

Who or what defines orthodoxy?

Opening Discussion

What challenges did
the early church face
to maintaining
orthodoxy?

Group Discussion

Gnosticism and Marcion

Heresy Series - Review

Background

- Jesus dies, rises, and ascends into heaven, leaving 11 disciples behind to run this new church.
- Those 11 Jewish men spread Jesus' teaching across the Roman world.
- Soon, far more than 11 churches have sprung up.
- And soon, Christianity is more than just Jewish.
- How do you maintain orthodoxy without an apostle nearby? Without knowledge of Judaism?

Gnosticism

- The world isn't real / important
- Hatred of material world / things
- Elitist / Secret Knowledge

Marcion of Sinope

(85-160 CE)

- Like the Gnostics, didn't like material things / reality
- Thought OT God was different from the NT God
 - OT God was wrathful, petty, and created a flawed world
 - NT God is loving, just, and is redeeming the fallen world
- Thought that the OT and many NT books were not faithful to true Christianity (too Jewish!)

Orthodox Response

- If Christ didn't suffer, then Christianity falls.
- Marcion has no apostolic authority.
- God's creation is good.
- God is one.

Docetism

Heresy Series

Docetism fundamentals

- Jesus only appeared human (Greek *dokeo* – to seem / appear)
- How could something spiritual and pure become material, worldly, corruptible, *human*?
- Jesus couldn't die or be born or suffer. That's degrading.
- Neither could he hunger or thirst.
- If he truly is to have the power to save, he must be untainted.

Orthodox Response

- One of the earliest creeds.
- Ignatius of Antioch's suffering
- Irenaeus explains the incarnation
- Redemption is not an escape from a creation, but a restoration of creation.