

The Eternal Kingdom

Lesson #35

11/20/19

Introduction: For those of you who might be visiting with us for the first time, we've been studying two great books, of the Bible being one, and brother Maddox's book is the second, "The Eternal Kingdom".

The last time we were together we discussed the departure in organization that occurred in the Lord's church. For example, instead of elders plural overseeing the Lord's church, we began to see a single man become the head bishop. Next we began to see big city churches, governing smaller churches in the country (so much for autonomy), Victor of Rome claimed to be the "Universal Bishop", but he was ignored by other churches. By the time we come to 250 AD, the terms "monarchal bishop" became universal. Interestingly enough, early writers (such as Ignatius) referenced presbyter and bishop as the same, however, later writers declared there was a difference between them. Friends, what does the Bible teach? Perhaps you recall we went through this exercise in Acts 20?

Acts 20:16 "elders" = presbyteros

Acts 20:28 "overseers" also "bishop" (1Tim.3:1)= episkopos

Acts 20:28 "shepherd" = poimaino

We also noticed how the church in Rome was elevated above other churches because of stories surrounding Peter and Paul's supposed roots there, and the fact that it was a very benevolent church.

Let's begin reading on page 110, second paragraph "Cyprian of Carthage..."

Departure and Organization

- 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

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.

Development of a Priesthood

- What time period do we see a distinction between ministers and the congregation?
- What did the hierarchy in the church begin to resemble?
- How did this view of the hierarchy affect the worship and how does it differ from (1Pt.2:9-10)

Bullet #1
150 AD

Bullet #2
The Old Testament priesthood.

Bullet #3
Only sanctioned priest or people in authority could preside over the worship services. How does this differ from 1Pt.2:9-10? We are all priests. Does this mean that even the woman can preside over the worship services? If not why not? Obviously we know based upon Paul's remarks in (1Cor.14:34-35; 1Tim.2:11-14) that woman are not to preside over the worship service. Just trying to get you to think folks!

The Growth of Sects (Gnostics)

- Basilides taught that there were 365 angelic orders.
- He taught there were seven “lesser gods”.
- Christ came to help man, but one of the lesser gods in the OT used the Jews to have Christ killed.
- Saturnilus believed matter was evil. He also believe in seven lesser gods. The god of the O.T. made man but didn’t give him a soul, so the great God had to intervene and provide a soul.
- What does our author say that they believed “in general” (pg.12, last paragraph)?

Bullet #1

Any one see 365 angelic orders in the Bible? How do you suppose they came up with the number “365”? How many days are there in a year? 365, yeah that will work.

Bullet #2

Anyone see seven lesser gods in the Bible? NO!

Bullet #3

Do you begin to see how some folks say that the God of the OT is different from the God of the NT?

Bullet #4

Anyone see how man was made without a soul and God had to come along and give man one? No!

Bullet #5

Read comment from author on page 12, last paragraph.

Growth in Sects (Neoplatonism)

- In 240, what did Ammonius Saccas teach in Alexandria?
- Consider the Apostle Paul's words in Col.2:1-10; 18; Acts 17:21.
- How was Neoplatonism similar to Gnosticism?
- Plotinus (205-270) was student of Saccas. What did he start in Rome?
- What did Porphyry (233-300) attempt to do?
- What might we consider strange behavior of Plotinus recorded by Porphyry?

Bullet #1

He taught a form of mysticism, attempting to harmonize pagan philosophy with Christianity. He didn't look favorably on flesh and the material world. He believed in asceticism.

Bullet #2

Paul taught the saints in Col about standing guard against those who will cheat you through vain philosophy.

Bullet #3

He denied the flesh and spoke against the material world.

Bullet #4

Plotinus started a school in Rome. He was gaining adherents and disciples of this religion.

Bullet #5

Porphyry attempted to mingle Neoplatonism philosophy into Christianity.

Bullet #6

Denied the flesh to the point of not getting their picture painted. He was ashamed of the flesh.

Growth in Sects (Manichaeism)

- Who was the founder of Manichaeism?
- What time period was it prominent?
- What popular teachings did Manichaeism derive from?
- How did this religious group view marriage?
- What was the central theory of this group?

Bullet #1
Mani

Bullet #2
250

Bullet #3
Zoroaster Pronunciation is "Zor-aster" sounds like disaster, (page #8)

Bullet #4
It impeded with one being perfect.

Bullet #5
Light vs. Darkness.

Growth in Sects (Ebionites)

- The Ebionites are defined as Judaizing Christians.
- What did the Ebionites refuse to depart from? What was their justification for it?
- What book(s) did they hold in high regard?
- Which Apostle did the Ebionites disagree with?

Bullet #2

They refused to depart from the Old Covenant God made with Israel. They believed that Moses and Christ were equals. How would you attempt to convince an Ebionite differently? Jesus' transfiguration (Mk.9:7). When He instituted the Lord's Supper (Mt.26:26-29).

If permitted (I'll explain that phrase in a moment) Perhaps read passages from the books of Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews right? For example Gal.3:10. The purpose of the law Gal.3:24. He flat out shows a comparison of two covenants and their purpose in Gal.4:21-30. The book of Hebrew beginning in chapter 7:11-12.

The Ebionites were a different creature all together. They were Jews who believed in the Messiah. However, they believed that one must be converted to Judaism in and not Christianity. Males would have to be circumcised to join the rank of the Jews.

It's also worth pointing out that the Ebonite's, although Jews, didn't hold to the religious festivals like Jews. They truly believed that Jesus was the atoning sacrifice for sins.

They denied the fact that Jesus was divine. They denied His virgin birth. They His preexistence.

Bullet #3

The gospel of Hebrews and Apocryphal books. These were uninspired books. The Ebionites wrote their own Bible, the gospel according to the Ebonite's (they took portions of Matthew, Mark, and Luke and accumulated passages that fit their doctrinal beliefs). According to the Ediomites, instead of John the one who immersed, eating locust and wild honey, he ate pancakes and wild honey. They also followed the gospel according to the Nazarenes.

Bullet #4

The apostle Paul.

Growth in Sects (Monarchianism)

- In this section we begin to observe the confusion surrounding the Godhead.
- According to the Ebionites God adopted Jesus. When did this happen? What did it become known as?
- Who led the church at Antioch astray by this doctrine of Monarchianism?
- What conflict did these views create for Christians?

Bullet #2

They believed that God adopted Jesus after he kept the Law of Moses perfectly. It became known as Monarchianism or Unitarianism.

Bullet #3

Paul of Samosata.

Bullet #4

They began to use philosophical language that was foreign to the scriptures in trying to defend their position.