



A Word from Pastor Schielke

Gnosticism – What is it, and who cares? Part 1.

Gnosticism (pronounced – NOSS-ticism) is a set of ancient heresies and ideas that have found their way into various religions throughout the centuries, including Christianity. The word Gnosticism comes from the Greek word for knowledge (gnosis). While there are a few people who would claim to be Gnostics, Gnosticism is not a religion per se. It usually manifests itself as a set of quasi-religious ideas that creep into other religions and often cause confusion and division within those religious traditions. It has a core set of ideas that may include:

- Dualism – a belief in two gods, one of the physical world and one of the spiritual world
- An understanding that spiritual things are good but physical or material things are evil.
- The goal of a human being is to escape the physical world, become purely spiritual, and be united with all other spirit beings in the great unity of all spiritual things sometimes called the Monad.
- All humans carry a divine “spark” and are generally good, but their true selves are enslaved by the physical world and to their own passions and desires.
- To be “saved” one must obtain the secret knowledge about all of this to be set free from enslavement to the material world.

Sound weird? It is. There’s a lot more of course, but these are some basics.

Shortly after Jesus’ ascension, the apostles had to deal with Gnostic ideas infiltrating Christian teaching. For example, the book of John emphasizes that Jesus is true God and true man. For the Gnostic, flesh is evil, so if Jesus was truly God He would not have a body. 1 John also highlights that any who deny the flesh of Jesus are false teachers. “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God” (1 John 4:2-3). In Colossians, Paul seems to be countering ideas that Jesus was only one of many divine beings worthy of praise. Colossians 2:18, “Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind.”

Gnostic thought wreaks havoc on a right understanding of Jesus. Marcion was an early Christian heretic with Gnostic tendencies. He taught that Jesus was simply a divine spirit who had the appearance of a body or pretended to have some physical form. Jesus represented the “god of light” and of spirit as opposed to the evil god who

created matter and the physical world. This is of course contrary to Christian teaching; Jesus was and remains fully divine and fully human, and He with the Father and the Spirit created both the physical and spiritual realms.

Understandably, Gnostic thought leads to false understandings about our bodies. Some Gnostics were *ascetics* (mentioned in Col. 2:18, above), strictly disciplining the body and refraining from anything pleasurable in an attempt to prevent the body from corrupting the divine spark or the soul. Other Gnostics went the opposite way and were *libertines*; since the body was irrelevant they felt you could do whatever you wanted in the body, indulge in every pleasure since ultimately the body would be discarded. Some Gnostics would navigate a middle ground between these two extremes, but overall the body is considered a prison from which we must escape.

If Paul and John had to deal with such ideas, rest assured the church today does too. Next month we will look at how Gnostic ideas find their way into Christianity in our day and age.

"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
1 Corinthians 15:57

Victory in Christ Lutheran Church
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The Augsburg Confession - Below is the Conclusion of the Augsburg Confession. The Confessions are what we believe and confess as a Lutheran congregation. When they say “they teach,” they mean our churches teach.

Conclusion

¹These are the chief articles which seem to be in controversy. For although we might have spoken of more abuses, yet, to avoid undue length, we have set forth the chief points, from which the rest may be readily judged.

²There have been great complaints concerning indulgences, pilgrimages, and the abuse of excommunications. The parishes have been vexed in many ways by the dealers in indulgences. There were endless contentions between the pastors and the monks concerning the parochial right, confessions, burials, sermons on extraordinary occasions, and

³innumerable other things. Issues of this sort we have passed over so that the chief points in this matter, having been briefly set forth, might be the more readily understood.

⁴Nor has anything been here said or adduced to the reproach of any one.

⁵Only those things have been recounted whereof we thought that it was necessary to speak, in order that it might be understood that in doctrine and ceremonies nothing has been received on our part against Scripture or the Church Catholic. For it is manifest that we have taken most diligent care that no new and ungodly doctrine should creep into our churches.

⁶The above articles we desire to present in accordance with the edict of Your Imperial Majesty, in order to exhibit our Confession and let men see a summary of the doctrine of our teachers.

⁷If there is anything that any one might desire in this Confession, we are ready, God willing, to present ampler information according to the Scriptures.

⁸Your Imperial Majesty’s faithful subjects:

⁹John, Duke of Saxony, Elector.

¹⁰George, Margrave of Brandenburg.

¹¹Ernest, Duke of Lueneberg.

¹²Philip, Landgrave of Hesse.

¹³John Frederick, Duke of Saxony.

¹⁴Francis, Duke of Lueneburg.

¹⁵Wolfgang, Prince of Anhalt.

¹⁶Senate and Magistracy of Nuremburg.

¹⁷Senate of Reutlingen.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Women's Bible Study 1:30 p.m.	3	4	5	6
7 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Studay / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	8	9	10	11	12	13 Men's Bible Study 8:30 a.m.
14 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Studay / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	15	16	17	18 Ascension of our Lord	19	20
21 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Studay / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	22	23	24	25	26	27
28 Divine Service 10 a.m Bible Studay / Sunday School 11 a.m. Lunch noon	29 Memorial Day	30	31			

For 2023, I would like to challenge every member of this congregation to read or continue reading through the Bible in one year. The Bible readings for May and part of June are listed below.

May 1: 1 Chron. 3-5

May 2: 1 Chron. 6

May 3: 1 Chron. 7-8

May 4: 1 Chron. 9-11

May 5: 1 Chron. 12-14

May 6: 1 Chron. 15-17

May 7: 1 Chron. 18-21

May 8: 1 Chron. 22-24

May 9: 1 Chron. 25-27

May 10: 1 Chron. 28 - 2 Chron. 1

May 11: 2 Chron. 2-5

May 12: 2 Chron. 6-8

May 13: 2 Chron. 9-12

May 14: 2 Chron. 13-17

May 15: 2 Chron. 18-20

May 16: 2 Chron. 21-24

May 17: 2 Chron. 25-27

May 18: 2 Chron. 28-31

May 19: 2 Chron. 32-34

May 20: 2 Chron. 35-36

May 21: Ezra 1-3

May 22: Ezra 4-7

May 23: Ezra 8-10

May 24: Neh. 1-3

May 25: Neh. 4-6

May 26: Neh. 7

May 27: Neh. 8-9

May 28: Neh. 10-11

May 29: Neh. 12-13

May 30: Esther 1-5

May 31: Esther 6-10

June 1: Job 1-4

June 2: Job 5- 7

June 3: Job 8-10

June 4: Job 11-13

June 5: Job 14-16

June 6: Job 17-20

June 7: Job 21-23

June 8: Job 24-28

June 9: Job 29-31

June 10: Job 32-34

June 11: Job 35-37

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May Birthdays:

2 Benjamin Schielke

6 Haley Mitchell

21 Joshua Rohloff

29 Cheryl Foltz



May Anniversaries:

18 Bo and Sandee Hill

23 Gary and Sharon Rohloff

25 Don and Cheryl Foltz

30 James and Suzanne Richardson



DIVING INTO THE



TEN COMMANDMENTS

Join us for our "Diving into the Ten Commandments" VBS as we discover the meaning behind each of the Ten Commandments and learn that they are good gifts from God!



K-5th grades

Register @ viclutheranchurch.org/vbs