘highway of those being killed for God’s sake’ was therefore ‘in danger’, whereas the Ephesians were at that moment ‘secure’ (Eph. 12.1). Therefore it makes better contextual and lexical sense to interpret Ignatius’ utilization of περίψημα in the more literal sense of one who offered his life as ‘something to be wiped or cast off’ away, whereas the Ephesians would continue on.

Like ἀντίψυχος, Ignatius’ use of περίψημα lacks any contextual clues that suggest expiation. If Ignatius intended the salvific sense in Eph. 8.1, it is curious that in the same sentence he labelled them a ‘church of eternal renown’ (ἐκκλησίας τῆς διαβοήτου τοῖς αἰῶσιν) that ‘had not been deceived’ since they ‘belonged completely to God.’ It is likewise contradictory to portray himself as the ‘scapegoat’ who bore their sins, while simultaneously denoting the cross of Christ as ‘salvation and eternal life for us’ (18.1—ἡμῶν δὲ σωτηρία καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνίας). Contra Bakker, such statements do not seem to derive from an alter Christus who viewed his death as supplementing the sacrifice of Christ.94 Even though Ignatius clearly viewed his martyrdom as a sacrifice, there is no firm evidence, either lexically or contextually, that he viewed himself as a sin-bearing ‘scapegoat.’

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11.3.3 The Goal of Martyrdom

Attempts to attribute an expiatory significance to Ignatius’ martyrdom go beyond the plain and contextual reading of the Ignatian epistles. Instead, Ignatius repeatedly emphasized the salvific intent of the passion narrative and its unique role in human salvation (Magn. 7.2; Phld. 4.1). The examination of Ignatius’ sacrificial language demonstrated that such terms were used in their more common lexical sense and were devoid of any clear soteriological inferences. By viewing his own life as insignificant in comparison to the lives of his audience (περίψηµα), Ignatius consequently regarded his life as a literal, physical substitute given in place of others’ lives (ἀντίψυχος). However, as previously suggested, it seems evident that Ignatius also considered his martyrdom as a sacrifice whose purpose was something more than simply an exchange of life. If Ignatius did not intend a redemptive purpose for his sacrifice it remains to be seen what additional goal(s) he expected in martyrdom.

An examination of the letters suggests that Ignatius envisioned his martyrdom as meeting both personal as well as corporate goals. From a personal perspective, by going through with his horrific execution, Ignatius would achieve his life’s goal of ‘reaching [the presence] of God’ (θεοῦ ἐπιτυχεῖν). Even though scholarship has at times viewed the frequent pairing of the verb with the genitive direct objects of θεοῦ or Χριστοῦ as an indication that Ignatius somehow sought to attain (i.e., earn) salvation through his own efforts, a wider study of the usage reveals that the phrase simply communicated the idea of being successful

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95 Wagner, After the Apostles, 143, 262 n. 11; Trevett, A Study of Ignatius, 19; Torrance, Doctrine of Grace, 6, 59, 66–7; Vall, Learning Christ, 193; Richardson, The Christianity of Ignatius, 7, 24, 91 n. 21.
in achieving his goal of arriving at God’s presence post death.\textsuperscript{96} In essence, Ignatius believed that when death finally arrived, his discipleship process would be completed and he would meet his goal of departing from the world and its troubles into God’s presence (\textit{Eph. 1.2}; \textit{Rom. 4.2}; 5.1–2; \textit{Pol. 7.1}). From a corporate perspective, Ignatius was clearly anxious to maintain an unwavering testimony for Christ when ultimately facing the beasts. Despite his firm desire to endure martyrdom, nevertheless, his fear of recanting in the arena is likewise evident in \textit{Rom. 7.2} where he urged the Roman Christians to believe his written requests to die and, should he succumb to fear upon arrival, to ignore any acceptance of aid in freeing him. Similarly, the focus of his warning to Polycarp—‘May none of you be found a δεσέρτωρ’ (\textit{Pol. 6.2}; cf. \textit{Rom. 3.2})—most likely included himself. It is possible that as his execution loomed closer that Ignatius was struggling with a lack of assurance (§10.2.3). Having rejected an apparent offer to somehow interfere with his execution (\textit{Rom. 1.1–2.3}), Ignatius’ goal in martyrdom was most clearly expressed in \textit{Rom. 2.1–3.3}. If he resisted the temptation to recant and was allowed to endure martyrdom Ignatius would become a ‘word of God’ (λόγος θεοῦ) as opposed to a mere ‘sound’ (\textit{Rom. 2.1 – φωνή}). Since he believed that Christianity was ‘greatest when it is hated by the world’ (\textit{Rom. 3.3}), Ignatius’ goal therefore was to be ‘faithful when...not visible to the

world’ and, by enduring martyrdom, to demonstrate by his faithful endurance that he was indeed a Christian (Rom. 3.2).  

In summary, martyrdom was the end of Ignatius' personal discipleship process. However, the letters do not support the notion that he understand his martyrdom to have a soteriological effect for either himself or his audience. According to Ignatius, Christ's sacrifice alone was redemptive in nature. By sacrificing himself for God, Ignatius sought to achieve his goal of reaching God's presence and, by faithfully enduring his horrific execution, to demonstrate to the spectators that he was indeed a genuine and faithful Christian. Ultimately, his goal involved leaving a powerful testimony to the world about Christ after death.

11.4 Summary

Having already established that Ignatius described salvation as being obtained by means of faith in the incarnational gospel narrative (§9), this chapter evaluated several arguments that suggest Ignatius acknowledged additional means of salvation. With regard to his repeated emphasis on ‘faith and love’ as the primary characteristics of the Christian life, the idea that Ignatius believed that both ‘faith’ and ‘love’ (i.e., works) enjoyed a causal role in salvation is not supported by the letters. Instead, what seems to be indicated is that spiritual life began at the moment of faith and that, once begun, life’s goal was then to imitate Christ in loving

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works. In other words, according to Ignatius, faith produced life which was then validated, not caused, by the performance of good works (i.e., love).

The investigation then explored Ignatius’ view of the eucharist in order to understand whether he attributed a salvific role to the rite. The syntax and context of Eph. 20.2 suggests that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that Ignatius viewed the consumption of the eucharistic bread as a salvific act for individuals. Instead, it seems more likely that the prescribed φάρμακον, crafted in order to ward off death and to ensure life, centered not on the eucharistic bread specifically but on the maintenance of corporate unity with regard to the incarnational narrative.

Lastly, in response to the suggestion that Ignatius viewed his martyrdom as a means of expiation for either himself or others, the study concluded that by sacrificing himself to God, Ignatius’ did not intend to function as an alter Christus. Instead, through his martyrdom Ignatius viewed himself as a literal (physical) non-expiatory substitute for the lives of the faithful who desired to be faithful unto death in order to provide the spectators with a powerful testimony about Christ.
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As the investigation closes, it will be helpful to conclude by revisiting the major soteriological threads and to thus weave them into a focused summary of Ignatian soteriology. Ignatius seems to have expressed his desire to provide such a summary when he told the Ephesians,

If by your prayer Jesus Christ considers me worthy, and if he wills [it], in the second small letter, which I am about to write to you, I will further explain to you that which I have [already] begun, namely the plan (οἰκονοµίας) with reference to the new man Jesus Christ, in his faith and in his love, in his suffering and resurrection (Eph. 20.1)

One of the major goals of this thesis was to provide an answer to a question that scholarship has largely ignored: why did Ignatius believe salvation was necessary? The response in Part I was threefold: undergirding Ignatius’ call for human salvation were the three related predicaments with sin, evil, and the expectation of an eschatological death in the form of God’s wrath.

In Chapter 2, a close and contextual reading of the letters demonstrated that Ignatius’ conception of sin was much more nuanced and multi-faceted than has frequently been proposed.
Through both direct and indirect references, Ignatius communicated his deep concern for sin’s adverse effect on humanity and, in particular, the early church. Despite viewing the crucifixion of Christ as the solution for the human sin problem (*Smyrn* 6.2), nevertheless the repeated warnings about specific sins showed that Ignatius believed a portion of the early church yet struggled with sin. Once the examination broadened outside the ἁµατ– grouping, a more fully developed picture of hamartiology emerged that described Ignatius’ view of sin from both an internal and external perspective. Christians, when viewed by God’s or others’ external vantage point, should appear ‘blameless’ and ‘without blemish’ (ἀµωµος). Consequently, when observed from an internal perspective, the Christian’s ‘conscience’ or ‘inner testimony’ should stand to guide and correct one’s behavior from within. For Ignatius, the only cure for the disease of sin, which was likened to the deadly plagues that periodically swept through the Empire, was the one physician Jesus Christ.

A second related factor behind Ignatius’ call for salvation was humanity’s predicament with evil proponents and their teaching (Chapter 3). In a way that was reminiscent to his own physical situation, Ignatius portrayed evil as a force that sought to thwart human salvation through a ‘capture and kill’ strategy. In order to counter such malevolent efforts, the letters present a threefold strategy. Ignatius’ addressees were first to flee spiritual capture. If unsuccessful, they were then to disarm such efforts by countering evil’s disunifying ‘alien views’ with the unifying message of the incarnational gospel narrative. However, Ignatius seems to have envisioned a bolder and more direct plan. When resistance to evil and its teaching failed, rescuing (i.e., saving) the deceived as well as the deceivers was the ultimate plan.
The final and ultimate predicament facing humanity was how to cure death and thus avert experiencing God's wrath, most likely imposed due to humanity's dual predicaments with sin and evil (Chapter 4). Despite scholarship's preoccupation with Ignatius' views on his own expected martyrdom, a close and contextual examination of the letters demonstrated that Ignatius was more focused on the spiritual-eternal form of death that awaited humanity. Despite being physically alive, those who yet struggled with sin and with evil, and who rejected the incarnational Gospel narrative, were spiritually dead and could only expect divine judgment. Humanity therefore required God's forgiveness lest they face unquenchable fire.

Part I closed by exploring Ignatius' segmentation of humanity based on a person's response to Christ's incarnational narrative (Chapter 5). The binary distinction between those who were Christian and those who were not was deemed insufficient due to the fact that Ignatius repeatedly described a third group of people who most likely claimed to be Christian, but whose beliefs and actions indicated to Ignatius that they were not genuine. Since this group often gave the appearance of being trustworthy, several related tests were presented that would unmask the duplicitous nature of the pseudo-Christian grouping. In other words, the genuineness of one's profession of faith should be proven by exhibiting fruit that demonstrated one's changed nature (Eph. 14.1–2). Such fruit would was described as love displayed toward others (Smyrn. 6.2), unity with the church and its leadership (Magn. 4; Trall. 7.2; Smyrn. 6.1–2; 9.1), as well as adherence to the Christian kerygma handed down by the apostles (Trall. 6.1–2; Phld. 3.3; Pol. 3.1). Ignatius warned that those who failed such tests, regardless of any claims to Christianity, demonstrated by their aberrant beliefs and actions that they were not
genuine Christians. By not recognizing this third category, Ignatius' soteriological views have at times been misinterpreted.

Having examined why Ignatius deemed salvation necessary, the investigation turned in Part II to examine who accomplished salvation (Chapter 6) and what salvation meant for Ignatius (Chapters 7–8). At a time when savior figures in both human and divine form were prevalent, Ignatius' savior, Jesus Christ, was the unique fulfillment of the OT that typically described God as the savior and, at times, hinted at the notion of a coming savior figure. In contrast to the emperor and contemporary deities, Ignatius' savior was the incarnate God who suffered for the sins of humanity (Smyrn. 6.2) and who died in order to procure salvation. Chapter 7 began by investigating what Ignatius meant by salvation. In contrast with his scant use of σῴζω and its cognates, which tend to proclaim more than explain, Ignatius described salvation first as the act of fleeing from the evil forces that sought to capture and kill God's race-runners, as well as the eschatological death that would occur if they failed. Consequently, those who sought salvation were urged to flee to Christ and his gospel. Salvation was thus conceived by Ignatius as the gracious act of redemption where Christ redeemed lost humanity by dying on their behalf. Finally, in an age of rampant slavery, Ignatius metaphorically described salvation as an act of liberation where Christ spiritual manumitted humanity out of slavery to evil and earthly passions and into God's service.

Part II closed in Chapter 8 by exploring the most central idea of salvation found in the letters—salvation as the reception of life from the dead. In answer to the hypothetical question posed in Magn. 9.2—'how can we possibly live without him?'—Ignatius provided the answer in Trall. 9.2 by stating that without Christ 'we do not have true life.' According to Ignatius then, apart from Christ and his
incarnational work, death reigned over humanity and spiritual life was nonexistent. Salvation was therefore described as a choice of destinies with one branch leading to life, and the other to death. Such life was simultaneously described as a new phenomenon for humanity that was also eternal. Lastly, when contrasted with the false life proposed by his evil opponents, the salvific life offered by Ignatius was true, and most importantly, was intrinsically linked to the person and work of Jesus Christ as its sole source.

Part III—The Means of Salvation—next sought to explore how salvation was accomplished. In Chapter 9 Ignatius’ conception of faith was found to simultaneously incorporate the dual senses of relational trust as well as cognitive assent. For Ignatius, believing faith, defined as one’s trust in Christ that was based on proper beliefs about Christ, functioned as the means of human salvation. An examination of Ignatius’ direct statements about faith in both semi-creedal and non-creedal forms revealed that faith must be centered on the historicity and physicality of the incarnational Christological narrative in order for salvation to occur. At the same time, Ignatius described such faith as a divine gift.

Chapter 10 then endeavored to describe Ignatius’ view of what occurred when a person exercised genuine faith in Christ. In an already-not yet fashion, the letters testify to Ignatius’ belief that, for those who believed the incarnational gospel narrative, death had been defeated and therefore spiritual life had thus become a presently realized benefit. Moreover, the letters indicate that those with spiritual life also exhibited a changed nature that was energized and enabled by the indwelling God and consequently evidenced by ethical obedience. The letters also describe faith as ultimately producing eschatological and, thus, permanent changes. Ignatius does not present Christian
perseverance as the means of salvation but as the evidence that salvation had already occurred.

However, those who failed to persevere, and who demonstrated by their aberrant beliefs and actions that they were not Christians (Eph. 14.2) could only expect to experience God’s wrath. By describing Christians as incorruptible, imperishable, immovable, and firmly fixed to Christ, Ignatius implied that perseverance was the expected norm.

Chapter 11, as the final chapter, explored several common suggestions that Ignatius described salvation as being obtained by means other than faith in the incarnational gospel narrative. While Ignatius does seem to use his favored pairing of ‘faith-love’ to indicate ‘faith-works’, the letters testify of his belief that spiritual life began at the moment of faith. According to Ignatius, spiritual life would then be validated, not caused, by the performance of good works (i.e., love). Following this, the investigation turned to examine whether a salvific role was attributed to the eucharist. After examining the primary piece of evidence used to indicate that he did so (Eph. 20.2), it was argued that the syntax and context of Eph. 20.2 prevents conclusively deciding that Ignatius viewed the consumption of the eucharistic as a salvific act. A likelier explanation that matches the context of the letter’s context and purpose is that Ignatius viewed the ‘medicine of immortality’ as a prescription for corporate unity with regard to the incarnational narrative. In other words, if attempts to introduce aberrant Christological doctrines into the Ephesian church succeeded, the result would be that ecclesial purity would be destroyed by allowing those who were spiritually dead into the assembly.

Lastly, the investigation evaluated the suggestion that Ignatius’ supposed ties to 4 Maccabees, as well as his use of certain sacrificial terms, should be understood to indicate that he viewed his own martyrdom as a means of salvation for either himself or others. Such arguments were found lacking. It
was first shown that Ignatius’ supposed intertextual dependence on 4 Maccabees and its theme of expiatory sacrifice is unsubstantiated. Furthermore, neither did his own use of sacrificial terms provide firm evidence that he viewed his sacrifice as an expiation for sin. Instead, Ignatius simply sought to give his physical life so that others could live and, in doing so, to ultimately provide the spectators with a faithful and lasting testimony about Jesus Christ.
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