

Doctrinal Studies: GNOSTICISM

- I. Gnosis – γνώσις knowledge
- II. Gnosticism Defined – A major thrust of Satan, which combines Greek philosophy and legalistic Judaism with Oriental dualism, and all this covered with a Christian vocabulary. A blend of religion, philosophy and culture.
- III. Gnosticism caused Paul to develop a technical vocabulary to describe certain principles of God's Word revealed in the book of Colossians. The Gnostics claimed to have a super knowledge. Paul said: "You should have *epignosis* – instead".
- IV. A general description of Gnosticism: 1. Gnosticism begins with a dualism – good versus evil. The question in Gnosticism is "How are you going to save man, since matter is evil?" They said there were two ways to do it:
 - Maximum asceticism (denial of self) or
 - Maximum lasciviousness (living it up)
- VI. Gnosticism Salvation – was in one area, achieved by abstaining from food, drink and marriage (this was asceticism). Lasciviousness said on the other hand, that the world of the pleroma (world of the spirits) was liberated by the phallic cult (Immorality among the Greeks). Proponents of these are called Nicolaitans in Revelation 2:6. Both of these systems are wrong – salvation by works!
- VII. Gnosticism was both an experiential and philosophical attack upon the Word of God. Their conclusion: Revelation is apart from the Canon. Also ritual and sacrifices must be included. This concept has been perpetuated from the first century up to this present time (worship services with symbols and rituals) Angels were also worshipped (Col. 2:8).