

From time to time I get asked about Gnosticism. What was it exactly? I deal with the issue in a number of my books, as you may know. Here is a summary statement that I published a couple of years ago on this date, based on my rewriting of the section on Gnosticism in my undergraduate textbook, [The New Testamen: A Historical Introduction to the Early Christian Writings](#).

\*\*\*\*\*

### Major Views of Various Gnostic Groups

Despite the many differences among the various Gnostic groups, most of them appear to have subscribed to the following views.

(1) The divine realm is inhabited not only by one ultimate God but also by a range of other divine beings, widely known as aeons. These aeons are, in a sense, personifications of the ultimate God's mental capacities and/or powers (some of them were called such things as Reason, Will, Grace, and Wisdom).

(2) The physical world that we inhabit was not the creation of the ultimate God but of a lower, ignorant divine being, who is often identified with the God of the Jewish Bible. Because the creator-god is an inferior being, the material world is a miserable place in which to live and was widely separated from the spiritual world above.

(3) The ultimate reason there is evil in this world - and the reason the inferior creator-God came into existence in the first place - is related to the actions of one of higher divine powers (aeons) that inhabited the spiritual realm. Usually this divine figure is called "Sophia," or "Wisdom."

(4) All human beings, or for some Gnostics, only some human beings, possess a spiritual element or an immortal soul that is connected with the divine realm. But because of their imprisonment in this world they have become oblivious of their divine origin.

**THE REST OF THIS POST IS FOR MEMBERS ONLY. If you don't belong yet, JOIN, OR YOU MAY NEVER KNOW!!!**

You need to be logged in to see this part of the content. Please [Login](#) to access.



[Mythicists, Jesus, and the Messiah](#)

[What If the Mythicists Were Right: Mailbag November 6, 2016](#)