

Gnosticism

The father of Gnosticism was Simon Magus, the Simon of Acts 8. Two major schools had developed by 150 AD, the followers of Valentinus and the followers of Basilides. Our knowledge of Gnosticism comes mainly from the early church father Irenaeus, who wrote the five-volume set, *Against Heresies* and the Gnostic literature itself found at Nag Hammadi, Egypt, in 1945. Irenaeus wrote that Gnostics derived their teachings from the heathen, namely Homer, Plato, Aristotle, the Pythagoreans and others.¹⁶ John the Apostle would not enter a bathhouse where Cerinthus was, and Polycarp said Marcion was the firstborn of Satan.¹⁸

The basic teachings of Gnosticism that the church called heresy are:

1. There are thirty Aeons (gods) that exist in the Pleroma, outside time and space. ¹
2. The goddess, Sophia, created the Demiurge, a creator angel (the god of the Old Testament) who was a tyrant; and being unaware of the Aeons, thought he was the only God. He created man; but Sophia gave man a spirit. ²
3. Some may be saved if they do enough good works; but some are predestined to go to hell. ⁴ (works salvation)
4. Gnostics have spirits that are emanations from Sophia. This makes them predestined to be saved. It is impossible for them to lose their salvation. It does not matter if their behavior is good or evil. The most "perfect" of them addict themselves to evil deeds and are in a habit of defiling the women they convert. ³
5. Eventually all matter will be destroyed since matter is evil and not capable of salvation.^{9,6}
6. Gnostics will become spirits and will marry the angels. ⁹
7. Christ descended upon Jesus at His baptism and left before Jesus went before Pilate. Sophia would not allow Christ to suffer. ⁹ (Adoptionism)
8. They utter mantras to effect nature. ¹⁰ (Hindu mantra and Kabalistic letter magic, Gramera, and emanations)
9. Souls reincarnate. ³²
10. Perfect knowledge is obtained by baptism, spiritual marriage, and last rites. ⁵ (Sacramentalism)
11. Sophia sent the serpent (the angel Michael or Samael) into the Garden of Eden to free Eve and Adam. By eating from the tree they attained true Gnosis and were set free. ¹⁵
12. Sophia saved Noah from the flood sent by the evil Demiurge. ¹⁵
13. The Demiurge forced Eve into sexual intercourse many times. Eve thereby gave birth to other evil creator angels. ¹⁵ (Serpent Seed)
14. At death, some souls enter an intermediate state to be purged of the animal nature before going into the Pleroma. ¹⁷ (Purgatory)

Later, other Gnostics would add or change some points and found their own Gnostic schools.

Simon Magus

Simon Magus was the father of the Gnostic movement. He had a feigned faith and used exorcisms and incantations, love-potions, and charms, as well as those beings who are called “Paredri” (familiar) and “Oniropompi” (dream-senders).⁶ He allegorized much Scripture to support his teachings⁴⁴, especially Genesis⁴⁵

Menander

Menander was a disciple of Simon Magus. When he broke away and formed his own Gnostic cult he taught that by means of magic one may overcome the angels that made the world. Only if you are baptized into Menander will you obtain resurrection and never die, again having eternal youth.⁶

Ebionites

The Ebionites were founded by a man named Ebion³⁸. They believed God created the world, but Jesus was just a man. They use the gospel of Matthew only and say Paul was an apostate and follow the Jewish customs.^{12, 38}

Nicolaitanes

The Nicolaitanes practiced adultery, and ate things sacrificed to idols.¹² In the course of time they became very obscene.³⁷

Carpocrates

Carpocrates Was a magician and a fornicator.⁴⁰ He practiced magical arts, incantations, spells, and held voluptuous feasts. And his followers are in the habit of invoking the aid of subordinate demons and dream-senders.⁴⁹ He taught we are imprisoned in a cycle of reincarnation by those evil creator angels, but will eventually break the cycle and be saved,⁸ and said Nicolas and Mathias taught fornication is no longer wrong.²⁴

Cerinthus

Cerinthus taught Jesus was just a man and the Christ descended on him at His baptism and departed before He suffered on the cross.¹² (Adoptionism)

Saturninus

Saturninus said He, himself, was an angel,⁷ Jesus did not have a physical body,⁷ Jesus came to destroy the god of the Jews,⁷ and Sex, marriage, and reproduction are sinful.^{7,14} Saturnilus and his school were vegetarians. Marriage and procreation were said to be instituted by Satan and they practiced asceticism.⁴⁸

Marcus

Marcus taught that the Holy Spirit put a drop of her blood into the wine when he blessed it. Upon drinking it, followers would understand mysteries and prophesy.¹¹ This was the

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beginning of the false doctrine of Transubstantiation. Marcus said the cup imparts grace, if he uses a special incantation.⁴⁶ Marcus taught a second baptism [of redemption], by a laying on of hands. Marcus also gave a word or phrase [Mantra] when he decides the follower is ready to go on to the higher mysteries, or when the disciple is dying [last rites]. They are taught to keep secret the word and even deny that it exists.⁴⁷

Marcion

Marcion rejected the Old Testament and used cut up versions of Luke and some of Paul's epistles. He taught the God of the Old Testament and His prophets were evil and will be destroyed.¹³ He taught God is the author of sin,²⁷ there were two equal and opposite gods, one good and one evil,²⁸ and that the Law and the Gospel being so against each other proves two different gods.³⁰ He was strongly addicted to astrology,²⁹ taught there was no resurrection and that the saved should not marry.³¹ He Removed references in his gospel that Christ was creator,³³ and said Jesus was a phantom [did not have a physical body]³⁴

Titian

Titian said Adam was not saved,¹⁹ drinking wine is a sin,²² and that the soul is not eternal; it dissolves with the body.²⁰ [Soul Sleep] He also taught Medicine is demonic, instead of taking it, we should rely on God alone.²¹

Ophites

The Ophites worshiped the serpent as primary Eon or god.³⁸

Cainites

The Cainites worshiped Cain, the brother of Abel as primary Eon or god.³⁸

Cerdo

Cerdo was the first to introduce dualism.³⁹

Apelles

Apelles agreed Jesus did come in the flesh, unlike other Gnostics, but after the resurrection, Jesus disintegrated His own body.⁵⁰

Calistus

Calistus formed a school [commune] that allowed fornication, common law marriages, the use of drugs for producing sterility, abortions [called murder by Calistus], no true Christian does these things.⁵¹

Alcibiades (Elchasai)

The Alcibiades, also called Elchasai, formed the Elchasaites who taught there are female angels, a new remission of sins [based on the teachings of his book]. Teachings were similar to the teachings of Callistus: with incantations, circumcision, taught Christ was born a man, reincarnation, and astrology.⁵²

Elchasaites

The Elchasaites taught Jesus incarnated many times. They resort to incantations and baptisms in their confession of elements. And they occupy themselves with bustling activity in regard of astrological and mathematical science, and of the arts of sorcery. But also they allege themselves to have powers of prescience.⁵³

Naasseni

Naasseni worshiped the serpent; taught their order was started by James, the Lord's brother, and that Adam was a hermaphrodite. They used the *Gospel According to Thomas*, some things taken from the Mysteries of Isis, and Mysteries of the Assyrians, and they practiced orgies.⁴¹

Peratae

The Peratae taught a kind of tri-theism.⁴² Another branch is the Peratae, who teach Jesus is the Son is the serpent.⁴³

Basilides

Basilides taught Reincarnation with Karma,²⁵ Man can grow up and be sinless all of his life,²⁵ [Born without original sin] and that Spirits [sometimes animal spirits] latch on to us and force us to sin.²³ He taught saving faith is intellectual ascent. All humans are born with the ability [Pelegianism],²³ after baptism, God forgives involuntary sins but you must pay for all voluntary sins in order to be purged from them [Penance, Purgatory, Cardinal and Venial sins],²⁶ and that Jesus was transformed to look like Simon of Cyrene; Simon was crucified in his place.^{7, 37} He also taught the name of the most supreme god was Abraxas.³⁷ This is where we get the magic word "Abracadabra."

Valentinus

Valentinus said saving faith comes from your spirit, if you are one of the chosen [men are born saved],²³ and some are not predestined to be saved, are predestined for hell, but the rest might be saved through works.³⁵ Only those who's spirit is an emanation from Sophia are predestined to be saved. All others are predestined to hell [Double predestination],²³ and those predestined for salvation do not need to practice good works.³⁶

In combating Gnosticism, the Scripture says the following:

- **1 John 1:5** There is no duality in God.
- **1 John 2:23** Whoever says Jesus is not the Christ is of antichrist.
- **1 John 4:3** Whoever says Jesus did not come in the flesh is of antichrist.
- **2 John 7,9-10** Do not welcome or allow into your house anyone who says Jesus did not come in the flesh.

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Lactantius, AD 285

Divine Institutes 4.30 – When they are called Phrygians, Novatians, Valentinians, Marcionites, Anthropians, or Arians they have ceased to be Christians.

Ecumenicisim

Victorinus, AD 280

Commentary on Revelation 11.1 – No one worships at the holy altar except one who confesses this faith.

References

1. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.1-3
2. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.5
3. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.6
4. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.7; 4.37
5. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.21
6. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.23
7. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.24
8. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.25
9. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.7
10. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.14-15
11. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.13
12. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.26; 5.1
13. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.27
14. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.28
15. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 1.30
16. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 2.14
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18. Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.3
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20. Titian, Greeks 13
21. Titian, Greeks 18
22. Clement of Alexandria, Instructor 2.2
23. Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 2.3,20; 4.13
24. Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 3.4
25. Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 4.12
26. Clement of Alexandria, Stromata 4.24
27. Clement of Alexandria, Against Heresies 4.29
28. Tertullian, Against Marcion 1.2
29. Tertullian, Against Marcion 1.18
30. Tertullian, Against Marcion 1.19-20
31. Tertullian, Against Marcion 1.24
32. Tertullian, Against Heresies 2.33
33. Tertullian, Marcion 2.17
34. Tertullian, Marcion 3.8, 4.8
35. Tertullian, Valentians 1.29
36. Tertullian, Valentians 1.30
37. Tertullian, Heresies 1.1
38. Tertullian, Heresies 1.2
39. Tertullian, Heresies 1.6
40. Tertullian, Treatise of the Soul 1.35
41. Hipolytus, Heresies 5.1
42. Hipolytus, Heresies 5.7
43. Hipolytus, Heresies 5.12
44. Hipolytus, Heresies 6.5-9
45. Hipolytus, Heresies 6.10
46. Hipolytus, Heresies 6.34-35
47. Hipolytus, Heresies 6.36-37
48. Hipolytus, Heresies 7.16
49. Hipolytus, Heresies 7.20
50. Hipolytus, Heresies 7.26
51. Hipolytus, Heresies 9.7
52. Hipolytus, Heresies 9.8-9
53. Hipolytus, Heresies 10.25



Carpocrates

The Carpocrates were a Gnostic cult that developed in the first century in Alexandria, Egypt. According to Clement of Alexandria, in *Stromata 3:431*, the Epistle of Jude was written specifically to counter their heresy. Tertullian (A.E. 3) says first Carpocrates cult sprang up, then the Apostle John's arch-enemy Cerinthus formed his cult. After his death, Ebion added Gnostic teaching to the Jewish Ebionites, creating the Gnostic Ebionites. Victorinus, in *Commentary on the Apocalypse 11*, says the Apostle John wrote 1 John to counter the teachings of Cerinthus, and that the Gnostic schools of Valentinus, Cerinthus, and Ebion were rapidly spreading across the land. So all these heretics were in existence in the time of Jude and John.

The Carpocrates slandered Nicolas and Matthias by saying they taught fornication is no longer wrong. They taught people are imprisoned in a cycle of reincarnation by those evil creator angels (Compare to Scientology) and that people can break the cycle of reincarnation only by experiencing all forms of sin and righteousness. The Carpocrates practiced magical arts with incantations and spells and invoked the aid of subordinate demons and dream-senders. They were well known for having voluptuous feasts which include gluttony, drunkenness, and fornication. They taught Jesus was the son of Mary and Joseph, so there was no virgin birth. They also taught Jesus was just a man with a pure heart because his soul was with a pure god before incarnation. Some of their adherents actually taught they were more pure and advanced than Jesus.

They had a few unique points compared to other Gnostic cults. Their disciples had a tattoo on the back side of the right earlobe. The ancient church fathers commented on their unique form of idolatry. They used small Idols of Jesus, Aristotle, Pythagoras, and other people and angels, whom they said were emanations of the pure god. (Compare to the Bahai.) They would adorn the idols with wreaths, garlands, and in other ways to honor/worship them.

Hippolytus AD 225

Refutation of All Heresies 7.21 – The disciples of Carpocrates make counterfeit images of Christ, alleging that these were in existence at the time... and were fashioned by Pilate.



Ebionites

After the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, some broke away, refusing to accept the resolution of the Council. They claimed Jesus as Messiah, but taught the following: (Eusebius' *Church History* 6:17 and Ireneaus' *Against All Heresies*, 1:26, 3:11, & 5:1)

Tertullian wrote the founder of the sect was named Ebion. Epipanius traces the origin of the Ebionites to the Christians who fled to Pella after the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem, AD 69-70. He also added that some of them held the belief that Adam was an incarnation of Jesus. Ebionites were found all over Israel and the surrounding region, Cyprus, Asia Minor, and even as far as Rome.

The Ebionites denied the divinity and virgin birth of Jesus, saying Mary and Joseph were his physical parents. They denied Jesus is the Son of God. They believed observance of the ceremonial law was necessary for salvation and taught no one could be saved by faith in Christ alone; it required a holy life [works]. They practiced circumcision, and observed the Law of Moses, and the Judaic style of life. They refused to acknowledge that Jesus was pre-existent, being God, the Word. They observed strictly the bodily worship of the Law and reproached Christians for eating unclean meats. Ebionites used only the so-called Gospel according to the Hebrews (some say the Hebrew version of Matthew). Rarely made use of the other gospels. They stated Isaiah's prophecy of "a virgin conceiving" should be translated "young woman" instead and they rejected all the epistles of the apostle Paul, whom they called an apostate from the Law.

The Apostle John would not even enter a bathhouse where the Gnostic Cerinthus was, because Cerinthus taught Jesus was just a man, born of Joseph and Mary. (Ireneaus' *Against All Heresies*, 3:11) Eusebius says Ebionite doctrines were spawned by evil demons. Those who believe Ebionite doctrine are not Christians. Ignatius, in *Smyraeans* 7, said those that believe the Passover does not refer to Jesus and His death on the cross are not Christians and we should not even speak to them.

A subgroup developed adding these additional doctrines to the above:

They did not deny that the Lord was born of a virgin and of the Holy Spirit, but they did deny the divinity of Jesus. They observed the Sabbath and the rest of the Jewish lifestyle, but also celebrated the Lord's Day as a memorial to the resurrection of the Savior. Some also practiced oaths of poverty and vegetarianism.

Later a full Gnostic sect developed: (Ireneaus' *Against All Heresies*, 1:26, 3:11, & 5:1 and the *Pseudo-Clementines*).

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The Gnostic Ebionites rejected any distinction between Jehovah the Demiurge, and the supreme good god and taught matter is eternal, and an emanation of the deity. They said the Son of God is the Christ, a middle-being between God and creation, not a creature, yet not equal to, nor even to be compared with, the Father. They believed man is saved by knowledge (gnosis), by believing in God the Teacher, and by being baptized unto remission of sins.

The name Ebionite can be translated “poor.” Some suggest this was applied to James’ group in Jerusalem, even though a different word is used in Scripture. If this is true, it may only refer to the Jerusalem Christians who took an oath of poverty. This could just as easily be referring to people who are poor. The Ebionite cult fused together Pantheism, Persian Dualism, Judaism, and Christianity. Ebionites seemed to have died out about the fifth century.

References:

Irenaeus Against Heresies 1.26
Irenaeus Against Heresies 4.21
Irenaeus Against Heresies 5.1
Tertullian Against Marcion 1.33
Hippolytus Against Heresies 7.22

Origen Comm. Matthew 6.12
Origen Cel. 5.61
Origen Cel. 5.65
Irenaeus Against Heresies 3.11



Encratites

Tatian started off being orthodox. He wrote a harmony of the gospels called the Diatessaron. Later, he became very violent and apostatized from the church. After he apostatized, he founded the Gnostic sect of the Encratites. The name in Greek means “self-perfected ones.” In the 12th century the name of Encratites was applied to the Bogomils. Tatian then started removing passages from the Diatessaron that referred to Jesus’ divinity and other non-Gnostic thoughts. Copies of both the original Diatessaron and the perverted Diatessaron still exist. (The eastern church used the Diatessaron for years before going back to the four Gospels.)

The basic teachings of the Encratites are similar to the Valentinian Gnostics. They believed in the Aeons, held dualistic views of God, condemned marriage, taught sex and reproduction is evil and that Adam was not saved. They were vegetarians and did not drink wine. They believed they were self-controlled, able to master their actions and become sinless. They rejected the epistles of Paul, calling him an apostate and taught Christ did not have a physical body.

References:

1. Irenaeus Against Heresies 1.28
2. Hippolytus Against Heresies 8.13
3. Origen Cel. 5.65

By the time he wrote his book entitled *To the Greeks*, about AD 166, Tatian was beginning to adopt some Gnostic ideas. He was orthodox in the following:

Tatian AD 166

Greeks 4 – There is only one God

Greeks 5 – God and the Logos created the world, not the angels. Matter is not self-existent.

Greeks 6 – We did not exist before we were born and do not reincarnate. There will be a physical resurrection.

Greeks 7 – Jesus created men and angels with free will. Jesus had foreknowledge of what free agents would do. There is no such thing as fate.

Greeks 9 – Demons invented the concept of fate with astrology to enslave man into worshipping them.

Greeks 11 – Our free will enslaved us to sin. (Rom 7) but we can choose to follow righteousness now.

Greeks 17 – Demons use numbers, letters, roots, and amulets to ensnare people.

Greeks 21 – Jesus was God, born in the form of man.

Greeks 25 – God the Father does not have a physical body.

Greeks 26 – Christians do not eat human flesh (as it has been rumored).

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Greeks 32 – Women and children of any age who want to hear are allowed to attend church.

But Tatian also taught the following Gnostic ideas:

Greeks 13 – The soul is not eternal; it dissolves with the body. The soul will be brought back at the resurrection.

Greeks 18 – Demons also use medicine [He did not believe in taking medicine. He taught people should rely on God alone.]

Irenaeus, AD 178

Against Heresies 3.11 – The Encratitae who, on account of such as come in hypocrisy, hold themselves aloof from the communion of the brethren.

Against Heresies 3.23 – Adam was saved, contrary to Tatian. There was no way possible for Adam to become a god.

Clement of Alexandria, AD 192-202

Instructor 2.2 – We use water mixed with wine for Communion, and the wine is just a symbol of the blood of Jesus, but it does sanctify both body and soul to those who take it in faith. We are to be careful of drunkenness, but avoid any, who like the Encratites, teach drinking wine is a sin.

Hippolytus, AD 170-236

Refutation of all Heresies 8.13 – Encratites are very prideful and violent, abstaining from animal food, (and) being water-drinkers, and forbidding to marry, and devoting themselves to asceticism.



Mani

The Manicheans were the followers of Mani. In about 252AD, Mani, a Persian, mixed Christianity with Gnosticism and other Persian elements. He stated his teaching came from Christ and the Persian Magi.

Mani taught there are two gods; one evil and one good.² Jesus was not a real man [did not have flesh].¹ Jesus came to reconcile man to Satan, the dark god⁴ but Jesus did not undergo punishment on the cross.⁶ Satan is the god of Moses and the prophets.⁷ Man does not have free will,⁸ some are born with their nature totally depraved,⁹ while others are born nearly perfect.⁹ He taught reincarnation based on Karma.⁵ Mani said he was the Comforter (Paraclete) and also the “that which is perfect” of 1 Corinthians 13: 3. Mani taught Vegetarianism,¹⁰ Marriage, and begetting children are sins,¹⁰ and that there was a purgatory for purifying souls.⁵ After being purged of sins in the sun, the souls fly to the moon [Purgatory].⁵ The soul of man is from light and his body from darkness.²

References:

1. Archelaus; Acts of Manes 47
2. Archelaus; Acts of Manes 6,7
3. Eusebius; E.H. 7: 31 & Archelaus; Acts of Manes 13
4. Archelaus; Acts of Manes 20
5. Archelaus; Acts of Manes 8
6. Alexander; Of the Manicheans 24
7. Archelaus; Acts of Manes 11
8. Archelaus; Acts of Manes 33 & Alexander; Of the Manicheans 21
9. Alexander; Of the Manicheans 21
10. Alexander; Of the Manicheans 4

St. Augustine was a Manichean for eight years before becoming a Christian. After becoming a Christian, he taught free will (see: *City of God*). It was not until 417 AD, while debating with Pelagius, that he began teaching what today's Calvinists describe as the doctrine of “total depravity” and the “bondage of the will.”

It seems that in reaction to Pelagian doctrine that “man could be sinless from birth,” Augustine went too far the other way.

Archelaus, AD

33 – The Judges concluded against Mani that man has free will; so if Mani can sin, his spirit can't be an emanation from God. The angels, and Satan (dark, evil god) are not of God's essence.

Augustine recorded that Mani taught when the sun and moon have liberated all the light they are able, there will be a fire kindled on the earth which will burn for 1,468 years, after which, there will be no light left. The King of Darkness and his hosts will thereupon withdraw into the pit prepared for them. Mani taught, unlike the world, man was created by demons. The aim of demons is to imprison in man, through the propagation of the race, as much as possible of the light, and so to hinder the separating process by the sun and the moon. Manicheans teach salvation comes from rigorous asceticism, and by the practice of certain ceremonial

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observances. Manicheans deny the saving efficacy of baptism but believe Salvation consists simply in the liberation of the light from the darkness. In the case of the Elect this takes place immediately after death; in the case of adherents who have not practiced the prescribed forms of asceticism, it takes place only after considerable torment [purgatory]. In the case of the ordinary sensual man, there is no deliverance.



Marcion

In the middle of the second century AD, Marcion left the church and started the Gnostic Marcionites. Marcion was a native of Sinope on the Black Sea. He first studied with the Stoics, then became a Christian. According to Epiphanius, as he began to apostatize, he seduced a young girl, and was excommunicated. Marcion then traveled to Rome in hopes of being readmitted to the church. Later he joined Cerdon and another Gnostic, preaching in Rome, hoping to create a schism in the church. Marcion's most famous disciples were Apelles, Lucanus, Basilus, Potitus, and Blastus. This same Blastus later caused a schism in Rome. Marcionites continued until the sixth century, principally in Egypt, Israel, and Syria.

Marcion rejected the Old Testament and used cut up versions of Luke and some of Paul's epistles, for Scripture. He used the Gospel of Luke but eliminated the first four chapters and removed all references to Jesus' divinity or any connection with the God of the Old Testament. His canon of Scripture also contained Romans, 1st & 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1st & 2nd Thessalonians, Philemon, and Laodiceans. All of these were tailored to fit Marcion's teachings. In Paul's Epistles, he removed all references to God creating the world, and to Jesus being God's Son, and any predictions of Jesus' birth. He taught the God of the Old Testament and His prophets were evil and would be destroyed because that god was the author of sin. He also taught there are two equal and opposite gods, one good and one evil. He taught the Law and the Gospel were so strongly different, it proves there were two different gods. Marcion insisted there is no resurrection and removed all references in his gospel showing Christ was the creator and the God of the Old Testament was Jesus' father. He also removed the genealogy of Jesus. He said Jesus was a phantom having no physical body. Marcion forbade marriage and said it was evil. Married people could not be baptized unless they got a divorce and practiced celibacy. The Marcionites were strongly addicted to astrology.

Other Doctrines of the Marcionites were that Jesus came to overthrow the dominion of the evil creator. Followers needed to be baptized in order to remove sins recently committed, and women were allowed to baptize other women. Followers must be single, widowed, or divorced before they could be baptized. They denied Christ came in the flesh and claimed there was no salvation or resurrection of the flesh, only of the spirit. Some Marcionites believed in the transmigration of souls. We know this teaching as reincarnation. Some Marcionites sought martyrdom in order to escape this evil world. It was well known that Marcion tried to publish a Gospel he wrote himself in the name of Paul.

Church teachings contrasted:

Tertullian, AD 200

Against Marcion 4.8 – Jesus was not a phantom, but had a real body.

Against Marcion 4.37 – Christ saves both body and soul. Only heretics say the body is not saved [resurrected].

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Against Marcion 5.11 – Heretics try to say the epistle to the Ephesians is the epistle to the Laodeceans.

References:

1. Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 1.27
2. *Against Heresies* 4.29
3. Tertullian *Against Marcion* 1.2
4. *Against Marcion* 1.18
5. *Against Marcion* 1.19-20
6. *Against Marcion* 1.24
7. *Against Marcion* 2.17
8. *Against Marcion* 3.8, 4.8
9. *Against Marcion* 1.29



Nicolaitans

In Revelation, John wrote that the Ephesus church hated the Nicolaitans and got rid of the false apostles who started the Gnostic cults; but in the process, they lost their first love. The ancient church fathers taught Nicolaitan characteristics included: the practice of fornication (both heterosexual and homosexual forms of adultery and chambering), Then in a confession ritual on a weekly basis they were forgiven. (on the eighth day). Nicolaitans used idols and participated in pagan rituals, which also means they tolerated ungodly things. This form of idolatry was also practiced by the Carpocratian Gnostics. The idea that food had to be exorcised before it was eaten was based on the idea that a Christian could be demon-possessed. The ancient church fathers taught Nicolaitans had a special way of exorcizing meat offered to idols so that if Christians ate it they would not become demon-possessed. The belief that Christians can be possessed by demons, is an error.

“So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.” *Revelation 2:15-16*

Eusebius, AD 325

Ecclesiastical History 3.29 – This sect took its name after Nicolas, one of the seven deacons of Acts (although Nicolas had nothing to do with them). Influenced by the Gnostics, they began practicing adultery and eating meat offered to idols in order to prove they had conquered their flesh.

Victorinus, AD 285

Commentary on the Apocalypse 2.6 – The works of the Nicolaitans were in that time false and troublesome men, who, as ministers under the name of Nicolas, had made for themselves a heresy, to the effect that what had been offered to idols might be exorcised and eaten, and that whoever should have committed fornication might receive peace on the eighth day.

