

The Eternal Kingdom

Lesson #19
July 24, 2019

(Express appreciation for Mike Wilson filling in for me last week).

We have been looking at the apologists. What is an apologist?

It is my understanding that tonight we are ready to look at...

Athenagoras (177-180)

- How was he converted and what is its correlation to Hebrews 4:12-13?
- In his work “Supplication for the Christians”, what did Athenagoras argue and how does this correlate with Isaiah 44:6-20?
- What was his work, “The Resurrection of the Dead” intended to do for its readers?

(Read book material).

He was converted by reading the scriptures and this aligns with Heb.4:12-13 revealing the power of God’s Word to convict and convert the soul.

In his work “Supplication for Christians” he argued that idols were useless and this was Isaiah the prophets exact remarks in (Isa.44:6-20).

The work of “The Resurrection of the Dead” was intend to get its readers to believe in the resurrection of Christ and the dead.

Theophilus (190)

- Where was he bishop?
- What did he have in common Athenagoras regarding their conversions?
- Who did Theophilus write to and why did he write his composition to him?
- Theophilus wrote three parts to Autolycus. Which part revealed that Christianity was superior to paganism and what does this mean to the modern day Christian?

(Read book material).

He was the sixth bishop of Antioch.

Both he and Athenagoras were converted by reading the scriptures.

He wrote a letter Autolycus with the hopes of converting him.

In the third part, Theophilus wrote about how Christianity was superior to paganism. What message does this convey to us? It should convey a message regarding the distinctiveness of the church. We are in the world, but not of the world (Rom.12:1-2). Jesus prayed that we would be "sanctified by His Word..." (Jn.17:16-17).

The State of the Church

- Fill in the blanks
 - “The last half of the second century was characterized by _____ from without and _____ within.”
- In your estimation, what factors created the perfect storm for error and false religious groups?
- What religious groups “deserve our special attention”?

(Read book).

Fill in the blanks with “persecution” and heresy”.

Bullet #2: The fact that teachings were being handed down orally because the Canon had not been developed. Also there were questions about how credible certain letters were.

Bullet #3: Docetic, Gnostic, Marcionite, and Montanistic.

Marcion

- Born 85 A.D. and the son of an elder in Pontus
- A wealthy ship owner
- Arrived in Rome 138 A.D.
- He was very generous and influential man
- His Biblical Views:
 - Thought the church was too legalistic
 - He rejected the value of the O.T. and viewed God differently in the O.T.
 - He only respected the Apostle Paul
- The church at Rome withdrew from him in 144 A.D.
- He wrote “Antithesis” or “Contradictions”
- He believed Paul’s and Luke’s writings as being credible
- He created the Marcionite church
- He created his own Canon (The Marcion Bible), 11 books

(Read book material).

Go through all bullets and discuss them.

(Find material about the church of Marcion)

Gnosticism

- Gnostic means “to know”
- They relied on human wisdom rather than revelation from God
- Salvation was obtained via intellectual means
- Examples of their error:
 - The material world was evil and the spiritual was good which led to the worship of spirits like angels (Col.2:1-4, 18)
 - They combined various religious teachings (Jn.10:1-5; 1Cor.1:10)
 - They divided men into three classes 1. Material or animal, 2. Psychic, and 3. Spiritual
 - The O.T. was perverted and God was really the devil and the serpent was the true God
 - They believed in fulfilling fleshly desires in order to destroy their desires (Col.2:12; 3:1-10)

(Read book).

(Show and discuss bullets).