

Contemporary Expressions of GNOSTIC CHRISTOLOGY

The following passages bring important warnings, basically stating that in the days prior to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, deceptions will be common — Mt. 24:4,5,11,23,24; II Thes. 2:3,9,10-12; I Tim. 4:1-3; II Tim. 4:3; and, in support of the specific warning from John concerning the spirit and message of antichrist, I John 2:18-23 and 4:1-3. It is this particular false teaching concerning Christ upon which we will focus in this handout. This cultural phenomenon is nothing short of awesome, for multiple reasons! Read on.

The *New Gnostic / Neo-Gnostic* movement is now a part of mainstream culture. I hope we clearly discern the most recent expressions of this old but dangerous lie—popularly reintroduced through the New Age Movement in the 1970s and 1980s. This is not a passing fad within culture. These ideas persist (and flourish) today. These Neo-Gnostic DOCTRINES, even on the most basic issues, are now wide spread and widely embraced. Below is one definition (that) contemporary expressions of this movement offer concerning “Christ.” Please note how well the I John passages apply!

A comparison between the Christ of the Bible and the Christ of Gnosticism is mind-boggling. In practically every category (e.g. – position about Being—ontology, accomplishments, etc.), the New Age or Gnostic Christ is exactly opposite that of the Biblical Christ. The following examples only scratch the surface.

Differences concerning the “Being” of Christ (Who He/It is in essence)

Even in this most basic category, you will notice we had to distinguish between “He” and “It.” This is because the Gnostic or New Age Christ is defined not as a person, but as a thing, a force, an attitude of mind, an all-present energy throughout the entire universe. Here’s how a few who could be classified to fall within the Neo-Gnostic movement define Christ.

Paramahansa Yogananda (1893 – 1952), a very influential Hindu prophet who was very instrumental in spreading Hindu philosophy in America and whose writings have been foundational to many New Age writers, expresses this faulty view of Christ in his book, Man’s Eternal Quest (pp. 334 – 336):

“... We are a part of the divine Christ Consciousness present in all creation. Each individual intelligence is a part of that vast Christ intelligence. ... Jesus, Krishna, Buddha, Babaji – all are Christs. They had expanded their consciousness to receive Christ Consciousness. St. John declared: ‘As many as received him [the Christ Consciousness that was manifested in Jesus], to them gave he power to become sons of God.’ ... You do not imagine it, you feel it – this love that Jesus, Krishna, all of the great ones manifested – this universal intelligence and love which is called Christ Consciousness.”

Norman Paulsen, in his book, Christ Consciousness, states that all who possess Christ Consciousness share some basic common beliefs.

“All cases of Christ Consciousness basically state the same facts: (1) The vision of the incredible brilliance, much akin to our own physical sun; (2) The face-to-face meeting with a divine intelligence which permeates the whole vessel of the creation; (3) The absolute knowing that one is immortal and that any further pursuit of salvation is unnecessary, as one already has it; (4) The elimination of the sense of sin, and the full understanding of the law of cause and effect which binds thoughts and images together in the creation.” (pg. xxvii)

David Spangler, one of the early Neo-Gnostic (or New Age) prophets to those in the “Christian” west, gives this fascinating description—definition if you will—concerning *Christ* in his book, Reflections On The Christ.

*“What is the Christ? Within all life there exists a quality, an energy, which has as its basic characteristic irresistible growth, irresistible and inevitable expression of divinity. It is a quality which says that whatever form I am encased in I will not be held prisoner by that form, but I will transform it into a greater form. I will use all life, all experiences as stepping stones to greater revelations of divinity. **The Christ is the basic evolutionary force within creation.**”* (pg. 13; emphasis ours)

Differences concerning the “Ministry” of Christ (What He/It has done)

Here again, every basic action of the Christ of Gnosticism is twisted into something radically different than the work of the Biblical Christ. While many authors could be cited, David Spangler’s Reflections On The Christ will serve our purposes here because he targets some of the most basic and important events in the life of Christ.

Concerning the birth of Christ, Spangler writes:

“The true birth of the Christ was not the birth of Jesus. Jesus was an individual who himself had to recapitulate certain stages. ... He had to in his consciousness touch this Christ pattern. ... When he [Jesus] became awakened [tapped into the Christ pattern] there was sufficient power generated with the race itself to lift that awakened state still further. It made it possible for him then to become the Anointed One, for there to be in this case the reverse action of what happened with Buddha, a downward pull in which the Christ, or this cosmic force literally entered the vehicles of Jesus and took them over, and used those vehicles as a means of making a very important link with the Earth. The word ‘Christos’ referred to the Anointed

One. This is exactly what happened; he was anointed with this cosmic power. He became the incarnation of this power on Earth. This being the actual birth of the Christ, Jesus had to manifest his own Christ consciousness before this could occur, because there has to be this resonating link.” (pg. 6)

Once again, the man Jesus is separated from the Christ! This is one of the basic indicators of the spirit of antichrist, for I John 2:22,23 and 4:2,3 specifically state,

“Who is a liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either. ... By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”

Spangler continues, this time addressing the death of Christ:

“...This is really the true crucifixion. It was not so much the hanging Jesus on the physical cross, but it was the entry of the cosmic Christ into the physical, etheric, mental, emotional energy patterns of the planetary body itself. From that point onward the Christ was no longer an educative force standing outside the planet, beckoning evolution forward. It became a very powerful force operative within the very structure of the planet itself, on really the lowest level, that is, right down to the nuclear levels, atomic levels.” (pg. 7)

I hope you are not belittling the false messages above! While they do sound off the wall, you would be saddened by how many people embrace these doctrines of Christ today – many of them actually believing they are Christ; some having stated the very warning of Matthew 24:5 to me. “I am the Christ,” they have exuberantly testified. Some years ago I sat down and wept after having just made contact with one of the New Age (once again, very similar to Gnosticism in many respects) students with whom I had been sharing for three years. It was so overwhelming that I had a hard time getting through the Bible study on Truth Foundations the next hour. Why? Because Sean was in such a state of confusion concerning the channeled revelation that he and Kendra had bought into that I had a difficult time even following what he was trying to say. It’s so sad!

We are in the concluding times of the end—just before our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will return in glory. There are many false christs, false teachers and major deceptions everywhere! Are we discerning our day and the expressions of antichrist today—e.g., the many expressions of false christology? Are we mentally prepared for the days ahead when the people of the world who embrace this spirit of antichrist will no longer endure / put up with sound doctrine ... and those who proclaim it?

One concluding thought:

Erwin Lutzer writes in his book, CHRIST Among Other gods: A Defense of Christ in An Age of Tolerance, “The New Age [and one could surely include the Neo-Gnostic movement within this group] has taken the Christ of the New Testament and sculptured Him (with verbal hammer and chisel) into a completely new image which is to their liking. This new sculpture is able to sit on the same display shelf with the sculptures of Buddha, Krishna, and other holy men. The tools used to remake Christ into this image are,

- 1) discovering ‘hidden writings’ that purport to contain the long-lost truths of the cosmic Christ;
- 2) transferring primary allegiance from Scriptural revelations to new revelations received through channelers and psychics; and,
- 3) developing an esoteric system of interpreting the Bible that enables the reader to seek hidden meanings so Jesus can be made to appear as a New Age evangelist.” (pg. 116; bracket comment ours)

Truth Foundations are of eternal significance! Truth matters, on this topic, eternally so.

At the same time these epistemological tools are being offered as substitute sources which speak contrary to the historical, Biblical Jesus, other efforts on other fronts are attacking the very source from which the true revelation concerning Jesus Christ comes—namely, the Word of God, the Bible. For example, the Jesus Seminar scholars, especially promoted by the secular media (interesting, isn’t it?), continue to “deceive,” or, being more politically correct, “shape the perspectives of many.” Some of the Gnostic scholars of our day, promoted by media, including big-screen efforts like *Stigmata* and *The Da Vinci Code*, are also making a huge cultural impact toward redefining the Biblical Christ of history. But on what firm grounds do they do so?

What a day in which to live! May we persist in His Truths which alone set free. Let’s remember our Truth Foundations.

“For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (I Cor. 3:11; NKJV)

“If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:31b, 32; NKJV)

“Jesus said to him [Thomas], ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’” (John 14:6; NKJV). Later in this same Gospel, Thomas responded in worship as he fell to his knees and said (after seeing the resurrected Christ), “My Lord and my God!” Surely this is not the same individual who wrote the *Gospel of Thomas*.