

We may make the following generalizations for all the Gnostic schools while not actually finishing any (that is, giving it a full treatment).

a. God

God is non-material (hence spiritual), good, exalted, all perfect, and all light. He is the head of the spiritual world of light. He is not knowable and is not personable. He is there.

This God is not the God of the Bible. The God of the Old Testament, in particular, was the creator-God of this place and was an unjust God, a demiurge. He is a much inferior deity and while he has some power it is not of a whole lot of help as the Gnostics would infer from looking at the trouble his world is in...and if he had been a better influence in our society we would have a better lot than we do.

b. The universe

The universe is compartmentalized and hierarchial in nature. There are three major portions:

God Above	as defined in the earlier paragraph...he is not personal, not individually knowable.
The Pleroma	The space between us and God... bits of truth about Him are lodged here.
Our World	The limitations of matter and the problems of a metaphysical dualism: good and evil

Bits of truth come from the Divine image and are scattered in the Pleroma. We must seek to gain these in the mystery of the Gnostic rites for only through these can we hope to aspire to a feeling or understanding of the world above. Gnostic teachers were those who knew how to get the stuff and give it to us. A key factor in profiting from them and the bits they pick up is a willingness to deny much of the affairs of this life and "overcome" our material needs and surroundings.

c. Christ

Christ is seen as the legitimate son of the poor demiurge, Jehovah. He does not a little bit about God as his father is other-worldly but he is not God-incarnate (an impossibility in Gnostic structures) and his miracles, resurrection, etc., were phantasmal at best, fabrications at worst. Followers of Christ can learn something about getting out of this world but not enough. His followers are obviously inferior to the followers of the Great God...whose followers are all disciples of and then found among the Gnostic teachers.