

1. Last week, I taught 1Ti 6:17, 18 and 19 and when the clock tolled noon, I was in the process of teaching the *Doctrine of Gnosticism*.
2. Before I return to the study of Paul's charge to Timothy, I want to give you opportunity to use 1Jo 1:9 as may or may not be necessary.
3. Here is an expanded translation of 1Ti 6:17-19.

Expanded Translation

1Ti 6:17 Instruct those who are rich in this present age of the church not to be conceited nor to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth; but instead to put their trust in God who richly provides all things for us to enjoy;
1Ti 6:18 additionally, urge those who are wealthy to do good, and to be ready to distribute to those less fortunate while also communicating what they know about the source of their wealth.
1Ti 6:19 Treasuring up for themselves a firm foundation, so that they may start living their eternal life.

4. Let's see what we can learn from verse twenty.

KJV-New Sentence

1Ti 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

NIV

1Ti 6:20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge,

1. As we noted last week the best way to teach this verse is to review how the "godless chatter ... falsely called knowledge" attacked the early Christian Church:
2. I want to review some of that learned last week and then begin new material on page three.

The Doctrine of Gnosticism

Preface

1. Gnosticism is not directly mentioned by name in the New Testament. Nevertheless, its leaven constituted a most serious peril to the apostolic church.

2. In the 2nd century that strange movement, partly intellectual, partly fanatical spread with the swiftness of an epidemic over the church ... Most expositors agree it was Gnosticism referred to by Jude in Jude verses three and four.

Jude 3 I had begun a pastoral letter to you when it was reported to me that certain ungodly men had crept into your local assembly spreading false doctrines. I therefore felt obliged to address this matter with a special admonition and exhort you that you earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered not only to you but to saints all over the empire.

Jude 4 Certain heresies have abounded in many of our local assemblies turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

Definition

1. Regarding the general definition of Gnosticism a few authorities may be cited. In his book *Early Church History*, Dr. Gwatkin (c. 313) has written:

“Gnosticism may be provisionally described as a number of schools of philosophy, oriental in general character, but taking in the idea of a redemption through Christ, and further modified in different sects by a third element, which may be Judaism, Hellenism, or Christianity.

The Gnostics only embraced the idea of redemption through Christ, not the full Christian doctrine, for they made it rather redemption ... from matter, rather than a redemption of mankind from sin.”

2. Dr. Orr writes in his book *The Early Church*:

“Gnosticism may be described generally as the ... product of the blending of certain Christian ideas-particularly that of redemption through Christ with speculation and imaginings derived from a medley of sources. It involves, as the name denotes, a claim to ‘knowledge,’ knowledge of a kind of which the ordinary believer was incapable, and in the possession of which ‘salvation’ in the full sense consisted. This knowledge of which the Gnostic boasted ... was grounded partly on the philosophic creed in which Greeks and Romans had taken refuge.

“For a long time, the pagan beliefs in the panoply of gods had ceased to be considered a legitimate truth by thoughtful men. Hercules, Zeus, Juno, Hera, Poseidon, Odysseus, Cupid and Eros had been displaced by various creeds derived from philosophical speculation. One such popular creed was Gnosticism.

Nature of Gnosticism

1. Gnostics lived in the conviction that they possessed a secret and mysterious knowledge; in no way accessible to those outside the Gnostic fraternity, which was not to be proved or propagated, but believed in by only the initiated. Its secrets were anxiously guarded and thought to be beyond the average believer. ... It was laid out in mystic writings, which were only in the possession of their fraternal order.

2. God was thought to work by means of emanations extending between God and the visible universe. They thought God could not work within an evil environment such as an evil world, therefore, his agents called emanations were sent out to collectively provide a solution.

2.1 A denial of the true humanity of Christ, (the Gnostic looked upon the earthly life of Christ and especially on His sufferings on the cross as unreal); even today this belief system is called Docetism, an early heresy that Christ was not a real person.

2.2 A true Gnostic denied the existence of a Supreme God, and the denial of the free will of man.

2.3 Rather than Christ being the only way, the Gnostic saw the merging of various religions as an act of a rational and orderly God.

2.4 The Scriptures of the Old Testament were ascribed as an emanation from the Demiurge or inferior creator of an evil world and not the true God. These ideas soon attacked the early Church. In early Gnostic literature the Apostle John was singled out as a special opponent of Gnostic heresies.

3. Gnosticism in the Christian Church

3.1 In the New Testament and the Apostolic Age

3.2 The germ of Gnosticism in the Christian church made its appearance in the apostolic age, and is referred to by Paul in several of his epistles, notably in that to the Colossians, 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus. Early Gnostic literature describes the resistance and criticism of the Apostle John at the end of his career. Gnosticism is also referred to by the apostle Peter in 2Pe 1:16 as “cunningly devised fables.”

3.2.1 In Colossians a great deal is said regarding false teaching. Their speculations led to the worship of angels in contrast to the worship of Christ. They taught esoteric exclusiveness wholly opposed to the universality of the gospel, and to doctrines injurious to Christian freedom. These tenets are identical with the more fully developed Gnosticism of the generation succeeding and following.

3.2.2 Their false teaching continued the same errors pervading the early Gnostic mind: namely, that there could be no connection between the highest spiritual agency that is God and gross corporeal matter.

3.2.3 Some were so bold as to claim God could not create such a worldly mess, therefore emanations had to be used. Examples of what developed were endless but included such emanations as: Adam, Moses, Christ, Buddha, the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Mormons, Gandhi, Joseph Smith, Mohammed and the writings of Mary Baker Patterson Glover Eddy. From this damaging error, that sin is inherent in the material substance of the body, the only way by which perfection could be reached was to punish the body and thus self-flagellation became a tenant of Gnosticism.

3.2.4 Through the infliction of pain and the mortification of the flesh the pure spirit of man might become like God. This idea was apparently borrowed from certain tenants of various eastern religions. This mortification of the flesh has insidiously appeared in various religions.

3.2.5 Many ascetic practices were afterward taught by various Gnostic sects not only in Colossae but apparently in Laodicea and Hierapolis. In the book of Colossians Paul urged that his letter to the local church located in Colossae be read in the local churches at Laodicea and Hierapolis.

3.2.6 The methods which Paul adopts is not so much to demolish error, as to establish the contrary truth of the Gospel that in Christ dwells not merely some or even much of the fullness of God, but all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; Christ the God of providence, the upholder of all things, in whom matter and all creatures and all events "consist" and have their being.

3.2.7 Peter in his 2nd epistle to the Christians in Asia Minor cautions against "cunningly devised fables."

2Pe 1:16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

4. Christ the Reconciler has reconciled us unto God through His sacrifice on the cross. Gnostic error crumbled into decay and vanished until the 20th century when it again made a feeble attempt to capture a heretical following.

5. Gnosticism is but one of many false doctrines upon which false religions have been built.

6. Now let's see what we can learn from our *Doctrine of False Communicators*.

Doctrine of False Communicators

1. The Scriptures are replete with teachings about false communicators.

1.1 False communicators are mentioned in Scripture by various names: false prophets, wolves in sheep's clothing, Satan's ministers, wells without water, hireling prophets, profane and vain babblers.

False Prophets:

Jer 14:14 Then the LORD said unto me, The prophets **prophecy lies** in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophecy unto you a **false vision** and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their heart.

Mat 7:15 Beware of **false prophets**, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Mat 24:11 And many **false prophets** shall rise, and shall deceive many ...
Mat 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

Mar 13:22 For false Christs and **false prophets** shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect.

Luk 6:26 Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the **false prophets**.

2Pe 2:1 But there were **false prophets** also among the people, even as there shall be **false teachers** among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

1Jo 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many **false prophets** are gone out into the world.

Wolves

Mat 10:16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of **wolves**: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Luk 10:3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among **wolves**.

Grievous Wolves

Acts 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing from Ephesus shall **grievous wolves** enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

False Apostles

2Co 11:13 For such men are **false apostles**, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ.

Angels of Light

2Co 11:14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an **angel of light**.

2Co 11:15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Wells Without Water

2Pe 2:17 These are **wells without water**, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever.

2Pe 2:18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

2Pe 2:19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

2Pe 2:20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

2Pe 2:21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

Hirelings

Joh 10:12 But he that is an **hireling**, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

Joh 10:13 The **hireling** fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

Profane and Vain Babblers

1Ti 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding **profane and vain babblings**, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

2Ti 2:16 But shun **profane and vain babblings**: for they will increase unto more ungodliness.

2. A few Old Testament examples:

Satan convinced one-third of the angels to follow him in his rebellion and terrible act of pride.

Isa 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

Isa 14:13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

Rev 12:4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

3. Satan was a deft false communicator when he possessed the snake, a creature originally created as a thing of beauty but later cursed to its present state because of his seduction of Eve.

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

Gen 3:2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,

Gen 3:3 but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'

Gen 3:4 "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.

Gen 3:5 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Gen 3:6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

4. Satan was also a major player in the slaying of Abel.

Gen 4:2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

Gen 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

Gen 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

Gen 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

Gen 4:6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

Gen 4:7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

Gen 4:8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

Joh 8:44 "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

5. There were false communicators who no doubt tried to dissuade Noah in building the ark. As John Grey Barnhouse has said in his book entitled *Genesis*:

"We must realize it had never rained upon the earth. Rain was one of the things not seen as yet. What a fool Noah must have seemed to those who lived around him, when he warned of a change in nature that was one of the greatest in geological history."

6. There were false communicators who rose up against Moses.

Exo 17:2 Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?

Exo 17:3 And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?

Exo 17:4 And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.

Exo 17:5 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go.

Exo 17:6 Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

Num 16:2 Now Korah and his men rose up against Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:

Num 16:3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

Num 16:4 And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face:

Num 16:5 And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow the LORD will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him.

Num 16:6 This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company;

Num 16:7 And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD tomorrow: and it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.

Num 16:8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi:

Num 16:9 Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?

Num 16:10 And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?

Num 16:11 For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?

Num 16:31 As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart

Num 16:32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, with their households and all Korah's men and all their possessions.

Num 16:33 They went down alive into the grave, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community.

Num 16:34 At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, "The earth is going to swallow us too!"

Num 16:35 And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.

7. Aaron could not handle the Exodus generation in Moses' absence. He became a false communicator by default, forsaking his "responsibilities as High Priest."

Exo 32:1 When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."

Exo 32:2 Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me."

Exo 32:3 So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron.

Exo 32:4 He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

Exo 32:5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, "Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD."

Exo 32:6 So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

8. In Numbers chapters 22 through 25 we find the terrible example of Balaam. So, evil was this man, he became the New Testament example for all false teachers; especially those with improper motivations.

End Lesson

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