

Introduction

Some books only need a short introduction. Most of Paul's epistles bear his name, and are written with a simple background. By reading Luke's account of the historical background in Acts and then looking at the problems addressed in the epistle, one is ready to begin teaching the book.

Other books require more preparation. The book of Job is a great example of this need. At the end of Job, in Chapter 42 there is a condemnation of the speeches of the three friends because they were "not right" in what they had said.

And so it was, after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. 8 Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has." Job 42:7-8

Since the words of the three friends make up a large part of the book these final words need to be carefully pondered and the right applications made regarding their speeches. God also told Job that some of his words were not right either.

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: 2 Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? . . . 1 Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said: 2 Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it. . . . 6 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: 7 Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me: 8 Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified? . . . 6 Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. Job 38:1-2 Job 40:1-2 Job 40:6-8; Job 42:6

These words have a great bearing on how to interpret the book. If we do not deal with this in the introduction, the student will become very confused when we begin teaching that the words of the three friends are wrong. It must be made clear in the introduction that what is inspired are the actual words spoken by the three friends and Job. It is up to us to determine which words are:

Right and true	Not right	Darken counsel
Without knowledge,	Correcting the Almighty,	Rebuking God
Annulling God's judgment,	Condemned God to justify Job,	Words Job repented / abhorred.

One should not begin a study of Job, without a thorough discussion of the implications of these final words and how they relate to inspiration. Inspiration will, with perfect accuracy give the content of the speeches and words of these uninspired men. Yet if their words were wrong then they are accurately recorded though wrong. Hence the book of Job needs to be approached with great caution and a need for corroboration from other Scripture. Nothing the three friends say that is not elsewhere recorded in Scripture should be used as inspired text because of God's accusation at the end of the book that what they said was not right.

In a similar way there are benefits to begin a study of 1John knowing some of the background behind the urgent needs for it's warnings and revelation. Some of this background is found elsewhere in Scripture, some of it is understood by the error and false teachings in the book itself and finally the information we have in the historical writings of those who continued to combat these doctrines after the book was written.

Think of it like this. If we pick up an old letter from our mother to our father, many of their statements would not be easy to understand without knowing the background and details they knew when the letter was written. Unless we can speak to those who were alive when the letter was written we will not know these details. It is these details that make any letter easier to understand and much easier to read. These are the details we will seek to understand in the writing of John's first epistle. John was confronting a false doctrine very different from the one that faced the church earlier. Acts 10 and 15 along with passages in Galatians, Corinthians and

other early epistles made it clear that the chief threat to the church was coming from the Jews who sought to blend the gospel with the Law of Moses.

John's concern was now coming from the Gentiles and the threat to the church that was arising from those entering the church from the Gentiles, and seeking to blend their own human philosophy with the Gospel. If we compare some of the things John said with those of Moses we begin to see the issue.

We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. 1Jn. 4:6

Whosoever goes onward and abides not in the teaching of Christ, has not God: he that abides in the teaching, the same has both the Father and the Son. 2Jn. 1:9

The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. Deut 29:29

For the faithful and trusting servant of God, only what is revealed in Scripture has any real value. If it reveals the answer, then we know the truth. If it does not reveal the answer to some questions then we must acknowledge that God did not choose to reveal it and therefore we can't know it. Many of man's most sought after answers are simply not revealed and therefore unknowable.

For those who truly trust God, this is enough. But there will always be those entering the church who will seek to answer these issues with the human philosophy in existence in their day. We see the issues today when it comes to the creation. All God reveals about the mechanics of the creation are found in Gen 1-2. Some scientists are not content with this and seek to supplement it with science and human wisdom. Some now have explanations of the creation that go far beyond what God revealed and sometimes even contradict it.

This is always how error creeps into the church. There are many things that God simply has not revealed, or has revealed in a way that creates difficulty for those with great wisdom who are "wise in their own craftiness." Paul spoke of this in the first chapter of First Corinthians. God chose to reveal things in such a way that the mighty and wise would be unable to accept it as it is revealed.

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 1Cor. 1:26-29

Whatever God revealed is all we have. If we are content with this and put our faith in God and His revelation, we are true servants. But when we seek for a higher knowledge developed outside of Scripture based on human wisdom, we will always end up with a toxic blend of human wisdom, philosophy and idolatry loosely proved and held together with those Scripture that are twisted to make it all fit together.

Just as Israel had been tossed about by the human wisdom of their day, so were those living in John's day. While in Ur, Rachel was influenced by those idols and brought them into Israel. When Israel entered Egypt, the idols of Egypt were added and also created serious problems. When they entered Canaan the god's of Canaan infected their worship and trust in God.

We must remember that there is always a reason why people are tempted to move into idolatry. Often it is the philosophies and teachings of men that give them the freedom to do what they enjoy doing without the guilt or punishment incurred from breaking God's law. Joshua challenged them, but they didn't listen.

"Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! 15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Josh 24:14-15

Subsequently the god's of Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. East and West they had been tossed to and fro by the influences of the wisdom of men. This same problem would be faced by those in the church after the death of the apostles. The idol was removed, but the

philosophies and doctrines that created the idol remained to corrupt the church.

Gnosticism

This term is not found in the Bible. It is the name those whom John was combating gave themselves. The word was used by to express the knowledge they both sought and possessed. The Greek language had several words of knowledge, but this one best captured their philosophy.

ginosko (verb) and *gnosis* (noun) are the terms they are used both of the initial learning and coming to know and also the full comprehension and understanding.

ginosko... the intelligent comprehension of an object or matter, whether this comes for the first time, or comes afresh, into the consideration of the one who grasps it ("to come to know," "to experience," "to perceive [again]") or whether it is already present ("to perceive"). (Kittel NT 1097)

These were the philosophers (lovers of wisdom) that had been trained in this knowledge prior to hearing the gospel. While some would recognize the folly of all human wisdom and reject their previous knowledge in favor of the divinely inspired knowledge of Scriptures, others would interpret Scripture in light of that previous knowledge and create a new doctrine and a new church that better fit their own understanding. To warn against this and to prove their conclusions were wrong was the task John would tackle in this letter.

Just as Israel only found apostasy seeking something greater than God revealed so will any church that moves away from the teachings of Christ.

I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. Gal. 1:6-9

It is always better to admit ignorance and come to a dead end, than to seek a knowledge tainted with the poison that would destroy true faith and trust in God and His Son, Jesus Christ. The dangers facing the brethren to whom John addressed his epistle centered in this human knowledge.

Gnosticism is complicated because depending on its place of origin, it taught different forms of human wisdom. It varied from culture to culture and entered the church by the converts of that region. Just as Israel had been infected by the gods of Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece, so now was the church.

The image in Daniel revealed that God would use Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Egypt and Rome to bring out His purposes. Yet while they fulfilled God's purpose in destroying the nations, they also brought their superstitions and knowledge into new lands. Alexander the great as he conquered the world brought Greek mythology and culture as far as Persia where it blended together in various ways with the eastern religions and philosophies. Rome followed adding its own wisdom to others. This wisdom of men, developed through the centuries, had very different ways of explaining the mysteries of life than the answers God gave in Scripture.

Yet because there were so many different forms and issues involved from country to country, there are many different opinions on exactly what John was fighting. Some say that it was primarily from Greece and its powerful influence on Rome. As John later wrote to the seven churches of Asia (Revelation), there is a strong possibility that this is the case. But many of the writings of those who continued to combat this doctrine into the second century were not only combating Hellenistic *Gnosticism*, but also that of Oriental *Gnosticism*.

Ever since the conquests of Alexander the Great, an intense interest had been felt throughout Asia Minor and Egypt in Hellenistic philosophy and Oriental theosophy; and while the old mythologic fables and professed systems of positive revelation had lost their authority, many thoughtful persons had discovered under these what they looked upon as a uniting bond of truth and the elements of a universal religion.

The result was that, near the time of the first promulgation of Christianity, a number of new systems of religious philosophy sprung up independently in different countries, and exhibited similar characteristics. They were usually formed by incorporating with the national religion what seemed

attractive elements in foreign systems, and softening down what was harsh and incredible in the popular faith and worship. In this way we discover a nearly simultaneous origin of the Judaistic philosophy at Alexandria, of Essenism and Therapeutism in Egypt and southern Palestine, of the Cabalistic literature in Syria and the East, and of New Platonism among the Hellenistic nations. These were all offshoots from the same general root, and not necessarily deriving anything original, but unquestionably drawing much assistance from one another. Similar circumstances everywhere called forth similar phenomena with no conscious interdependence.” (McClintock & Strong Encyc.), The Judaistic form of heresy was substantially conquered in the apostolic age. More important and more widely spread in the second period was the paganizing heresy, known by the name of Gnosticism. It was the Rationalism of the ancient church; it pervaded the intellectual atmosphere, and stimulated the development of catholic theology by opposition. (Schaff, History) The false gnosis on the contrary, against which Paul warns Timothy, and which he censures in the Corinthians and Colossians is a morbid pride of wisdom, an arrogant, self-conceited, ambitious knowledge, which puffs up, instead of edifying, runs into idle subtleties and disputes, and verifies in its course the apostle’s word: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Rom 1:22). (Schaff)

Thus Gnosticism was evolving over time and thus it becomes very difficult to prove with certainty when exactly the philosophies of these other religions and cultures entered this evolution.

Gnosticism in John’s Day

As one reads the various Commentaries and Bible Encyclopedias one becomes overwhelmed with the complexity of the issues and the divergence of opinions. The reason behind this centers on the sources and the time frame. We know what *Gnosticism* ultimately became but we do not know exactly at what point in this evolution John dealt with in his own day. As these philosophies blended with the teachings of Christ, they would evolve into something even more dangerous as they found better ways and more passages that could be twisted to express it

“No question, however, has more perplexed historians than that which refers to the direct origin of Gnosticism. We are in possession of scarcely any authenticated documents which have come down to us from persons living at the time and in countries in which it had its birth. We are dependent for our information respecting it almost entirely upon the representations of opponents, who knew almost nothing of Oriental systems, and were acquainted with it only in its maturity.” (McClintock & Strong Encyc.)

Doctrines competing with the Scriptures and claiming to come from them take on a life of their own. Unless we have the writings of the original teacher, it is nearly impossible to determine with absolute certainty when and how the earlier doctrines created the finished product. As new documents were found and more research was done, the truth has become much more complicated than was thought in earlier years. As one surveys the various attempts to explain *Gnosticism* in John’s time, it is evident that the fewer writings against *Gnosticism* they had in their possession, the more simple their explanation became. Although tedious and extensive, the following quotes substantiate and elaborate on this truth.

“We thus account for the origin of Gnosticism, and easily reconcile the conflicting views of different writers respecting it. As the early ecclesiastical writers were themselves acquainted almost exclusively with Occidental literature, they were in the habit of ascribing the rise of Gnosticism to the study of Grecian philosophy, and especially of Platonism, and they appeal to the cosmogonies of Hesiod and others for the exemplars of the Gnostic speculations. Modern historians, however, have found in most of the Gnostic systems such a predominance of Oriental elements, that they have been led to infer a direct influence not merely from **Alexandrian Judaism**, but **dualistic Parsism**, and even from **pantheistic Buddhism**. There can, in fact, be no question regarding the influence of all these systems. The **Platonic doctrines** of a God, without distinctions in his nature, withdrawn entirely within himself, intelligible only to the initiated, and that only through the mediation of the Nous, a higher ideal sphere reflecting itself in a lower phenomenal world, a hyle (υ%lh) and an undefined dualism between it and God, a fall of spiritual beings from the divine to the sensuous sphere, the derivation of sin from a contact with the material element; the **Pythagorean doctrine** of numbers; the **Brahminic doctrine** of emanation hypostatizing of the divine attributes; **the Parsic** representation of the divine essence as light. of a dualism in which God is subject to the continual aggression of a world of matter, and of a good principle in eternal conflict with the prince of

darkness; and the **Buddhist notions** of a God in process of development, of souls longing to be freed from the bonds of matter, and to be raised above all sensible things, and reunited with the divine source of life, are all unmistakable, and indicative of their respective sources.” (McClintock & Strong Encyc.)

“In recent times several original Gnostic writings have been discovered such as Pistis Sophia, written in Coptic and discovered in Egypt. A most important find was made in 1896 when a codex containing the Gospel of Mary, the Apocryphon of John, and the Sophia of Jesus Christ, all of them Gnostic, was discovered in the same country. Strangely enough, it was not published until 1955. A more valuable discovery was made in 1945 by some peasants near the little town of Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt. They found a large jar containing a collection of Coptic Gnostic books and documents dating from the 4th cent. A.D. Altogether there were forty-eight treatises — Gnostic gospels, epistles, etc. They were found near the site of one of the monasteries founded by Pachomius ca. A.D. 320, AD (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia - ISBE)

Mansel (p. 32) summed up the principal sources of Gnosticism in these three: **Platonism**, the **Persian** religion, and the **Buddhism** of India. To **Platonism** it owed much of its philosophical form and tendencies. From the dualism of the **Persian** religion it derived its speculations regarding the origin of evil, and much of what it taught about emanations. To **Buddhism**, Mansel believed, it owed the doctrine of the antagonism between matter and spirit, and the unreality of derived existence — the germ of Docetism. **Alexandrian Philosophy**. Alexandrian philosophy endeavored to unite Greek philosophy and Hebrew religion. ... Philo drew a sharp line between God and the material world: with him God cannot exert any action upon the world of matter except through intermediate agencies, the Jewish angels and the heathen demons. While Philo, like the gospel, said much about the Logos, his conception was very different. For him the Logos was merely an impersonal power of God, although He is the only firstborn of God, the chief of the angels, the viceroy of God, and the representative of mankind . . . The **Zoroastrian or Persian** system was based on the assumption that there existed two original and independent powers of good and evil, of light and darkness, Ormuzd (Ahura-Mazda) the wise Lord, and Ahriman (Angra-Mainyu) the wicked spirit. These powers were believed to be equal and each supreme in his own domain. ... **Buddhism**. Mansel's view that Gnosticism owed a great deal to the Buddhism of India has been strongly opposed by the greatest authorities. At the same time it is difficult to escape the conclusion that the hopelessness of the East and the intense asceticism so characteristic of India must have exercised a profound influence upon Persia, Iraq, and Syria in the early ages. It is now well known that ideas then spread with surprising rapidity, and while Gnosticism may not have owed a direct debt to Buddhism it was certainly influenced indirectly.” (ISBE)

Of all these systems Platonism had the greatest influence, especially on the Alexandrian Gnostics; though not so much in its original Hellenic form, as in its later orientalized eclectic and mystic cast, of which Neo-Platonism was another fruit. The Platonic speculation yielded the germs of the Gnostic doctrine of aeons, the conceptions of matter, of the antithesis of an ideal and a real world, of all ante-mundane fall of souls from the ideal world, of the origin of sin from matter, and of the needed redemption of the soul from the fetters of the body. We find also in the Gnostics traces of the Pythagorean symbolical use of numbers, the Stoic physics and ethics, and some Aristotelian elements. (Schaff, History)

For these reasons, we can see that although there is no absolute proof of what John had in mind, it doesn't matter as they all have the same form of ungodliness. They blended human wisdom with Scripture in dangerous ways that lead to error entering the church and destroying the members.

The best summary I found is set forth in Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, where he speaks of the sources of all our knowledge *Gnosticism*. They fall into three basic categories. First, “*there are the Gnostic texts, which are known as the New Testament APOCRYPHA.*” Second are “*the refutations of the Gnostics by the early church fathers.*” Finally and most importantly: “*Still a third source about Gnosticism is the New Testament itself. Many Gnostic teachings were condemned by the writers of the New Testament.*”

“Our knowledge of Gnosticism comes from several sources. First, there are the Gnostic texts, which

are known as the New Testament APOCRYPHA. These texts are not recognized as Scripture because they contain teachings which differ from those in the Bible. Then, there are the refutations of the Gnostics by the early church fathers. Some of the more important ones are Irenaeus, Against Heresies; Hippolytus, Refutations of All Heresies; Epiphanius, Panarion; and Tertullian, Against Marcion.

Still a third source about Gnosticism is the New Testament itself. Many Gnostic teachings were condemned by the writers of the New Testament. Paul emphasized a wisdom and knowledge that comes from God and does not concern itself with idle speculations, fables, and moral laxity (Col 2:8-23; 1 Tim 1:4; 2 Tim 2:16-19; Titus 1:10-16). John, both in his gospel and in the epistles, countered heretical teaching which, in a broad sense, can be considered Gnostic." (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

Content of Gnostic Teaching

The most common errors that existed at that time came through two branches of Greek philosophy. The Stoics (denial) or Epicureans (giving in to pleasure). They either taught asceticism and the complete denial of all that the body needs or they taught no moral law matters and the only way to control lust is to give in to it.

All the Gnostic heretics agree in disparaging the divinely created body, and over-rating the intellect. Beyond this, we perceive among them two opposite tendencies: a gloomy asceticism, and a frivolous antinomianism; both grounded in the dualistic principle, which falsely ascribes evil to matter, and traces nature to the devil. The two extremes frequently met, and the Nicolaitan maxim in regard to the abuse of the flesh was made to serve asceticism first, and then libertinism. (Schaff, History Vol. 2)

The ascetic Gnostics, like Marcion, Saturninus, Tatian, and the Manichaeans were pessimists. They felt uncomfortable in the sensuous and perishing world, ruled by the Demiurge, and by Satan; they abhorred the body as formed from Matter, and forbade the use of certain kinds of food and all nuptial intercourse, as an adulteration of themselves with sinful Matter; (Schaff, History Vol. 2)

The licentious Gnostics, as the Nicolaitans, the Ophites, the Carpocratians, and the Antitactes, in a proud conceit of the exaltation of the spirit above matter, or even on the diabolical principle, that sensuality must be overcome by indulging it, bade defiance to all moral laws, and gave themselves up to the most shameless licentiousness. (Schaff, History Vol. 2)

The basic teachings of *Gnosticism* as it evolved over the first three centuries is broken down by the ISBE into eight basic points. One of the interesting consequences of these *Gnostic* teachings is their subsequent influence on those in the Catholic church and later on the reformers(Luther, Calvin, etc.).

"Gnosticism," stated Gwatkin, "is Christianity perverted by learning and speculation" (II, 73). The intellectual pride of the Gnostics changed the gospel into a philosophy. The clue to the understanding of Gnosticism is found in the Greek word from which its name is derived — *gnosis* - "*knowledge*." The Gnostics claimed to be the elite, the wise, the philosophers, to whom was revealed a secret knowledge which the overwhelming mass of mankind could never know.

The following may be regarded as the chief points in the Gnostic systems: **(1)** a claim on the part of the initiated to a **special knowledge of the truth**; a tendency to regard knowledge as superior to faith and as the special possession of the more enlightened, for ordinary Christians did not possess this secret and higher doctrine; **(2)** the essential **separation of matter and spirit, matter being intrinsically evil** and the source from which all evil has arisen; **(3)** an attempt to **solve the problems of creation and the origin of evil** by postulating a demiurge, i.e., **a creator or artificer of the world distinct from the deity**, and **emanations extending between God and the visible universe** (the demiurge for the Gnostics being the God of the OT, an inferior being infinitely remote from the Supreme Being who can have nothing to do with anything material); **(4)** a **denial of the true humanity of Christ**; a docetic Christology which considered **the earthly life of Christ and especially His sufferings on the cross to be unreal**; **(5)** the **denial of the personality of the Supreme God**, and also the **denial of the free will of mankind**; **(6)** the teaching, on the **one hand**,

of **asceticism** as the means of attaining spiritual communion with God, and, on the **other hand**, of an **indifference** that **led** directly to **licentiousness**; (7) a syncretistic tendency that **combined** certain more or less **misunderstood Christian doctrines and various elements from oriental, Jewish, Greek, and other sources**; (8) **ascription** of the **OT to the demiurge or inferior creator of the world**. Some of these ideas are more obvious in one and some of them in another of the Gnostic systems. (ISBE)

For the purposes of this work, we will not enter into the details of all eight points. Only those that are addressed in John.

(1) Claim to a special knowledge of the truth.

This is what set the *Gnostic* apart from others. They took the Greek word for knowledge (*gnosis*.) and made it the name of their philosophy. A “*gnostic*” was one who “*knows*” about things others who only hold to Scripture do not. Those most tempted by *Gnosticism* would be drawn away by the “*pride of life*” (1 Jn. 2:15-17). This “special knowledge” allowed human wisdom to be placed above inspired Scripture and led them to judge Scripture by human opinion. We still see this today in Roman Catholicism where their own traditions and the decrees of the Pope are equal or even above Scripture if a choice must be made. *Gnosticism* changed the simple faith in the gospel that was preached by the apostles into a system of philosophy blending the idolatrous ideas of the culture with Christianity. There is nothing new under the sun (Ecc. 1:9-11), and we have seen this before. Jeroboam very successful removed the ten tribes from the authority of the Law of Moses and they never returned (1Kings 12:26-32; 2Kings 17:21-23). Judah followed suit when they replaced their own altar in the temple at Jerusalem the altar to an idol they saw in Assyria (2Kings 16:10-15). Both John and Paul reveal this knowledge for what it really was.

*And hereby we **know** that we **know** Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He that saith, I **know** Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in Him. 1Jn. 2:3-4*

*O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babble and contradictions of what is falsely called **knowledge**— 21 by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith. Grace be with you. Amen. 1 Tim 6:20-21*

(2) a separation of matter and spirit, matter being intrinsically evil and the source from which all evil has arisen;

The philosophers without the knowledge of the Scriptures had each devised a theory of their own to answer the questions of good and evil. Some were satisfied with “Pandora’s box” but others went deeper. As they grappled for answers to the physics of this world that leads to death and maiming; and to the animal and insect worlds of terrible cruelty.

And I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised. 14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind. 15 What is crooked cannot be made straight, And what is lacking cannot be numbered. Eccl. 1:13-15

Added to this were the basic issues in human character. Why can’t man be good? Why are some so evil? Why are children so selfish and learn to lie, steal, or be cruel to others at a very early age? Why are nations ruled by tyrants? These and multitudes of other questions plagued the minds of the enlightened and elite. After careful thought they devised a system to solve these problems to their satisfaction. They concluded that all matter (including the human body) was evil. The spirit in man was good and clean, but the body and world that contained it was evil. These philosophies are directly opposed to the Scriptures. God revealed that everything He initially created at the beginning was very good (Gen. 1-3). Evil is not found in matter, but in the free will choices of man. The fault is not in matter, nor in God, but in ourselves.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death

spread to all men, because all sinned— . . . 19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Rom. 5:12; 19

I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. 10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Rom 7:9-11

For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. Rom 8:20-25

(3) an attempt to solve the problems of creation and the origin of evil by postulating a demiurge, i.e., a creator or artificer of the world distinct from the deity, and emanations extending between God and the visible universe (the demiurge for the Gnostics being the God of the OT, an inferior being infinitely remote from the Supreme Being who can have nothing to do with anything material);

This is the first serious consequence to the false premise above. If the universe is evil then a good god could not have created it. Because of their idolatrous belief in many gods, they simply concluded that a god who was not good created it. Greek pantheism moved right into this doctrine, as did the other religions of that day. It was easy to use the concept of multitudes of gods some more powerful than others to explain the existence of evil. One of these lower gods (aeons) was called the "demiurge" which is the Greek word "demiourgos" (*demos- people; ergos - work*). Thus "a worker for the people a workman; craftsman" This god was evil and was the worker and craftsman who created the faulty and evil universe we live in.

The ultimate aim of Gnosticism was to present a perfect solution of the great problem of the origin and destiny of the universe, and especially of the origin of evil. The three ideas which were fundamental to all its speculations were: 1. A supreme being, unconnected with matter, and incapable of being affected by it; 2. Matter, eternal, the source of evil, and opposed to God; and, 3. A series of beings intermediate between these two (McClintock and Strong Encycl.)

Teachings of the Gnostics. The Gnostics accepted the Greek idea of a radical dualism between God (spirit) and the world (matter). According to their world view, the created order was evil, inferior, and opposed to the good. God may have created the first order, but each successive order was the work of anti-gods, archons, or a demiurge (a subordinate deity). The Gnostics believed that the earth is surrounded by a number of cosmic spheres (usually seven) which separate man from God. These spheres are ruled by archons (spiritual principalities and powers) who guard their spheres by barring the souls who are seeking to ascend from the realm of darkness and captivity which is below to the realm of light which is above. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

Some, influenced by the teachings in its teachings actually made the Jehovah of the Old Testament this evil demiurge. John dealt with this in his gospel as did Paul.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. . . . 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-4; 14

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. Col 1:15-18

(4) a denial of the true humanity of Christ; a docetic Christology (Christ's body was not

human and his sufferings were not real- akh) which considered **the earthly life of Christ and especially His sufferings on the cross to be unreal**;

Since the spirit in the Christ was good He could not be part of an evil body. There were two different approaches to solve this. Either He never had a human body and thus though nailed to the cross didn't feel anything. Or, the human part was the natural offspring of Joseph and Mary (denying the virgin birth), and the Christ did not come until the dove at His baptism and then left just prior to the betrayal. Only the body of the Christ was crucified and suffered death. Not the eternal being whom the *gnostics* considered to be good. Hence one way or the other, Jesus was not connected to an evil human body.

"The Christology of the Gnostics assumed two forms. "One class of early Gnostics separated the spiritual being Christ from the man Jesus; they supposed that the Christ entered Jesus at the time of His baptism, and left Him at the moment of His crucifixion. Thus the Christ was neither born as a man nor suffered as a man. In this way they obviated the difficulty, inseparable to the gnostic mind, of conceiving the connection between the highest spiritual agency and gross corporeal matter, which was involved in the Catholic doctrine of the Incarnation and Passion, and which Gnostics of another type more effectively set aside by the doctrine of Docetism, i.e., by assuming that the human body of Our Lord was only a phantom body, and not real flesh and blood" (ISBE)

Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, (even) he that denieth the Father and the Son. 1Jn. 2:22

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 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. 1Jn. 4:1-3

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

(5) the **denial** of the **personality of the Supreme God**, and also the **denial of the free will of mankind**;

Whenever people are not content with acknowledging evil to be the act of their own free will which has chosen to forsake its absolute dependence upon God, one of two results follows. They either limit the holiness of God, and find the cause of evil in God Himself, thus annihilating all distinction between good and evil — which is monism; or they limit the power of God by granting the existence of an eternal evil power beyond the control of God — which is dualism. In avoiding monism, Gnosticism accepted the dualistic solution, ascribing to evil an eternal self-subsistent nature. As absolute self-subsistence can be affirmed of none but God, the eternally self-subsistent evil of dualism must be God, which it cannot possibly be, because it is not good. Here is the self-contradiction in which dualistic Gnosticism was entangled. (ISBE)

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 1Jn. 1:10

He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 1Jn. 2:4

(6) the teaching, on the **one hand**, of **asceticism** as the means of attaining spiritual communion with God, and, on the **other hand**, of an **indifference** that **led** directly to **licentiousness**;

Ethical behavior among the Gnostics varied considerably. Some sought to separate themselves from all evil matter in order to avoid contamination. Paul may be opposing such a view in 1 Tim 4:1-5. For other Gnostics, ethical life took the form of libertinism. For them knowledge meant freedom to participate in all sorts of indulgences. Many reasoned that since they had received divine knowledge and were truly informed as to their divine nature, it didn't matter how they lived. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

Let no man rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, dwelling in the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body, being supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, increasing with the increase of God. 20 If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances, 21 Handle not, nor taste, nor touch 22 (all which things are to perish with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men? 23 Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body; (but are) not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh. Col 2:18-23

For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 6 For of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. 8 Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith; 9 but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, as theirs also was. 2 Tim 3:2-9

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 1 Tim 4:1-5

But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, 13 and will receive the wages of unrighteousness, as those who count it pleasure to carouse in the daytime. They are spots and blemishes, carousing in their own deceptions while they feast with you, 14 having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children. 15 They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; 16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet. 17 These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. 18 For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. 2 Peter 2:12-20

Nevertheless I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. 22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds. 23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works. 24 "Now to you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden Rev 2:20-24

Along with their teachings comes questions about their influence. How big a threat did they pose to the church after John's death.

The number of the Gnostics it is impossible to ascertain. We find them in almost all portions of the ancient church; chiefly where Christianity came into close contact with Judaism and heathenism, as in Egypt, Syria, and Asia Minor; then in Rome, the rendezvous of all forms of truth and falsehood; in Gaul, where they were opposed by Irenaeus; and in Africa, where they were attacked by Tertullian, and afterwards by Augustin, who was himself a Manichaeon for several years. They found most favor with the educated, and threatened to lead astray the teachers of the church. But they could

gain no foothold among the people;

This background is helpful to a fuller and richer understanding of the reason and basis for some of the statements in John and other NT epistles. Finding specifics is not really that important. As long as we allow the Bible to interpret the Bible, we will identify them in their current form. Things haven't changed much since the first century. Those with superior "knowledge" today still do many of the things listed above.

Gnostic Gospels

We gained a great deal of knowledge about the threat it posed and the extent of the influence of Gnosticism when a collection of books were found in the upper Egyptian town called the Nag Hammadi library. They were discovered in 1945 and were well preserved because of the sealed jars in which they had been placed. They are also called the "Chenoboskion Manuscripts," or the "Gnostic Gospels." these 52 books were found in thirteen leather-bound vellum codices buried in a sealed jar.

Codex I (also known as The Jung Codex):

The Prayer of the Apostle Paul
The Apocryphon of James (also known
as the Secret Book of James)
The Gospel of Truth
The Treatise on the Resurrection
The Tripartite Tractate

Codex II:

The Apocryphon of John
The Gospel of Thomas a sayings gospel
The Gospel of Philip
The Hypostasis of the Archons
On the Origin of the World
The Exegesis on the Soul
The Book of Thomas the Contender

Codex III:

The Apocryphon of John
Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit
named The Gospel of the Egyptians
Eugnostos the Blessed
The Sophia of Jesus Christ
The Dialogue of the Savior

Codex IV:

The Apocryphon of John
Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit
named The Gospel of the Egyptians

Codex V:

Eugnostos the Blessed
The Apocalypse of Paul
The First Apocalypse of James
The Second Apocalypse of James
The Apocalypse of Adam

Codex VI:

The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles
The Thunder, Perfect Mind
Authoritative Teaching
The Concept of Our Great Power
Republic by Plato - The original is not
gnostic,
but the Nag Hammadi library version is
heavily modified with then-current gnostic
concepts.

The Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth -
a Hermetic treatise
The Prayer of Thanksgiving (with a hand-
written note) - a Hermetic prayer
Asclepius 21-29 - another Hermetic treatise

Codex VII:

The Paraphrase of Shem
The Second Treatise of the Great Seth
Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter
The Teachings of Silvanus
The Three Steles of Seth

Codex VIII:

Zostrianos
The Letter of Peter to Philip

Codex IX:

Melchizedek
The Thought of Norea
The Testimony of truth

Codex X:

Marsanes

Codex XI:

The Interpretation of Knowledge
A Valentinian Exposition, On the Anointing,
On Baptism (A and B) and On the Eucharist
(A and B)
Allogenes
Hypsiphron

Codex XII

The Sentences of Sextus
The Gospel of Truth
Fragments

Codex XIII:

Trimorphic Protennoia
On the Origin of the World

The Themes of 1 John and the Gospel of John are very Similar

There is a universal agreement that John is the author of both books, and that both books were written with the same basic theme. Both books begin with nearly the same thoughts.

Yet there are important differences. First, the gospel of John was written to help us believe and the first letter of John was written so we could know we have eternal life.

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. John 20:30-31

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

1John 5:13

We see the progression from the gospel that creates the belief and the letter which through that belief shows us that we have eternal life.

One of the main points of their similarities was that they had seen these things with their own eyes, had been present when they all happened and were the only credible witnesses of the things that occurred. This is how he ended John and how he started First John.

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. John 20:30-31

This is the disciple who testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. 25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen. John 21:24-25

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life — 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us — 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full. 1 John 1:1-4

Peter said much the same thing in his letter:

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. 2Pet. 1:16-18

Luke summed up all that John and Peter said as he spoke of how he wrote his book after speaking with all of them and compiling an inspired history based on all the eyewitnesses.

Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, 3 it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, 4 that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. Lk. 1:1-4

We now have the same choice they did. We can believe the eyewitness testimony of those who were first present and later inspired to remember these things and record them for us. Or, we can choose to believe that others have equal ability with them. The former is the truth proclaimed in the Scripture and the latter the foundation of all gnosticism.

"These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. 26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. Jn. 14:25-27

"But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me. 27 And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning. Jn. 15:26-27

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. Jn. 16:12-13

This is the most critical difference between those who will fully submit to the words recorded in the Scriptures and those who will ever seek further revelation and further enlightenment. John made the choice both clear and stark.

We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we

know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. 1Jn. 4:6

In both books the points that have the greatest bearing on our faith are the following:

Beginning

Word

Life

Father

Light

Darkness

*That which was from the **beginning**, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the **Word of life** 2 (and the **life** was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the **life**, the eternal (**life**), which was with the **Father**, and was manifested unto us); 3 that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the **Father**, and with his Son Jesus Christ: 4 and these things we write, that our joy may be made full. 5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce unto you, that God is **light**, and in Him is no **darkness** at all. 1Jn. 1:1-5*

*In the **beginning** was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God. 2 He was in the **beginning** with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was **life**, and the **life** was the light of men. 5 And the **light** shines in the **darkness**, and the **darkness** did not comprehend it. . . . 9 That was the true **Light** which gives **light** to every man coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. . . . 14 And the **Word** became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the **only begotten of the Father**, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-5; 9-10; 14*

After all we have learned about gnosticism and its tenets, it becomes evident that not only First John, but also the gospel of John were combating them with their introductions.

The rest of the first chapter brings in some very important vocabulary words that we must become familiar with to understand both the book and the battle it revealed. Most of them are first principle doctrines that we are all fully aware of, but they also bring out the difference between the gnostic thinking and the revelation from Scripture.

fellowship

walk

truth

sin

lie

liar

deceive

cleanse

confess

forgive

If we say that we have **fellowship** with Him and **walk** in the **darkness**, we **lie**, and do not the **truth**: 7 but if we **walk** in the **light**, as he is in the **light**, we have **fellowship** one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son **cleanses** us from all **sin**. 8 If we say that we have no **sin**, we **deceive** ourselves, and the **truth** is not in us. 9 If we **confess** our **sins**, he is faithful and righteous to **forgive** us our **sins**, and to **cleanse** us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not **sinned**, we make Him a **liar**, and his **word** is not in us. 1Jn. 1:6-10

As we study this first chapter, special emphasis will be given to these terms. After finding the 52 gnostic gospels we get a better idea of what John was fighting against. These books had the sound of veracity, but were forgeries and counterfeits. Christians had to be quarantined against them so that their faith would not be overthrown.

Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us. 1Jn. 2:18-19

Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. 23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also. 1Jn. 2:22-23

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 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. 1Jn. 4:1-3

For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 8 Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward. 9 Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 2Jn. 7-10

We also see the influence that gnostic teaching had on his book by the many times he used the term know.

Know in 1 John

hereby we **know (ginosko)** that we **know (ginosko)** Him: keep His commandments. 2:3

He that says I **know (oida)** Him, and keeps not His commandments, is a liar, 2:4

Hereby we **know (ginosko)** that we are in him: walk even as he walked. 2:5-6

he that hates his brother is in and walks in the darkness, and **knows (oida)** not where he goes 2:11

ye **know (ginosko)** Him who is from the beginning. 2:13,14

you **know (ginosko)** the Father. 2:14

it is the last hour: many antichrists; have arisen whereby we **know (ginosko)** that it is the last hour. 2:18

you have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye **know (oida)** all the things.

not written you because ye **know (oida)** not the truth, but because ye **know (oida)** it 2:20

If ye **KNOW (EIDO)** he is righteous, ye **know (ginosko)** every one who does righteousness is begotten of Him. 2:29

we are called children of God; For this cause the world **knows (ginosko)** us not, because it **knew (ginosko)** Him not. 3:1

We **know (ginosko)** when shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as he is. 3:2

you **know (oida)** he was manifested to take away sins; and in Him is no sin. 3:5

whosoever sins hath not seen Him, neither **knows (ginosko)** Him. 3:6

We **know (oida)** that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. 3:14
 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer: and ye **know (oida)** no murderer has eternal life 3:15
 Hereby **know (ginosko)** we love, He laid down His life for us we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 3:16
 Hereby shall we **know (ginosko)** that we are of the truth, if our heart condemn us not, 3:19, 21
 God is greater than our heart, and **knows (ginosko)** all things. 3:19
 he that keeps His commandments abides in Him. Hereby we **know (ginosko)** he abides in us, the Spirit he gave us. 3:24
 Hereby **know (ginosko)** you the Spirit of God: every spirit that confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 4:2
 We are of God: he that **knows (ginosko)** God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. 4:6
 By this we **know (ginosko)** the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. 4:6
 every one that loves is begotten of God, and **knows (ginosko)** God. 4:7
 He that loveth not **know (ginosko)** not God; for God is love. 4:8
 hereby we **know (ginosko)** we abide in Him and he in us, because he hath given us of His Spirit. 4:13
 And we **know (ginosko)** and have believed the love which God hath in us. 4:16
 Hereby we **know (ginosko)** that we love the children of God, when we love God and do His commandments. 5:2
 These things have I written unto you, that ye may **KNOW (EIDO)** that ye have eternal life 5:13
 if we **know (oida)** he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we **know (oida)** we have the petitions we ask of Him. 5:15
 We **know (oida)** that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; 5:18
 We **know (oida)** that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the evil one. 5:19
 we **know (oida)** the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, 5:20
 We **know (ginosko)** and are in Him that is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. 5:20

There are two different verbs (one in two different tenses). Their meanings differ only slightly:

ginosko... the intelligent comprehension of an object or matter, whether this comes for the first time, or comes afresh, into the consideration of the one who grasps it ("to come to know," "to experience," "to perceive [again]") or whether it is already present ("to perceive"). (Kittel NT 1097)

"*ginosko*... 1. univ. 1. to learn to know, come to know, get a knowledge of,... 2 to know, understand, perceive, have knowledge of... II in particular *ginosko*, to become acquainted with, to know, is employed in the N. T. of the knowledge of God and Christ, and of the things relating to them or proceeding from them... In classic usage... *ginoskein*, distinguished from the rest by its original inchoative force, denotes a discriminating apprehension of external impressions, a knowledge grounded in personal experience ..." (Thayer, p. 117-118; 1097)

This word knowledge is a term to describe what we *learn* or *come to know* and then *have a knowledge of*. We *understand and perceive*.

"*oida*,... 1. like the Lat. *novi* it has the signification of a present *to know, understand*; and in the plpf. the signif. of an impf. 1. *to know*,... 2. *to know* i. e. *get knowledge of, understand, perceive*; a. any fact... b. the force and meaning of something that has definite meaning:... c. as in class. Grk., foll. by an inf. in the sense of *to know how* (Lat. *calleo, to be skilled in ...Phil 4:12*)..." (Thayer, p. 174; 1492).

This word's primary meaning is to see or perceive with the eyes (Latin - *video*). This is the knowledge of "*perception and discernment*," of "*discovery and experience*."

"*eido*... lat. *video*... The tenses coming from *eido* and retained by usage form two families, of which one signifies to see, the other to know... I. *to see* 1. *to perceive* (with the eyes)... 2. lat. *video, to perceive by any of the senses*... 3. univ *to perceive, notice, discern, discover*... 4. *to see*, i.e. to turn the eyes, the mind, the attention to anything; a. *to pay attention, observe*... b. ... *to see about something* i.e. to ascertain what must be done about it... c. *to inspect, examine*... d. *to look at, behold*... 5. *to experience*, any state of condition... 6. *to see* i.e. *have an interview with, to visit*..." (Thayer, p. 172-174; 1492)