

## Docetism

**For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. (2 John 1:7)**

**To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself... (2 Corinthians 5:19)**

Gnosticism rejected the doctrine of the incarnation. It declared that Christ could not possibly have a body: (1) because the absolute cannot enter into a real union with the finite; and (2) because matter is evil, and the spiritual world is ever in conflict with it.

It was thought that the Christ had joined himself for the time being with the body of a profoundly spiritual man called Jesus. As Fisher puts it, the divine was merely in “temporary juxtaposition with humanity.” This union was effected either at the birth or at the baptism of Jesus, and it was dissolved shortly before the crucifixion.

It followed, therefore, that the Christ was not really crucified. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was an optical illusion in which the man Jesus was the real sufferer. Thus Gnosticism, with its docetic conception, denuded the Redeemer of any real humanity, and destroyed the historic person of Christ.

Gnosticism clearly derived its ideas of the Redeemer from pagan mythology.

(A History of Christian Thought, Vol. I, by Otto W. Heick, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965, 72)