

GNOSTICISM AND SCIENCE FALSELY SO CALLED

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1 Timothy 6:20 And Meaning Of The Word "Science", "Gnosis" Means "Knowledge", Only 1 Timothy 6:20 Translates "Gnosis" As "Science", Apostle Paul Isn't Discussing Science In The Verse, Paul's Warning Regarding Teachings That Are Contrary To Doctrines Of Christ, "From Such Withdraw Thyself", Other New Testament Warnings Regarding False Doctrines, Esoteric And Heretical Teachings Of Gnostics, Their Views Concerning Jesus And Salvation, Another Jesus And Another Gospel, "Bear With Him", "Some Professing Have Erred Concerning The Faith", "Oppositions Of Science Falsely So Called", Ungodly Modern Science, Some Closing Remarks, BBB Suggested Reading List

Contrary to what some modern Christians have erroneously been led to believe, in 1 Timothy 6:20, the word "science" is NOT referring to what we call science today. That is to say, it is NOT talking about the different modern scientific disciplines such as chemistry, biology, physics, astronomy, etc. Allow me to share that verse with you so that you can see what I am talking about:

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:"

1 Timothy 6:20, KJV

As some of my readers may possibly already know, the word "science" in the previous verse is actually translated from the Koine Greek word "gnosis", which Thayer's Greek English lexicon simply defines as "knowledge". What's very odd about this, is the fact that 1 Timothy 6:20 is the ONLY verse that is found in the entire New Testament of the Authorized King James Bible where "gnosis" is translated as "science". In case you were not aware of it, it may surprise you to know that in all of the other twenty-eight instances where the word "gnosis" is found in the New Testament of the KJV, it is always properly translated as "knowledge".

If that is not already enough to grab your attention, to add to this interesting mystery, consider the fact that if you closely examine all of the surrounding verses in this same chapter, what you will quickly discover is that the Apostle Paul is NOT even discussing anything of a scientific nature whatsoever. So in my mind, this presents a very interesting question: Why did the King James Bible translators choose to translate "gnosis" as "science" in this one verse only? It just does not seem to make any sense, does it? In fact, it really does seem quite out of context with the rest of the chapter. So let's try to unravel this mystery, shall we?

Well, to begin with, in the aforementioned chapter, the first thing that we notice is that the Apostle Paul issues a strong warning against any teachings which are contrary to the sound doctrines of Jesus Christ. He in fact writes the following sharp admonition near the beginning of the chapter:

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

1 Timothy 6:3-5, KJV

As you can obviously see, the Apostle Paul is taking this problem concerning false teachings, false doctrines and false knowledge in the First Century Church very seriously. In fact, Paul concludes verse five by stating "from such withdraw thyself." In other words, get away from them, and have absolutely nothing to do with them. As I point out in a number of other Bill's Bible Basics articles, this is NOT the only place in the New Testament where the Apostles warn the Disciples to steer clear of anyone who teaches anything which is contrary to the doctrines of Jesus Christ. Consider the following group of verses which offer additional proof of this point:

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

2 John 1:9-11, KJV

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Galatians 1:6-9, KJV

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and DOCTRINES OF DEVILS; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;"
1 Timothy 4:1-2, KJV

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in DAMNABLE HERESIES, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."
2 Peter 2:1, KJV

"From which some having swerved have turned aside unto VAIN JANGLING; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."
1 Timothy 1:6-7, KJV

"For the time will come when THEY WILL NOT ENDURE SOUND DOCTRINE; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"
2 Timothy 4:3, KJV

"Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
Hebrews 5:11-14, KJV

So again we see a very strong warning being issued by both the Apostle John and the Apostle Paul, to avoid those people who are preaching things which are contrary to the doctrines of Jesus Christ. John firmly admonishes his readers to not even allow such deceivers into their homes, or to even bless them lest they be partaker of their evil deeds. For his part, the Apostle Paul outright curses such misguided people and refers to their teachings as the "doctrines of devils". The Apostle Peter too warns of "damnable heresies".

So the next question we need to ask ourselves is this: Just who are these dangerous individuals against whom the three Apostles are issuing such strong warnings? As we learned a moment ago, the word "science" is translated from the Koine Greek "gnosis", which would have been better translated as "knowledge" in order to conform with the other twenty-eight occurrences of this word in the King James New Testament.

The fact of the matter is that the word "gnosis" provides us with a very big clue with regard to exactly who the Apostle Paul is probably talking about. You see, it just so happens that it was precisely during the First Century that a certain group of people referred to as "Gnostics" were very prominent in that particular part of the world. Furthermore, as we all know, it was also exactly the same time when the Apostle Paul both lived, preached and wrote his Epistles.

The Gnostics actually consisted of different groups of people who did not all embrace the exact same beliefs. They believed that they were in possession of esoteric -- secret -- divine or spiritual knowledge that was essential for salvation. Some Gnostics believed in a spiritual, benevolent God, but also in a lesser, flawed, evil deity who was supposedly responsible for the creation of the physical world and human beings as well.

Furthermore, regarding Jesus Christ, the Gnostics actually had different conflicting views concerning His mission, and His actual human and spiritual nature. Some Gnostics believed in a divine redeemer, while other Gnostics viewed the Lord as being merely a human who had attained to enlightenment. Some Gnostics even rejected the idea of Jesus Christ experiencing a regular human life, death and resurrection. Furthermore, not all Gnostics embraced the view that faith in Jesus Christ was a necessary requirement for one's Salvation. The Gnostics had other beliefs as well, which you can easily discover for yourself, if you want to invest some time in personal online

research.

So the main point to consider as it pertains to our current discussion, is the fact that for very obvious reasons, early Christians viewed some of the Gnostics' teachings as being quite heretical. After all, as we have clearly seen, many of them believed in another Jesus, and not in the real Jesus of the Bible, as we read in the following verse:

"For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

2 Corinthians 11:4, KJV

Please note that in the previous verse, the phrase "bear with him" is derived from a Koine Greek word which actually means to hold oneself erect and firm, or to endure. In other words, what the Apostle Paul is actually telling the brethren is to stand firm against any individual who comes preaching a false Jesus and a false gospel.

That being the case, it's really not too surprising then that in 1 Timothy 6:20 above, the Apostle Paul writes "oppositions of science falsely so called". In other words, as we've just seen, the Gnostics embraced certain beliefs which directly opposed the doctrines of Jesus Christ. That is precisely why in the very next verse after that, Paul then adds "Which some professing have erred concerning the faith." In other words, because certain people had chosen to embrace the misguided beliefs of the Gnostics, they had in fact erred from the true doctrines of the Christian faith.

So, my dear friends, that is what I personally believe the Apostle Paul is referring to when he writes "oppositions of science falsely so called". He is really talking about the false knowledge -- or gnosis -- of the Gnostics, which was contrary to and contradicted the teachings of Jesus Christ. To reiterate, it is my view that 1 Timothy 6:20 has nothing to do with actual science as we understand the word today.

Does a lot of modern science also strongly contradict God's Word, and basically accuse God of being a liar? As I point out in a number of my other science-centric articles, most definitely. But again, in my opinion, I do not believe that is what Paul was really writing about. He was talking about the so-called esoteric, secret spiritual knowledge that was

embraced by the Gnostics. Such knowledge was obviously full of deception, and it posed a danger to the First Century followers of Jesus Christ.

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you've found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

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