

## Ancient Church History 11

### *Tertullian*

“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”

—Colossians 2:8

“We multiply whenever we are mown down by you; the blood of Christians is seed.”<sup>1</sup>

—*Apologeticus*, 50, s. 13

#### I. Introduction

- a. Background
- b. African Christianity
- c. Tertullian's Life and Characteristics

#### II. Controversies

- a. *Against Marcion*
  - i. Review of Marcion's Teaching
  - ii. Tertullian's Response
- b. *Against Praxeas*
  - i. Who was Praxeas?
  - ii. Monarchianism = a hyper-emphasis on the unity of God so as to exclude the possibility of three distinct Persons
  - iii. Tertullian's Response

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<sup>1</sup> Latin: *Plures efficimur, quoties metimur a vobis; semen est sanguis christianorum*. This is often paraphrased as, “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.”

### III. Contributions

#### a. Trinitarian Advancements

##### i. Vocabulary

1. *Trinitas* (*Tri* + *Unitas*)

2. *Substantia* (Gr. *Ousia*) and *Persona* (Gr. *Hypostasis*)

##### ii. Doctrine of the Trinity

1. God is one in *substantia*.

2. God is three in *personae*.

#### b. Philosophy and Theology: “What indeed hath Jerusalem to do with Athens?”

#### c. The First Baptist?

#### d. On Persecution

### IV. Conclusions

#### a. Did Tertullian Apostatize?

#### b. Lessons

i. The Church is by no means perfect.

ii. The best of men are men at best.