

Hate the Gnosticism, Love the Gnostic

“Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”
2 Cor 10:5



Every high thing...

A little background: I spent over a year thinking about this subject. It wouldn't leave me alone.

While I only had a cursory understanding of Gnosticism, I knew one thing, that it was a huge subject and yet it deserved to be exposed. Few have undertaken it in these last days, and those who choose to only treat the symptoms of heresy which are manifold as it is. But his cult is systemic in the culture - secular, religious, political, it's there.

What commandeered my freight train was this: it occurred to me that if Paul, John, and Jude thought it enough of a threat to combat it without outright naming it, I knew it was important. I knew they and the next generation were vexed by it. I knew that if it had a name I surely could research it with all the resources I have at hand. And after 35 years of studying apologetics, I also know that no genuine deception ever actually disappears from the scene. So, whatever it is that was called “doctrines of demons”, “vain philosophies”, and “knowledge so-called” by the early Church, I was compelled to know. I thought, this goes beyond just general warnings for all generations, there’s something specific in view as well.

I almost threw in the towel more than once throughout this undertaking. But I just couldn’t. I tried.

What I found genuinely surprised me. It might surprise you as well. So, I truly hope this is enlightening for you the reader. I hope you find my time investment worthy of your time.

What is gnosticism?

And just as importantly, why did it vex the early church so much? I am going to present the premise that Gnosticism was incarnated into this world from the garden; that Satan has used it to steal, kill, and destroy as it is part of the very first lie told to the very first people. And it has found a dwelling place as a counterfeit of Christianity.

Gnosticism is hard to staple down because it is not an organized church (easy to identify) but an intellectual and philosophical movement (subjective) that can infect any church, any secular movement, anywhere, any time, to any degree, and in many subtle ways. This makes it a moving target and is probably why few apologists address it to any real extent. But there are many symptoms listed in the New Testament, which tells me that since the NT authors wrote about it, they knew precisely what it was.

Is. And so should we.

Gnosticism took and continues to take many different forms since Plato, whose writings are gnosticism through and through. So, while I cannot possibly connect every single dot for you in this medium, my hope is that you at least get the big picture. I am going to suggest that it is the biggest heresy

ever. And we are having to deal with it on so many levels it can be difficult to wrap one's mind around it.

As I said, it is not a church or denomination. It is an ancient philosophy. A vain philosophy. And not even merely a pagan, illiterate, medieval, easily dismissed doctrine that we Western sophisticates can try and pass off as ignorant superstition. Recall that in Genesis, the first 2 humans were dealing with a very "cunning" (sly, crafty; Gen 3:1) serpent - and a "craftiness" on a level we probably don't completely understand ruined mankind and paved the way for our redemption. It's that redemption, that's the enemy's sore spot, as he competes with the Most High for the souls of men - every moment since.

Gnosticism purports to explain the material world, the spiritual world, salvation, the nature of God and revelation, creation, and good and evil. I am going to suggest it is THE framework for the world system that Satan oversees, that we interact with (mostly with considerable frustration) every single waking moment.

Gnosticism derives from the word "gnosis", the Greek word for "knowledge". Easy enough. Let's go through that door.

Back in the garden, the devil "disguised himself" (Genesis 3:1); the bible clearly teaches he is able to "transform himself" (2 Cor. 11:4). He is a cunning imitator; not an originator. A master counterfeiter of everything that God has declared to be good, our arch enemy is.

This is how he deceived Eve, by corrupting her mind (perceptions and thoughts, 2 Cor 11:3), and every human to follow, causing her to take from God's Word, and to alter it. And that tree? A tree of knowledge (da'ath in the Hebrew) of good and evil. Experiential knowledge of what is both good, and what is morally corrupt and evil and dark, which we observe every day of our lives. Humans became morally aware of good and evil and every nuance in between at the fall, and have the free will to accept or reject any or all of it. Before the fall, only God knew such things. They tapped into things of God, becoming like God in this. So naturally, the Tree of Life had to go because humans, praise God, cannot be allowed to live forever in a fallen state. There's no hope for mankind then, unless God sends a Saviour to take our punishment for rebellion and defeat death through the resurrection, the death blow to our enemy for sure.

The word "knowledge" first appears in the Scriptures in Genesis 2:9. That Hebrew word "da'ath" is the equivalent of that NT Greek word "gnosis".

There are 2 *kinds* of knowledge.

There is propositional knowledge, the kind that we acquire somewhat indirectly through the reports of others, and through acquired knowing: “I know that Wisconsin is in the United States.”

Then there is empirical knowledge, which is acquired by direct participation. “I know Wisconsin winters” - having *experienced* them. And indeed I do, and have.

The Gnosis of Gnosticism refers to Door #2.

Therefore, in a spiritual context, to be 'gnostic' is to rely not on knowledge in a general sense, but refers to mystical or esoteric experiences of direct participation with the divine/spiritual realm. So in Gnosticism, the salvation of the soul happens through a secret knowledge only given to some, generally through acquaintance with mysticism. If you are familiar with occultism or the New Age, you know just what I mean here.

So instead of seeking the one true God for answers, gnosticism teaches mankind to go within - ultimately to find the divinity within, and secure one's salvation through a special knowledge of the Divine. This philosophical system then can be, and has been, infused into any religion, politics, or belief system seamlessly and deceptively. Even Judaism, through the popular Kabbalah system, (often pushed by celebrities looking for some mystical experience) spreads Gnosticism far and wide. What is called the New Age in the West is but one of the more obvious portals to gnosticism.

Let's just peek through a window for a minute: take the emergent church movement for example. Any “there are no absolutes” American church can be deeply gnostic, and I would guess attendees would ever suspect. All you need is a “hath God said” narrative, spend time in contemplative monastic mumbo jumbo, and hang on the social justice gospel and you too can be saved from this material world via gnosticism. Some of you may attend a church that's already there. Alarmed? You should be. Absolutely. Leave now.

If you are doing yoga or contemplative anything, stop before you even finish this. You're on the Gnostic train to nowhere. I have been trying to warn about the emergent church movement for 15+ years, it's shallow and narcissistic and appeals to a generation that just feels like questioning everything so that any claim that God might have on their lives is minimal and doesn't upset any apple carts. But more about the Gnosticism all around us later.

Bottom line: Gnosticism it is the ultimate attack on God and Christianity and is as old as time.

So here goes.

An “a-gnostic” is one who “doesn’t know” if there is a God. A “dia-gnosis” means to set apart (dia) and know and differentiate one disease from another so we know what’s wrong with our bodies. “Pro-gnosis” charts the future course of a disease or situation. In the New Testament, we find the Greek word “epi-gnosis” used often, referring to the right and correct knowledge of the things of God.

One example of *epignosis* would be Romans 10:2 - “For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to **knowledge**”. It’s a worthy bible study to dig into this word “knowledge” in the entire NT.

Here is where things can get a bit convoluted so stay with me.

Gnosticism teaches a sharp dualism, believing that the spiritual realm is good, but matter is evil. The spirit is good, the body is evil. If the body is deemed to be evil, and it hinders our righteousness, then it could be acceptable to deny any earthly or sensory pleasure to get “closer to the divine”. Those who practice severe self-denial or discipline for the sake of spiritual perfection and ascension are referred to as “ascetics”.

On the other hand, a person could seek to be extremely licentious, believing that since the body is of no importance, anything done in life, no matter how hedonistic or evil, is ok because - it doesn’t matter. Matter doesn’t matter. The body is beyond redemption, they say. These are said to be “sybaritic”. I call it “hedonistic”.

So if anything material is evil, where does gnosticism stand in regards to Genesis, and what God called “good”? Good question.

Are we really to “hate the sin but love the sinner (material/ physical duality)? Truth is, you cannot separate the sin from the sinner. That’s more about making the church feel better in calling out sin, softening the blow, so to speak.

The Mythical Origins

So what exactly is the “creation account” in gnosticism? Though you may wonder why this is of any value to know, it does explain a lot and leaves one wondering just how anyone with the Western mindset would ever embrace it, except it really is a brilliant, cunning belief system for the unspiritual - one in which that cursed snake actually wins his confrontation with God. Remember, Satan is not an opposing, equal power to God. Satan is a rebel *against* God. There is no opposing power except in Satan’s thinking.

According to Gnosticism, the universe in its present state is not good, nor was it created by a good, benevolent God.

According to the gnostic “Gospel of Philip”, the creation came about as a mistake. Eons ago, there came a pre-cosmic disturbance from some being, a substandard deity, who turned God’s good intentions into a world of hurt and death. I recognize that signature.

This substandard being who created the world is called the “demiurge”. The most common name for this male/female beast is “Yaldabaoth”, probably a condensed version of “Yahweh, Lord of Sabbaths”. The demiurge was the offspring of Sophia (goddess of wisdom) who decided on her own to have a son, an androgynous being that looked like - a snake!



He was an arrogant, vile creature that terrified Sophia, so she had him cast out of heaven. This poor cast out demiurge then, being lonely, decided to create a material world to his liking, and he also created Archons - his very own angels to administer this world. There were 7 Archons, corresponding to 7 different planets, 7 days of the week, 7 days of creation, 7 levels of heaven to be ruled over, so the myth goes.

The Archons, androgynous too but neither man nor beast, created humans and ruled them in a chaotic, brutal manner. In a series of secular articles entitled, “Gnosticism Explained” by Daniel McCoy, he goes on to say,

“They were the ones who were ultimately responsible for all of the evil thoughts and actions of humankind.

But it gets worse: since the Archons had created humans in the first place, they had created humans to be extremely susceptible to their influence, and to be almost unable to resist it. Only a “divine spark” from Heaven, which had slipped into creation (via the demiurge) despite the Archons’ intentions, gave people any kind of a chance of resisting the Archons’ temptations and realizing their godhood.” *(This would be the Gnostic version of Jesus, the New Age Christ spirit . Humans are just divine souls trapped in a material universe. – MD)*

“But only a few people – the Gnostics – were even aware of that divine presence within themselves, and even for them it was a tremendous ordeal to act in accordance with that presence rather than the wishes of the Archons. Most people were just the puppets of the Archons.”

Thus, the normal, default state of humans was basically demonic possession!

He goes on to say, “It’s fitting that the Gnostics identified the Archons with the entities that were worshiped as pagan gods. How could you fail to worship a god that already possesses and controls you?”

Originally the word “demiurge” referred to a specialized craftsman or artisan with skills that benefited society. Later, some, including Plato, began to attribute the word to describe a junior god involved in the creation. This creator was given the title of the Grand Architect of the Universe. That the demiurge was the creator, and there was a supreme God above him, is a common narrative also, which makes sense if the snake is the one who authored, or explains, evil in the world. (Never called “sin” in gnosticism).

Over time as the narrative was added to/altered, others gave the demiurge less favorable characteristics. The Gnostics described this creator as so proud he was foolish and bungled the creation against the instructions of the Supreme God. Gnostics therefore considered all material things flawed or evil because everything physical was the product of the demiurge. In contrast, all spiritual things were considered good. In other words, no truly benevolent, omnipotent God could ever create a material world, much less one that is fallen. The gods are above all that, you know. This is oddly not

unlike those today that deny free will, reasoning that if God creates a being that freely chooses sin, then God is not only not truly sovereign, but He has created imperfection and is actually the author of evil. And yes, that is a huge belief system today. But I digress for now.

The Knowledge of Good and Evil

So, this snake god, who just wants to toy with Adam and Eve, puts a tree of knowledge, knowing both good and evil, in their midst. Wanting them to be autonomous, to see the truth and think for themselves, and to see that the material world is just a fake, really means that their “compassionate” serpentine creator (plot twist alert!) really only wants their destruction. It is said that the demiurge, the creator, from time to time would get furious and try to wipe mankind out, so after generations of rules, punishment, and destruction on earth, the Archons finally send Jesus to pave a new path for humans - one of peace, acceptance, and bringer of hidden knowledge (gnosis) – pitting the OT bumbling war-like judgmental god against the NT God, who suspended violence and vengeance in favor of the gnosis of the Kingdom. The one where social justice reigns and everyone is enlightened. They like the NT god but not that violent, mean OT god. Sound familiar amongst “scholars” today? Pure gnosticism.

“He Gets Us” ad campaign? Gnosticism.

So of course, this Gnostic Jesus is not the Jesus of the bible, in case I need to reinforce this. But the devil, all he wants is for humans to continue to choose sin because, well, because they *can*. Free will, it is in the Scriptures from front to back. There is no such teaching in the bible that mankind lost free will at the fall, or that our will is in bondage to this day. None.

So, here is where every cult gets it’s dogma: this Gnostic Jesus therefore, was not fully human since their god could never have anything to do with matter. Jesus only *seemed* to have a body (“docetism”); his suffering was an illusion as He was pure spirit. Gnosticism teaches that when the dove descended upon him in Matthew 3, He began to fulfill his mission to make mankind understand that they too were really gods. This spirit was withdrawn on the cross, so there was no substitutionary atonement. No incarnation - He could not be God and a material, therefore evil, man - so the crucifixion wasn’t really Him and therefore He could never have resurrected, completely overturning the gospel. The door to understanding real biblical truth via the system called *gnosticism* is officially slammed shut. Every single cult today is the evil offspring of gnosticism.

Gnostic “salvation” then, is simply having a sufficient amount of divine knowledge, a secret knowledge that Jesus came to give mankind - and which will free the human soul from this life. Salvation is the knowledge by means

of which man escapes this material world. Man's real problem then, is creation and his own body, not sin. The fall of mankind was simply from spirit into the material world. Self-redemption is now the goal.

Now what? Switching gears completely, let's move many centuries ahead.

What is an Apostle?

An Apostle is one who was an eyewitness to the works of Jesus - and, an eyewitness to His resurrection. (Acts 1:21-22; Acts 10:38-41). What you may not know is how important these passages are, this requirement is, if you are the first church fathers in the fight against gnosticism that is alluded to in dozens of NT verses. If the resurrection was not witnessed to, and this account cannot be passed down as truth, then gnosticism with its snake god wins the day. This is all-out war, and you are about to find out just how universal this war is.

So, I say we can know that elements of gnosticism existed before Christianity, especially through Plato and other philosophers. But what was it about the earliest days and years of Christianity that alarmed the NT writers so?

The founder of "Christian" Gnosticism was Valentinus (b.100AD), a so-called "theologian". He wanted to be Bishop of Rome, and claim some authority from the first Apostles in a bid for credibility, without which his heresy would be rejected. (Once the Apostles had gone home to be with the Lord, heresies could take root much more easily and Paul knew that was coming, Acts 20:29-31.)

It wasn't long before 2nd century Gnostics had written their own works, their teachings spreading like wildfire, to the point that their writings would be alluded to within those letters which would become our New Testament. In this way especially, the epistles all become historical accounts of the early days of the Church.

And, as gnostic writings spread far and wide, post-Apostolic orthodox Christian leaders began a first ever apologetics style-ministry - written works to counter ever-growing Gnostic influence. As you can see, hierarchy of church leadership in those days, generational succession of those who knew Jesus, Paul, John, etc., became the standard by which to judge a man's fitness to rule the early church and which led to establishing the canon of Scripture. If these men had not taken on Gnosticism instead of ignoring it or incorporating it, we would not have our current bible.

If people who have the bible would actually adhere to it and teach it today, we likely wouldn't have our current apostasies. And so it goes.

The Early Gnostic Cults

At the close of the BC era, a group that opposed the Pharisees and Saducees secluded themselves in Qumran to produce copies of the Scriptures and preserve them in that desert-dry climate. There was also another group, the Egyptian Essenes, who were very different in beliefs. They denied that a body could be resurrected, and mixed paganism with Judaism, believing in reincarnation, evolution, and predestination - meaning that only *some* of humanity had a divine spark that they would some day be liberated from. Josephus tells us that their own special mysticism was very similar to what we would consider Eastern Mysticism today.

Church history tells us that out of this 2nd group came Simon the Sorcerer, considered by early orthodox church scholars as the father of the Gnostic cults that have crept into Christianity. It was when he was in Egypt that he adopted their views on becoming a god himself. By the time we catch up with Simon in Acts 8, he has fully, unrepentantly, embraced sorcery, the type of which would give him what he hoped would be the power of God for his own ends and means. The Apostles were the first, then, to oppose gnostic sorcery in all it's incarnations and it started right there. Think, "doctrines of demons".

Irenaeus of Lyons, (130-200AD) a disciple of Polycarp (Bishop of Smyrna) who was a disciple of John, was the one who really took up the ministry of denouncing gnosticism and was very influential in keeping it at bay. He became part of a church in Lyons (France) during a time of severe persecution. He was well aware of not only the courage of the believers there, but these believers sent him to Rome with letters, appealing for help in fighting Gnosticism in the young Church. He ended up writing several key books to refute it, notably, "Against Heresies" (180AD) which stood fast for the purity of the doctrine as set forth by the Apostles.

Without getting bogged down by all the various sects and what they believed before I make a case for the rampant gnosticism that we still fight today, I want to briefly mention a couple of key trains of thought that you will recognize.

The early church battled 2 main streams, Valentinian and Basilidean Gnostic thought.

Basilides taught that mankind can be sinless and live a sinless life; once a person (child) is baptized, a believer can be purged of those pesky "unintentional" sins through penance, purgatory, and designating the severity of the sin (venial, mortal). Sacramental salvation started here.

Valentinus taught that our spirit can be saved if we are one of the chosen (basically born saved); some are predestined to salvation and others to hell. Only those spirits who descend from Sophia are predestined to salvation and do not need any good works because the deal is sealed.

Here is where it gets interesting: along comes Augustine, who spent his formative years in a Gnostic cult. After he converted to Christianity, he began to debate those who did not believe in free will and who said we could be born saved and therefore technically sinless (Pelagianism). In true Hegelian fashion, (take 2 contradictory views and meet in the middle so everyone is happy), he won his debates by inventing total depravity, unconditional election, and (single- and double-) predestination, which appealed to gnostics why?

Because

- a) nothing Augustine concluded went against their worldview about Gnostic “salvation”, and
- b) the body was unredeemable anyway --

--so it didn't matter what was done in the flesh. Everyone was happy for now, never mind that Augustine's conclusions were not found in Orthodox Christianity. For now at least, these views slept and slumbered - for about 1000 years anyway - until the Reformation wakened the sleeping Predestination/Gnosticism giant. And yes, I'm more than suggesting that the Reformation really didn't reform anything that really needed it. Remember, there was no such thing as Protestants in the first centuries of church history, only believers and non-believers. Sound doctrine, and heresy. I still think that is true.

Summary:

The early church:

- taught free will only;
- the early debates with gnostics over orthodoxy centered primarily on free will vs. total depravity.

The Gnostics: denied free moral agency and did not believe the Genesis account.

Augustine: converted out of a Gnostic cult, the Manicheans.

So it appears that Augustine is the one individual, the most pre-Reformation revered church father of all time, considered the last great theologian of all time, who has opened the door for extensive gnostic influence in the church.

He is claimed as a Roman Catholic saint. In every way, and why not? Catholics claim that (St.) Augustine taught:

The canon of Scripture includes the Apocrypha
Authoritative Tradition
Baptismal regeneration and grace
Necessity of baptism for salvation
Real presence of Christ in the Eucharist (Lord's Supper)
The Mass is a sacrifice
Necessity of the Lord's Supper for salvation
Purgatory and praying for the departed
The communion of saints and saintly intercession
The sacrament of penance
Mary was ever virgin

But now just wait a minute - Calvin and Luther claimed that Augustine was the foundation for the Reformation. Luther was an Augustinian monk. Isn't this enlightening?

Calvin refers to Augustine over 200 times in his writings; Luther over 40. It becomes inescapable to me then to conclude that their writings were tinged with Gnosticism. If Catholics and Protestants think Augustine was the greatest theologian of all time, this can only mean that there is not much difference between the two theological behemoths after all. And it also means that Augustine is the pivot point in church history that brings Gnosticism back into the church through denial of human free will. The Gnostic doctrine of the bondage of the will has been masquerading as Christianity for a very long time.

Bet you didn't see that one coming. I sure didn't. I'm thinking by now someone out there is offended, be ye Catholic, Lutheran, or Calvinist. I have no dog in that race. I have no sacred cows, but from time it might be of value to ask ourselves, is all that we think we know about denominations, destinies, and doors (the Wittenberg kind) really true? Did Calvin's teachings begin with Calvin? You decide, just make sure you look into it for yourself.

I could go on about all the gnostic cults that were in existence at the time of the writing of the New Testament. I don't think that is necessarily helpful, but with a certain understanding of gnosticism's main tenets, various bible verses will now pop off the page as the writers of the Epistles come against it.

Keep in mind these hallmarks of gnosticism when you read the following smattering of verses:

1. Beliefs such as it didn't matter what was done in the body because it wasn't redeemable (licentiousness);
2. Following dietary laws and other rules of self-denial made one spiritually superior (ascetics);
3. Experience over truth
4. Jesus did not come in the flesh, did not resurrect, and was not fully God and fully man

These were all things that Paul, Jude and John had to contend with. Here are a few pertinent anti-gnostic verses. Just a very, very few:

1 Timothy 4:1

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

1 Timothy 6:20-21

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

James 4:17

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Colossians 2:8

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

1 John 4:2,3

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now is already in the world.

1 Corinthians 2:6

How be it we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought.

Colossians 2:8,9.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power...

Colossians 2:20-23

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch” (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

1 Corinthians 8:1

Now concerning food offered to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” This “knowledge” puffs up, but love builds up. (See “Nicolaitans”, Revelation 2).

Jude 1:3,4

Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

1 John 2:22-23

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

And finally, Paul’s beautifully constructed gnostic antidote, reinforcing the cornerstone of our faith:

1Cor 15:12-19

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

Gnosticism and the Culture

There is much more to be said, so many more verses to lay out, but I am guessing that even with this much, you might find that you read some of the New Testament warnings against heresy with a different perspective now.

Finally, and not the least important here, I must include the manifestation of gnosticism in today's modern world. There are a multitude of Gnostic threads we could pull on in these last days.

The media and film industry are certainly primary mouthpieces for gnosticism. Science fiction is full of this esoteric, New Age hidden knowledge. The media has been and is complicit in every way, daily. Consider just these few films:

The Matrix (the daddy of all gnostic films) in which the material world is not real and hidden knowledge creates and reveals "The One" - of the universe; the messiah of the age. His name is "Neo", as in "Neo-Gnosticism".

The Wizard of Oz - witches, crystal balls, a lame Wizard who is no help at all but represents the "powerless" and unenlightened god of 20th century denominationalism. A witch tells Dorothy she had the power inside her all along to get back to Kansas. Toto too.

The Truman Show - the material world is an illusion and the all-wise Sophie helps Truman escape the world he is tied to and has been tricked into believing is reality.

Add on here any films that depict technology interacting with the human mind; ie, using Avatars to replace the body; any programs about the Singularity, in which a human uploads technology to replace their brain so they can ascend to a higher plane and live forever, doing away with material body to become an ascended human. Films about a New Age Christ, etc. etc. All occultism, all Gnostic.

Throw in any movements and religions that are pure Gnosticism because they deny the divinity of Jesus, the Trinity, the substitutionary atonement, or teach that the natural world is not what it seems. It's a long list, I am barely touching the surface:

Jehovah's Witnesses - Jesus was a spirit creature; not equal to God, did not have a bodily resurrection just a spiritual one. No Trinity. "Hath God said?" is their calling card.

Mormonism - Jesus was not God; but we shall be gods. Joseph Smith and his angels/spirits that reveal hidden knowledge; an esoteric book to explain the Bible; God is an exalted man; Jesus is the brother of Satan; every human is a direct descendant of a Heavenly Father and Mother (Sophia myth); every human was reared in heavenly mansions before taking on a body; Jesus was the first born of this union, our spiritual brother. The atonement was insufficient but they are basically universalists.

Islam: Jesus is a created being; not God. A prophet of God Who is subject to Allah (who is a demon actually). Not God's Son. Jesus did not die on the cross, His spirit was taken at the last moment; Mohammad was a successor to the Apostles of Abraham. Did Mohammad have access to early gnostic writings? Very possible. It is a political movement disguised as a religion. The gnostic one.

Yoga: detachment from the material world; become divine; the universe is not material; the material is the enemy of the spiritual. Altered states bring one into divinity; classic Hinduism which is also Gnosticism.

Word Faith: Gnosticism through and through. A mix of Christianity, New Thought, metaphysical cults, New Ageism (you shall be gods); Jesus died spiritually and was born again in hell.

D. R. McConnell, in *A Different Gospel*, page 185 states their heresies succinctly:

its deistic view of God, who must dance to men's attempts to manipulate the spiritual laws of the universe;

its demonic view of Christ, who was filled with "the Satanic nature" and must be "born again in hell";

its gnostic view of revelation, which demands denial of the physical senses and classifies Christians by their willingness to do so; and

its metaphysical view of salvation, which deifies man and spiritualizes the atonement, locating it in hell rather than on the cross, thereby subverting the crucial biblical belief that it is Christ's physical death and shed blood, which alone atone for sin. All four of these heresies may be

accounted for by Kenyon's syncretism of metaphysical thought with traditional biblical doctrine (and adopted by Copeland, Hagin, and many others).

Throw in this mix the New Apostolic Reformation. The Signs and Wonders movement. Latter Rain. Kansas City Prophets. Elements of Gnosticism throughout.

Freemasonry - secret knowledge reserved only for the few, salvation is ultimately by means of knowledge and not of Jesus, the first degree of masonry emphasizes a separation from the material world to transcend material reality.

The Kabbalah: the religion of the hipster Hollywoodites, Kabbalah is Jewish Mysticism and complete Gnosticism. Extra biblical revelation, esoteric practices; charts, graphs and secret symbolism.

Nazism - A religion more than a political movement - and philosophical Gnosticism throughout. They taught that Germans were descended from a master race called Aryans. Their ancestor worship ideals led them to seek hidden documents in various nations (that they invaded) that contained occultic wisdom. The goal was to replace Christianity with their Gnostic church. This alone is proof that Gnosticism can have far-reaching political consequences for the whole world.

Liberalism: Lest you think this is a stretch, I will simply direct you to the following articles written by those savvy folk at *The American Thinker*. Considering today's liberal cult that seeks to own, control and reinvent all manner of reality for the sake of a one-world ideology, please read and consider these. You many never look at what's under the hood of the Left the same again. Haven't we all said over and over that this left/right war is spiritual? Here's your proof:

"Denying Reality: the Gnostic Left" (from 2014).

https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2014/06/denying_reality_the_gnostic_left.html

"The Left's Endgame of Gnostic Activism"

https://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2017/02/the_lefts_end_game_of_gnostic_activism.html

and "Understanding the Liberal Mind" - an excerpt:

Founders of Modern Gnosticism

“Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche can indeed be considered the founding fathers of all the Gnostic mass movements of the past century. Their ideas led to the holocaust and multiculturalism. Their ideas led to the political decline spawned by communism, and the moral decline caused by relativism.

Gnostic enterprises in recent history include Karl Marx, with his attempt to create the social man, Fredric Nietzsche with his attempt to create the superman, Hitler with his attempt to create the Aryan man, the New Age Movement with its attempt to create the god man, and yes, modern liberalism with its attempt to create the softer, gentler, kinder girly-man. As well, we should not forget Hegel who thought he was the only man.”

<https://www.chuckjines.com/gnosticism-understanding-liberal-mind/>

Not to mention the leftist thought pattern that says that anyone of either gender, can at any moment, pretend to be the other gender, or no gender, just because they think it's so. This manipulation of reality is - again - GNOSTICISM.

Ok, that's enough. But truly, do you see what the world system is now, maybe better than before? Do you see how vast its tentacles are now in the form of a world system that has all of humanity under its sway?

“...the whole world is under the sway of the wicked one...” 1John 5:19

Every high thing that exalts itself.

If it's not truth, it's a lie, and must be dismantled.