



# THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

Lesson #40

December 25, 2019

Intro: If you have been a part of this class, you are well aware of the book we have been studying. It is the Eternal Kingdom (show book and author; ask if everyone has a copy).

As we continue to look at the departure from New Testament doctrine, we come to the topic of asceticism and celibacy. That can be found on the bottom of page 120 in your book.

## 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, and (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. Some folks will argue that Christians did celebrate Easter in the NT church based upon Acts 12:1-4. The Greek word in verse 4 is “pascha”, meaning “Passover”. Keep in mind the church was competing with their pagan neighbors and with their religious holidays. **(Mike, I have included a link in the email by Mark Copeland that may help you with this point. Be prepared for folks to discuss Christmas as well. Mark Copeland has an article on that if you wish to read it).**

**(Mike, when you finish with the Easter section, read the “Summary of Part Two” section. I don’t have slide for it.)**

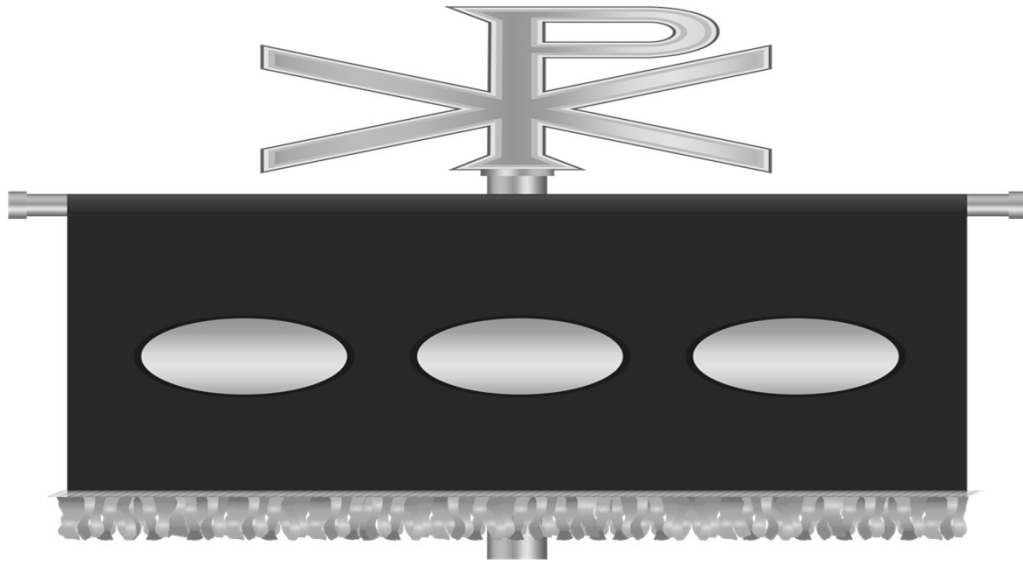
## INCREASE OF ERROR 313-787A.D.

- **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.**

(Post the slide and read this section. There are no questions, just information).

(After reading the last bullet regarding the cross, go to next slide showing the cross and flag).

## 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 into 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?**

(Read bullet #1).

### Bullet #2

He involved himself in the debate between Donatus and Caecilian in an attempt to keep unity.

### Bullet #3

Crispus was Constantine's son, and Fausta was his wife. There are many rumors as to why he had them executed. For the record, Crispus was not Fausta's son. They were actually pretty close in age. Some of the rumors surrounding them was sexual immorality between them. It has been said the Crispus rejected her advances at one point, she became so angry that she had him executed. This sounds similar to Joseph's story with Potiphar's wife (Gen.39). Eventually, Constantine discovered her evil deeds and drowned her in tub of water.

**(Mike, I doubt that you will make it to the bottom of page 129, “the Council of Nicaea”. If you do, just read it and discuss it at will. It basically reveals how Constantine become a dictator in the church, while ironically unconverted).**