

Lesson 13 The Patristic Period: Alexandria The Hot Bed of Corruption

Review/Introduction

- Before we study what was going on in Alexandria Egypt during the Patristic Period we need to review the cycle of church history from a previous lesson.
 - *Preaching*—which may be called Evangelism
 - *Teaching*—which may stand for Education
 - *Culture*—which means the introduction of science, philosophy, and tradition (Col. 2:8) into the teaching
 - *Apostasy*—includes ecumenical overtures (compromise) with pagan religious systems or unsaved people.
 - *Paganism*—which means the original condition the populace was in before they were “evangelized.”

Review/Introduction

- The school of Alexandria introduces “culture” into the mainstream of Christian thought thereby continuing the apostasy that was already under way.
- Bible believers should be skeptical of anything coming out of Egypt. Some argue that the “first mention principle” highlights this point.
 - Genesis 12:10-14
- In the Bible, Egypt is a type of the world, and God would not tolerate his Son (Matthew 2: 13, 19-21), His nation (Exodus 12-15), His saints (Genesis 50:5), or even the bones of his saints (Exodus 13:19) to stay there.

Background of the School

- As we have already ready seen in previous studies early believers where constantly battling Gnosticism and other false teachings when they were not being persecuted by the Roman Caesars.
- Some men like Tertullian resisted movements to merge Platonic philosophy with Christian doctrine.
- Clement and Origen blend aspects of Hellenistic philosophy with Christian Theology.
- Pantaenus established the school in Alexandria around 180 AD.

Background of the School

- Leadership of the school was assumed by Clement in 190 AD who was followed by Origen in 202 AD all of whom were openly seeking to philosophize the Christian faith and all of whom would not hesitate to correct the Bible when it suited their needs.

Popular View of Clement

- Wrote: *Exhortation of the Heathen, Instructor, and Miscellanies*
- “the first Christian scholar” well versed in Scripture as well as classical philosophy and literature.
- Wanted to be an apostle to Hellenistic intellectual world.
- Said that the philosophy of the Greeks prepared the way for the Christian gospel.
- Important progress in theology uniting philosophy with Scripture.



Popular View of Origen



- Succeeded Clement as the leader of the school.
- Possessed a battery of shorthand stenographers enabling him to write extensively.
- Constructed the *Hexapla*.
- Father of allegorical interpretation.
- Viewed as having dealt heresy a death blow.
- Believed where the church was silent He free to speculate.
- Renounced physical comforts, no shoes, drank only water, and castrated himself.

Critical View of Origen

- While believing in the virgin birth, the Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ Origen also believed in:
- Transmigration/Reincarnation
- Allegorical Interpretation
- No Millennium
- Universal Reconciliation
- No Eternal Security
- Endorsed Old and New Testament Apocrypha as Scripture



Critical Analysis of Clement



- Writing before Origen, Clement of Alexandria refers to I John 5:7 over two hundred years before Codex Vaticanus and Sinaiticus removed it following manuscripts that Origen corrupted.
- Clement who quotes the Bible more than 2,400 times demonstrates that same bent towards heresy as his student.
- One must continually confess sins through penance to remain saved.
- Universal Reconciliation
- Baptismal Regeneration

Concluding Remarks

- The great teachers from the school of Alexandria laid the foundation for modern evangelical scholars to undermine the authority of God's written word. Beside the enduring legacy of their heretical beliefs, Clement and Origen paved the way for the following three issues that still threaten the recovery of truth within Christendom.
 - There is no final written authority on this earth because it was lost with the original autographs.
 - Final authority is matter of preference and opinion depending on what you think, how you feel, or what you want to prove.
 - The more education a man has, the better equipped he is to usurp the place of final authority.