

**Series: Early Christians Speak**  
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**2016**

**Papias**  
**(125 - 150 A.D.)**

Papias was a bishop of the Lord's church in Hierapolis in the Roman province of Phrygia. This is today the country of Turkey. His writings are normally dated at the year 130-140 A.D. Unfortunately, his writings have been lost but they are preserved to us through the extensive quotations from him which Irenaeus and Eusebius later made.

His primary work is *Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord* (ca. 130 A.D.) which were composed in five separate books. Papias would probably be considered a very minor contributor to the testimony of the Church Fathers, except for the fact that he makes a comment about the canonical work of Matthew. Telling later generations that the book of Matthew originally was composed in "Hebrew" (or Aramaic), Papias' statement throws the current philosophies of Source Criticism into confusion. Source Critics normally insist that the gospel record was the result of a "development" during the first century. This requires a late date of the books. Papias, however, seems to discredit that view, for if Matthew was originally composed in "Hebrew" that would place its origin in the pre-70 years before the destruction of Jerusalem, after which there would be no need of a Hebrew writing of the gospel.

Eusebius gives Papias credit for starting the MILLENNIAL views in the early centuries. Eusebius writes that Papias received "strange parables and mythical accounts. Among them he says that there will be millennium after the resurrection of the dead, when the kingdom of Christ will be set up in *material form on this earth*. I suppose he got those notions by perverse reading of the *apostolic accounts*, not realizing that they had spoken mystically and symbolically. For, he was a man of very little intelligence, as is clear from his books. But he is responsible for the fact that so many Christian writers after him held the same opinion, relying on his antiquity, for instance Irenaeus and whoever else appears to have held the same views."