



THE ETERNAL KINGDOM

Lesson 44

January 22, 2020

Last week we began looking in chapter 10, the growth of the episcopacy.

Thus far we have notice a very flawed function with regards to the structure and organization of the church. For example,

THE GROWTH OF EPISCOPACY

- **At first bishops were equals.**
- **Monarchal bishops began to arise. The chairmanship of elders gained power.**
- **The churches in the West eventually began to exalt the bishop of Rome giving him the title of (papa) and considered him the universal head of the church.**
- **In 325 the Council of Nicaea exalted the bishops of Rome, Antioch and Alexandria giving them charge over other churches in their provinces.**
- **In 341, Julius, bishop of Rome lobbied that the dispute (Arian debate) should be handled in Rome. He referenced Peter as proof, but no such passage can be found in the Bible.**
- **343, the Council of Sirica (Serdica) agreed that a retrial of bishops should be held in Rome. Again this is dealing with the Arian controversy. Peter was referenced once again.**
- **376, Damascus, bishop of Rome hired Jerome to translate the Bible into Latin and referenced Peter as the rock the church was built on.**

(Review bullets).

Things to notice is how the bishops equal powers changed to a monarchal system i.e. one bishop over a group of other bishops. This would lead to a bishop being over other bishops in other churches. We see this happening with the Council of Nicaea in 325 (page 138 next to the last paragraph).

We then see Rome rising in power and men like Julius lobbied that disputes should be handled in Rome and he referenced the Apostle Peter as proof for his position.

In 376, Damascus (bishop of Rome) had the Bible translated into Latin and he referenced Peter as the Rock from (Mt.16:18).

(Begin with 380 Theodosius on page 139 and end with 140 "two were equal").

THE GROWTH OF EPISCOPACY

- **380** Theodosius I recognized the bishop of Rome as “Pontiff” (Pope).
- **381**, the West recognized bishop Gregory of Nazianzus as having “first place honor” next to the bishop of Rome. This happened at the Council of Constantinople. He had control over the bishops in Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem.
- **382**, Emperor Valentinian placed his military might behind the bishop of Rome in a trial of church officials.
- **417**, the Bishop of Rome addresses the African bishops from a perspective of divine authority.
- **424** the African bishops refute and reject the Bishop of Rome’s authority.
- **445**, Valentinian III declared his favor of Rome’s bishops having all authority.
- **541**, the Council of Chalcedon rejected Rome’s sole supremacy and elevated Constantinople as the rightful place of power for the church. It didn’t view itself greater than Rome, but equal to Rome in power.

(Begin with 380 Theodosius on page 139 and end with 140 “two were equal”).

The pope that Theodosius would have recognized was Celistine.

The pope in 381 would have been Gregory of Nazianzus.

(After reading all of the bullets, we see that Rome is getting some push back. We this in 424 with the African bishops, and certainly in 541 at the Council of Chalcedon). This is a good segue to our next section, the battle of the bishops.

THE BATTLE OF THE BISHOPS

- **It was becoming obvious that Rome and Constantinople were opponents.**
- **According to our author, page 141, there were some contributing factors that made Rome excel: Prestige, Reputation, and the Mother church for mission work.**
- **According to our author, Leo I, a Roman bishop, soon to be viewed as Rome's first pope, was a successor of Peter, possessing the same powers Christ gave to Peter.**

Begin with 140 "The Battle of the Bishops" and read to page 142 top paragraph
"....exaltation of the Eastern bishop."

By this point and time, it was becoming apparent that Rome and Constantinople were rivals for power and strength. When Constantine set his eyes on Constantinople and left Rome, it would eventually create the perfect storm for division within the church.

However, Rome was the first place of allegiance to most church goers. She had everything going for her according to bullet #2. She garnered favor by most modern day emperors as well. This is witnessed in Valentinian's edict of 445 AD.

For all practical purposes, Leo I, is viewed by non Catholics as the first formal pope. This Leo I is not to be confused with emperor Leo I who reigned from 457-474.

THE BATTLE OF THE BISHOPS

- **Some emperors allegiance tilted towards Constantinople such as Justinian. Rome refuted it.**
- **Rome began to play the “Apostolic Succession” card to gain favor as being legitimate.**
- **When invaders opposed territories, Rome was looked to for guidance and support.**
- **By the time Gregory I was pope in 590-604, universal pope was official and the priesthood was established. It no longer resembled the first century church.**

Begin on page 442 “It looked...” and read to the end page 444.

Things to point out:

There’s a lot of moving pieces and parts to this story. You have public opinion seeming to favor Rome. You have emperors like Justinian casting his vote towards the East, Constantinople.

We then see Rome’s response when they play the apostolic card. This was a fancy way of saying, “our heritage and pedigree is purer than yours.” We can trace our origin back to Paul and Peter (NOT)!

Rome gained favor and support by way of showing strength against barbarian invasions.

By the time we come to the end of sixth century, the NT church was unrecognizable.

Food for Thought:

What is your estimation of the Christianity from the 1st century until 604 A.D.? How would you describe it?

How would you have reacted to Constantine’s involvement into the church? Don’t forget about the church being persecuted prior to his reign.

By the time we come to the sixth century, the church strongly resembled what we call “Catholicism” today. What have we studied thus far that would aid you in redirecting folks back to NT Christianity?