



BEHOLD THE KING

MATTHEW

1. Exclusive worship

CHRIST IANITY

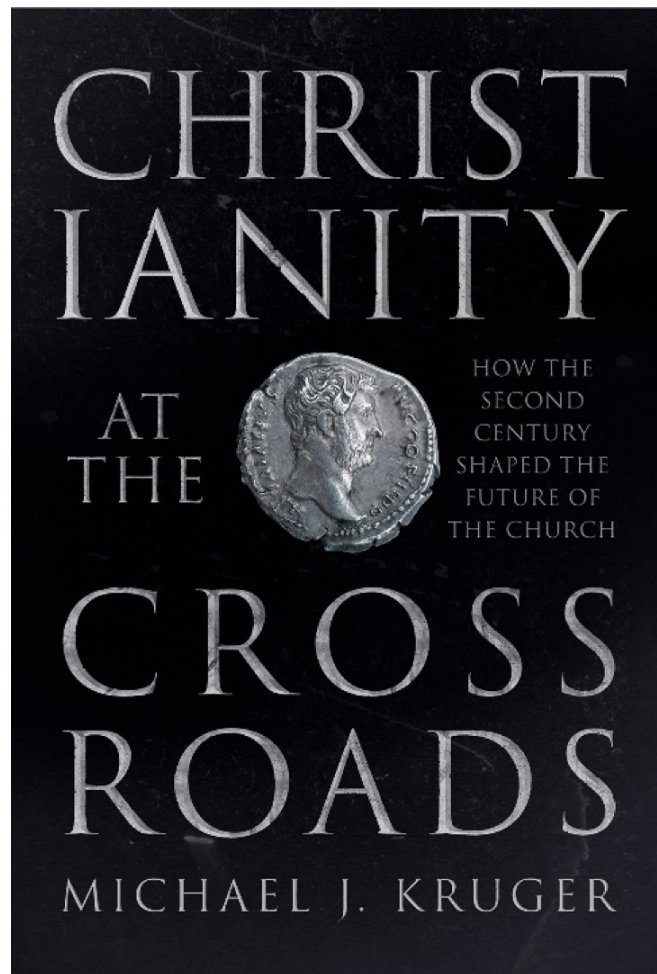
AT
THE



HOW THE
SECOND
CENTURY
SHAPED THE
FUTURE OF
THE CHURCH

CROSS ROADS

MICHAEL J. KRUGER



“Christianity was deemed to be a threat. Refusal to worship the gods, and to potentially invoke their wrath, was viewed as recklessly endangering the Roman people.

“For Christians to do so was viewed as a blatant disregard for the welfare of their fellow citizens. This is why, no doubt, Christians were charged with ‘hatred of mankind.’”

Michael Kruger

1. Exclusive worship
2. Inclusive **ethnicity**

1. Exclusive worship
2. Inclusive **ethnicity**

“[Christians] show that they want and are able to convince only the foolish, dishonorable, and stupid, only slaves, women, and little children.”

Celsus

Destroyer of the gods

EARLY CHRISTIAN DISTINCTIVENESS
IN THE ROMAN WORLD



Larry W. Hurtado

Destroyer of the gods

EARLY CHRISTIAN DISTINCTIVENESS
IN THE ROMAN WORLD



Larry W. Hurtado

“The aggressively transethnic appeal and spread of early Christianity, however, gave it no such character and made Christianity seem much more ‘in your face.’

“Other religious movements of the time had their oddities too, but early Christianity was not simply odd; it was deemed dangerous to traditional notions of religion and, so it was feared, also for reasons of social stability.” Larry Hurtado

“It is a fundamental human right, a privilege of nature, that everyone should worship according to one’s own convictions.... It is assuredly no part of religion to compel religion....

“A Christian is enemy to none, least of all to the emperor of Rome, who he knows to be appointed by God, and so cannot but love and honor.”

Tertullian

1. Exclusive worship
2. Inclusive ethnicity
3. Distinctive **morality**

Most everything we have today was in Rome:

Most everything we have today was in Rome:
open marriages

Most everything we have today was in Rome:
open marriages
spousal “abuse”

Most everything we have today was in Rome:
open marriages
spousal “abuse”
LGBTQ

Most everything we have today was in Rome:

open marriages

spousal “abuse”

LGBTQ

fraud in business

Most everything we have today was in Rome:

open marriages

spousal “abuse”

LGBTQ

fraud in business

greed

Most everything we have today was in Rome:

open marriages

spousal “abuse”

LGBTQ

fraud in business

greed

abortion

Jesus calls his followers to ...

Jesus calls his followers to ...
love their neighbors

Jesus calls his followers to ...
love their neighbors
honor marriage

Jesus calls his followers to ...
love their neighbors
honor marriage
reject immorality

Jesus calls his followers to ...

love their neighbors

honor marriage

reject immorality

conduct business honestly

Jesus calls his followers to ...

love their neighbors

honor marriage

reject immorality

conduct business honestly

refuse to watch the gladiator games

Jesus calls his followers to ...

love their neighbors

honor marriage

reject immorality

conduct business honestly

refuse to watch the gladiator games

value children

“For example, you might receive harassment and ostracism from family members, friends, and associates.

“Christian slaves of pagan masters might well have suffered corporal punishment, and wives of pagan husbands might well have received verbal and physical abuse.

“Scrupulous Christian members of professional guilds who demurred acknowledging the guild deities would have found themselves the object of scorn and worse.

“Indeed, these and other social costs were such that it prompts the question why people chose to become Christians in that period.”

Larry Hurtado

“Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.”

Matthew 10:34

What about ...

What about ...

- prophecies - Isaiah 9:6 “Prince of Peace”

What about ...

- prophecies - Isaiah 9:6 “Prince of Peace”
- the angelic multitude

What about ...

- prophecies - Isaiah 9:6 “Prince of Peace”
- the angelic multitude

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth
peace among those with whom he is
pleased!”

Luke 2:14

What about ...

- prophecies - Isaiah 9:6 “Prince of Peace”
- the angelic multitude
- Jesus’s beatitudes

What about ...

- prophecies - Isaiah 9:6 “Prince of Peace”
- the angelic multitude
- Jesus’s beatitudes

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” Matthew 5:9

“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.”

Matthew 10:16

“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.”

Matthew 10:16

sword = the **antagonistic** response of many to the **gospel of Jesus**

Global - “earth” (34)

Global - “earth” (34)



Local - “household” (35-37)

Global - “earth” (34)



Local - “household” (35-37)



Personal - “his life” (38-39)

Jesus is the ultimate means of
identity formation!

“Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

Matthew 10:39

1. Look

1. Look

We must recognize that every **culture** has **identity-forming** assumptions.

Five ways to find your self/life:

Five ways to find your self/life:

- the **family** self







Five ways to find your self/life:

- the family self
- the **city** self

Five ways to find your self/life:

- the family self
- the **city** self

individual rights = participation in public
with those who had
the power

THE BATTLE OF LEUCTRA



Five ways to find your self/life:

- the family self
- the city self
- the **conqueror** self



Five ways to find your self/life:

- the family self
- the city self
- the conqueror self
- the **expressive** self

Five ways to find your self/life:

- the family self
- the city self
- the conqueror self
- the expressive self
- the **fluid** self



Western culture now believes in
“a socially unsituated self from which all
[moral and meaning] judgments are
supposed to flow.”

Robert Bellah

family

family → city

family → city → conqueror

family → city → conqueror → expressive

family → city → conqueror → expressive → fluid

Why does this matter?

1. Look

2. Love - We find in **Jesus** a **love like**
no other.

“Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”

Matthew 10:37

“Children ought to love the Lord Jesus
Christ above all things in the world.”

Jonathan Edwards

“There is no love so great and so wonderful as that which is in the heart of Christ.

“He is one that delights in mercy; he is ready to pity those that are in suffering and sorrowful circumstances; one that delights in the happiness of his creatures.

“The love and grace that Christ has manifested does as much exceed that which is in this world as the sun is brighter than a candle.

“Parents are often full of kindness towards their children, but that is no kindness like Jesus Christ’s.”

Jonathan Edwards

“The best parent in the world does not love you anywhere close to the way Jesus loves you.”

Dane Ortlund

1. Look
2. Love
3. Live - We find **ourselves** as we die to **false identities** and **follow Jesus**.

1. Look
2. Love
3. Live - We find **ourselves** as we die to **false identities** and **follow Jesus**.

“And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

“Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

Matthew 10:38-39

“I suppose that there is nothing else that will wholly dethrone self but the enthroning of Jesus Christ.

“That dominion is too deeply rooted to be abolished by any enthusiasms, however noble they may be, except the one that kindles its undying torch at the flame of Christ’s own love.”

Alexander Maclaren

“To live one’s life as though one owns it
and can use it and keep it for oneself is an
illusion that death will brutally destroy.”

Richard Bauckham

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

Galatians 2:20

“If then you have been raised with Christ,
seek the things that are above, where
Christ is, seated at the right hand of
God. Set your minds on things that are
above, not on things that are on earth.”

Colossians 3:1-2

“For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”

Colossians 3:3-4

We are not primarily identifying ourselves
in our ...

We are not primarily identifying ourselves
in our ...
family

We are not primarily identifying ourselves
in our ...
family
city/nation

We are not primarily identifying ourselves
in our ...
family
city/nation
accomplishments

We are not primarily identifying ourselves

in our ...

family

city/nation

accomplishments

feelings

We are not primarily identifying ourselves
in our ...

family

city/nation

accomplishments

feelings

attractions