

The Eternal Kingdom

Lesson #33

11/6/19

Introduction: We've been looking at the book "The Eternal Kingdom" for several months now. I hope that you are as enthused about today as we were the day we started this study. Your attendance certainly says that you are.

The last time we were together we discussed not only the oral inspired Word of God, but we discussed the written Word of God.

Let me ask you, what do you think our lives would look like if we could only rely on what people said about God's Word from one generation to the next? What do think our worship would look like if we relied merely words from one generation to another.

Now one could make the argument that we have the inspired Word of God in our very midst and people's lives are still messed up. Worship is more self centered than it is God centered. This is true!

But brethren, at least with the written the Word of God we have something tangible, legible and lawful (authoritative) for us to look to.

I'm going to share something with you that perhaps many of you don't know about me. I like to cook! And one of my favorite dishes to cook is a good old fashion meatloaf. Now I don't have any deep dark secret meatloaf recipes. Like many of you I find a cook book or I just may ask Siri and siri goes out and finds several meatloaf recipes. I find the one that appeals to me, and guess what? I follow it.

I made a meatloaf last Wed. Later that night, Kathy offer me compliment, she said, "that meatloaf was really good tonight." Do you know why that meatloaf was good? I followed the instructions.

Friends, God gave His instructions to us on how to live our lives in a fashion that pleases Him! It's right here in the Bible. It is this book that is our standard and is this book, His word by which we will be judged (Jn.12:48).

But as we discussed in our last lesson, there were various "religious letters" that were being passed around from church to church. How do you what's authentic and what isn't? Let's go to page 103

Tests Applied to Questioned Books

- What tests (questions) were given to determine if a book was genuinely authentic?
- Based upon Edward Young's remarks, what other factor existed to help the Christian identify the authenticity of God's Word?
- About what year were all 27 books recognized as authentic?

Bullet #1

Answers are page 103 next to the last paragraph.

Bullet #2

The Holy Spirit (page 104 top paragraph).

Bullet #3

The year 250 was when all 27 NT books were accepted.

Apocrypha Books

- Which second century character was mentioned as establishing his own canon of scripture? Who did he accept and reject as authentic?
- According to Eusebius, what appeared different to him when basing his decision of the genuineness of a book?
- How did the apocryphal books do damage to the church?

(Read book then bullets).

Bullet #1

Marcion accepted Paul's letters and Luke's. He rejected the OT and anything that mentioned "Law".

Bullet #2

The way phrases were put together and used. It didn't match what the apostles wrote.

Bullet #3

People based their faith on forgeries. Also, the church could lose credibility among non-believers.

Thus far we have been given clues that church was slipping away. The apostle Paul warned us of this (2Tim.4:3-4). With that, let's look at...

Departure from the New Testament Pattern 100-325 AD

- The author lists a few problems where departure was evident
 - Greek philosophy made an impression on the mind of Christian thinkers
 - Internally, the church was torn by various views of Judaism
 - Men introduced changes in organization and led disciples away after themselves resulting in denominations. Paul argued against this (1Cor.1:10-15)

Sub bullet #1

As Christians we must understand that we different people now, we reason differently (2Cor.5:14-17 read).

Sub bullet #2

It might be hard for us to comprehend this, but imagine waking up one morning and your entire process with regards to religion has changed.

Sub bullet #3

Read 1Cor.1:10-15

Departure in Organization

- What is the meaning of “monarchal episcopate”?
- According to our author, who was a champion of a “one bishop” rule?
- Didache referenced Ignatius’ letters to prove a diversity of organization in the first century church. However, where is the real evidence of organization of the church?
- What scenario existed in the church that prompted one single bishop (pg.108 top paragraph)?
- By the year 150 a monarchal bishop was in full bloom. Suddenly there was a difference between elders and bishops
- What examples do we have how the bishops power increased (pg.108, 109)?

Bullet #1

Congregation ruled by one man.

Bullet #2

Ignatius

Bullet #3

In the scriptures.

Bullet #4

A chairman elder would preside over meetings then became the chief elder.

Bullet #5

Read outline

Bullet #6

Big city elders began to rule for county congregations.

Departure in Organization

- What do we see happening during Irenaeus (185) time? We also see Eusebius involved in the effort as well.
- What did Victor of Rome attempt in 190 AD?
- By the time we come to 250 AD, the term “universal bishop” was universally established.
- After reading pg.110, top paragraph, what conclusions do you make as to how the Roman church became revered?
- How did Cyprian of Carthage advance the “one bishop” system and other strange things pertaining to priests and laity (pg.110, two final paragraphs)?

Bullet #1

There was an attempt to trace elders back to the Apostles.

Bullet#2

He attempted to become the universal bishop.

Bullet #3

Read outline

Bullet #4

Traditions placed it as the chief place where men like Paul and Peter had links to and established.

Bullet #5

We see a difference between the priests and the common people laity. Priests had special powers all of a sudden. A new office came into existence during this time within the church.