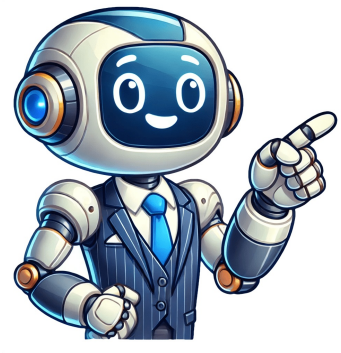


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Gnosticism practice problems

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According to Gnosticism, each person possesses a portion of God—the greatest good or a divine spark—within them that has descended into their physical form from the immaterial universe. All physical matter is liable to rot, decompose, and die. See the fact file below for more information about Gnosticism, or you can download our 24-page Gnosticism worksheet pack to utilize within the classroom or home environment.

Key Facts & Information

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Because they were made by a lesser being, those bodies and the material universe are evil. The parts of God need knowledge (gnosis) to be informed of their true position because they are imprisoned in the material world but unaware of its state. It is believed that the demiurge is identical to the God of Abraham. The demiurge may be perceived as evil or occasionally as imperfect, yet it is trying its best. Gnosticism is reported to have been practiced by some cults and sects, primarily in the few hundred years before and after the birth of Christ.

HISTORY

Up until the conversion of Roman emperor Constantine the Great in 312 CE, there was no central authority during the first three centuries of Christianity. Various viewpoints were taught in Christian communities.

2nd CENTURY CE.

Some organizations, now commonly referred to as Gnostic Christians, asserted to possess "secret knowledge" regarding the nature of the cosmos, the character of Christ, and the significance of his earthly presence to believers in the second century CE. A collection of Christian thinkers who are now collectively referred to as the Church Fathers—including Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and others—wrote extensively against these Gnostic Christians around the middle of the second century CE. The many schools of philosophy educated both the Gnostics and the Church Fathers. Many of the schools adhered to Plato's beliefs and his worldview, which were developed between 428 and 347 BCE. Since "god" (or "the highest good") resided outside of the physical universe and was perfect, he would not have made an imperfect world, according to Plato. He proposed the presence of a secondary force called the "Demi-Urge," responsible for generating matter, the basis of the physical universe. This viewpoint was supported by most Gnostic systems. Gnostics pondered questions such as "Who am I?" "Where did I come from?" "What is the meaning of life?" "Why am I here?" and "What is my true self?"

Existentialism, a contemporary school of philosophy, is similar to the Gnostics in their consideration of "how and why do we exist?"

THEOLOGY

The profound dualism that Gnostics advocated for governs the universe. The soul/spark vs the flesh, light versus darkness, was how this was polarized. In a moment of weakness, Sophia ("wisdom"), one of the archons, gave birth to the Demi-Urge, who later fashioned a physical universe that included people. The reasoning principle that linked the ultimate god to the physical world was known as the logos (Latin for "word") in philosophical thinking. A mythical "pre-Adam and Eve" existed before their emergence as people in the Garden of Eden, according to several systems. According to Gnostic thought, physical creation led to the fall. Gnostics preached androgyny, or the merging of genders, in accord with the "oneness" of the everlasting God. After the fall, the pre-existent Christ, the logos, descended to earth in the form of a person to instruct mankind on how to revert to this primordial androgyny and reconcile with God. Humans' internal divine spark had dozed off, and was unaware of its beginnings. The idea was similar to Zen Buddhism in that it required awakening humans to the presence of this element of god within them. The archons' authority would come to an end once this is completed.

THE ORIGIN OF ORTHODOXY / HERESY

The twin ideas of orthodoxy and heresy were created by the Church Fathers in response to Gnostic beliefs. The ancient world did not have these ideas. In the Mediterranean Basin, where there are thousands of distinct native cults, there is no centralized authority that dictates what individuals are to believe. Heresy (derived from the Greek term *haeresis*, "a school of thought") and orthodoxy (the "correct belief") are two sides of the same coin. The Church Fathers labeled the Gnostics as heretics for the following reasons: The Gnostics emphasized that the true God is a higher God of unadulterated essence and love rather than the Creator God. Some Gnostic ideologies claimed that Satan himself was a part of the malevolent God of Israel. Therefore, it was decided that the laws given by the God of Israel were unjust. Gnostics asserted that Jesus himself was the source of their teachings. The majority of Gnostic systems do not believe that Jesus took on a human form. The salvation of an individual was seen as more important by Gnostics than that of the community as a whole. One's spark, now at home after successfully navigating the upper atmosphere, merged with the godhead; in some systems, one became God. For Gnostics, each person is the kingdom.

GNOSTIC RITUALS

They received baptism and took part in communion as Gnostic Christians. Gnostics did attempt to advance female pastors during the celebration of the Eucharist, which caused them to quarrel with the Church Fathers. In the Gnostic text *Exegesis of the Soul*, the terminology and metaphors of marriage were utilized in a union with Christ, making it the most contentious of Gnostic rituals. "The Bridal Chamber," where one acquired "Christhood." The schools of thought advocated prioritizing the soul above the body (*apathea*, "no passions") and against letting bodily inclinations control one's actions. Such instructions were interpreted as asceticism (Greek for "discipline"), as in the physical discipline of athletics. Gnostic Christians literally believed they could control the body. They were the first to adhere to chastity (never engaging in sexual activity) and celibacy (not entering into a marriage contract). The old life cycle was disrupted in this way; divine sparks would no longer be imprisoned in corporeal bodies. Gnostics employed the literary device of allegory, just like everyone else who had received philosophical training. The majority of the Gnostic literature, however, can appear exceedingly arcane and puzzling to the common reader if they are not familiar with the allegorical symbols or meaning. They had study groups, but the areas of the universe where power gradients lived were what they studied.

A Gnostic's spark or soul was released from his wicked body upon death, but it then had to return home.

GNOSTIC WRITINGS

The canonical gospels of the New Testament are distinct from the gnostic gospels. The teachings of Jesus that clarify the reality of the true God are frequently all that are included in them instead of a narrative or a story.

GOSPEL OF TRUTH.

Valentinus, a Gnostic teacher from Alexandria who was later excommunicated from Rome (around 150 CE), was considered to have composed *The Gospel of Truth*. One of the more spiritual Gnostic gospels, he gave life to abstract concepts like Error, Fear, and Hope. The manifestation of hope is what Christ is said to be.

GOSPEL OF MARY MAGDALENE.

The disciples are disappointed and leaderless following Jesus' death. Mary is asked by one of the disciples to provide whatever information she has, as it was known that Jesus had a particular relationship with her. Mary then says that she received a revelation from Jesus after his resurrection.

GOSPEL OF THOMAS.

There are 114 logia, or sayings of Jesus, in the Gospel of Thomas, which claims to be authored by the twin of Jesus. Many of the classic parables and teachings were familiar to the author, but the gospel also challenges the conventional view of Jesus as the Messiah, equating him instead with an enlightened philosopher.

GOSPEL OF PHILIP.

Gnostic attempts to modify the proto-orthodox doctrines of the Church Fathers can be seen in *The Gospel of Philip*. This gospel emphasized Christ's twofold nature: He was both the pre-existent redeemer figure and the human Jesus of Nazareth throughout the ministry.

GOSPEL OF JUDAS.

This gospel asserts that Jesus gave Judas the order to betray him, in contrast to the canonical gospels, which portray Judas as a traitor. The genuine message, which Jesus taught to Judas, was not passed along to the other disciples. Gnosticism Worksheets

This fantastic bundle includes everything you need to know about Gnosticism across 24 in-depth pages. These ready-to-use worksheets are perfect for teaching kids about Gnosticism. According to Gnosticism, each person possesses a portion of God—the greatest good or a divine spark—within them that has descended into their physical form from the immaterial universe. All physical matter is liable to rot, decompose, and die. Complete List of Included Worksheets

Below is a list of all the worksheets included in this document.

Gnosticism Facts

The reason

FAQs

Be kind

Gnos-pell

Let me tell you a story

Ask-gnostic

Who, What, Where?

Gnostic reel

True faith

Gnostic choice

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Gnosticism?

Gnosticism is a religious and philosophical movement that emerged in the early centuries of the Common Era. It encompasses a diverse set of beliefs and practices but is often characterized by the pursuit of spiritual knowledge or gnosis. Gnostics believe that salvation and enlightenment come through this direct, mystical knowledge of the divine, which transcends conventional religious teachings. What are some key Gnostic beliefs?

Gnostic beliefs vary among different Gnostic sects, but some common elements include the idea that the material world is a flawed creation and that a transcendent, divine realm exists. Gnostics often view the creator of the material world, known as the Demiurge, as a lesser or malevolent deity who keeps humanity ignorant of their true spiritual nature. Gnosticism also emphasizes the role of a divine spark within individuals that can be awakened through gnosis to liberate them from the material world. How does Gnosticism relate to Christianity?

Gnosticism has historical connections to early Christianity. Some Gnostic sects claimed to possess secret teachings of Jesus and integrated elements of Christian theology into their beliefs. However, mainstream Christianity rejected Gnostic teachings as heretical, leading to theological conflicts in the early Christian church. The Nag Hammadi library, discovered in the mid-20th century, contains many Gnostic texts, shedding light on Gnostic perspectives. What are some famous Gnostic texts?

The Nag Hammadi library, a collection of Gnostic texts discovered in Egypt in 1945, includes several well-known Gnostic scriptures. Some of the prominent Gnostic texts found in the library include the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Philip, the Gospel of Mary, and the Secret Book of John. These texts offer insights into Gnostic cosmology, spirituality, and the relationship between humans and the divine. Is Gnosticism still practiced today?

While historical Gnostic sects largely disappeared by the Middle Ages, some contemporary groups and individuals identify as modern Gnostics. They draw inspiration from Gnostic teachings and may incorporate Gnostic beliefs into their spiritual practices. Modern Gnosticism is a diverse and often eclectic movement, and it can be found within various religious and philosophical contexts, including esoteric and New Age traditions. Link/cite this page

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