



June 18, 2006

Sin, Salvation & Gnosticism

Nobody likes to be told they are wrong. This is even more troubling when we think of an omnipotent, omniscient God who will judge and reward or punish. There are many schools of thought on the “idea” of sin and guilt and the Gnostics represent just one more flavor of rejection of what the scriptures state. To some Gnostics “salvation” lies in uncovering the “hidden truth” of the universe. Through this they may advance or even return to the unknowable God. It is therefore knowledge, or enlightenment, that is salvation. Up to this point, everything that we have reviewed concerning Gnosticism, has focused on the individual, of the liberation of the mind through knowledge, the tolerance of others and the rejection of the image of God as presented in the scriptures. Simply stated, Gnosticism is just another way of thinking that has its origins in the family of man and amounts to nothing more than a sophisticated system of unbelief. It is quite probable that the Gnostic way of thinking was attractive to anyone who wished to develop a sense of empowerment. This would prove a way to have the “secret” knowledge of the universe and in their sense of personal power would feel important. The scriptures show us a completely different picture of God and Christ. Christ came to serve and do the will of the Father (**John 5.30**). He told his disciples that he who desired to be the greatest among them should serve as he had served the Father (**Lk 22.26**). Christ, as noted above, stated that it was not of his own will that he came into the world, but through the will of the Father who sent him. It was this same father who acknowledged Christ as his son and commanded even the disciples to hear him. As has been stated in previous articles, it was the mission of Christ to seek and save the lost and He was willing to die at the will of the Father (**Lk 3.21-22, Matt 17.5**) to accomplish this. We are also told that it was the father who raised Christ from the dead. Christ now reigns with the Father at his right hand (**Acts 2.32-33**). Christ, speaking to his disciples, stated that commands from the Father, and therefore from himself, would be given to them when the holy spirit came to them (**John 16.7-14**). The Holy Spirit would not speak of his own volition but would reveal those things he had seen and heard. Inevitably everything points back to the Father, working through Christ, the holy spirit, apostles, prophets and others, to reveal that all need to repent and serve the Lord. We are told that while all things are under Christ, the Father is an exception to this (**1 Cor 15.27**) and in the last day, when judgment has been rendered, Christ will present the church, the body of saved believers to the Lord (the Father) (**1 Cor 15.24**). The Bible reveals if we are found in that number we will live with Christ for eternity (**1 Thess 4.17**) never more to experience the negative things of this life including temptation, sin, death and guilt. When we review all these things we need to ask ourselves what sounds more reasonable? What sounds the most logical? If salvation and eternity, as presented in the Bible, are critical things, then it seems that the Bible would be easy to understand, readily available and abundant in the world. Even those who do not believe in the Bible will admit that these conditions exist. There are no further revelations, mysteries or great secrets to be unraveled. There is only the simplicity of the Gospel and the need to spend time with it and understand what it says. The energy that has to be expended and the mental constructs that have to be created in order to believe in some complicated idea such as Gnosticism is incredible. It takes far less to believe in the Bible and the things that we are told there. The problem is that in believing the Bible, and obeying it, we state a belief in one who is higher than us. We confess the name of Christ, admitting that we are unable to save ourselves and that we need the salvation that God has promised. We acknowledge that we will shift our perspective away from ourselves and concentrate on others (**Phil 2.4**) and the work that God has for us. But then that would not be exciting enough to warrant and then hold our interest, nor does it endow us with personal power that will enrich and satisfy our sense of how we want to see ourselves. The gospel is an appeal to rationality and reality with the promise that there will be far greater things than this for those who believe, obey and serve. It really comes down to what you put your faith into; yourself, or God.

TLC