

# On the Corner Fringe: Irenaeus "Against Heresies" February 19, 2020

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://cornerfringe.com/media/c2nz2j2/otcf-irenaeus-against-heresies>

\*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document be printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliteration into the English alphabet. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

## Gnosticism and the Modern Prosperity Gospel

This transcript of a message, from **Pastor Daniel Joseph** of **Corner Fringe Ministries**, examines the ancient writings of **Irenaeus** to warn modern believers about the dangers of **Gnosticism**. Daniel highlights the historical figure **Marcus**, a heretic who allegedly used **manipulative tactics** and psychological pressure to convince followers they possessed supernatural gifts. He draws a direct parallel between these **second-century deceptions** and contemporary movements, specifically criticizing the **prosperity gospel** for encouraging manufactured spiritual experiences. Daniel argues that modern practitioners often prioritize **subjective feelings** and "nonsense" utterances over the established **Word of God**. Ultimately, he calls for spiritual vigilance, urging Christians to rely on **biblical scripture** rather than emotionalism to identify **false prophets**.

[Daniel Joseph]

Welcome everyone. I'm Daniel Joseph, and you're "On the Corner Fringe."

Today we are going to take a page out of history. We'll look back to the second century and the works of Irenaeus. Irenaeus, in his work known as "Against Heresies," starts listing all these heretics one after another. Now what's interesting is he mentions a man by the name of Marcus.

Now, Marcus is a Gnostic, and if you're not familiar with Gnosticism, I can tell you this: Gnosticism in the second and third centuries was probably public enemy number one of the church which had recently been birthed. The gospels were going out to the entire world, and the ecclesia was growing. Gnosticism was the vile enemy of that. It was a perverter of the church.

And what's so scary is there was all these Gnostics running around, but they're confessing themselves as being Christians. They're confessing Jesus as Lord. While doing that, they held certain ideologies which were absolutely destructive to the faith. Ideologies that did not line up with the Word of God. In fact, worth quoting is a modern-day witch, Caitlin Matthews, a priestess, who made the following statement:



“Gnosticism serves most admirably as a bridge for paganism to infiltrate Christianity of our time.” You think about this. This is a modern-day witch recognizing the power of Gnosticism and how it has this unique ability, to infiltrate the church and tear it apart, and stating pleasure of its ability to do this. When you go back to the second century the lands were filled with Gnostics.

If you're not familiar with Gnosticism, and I'm going to overly simplify this and by no means do it justice. Gnosticism is simply the idea that salvation is obtained through divine revelation, some secret knowledge that is given. So, all these Gnostic leaders said, I received this secret divine information, and therefore salvation comes through this. Gnosticism would elevate the experience over the biblical text. It would elevate what you feel in your heart more than what we read in the Word and trust in that feeling more. It's really a peculiar deception and one that we see alive and well today.

So, I want to show you just how alive and well it is, and it's rearing its ugly head once again by taking you to Irenaeus' writings and listening to what he says. The man he brings to the table here is Marcus. — *Irenaeus, against Heresies*—But there is another among these heretics, Marcus by name... Thus it appears as if he really were the precursor of Antichrist. Right off the bat, you get to feel the weight of how much Irenaeus really loathes this situation and sees it as absolutely demonic from the pit of hell.

Moving on—It appears probable enough that this man possesses a demon as his familiar spirit, by means of whom he seems able to prophesy, and also enables as many as he counts worthy to be partakers of his Charis themselves to prophesy. For those Greek students out there, you recognize the term “Charis” (χάρις) because in the New Testament this is the Greek term “grace.” Now having said that, it does take on a little different connotation in a Gnostic context. There are many different emanations that the system of Gnosticism bears, and there are actually multiple systems of Gnosticism. I'm not going to get into that.

But continuing, regarding Marcus—He devotes himself especially to women, and those such as are well-bred, and elegantly attired, and of great wealth, whom he frequently seeks to draw after him by addressing them in such seductive words as these: Now before I show you what these words are, Irenaeus is going to show us how he is seducing these people and recognize the people he's talking about. He's talking about this guy captivating women, and he's captivating the wealthy, the well-bred, and the elegantly attired. Think about this: when this becomes your audience, guess what happens? You have a very influential audience. Because typically, as the rule goes, people of great wealth, well-attired, and well-bred are people—men and women—of notoriety. These are people of influence. So, when you're able to captivate an audience like this, you better believe this is going to be a force to be reckoned with.

Now listen to the deception this Gnostic man Marcus is bringing. This is what we read, and these are the words of Marcus—it behooves us to become one. Receive first from me and by me [the gift of] Charis. Okay, so obviously these words sound amazing. And of course, when you're in a Christian context, we are supposed to be unified. We are all supposed to be one, in the Hebrew “echad”; this is what we are called to be. Doesn't that sound nice and biblical? And receive from me what I have, the gift. I mean, even the terminology he's using here is almost like you could say, “Well, this kind of sounds like the Apostle Paul.” Whether you're reading Romans 12 or reading 1 Corinthians 12, he's going to impart some gift. We can see other places with the Apostle Paul in the book of Acts where he lays on hands, and he imparts the gift; he imparts what he has, right?

Then he goes on and says, “Behold Charis has descended upon thee; open thy mouth and prophesy.” So here he's recognizing that he has this well-bred audience, and of course they want this gift of *Charis*; they want this divine gift. Then he says, “You've received it; it descended upon me, and because I've commanded, it has descended upon you.” We continue—On the woman replying, so here is one example of a woman who replied to him, “I have never at any time prophesied, nor do I know how to prophesy;” then engaging, for the second time, in certain invocations, so as to astound his deluded victim, he says to her, “Open thy mouth, speak whatsoever occurs to thee, and thou shalt prophesy.”

Isn't that amazing? In other words, this person is like, “I don't know how to prophesy. This is something I've never done before. I don't know how to do this.” And he comes back and says, “Just open your mouth, and you will do it.” Now, I must ask you, does this at all sound familiar to any situation we see happening in the Christian church, or at least a specific part of the Christian church today? And what I'm referring to is the prosperity gospel. Does this situation sound familiar? Where you have the well-bred and the wealthy. You have men and women of great influence, and you have this prosperity movement. You have that environment.

What do we know about those environments? They're typically identified by one thing standing out above all else. And what is that? That is the radical expression of the gift of the Spirit, typically through the gift of tongues. You can go to these Word of Faith or prosperity gospel churches, and what you'll find is that tongues is elevated above all else. In fact, many would say that, “Hey, if you don't have the gift of tongues, you're not showing the signs that you have the Spirit of God. You need to speak in tongues.” And I've seen this with my own eyes; I grew up in Assemblies of God, so I grew up in this environment. I know all about it; I didn't even blink an eye when the whole church erupted in tongues. I'm very well aware of this, and personally I can tell you this right now: I believe in tongues. It's a legitimate gift.

But what I have seen happen is not legitimate. What I have seen happen is Gnosticism. What I've seen happening is men and women attempting to teach other men and women how to actually speak in tongues. And I am not making this up. Some of you who have no real exposure to what I'm saying right now, I'm telling you the truth: there are men and women out there who are trying to teach the gift of tongues, which is interesting because it's a gift; you can't teach it, and you can't be taught it. It's the Holy Spirit that comes down upon you and does it all. He's the one that causes you to speak. He's the one that causes you to say, “Thus says the LORD.”

I can remember; this even tried to come into my own church, where a gentleman came in and tried to get one of our congregants to, as he said, “loose his tongue” and just open and just start babbling, and you will be speaking in tongues, and that's the gift of tongues. Whatever just comes naturally, but unintelligibly, that's tongues. The very thing we see happening and being taught today is the very thing that happened in the second century regarding exactly what we're reading right now. I mean, this is scary. We see Gnosticism rearing its head once again.

Now listen, he goes on—She then, vainly puffed up and elated by these words, and greatly excited in soul by the expectation that it is herself who is to prophesy. Of course, when you see other people manifesting this, you want to be part of the club. This is going amazingly; I want this power. I want this. I want *Charis* to rest upon me. And so, she's excited. Then we continue—her heart beating violently [from emotion], reaches the requisite pitch of audacity, and idly as well as impudently utters—utters—some nonsense as it happens to occur to her, such as might be expected from one heated by an empty spirit (emphasis added).

Now, again, I tell you, unfortunately I have seen this happening. It's happening in this prosperity environment where these people are being sucked in to manifest their own selves, of their own flesh, because they're being encouraged to do this, and they end up, at the end of the day, uttering some nonsense. Now, I'm not saying the authentic gift of tongues when the true and authentic Spirit of God moves through someone and tongues are spoken and fruit is borne, where someone else hears of it, and they hear the glory of God being spoken. They hear the name of Yeshua Jesus being exalted. It could even be a word of knowledge. There are actual events where I know the gift of tongues is manifested, and it is powerful.

But then we have the flip side where Gnosticism is trying to creep in and destroy. Where it's literally being contrived out of a product of flesh. Where it's just me who's doing it, this is scary stuff, but this is nothing new. This is the same stuff the enemy was doing back in the second century. Is this crazy or what?

Now going on—[Henceforth she reckons herself a prophetess, and expresses her thanks to Marcus for having imparted to her of his own Charis.](#) I mean, this is where we're at today. People walk out, and this was so scary, as people who start attempting either to prophesy of their own accord or speak in tongues of their own accord fall into this great ditch because they have this false elation of acceptance. They have this false elation of accomplishment, and really the enemy is just preying upon them. So, here we are in 2020, and we are seeing Gnosticism growing. We are seeing Gnosticism destroy.

Now, having said that, I don't believe, because I know I'll get the emails on this, that everyone who goes to a prosperity church or even a Word of Faith church is deceived, and that everyone there is doomed to hell. I don't believe that, so don't think that, but if you think for one moment the enemy is not trying to rip those communities to shreds and bring them down and that deception is, in fact, very prevalent, that's where we have the problem. Because it is absolutely clear what I'm seeing is a very strong Gnostic tendency of, those believing their feelings; of what they feel in their heart takes precedence over the written Word of God. This is where we're at.

I can tell you, of a recent conversation I had with a gentleman, a believer in ministry, and he brought something to the table. I told him, biblically, "What you're saying is just not accurate." Of course, I did it in love. At which point he told me, "I know what's in my heart. What's in my heart is truth." I responded, "Well, Jeremiah 17:9 says, [“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?”](#) I said, "Your heart, what you feel in your heart, is not trustworthy, but what is, is the Word of God." That is what we need to trust in. That's the only thing we can trust in.

A Gnostic tendency, this kind of concept, would rest more on the experience than on the written Word, and we have to get away from this. We have to get away from this deception. We must pull these people out of the fire.

Remember what Yeshua said in Matthew 7:15—[“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”](#) What did Paul say in 2 Corinthians 11:13-14? He says, [“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. <sup>14</sup> And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.”](#) Ministers come as ministers of righteousness. It's like when we hear somebody saying the name of Jesus, and our defenses go down and we just kind of check out. “Oh, they're a Christian; they're saved; it's all okay.” It's all okay when it

lines up with Jesus's words. It's all okay when it lines up with the Torah and the Prophets. Then we have the green light. Then we're clear. But not before that.

I can't help but think of Jude's words in Jude 4—**For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.** That men would secretly come in, and they would turn the grace, the *Charis*, of God into lewdness.

We must have our eyes open. We must have our wits about us today. We need to be embedded into the Word. We need to be married to the Word because it is our husband in Christ. He is the Word who became flesh.

So that's all for today. Bless you, and I hope you have a great week.

# The Ancient Roots of Modern Deception: Irenaeus vs. Gnosticism

From 2nd-century Gnostic heresies to modern spiritual movements, the priority of Scripture over manufactured experience remains a central battle.

## THE TACTICS OF MARCUS (2ND CENTURY)



### Targeting Influence and Wealth

Marcus focused on captivating the well-bred and wealthy to gain notoriety and social force.



### Manufactured Prophecy

He commanded followers to speak whatever occurred to them, framing nonsense as divine prophecy.



### Experience Over Scripture

Gnosticism prioritized "secret knowledge" and internal feelings over the objective authority of biblical text.

## THE MODERN PARALLEL



### DIRECT COMPARISON: ANCIENT METHODS VS. MODERN TENDENCIES

| Feature                                                                                          | 2nd-Century Gnosticism (Marcus)                                                                                                     | Modern Gnostic Tendencies                                                                                                            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <br>Audience   | <br>The wealthy and "elegantly attired"           | <br>Prosperity gospel/Word of Faith environments  |
| <br>Method    | <br>"Open thy mouth and speak whatsoever occurs" | <br>Encouraging "babbling" to "loose the tongue" |
| <br>Authority | <br>Subjective "Charis" (Grace)                  | <br>Feelings in the heart over the written Word  |

### The Prosperity Gospel Link

Modern movements often mirror Marcus by elevating radical outward manifestations over scriptural alignment.



### Contriving Spiritual Gifts

Attempts to "teach" spiritual gifts like tongues create a product of flesh rather than spirit.



### The Deceitful Heart

Scripture warns that the heart is deceitful; only the Word provides a trustworthy foundation.