

THE Gnostic GOSPELS

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Introduction

It has become quite popular on college campuses for atheistic professors to attack Christianity by stating that Gnosticism was the "original" Christianity. Thus the Christian student today has to have a basic understanding of Gnosticism in order to defend the faith ([Jude 3](#)).

1. The Early Christian Church rejected various fake gospels produced by a Greek mystery religion called Gnosticism which attempted to absorb Christianity. The Apostle Paul attacked Gnosticism directly in Colossians while John attacked it in [I](#) and [II John](#) and [Revelation](#). Every subsequent Church Father and council attacked the Gnostics. At no point did the Christian Church accept Gnosticism.
2. The Gnostics denied the existence of the Biblical personal/infinite God, monotheism, the Trinity and that Jesus was human and divine. They even denied that He was Christ! Jesus, to them, was simply a link in the chain of Being. They also denied Jesus died for our sins and His bodily resurrection. The Gnostics rejected the Old Testament and New Testament and drew upon Eastern ideas such as Reincarnation and pantheism.
3. While the New Testament began within ten to fifteen years of the death of Jesus (AD. 33) and we have a fragment of Mark which can be dated AD 50 and Luke AD 57, the vast majority of the Gnostic gospels were not written until late into the third and fourth centuries.
4. The Gnostics had a stronghold in Egypt and some fourth century manuscripts have been found in Nag Hammadi. These false gospels contained historical and literary blunders which reveal that they were not written in the first century. Their literary style is drastically different from the New Testament and they exalt absurd stories of Jesus' childhood such as:
 - (a) Jesus would make clay birds and change them into real ones.
 - (b) While playing hide and seek, Jesus searched for some children in a particular house into which they had run. When He came to the door and asked the mother if there were any children inside she said, "No, only kids." Outraged, Jesus turned all of the children into goats.
 - (c) Jesus had a twin brother.

- (d) Jesus had sexual involvement with various women.
5. In [John 2:11](#), the Apostle John stated that the first miracle Jesus did was turning the water into wine at the wedding of Cana. The Gnostic materials, which are filled with absurd miracles of the child Jesus, cannot be viewed as valid in the light of [John 2:11](#).
 6. Certain newspaper writers sensationalized the finding of the Gnostic gospels as they did the finding of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Once scholars had a chance to translate these works nothing new was discovered that was not already known from the writings of the early Church Fathers. The Early Church never said or pretended that these fake gospels did not exist. The Church never hid anything from anybody. They showed that these were spurious works.
 7. While the New Testament is organically linked to the Old Testament, the Gnostic works reject the existence of God, the creation of the world out of nothing, the goodness of matter and flesh, the necessity of a substitutionary blood atonement, etc. Whereas Christianity is an extension of Old Testament Judaism, Gnosticism is an extension of Eastern religions such as Buddhism.
 8. No Biblical scholar today feels that there is any significance to the Gnostic works beyond that of historical curiosity as to what this mystery religion believed. Since none of them were written in the first century and they did not appear until several hundred years after Christ, they are worthless as a guide to Jesus' life. The first century New Testament, written by the Apostles who were eye-witnesses and friends of Jesus Christ, is logically and historically a superior guide to the life and teaching of Jesus.
 9. Christianity triumphed over Gnosticism because of the superiority of the Biblical Gospel. While such writers as Pagels try to prove that Christianity triumphed because of its political structure, this is a very superficial position. We must ask on what basis did the early Fathers have political authority in the Church? The Orthodox position won out because it was in harmony with the Old Testament and New Testament and descended from the Apostles and other eye-witnesses. It was rooted in the historical bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ as a real space-time event which was verified by over 500 eye-witnesses. Gnosticism was built on myth and subjectionism.
 10. Modern forms of Gnosticism attempt to discount the New Testament and appeal to the Nag Hammadi texts as "Lost Bibles". This is historically and theologically absurd. The attempt to identify Gnosticism as a part of Early Christianity is doomed to failure once it is understood that Gnosticism existed before Christianity appeared and that it tried to absorb all the religions it encountered. It was clearly denounced as "Anti-Christ" by the Apostles and Church Fathers. It never represented Biblical or Historic Christianity. Since the Gnostic "gospels"

attack the New Testament, it is obvious that the New Testament existed before them.

11. There is but one eternal personal infinite God who created the world out of nothing. This God eternally existed in three centers of consciousness or personality which the New Testament identifies as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This Triune God has done all that is necessary for man's forgiveness and salvation. Jesus Christ was incarnate as a real man and died a real death. He was bodily raised from the dead, having paid off all the punishment that God's Law demands. Christ's death makes Karmic reincarnation unnecessary. Jesus has paid it all. Our responsibility is to repent of our sin and to accept Jesus Christ as the Lord of all of life.

Conclusion

Gnosticism was never part of Christianity. It was always viewed as a pagan religion. The so-called Gnostic "Gospels" are obviously frauds.



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