

At the end of part one, I said that next time we would talk more about what Gnostics believe and how Gnostic belief has invaded the beliefs

of Christianity. This is because, if we are going to realize just what a fallacy it is to believe in concepts Gnostics teach, we must be privy to their basic ideas. One of the first concepts we need to understand about Gnostic belief is, the nature of god they believe in. Now, Gnostics believe many different stories which use different names and people, but one of the most popular basic stories is this - Gnostics generally believe there is an original power. I say "power," because it would depend on which Gnostic teaching you were hearing as to whether they would define what they believe originated everything, as a "power," or a "god." Another very popular media drama simply describes this idea as, "The Force." According to Gnosticism, this "power" lives in a "region of light." It's from this god, power, or the region itself, that other, lesser deities "emanate" or come into existence. In one of the more popular versions, the story says the "power" was a greater god, and then a lesser god emanated from the region of light, who is responsible for the creation or, at the very least, organization of matter and ultimately humans. In many versions, this lesser god tries to use earth, or this physical world, as a prison of sorts. In the story, this god wants to hinder the ability of humans to leave the here and now. Gnostics believe that with enough knowledge a human can learn to, or earn the right to, ascend from this physical place created by a lesser god and go to that spiritual place where the superior god lives.

The truth of the matter is that many people believe in the basic ideas which makeup Gnosticism, even if they claim to be Bible believing Christians. As I said in part one, they would never call themselves Gnostic, but, in fact, they are following what most false religions, in general, teach. We find these beliefs enticing as humans, because we want certain things. First, we want to be gods. The devil told Eve the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good

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PART II

and Evil would make them like God. The devil was pointing out that the fruit could make Eve like God in the fact they would then have

the knowledge of good and evil. However, the devil knew Eve would take this fact as meaning humans could obtain godlike status overall, and there is every reason to believe that is exactly how Eve took it.

Humans have always liked the idea we could be something more than we are, and there is nothing wrong with that. What is wrong is what we want to be. God made us in innocence not perfection. That is exactly why God did not want us to be like Him in having the knowledge of good and evil, thus, being responsible for it. However, humans have always hoped they could have their cake and eat it too. Humans don't want to be all God created us to be, humans want to ascend to a higher state of being. They do not want God to help them, because they want to be gods; but the Bible tells us that will never happen. Being with God as the people He created us to be is what the Bible tells us is our reward; but people want what the devil wanted, to ascend to God's level and be like God. (Isa. 14:12-14)

This all boils down to an extreme selfishness. You see, people do not want a perfect God who created them because that would mean God has the right to set our boundaries. What we do not want to accept is the fact that right living has to have boundaries. Freewilled beings can't simply do whatever they want whenever they want to. There must be limits to our free will if we are going to live in a way which is fair to all. If there is always a perfect God above us, then we can never escape judgment for our selfish desires. However, if God is not perfect, we have an excuse not to be judged by Him. If we can somehow ascend to His level, then He will no longer be able to stop us from doing whatever we want! This is why Gnostics believe a lesser god created us, and this lesser god is very imperfect. In fact, this god is actually evil in many of the

stories; it's practically a human's responsibility to try and escape what this god has done. This is why they teach that the lesser god has enslaved us in an attempt to limit us to this existence. This is also why they believe the higher thing - which this lesser god came from - is some unknowable power they will never have to confront.

What many people do not stop to think about is the fact, even God limits His actions according to the rules of right and wrong! This is why we see the words in James 1:13, which tell us, "...for God can not be tempted with evil neither tempteth he any man:" Even God is limited in His actions. He will not do wrong in any way, shape or form. Now, God is not limited because there is something higher telling Him what is right and wrong. God limits His own actions, because He is perfect and holy! This is something many humans simply will not accept! Some do not want to accept this because they do not want to admit that God, in His perfection, has the right to judge us. They do not want to admit there is a definable right and wrong. They do not like the idea that right and wrong is not a fuzzy gray area which we can't know. Right and wrong are not arbitrary. Others do not want to accept that God would voluntarily limit Himself because they simply believe a nature so much higher than man's is impossible. Far too many people would rather be friends with Satan than The God who created them, because birds of a feather flock together. Striving to be righteous is work which many do not want. So, it's easier to believe righteousness is unattainable or that they do not need it. The definition of a "good person" is something man wants to define amongst himself. Humans do not want a perfect God defining it. However, the Bible tells us we are all born knowing God. (Ps. 22:10, Rom. 1:18-25) Denying God's very existence is also hard. So, one of the easiest ways for us to swallow the excuse that we do not need to follow righteousness, is to say, even God is not perfect and/or His nature is something so different from ours that God only vaguely relates to our existence. This is why the Gnostic tells us the ultimate god or power is unknowable. In Gnostic belief, we only deal with the lower god(s) which are not perfect. In many ways, there is no perfect in Gnostic belief; and this is why Gnostics suggest the

nature of Jesus was not perfect and clean, but more akin to the sinful nature of man. The Bible tells us, "...for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Heb. 11:6 If we are going to live with God, we must believe God is who His Word tells us He is. We can not be like those described in Romans 1:18-25 which have taken the image of a perfect God and made it like unto man and four-footed beasts.

Again, if we go to the Genesis story of Eve and the serpent, we see the seeds of Gnostic philosophy in what the devil says. In Genesis 3 verses 4-5, Satan tells Eve, "Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Satan got Eve to question whether God's motives were for their good or not. If God was not working for the good of humans, then Eve had an excuse to rebel against God's instructions. Some would even say she had a duty to her offspring to set them free from this judgmentalism and give them the knowledge they needed to take care of themselves. So, Eve not only eats the fruit, but she gave also to her husband. (Gen. 3:6) Just like Eve, many people today do not want to have a conversation with God about something they question. They do not want to seek God out and find that He is perfect. Simply teaching there is reason to mistrust the perfect nature of God gives man the excuse he wants to reject a God who sets limits on their freedom and has the right to judge them when they fail to be right in their choices!

Many humans have chosen this selfishness, and they do not want the rights of other humans getting in the way of them having what they want, when they want it. This goes from the childlike idea of wanting the whole cupcake in spite of the fact there is only one cupcake and many who want it, all the way to things many think are selfless. Not always, but many times, even those who do things which seem selfless, do it to gain recognition for their actions. This is why one of the best fund-raising techniques (even among "Christians") is to promise to put someone's name in a prominent public place when they donate a certain amount of money. Rec-

ognition among men for being "good" is what many believe proves they are ascending, in a way. However, giving to gain the recognition of others means we do not want to hear the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:1-4 when He tells us that when we give, we should not even let the right hand know what the left hand is doing. Jesus also explains that those who do give their alms before men have their reward. The reward of recognition by men is not an eternal reward. This clearly means it's not gaining us the ability to ascend, it's actually holding us back. We need to follow in the Words of Jesus when He said, "...thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly." We need to see that the only way for us to gain ground is for us to yield our will to God, and trust His guidance.

Again, we need to be reminded that Gnostic belief comes with many faces. The fact a Gnostic teaching is shrouded with Biblical characters does not change how wrong it is. Beyond the simple premise of Gnostic beliefs we have been talking about, there are many facades as to who and what god is or can be. The idea that we can transcend this world through our actions or earn transcendence through our actions or understanding, is Gnostic in nature. The idea of "enlightenment" is a Gnostic idea. This means there is much room in a Gnostic mind for what constitutes a "savior." (again that Baal theology) This is why Gnostics can encompass so many different false religions, and this brings us to an important point. You must understand, Gnostics do not believe it's the specific work of a savior that provides salvation for us. They believe it's our actions which provide the salvation, and saviors are only characters which provide understanding of how to obtain salvation or ascension.

Be careful to realize that Gnostics accept the idea there are many saviors, and thus, many opportunities to learn or earn salvation or ascension to a heavenly realm of some sort. While Gnostic belief tells us these "saviors" are divinity in nature, they are emanations from the higher power. This means they are lesser divinities. Just how less they are depends on how far down the chain of emanated deities they emanate from. In the case of "saviors," most are believed to be emanated directly from the

supreme power. Who, in most Gnostic beliefs, is not the god who created humans or this world. This is a major point which separates true believers in God from Gnostics, and it should demonstrate to us just how dangerous it is for true believers to be pulled into Gnostic belief!

Our need for salvation is all based in the fact there is a perfect way to handle our choices, and only God is perfect in the execution of right and wrong. Thus, we need to try our hardest to be righteous, but we will ultimately need God's grace to save us. (Eph. 2:8) If we believe God is no better than man, and all man needs is a guide of some sort, then the Scripture means nothing. Romans 3:23 tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" Coming short of God's glory means we are not perfect, and even if we reached perfection in our actions, it would be a long road. Scripture teaches us that being considerate of others and being humble before God is key to our lives. We must understand why the fruits of the spirit are, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance; we should understand why, against these, we are told there is no law! (Gal. 5:22-23) Jesus told us, if we were not forgiving of others, God would not be forgiving of us! (Matt. 6:14-15) This is all truth which Gnostics are trying to escape, but we cannot afford to think we have escaped these truths.

If God is not perfect, it means nothing to us when the Bible tells us, our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; (Isa. 64:6) and we will never understand that without living in innocence as we were created, we all do things which are worthy of death all along the way. This is why God, in His perfection, had to lay on us the judgment of death; but in His mercy, He did not strike us dead, He simply removed us from the Tree of Life. (Gen. 3:22) It is crucial we understand we were given this life, not so we could try to ascend, but that we were given a chance to repent!

Under the teaching of Gnosticism, salvation can come through deep and hard self exploration which brings the greater knowledge you need to survive, or it can come from gaining a simple knowledge

about the superior god's existence. It only matters which form of Gnostic belief you hold, because Gnostics can argue, salvation can come from any variation in between these two extremes. What causes there to be very little argument though, is there is no pat answer. The answer in a Gnostic mind is, "Whatever works for you!" So, Gnostic belief tells us that repentance of sin is unnecessary. Gnostic belief tells us we only need to be guided so we can find the knowledge which will save us. If we believe this, then we believe we do not need a Saviour. We care not for what we do to others or against God unless it comes in the light of gaining ground toward our ultimate goal of ascension. This idea brings us to the very human thought pattern of the strong oppressing the weak. If someone or something cannot stand in our way, then we do not care about that person or thing. If someone or something can stand in our way, then we only care about them or it because of what we stand to lose. Again, no definable right and wrong, only what keeps your life moving in the direction you want it to. In the end, we should realize that Gnostic belief is not leading us to a "higher plain of existence," it is only telling us to follow our bliss! Gnostic philosophy teaches that our past actions are irrelevant. Again, there is nothing about judgment for sin in Gnostic belief, only the thought that your existence is what you make it, and that is just the way many people like it! On the other hand, the Bible clearly tells us we will all stand before God on Judgment Day to be judged for the actions of our lives! (Rev. 20:12) So, you see how important it is for us to choose this day whom we will serve! (Josh. 24:15)

If we buy into the thoughts portrayed in writings, like *The Da Vinci Code* and *The Gospel of Judas*, we are choosing a path which is not the straight and narrow. (Matt. 7:13-14) What Gnostic belief does, is attempt to portray Jesus as simply one of many guides to salvation, not The One and Only Saviour of the world. (John 14:6) This means the nature of Jesus does not need to be pure. Nor does Jesus' life, as a man, really matter in the way the Bible tells us it did. To believe this way is a big problem, because we need a Saviour! If God does not give us a Saviour, we can never be saved, because we can never earn salvation for ourselves.

This is why the devil wants to break down our belief that God is perfect and has the right to judge us. If he can do this, he can unravel our understanding of the Bible's message of who The Messiah is and what He came to do. Meaning, we will never understand our need for true salvation and how to obtain it.

Some may believe that man needs a little help in understanding exactly how to save himself; some may believe man is mostly on his own; but Gnostic belief, ultimately, tells us to rely on ourselves. Make no mistake about it, this is true, even of those who call themselves, "Christian Gnostic." Now, many "Christians" who hold very Gnostic beliefs would never call themselves "Gnostic," and many people do not even see that they are believing in a Gnostic philosophy. However, it exists, and the lack of sound doctrine in the church causes many to simply accept theology which is very wrong according to the Bible.

The most hard core "Christian Gnostic" philosophy is the idea that the inferior god is the god of the Old Testament. They say this god created us and this world we live in. Then, it is generally believed that the superior god, or at least an agent from it, is represented in the New Testament. They say the superior god emanated a lesser deity much like the one who created us. However, this deity was an agent of the superior god, and not as inclined to evil. This lesser deity's purpose was to show us the knowledge we needed to "ascend," generally to the spiritual world or region of light which the superior god lives in. Gnostics try to tell us that is who Jesus is.

"Christian Gnostics" believe God in the Old Testament is an angry God, and God in the New Testament is a God of love. They believe God in the Bible is actually two different gods, with two different agendas. This is easy for many people to swallow, because they do not know their Bible. People do not understand that Jesus came not to destroy the law but to fulfill the law. (Matt. 5:17) They do not understand how the Bible tells us the story of God's interaction with us, and it shows us the unfolding of God's grace to save us from our

sin. This Biblical illiteracy is why there are many who call themselves Christians who fall into Gnostic ideas, or theologies similar to Gnostic ideas. Many people are taught such wrong things about the nature of God that they too believe God was, at the very least, some what different in the Old Testament than in the New Testament. We are not taught the continuity of God's actions.

Of course, what makes you a defined "Christian Gnostic" is nothing more than a label. You do not have to specifically believe Jesus was that lesser deity sent from the superior god or power. Jesus said, if you are not for me, you are against me. (Matt. 12:30) You cannot be for God if you are believing in an ancient false religion, even if you are redefining Biblical personalities to fit your story. That is by definition, antichrist, (I Jn. 4:3) and this is the point we need to see clearly! Gnostics still portray Jesus as a savior but not because of who He was. To them, Jesus is important only for the information He brought. The theology among Gnosticism splinters quickly from there, but one feature that is common to most all, is the idea that there were or are many saviors besides Jesus. The Holy Spirit is said to be one, and this is clearly not what Jesus told us. Some believe John the Baptist was one, again, not a story supported by the Bible. Along with this is the idea that even men like Judas are not sinners who need to repent and receive forgiveness, but possibly one of many divine agents sent to help us find the truth. All this is fallacy! Jesus told us The Holy Spirit would not speak of Himself but put us in remembrance of all the words Jesus has spoken. (John 14:26) We are also told that John the Baptist was not The Light but was sent to bear witness of The Light, which was The True Light to save all men. (John 1:6-9) So, as I started off this series by saying, Jesus was exactly who He said He was or He was crazy.

In reality, Gnostic belief is everywhere in the church, but most do not see it because they are simply led to believe Gnostic type thinking is what Christians believe! The fact Gnostic ideas and theology pervades is no surprise. I have talked many times about man's ideas invading the thoughts of the true believer, and the Bible tells us clearly that

our thoughts lead us to death. This is why Isaiah 55:6-8 instructs us, "Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD."

Next time, we want to get into the nature of who Jesus was and a deeper discussion as to why the pure nature of Jesus was and is important. As we go along, we also want to talk about how Jesus was not just one of many guides, but the fulfillment of the Old Testament's Words.

Until next time, I hope you will continue to straighten your life through the true Word of God that you may overcome the foolish beliefs of selfish men!

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