

~ALEXANDRIA (61)

(Al-ex-an'dria) [Arabic, *Al-Iskandariyah*]

- Chief city and famed metropolis of Egypt during the time of Jesus and his apostles. Modern **Alexandria** stands on the ancient site and is a seaport, but has little of the ancient splendor.
- The city derived its name from Alexander the Great, who ordered it to be built in **332 B.C.E.** In time it became the principal city of Egypt, and under the Ptolemies, the Hellenistic kings of Egypt, **Alexandria** was made Egypt's capital.
- It remained such when Rome took control in **30 B.C.E.** and served as the administrative center of Egypt on through the Roman and Byzantine epochs down to the Arabic conquest in the **Seventh Century C.E.**
- The Jews for long had formed a sizable portion of the population of **Alexandria**, which, at its height, reached perhaps 500,000 persons. Many of the Jews were descendants of the refugees who fled to Egypt after Jerusalem's fall in **607 B.C.E.**
- In Tiberius time they were said to compose about one-third of the city's total population. With their own section or quarter called Regio Judaeorum, the Jews were allowed to live according to their own laws and have their own governor, or Alabarch.
- It was here in **Alexandria** that the **Greek Septuagint**, the first translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, was made. It was produced by **Alexandrian** Jews, evidently beginning during the reign of Ptolemy II. Philadelphus, **285-246 B.C.E.**
- Only brief reference is made to **Alexandria** in the Bible. Among those disputing with Stephen before his trial were **Alexandrians**, or Jews from **Alexandria**.
- **Alexandria** was the native city of the eloquent Apollos. And two of the ships on which Paul traveled as a prisoner headed for Rome were out of **Alexandria**, doubtless large grain ships of the great **Alexandrian** fleet that crossed the Mediterranean Sea to Puteoli, Italy, though at times doing coastwise sailing to the ports of Asia Minor.

- But certain men rose up of those from the so-called Synagogue of the Freedmen, and of the Cyrenians and **Alexandrians** and of those from Cilicia and Asia, to dispute with Stephen. (**Acts of Apostles 6:9**)
- Now a certain Jew named Apollos, a native of **Alexandria**, an eloquent man, arrived in Ephesus, and he was well versed in the Scriptures. (**Acts of Apostles 18:24**)
- But there the army officer found a boat from **Alexandria** that was sailing for Italy, and he made us board it. (**Acts of Apostles 27:6**)
- Three months later we set sail in a boat from **Alexandria** that had wintered in the island and with the figurehead Sons of Zeus. (**Acts of Apostles 28:11**)