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CHURCH HISTORY MONTHLY

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Timeline of Topics

-Quotes

---A collection of previous spiritual quotes since Volume 1, number 1

-Early Church

---The first Bible

FREE, ONLINE CLASS FOR THE FALL: "OVERVIEW OF THE NEW TESTAMENT":

--This class will cover the NT from a larger perspective: What is the Roman and Jewish background of the NT and why each of the books were written. (Plus much more).

--8 weeks

--Starts September 19

--3-4 hours a week

--To join or for more info, click here.

Sinaiticus: The earliest Bible that has been discovered

The story of the discovery of the Sinaiticus centers on Constantin von Tischendorf (1815-1874). In 1844, at age 29 and on behalf of the University of Leipzig, Tischendorf traveled throughout much of the Middle East searching for early Biblical manuscripts. As part of his travels he stopped at the monastery of St Catharine at the foot of Mount Sinai.

One day he noticed the monks stoking the oven fire with parchments from a trash can. Upon close inspection, he discovered they were early Greek copies of Old Testament books (dating over 1000 years)! He searched through the basket and discovered forty-three leaves (or pages). One monk told him that two basket loads of such parchments had just been burned. Tischendorf was able to keep some of these parchments and, in 1846, presented them to his patron (who paid his bills), the King of Saxony, Frederick Augustus.

In 1853 Tischendorf was able to visit the monastery of St Catharine again, but had no success in finding more manuscripts. He visited again in 1859, this time with the Czar of Russia, Alexander II, as his patron. He again met with no success until the day before he left. He gave a gift to the overseer of the monastery, a published copy of the Greek manuscripts he had earlier taken back to Europe. The overseer mentioned that he already had a copy of these. Upon seeing it, Tischendorf realized that it not only contained a copy of the Old Testament in Greek, but the New Testament as well. He stayed up the entire night studying the parchment; it was that earliest complete New Testament in Greek mentioned earlier, the Sinaiticus. Tischendorf later wrote in his diary "It really seemed a sacrilege to sleep."

Yet the overseer would not allow him to buy this volume. The next day Tischendorf left for a scheduled trip to Cairo. While there he located the abbot of the monastery (a position over that of overseer) and convinced him to have the Greek New Testament volume brought to Cairo for more study. Once it was there, Tischendorf convinced the abbot to give it to the Czar of Russia (remember that he was paying Tischendorf's bills) in exchange for certain favors by the Czar (who was the protector of the Greek Orthodox Church, to which St. Catharine monastery belong). And so that volume known as the Sinaiticus eventually made it to Russia where it was studied and reprinted.

Yet as fascinating as that is, it almost pales compared to this. Russia experienced a revolution in 1917, and the czar was killed. When the Communists came to power, they had a great need for money and, therefore, sold many works from their museums. Being an atheistic government, they saw no need to have such a "useless" treasure as the Sinaiticus and decided to sell it. They found a buyer in the British Museum. In December 1933, the Sinaiticus was sold to the British Government for the price of \$50,000 (in 1933 dollars). And it has been in England ever since. (Except when it is loaned to museums in other countries. For example, I was able to see it in 2005 when it was brought to a museum in the USA.).

Spiritual Quotes So Far

A collection of spiritual quotes found in the newsletter since Vol 1, No. 1

"When I consider the cross of Christ, how can anything I do be called sacrifice?"

Amy Carmichael

"A person will always be tripped up by that thing which he will not cut off from himself."

Poemen, Desert monk, sometime in the 300s.

William Carey is considered the "Father of Modern Missions" for the work he did in India from 1793 to 1834. His fame as a missionary spread widely while he was alive. As he when he lay dying in 1834, though, his thoughts were only about Christ. Upon hearing people talk about his accomplishments, he summoned fellow missionary Alexander Duff to his side and whispered, "Mr. Duff! You have been speaking about Dr. Carey, Dr. Carey; when I am gone, say nothing about Dr. Carey. Speak about Dr. Carey's Savior."

"I cannot dance, Lord, unless you lead me.

If you want me to leap with abandon,

You must sing the song.

Then I shall leap into love,

From love into knowledge,

From knowledge into enjoyment,

And from enjoyment beyond all human sensations.

There I want to remain yet want also to circle higher still."

Mechthild of Magdeburg (d. 1280), "The Flowing Light of the Godhead"

"No one attains to a true self-understand until they have previously contemplated the face of God and come down after such contemplation to look into themselves." [Meaning, people cannot understand themselves only by looking at themselves, they must start by learning about God, the creator, first and then move to themselves, the creation. Starting with oneself will always lead to a corrupted understanding.]

John Calvin, "The Institutes," 1559

Questions, comments, or want to join a free class contact Mark at marknickens@gmail.com

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"By focusing on myself, I lost myself. By seeking only You and by truly loving You, I found both You and myself."

Thomas à Kempis, "The Imitation of Christ"

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Jim Elliot wrote this in his journal on October 28, 1949; he was martyred for his faith 6 1/2 years later in South America by being speared to death by the people he came to witness to.

"Perfect disciples do not ask to be richly rewarded nor to be spared pain nor for anything other than for God Himself. They do not care if they are happy or sad, as long as the will of Him whom they love is fulfilled."

"Cloud of Unknowing," 1300s

One of the greatest, if not the greatest, conservative theologians in the 1900s was Karl Barth. He wrote many articles and books. On a visit to the USA, someone asked him if he would summarize all his writings down into one sentence. He replied, "Jesus loves me, this I know, because the Bible tells me so."

Egyptian Desert Father, c. 350: "Abba [meaning "Father"] Poemen used to say, "Teach your heart to keep that which your tongue teaches."

"Be so convinced of the existence of spiritual things that those things that are seen become mayor shadows, which, while present to the eye, are only an illusion of invisible realities . . . Let us begin to live the interior life all the more sincerely as we live less exteriorly. To summit all up in simple language, temporary things should less influence us as we come to know more fully things that are eternal, and we should have less esteem for physical things as we begin to raise our thoughts to those that are real."

Erasmus, 1501

John Wesley founded Methodism in the 1700s. He said this on his deathbed shortly before dying: "The best of all is, God is with us."