

Remnant Life Church
November 8, 2015
The J-G Virus in Colosse
Part 2 - Gnosticism
Colossians 1:15-19

Last week:

- Judaism
 - The culture and religion of the Jewish people
 - The ruling people over the Jews during the 400 years of the intertestamental period
 - Knowledge of the law was most important
 - How this shaped the thinking of the people
 - Paul taught that belief and faith in Jesus Christ was most important – even over the law
 - This is why the religious leaders of the day fought Jesus and the message He brought
 - It would mean that the people would no longer look to them for guidance in the same way
 - Their livelihood would be effected
- Gnosticism
 - A religious philosophy from the 1st and 2nd century AD
 - Has at its roots (among others)
 - + Christianity
 - + Greek Philosophy
 - + Buddhism
 - + Platonism
 - + Hellenistic Judaism
 - + Kabbalah – Jewish mysticism
 - What did they believe?
 1. Intimate knowledge of self and the cosmos is the only true way to salvation of the soul
 2. There is a divine nature present in all of creation but it was lost by man in the Garden
 - + The tree of knowledge was provided for man to eat from
 - + Once he did he realized that the creator god was in fact not the supreme god but jealous of man
 - + Upon this realization man is cast into an earthly world of forgetfulness
 - + This then puts man into a forced process of spiritual reawakening
 3. Jesus was a man who reobtained His divinity and tried to teach His disciples to do the same
 4. All worldly matter is, in and of itself, evil in nature and we should withdraw from any of the physical pleasures of life – asceticism (self-denial)
 - + This is one reason why Jesus gave instructions on fasting to avoid confusion (**Matt 6:16**)
 - + Also why today, when we help someone, we should not make a big deal about it

5. The universe was created by a lesser god who then became what we call satan
 - + This is why they believe that those who are truly striving to become enlightened should deny all things of the flesh
- Gnosticism had faded through the centuries but reemerged again in the mid 1940's with the discovery of the Gnostic gospels by an Egyptian farmer in cliffs along a northern Nile region
 - They are known as the Nag Hammadi Texts because that was the name of the town near where they were discovered
 - 12 leather-bound writings on papyrus material (helped in the dating)
 - 52 treatises or writings that many have claimed should be considered as important as the Bible
 - The reason for this is because of who the writings are about or who they claim to be written by
 - + The Prayers of the Apostle Paul
 - + The Gospel of Truth
 - + The Gospel of Phillip
 - + The Gospel of the Egyptians
 - + The Acts of Peter and the 12 Apostles
 - + The Gospel of Thomas (received the most attention claiming to be a collection of isolated and unknown sayings of Jesus)
 - We still have Gnosticism and Judaist thinking to deal with today – New Age Religion
 - Started in the 1970's it is centered around inclusiveness and universalism
 - Everyone gets to believe whatever they want to believe and there is very little in the realm of right and wrong
 - You are on your own spiritual journey
 - Recognize the common traits and don't be fooled
 - + It does not embrace the singularity of God instead using terms such as Ocean of Oneness; Primal Stream; One Essence; and Universal Principle
 - + God is described in terms of energy, consciousness, or intelligence
 - + Life-force is a general term for what each of us has that links us to the divine
 - The New Age movement exhibits a strong emphasis on the idea that the individual and their own experiences are the primary source of authority on spiritual matters.
 - Paul counters all of this wrong thinking by giving us some of the most powerful Christological (study of the person and teachings of Christ) statement in any of His writings – it was relevant then it is just as relevant today
 - **READ - 1:15-20**
 - It is Jesus alone – He is supreme to everything and He is all that we need!
 - We are complete in Christ!
 - Paul goes on to give the fullness of who Jesus is in us as we desire to build our lives in Him in every direction...
 1. *...if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been*

proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant. (1:23) – This is the DEEPER life.

2. *So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness (2:6-7) This is the HIGHER life.*
3. *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. (3:1-3) This is the INNER life.*
4. *Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (4:5-6) This is the OUTER life.*

- We must be asking ourselves everyday
 - Do I desire to live a full directional life for Jesus Christ?
 - Am I willing to decrease in each of these areas so that He can increase?
 - **John 3:30** – *He must become greater; I must become less.*
- We must stay on guard in the last days
 - New Age religion will be one of satan's most powerful tools of infiltration in the last days
 - It is already happening and will continue to increase if we are not careful
 - **Matt 24:24** – Jesus says - *For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect*
 - This is why we have got to be so cautious about chasing after the signs and wonders that are so often presented as proof of God's presence
 - Does it line up PERFECTLY with the Word of God?
- Paul is saying in this book one simple thing – **All you need is Jesus**
- That same timeless truth must be preached, embraced, and understood today!