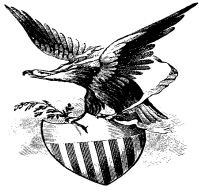


# Light Brings Salt

Volume 4, Issue 5

January 29, 2006



## Iron Range Bible Church

*Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God*



### Some Thoughts on Origins Pastor John Griffith Sr.

In the Bible, reality isn't one thing; it's two things. There are two levels of being that must be recognized: the eternal existence of the Infinite-Personal Creator in His manifold complexity, and the created existence of man and nature that began and continues in utter dependency upon Him. This is the Creator - creature distinction that must be maintained.

What we find in Genesis 1 as to origins is this, it tells you that your ultimate environment is not DNA molecules nor the laws of physics nor some warm, fuzzy "Good" principle.

Your ultimate environment is a Person Who thinks, talks, experiences emotion, loves, has a sense of art, and appreciates music!

Beyond the galaxies is not a cosmic dust cloud radiating background energy from a Big Bang; but a living Personal God!

Paul tells us in Romans 1 that all men at the bottom line know God, have an awareness that He exists. If they didn't, they could not be held accountable at the final judgment. That judgment is "according to truth" (Rom. 2:2) and falls upon men precisely because they anger God by their deliberate suppression of the truth (Rom. 1:18).

Fallen men, of course, deceive themselves into thinking the evidence for God's existence is not clear. By so doing, they think they have a legitimate defense if such a judgment should ever come upon them.

This pagan program of burying God-consciousness resembles a little child who gets mad at his father. The child defiantly shuts his eyes, thinking for a moment that by shutting off his perception he can erase genuine existence.

He deludes himself that his father doesn't exist anymore because he can't see him through deliberately closed eyes.

Throughout history the Church as it communicates the Gospel, and truth - doctrine it confronts again and again men who like the child have deliberately closed their eyes because they are mad at their Creator. Of course one day God will rip off the self imposed veil from the closed eyes, but by then it will be too late for them.

And what does the pagan worldview tell you that you are? It tells you that reality at the bottom line all is one. There is only one level of being.

It matters not whether reality is pictured as a vast machine (19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century), or as some sort of cosmic organism (ancient paganism and just now returning to popularity). The universe beneath you, above you, in front of you, and behind you is an **Infinite Impersonal "It"**.

You and your "personal" nature differ only in degree from **It's** molecules and atoms. In the Chain of Being, (there is continuity of being) your thinking, talking, emotions, loving, and artistic expressions are merely surface appearances on 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.

In philosophy the area of knowing is called epistemology which is derived from a Greek word meaning "to know" (episthmo). This area basically deals with the question, how can we know? What is knowledge? It concerns language and logic.

What distinctive answer comes from biblical creation? In the two-level view of reality, God the Creator thinks thoughts about everything. He created according to a plan (Eph. 1:4-5). Truth is His thoughts! They pre-exist your thoughts.

That means that we only discover truth, not invent it. It also means you can only discover truth that He permits you to (Deut. 29:29; Matt.11:25), not any more.

It means your personal relationship with your Creator is directly involved in knowing His thoughts! We must be "on speaking terms" with Him. We must learn at some point to think His thoughts after Him.

In all the various versions of paganism there is **no** ultimate Personal Creator God. Gods, if existing at all, themselves are surrounded by the same mystery you are. They may know more than man in the Chain of Being, but in the end they, too, are limited.

In the pagan view it means you and other beings truly originate thoughts that have no pre-existence. You invent truth, not discover it. In short, you are autonomous.

Autonomous comes from two Greek words, one meaning "self" (autos) and another meaning "law" (nomos). You, as a lonely self, determine whatever laws you think about. There is no prior standard of truth.

A severe problem with all this, a problem paganism has never solved in either ancient or modern forms, is how language and logic can be trusted as you attempt to think about reality.

If you need stable categories and contexts to get meaning, and you do, how can this occur if all reality is one? This continuity of being.

If there is no Personal Creator, there are no pre-existing eternal thoughts that express the plan of the universe. There is no assurance that today's categories will remain tomorrow. There is no knowable ultimate environment, only mystery.

A man in his everyday speech may use universal terms ("all", "always", "never", "truth", etc.), but they have no basis. Without the preconditions of knowledge, paganism is what the Bible calls "vanity" (a more modern word would be "speculation").

### How Should We Live?

In philosophy this area is known as ethics and axiology (The study of values and value judgments). It seeks answers to questions like what ought we to do? What is the source of value? To answer the question "how should I live" you have to seek your highest loyalty.

I just mentioned that in the pagan worldview you are alone and autonomous. That means you have a big problem at this point! With No One there to Whom you are ultimately responsible? You are left on your own. You may do what seems right in your own eyes. The rub comes when you meet another autonomous person who is doing what seems right in his eyes and there is a vast difference!

You could try to attach your loyalty to "society", hoping to convince your doubting heart that at least here you have a standard of right and wrong. Or you could try "mother earth" the darling of the New Agers.

By now I hope you are beginning to see the distinctives of biblical creation. Only with the creation event do you have the distinctive two-level reality with the eternal, self-contained, infinite personal God as your ultimate environment.

Only with ex-nihilo creation do you have a standard of truth and a source of your "oughts".

All goes back to the Creator, God, thankfully!