

## *Heresy and Orthodoxy in the Second Century*

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During the 2nd century A.D., there arose among the Christian community challenges to the Trinitarian beliefs that had been established by the Apostles in the 1st century A.D. There is debate in the historiography of Early Christianity about how much the orthodox position changed during this time. Historians who tend to be more conservative argue that there was a general consensus from the time of the Apostles onward of what orthodoxy was. Other more liberal historians argue that there were multiple competing views of orthodoxy that did not merge into a unified orthodoxy until the Council of Nicaea in 325. It is clear from reading the primary sources that there was a majority of Christians who held orthodox views of the Trinity. However, there were those who espoused views that conflicted with the orthodox conception of Christianity. Some of these groups, such as Gnosticism, were able to attract large numbers of followers, while others were much smaller. The reason that these cannot be viewed as legitimate alternatives to orthodox Christianity is because their positions were thoroughly denounced by orthodox writers such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus. Even though there were rival interpretations of the Trinity, the orthodox view established by the Apostles remained Orthodoxy.