

## KOINE KORNER #3

Welcome again Saints to “Koine Korner.” In our last article We concluded with the death of Alexander the Great in 323 B.C. and his kingdom thereafter to be divided up between his four top military generals. It was one of these generals, Ptolemy I (the first) and his son Ptolemy II that were used in a very big way to further the learning and distribution of God’s Precious Word.

Ptolemy I (366-282 B.C.) was Alexander’s personal body guard and one of his four top generals; in addition, he was very possibly the half-brother of Alexander (Author’s opinion). Given charge of lands which included Egypt to the south and The Holy Land of Israel to the east, Ptolemy I became King of Egypt and developed the city of Alexandria, the most important city on the Mediterranean sea at the time. In Alexandria, the King founded a great library appointing a one Demetrius of Phaleron as the head librarian. Ptolemy I did not believe that he was a god, as Alexander did; however, he rebuilt the temples and the religious system of Egypt. Eventually, the Egyptian people “made him” a “son of RA,” the Egyptian god of the created world. Upon the death of Ptolemy I in 282 B.C., his son Ptolemy II assumed the throne in Egypt.

Ptolemy II of Egypt(285-246 B.C.) commissioned the Royal librarian Demetrius to “purchase or copy all of the books In the known world in that day!!! In a word... “unbelievable.” King Ptolemy II wanted, and for proper reason, a Koine Greek Translation of “The Holy Scriptures of the Hebrews.” He had Demetrius draft a letter to Eleazar, the high priest of Israel At Jerusalem (260-245 B.C.). Within this letter was a request that Eleazar send seventy-two scholars, six scholars from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, to travel to Alexandria, Egypt and produce the needed Koine Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament; this work of monumental importance was called “The Septuagint” ( literally, “The Translation of the Seventy”). Along with the letter, Ptolemy II sent 50 talents of gold ( a Talent of gold was 131 pounds Troy; therefore ,  $50 \times 131 = 6,550$  pounds of gold!). This gold was to be used by the high priest for the fabrication of temple vessels. The King also sent 100 talents of “other monies” ( a talent of The King was 158 pounds Troy; therefore,  $100 \times 158 = 15,800$  pounds of other monies!). These “other monies” were to be used by Eleazar as he saw fit “for things relating to temple worship.” Of note also, Ptolemy II

at this time, freed all Jewish slaves in Alexandria.

Next time, Lord willing, we will discuss the formation of The Septuagint and its importance and use by The Almighty. I am enjoying this folks. I hope you are also!