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A0431 -- August 1, 2004 -- 1 John 2:18-19 -- Battle with the Antichrist-Part 1

Last week, we looked at 1 John 2:15-17 where John's readers who were well prepared for battle (1 John 2:12-14) went to war with the world. John told them in v. 15 "***Neither love the world (kosmos) nor that in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him:***" So, here John tells us there are only two basic worldviews, two basic systems of thinking; either worldly or godly. We call this HVP and DVP. Lots of Christians get involved in what we call comparative religion studies and try to sort out all the details of every religion and what they believe so they will be prepared to defend Christianity against these other religions. Not only is it impossible for any of us to know all the details of every religion this is never the way Paul or Jesus confronted those of different faiths. Why not? because biblically speaking there are only two worldviews. Now, the details may differ, but at base there are only two worldviews and all you have to do is study the root presuppositions of these two worldviews in order to be prepared to defend Christianity.

First, either you presuppose that all reality is one, what we call the Chain of Being, that all things are related (e.g., the ancients called this Continuity of Being, modern people call it Evolution) or you believe that all reality is on two planes (e.g., biblically this is what we call the Creator-creature distinction. Second, either you presuppose that in Divine Sovereignty where a personal God is ultimately behind all that happens in the universe or you presuppose in Impersonal Chance, where the ultimate thing back of the universe is Chance and the universe is an impersonal process. The universe is just a machine, like a computer that spits out data the universe just spits out natural law and we are at the mercy of an Impersonal Chance process. There is no person behind the universe. Now, these are the two basic presuppositions that underlie all thought. There simply are no other positions available and when you dialogue with someone, believer or unbeliever you are trying to discover what they think about these two ideas. Everyone and I mean everyone, from the guy that takes the trash out at Wendy's to the guy who works as a NASA engineer, everyone fundamentally accepts one of these two ways of thinking. It permeates everything about everyone's life. What this ultimately means is that *you can't say something about anything without saying something about everything*. Everyone has a worldview, a series

of connected thoughts that fit together in some way, usually very inconsistently, but nevertheless, everyone has one. You can't get rid of your worldview, it's like flypaper, you know that really sticky yellow paper that catches flies. If you step on it to get it off one foot it sticks to the other. Now that's what worldviews are like, you can't get rid of them and everyone has one. Now, they may not have thought it through, but at the base level, everyone basically accepts in their thinking either the Chain of Being or the Creator-creature distinction and either in Divine Sovereignty, a personal universe, or in Impersonal Chance, an impersonal universe. So, everyone has something to say about origins and everyone has something to say about the universe. Nobody is neutral nor can they be neutral because you can't get rid of your worldview, you can't set aside your biases, you can't so-to-say put your beliefs on the shelf and be objective. Everybody comes to the table with baggage. As Christians we are called to root out the deep seated HVP ideas and replace them with DVP ideas, and that is what John is telling us here; you either love the world or you love God, there are no other loyalties. And this includes how you think in every area of life. We've got history, art, marriage, family, government, money, friends, society, sex, mathematics, etc. In every area of life, you are being loyal either to God or to the world. This is the DVP/HVP struggle that we as Christians are constantly at war with. If we don't have a DVP mentality about some area of life then John says *the love of the Father is not in us*. This simply means that we don't love God. It's that simple.

Now, in v. 16 John gives us the 1st reason we are not to love the world. He says, "*because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh (sarx) and the lust of the eyes and the vain/empty pride of life (bios), is not out of the Father but is out of the world.*". He says basically that all that is in the world is not of God. This simply means that the world is anti-God. Then John gives us three subcomponents of the world; the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life*. The *lust of the flesh* corresponds to the inner sin nature. You're sin nature either pumps out human good or personal sin all the time. It excels at this and this is one source of sin, your old sin nature. Second, *the lust of the eyes* refers to the world you see around you and wrongly desiring things in the world that you see such as pornography, coveting, etc. You see it and you wrongly desire it. Third, *the boastful pride of life* refers to temporal material things that you spend all your life trying to get. Now, when you do this you're not thinking right. You're thinking of the world as basically a stable environment. You're thinking these things are going to last. You accumulate things, power, fame, etc., and then have the gall to boast about it. Oh, look at me, I'm so great, look at all I've accomplished. This is the world and this is making the worst investment you could ever make because we know, as believers, that these things are passing away. They don't last and they don't fill the vacuum in the human soul that keeps

longing to be filled. That soul can only be filled with God. That's the only thing that has ever or will ever satisfy anyone, anywhere, anytime in history.

In v. 17 we find the second reason no one can be neutral, it's because attempts to be neutral are immorality. Now, the world thinks that it's being neutral, they think they are neither for God or against God. They think they are being objective in their thinking. The problem is that they are sinners, they are at enmity with God, they are untrustworthy, they are full of deceit. Now, who are you going to trust? Are you going to trust your friend's evaluation of himself or God's evaluation of your friend? It's that simple. But the one, the Christian, who abides in Him, that is, stores up DVP in the mentality of his soul, that one, all that he produces in the Christian life will abide forever. He is doing the will of God; he is loving God.

Now, turn to today's lesson, 1 John 2:18 & 19. Now, if we resist the world then it follows that we ought to be able to resist the Antichrists that John now warns his readers about in v. 18.

2:18 Paidi,a(evsca,th w[ra evsti,n(kai. kaqw.j hvkou,sate o[ti avnti,cristoj e;rcetai(kai. nu/n avnti,cristoi polloi. gego,nasin(o[qen ginw,skomen o[ti evsca,th w[ra evsti,n

2:18 Children, it is the last hour, and just as you heard that antichrist comes, even now many antichrists have arisen, therefore we know that it is the last hour.

Here we have John warning his Christian readers about *many antichrists*. John says that his readers have *heard that antichrist comes*. John's readers already had revelation regarding the unique end-times individual called the Antichrist, probably from John's oral teaching and/or from 2 Thessalonians 2:1-10 where Paul talks about the "Man of Lawlessness". 2 Thessalonians was written in the year 52AD while Paul was in Corinth. The Thessalonian epistles are doctrinal primers. They deal a lot with practical day by day living and because of that Paul fills both epistles with prophecy. Paul knew how practical prophecy was. Think about it, if you don't know what's going to happen in the future then how does that affect you today? Well, it produces uncertainty, worry, anxiety, angst, etc., in your life. You don't know what's coming next. These are all the symptoms that modern medicine diagnoses as mental illness and treats with Prozac or some other drug. I can tell you right now that about 95% of the time this has nothing to do with some mental illnesses. The real problem is spiritual illness caused by a lack of knowledge of future events. Paul knew that knowledge of Bible prophecy removes uncertainty, worry, anxiety, and angst. He saw the practicality of prophecy. The Thessalonians apparently had a lot of problems

living in the present and so Paul filled his letter with prophecy because he knew that if they knew the future then that would clear up their symptoms because knowing the future is directly related to how you live in the present. Just think if you knew the winning lottery numbers for next week. How would that knowledge of the future affect how you lived between now and next week? Well, Paul was not stupid; he realized this principle and utilized it to solve daily problems. Have you ever noticed how Paul solved problems? Say you have some problem, maybe its humility. You think you're pretty hot stuff and there are people out there who really are not as important as you. Well, Paul looks at your problem and proceeds to launch into a full-scale development of the doctrine of kenosis (the emptying of Christ in Phil. 2:5-7). You say, "hey Paul, slow down, maybe you didn't hear me right, why are you going into all this kenosis bit, let's simply address the problem of my lack of humility." Well, how are you supposed to change your life if you haven't changed your thinking? Obviously, Paul knew how to think unlike a lot of modern Christians. Paul knew that to solve basic life problems required DVP coming into the mentality of the soul. Paul reached deep down to the doctrine that was required before the problem could be solved. Paul wasn't interested in quick fixes. Paul was interested in getting to the root of the problem so that your problem could have a permanent fix. So, all doctrine is very practical stuff, the problem is that believers today can't think. They can't think through the arguments Paul is making. They can't even see why we need doctrine anymore. Can't we just all get along, why do we have to get into all this doctrine? Doctrine just causes divisions. And so, most Christians get together once or twice a week, hold hands, sing a few ditties, get all emotional, go home and come back next week. This doesn't solve anything. The way you think determines how you live and Paul understood that very well. That's why Paul always, without exception, begins his epistles with doctrine and only after the doctrine does he get to the application. So, John's readers already had 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, it has been around since 52AD and here we are in 62AD. And in particular they knew 2 Thess. 2:1-10. In 2 Thess. 2 Paul where Paul explains the end times events. He says, you're not in the Tribulation yet. Some things have to take place before the Tribulation. One of those things is that ***the man of sin, the son of destruction has to be revealed. man of sin and son of destruction*** are Paul's way of talking about the ***antichrist***. Interestingly, John is the only one who uses the term ***antichrist*** in the NT and it is never used in the Book of Revelation (cf. 1 Jn. 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Jn. 1:7). It is only used in 1st and 2nd John. But the word is obviously parallel to Paul's description of the ***man of sin*** in 2 Thessalonians. So, they already knew that the ***antichrist was coming***. And this fact was a sign that they were living in ***the last hour***. ***last hour*** here refers to a period of unknown duration. Sometimes it means a part of a day, 60 minutes, 3,600 seconds, but the context determines and here it's obvious that ***last hour*** refers to a period of unknown duration that

would be signaled by *antichrists*. Notice that John talks about *the Antichrist* (singular) and *antichrists* (plural). So, we've got *antichrists* now and *Antichrist* not yet.

Well, who is the Antichrist? We've got to know something about the people John's readers were going to war with so we have to look at *the Antichrist* himself. Well, the Antichrist is the key personality of the future Tribulation on earth. Now I want to expose you to three basic truths concerning the Antichrist: his Origin, his Character and Rise to World Power, and His Destiny.

ORIGIN OF THE ANTICHRIST

(Gen. 3:15; 2 Thess. 2:9; Dan. 11:37; Rev. 13:1; Dan. 9:26-27)

There are two aspects to the origin of the antichrist: his natural and supernatural origins. Since the Antichrist is a counterfeit Christ it logically and scripturally follows that he would counterfeit the virgin birth, being born of a natural woman but of the seed of Satan. Turn to Gen. 3:15 for the supernatural origin of the Antichrist. ***“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel.”*** This verse is usually cited to show the supernatural origin of Christ but it also contains the supernatural origin of the Antichrist. Notice that there is enmity between two pairs. First, there will be enmity between Satan and the woman. This took place in Genesis 6 where Satan had some of his demons intermarry with human women in an attempt to destroy the human line of the promised Messiah.

Second, there is going to be enmity between the Seed of Satan and the Seed of the Woman. The Seed of the Woman refers to Jesus, the Messiah. Jesus Christ is eternally God but His humanity was born of the Seed of a Woman in order to avoid the sin nature which is passed on by the father. The male aspect was provided by the Holy Spirit so that Jesus was born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Matt.1:21). Thus, Jesus Christ was both God and man. If the Seed of the Woman is Christ, the Seed of Satan can only be the Antichrist.¹ Satan will counterfeit the virgin birth by someday impregnating a woman who will be Satan's seed who is going to be the Antichrist. This woman may not be a virgin but the conception of the Antichrist will be through the supernatural power of Satan. This supernatural origin of the Antichrist is also confirmed by 2 Thess. 2:9 which says, ***“the one [Antichrist] whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,”***. The Greek word for *activity* is *energeo*, which refers to kinetic energy. This word is used 9 times of God in the NT and once of Satan. This kind of energy or power is never ascribed to men. It is therefore supernatural power that effects a counterfeit virgin birth.

However, the Antichrist also has a natural origin. There has been a lot of discussion over the nationality of the Antichrist. Some have argued that the Antichrist will be a Jew on the basis of a few bad arguments.

First, some argue that the Antichrist must be a Jew because the Messiah was supposed to be a Jew. The Jewish people would never accept a Gentile Messiah. Therefore, the Antichrist must be a Jew. This argument is weak for two reasons. *First*, the Scriptures never claim that the Jewish people will accept the Antichrist as the Messiah. This is an assumption. *Second*, the argument that the Jewish people would never accept a Gentile as Messiah is contradicted by history. In 1806, a large section of the worlds Jewish population declared Napoleon to be the Messiah because he favored the re-creation of the state of Israel in Palestine. So, both assumptions are invalid assumptions.

A second argument that the Antichrist will be a Jew is based on Rev. 7:1-8. It is argued that since the tribe of Dan is left out of the tribes which make up the 144,000 then this must mean that the Antichrist comes from the tribe of Dan. This is fallacious reasoning. The Bible never tells us why Dan is left off of the list. Why is the entire tribe of Dan punished because of one man? Further, why is Dan listed as one of the tribes that will have land allotted to them in the Millennial Kingdom in Ezekiel 48:2? Also, in every case where the tribes are listed, they are listed in groups of 12, never 13. When the tribes are listed there are actually 14 different tribal names that are listed in different combinations of 12. The two additional names come through the line of Joseph who had two sons; Manasseh and Ephraim who are sometimes listed as tribes while others are left off. The point is that the Scriptures always list 12 tribes. We might ask, why is Joseph not allotted land in the Millennial Kingdom? As you can see these arguments for a Jewish Antichrist are futile logically and have no support in Scripture. They are pure speculation.

The third, and most common argument for a Jewish Antichrist comes from Daniel 11:37. Turn to Daniel 11:37. Some argue on the basis of the KJV reading of this text that the Antichrist will be a Jew. The KJV says, ***“Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all.”*** The argument surrounds the first phrase, which says that the Antichrist will not ***regard the God of his fathers***. Since it says ***God*** then this tells us that the Antichrist’s nationality is monotheistic. However, the actual Hebrew word for ***God*** is in plural here, not the singular. The proper translation of the Hebrew word is ***gods*** not ***God*** as in the NASB. ***“He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women, nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all.”*** So, what this actually

shows is that the Antichrist will not be from a monotheistic nation but a polytheistic nation. He will not worship the gods that his fathers worshipped. This is the first strong argument that the Antichrist will not be Jewish, but Gentile. We have to base our doctrine on the original Hebrew and Greek texts and not on English versions of the Bible. Most modern translations have done us a great service in changing this translation to read *gods of his fathers*. Even if it did read *God* does that necessarily mean he has to be a Jew? What about other monotheistic religions like Islam or Christianity.

Well, if the Antichrist is not a Jew, are there any Scriptures that show that he will be a Gentile? Yes, there are. Three proofs show that the Antichrist will be a Gentile.

First, the Bible gives a type of the Antichrist in the person of Antiochus Epiphanes and Antiochus Epiphanes was a Gentile, not a Jew. Second, in the Book of Revelation the *sea* is used symbolically for the Gentile nations and we find that in Rev. 13:1 the Beast, who is the Antichrist, rises up out of the *sea*. This indicates that he will come from the Gentile nations. Third, and the strongest argument for a Gentile Antichrist, is the fact that we are living in the *times of the Gentiles* (Luke 21:24). The *times of the Gentiles* does not end until the Second Coming of Christ at the end of the Tribulation. How then can a Jew be the last ruler when the Gentiles have pre-eminence? If the Antichrist were a Jew it would contradict the whole nature of the *times of the Gentiles*. These three evidences are strong enough to say with certainty that the Antichrist will be a Gentile. But the Scriptures do not stop here. They tell us more about the Antichrist's nationality. Turn to our Scripture reading for today, Daniel 9:26-27. This is the last section of the most fantastic prophecy in the entire Bible, Dan. 9:24-27, what many call the 70 sevens. "***And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. ²⁷ And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.***" Now, all we have to do is identify the personality who confirms the covenant at the beginning of verse 27. Who is the *he* referring to? Well, it refers back to the *prince that shall come* in verse 26. Scholars agree that this prince refers to the Antichrist. Both the *prince* and *he* refer to the Antichrist. The moment the Antichrist signs a peace covenant with Israel (*the many*) marks the beginning of the tribulation. The rapture does not begin the tribulation. Now that we've established that this is the Antichrist look back to verse 26. It tells us that three things. *First, that after* three-score and two weeks (i.e., 7 weeks + 62 weeks = 483 years) that the Messiah will be *cut off* (crucified). *Second, that the people of*

the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The *city* refers to Jerusalem and the *sanctuary* to Israel's temple so all we have to do is ask, "What people destroyed the city and the sanctuary?" Well, it was the Romans under Titus in 70AD. So, we can say with confidence that since these are the *people of the prince that shall come*, that is, that these are the *people of the* Antichrist, that the Antichrist will be a Gentile of Roman descent.

So, concluding, the Antichrist will have both a supernatural and a natural origin because he is a counterfeit Messiah. His supernatural father will be Satan. His natural mother will be a woman of Roman descent. A time is coming or has come (perhaps) when the events of Genesis 6 will be or have been repeated, this time it will be Satan himself impregnating a human woman of Roman descent who will give birth to Satan's child. The end product will be a counterfeit god-man.ⁱⁱ

CHARACTER AND RISE OF THE ANTICHRIST (Dan. 8:23-25; 11:36-39)

Because of the supernatural origin of Satan's seed, the Antichrist will always have a clear line of communication to his father, Satan. He will no doubt fall to the temptation which our Lord resisted when He was offered the all the kingdoms of the world and their glory if He would just bow and worship Satan one time (Matt. 4:8). Our Lord responded by saying that God alone was to be worshiped. However, the Antichrist will fall to the temptation of his father, Satan, and his father will give him all the kingdoms of the world. When this happens, it will mark the beginning of the ministry of the Antichrist. Two passages address the Character and Rise of the Antichrist. *First, Daniel 8:23-25 "In the latter period of their rule, When the transgressors have run their course, A king will arise, Insolent and skilled in intrigue [understanding of riddles like Daniel (5:12) but his ability to understand will come from Satan rather than God].²⁴ "His power will be mighty, but not by his own power [the source of the Antichrist's power is not himself but Satan], And he will destroy to an extraordinary degree And prosper and perform his will [he will prosper for a short time]; He will destroy mighty men and the holy people.²⁵ "And through his shrewdness [craftiness of rule which will give the other rulers a sense of security, albeit false] He will cause deceit [lull his fellow rulers into following him so that he can take advantage of them] to succeed by his influence; And he will magnify himself in his heart [even to the point of openly claiming to be God], And he will destroy many while they are at ease. He will even oppose the Prince of princes, But he will be broken without human agency [the Prince of princes will break him].*

Second, turn to Daniel 11:36-39 to see more about the Antichrists rise to power. ***“Then the king will do as he pleases, and he will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will speak monstrous things against the God of gods [anti-God]; and he will prosper until the indignation is finished [short period of prospering], for that which is decreed will be done. ³⁷ "He will show no regard for the gods of his fathers or for the desire of women [the enmity of Satan against womankind will continue through Satan’s seed; Gen. 3:15], nor will he show regard for any other god; for he will magnify himself above them all [will exalt himself above all]. ³⁸ "But instead he will honor a god of fortresses [Satan], a god whom his fathers did not know; he will honor him with gold, silver, costly stones and treasures. ³⁹ "He will take action against the strongest of fortresses with the help of a foreign god; he will give great honor to those who acknowledge him and will cause them to rule over the many, and will parcel out land for a price [the land he conquers will be given to those who submit to his authority].”***

So, the Antichrist will be totally controlled and energized by Satan as he sets out to conquer the world. His rise begins when he falls for his father’s temptation to rule all the kingdoms of the earth but his total control will not take place until the middle of the tribulation.

ⁱ Fruchtenbaum, Arnold, *Footsteps of the Messiah* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Press, 1984), 144.

ⁱⁱ Fruchtenbaum, Arnold, *Footsteps of the Messiah* (Tustin, CA: Ariel Press, 1984), 144.

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