

Audio Teaching Sermon

Message #31

Christianity vs Gnosticism

[A Intro – Pastor Jefferson 0:00 thru 1:16]

A big hello to all you listeners out there. It is my prayer that you're being abundantly fed from out of God's word and that these audio sermons are making positive changes to your life. This is Pastor Jefferson here and I'd like to welcome you to **Message #31** of this audio teaching series. Today, in this message we will be continuing along with our topic of how we receive God's word. And, how it is absolutely critical that we protect ourselves from any counterfeit versions of God's truth, as there are people who will try to lead us away from the path of righteousness. At the end of the last message, I was finishing up with Paul's letter to the Corinthian church. In **2nd Corinthians 6:17**, the Apostle Paul was urging them to come out from the midst of the teachings of the Pharisees and to be separate. He further urged them to not allow themselves to be intellectually touched or exposed to anything evil. The promise which Jesus mentions at the end of the verse is something we should all be daily striving for.

[B And Jesus Will Receive Us 1:16 thru 2:38]

He says, *"And I will receive you."* The meaning of the verse is quite clear. If we will come out from the midst of the **MDP's**, and stop drinking their evil laden Kool-aide, then we will have been successful in heeding the command of Jesus, and thus, will be warmly received and welcomed by our Savior. The word we see for **will receive** is [1] *ees-DEHX-oh-my-ee* and means *'to receive, to accept or to take in.'* Notice that Jesus is making a promise here. It's a promise we can each take to the *bank of amazing grace*. The word **receive** is defined to mean, *'to come into possession of, or to acquire.'* The thought conveys the action of receiving or accepting something or someone into one's presence. It implies a welcoming attitude and an openness to embrace what is being offered or who is being received. It's a very big promise. But we must be willing to not only come out from among them—the **MDT's**—but also to have the courage to completely separate ourselves from them.

[C Do Not Become Unequally Yoked 2:38 thru 3:59]

Jesus says He will warmly welcome us, but only if we depart from the teachings of the **Pharisees**. Look back to **2 Corinthians 6:14**. Jesus is telling us to, *"Not become unequally*

yoked together with unbelievers." The one word used for **unequally yoked together** is [1] **het-ter-roz-GOON-tes** and means **'to be yoked together with one different from oneself.'** The difference refers to having a stark incompatibility with someone else. It refers to what amounts to a spiritual mismatch. In ancient agricultural societies, a **yoke** was **'a wooden beam used to pair two animals together for plowing a field or pulling a load.'** The animals needed to be of similar strength and type to work effectively. Have you ever tried riding on a tandem bicycle with a person of inferior strength? The truth is the stronger person winds up making most of the effort. As a kid, dad used to tell us not to hang with other kids who were known troublemakers. The result was their bad behavior would always wind up pulling us down.

[**D** **Treachery in Unbelief** **3:59 thru 5:13**]

Look now at the word for **unbelievers**. It is [5] **AP-pis-toy-is** and each time it is used it is talking about people who are **'unbelieving, faithless and unfaithful.'** The actual definition of the word conveys a sense of treachery. The word **treachery** means a **'violation of allegiance or of faith and confidence.'** Therefore, it's not referring to people who have little interest in or possess no knowledge of Jesus Christ; rather it is specifically discussing those who outright reject the message of the Gospel or who are untrustworthy with their handling of it. Jesus is not talking about the everyday people who we work with, who live in our neighborhoods or towns, or who we see in social circles. No! He is not talking about folks who reside outside of the church. He is being much more specific. Just as we discussed the narrow gate versus the wide freeway access, Jesus is talking about the people who have been exposed to the teaching of the Gospel from inside the walls of the sanctuary.

[**E** **The Quiet Voice of Jesus Muted** **5:13 thru 6:57**]

Rather than compare us to the rest of humanity, Jesus is contrasting us with folks who call themselves Christians! He is telling us that we must be separated from those who are **MDP's** in order that we can effectively be taught by *Him*. When we pay attention to these false teachers who spout manmade precepts I call **Christian Mythology** in the place of rigorous Biblical doctrine, the quiet sound of the voice of Jesus gets drowned out. Listen friends, I see evidence of this every single day. Our natural instinct is to follow the path of sin. Until we are fully fledged, that being completely adopted into God's family, we are

yet slaves to sin who remain under the influence of the domain of evil. Even as a devout fledgling follower of Jesus, we can still be tempted and led away onto paths we shouldn't be traveling. I hear from people all the time telling me how much they pray and read their Bible. Hey, I got some bad news for you. Prayer is a one-way communication channel, where you are doing all the talking and none of the listening. And while it might make you feel better; it's not doing you any heavenly good. And as far as reading the Bible, I've already established in these audio sermons, that it amounts to what is essentially a waste of your time, apart from getting instruction directly from Jesus in concert with discernment being delivered by the Holy Spirit.

[**F** Christianity vs Gnosticism 6:57 thru 8:21]

One of the ways the MDP's try and get us off the path to holiness is through a modern variation on the philosophy called **gnosticism**. This is defined as **'the thought and practice especially of various cults of late pre-Christian and early Christian centuries distinguished by the conviction that all matter is evil, and that emancipation, or true spiritual freedom comes through gnosis.'** Many of the deuterocanonical books written during the first three centuries after the death and resurrection of Christ were produced by such people. Now, folks will tell you that there is no such thing as a Christian form of Gnosticism. They will state that both systems—Christianity and Gnosticism—are mutually exclusive in their beliefs. That would indeed be true if the strict teachings of Christ were taught from every pulpit. The sad fact is that most pulpits do not dig into the deeper messages of the Bible. So, what do folks who follow gnosis claim to believe? **Gnosis** is defined as **'esoteric knowledge of spiritual truth held to be essential to salvation.'**

[**G** For the Specially Initiated Alone 8:21 thru 9:52]

The word **esoteric** is defined to mean **'designed for or understood by the specially initiated alone.'** "Wait, a minute," I can hear some of you saying. "This kind of sounds like what the Bible speaks about its interpretation. Only those who have the Holy Spirit can properly understand the Scriptures." That is 100% true. As usual, Satan is quite clever and so it is in this case; the devil lies in the details of **Gnosticism**, as it were. **First** off, it is the knowledge of **Biblical truth**—the Word of God—which is essential to achieving salvation. Without this knowledge, how would someone even know about Jesus, God or salvation? The difference is, Gnostics teach that it is this knowledge itself what achieves salvation.

They bypass the role that Jesus plays in the process—which is always a hallmark of satanic doctrine. Whereas, the Bible says that it is this Godly knowledge is what allows for the creation and growth of a personal relationship with Christ. He is the One who informs His heavenly Father, and it is God Almighty Himself who then delivers salvation through His Son, Jesus. Gnostics on the other hand, claim to possess an elevated knowledge of a “**higher truth**” known only to a certain few.

[**H** Gnosticism Means “to Know” 9:52 thru 11:27]

As with the Pharisees, the title **Gnosticism** comes from a Greek word, **GHIN-nos-ko**, which not surprisingly means ‘**to know**.’ The problem is Gnostics lay claim that their mystical knowledge is acquired from some unspecified higher plane of existence. And as with the Pharisees, Gnostics see themselves as a privileged class, elevated above everyone else due their claim of having a higher and deeper knowledge of God. The **2nd major problem** with Gnosticism is that they assert that all physical matter is inherently evil, while everything spiritual is good. They assert that anything done in the body—even the very worst of sins—have no meaning because real life exists in the spirit realm alone. Just as we learned in the last message, everything which God created is good. Jesus paid the price for all of humanity’s sin with His life. So, it is within the spiritual realm where the real war is being waged over man’s souls. It is anything but good. Recall that Jesus said in **Ephesians 6:12** that ¹ “Our struggle ² is not against flesh and blood, ³ but against the rulers, ⁴ against the authorities, ⁵ against the powers of this dark world and ⁶ against the spiritual forces of evil ⁷ in the heavenly realms.”

[**I** Lost Books of the Bible 11:27 thru 13:13]

So how do they manage to hold on to such dissenting views from Scripture? The answer is the Gnostics, use a variety of early heretical writings known as the **Gnostic gospels**, a collection of forgeries claiming to be “**lost books of the Bible**.” Thankfully, the early church fathers were nearly unanimous in recognizing these Gnostic scrolls as fraudulent forgeries. This is because the supposed gospels espouse false doctrines about God, Jesus Christ, the plan of salvation, and nearly every tenet of Christian belief. There are countless contradictions between the Gnostic “gospels” and the Bible. Even when the so-called modern Christian Gnostics quote from our Bible, they intentionally rewrite and misquote verses and alter certain parts of verses, in order to harmonize them with their

philosophy, a practice which is strictly forbidden by Scripture. Gnosticism is based on a mystical, intuitive, subjective, inward, and emotional approach to truth which is not new at all. It's actually the oldest practice, going all the way back to the Garden of Eden. That's where Satan questioned what words God actually spoke before Eve. And since she hadn't heard them directly from the LORD, she was able to be deceived. Satan convinced first Eve and then used her to persuade Adam to reject God's Word. Instead, they wound up accepting a lie. Satan operates in that exact same way today. Gnostics are but one example.

[**J** **Test and Hold Tightly** **13:13 thru 14:29**]

The smart play for those who are genuinely seeking Christ is to follow the advice of the Apostle **Paul** who said in **1st Thessalonians 5:21**, ¹ *“However, test all things.* ² *To the good* ³ *hold firmly.”* And this is what we do in Discipleship Training. The word we see in **thought 1** for **test** is [3] **dok-im-MAT-ze-tah** and translates **‘to prove, to examine or to approve.’** It brings along with it the requirement to test something as a demonstration to prove whether it is indeed acceptable and satisfactory or not. We are to compare everything we see and hear coming from the Biblical realm directly to the Word of God. If something is not supported by that Truth, or conflicts with it in any manner, we simply disregard it if it didn't stand up to scrutiny. In **thought 3** we see we are to hold firmly to what is good. The word for **hold fast** is [3] **kat-EKT-te** and means **‘to restrain, to possess or to keep possession of.’**

[**K** **Poison Pills are Fatal Flaws** **14:29 thru 16:06**]

Jesus is commanding us to hold tightly to His teachings. We are to never let them get away from our intellectual grasp. These two words we just discussed from this verse are only used **3 times**, and in each instance they are discussing always taking a **critical examination** of spiritual things. We are to cling tightly to the teachings of Jesus and reject all the rest. God is aware of Satan's continuous efforts at trying to deceive us. He is ever attempting to trip us up by polluting our spiritual understanding of God's word. I can promise you that every single satanically driven attempt to steer us off the holy path has a fatal flaw. It is almost as if every strategy Satan employs has a poison pill inside. They are actually fairly easy to spot, but only if you're a careful student of the teachings of the LORD. For example, none of the books not making it into the Bible contain any genuine

prophecy, unless first copied from one of the official New Testament books. All the rest of their prophecy is entirely bogus. And, just as with God’s word, they plagiarized the claim of needing special dispensation to understand their texts. When Gnostics lay claim to having some mystical power to be able to do so—they’ve thus created a clear counterfeit to the Holy Spirit.

[**L** **Mary Did Not Write a Gospel** 16:06 thru 17:16]

Also, when these books are closely examined, they lack the widespread use of words seen only one time in Scripture, something I daily demonstrate in nearly every message. The blockbuster movie, “**The Da Vinci Code**,” was based on a Gnostic gospel allegedly written by Mary. It would have us to believe that Jesus settled somewhere in the south of France, where He lived out His life raising kids and having a normal life. All of which conflicts with the Biblical statement of His ascension to heaven with over 500 witnesses in attendance. Obviously, there is zero proof that Jesus did not ascend as the movie plainly states. Only the cleverly written tale filled with countless rumors that He did not. True followers never need to be inventive when it comes to answering tough Biblical questions. There is no need for us to create theories or invent notions as to what really ever happened. The Bible gives us a formula which unbelievers cannot access.

[**Z** **Some Final Thoughts** 17:16 thru 18:38]

We see in **Luke 12:12**, where he wrote, ¹ “*For the Holy Spirit will instruct you*” ² *at that time* ³ *what must be said.*” And the Holy Spirit does it in the same way as when Jesus promised that He would bring His words to the minds of men who wrote down our Biblical text. Here’s the problem. This statement only applies to those who are either on the road to holiness or have been adopted into God’s family—something I refer to as being “**fully fledged**.” Modern day Christianity tries to paint a picture where everyone who speaks a 30 second prayer asking Jesus for salvation is then at that moment saved. As this message concludes, I ask you—does that in any logical sense agree with what we’ve been learning from Scripture? If so, then why does Satan work so hard at distorting God’s Word? And, why will Christ send away persons who preached, cast our demons, and did miracles in His name? **So, until next time my beloved, this has been Pastor Jefferson, speaking in God’s Holy name and for His glory alone. Amen!**