

# The Eternal Kingdom

Lesson #39

December 18, 2019

(Welcome visitors).

(Explain what we've been studying).

In our last class, we looked at the departure in doctrine that occurred not long after the first century church came into existence. Last week we discussed...

## A Review

- Original Sin
  - Tertullian was the first to introduce the doctrine of original sin (everyone shares in Adam's guilt and is accountable for Adam's sin).
- Infant Baptism
  - Cyprian of Carthage was the first bishop to approve of infant baptism... BUT DID NOT INSIST ON IT! (This is an example of how opinion becomes doctrine).
  - Some church leaders believed in "age appropriation" such as Gregory of Nazianzus; age three was preferred.
  - Others believed in the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration" where one is baptized for the forgiveness of sin (apart from faith and repentance), but there was no remedy for sin after baptism. Such a view gave way to individuals waiting until old age to embrace baptism.
  - Infant baptism became a general practice in the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

(Read all bullets).

Let's now discuss the second paragraph top of page 120.

## Departure in Doctrine (Original Sin and Baptism)

- 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?

### Bullet 1:

They taught that baptism was necessary for salvation and it was to be done by immersion. This was widely accepted as the religious norm.

### Bullet 2:

Baptism became ritualistic during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. It was done twice a year.

### Bullet 3:

Pagan or mystery religions influenced the church.

## Departure in Manner of Life (Asceticism and Celibacy)

- What sect encourage Christians to practice asceticism and celibacy?
- Which bishop from Alexandria defended marriage as being proper, and who did he reference as an example of marriage?
- What kind of communities came into existence as a result of this belief?

Bullet 1:  
Gnostics.

Bullet 2:  
Clement of Alexandria. He referenced the Apostle Peter as being a married man, he also said Paul was married based upon (Php.4:3). After reading Php.4:3, one would be very hard pressed to conclude that Paul was married. He was surrounded by women who were true servants and he acknowledged them (Rom.16:1-2) is a prime example.

Bullet 3:  
Monastic communities. "Be safe, Be celibate" would have been their mantra. I'm reminded of Paul's words in 1Tim.4:1-3 (read).

## Easter Celebration

- The church felt like it was in competition with their Jewish and pagan neighbors, and this gave way the establishment of religious holidays as a way to appeal to others. Easter came into existence.
- Who did the church in Asia Minor claim that Easter was to coincide with the Passover?
- Who supposedly taught the church in Rome that Easter occurred on a Sunday?
- Who can find in the Bible a formal Easter celebration promoted by any apostle?

(Read bullet 1).

Bullet 2: Philip and the apostle John.

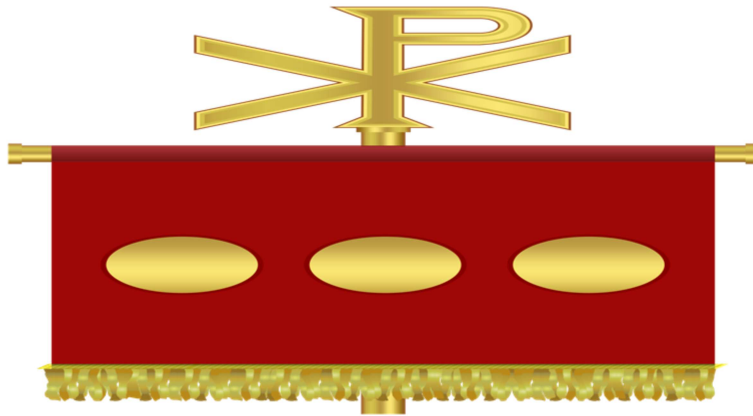
Bullet 3: Peter and Paul.

Bullet 4: There are no passages that support the fact that Easter was preached, promoted, or practiced by any of the apostles.

## Increase of Error 313-787A.D.

- The Influence of Constantine
  - Was educated in the court of Diocletian 292 A.D.
  - His father, Constantius was governor of Britain, Gaul and Spain. He favored Christianity. Helena his wife was a convert.
  - Roman empire was ruled by four leaders. After the death of Constantius, Constantine took his place and emerged as sole emperor of the West.
  - Constantine attempted to unify the West, while on his way to Rome he claimed to see a vision "By this conquer."
  - By 323, Constantine became the sole emperor of Rome.
  - Prior to becoming the emperor, when he did battle against Rome, he fought with 40,000 soldiers against one hundred and seventy thousand soldiers, and he won!
  - The sign of the cross took on significance with Constantine.

## Constantine and the Cross



The Chi Rho are the first two Greek letters of the word Christ. This was adopted as an official insignia by the Roman Emperor Constantine. This flag was carried lauded and touted in battles by the Roman army under Constantine. There were also coins or currency with the symbol on it as well.

## Support of the Church

- He authorized elaborate church buildings to be constructed with funds from the government and ministers be paid (Consider the Edict of Milan pg.97-98).
- What example do we have of him taking “a hand in all internal affairs” regarding religious matters?
- Who were Crispus and Fausta, and what do we know about them?
- What did Constantine issue and edict against?
- What was Constantine's view of working on Sunday?