

The Eternal Kingdom

Lesson #15

June 19, 2019

We have been studying a book written by F.W. Mattox entitled “the Eternal Kingdom: A History of the Church of Christ”. Now before we begin, I want to remind you that we will not be having classes covering this subject b/c of VBS. But tonight as we continue to look at this book and it’s related sources, we see a treasure trove of information that supports this book THE BIBLE.

Not long after the last apostle died and the final book was written, we see not only things that substantiate God’s Word as being true, but sadly we see a departure from NT teaching. Thus far we have noticed we have seen affirmation and confirmation of what God’s Word says, but we have seen molestation of the scriptures where men have abused the inspired word of God; both examples will resonate as we continue in our study.

Lets turn in our books and look at page 51 where the title reads “The Epistle of Barnabas”. (NS).

The Epistle of Barnabas

- It is believed to have been written prior to 130 AD.
- It consist of twenty one chapters and nine verses.
- It presents an argument that Christians are not bound to Mosaic Law.
- Most scholars agree that this Barnabas is not the same Barnabas who worked with the Apostle Paul.
- What are some points Mattox makes that's unique about the book?

Read Mattox's material.

Read bullets and make remarks.

What are some points that Mattox makes that are unique? The word "Gnosis" changed from knowledge one acquires through God vs. knowledge that abandons God's Word. Now, we will later learn about Gnosticism on page 68. So I don't want to look at this too extensively, but I do want to look at the tip of the iceberg.

The word "gnosis" as Mattox illustrates, is knowledge one attains through Christ. A passage that jumps out at me is (Eph.1:16-18 read and explain). Another passage is 1Cor.12:1-8 (read and explain). Notice where knowledge came from. It came from God! Not some energy produced by the universe or atmosphere.

Didache (130-150)

- After reading this section, we see the following items:
 - Didache means the “Teaching of the Twelve Apostles”
 - It’s agreed upon date is uncertain
- What does this letter indicate about church leaders?
- What does the letter reveal about “baptism”?
- What thoughts do you have regarding these matters?

Pipias (125-150)

- He was from Phrygia.
- He wrote about the year 140 AD.
- He refers to the leaders of the church as “presbyters”, but also does so with the Apostles.
- What view did he hold on the millennial?

Polycarp (115-156)

- Best known as an elder of Smyrna martyred for his faith.
- Died on Feb. 22, age 86.
- Was an elder for 40-45 years.
- Who claimed to have seen Polycarp as a child?
- What fanciful story did Irenaeus remember?
- What do you admire about Polycarp while being escorted to his death?

The Shepherd of Hermes (140-150)

- Believed to be a brother of Pius, bishop of Rome
- He was a slave of Rhoda and freed by her.
- He became a wealthy farmer, strayed from God, and eventually repented and returned.
- What are some biblically correct points he makes in his writings?