

This excerpt is taken from my book [Upon this Rock](#)

To read more about Ignatius and to read his seven letters on-line, click [here](#) and scroll down to Ignatius of Antioch. To purchase the collection of early Christian writings in book form, click [here](#). This book is inexpensive and well worth owning.

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Two passages from Eusebius relate Ignatius' importance at the turn of the first century. First, we read, "And at the same time Papias, bishop of the parish of Hierapolis, became well known, as did also Ignatius, who was chosen bishop of Antioch, second in succession to Peter, and whose fame is still celebrated by a great many. Report says that he was sent from Syria to Rome, and became food for wild beasts on account of his testimony to Christ. And as he made the journey through Asia under the strictest military surveillance, he fortified the parishes in the various cities where he stopped by oral homilies and exhortations, and warned them above all to be especially on their guard against the heresies that were then beginning to prevail, and exhorted them to hold fast to the tradition of the apostles. . . . So much concerning Ignatius. But he was succeeded by Heros in the episcopate of the church of Antioch."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eusebius 3, 36 in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, 1:166-169.

Philip Schaff, in his *History of the Christian Church*, states that "Ignatius, surnamed Theophorus, stood at the head of the Church of Antioch at the close of the first century and the beginning of the second. . . . The church of Antioch was the mother-church of Gentile Christianity; and the city was the second city of the Roman empire. Great numbers of Christians and a host of heretical tendencies were collected there, and pushed the development of doctrine and organization with great rapidity" (2:653-54). Ignatius was an extremely important figure in the period following that of the ministry of the

Second, we read in Eusebius, “At this time Ignatius was known as the second bishop of Antioch, Evodius having been the first. Symeon likewise was at that time the second ruler of the church of Jerusalem, the brother of our Saviour having been the first. At that time the apostle and evangelist John, the one whom Jesus loved, was still living in Asia, and governing the churches of that region, having returned after the death of Domitian from his exile on the island.”<sup>2</sup> Church historian Warren Carroll, tells us that Ignatius was “at least thirty years a bishop, probably trained by the Apostle John, and was apparently at this time the most venerated living member of the whole Church”.<sup>3</sup>

To understand Ignatius a little better, as to his person, his deep spirituality, and his love for the Lord Jesus, it is appropriate to cite one last passage from his epistle to the Romans: “Only request in my behalf both inward and outward strength, that I may not only speak, but [truly] will; and that I may not merely be called a Christian, but really be found to be one. . . . I write to the Churches, and impress on them all, that I shall willingly die for God. . . . Suffer me to become food for the wild beasts, through whose instrumentality it will be granted me to attain to God. I am the wheat of God, and let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. . . . Let fire and the cross; let the crowds of wild beasts; let tearings, breakings, and dislocations of bones; let cutting off of members; let shatterings of the whole body; and let all the dreadful torments of the devil come upon me: only let me attain to Jesus Christ. . . . All the pleasures of the world, and all the kingdoms of this earth, shall profit me nothing. It is better for me to die in behalf of Jesus Christ, than to reign over all the ends of the earth. ‘For what shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, but lose his

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apostles.

<sup>2</sup> Eusebius 3,22 in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd series, 1:149-150.

<sup>3</sup> Warren H. Carroll, *The Founding of Christendom* (Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 1985), 455.

own soul?’’ Him I seek, who died for us: Him I desire, who rose again for our sake.’’<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ignatius to the Romans* 3-6 in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* 1:74-76.