

Hurtado, “A New and Mischievous Superstition; Early Christianity in the Roman World”

Lecture Listening Guides

by David Capes

Lecturer: Larry Hurtado

Title: A New and Mischievous Superstition; Early Christianity in the Roman World

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1. What does Hurtado mean when he describes Christianity as one option among many? Where are gods to be found in the Roman world?
2. How does Hurtado debunk the idea that the gods of Rome are somehow failing?
3. How do we think about religion differently than the Romans?
4. How were the gods worshiped?

5. What are some of the new religious movements at the time of early Christianity?
6. What does Hurtado mean when he calls Christianity a transethnic and trans-local movement?
7. What are some of the charges leveled against Christians by non-believers?
8. What features that made Christianity “distinctive” have become cultural commonplaces?
9. What was expected of a good Roman when it came to the worship of the gods?
10. How did early Christianity differ from the rest of the Greco-Roman world?
11. Why are Christians referred to as atheists and anti-social? How are these related?
12. How do early Christian distinctiveness reflect its Jewish matrix?
13. How does Christianity establish the practice that one’s

religious identity is distinguishable from your ethnic identity?

14. What does Hurtado mean that early Christianity is “bookish”?
15. When were the earliest compositions and collections of Christian books made? Who was the author?
16. What does Justin Martyr say about the public reading of the Gospels?
17. By the 3rd century how many Christian texts had been produced that we now have? What kinds of texts were they? How does this compare to other religions?
18. What evidence do we have that Christians made copies of special texts?
19. What are the three most frequently attested books from the earliest Christianity communities?
20. How were these Christian texts circulated?
21. What were the two most common book forms? Which did

early Christians prefer?

22. What percentage of books were rolls and codices in the 2nd century? 3rd century?
23. What percentage of Christian texts of Scripture were codexes/codices?
24. What does nomina sacra refer to?
25. What unusual ethical standards did early Christians have?
26. Why did Edwin Judge say it is misleading to call Christianity a religion in the Roman world?
27. Why did Roman world consider Christianity a superstition?