

# The Eternal Kingdom

Lesson #36

November 27, 2019

As we continue our journey through “church history” we’ve been using brother Maddox’s book, “The Eternal Kingdom” as an aid.

The last time we were together we were looking at religious sects or denominations that cropped up not long after the church came into existence.

We finished last week by discussing Gnosticism. Of course we’ve looked that Gnostics in pretty great detail already when studied pages 68-70. Just briefly, who can give us synopsis of Gnosticism?

Let’s move on to Neoplatonism...

## 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.

## Growth in Sects (Donatists)

- According to Donatus, which Roman emperor was responsible for Christians to commit the “unpardonable sin”? What did that Roman emperor demand of the Christians (hint: pg. 95 new books)?
- Who was a powerful religious figure who initially embraced Donatus’ position, but would later reverse it?

## Departure in Doctrine (Millennialism)

- “Millennium” comes from two Latin words “thousand years”.
- Revelation 20:3-5 mentions a thousand years in which the Devil is completely bound and the saints reign with Christ.
- Premillennialist believe that the second coming is to occur before the thousand years.
- Postmillennialist believe the second coming of Christ after the thousand years.
- Amillennialist hold to the view that the second coming has nothing to do with the thousand years.

## Millennialism

- Who did Eusebius accuse as being the first one to introduce “Millennialism”?
- How do early writers depict the views of the Millenniums founder?
- What humorous story does Polycarp tell regarding John’s interaction with Cerinthus?
- Who was another key figure that believed in the coming the millennium in material form?

Bullet #1  
Cerinthus.

Bullet #2  
Of carnal nature in the coming age.

Bullet #3  
John tells of a bathhouse going to collapse because Cerinthus was in it.

Bullet #4  
Papias. He was a mid second century bishop of Hierapolis.



## Departure in Doctrine (Original Sin and Baptism)

- Who was the first to formulate the doctrine of original sin?
- Who was the first to approve infant baptism and why?
- When did infant baptism become a general practice?
- What was there an agreement on between Apostolic Fathers and Apologists?
- About when did baptism become a ritualistic ceremony?
- What outside forces influenced the church to unscriptural views of acts like baptism and the Lord's Supper?