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**B0434 -- August 22, 2004 -- 2 John 7 -- Relationship of Doctrine to Rewards**

Last week we looked at the two basic worldviews: Paganism and Biblicism. Most people want to get into all the comparative religion stuff but God's word says there are only two basic worldviews, granted in the details there are many differences, but when we boil it down to the fundamentals there are only two. And these two worldviews have a radically different set of fundamental beliefs or presuppositions. First, on the side of Biblicism (DVP) we have the Infinite-Personal Creator distinct from and separate from His creation. So, there are two levels of reality and a sovereign Person behind the universe. Second, on the side of Paganism (HVP) we have an Infinite-Impersonal Cosmos from which all things transform whether gods, men, animals, rocks. Everything is basically the same stuff. The Impersonal Cosmos has the power to bring forth life in a Chance process. There is only one level of reality and ultimately there is no Person behind the Cosmos.

These two worldviews have radically different answers to the 3 most basic life questions: **Who am I (Metaphysics/Ontology)? What is truth and How do I know (Epistemology)?** and **How should I live (Axiology)?** These are basic questions that all students of philosophy have to wrestle with and yet every answer philosophy has given us amounts to the same answer because they all start with the Pagan assumptions of One Level of Reality and an Infinite Impersonal Cosmos.

**Who am I?** This question is tied up with the nature and structure of existence or reality. What is the structure of reality? Paganism, because it assumes only one level of reality, answers that ultimately you and other humans are alone. Your emotions, your personality, your supposed uniqueness are only surface like appearances on a basically impersonal cosmos. You and other humans are only person-like bubbles floating on an ocean of chance. Biblicism, because it says there are two levels of reality, answers that your ultimate backdrop is not impersonal chance or DNA molecules but a Personal God who thinks, speaks, loves, has a sense of art and music (Job 38:7).

**What is truth and How do I know?** The answer to this question is tied up with language and logic. Because Paganism has only one level of reality and is an impersonal cosmos, they say that man is autonomous (auto – self and nomos – law) and the inventor of truth. This means that human beings invent thoughts (in the form of language and logic) that have never been thought before. We are the *inventors* of truth, not the *discoverers* of truth. So, Paganism tells you #1 that you are all alone in an impersonal universe and #2 that you determine what is true for you because there is no prior standard of truth. However, on the other side of the coin, Biblicism makes a sharp distinction between the Creator and the creature, so there are two levels of reality, not one, and the ultimate backdrop of reality is an Infinite-Personal God, not an Impersonal Cosmos. What this means is that God has a plan and that God's thoughts are truth. Thus, we do not invent truth, but we discover truth. We are not lords of knowledge but He is the Lord of knowledge. We only know things truly in so far as God reveals things to us and therefore, to know truth we must be on speaking terms with the Creator. These two answers result in radically different ways of answering the third question...

**How should I live?** This is the basic area of ethics and morality what philosophers call axiology). On Pagan assumptions, since we determine truth (autonomy) and we are all alone then there is no one to whom we are ultimately responsible. We can do as we please. The rub comes when we run into another human being who is doing what he pleases. So, truth becomes relative. You have your truth and I have my truth but this never works because when someone violates our ethical standard in order to be tolerant, we have to let it fly or else be called a bigot and no one can or does live in that kind of world. We can try to convince ourselves that two opposite things are equally true but it just doesn't work in the real world. There's tension between people because of this (9/11). On the other side, Biblically, it's quite simple, since there is a Personal God behind the universe who has a plan and reveals truth to us then we should live according to God's word. God's word gives us the form of creation and how to live in that form. It's in the form of God's creation that we find freedom.

So, you can see that there are only two ways to look at reality and they are radically opposed on the most fundamental issues that all men face day by day.

**Creator-creature vs. Chain of Being.** Next, I showed you the contrast between the Creator-creature distinction and the Chain of Being. To picture the Chain of Being I want you to picture the links of a chain connecting the gods, if they exist, angels, men, animals, rocks, machines, etc. They all are basically the same stuff and transformed out of the Infinite-Impersonal Cosmos by Chance. Ultimately there's "mystery" behind this whole

thing. Inherent in this whole idea is spontaneous generation, the idea that *life comes out of non-life* even though this has been disproved many, many times. So, God, if he exists in this view is identical to nature. God is just a process and that's exactly what Harvard professor George Wald said in his quote last week.

As per biblical thought we hold to the Creator-creature distinction. God created all things out of nothing, not out of Himself. God spoke the things that are visible out of the things that are invisible. There is therefore a permanent and transcendental distinction between the Creator and His creation. God created different kinds and created them to procreate and produce more of those kinds. There are definite non-transgressable boundaries between men, animals, and plants.

**Evolution.** Most people think that Evolutionary thought is a new and modern idea. I showed you last week that the story is quite different than modern scientists would have us imagine. As Van Til once said, "Darwin got the idea from Plato, Plato got the idea from Aristotle, Aristotle got it from Adam, Adam got it from Eve and Eve got it from the Devil." So, this is an ancient idea. It is inherent in all the eastern religions. In fact, my wife has a cousin in China now doing missionary work with his wife. They've been there for 3 years. They are there teaching English as a foreign language to these Chinese students (TOEFL). And I found out last week that they are basically talking to two students. In three years, they have gotten a hearing with two students and guess what both of them are having difficulty with? Evolution. Both of them cannot accept Jesus Christ as their savior because of their evolutionary beliefs, and so these two thought they were going to go to China and this was going to be fun and they were going to share Christ with these people and people were just going to get all happy and love Jesus and they're finding that that's not reality. So, they are starting to study creationist literature because they are realizing that the gospel is impotent outside of a creationist framework. Jesus and evolution don't mix and these people are smart, everything about their thinking from day one has been built on evolutionary thinking and they can't accept Jesus and evolution because they are thinking this through and they are seeing that those two ideas can't get together. And I know there are a lot of Christians out there who are still trying to get creation and evolution together or Jesus and evolution together and I can tell you they are just wasting their time. Christians have been doing this for 150 years and it just doesn't work. I'm a scientist and a theologian and I can tell you it's simply a matter of accepting the authority of the Bible. It's as simple as that. If you're not going to accept the Genesis account of a 6-literal day creation you can just toss Jesus...because Jesus accepted a 6-literal day creation. It's stunning that evolutionists have recognized this concept and yet Christians don't see it. It is time to question whether these so-called believers really believe the Bible or not. So, the point is

that this is not a new story, evolution is not new, it's the Chain of Being dressed up on in fancy scientific garb (i.e., terminology) so that you won't see that it's ancient paganism.

Obviously, you're not going to get this information from our modern left media but it's everywhere in the literature and this stuff is just the modern origins myth that the socially elite have propagated through the educational system of John Dewey (Dewey decimal system). And now it's in our children's textbooks and it's there to destroy them spiritually. That's the background of the deceivers John is talking about in v. 7. They held to a form of the Ancient Chain of Being. How do I know that? Well, let's look at v. 7 and then I'll show you their story. We know the modern evolution story, now I'm going to show you their story of origins.

## **B. Abiding in the Teaching of Christ (7-11)**

***7 For many deceivers have gone out into the world, ones that do not confess Jesus Christ coming in the flesh: this is the deceiver and the antichrist.***

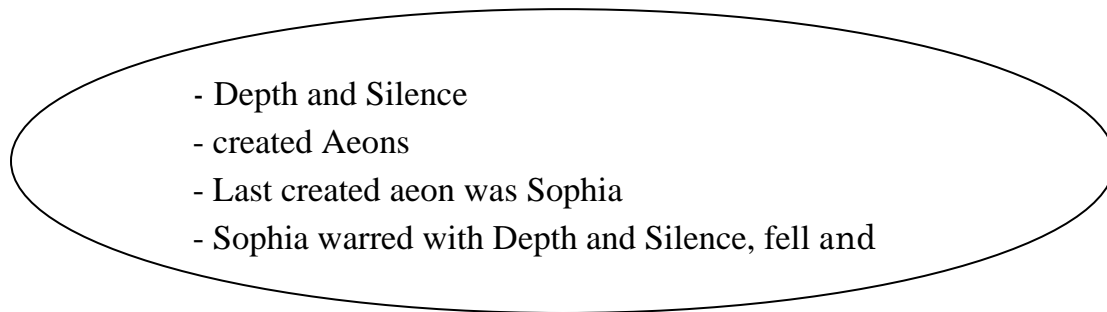
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v. 5 told us that believers should walk in the sphere of God's commandment to love each other. Why? Because *deceivers* have gone out into the world. *Deceivers* comes from the Greek word *planos* meaning a "wanderer, roamer, strayer" and is used of deceitful spirits in 1 Tim. 4:1. Turn to **1 Timothy 4:1**. ***But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons***". Notice how Paul warns Timothy that some Christians will ***fall away from the faith*** paying attention to deceitful (same word *planos*!) spirits and doctrines of demons. Now, what do you think Paul has in mind? At root he's talking about the doctrine of the Chain of Being. It's not, I repeat, it is not by coincidence that John uses the same word in 2 John 7 as Paul used to describe these *deceivers* in 1 Tim. 4:1. It's by design, and John does not want his readers to be those who ***fall away from the faith***. Remember, I told you that the Chain of Being and Modern Evolution are spiritual poison. You would be amazed if you walked on a University Campus today and sat in some of these classes. The outright profession of many professors is that they are out to destroy the faith of the Christian. That's right, they've even got a technical word for it which I can't remember but it means this; kids come in with ideological beliefs and we wipe the slate clean and re-build their thinking with our ideology, which is basically evolution applied to every area of life (what we call Social Darwinism); sociology, psychology, anthropology, business ethics, philosophy, mathematics, biology, healthcare, etc. The way they do this is you come in and

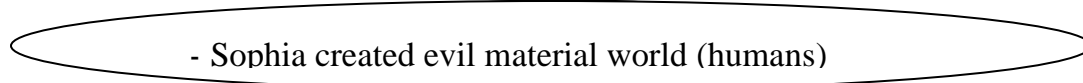
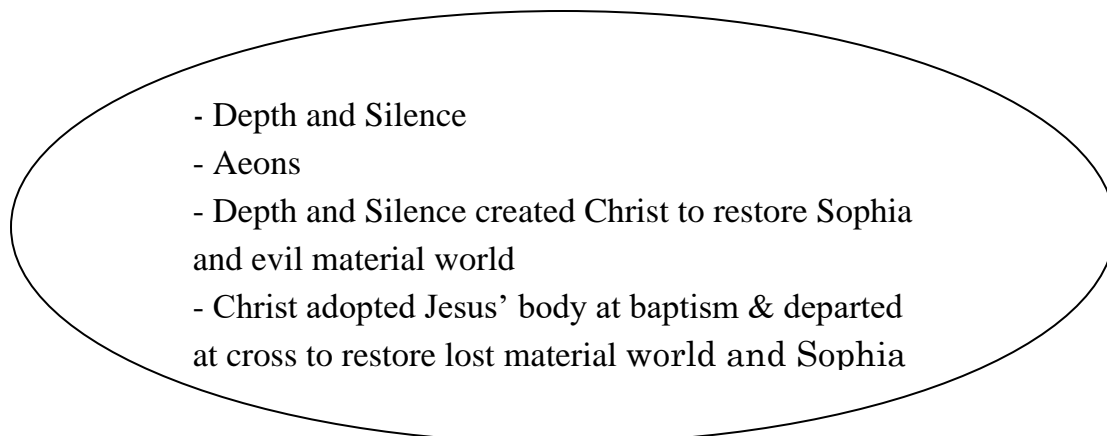
the first distinction they make is the separation of religion from science. Don't you ever buy into that separation! The Bible never makes that separation. The Bible says "If I tell you of earthly [scientific] things and you don't believe that how can you believe me if I tell you of heavenly [spiritual] things." (John 3:12) And I know this is a part of some of your thinking and I promise you that you will never move forward in the Christian life in a substantial way until you get that out of your system. You've got to be convinced in the authority of Scripture before you can trust God and live by faith. So, John warns us that the way to keep from falling *away from the faith* is to know, guard, and walk in the truth of the commandments of God's word. When they do this, they will promote a Christian unity that is unbreachable by the deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons. See, we're all going to get on the same page here as I teach you this stuff. We're going to find a unity that can't be breached by deceptive spirits and doctrines of demons. And the evidence of our doing this will be our reciprocal "love for one another". Reciprocal love for one another cannot, I repeat, it cannot come out of doctrines of demons such as the Chain of Being. John says these deceivers *have gone out into the world*, the verb is in the aorist, indicating that this was a definite instance in the 1<sup>st</sup> century when certain deceivers who had crept into the congregation in Jerusalem were found out (Acts 15:24; 1 John 2:19) and left the church, going out into the world to spread their destructive heresies. They do not *confess*, *confess* is *homologeō*, "to agree with, to acknowledge" (cf. 1 John 1:9). These individuals do not acknowledge Jesus Christ coming in flesh. In fact, as we'll see in 1 John these people thought that Jesus and Christ were two separate people. If Jesus and Christ were separate people then they would certainly deny his *coming* in one person in the *flesh*. The word *flesh* emphasizes the character and nature of the coming as a flesh-coming. *flesh* does not refer to the "totally depraved nature, but to the physical body and human life with its limitations. The denial here is that of the incarnation...the fact of an Advent of Deity at all, of an incorporation by Deity of human nature" (Wuest).

**The Antichrist's Origin Story.** The *antichrists* of John's day held to a form of the Chain of Being. It looked something like a pre-Gnosticism where you had one level of reality and in this scheme, you had a top-down spirit-matter emanation. At the top you had two gods (Depth and Silence) and these gods created out of themselves many intermediaries, called *aeons*. The last aeon created was Sophia and she went to war with the original two gods (Depth and Silence) by which she fell and part of the original two gods was lost. Sophia then created the evil material world of which humans are a part. In order to restore the lost Sophia and the evil material human world to harmony with two gods (Depth and Silence) she created Christ and Christ came and adopted Jesus' body at his baptism by John and then departed from it just before the crucifixion. Jesus came to restore what was originally

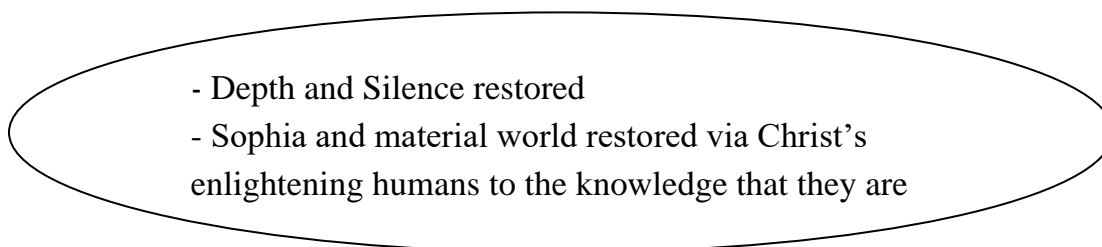
lost and to enlighten humans to the knowledge that they were a part of the godhead. When we realize that we are at one with the gods then we will be restored.<sup>1</sup>



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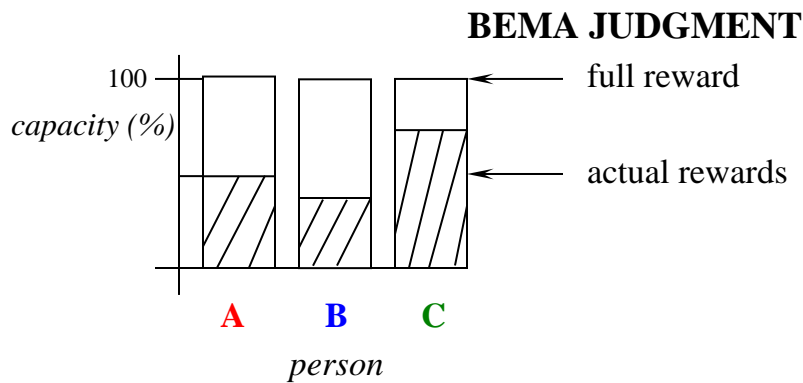
This is pure New Age Mysticism (which is just a renewal of Gnosticism; the movie “The Matrix” is basically this same story, a very Gnostic movie with all these basic elements) This was the basic origin-myth of John’s day as Evolution is the modern origin-myth in our day. As you can see from their scheme it’s impossible that Christ be incarnated in the flesh because human flesh is a part of the evil material world. Salvation from humans is by a special enlightening knowledge that we are a part of the gods. All is one, there is only one level of reality in the Chain of Being and that knowledge is salvation itself. Doesn’t this strike you as being so identical to the Eastern “Enlightenment” Religions? That’s why it’s spiritual poison and that’s why John is so adamant that his readers not be deceived (*planos*) by these false teachers. It destroys the plan of salvation! The plan of salvation is not about realizing that we are god. The plan of salvation is that Jesus Christ did come in the flesh (flesh in the sense of true material humanity). Biblically, material is not inherently evil. You and I will one day have a transformed material body. Jesus had a material body and came down and identified with mankind in His sufferings and He did die on the cross. the Bible teaches the full humanity of Jesus Christ apart from a fallen human nature. Jesus Christ was virgin born (Matt. 1:23), had a true body of flesh and blood (Luke 1-2; John 4:9; Matt. 13:55; John 19:1; 18, 28), he developed like a human (Luke 2:52), he had a true human spirit and soul (John 12:27; 11:33; 13:21; 19:30), he had human characteristics (Matt. 4:2; John 4:6, 7; 11:34-35; Matt. 9:36; 23:37; Luke 19:41), and had human names (Matt. 1:1, 21; Acts 17:31; 1 Tim. 2:5) (Enns, p. 222-224). The statement “to err is human” is therefore incorrect, for Christ was truly human yet did not err. But He did this in order to restore His creation to its original design, not so that we would realize that we are a part of God. John holds to the Creator-creature distinction, a distinction that will remain for eternity. God’s creation never was and never will be a part of God. God is self-contained, self-operative, self-sustaining...we are not a part of God.

***8 Consider yourselves, that we not lose that which we invested, but that we receive full reward.***

**8 ble,pete e`autou,( i[na mh. avpole,shte a] eivrgasa,meqa avlla. misqo.n plh,rh avpola,bhte**

2 John is important if just for this one verse that links right doctrine with eternal rewards. Notice that John does not say that being deceived results in loss of salvation. There can be no loss of eternal life (John 6:35-40). Instead, John says that being deceived results in *loss of reward*. John has in view the Judgment Seat of Christ where Church Age believers will stand before Christ to have their works judged (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:10). This is the clearest verse in the Bible connecting the maintenance of right doctrine with gaining eternal reward. ***Consider yourselves*** means literally, “ever keep a watchful eye upon yourselves”. He wants them to watch their doctrine. Robertson says it is equivalent to our “Look out!” The majority text reads ***that we not lose*** and ***that we receive*** (unlike the NASB). This is a significant difference because it is saying ***consider yourselves, that we not lose...reward***. The point is that John does not wish that what he and the other apostles have ***invested*** in

them be lost. In light of the stock market, it is agreed on all hands that not all investments guarantee a full return, but John wishes that his investment have a full return. How can we not get full reward if others don't watch their doctrine? Hodges says, "a little reflection will show why this should be so. Since the task of evangelization should always be followed by the task of making disciples (cf. Matt. 28:18-20), winning souls to Christ is only the first step in a process that should go on in a Christian church as long as that church exists. When this process is carried forward properly, Christians will grow in their Christian experience and bear increasing fruit for God as time goes on. New souls will be won to Christ, will grow and produce fruit themselves, and so on. Only God knows the full potential of the work He is doing in any one Christian congregation. Bu if false doctrine is allowed to intrude, it has the potential to stop that church's progress or even to destroy the church. In that case, the full potential of the church is not realized, and the total value of previous labors in that church is thereby reduced."<sup>iii</sup> If John's readers carefully attend to the doctrine John taught them John and this lady and the church will **receive full reward**. The phrase **full reward** refers to a full day's wages (cf. 1 Cor. 13:8). Smith says "We have worked together: see that you do not forfeit the reward of your labor. Get a full wage. Be not like workmen who toward the close of the day fall off, doing their work badly or losing time, and get less than a day's pay."



This has drastic implications for a ministry such as Fredericksburg Bible Church. This church is on its third pastor-teacher. We had Jerry, then Fred, and now me. Each time the baton is passed on is extremely important. If I get into all sorts of false doctrine then Jerry and Fred will not receive their full reward. So, it has been interesting to re-study 2 John because now I realize the importance of the pastor-search process that the elders here implemented. I'm not sure they were aware of this because it's not in the critical text which is the basis for the NASB but the majority of the manuscripts shift from you to we so that we find this teaching lodged in 2<sup>nd</sup> John. If they got the wrong guy here, someone who was easily swayed into false doctrine and led this church into false doctrine then Jerry and Fred would lose not receive **full reward** because this church would not reach its full potential.



Many of you would probably not receive *full reward* either. But fortunately, I am fully convinced that God did want me here and that I am doctrinally sound by the grace of God, not by my own ability but by God's power and will.

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<sup>i</sup> Hoehner, Harold, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 303.

<sup>ii</sup> Hodges, Zane, *The Epistles of John* (Irving, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 1999), 260.

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