

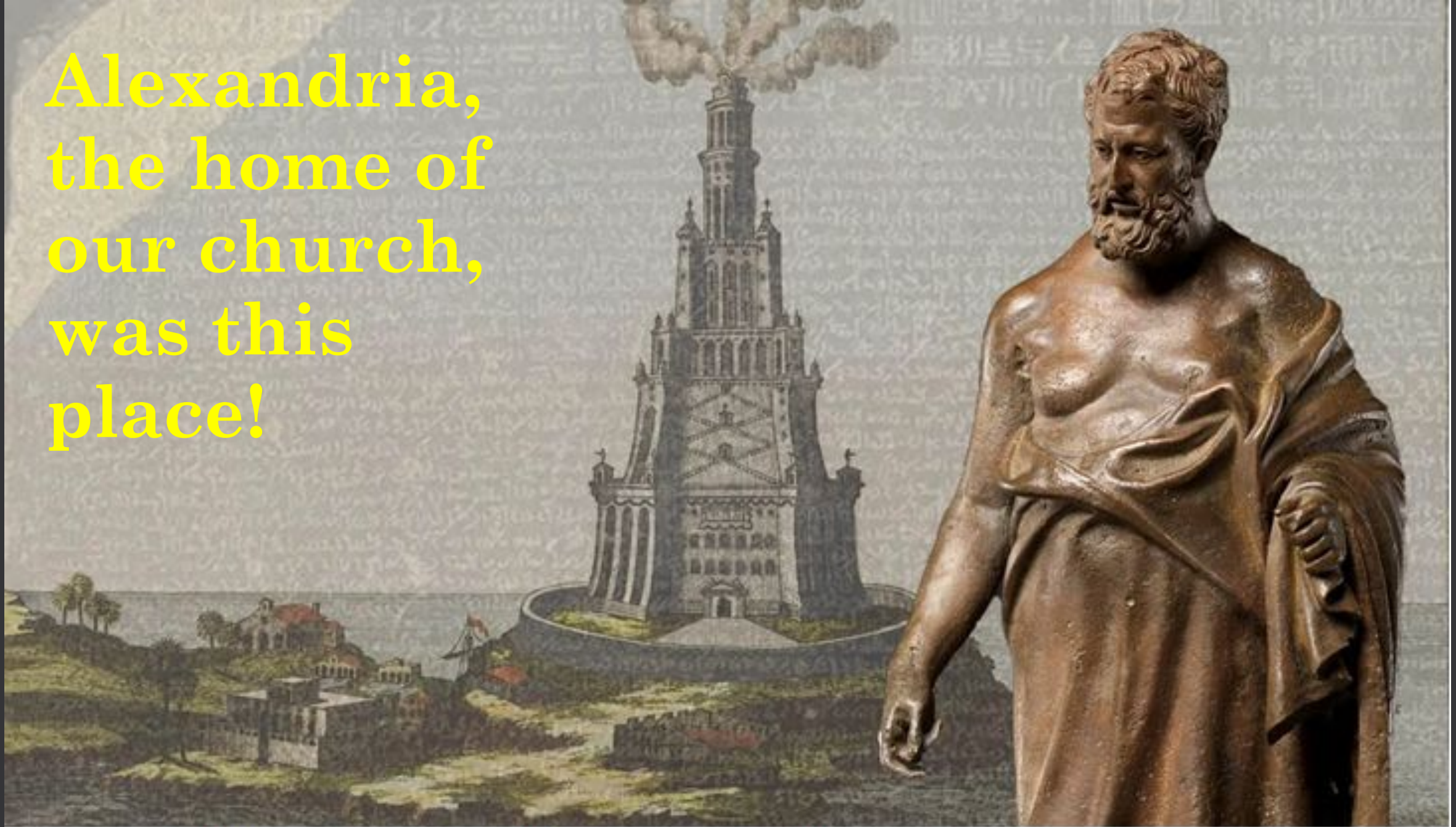


School of Alexandria

“You shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

Close your eyes and imagine the smartest people you know. Where are they? What are they doing? Are they teaching a class? Arguing about a tough problem? Imagine there was a place where you could predictably find some of these smart people, a true tome of knowledge. Imagine a place where it was known as the center for all things “smart.”

Alexandria,
the home of
our church,
was this
place!



Engraving of the Lighthouse of Alexandria; with A Roman Statue of a Philosopher, late 1st century BC

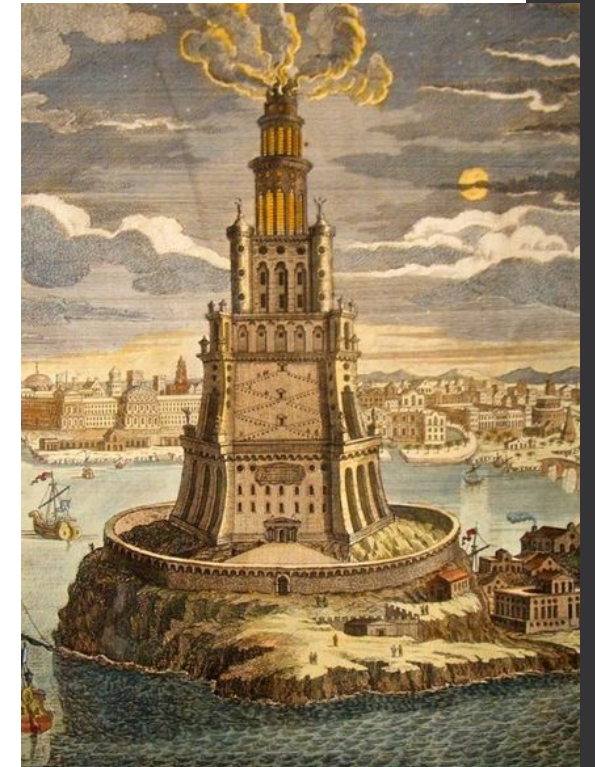
The City of Alexandria

- Located in Egypt.
- Was founded in 331 BC by Alexander the Great and became Egypt's capital under him.
- Was home of many religions and was a world-renowned center for learning and culture.
- Had great schools, museums and libraries full of thousands of books.
- Its location and clever architecture allowed it to be a conducive meeting ground for philosophers⁽¹⁾, theologians⁽²⁾, and all different types of intellectuals⁽³⁾.
- Many years later after Jesus ascended and the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles. St. Mark visited Alexandria. He started preaching after he met Ananias the cobbler, baptized him and ordained him as bishop before leaving.

(1) Philosopher is a person who seeks wisdom, thinker, asks a lot of questions about everything.

(2) Theologian is a person who studies religion, God and faith.

(3) Intellectual is a smart person who is intelligent.



The School of Alexandria

- Founded by St. Mark the Apostle in the 1st century.
- Purpose was to provide Christianity with defenders or *Apologists* as a way to 'match' the intellectuals native to the region, and those visiting.
- St. Mark appointed St. Justus as the very first Dean (principal) of this new school. It did not gain attraction until a notable Greek scholar and philosopher, **Pantaenus**, began teaching there.
- People came to this school to learn about Jesus Christ.
- Science, mathematics and the humanities were also taught there.
- Worship went side by side with study in school. Teachers and their students practiced prayer, fasting and asceticism (a spiritual exercise where you can practice living simply without focusing on earthly and materialistic needs like money, food, possessions, attention,...etc.)

It is highly probable that there were well-educated Christians in Alexandria in the apostolic times. St. Luke tells of Apollos who was a learned Jew of Alexandria and mighty in the scriptures; he may well have learnt there the knowledge of Jesus that he possessed

"And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus." Acts 18:24



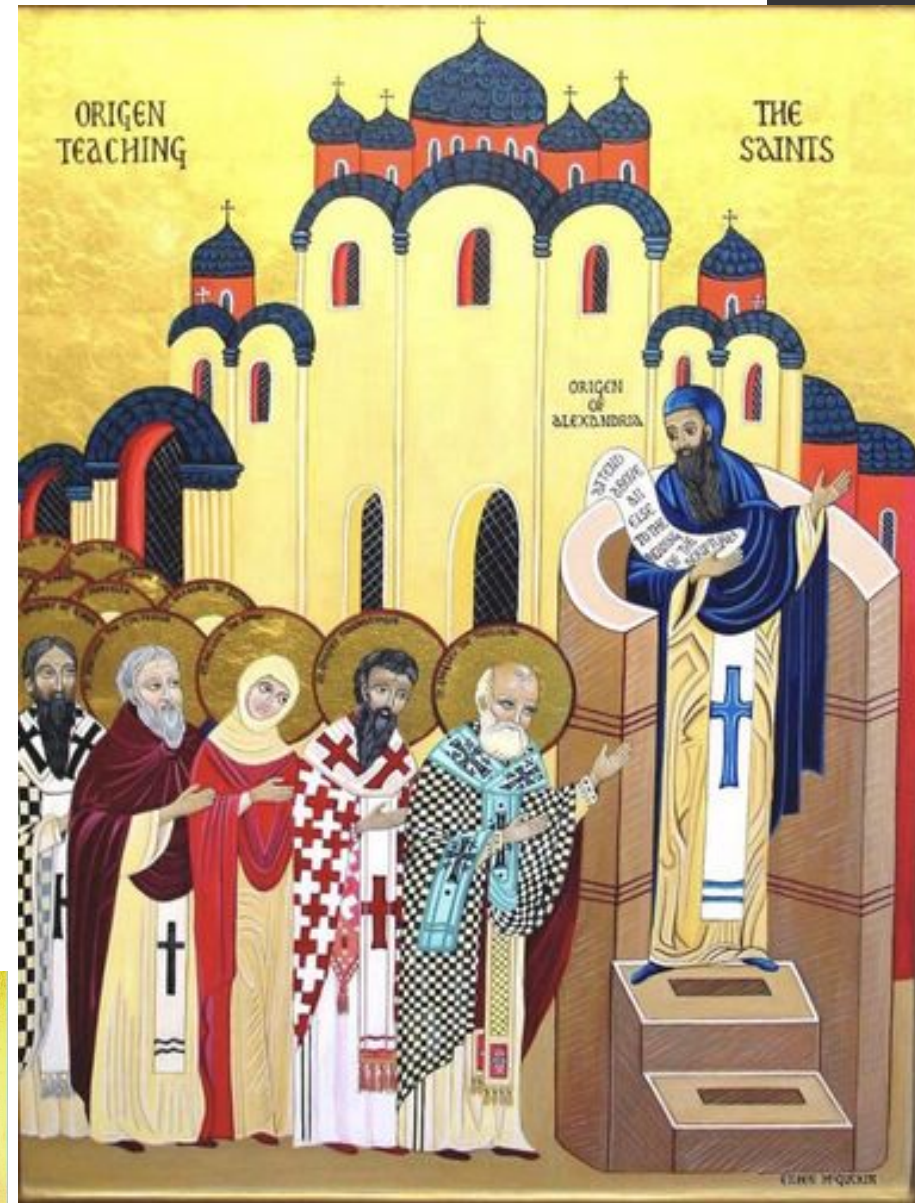
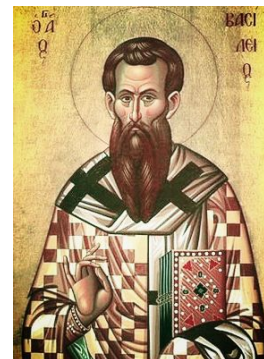
The School of Alexandria

Fathers

- The school with **St. Pantaenus**, followed by **St. Clement of Alexandria** & then **St. Origen** as its leaders, thrived in Alexandria and became a center of intellectualized Christianity.
- It presented the Christian religion to Christians and non-Christians alike, to show them that Christ was the summit of all human knowledge.
- The fathers utilized Philosophy to present the faith at their time. “Philosophia” means “The love of wisdom”, is a way to make sense of the world” or in other words it’s a way to think about any questions.

FUN FACT

You’ve used philosophy without even knowing it. Every time you argue with your parents or decide to eat a vegetable over candy, you are doing philosophy because you are thinking about the world and your place in it. You are figuring out what you value and why you value it and what you should do about it!



The School of Alexandria

Defenders of faith till this day

- The school had quite a lot of well-known people attend its hallowed halls; a lot of whom later became Patriarchs.
- St. Mark's vision accomplished.
- **St. Athanasius** of Alexandria, hailing from this school, who defended the faith against Arius.
- **St. Cyril** of Alexandria who defended the faith against Nestorius.

FUN FACT

- **Pope Shenouda III** graduated from the more modern version of this school.



The School of Alexandria

Enjoy watching the video below

[School of Alexandria - YouTube](#)

The School of Alexandria

Life Application

- We should never be afraid or ashamed of our Christianity, we should learn our faith in order to be able to defend it proudly.
- Attending Sunday School is the first step of learning about your faith.
- Reading in the Bible and other books about Saints adds to your knowledge.
- Don't be shy to ask questions to your parents, Abouna, Sunday school teachers. Questions are great they help us all learn.

The School of Alexandria

Questions

- How did Alexandria become an intellectual center before Christianity?
- What was the goal of the School of Alexandria?
- How is the School of Alexandria similar to your school? How is it different?