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**B0433 -- August 15, 2004 -- 2 John 7 -- Creature-Creator vs. Chain of Being**

Last week we looked at the first exhortation of 2<sup>nd</sup> John: Walking in the Sphere of Truth (4-6). We found in v. 4 that John wrote this letter in response to some of the *elect lady*'s children whom he saw *walking in the truth*. In v. 7 John reminds the lady of an old commandment that they have had from the beginning of their Christian experience. Namely, that believers *love one another*. This is the key to this whole thing. We are to love other believers because it is a witness to the world, and the love we express between one another expresses a camaraderie. It sets us off from the world as distinct. As you'll see, Christian reciprocal love is a bulwark against false doctrines of *antichrists*. If we love the world like we are supposed to be loving other believers then we are making a grave mistake. John tells us in his first epistle that we are not to love the world or the things in the world. We can't be neutral; we can't love the world and God at the same time. To love the world is to be anti-God and immoral. Both of which are passing away. Now, even though these children were walking in the truth does not make them somehow immune to the world system so John reminds them to continue to walk in the commandments and thus demonstrate love. So, we've got truth, love, and walking. Truth is the greatest sphere; love is within that and within truth and love is where we walk. We want to be ever expanding the area over which we can walk and the only way to do that is to increase our knowledge of the word of God so that we can live by faith, we can love over a greater area and walk freely, conscience unstained yet in the boundaries of truth. In other words, we want the three spheres to have the same volume.

Today we are looking at the second exhortation of 2 John which begins in v. 7 and extends to v. 11. But, in order to understand the teaching of the deceivers we have to back up because it is crucial to understand what's back of their teaching mentioned in v. 7. We want to understand something about their worldview. Today I can only give you a piece of the puzzle. So, I'm leaving out a large section of material that can be summed up in the following five points.

- 1) The ultimate context for any discussion is origins

- 2) Everyone has a view of origins (NO NEUTRALITY)
- 3) One's view of origins dictates his ultimate view of the world
- 4) Historically there are only two views of the world
- 5) These are Paganism and Biblicism

Now, I'm not using the term Paganism in a derogatory sense. The word Pagan simply means "one who does not adhere or conform to the culture of the Bible". We're not name calling by using this term. Biblicism is "one who does adhere to or conform to the culture of the Bible." And within these two worldviews there are two basic presuppositions. A presupposition is an unchallengeable assumption. It's something in your thinking that you never challenge, it's the basic starting point for knowing anything at all. And everyone has presuppositions. Everyone has a worldview. These things are like flypaper. If flypaper is stuck to your foot and you try to get it off with the other foot then it just sticks to the other foot. One's presuppositions and worldview are like flypaper; you can't ever get rid of it. So, everyone has presuppositions and since the ultimate context for any discussion is origins then everyone has a view of origins. Ultimately there are only two views of origins.

### **Biblicism**

#### ***1. Infinite-Personal Creator***

INFINITE-PERSONAL

-----CREATOR-----

x-----finite man and nature  
 creation  
 event

### **Paganism**

#### ***2. Infinite-Impersonal Cosmos***

INFINITE-IMPERSONAL COSMOS

"mystery"-----transformation of gods, man, and nature-

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Now, let's take a look at some of the major differences between these two views of origins because these two views have a lot to say about who man is (ontology/metaphysics), what truth is/how we can know (epistemology), and how we should live (axiology).

**Who am I?** To answer the question of “who am I?” we have to expand the context to talk about what is reality/existence and what is its structure? The two diagrams above give radically different answers to these questions. Biblicism says that ultimately reality/existence has two levels of being; there is the eternal, Infinite-Personal Creator and there is the finite creation composed of man and nature that depends on Him. Imagine the Genesis 1 account of creation...how do things come into existence? God simply speaks. He uses language to create *ex nihilo* (i.e., out of nothing). Man and nature were not created out of God. Man and nature were not created out of some pre-existing matter. Man and nature were not created by procreation. God simply speaks them out of nothing.

So, what does Genesis 1 tell you about who you are? It tells us that our ultimate environment is not DNA molecules or the laws of physics, chemistry, and biology. Your ultimate environment is a Person who thinks, loves, speaks, has a sense of art and beauty, and enjoys music! So, back behind the cosmos is not some impersonal background radiation emanating from the Big Bang, but a living Personal God.

What does Paganism tell you that you are? It tells us that reality/existence, at bottom, is one. It doesn't matter whether reality is a vast machine or a cosmic organism because either way the universe around you, behind you, and in front of you is ultimately an Impersonal “It”. Your personal make-up only differs in degrees from “It's” electrons and protons that you are composed of. In Paganism, what supposedly makes you unique, your emotions, thinking, talking, loving, and artistic expressions are merely surface appearances in a reality that is basically Impersonal. “You and other humans are really only person-like bubbles floating for the moment on an impersonal ocean of chance. Ultimately, you and other humans are alone.”

**What is Truth and How do I know?** In philosophy this area is known as epistemology. This question asks the question of “how do I know what is true?” The answer lies in the areas of language and logic

Biblical creationism, asserting that there are two levels of reality says that God the Creator thinks thoughts about everything. He has a plan that he designed and put into action (Eph. 1:11). Truth is therefore God's thoughts. God's thoughts pre-exist our thoughts. This means that we discover truth, we do not invent truth. As the Psalmist says, “In Thy light we see Light” (Ps. 36:9). This means that we can only know something truly if God reveals it to us (Deut. 29:29). So, to know things we must be on “speaking terms” with the Creator.

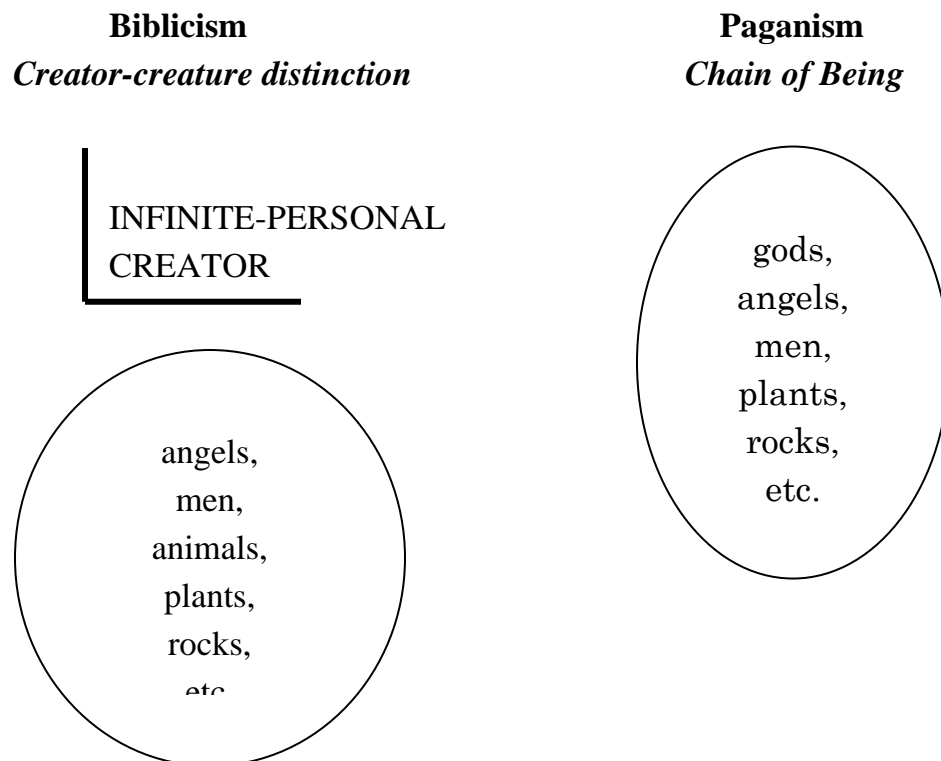
Paganism, which has only one level of reality and denies the Infinite-Personal Creator, says that gods, if they even exist, are ultimately surrounded by the same “mystery” that you and I are. They may know more than you do, but in the end, they too are limited (e.g., God has a higher IQ). This means that human beings invent thoughts that have never been thought before. We are the inventors of truth, not the discoverers of truth. In Paganism man is autonomous, autonomous comes from two words, “auto” meaning “self” and “nomos” meaning “law”. So, you are all alone in the impersonal universe and you determine what is true for you because there is no prior standard of truth. Just two days ago, the Mayor of New Jersey showed us his pagan belief in a one-level impersonal cosmos when he made this statement, “At a point in every person’s life one has to look deeply into the mirror of one’s soul to decide one’s unique truth in the world. Not as we may want to see it, or hope to see it, but as it is. And so, my truth, is that I am a gay American.”<sup>i</sup> So, you see, Paganism is forced to conclude that we invent our own truth. And all this comes out of one’s view of origins.

The problem with the Pagan view that has never been answered is “how can language and logic be trusted when think about reality? If you need stable categories for thinking (e.g., dog trans-mutating into cats) then how can you get stable categories in a one-level infinite cosmos. You need to have a thinking Person behind the universe that has a plan in order for us to have stability of categories so we can speak and think meaningfully. In an impersonal-infinite cosmos how can we guarantee that today’s categories will still be valid tomorrow? If there is no Personal Planner-Creator behind the universe who designates the categories then ultimately there is only “mystery” and no one can know...Pagans use universal terms like “truth”, “know”, “certain”, “always”, but they have no basis to do so. Without the Infinite-Personal Creator we can’t have knowledge. The Bible calls this “vanity”. In modern times we might substitute this with the word “speculation”.

**How should I live?** This is what we call ethics or axiology in Philosophy. To answer this question, we rest on our highest loyalty. Paganism answered the first two questions by concluding that we are ultimately autonomous and alone. Since we are alone and autonomous there is no Person to whom we are ultimately responsible. You may do what seems right in your own eyes (as per Judg. 17:6 and Gen. 6). The problem comes when you meet another person who is doing what seems right in his eyes (e.g., 9/11). You can try to attach loyalty to “society” and let them dictate a standard for right and wrong. Or you could try “mother earth”. But by now you ought to see how morals, values, and ethics erode. They are built on autonomous men.

Biblical creation, on the other hand, has a firm basis for ethics and morality. With the creation event we have two-levels of reality; the Eternal, Infinite-Personal Creator God who has revealed the standard of truth and source for man’s morals, values, and ethics. So, we live, not autonomously, as if we erected the standards, but submissively as God’s creatures living according to a pre-existing standard of truth.

The stunning thing about all this is that the natural man is forced into this way of Pagan thinking. The claim the Bible makes is that the natural man inevitably thinks in terms of this Pagan one level of reality when they reject God. Turn with me to Rom. 1:18-27. So, there are only two ways of thinking about the world. Vern Poythress comments: “Let us begin with the basics. According to the Bible, the Creator-creature distinction is fundamental (Genesis 1; Isaiah 40; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:15–17). There are two levels of being, two levels of existence: the self-sufficient, original existence of God the Creator, and the dependent, derivative existence of creatures. By contrast, non-Christian philosophy pretends that there is only one universal level of being.”<sup>ii</sup> And this thinking pervades your view of who you are, what truth is and how you know, and ultimately how you live. So, now I can show you in graphic form these two different views of the world; the Creator-creature distinction of the Bible and Paganism’s Chain of Being.



**Creator-creature vs. Chain of Being.** Biblical creationism as explained in Genesis 1 shows that God is wholly separate from the universe. He is before all things. All things result from His spoken word! They come into being not by transformation out of Himself but by speaking them out of nothing (Heb. 11:3). There is an absolute transcendental distinction between the Creator and His creation.

In Paganism, there is an aggressive denial of the Creator-creature distinction. They insist that there is a unity of all things. gods, if they exist, men, plants, and rocks are all a part of the same existence or stuff. This is what we call the Chain of Being (aka *Scala Natura* (Scale of Nature) or the Continuity of Being). This doctrine is found in **ALL** forms of paganism whether ancient or modern (e.g., Platonism, Gnosticism, Modern Evolution). Inherent in the Chain of being is the concept of spontaneous generation, the idea that *life comes from non-life* and *everything only differs in degree*. The universe has the power to bring forth life out of non-life. However, famed scientist Louis Pasteur showed conclusively in the mid 1800's that spontaneous generation is impossible (cf. his boiled broth experiment in a bent neck beaker). However, scientists still believe and teach spontaneous generation even though it has never been demonstrated or observed. For example, listen to George Wald, Professor of Biology at Harvard University, as he discusses spontaneous generation. "One has only to contemplate the magnitude of this task to concede that the spontaneous generation of a living organism is impossible. Yet here we are—as a result, I believe, of spontaneous generation."<sup>iii</sup> If you wonder how and why such a well-educated scientist like Wald could make such a statement consider his own statement on cosmology. "What I have learned is that many educated persons now tend to equate their idea of God with their concept of the order of nature."<sup>iv</sup> [underline mine] What is Wald describing? Wald is saying that God is equivalent to the "order of nature". "Order of nature" is another way of saying the Chain of Being or the Scale of Nature, and this "order of nature" is God. Notice, this is identical to saying there is only one level of reality. Wald clearly holds to the ancient doctrine of the Chain of Being in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Now, contrast this concept that everything differs only in degree with the Biblical claim that God created things to produce after their own kind. The Bible teaches that there are non-transgressable boundaries between man, each kind of animal, and each kind of plant (Gen. 1:11-12, 21, 24-25, 27; 1 Cor. 15:38-39).

Modern man thinks he is so advanced intellectually, and our tendency is to think that the Theory of Evolution is an advanced, modern concept. But listen to the frank admission of Dr. Henry Fairfield Osbourne, former Director of the American Museum of Natural History as he tells us about the link between the Ancient Pagan Chain of Being and Modern

Evolution. “When I began the search for anticipations of the evolutionary theory...I was astonished to find how many of the pronounced and basic features of the Darwinian theory were anticipated as far back as the seventh century, B.C.”<sup>v</sup> Evolution was not a new idea with Darwin in 1859. In fact, it can be traced back to Plato and it formed the basic mental furniture of most educated men from the Renaissance until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Outside, of Christian Europe, the link is even more clear “Far Eastern philosophers thought of creation in evolutionary terms....a belief in an inherent continuity of all creation and, second, a reference to the merging of one species into another.” That’s a remarkable statement. Confucianism, Buddhism, Shintoism, and Hinduism all express the ancient pagan belief in the Chain of Being and Chance.

You’ve probably never seen this link before because modern evolutionists like to deceive you into thinking that evolution is a new discovery of modern science. But evolution is simply the ancient Pagan Chain of Being dressed up in 20<sup>th</sup> century scientific garb (i.e., terminology). It’s nothing more than the world’s officially sponsored origin mythology. Stunning brilliance of modern scientists is set forth in a manner strikingly similar to the ancient Babylonian Magicians and Astrologers of Daniel’s day who propagated the same origin-myth in their day (cf. Enuma elish). The intellectually elite of both the Ancient and Modern world determine the form this ancient origin myth will take and then pass it on to the lower classes of society, spiritually poisoning children and adults who are unaware. Hopefully you can see that ultimately there are not “hundreds” of different origins stories, there are only two—biblical and pagan.

Hopefully you are beginning to see the agenda of the god of this world (Satan) and particularly the deceivers in 2 John. These deceivers have a way of thinking that does not permit them to accept the true humanity of Jesus Christ. They are in a state of rebellion against their Creator, suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. They hold to a form of the Ancient Chain of Being and John finds their teaching to be spiritual poison. If his readers bought into this myth it would destroy their faith and fellowship with God.

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<sup>i</sup> National Public Radio, August, 13, 2004. <http://www.npr.org/features/feature.php?wfId=3849635>.

<sup>ii</sup> Poythress, Vern, *Reforming Ontology and Logic in the Light of the Trinity: An Application of Van Til’s Idea of Analogy* (WTJ 57:1 (Spring 1995)), 187

<sup>iii</sup> George Wald: “The Origin of Life,” in *The Physics and Chemistry of Life*, by the Editors of *Scientific American*, Simon and Schuster, 1955, p. 9, cited by Whitcomb, John and Morris, Henry, *The Genesis Flood* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1998), 234.

<sup>iv</sup> George Wald: “The Origin of Life,” in *The Physics and Chemistry of Life*, by the Editors of *Scientific American*, Simon and Schuster, 1955, p. 9, cited by Whitcomb, John and Morris, Henry, *The Genesis Flood* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1998), 234.

<sup>v</sup> Osbourne, Henry Fairfield, *From the Greeks to Darwin*, p. xii.

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