



1 John and Gnosticism (II)

Why Does Gnosticism Appeal To So Many?

1. No rules. Bash NT; use imagination
2. No guilt. No law, no transgression
3. No judgment. Freedom from fear
4. No humility. Athens trumps Jerusalem

I. Jesus

Docetic view
Cerinthus view
Basilidian view

I. Jesus

II. Truth

I. Jesus

II. Truth

**III. Morals, Sin,
and Obedience**

Gnostic: sin is lack of knowledge

- If the body is bad, we can't help it
- Some embraced homosexuality
- Carpocratians: all action is indifferent; neither purity nor filth changes nature of pure gold
- Perfect knowledge requires experience of all sins

Gnostic view of sin: lack of knowledge



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1 Jn.1:6-7 – first of three lies

6, **sin is not important**; we may live
in sin and fellowship God

6, "***not practice the truth***" (Jn.3:21)

**Truth is not confined to belief
or language; includes conduct**

(Rv.22:15)

1 Jn.1:6-7 – first of three lies

6, sin is not important . . .

6, "not practice the truth" (Jn.3:21; Rv.22:15)

- 7a, walk in light (cf. 5, God is light)
- 7b, "blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" –
 - Blood = Jesus had body
 - Jesus Christ His Son = one Person
 - Cleanses: suffered; ...to save us
 - All sin: no limit to power

1 Jn.2:3-6, gnostics boasted of knowledge

3: We know God only by
keeping His commandments

What makes an artist?

- 4, Gnostics claimed to "*know Him*"
- 5, "*know that we are in Him*" - not by becoming 'Carnal Christians'
- 6, He never called us to walk on sea

1 Jn.2:15-17

To love the world is to lose everything

- **Two dangers to avoid:**

The world,
15-17

Antichrists,
18-28

- **The two are related. 2 Pt.2:1-3**

1 Jn.2:15-17

To love the world is to lose everything

- **Lust of flesh** –
 - Carnal nature uses body as its instrument. Ga.5:16; Ph.3:19
- **Lust of eyes** – bridge between flesh and outside world. Mt.5:28
- **Pride of life** – pride in possessions (Ja.4:16): pretension; ostentation

1 Jn.2:15-17

To love the world is to lose everything

- Lust of flesh
 - Lust of eyes
 - Pride of life
- } Things not possessed
- Possessions

Followers of world share its death (17a)

Followers of God abide forever (17b)

1 Jn.2:29, offspring resembles parentage

Evidence of sonship: doing righteousness

1 Jn.3:4, 6-9, 10, law, sin

- 4: not *privation* of law, but *disregard*

Doing sin: reverse of doing righteousness

- 6-9, does not contradict 1:8-10
- Pres. tense: *cannot walk (live) in sin*

Gnostic insight put them above moral law

John: sin is serious (10)

I. Jesus

II. Truth

III. Morals, Sin, and Obedience

IV. Love

Gnostics knew nothing of love

Knowledge alone was important

- John's love never compromises
 - **1 Jn.2:7-11**
- On day we are saved, we don't know everything . . . but we *do* learn love
- 7-8, new – old
- Jn.13:34-35

New standard

New motive

Gnostics knew nothing of love

Knowledge alone was important

1 Jn.2:7-11

1 Jn.3:11-12

- Brother love implies opposite (hate)
- Cain killed Abel
- Some gnostics praised Cain

Ophite heresy

Cainites

Conclusion:

“Lost Books” of the Bible

- Gospel of Philip, Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Mary, Gospel of Judas, Gospel of Thomas, etc.
- NT Canon could have come about in only one of two ways:
 - 1.** Invented and promoted **by men**
 - 2.** Inspired and preserved **by God**

Conclusion:

“Lost Books” of the Bible

- 1. If of men:** books are not lost, but rejected.

Eusebius includes writings of Thomas with group of books that are spurious –

“the fictions of heretics”

- 2. If of God:** books are not lost; they “did not make the cut” (2 Th.2:2; 1 Pt.1:25)

What would John say...?

- 1 John refutes several Gnostic views
- Cerinthus rejected all gospels except small part of Mt., Mk., & Paul
- Would Gnostic books fit beside 1 John?? [1 Jn.2:19; 2 Jn.9-11]

Jesus Seminar books?

Marcion "excommunicated"

Polycarp and Marcion