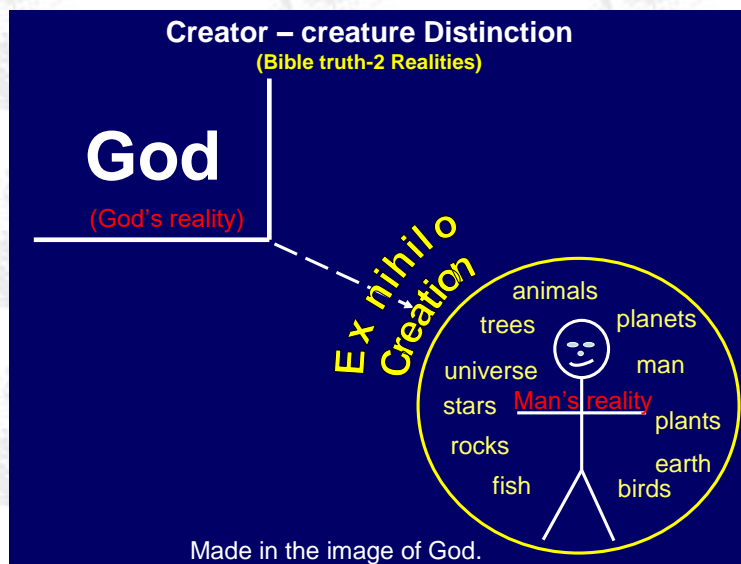


## Biblical Framework Part 1

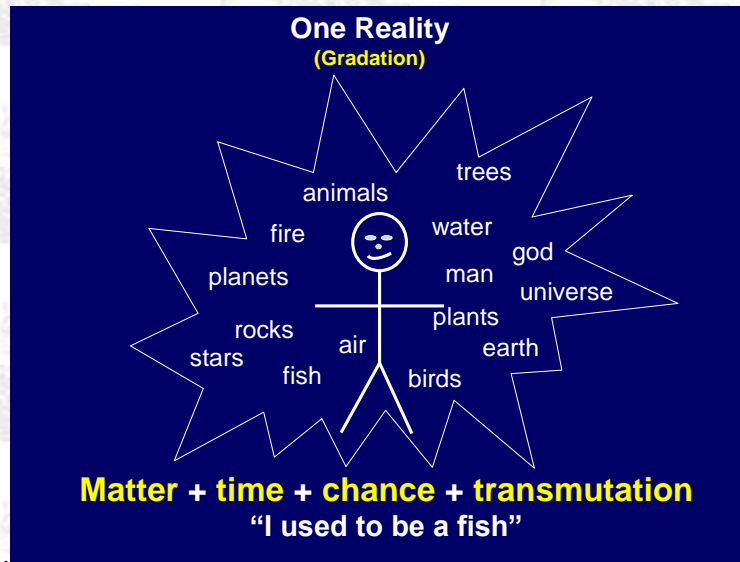
### Creation: The Buried Truth Of Who God Is & How God Can & Cannot Be Known

Last time, we looked at the Creator-Creature distinction vs. Continuity of Being.

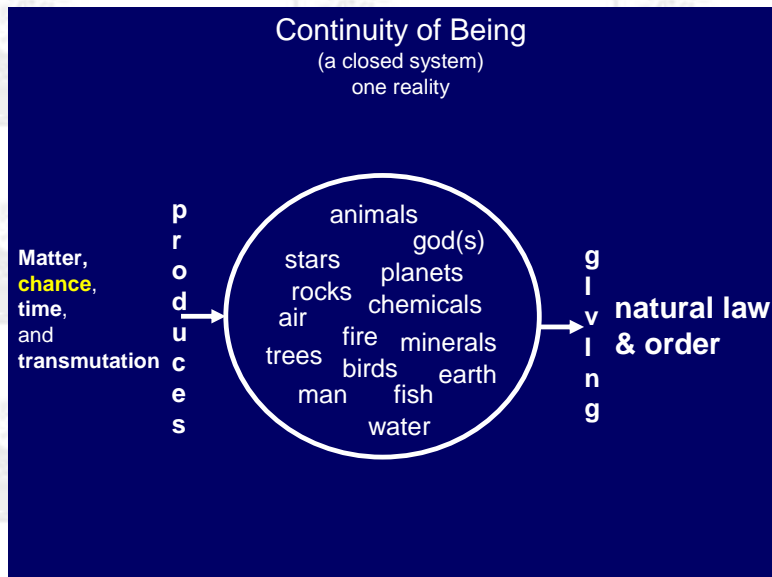


We saw that the Bible is the only book in the world that tells us ultimate truth. If we grant that we can start anywhere other than the Bible, then we've already undermined the Christian position.

## Biblical Framework Part 1



We looked at the Pagan view of one reality; that we're all on a scale, a gradation, like a spectrum, and we only differ in degree. The Egyptians, the Mesopotamians, the Persians, Plato, the Gnostics, and now Modern liberal theologians believe this. Dress it up as you will, in slick equations and scientific terminology but when all is said and done it's still the same old Continuity of Being.



We learned that in this process of intellectual pursuit and tight logic that there is a thing called spontaneous generation (life from non life).

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So from nothing, comes something (matter), which, when mixed with chance, time and transmutation; gives us the order we see and depend on for the sciences, namely natural law and order. Why? Because autonomous man cannot submit to a Creator even when he knows in his deepest being that He exists!

### **Class 5 begins.**

#### **Creation: The buried truth of who God is.**

Many of you have been in liturgical churches and you know the creeds that you recite, and all the creeds basically begin somewhat like the apostle's creed, "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." You notice the creeds never begin with I believe in Jesus. Ever ask yourself why that is? Why don't they start with Jesus? Obviously they do believe in Jesus, but why don't they start the creed that way? The reason they don't start the creed that way is because the Holy Spirit didn't start the Bible that way. This Bible doesn't begin with Jesus, it begins with creation, and hence the creeds, the historic creeds of the church always begin with "I believe in God the Father, Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," because that defines God.

So creation is a defining event of who God is. The cross and the resurrection, are they important? Absolutely, but the cross and the resurrection tell you what this God is doing. But God Himself is defined by the event of creation. This is why it's such a critical event. It sets the universe apart from God and God apart from the universe, and defines who our God is. The importance of creation is that, at this point it eclipses the cross, and what I mean by that is "redemption would be unimportant if the God who redeemed were not the Creator." If God is not the Creator, then everything else is sort of quasi relevant.<sup>1</sup>

This is the reason Paul insisted that the "front end" of the gospel to a pagan society ought always to be creation (cf. Acts 14:15; 17:24; Rom 1:20). How foolish, then, for us in an increasingly pagan society to skip over creation because unbelief in our day has deliberately made it "controversial"!

Someday in the future, believers of all ages and the angels will praise God at His Throne:

## **Biblical Framework Part 1**

“Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for Thou didst create all things, and because of Thy will they existed and were created.”

(Rev. 4:11)

To learn who God really is, we must abandon the pagan deceptions surrounding creation. This is no trivial act. It involves changing our most basic presuppositions about the world and who we are. It is repentance at the very bottom of our hearts, minds, and souls. It is the "unburying" of original God-consciousness that has become piled high with debris from this world's wisdom. Only after we confront the God with Whom we have to do, can we understand sin and the need for atonement and resurrection.

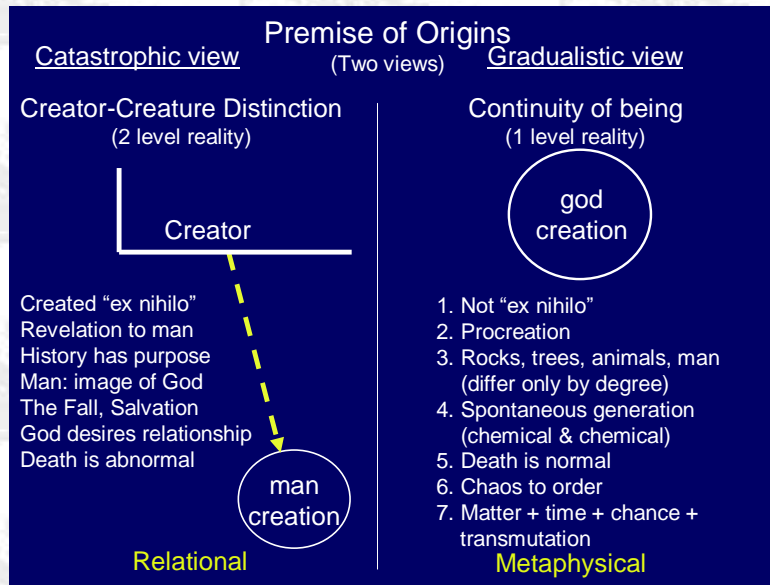
In this lesson, to help in any needed repentance, we are going to clarify further the radical difference between biblical creation and its pagan counterfeits. Then we will address the question of how can we know Who God is.

By refusing to start with the Creator-creature distinction, the unbeliever and the carnal mind start from the creature, independently of the Creator. And this has immense implications to the basic questions men ask during their lifetime: Who am I? What is truth and how do I know? How should I live? There are two and only two answers to these questions. Biblical and Pagan:

### **The Distinctives of Biblical Creation**

Let's look at a diagram to see how paganism differs from the distinctive biblical creation.

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What are the distinctive marks of biblical creation?

First and foremost it is ex-nihilo, i.e. "out of nothing" creation. God created without having to use pre-existing material. There was once nothing beside Him; then He spoke the universe into existence by His Word (refer again to Ps.33:6, 9).

*Ps. 33:6 "By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host."*

*Ps .33:9 "For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."*

Suddenly, something exists that didn't exist before – an event that only an All Powerful Being could do! And its "cause" was only the spoken Word of God. This is not part of the Continuity of Being. This is a radical discontinuity.

All pagan myths deny ex-nihilo creation. Remember in Enuma elish how the gods came about by procreation? Procreation is a natural process of producing something from something. These myths all tell stories of transformation of prior existing material. One piece of the universe "causes" another piece. There is a basic continuity underlying whatever change takes place.

### Implications of Biblical Creation and Paganism

## **Biblical Framework Part 1**

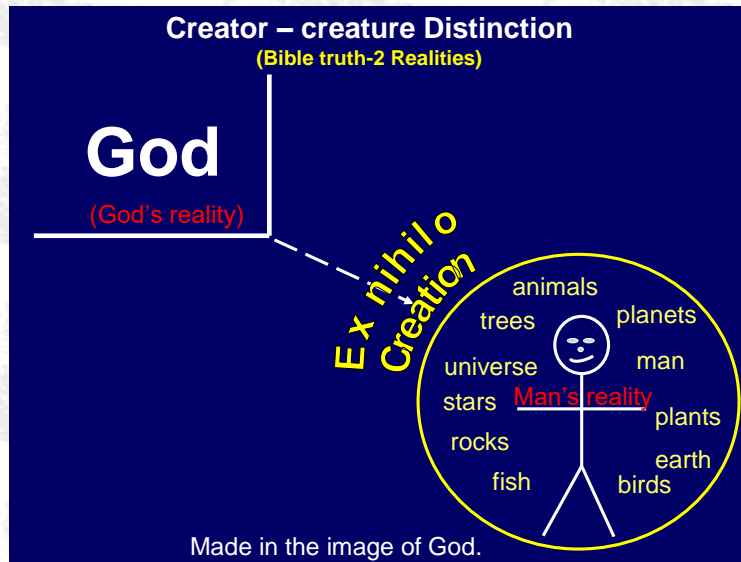
You'll want to see more deeply into these differences because we have been immersed in pagan influences. Let's look at those three basic questions all men ask: Who am I? What is truth and how can I know? And, how should I live? You need to understand and study the radically different answers you get from biblical creation and paganism. The difference is that of day and night, of light and dark, of truth and lie.

	<b>BIBLICAL</b>	<b>PAGAN</b>
Who Am I?	I am a creature made in God's image and living in His presence	I am a piece of cosmic debris and I am alone.
What Is Truth? How Do I Know?	God and His plan are truth. His revelation.	Whatever I determine is true for me. I am autonomous.
How Should I Live?	According to God's law.	As I decide or according to society or nature.

**Who Am I?** If you study philosophy, this area is called metaphysics or ontology. Metaphysics comes from Greek components that mean "above" and "nature", what is the higher understanding of nature. Ontology comes from Greek components that mean "being" and "knowledge", a knowledge of being. To answer "who am I?" you have to deal with the bigger context: what is reality or existence? What is its structure?

In the Bible, reality isn't one thing; it's two things. There are two levels of being: 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. Picture the Genesis 1 narrative in your mind. You see God causing everything to do with man and nature by simply speaking His Word. The universe doesn't come out of His anatomy. He doesn't procreate it. Nor is He fighting with another god in order to create. He just speaks the Word!

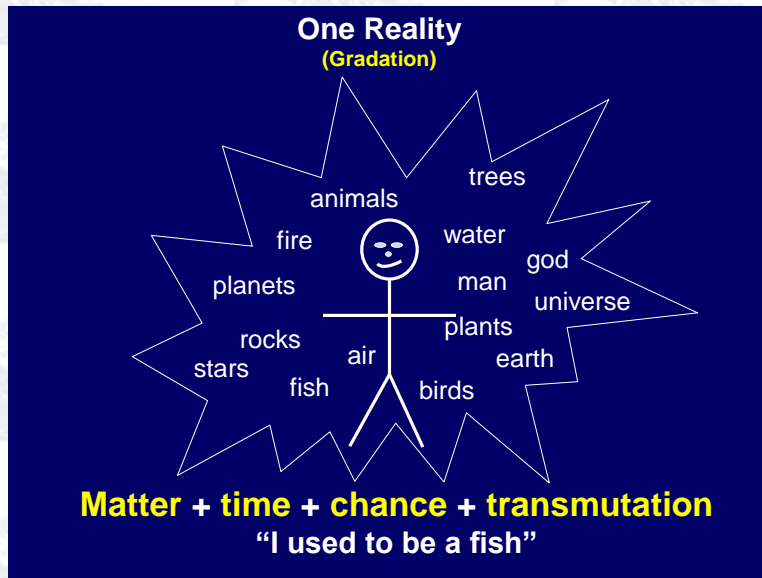
## Biblical Framework Part 1



What does Genesis 1 tell you that you are? It tells you that your ultimate environment is not DNA molecules nor the laws of physics nor even a warm, fuzzy "Good" principle. Your ultimate environment is an Infinite-Personal Creator 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!

And what does the **pagan worldview** tell you that you are?

## Biblical Framework Part 1

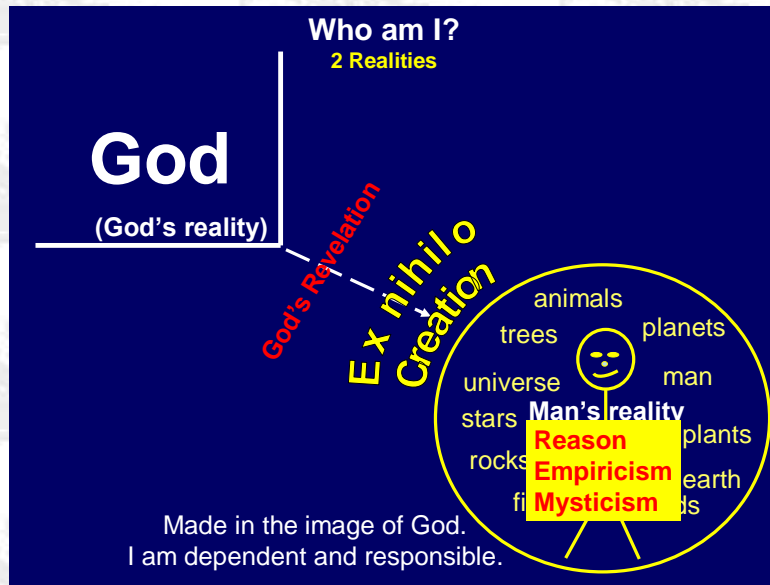


It tells you that reality is one. There is only one level of being. The universe beneath you, above you, in front of you, and behind you is an Infinite Impersonal "It". You and your "personal" nature differ only in degree from It's electrons and protons. In the Chain of Being, your thinking, talking, 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.

**What is Truth and How Can I Know?** In philosophy the area of knowing is called epistemology from a Greek word meaning "to know". This area deals with the question, how can we know? What is knowledge? It concerns language and logic. What distinctive answer comes from biblical creation?



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Man, by himself gains knowledge by reason, by empiricism (observing data), and mysticism (intuition, feelings, moods). However, God has provided revelation about Who He is, what He has done, what plans He has for us and creation, the true events of history, who we are from creation, what really happened to bring all the evil and suffering that we see about us, and His wonderful plan for salvation through sending His Only Begotten Son to take on a human body and die on a cross for us! That there are two plans: one for Israel and one for the Church – both stemming from the Abrahamic Covenant. These are things we would not have known without His revealing them to us. This is why we take the Bible seriously and literally.

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 you discover truth, not invent it. It also means you can only discover truth that He permits you to, no more (Deut. 29:29; Matt.11:25).

*Deut. 29:29 "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."*

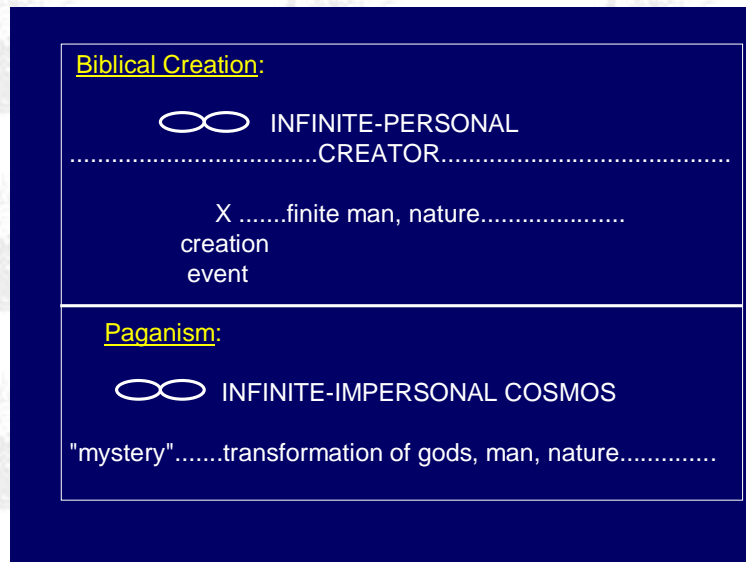
*Matt.11:25 "At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou*

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*didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes.”*

It means your personal relationship with your Creator is directly involved in knowing His thoughts! You and He must be "on speaking terms".

In all the 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 you on the Chain of Being, but in the end they, too, are limited. That 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.

There is a severe problem that paganism has never solved in either ancient or modern forms; that is, how language and logic can be trusted to think about reality. If you need stable categories and contexts to get meaning, as was explained in a previous session, how can this occur if all reality is one? 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 for tomorrow. There

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is no knowable ultimate environment, only mystery. A man in his everyday speech may use universal terms like "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 I Live?** In philosophy this area is known as ethics and axiology. 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.

You just learned that in the pagan worldview you are alone and autonomous. That means you have 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! 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".

By now 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 for your ethical "standards".

### **How God Can & Cannot Be Known**

Paul tells us in Romans 1 that all men know that God exists. The creation they see around them and their own conscience attests to this fact. 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.

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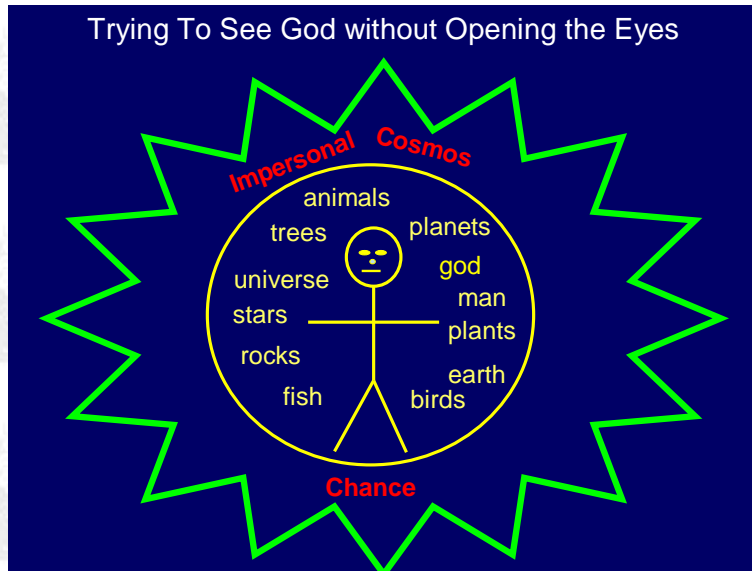
Let's see why it's so important to start with open eyes and not closed eyes. The closed eye tantrum approach is this thing on the right, where we're saying that we're alone, we are king, we make our own universals, and we will do what is right in our eyes. Lest this become something strange, let me give you a religious counterpart to this, where it insidiously creeps into evangelism. Often, out of maybe legitimate concerns, because we want to win someone to the Lord, because we want them so bad to become a Christian, what we try to do is dilute the offense of the gospel, and we try to come across with a message that goes something like this—Jesus will take all your blues away, Jesus can help you, Jesus can do this and that, so forth and so forth. So we violate something right off the bat, we start talking about an undefined Jesus. We haven't given any content to J-E-S-U-S, and most people are so illiterate as far as the Scripture goes they have no idea who Jesus is. And if you start presenting Jesus as aspirin, you're just going to sound like a Tylenol commercial. There's a logical progression to get to Jesus and you have to go through that or you get the wrong Jesus. So, you may get converts, but the converts aren't to the Christ of Scripture.

No matter how much you love someone, no matter how much you want them to become a Christian, you cannot short circuit the offense of the Creator-creature distinction. They have got to face the fact that we are talking about the Personal Sovereign Creator who alone is the authoritative truth, period. He sustains even our rejection of Him. And that's offensive, but there's no substitute for it.

So, this pagan program of burying God-consciousness resembles the little child who gets mad at his father and defiantly shuts his eyes, thinking 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 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 forcibly open those closed eyelids, but by then it will be too late.

## **Biblical Framework Part 1**

### Trying To See God without Opening the Eyes.



We just saw in the previous section how paganism answers the three basic questions men ask. In that view, you share the same essential level of existence with God (if He exists). Both of you are ultimately **alone**, surrounded by the mysterious **Impersonal** Cosmos run by **Chance**. In your autonomy you legislate what the universe is like on the basis of your limited experience and reason. And you do what seems right in your own eyes.

Unfortunately, Christians too often have tried to prove God's existence without ever demanding that the child open his eyes. Many of the so-called arguments for the existence of God simply cater to the child's tantrum. They unintentionally encourage the sinful game of pretending God can't be seen. I'll give you an example and then show you how God is known along with the limits of this knowledge.

These are the presuppositional "closed eyelids" with which the carnal heart hopes to eliminate God. These "closed eyelids" must be challenged when we speak of God. Are they challenged, however, by the classical arguments for God's existence? Let's look at one.

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### **The Cosmological Argument**

In its usual form it goes like this:

- (1) everything has a cause;
- (2) therefore the universe has a cause; and
- (3) that cause is God.

A common atheistic maneuver around this argument is simply to apply statement (1) to God and continue the reasoning.

"Therefore God must have a cause", and so on.

One classical argument is called the cosmological argument.

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"Therefore God must have a cause", and so on.

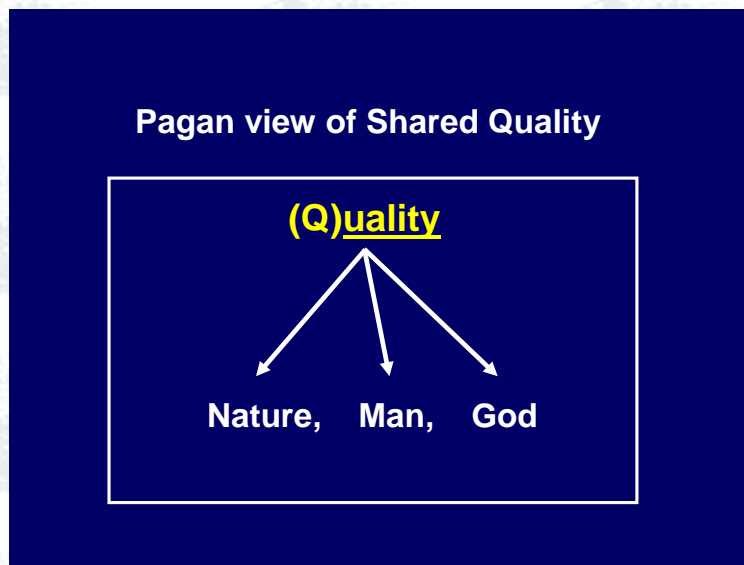
The issue in this argument is there's a mistake embedded in this statement—"everything has a cause". What's wrong is embedded in this first word, "everything". That is a universal and that means that no matter what we are talking about, God, man, creation, it all has a cause. In other words, that first statement applies in the same way to God as it applies to the universe, as it applies to gravity, as it applies to anything. We have erected a universal that is not really a universal. So, this is a fake universal, a universal statement that treats the Creator and the creature identically, and all the atheist does to wipe you out is simply plug God into the equation that you gave him. So don't give him the equation. The argument is wrong because it presumes that you can make a statement about the Creator and the creature and mean the same thing for both of them.

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Whenever we make a universal statement that encompasses both God and man what we are really doing is extremely arrogant. We are so profound in our intellects, and have so many degrees after our names, and we have such a high IQ that we can come up with a universal that encapsulates both God and everything else. That's arrogance not intelligence. Where do we get the authority to make a universal about anything; whether it's cause-effect, whether it's love, whether it's justice, whether it's right, whether it's wrong, whether it's space, whether it's time, whatever the attribute or characteristic is we do not have the authority to state it as an abstract quality that applies to the Creator and creature in the same way. If we have the arrogance to do that God is going to take us down just like He did Job, "Who are you that speaks words without knowledge?"

So, here is that familiar pagan feature again: **one-level of existence!** It hasn't been challenged. The "closed eyelids" remain in place.

We diagram the state-of-affairs this way:



In this diagram there is some (Q)uality that universally applies to God, man, and nature as though they all share the same kind of existence. The atheist has absorbed the cosmological argument into his pagan worldview by interpreting the terms "everything" and "cause" his way. He has made "causation" a (Q)uality that stands above God, man, and nature applying to all in exactly the same way.

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Here is why anti-Trinitarians like Muslims, Mormons, and Jehovah's Witnesses devastate naive Christians. These pseudo-biblical people come with a definition of "threeness" and "oneness" as a (Q)uality that applies in the same sense to God and man. After showing that something cannot be both "three" and "one" in the realm of man, they merely apply the logical conflict to God and thereby "prove" the Trinity doctrine is self-contradictory.

Naive Christians don't see that the pagan presupposition of the Continuity of Being was slipped into the argument's first step when they defined the numerical quality as applying to all reality in the same way. The only way the numerical quality could possibly apply to God and man in the same way would be for God and man to partake of the same level of existence. This pagan presupposition is not challenged.

Let's take a look at Job 38. We want to see that God never permits us to set it up wrongly. Job 38:1-4 is a classic kind of confrontation when God speaks to man. I want you to observe carefully because these Scriptures are Scriptures that establish the principle about Q and q which we will be talking about shortly. Let me remind you that this is a suffering situation. Job's world has just come falling down around him and here's the Lord's response. Job 38:1-4, "Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said [2] "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" In other words, "Who are you?" That basic identity question we looked at above, "Who am I?" and you learned that it was not some abstract philosophical question and here it is. What's God doing here? Obviously He's not ignorant of who Job is - but Job is. Job has forgotten just who he is just by the way he's asking God questions. [3] "Now gird up your loins like a man," You are a man Job, you are made in My image and you approach Me a certain way. Let Me remind you of the rules here. "And I will ask you, and you instruct Me! [4] "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth! Tell me if you have understanding." And He just goes on and on as you can see verse after verse, it's a series of questions. What's striking about this is that God doesn't come up and pat Job on the back and say, "It's going to be ok Job. I love you." God doesn't do that. Instead He peppers Job with



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one question after another, relentlessly. Why does God use this approach? What is God getting at with these questions? Look at the questions. If you'll just scan through the questions you'll see that they all have basically the same answer, always. For example, in verse 4, "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?" What do you suppose God is driving at? What is God going to establish in counseling Job this way? Obviously what Job has done for 35 chapters, as well as his counselors, is to try to figure out the mystery of evil and suffering, "What's going on down here God? What have I done to deserve this suffering? How can you allow this to happen to me? Give me a clue here. My pain doesn't make sense." So, he's hitting right on the classic problem in Christianity. Frankly, if I were a non-Christian I wouldn't even bother with evolution so much as this, the most destructive anti-Christian approach to the gospel. It will hang up more people than any other objection to the Christian faith, the problem of evil. "If you're really good God then why are you allowing this evil down here?" And Job is devoted to this objection. So its striking, and we ought to remember this, and whenever we have a problem and you're reading, or discussing with people and you hear an objection to the faith, don't panic about it, just ask the Lord to lead you through the Bible to where that problem is handled, because we know from Scripture that "all Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for doctrine," it's sufficient for every good work. So the answer has to be somewhere in the Bible. All we have to do is be diligent enough to find the location of it. And here is a classic location of how God answers the problem of evil. First of all, He starts, as He does in verse 1-4 by cutting man down to size. If nothing else comes out of this, it's obvious that what comes out is that God is God and man is man. What we are faced with is what we have been talking about for several weeks now. God insists on starting the discussion with the Creator-creature distinction. Do you see that? He does not sit down as AN EQUAL with Job and say, "Gee, Job, you got some good points there, now let's sit down and you and I together we'll reason this through." That's not the approach; the approach is "You don't know what you're talking about so listen to Me." That kind of starting point, the Creature-creature starting point is deeply offensive to the carnal mind; it stimulates an intellectual revolt right from the start. A fleshly mind will rebel against the idea that you must listen to God's mind in this matter and your mind is not capable of making

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sense of it all apart from His starting point. So the discussion starts right out with a radical diminishing of the human mind. This is not ridiculing human thought, it's simply pointing out there's a proper starting point to the discussion.

Let's go on and you'll see how this echoes through the passage. Verse 8, "Who enclosed the sea with doors, when, bursting forth, it went out from the womb," one of the early creation themes that impacts marine sciences and laws of physics like gravity. Verse 12, "Have you ever in your life commanded the morning," in other words, do you control the universe? Verse 16, "Have you entered into the springs of the sea Or walked in the recesses of the deep?" You know, after 50 years of exploring the depths of the ocean we've only looked at 50 square miles, in 50 years and there are 130 million square miles down there. We haven't even scratched the surface of what's down there. Verse 19, "Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place, [20] That you may take it to its territory, and that you may discern the paths to its home." He goes on and on and on, huge cosmic questions. Verse 31, "Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades," in other words what controls do you have astrophysically? Verse 34, "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, So that an abundance of water may cover you?" In other words, do you have meteorological controls Job? Verse 39 gets into ecology, "Can you hunt the prey for the lion, Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions," basically all these questions deal with various areas of human thought, science, research, etc. And yet included in all of this is that God is pointing Job to creation as a reflection of the Creator. This is the glory of God revealed in Creation. In Romans Paul talks about the glory of God, etc. and you wonder what does Paul mean when He talks about the glory of God in creation. Right here, God Himself is pointing to His own glory in the creation throughout these passages. If you were to turn to Isa 40 you would see God asking the same kinds of questions through Isaiah. Why is God asking those questions? Notice the thrust of the question is to force us to salute, say "Yes Sir." There's an authority of His being, and God, in all these passages is refusing to answer anyone on any other starting point than the one we've outlined. Don't you think that that is a model for how we need to deal with people's questions? The problem is we get trapped because we buy into a question that's thrown at us, we don't

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carefully analyze the question and we go 50 mph into answering a question that was the wrong question to start with. God does not accept at face value our questions. That's why in the Isaiah and Job passage, and many of these passages, God insists on a Creator-creature starting point. Only with that as the origin of the discussion will He proceed. This is why we're going to get into the ramifications of this Creator-creature starting point, and why if you start anywhere else you'll wind up chasing your tail. I've already illustrated that with the cosmological argument for the existence of God. It has always failed, yet it is the classic argument for the existence of God, you can read it in any Christian apologetics textbook. But it fails most often because of the way it approaches life without starting here [with God]. It assumes that man in his autonomy is able to start with his own rules for the discussion. And God does not start with our rules for the discussion; He starts with His rules for the discussion.

The Bible warns us not to "answer a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him" (Prov. 26:4). Too often the classical arguments for God's existence amount to answering the closed-eyed pagan according to his false one-level existence presupposition. You become like him. Then you can't answer him when he attacks your belief in the Trinity, in a sovereign God, or in a loving God. Your answer must not be according to folly.

You ought not go along with his closed eyes!

### Opening the Eyes to See God.

How to know God depends upon Who and What He is. By pretending that the pagan view of origins is correct, you falsify Who and What He is from the very first step. No wonder He can't be known by the usual arguments for His existence!

Therefore you start with God as He is revealed in the creation event--the Infinite Personal God wholly independent of His creation. You and He, therefore, do not share the same basic existence, differing only in degree. You and He differ in "kind"!

Isaiah puts the matter clearly:

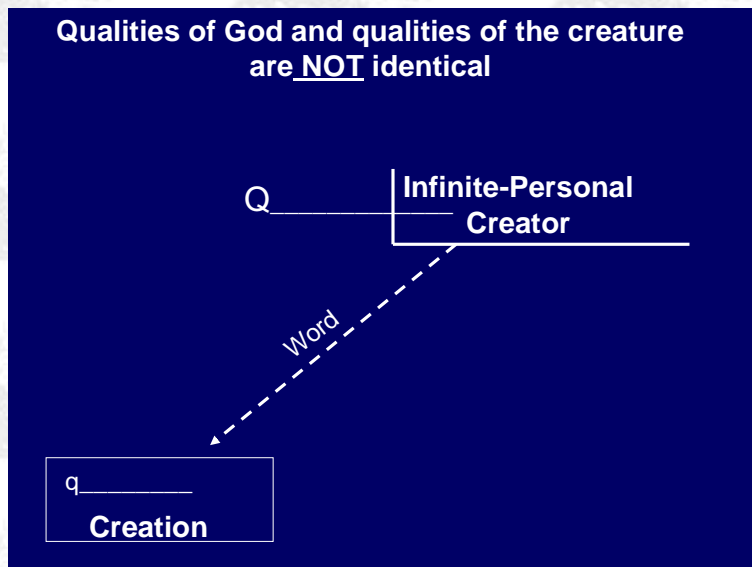
"To whom will you liken me, that I should be his equal?" says the Holy One. . . .The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends

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of the earth. . .His understanding is inscrutable." Isaiah 40:25,28 (NASV)

His existence sustains your existence. By virtue of the creation event, your ultimate environment is not a cosmic "It"; your ultimate environment is a Person! And His ultimate environment in turn is not some mysterious cosmic Fate or Chance in back of Him. He has no ultimate environment other than Himself!

To know Him, therefore, you must conform to Who and What He is, not to some image of a "possible" god of paganism. Arguments for His existence must also comply with Who and What He is, or they inevitably lead to other gods. Thus we bow our knees and begin with the consequences of the creation event.



Starting from the presupposition of biblical creation, there are two levels of existence so that qualities of God and qualities of the creature are NOT identical. A (Q)uality or attribute of God, is never identical to a corresponding (q)uality in the created universe. The pagan equation,  $Q = q$ , denies biblical creation.

Biblical creation implies the incomprehensibility of God. Not only are there things He has not and may never reveal to us (Deut. 29:29), but even the things He has revealed to us remain incomprehensible (Rom.

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11:33)! His thoughts are not identical to our thoughts (Isa. 55:8). This is why we worship Him!

At this point the pagan theologian argues, "With your creation doctrine you have made your Creator unknowable! You admit He is incomprehensible. You therefore agree with us liberal theologians that revelation is impossible. You can't distinguish Christian worship from Buddhist meditation on the great Unknown."

And the Biblical response is, "It is precisely the **creation doctrine** that is the basis of revelation. Because God spoke the universe into existence by His Word, it has been structured by His thoughts. We men are shaped by His mind and mouth. Why should He have any trouble revealing Himself to us. . .especially since mankind is 'made in His image'? Unlike the pagan deities who manifested in animals, God selected man for the incarnation of His Son (Heb. 10:5)."[2]

Genesis 1:26-27 informs us that we are the image of God. We are a finite replica of Him. We are not identical to Him, but we are what He would look like if projected down to finite size. (Q)ualities of the Creator appear as finite (q)ualities in the creation. Biblical creation, therefore, gives us the answer to how we can know an incomprehensible Creator. It is not the identity relationship,  $Q = q$ , but a similarity relationship,  $Q \sim q$ .

The liberal theologian, following the pagan program, insists that knowledge be defined as comprehensive: unless man can know God as fully as he knows anything else, he says He, God, can't be known. If you were to agree with this notion, you would be led back to the identity relationship,  $Q = q$ , and on to the one-level view of reality. And finally you would wind up with some form of the pagan origin myth.

To know the God of biblical creation you have to comply with His structures and laws. You have to open your eyes. You have to look at biblical creation. If, instead, you insist on the pagan program of suppressing God-consciousness, you essentially are shutting your eyes like a child having a tantrum against his father. The "closed eyes" approach, technically, is one way of knowing Him but only as a threatening and

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rejecting Judge. It is knowledge to avoid. You cannot really know Him that way.

To know God as a Loving and Accepting Savior, you must be fully convinced in your heart that it is safe to open your eyes. . . .that the biblical creation event is true. . . .that you are dealing with the Person Himself and not mere propositions about Him.

**Next time, we will discuss Who and What God is, some of His attributes, and Creation: the buried truth of Man and Nature.**

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<sup>i</sup> Be careful of the vocabulary word “creation.” People tend to use that in a sloppy fashion, and we want to be clear as Christians about what God’s word says and what it doesn’t say. When God says in Gen. 1:1, turn to Gen. 1:1, let’s look at that text, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The heavens and the earth are a Hebrew word pair that mean the whole universe. There’s no other word pair available in the Hebrew language for universe; heavens and earth, those two terms coupled together equal what we today would call universe. That’s just the Hebrew way of saying universe. So it is an all encompassing point in verse 1, there’s nothing outside of the heavens and nothing outside of the earth. If I say God created the heavens and the earth I mean God has created all that there is, outside of Himself that is.

Turn to Exodus 20. What’s in this chapter, a key chapter of the Bible? Where God reveals the Ten Commandments. Last week we looked at all those New Testament verses because I wanted you to get in the habit—when you read the Old Testament learn to read it in the same way that the people who wrote the New Testament read it; or the people that wrote later portions of the Old Testament, how they interpreted the earlier portions of the Old Testament. That’s how you learn to interpret Scripture. It’s not what some person says in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that Scripture means, it’s the rules of interpretation that were already established by the very people who wrote it. Here is Moses, who was the compiler of Genesis and he says in Exodus 20:1, “Then God spoke all these words.” Look who’s doing the speaking. Is it Moses? No. It’s God. The subject of the verb is God. And so what we are left with is that from verse 2 on these are the words that God spoke.

It’s not Moses making them up, it’s what if you were a tape recorder and you taped it, you could have taped this in Hebrew. And God Himself says in verse 9-10, notice the context, verse 8, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” That’s the context. But look how He gives you reasons why the sabbath day is important. Verse 9, “Six days you shall labor and do all your work. [10] But the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male servant or your female servant or your cattle” that’s an interesting point, when we look at the Mosaic Law code you’ll see that the first laws of being humane to animals are given by Moses, very interesting. The other law codes in the ancient world did not have provisions to protect animals, they had some but usually it was for economic reasons. Here you have a very clear mandate that the animals are to be cared for and to be protected, you can’t work them to death.

Now if you didn’t read verse 11, you stopped at verse 10, just look at verse 9-10 for a minute, at the end of verse 10, if you had heard there... picture yourself, you’re standing there before

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Mt. Sinai and God storms forth with these words in the Hebrew language and they reverberate down through that canyon and a few million people heard the sound of God reverberating down the valley. Remember what the people said after they heard this? They said hey, Moses, you take care of this, this is a little high voltage for us. So obviously they were hearing words. If you just stopped with a period at the end of verse 10, how would you interpret days? What is the context? Verses 8, 9, and 10 are talking about what? What we call the week. Hasn't it ever struck you as a little odd that all over the world, on every continent, and every culture, the week is always seven? Why is that?

Ever hear of a week of 10 days? At times there have been attempts to do this. One of the silly things that communism did in the 30's in Russia when they were trying to increase productivity, I've read although I can't document it completely, is they experimented where they tried to keep the factories funning for 8 or 9 days, then have one day break, because they thought greater productivity. What they found out was they weren't getting greater productivity, people were getting tired and making more mistakes. And they found out there was an optimum here of six to one, and that when you violate the optimum human efficiency goes down. Gee, I wonder why. Because we're created that way, here's the God that made us, and He's telling us, I built you a certain way, and I structured the universe a certain way, so follow the directions.

In verse 8-9 it's days, nobody has a problem with that. It's very clear in verse 10 it's a day. The only time people have a problem is when they get to verse 11, "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day." Now if you were there, sitting at the base of Mt. Sinai, you would have to structure that if God is saying what He's saying in verse 11, then Genesis must be meant to be interpreted in a straightforward normal way. How else would you interpret it? Today the problem is we're under pressure. Obviously the last 200 years the church has been under tremendous intellectual pressure about this problem of the age of the universe, etc. That's why last week I went into the accommodation strategies, etc. There's a lot of pressure, we all know this. Any educated person knows a lot of pressure, but I can't bend my interpretation because of the pressure. I have to trust the Lord that somehow this will work out, but I can't be dishonest to the text. Unfortunately, what we have going on today is a real problem with translations of the Bible. People have got real loose with the text and part of that is a reflection of their lack of respect for the authority of Scripture. We've got gender neutral translations. God's a she and we just try to make it more politically correct. Sorry, that's not what it says. So, we get translations like The Message and you read it and it's like you're reading a children's story. It's ridiculous. At best it's devotional. But let's be honest here, it's not the word of God. My point is that you can't just rip through the text of Scripture. If you're going to play grease with the text in Gen., think about it, if we have problems interpreting the first two chapters of the Bible, what are you going to do with Ezekiel and Revelation?