Compass Life Adult Sunday School

Pastor Pete

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**“Origen of Alexandria”**

**I. Three Options for Believing in God**

The Appeal of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Religion (Christianity)

1. Avoid the Wrath of the God (Escape wrath of God through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)
2. Common Moral and Religious Base (True Biblical Morality)
3. Societal Stability (Network of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

The Appeal of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Religions (Gnosticism)

1. Spiritual experience versus formalism
2. Sense of something Transcendent
3. Personal Fellowship with the Gods (Personal relationship with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)
4. Esoteric Knowledge (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)

The Appeal of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Plato and Aristotle)

1. Need to understand reality/rationalism (deep answers for life’s problems)
2. Hunger for truth/meaning of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (satisfied mind)
3. Ethics and Morality (righteous living)
4. Intellectual sophistication (Insight into Metaphysical issues: soul, matter, epistemology)

**II. History of Christianity in Alexandria (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)**

Christianity was brought to Egypt by the Mark. Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, in his Ecclesiastic History, states that Mark first came to Egypt during the reign of Emperor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, sometime between AD 41 and 44, and that he returned to [Alexandria](http://www.touregypt.net/alex1.htm) some 20 years later to preach and evangelize. Mark's first convert in Alexandria was Anianus, a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who later was a bishop and Patriarch of Alexandria after Mark's martyrdom. Christianity in Egypt was locked in a struggle against the polytheistic religions of the Greco-Roman culture that began in Alexandria and spread to other large cities. To counter Hellenistic philosophy the Christian leaders in Egypt established a catechetical \_\_\_\_\_\_ in Alexandria. This school became a center of Christian philosophy, and great teachers and orators such as Clement and Origen were able to battle the Hellenistic philosophers and advocate Christianity in an orderly and intellectual manner. It was also in this great university of Christian learning that Christianity first underwent rigorous studies that created its first \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_. The school educated everyone who came to it in \_\_\_\_\_\_, opening the study of religion to just about everyone, and making as many people as possible literate. The greatest persecutions on the young religion came at the hands of the Roman government. An arrested Christian could receive a pardon simply by offering incense on a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but many refused to do so, citing scripture passages urging faith in the one God. The true "crime" of the persecuted Christians was their refusal to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the Roman gods, including the emperor. Those who did refuse to bow to the Roman religion were imprisoned, often tortured, thrown to the wild animals in the coliseum, or suffered execution. Rather than discouraging the Christians, these actions encouraged them and reinforced their faith, echoing the words of Jesus that those who suffered persecution because of his name were truly blessed. In the first century this persecution was largely done by the government, though after a few decades they seem to have lost interest and in the second and early third centuries the \_\_\_\_\_\_ took over the persecutions. Decius and [Diocletian](http://www.touregypt.net/33dyn16.htm), in the 250s and early 300s respectively, brought the imperium back into the persecution, but it was clear by this time it was a losing battle as Christianity had penetrated even into the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of society. It was in Egypt that some of the greatest defiance of the Romans by Christians were done. While their Roman counterparts worshipped in catacombs and underground vaults, the Egyptian Christians built their \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ openly and performed their ceremonies in full view of the Empire. And for everyone that the Empire struck down, more would be converted by the example of the martyr. Diocletian was particularly brutal, executing so many Christians in 284 alone that the Coptic Church dates its calendar, the Calendar of the Martyrs.

**III. Origen 184-253 (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)**

Origen was born around 184 in Alexandria, Egypt, a thriving city founded by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the fourth century BC. Alexandria was a center of commerce and culture, the birthplace of Neoplatonism and the hometown of the Philo, the great Jewish philosopher. Christianity arrived as early as the close of the first century (Apostle Mark) and joined the rich atmosphere of philosophical discussion already present. Alexandrian Christians viewed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ philosophy as a useful means for interpreting and sharing their faith. Origen was the eldest of seven children. His mother's name is unknown, but his father was Leonides, a Roman citizen of high standing and a teacher of Greek literature. Leonides personally educated his brilliant son in both Hellenistic and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ studies. In 202, Leonides was taken prisoner and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ under the persecution of Septimus Severus. Origen took shelter for a time in the household of a wealthy Christian lady while he continued his studies. He had begun work as a teacher of Greek literature in order to support himself and his newly impoverished family. Persecution under Severus had left the catechetical school of Alexandria without leadership. To meet the needs of those who desired to learn about the Christian faith, Bishop Demetrius appointed \_\_\_\_\_\_ to take over the school. By all accounts Origen lived an extremely ascetic life (his great zeal caused him to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ himself). In the Alexandrian tradition, Origen's curriculum covered not only the Christian faith, but the ideas of several schools of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ philosophy. Around this time, Origen began to learn Hebrew to facilitate his study of the Old Testament and his conversations with Jews. He regarded the Greek Septuagint as the authoritative version. Origen also began to compile the Hexapla (a six-columned Old Testament with one Hebrew and five Greek versions). When Origen visited in Caesarea, he was ordained to the priesthood by the bishop of that city, so that he was able to \_\_\_\_\_. Bishop Demetrius was incensed by this breach of his jurisdiction over the Alexandrian. Upon Origen's return, two successive synods were held concerning Origen: the first banished him from Alexandria; the second stripped him of his ability \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The bishops of four provinces refused to accept the latter ruling: Palestine, Arabia (Jordan), Phoenicia and Achaia (Greece). It is in these regions that Origen would spent the remainder of his life, acting as a pastor as well as a scholar. In 233, Origen left Alexandria to make his permanent home in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. In Caesarea, Origen added preaching to his regular duties of teaching and writing. Almost \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sermons preached by Origin have survived, far more than what we have of any other teacher of that era (he preached \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_). Later in Origen’s life many Christians were imprisoned in Caesarea (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_), including Alexander of Jerusalem, who died in prison. In part due to the large influx of nominal believers under the Christian Emperor Philip of Arabia, a great deal of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ resulted from the persecution. Origen himself, in his late sixties, was put in prison and tortured, and later died of his wounds. Jerome reports that Origen was buried in Tyre, in Phoenicia historical records confirm the presence of his tomb there until middle ages.

**IV. Antioch and Alexandrian Schools of Interpretation**

Hermeneutics is a discipline that deals with biblical \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. During the Patristic era, the Alexandrian and Antiochene hermeneutics laid the history of the hermeneutics that are \_\_\_\_\_\_. Alexandrian hermeneutics as popularized by Origen introduced the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ method of interpretation. This kind of hermeneutics approaches the Bible and looks at it in three levels: first, the literal meaning; second, the moral meaning; and third; the spiritual meaning. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ context is set aside. Moreover, those who practice Alexandrian hermeneutics believe that the spiritual meaning of the Scriptures is hidden and they should be interpreted in a figurative manner. Furthermore, Origen asserted that those who are engaging in this kind of hermeneutics need to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ first for guidance and use his intelligence. In contrast to the Alexandrian hermeneutics, Antiochene interpretation approaches the text in three categories namely, literal, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Antiochene interpreters rejected the use of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Antiochenes, in addition, insisted on the historical reliability of the Bible. The deeper meaning of the Scripture is elicited when one pays attention to the literal and historical context of the text. Thus, they greatly reject the thought of “hidden meanings”. This means that particles, moods, prepositions and terminologies should be given a careful consideration. They advocated the study of the passage within its context and not to draw interpretation out from an isolated verse. The Antiochene school in Palestine also firmly uphold to the Scripture as the basis of knowledge and not on Gnosis (secret knowledge) which the Alexandrian school base their interpretation.

**6/3 Modern Day Puritans: Karl Barth**