

# Comparing Origins (DVP vs. HVP)

## Review

Avoiding the trap of religious neutrality was the main topic of our last lesson. If you learn nothing else in this course, it would be a great thing to learn the fact that no one is ever neutral. Neutrality is an illusion usually offered up as some sort of open-mindedness! But no one is an empty cup when it comes to the basic assumptions of life. It's important to not buy into what someone says without examining it.

Often this issue of neutrality crops up in the realm of education. While public schools make an effort to be neutral they cannot avoid the humanist religion as taught through evolution. All throughout the scientific training of our schools there exists this commitment to remain neutral, that is, to not commit to a certain god for the origin of mankind.

However, we discussed that humanism is really just another religion with man set up as the final authority of everything. They exclude the God of the Bible from the schools in effort to teach another worldview. But we stand on the final authority of the Scripture, and it tells us that God is the Creator and is therefore important for every subject.

Let's think about the logic. If God is who the Bible says He is, then He has structured the universe His way and the universe reflects His character and His being. So is God important in every subject?

What does the neutrality theory start with? If somebody believes in the neutrality theory, they're saying math is math, whether or not God exists; history is history whether or not God exists; literature is literature whether or not God exists. But if that's so, they've already by implication denied that the God of the Bible can exist, because if He did exist He would be important for all these subjects. And they're saying He's not important for these subjects because they say the subjects don't change, whether or not He's there. The moment they said that, they denied the existence of God. So, the myth of neutrality is not neutral. It denies the existence of God.

This way of thinking may be difficult at first if you have never thought about it before, but you must start to think more critically about what lies underneath the HVP.

In our last lesson we also discussed the fact that man has eternity in his heart, meaning that he has a built in desire to press to the furthest context of his existence to understand who he is, where he has come from, what is truth, and what is the ultimate

reality. This desire can never be satisfied with HVP as Solomon shows us in the book of Ecclesiastes. Only a relationship with the Creator will satisfy eternity in man's heart.

In this lesson we move on with our focus of the creation event and begin to think through the DVP of origins verses the HVP of origins. We will establish some very important differences between the two ways of thinking that will lay the foundation for many other HVP lies. This lesson contains the most fundamental point of the book of Genesis and it must not be missed if you want to understand DVP throughout the Bible.

## Introduction

Have you ever thought about the different stories of origins that exist out there? They are so numerous. Almost every people group has adopted some kind of story to communicate the beginning of all things. We know why this is done because in our previous lessons we have seen that our view of origins provides a foundation for everything else we believe. People need beginning, but what they choose to believe at this point will determine so much about the rest of their thinking and behavior.

In our last lesson we established the fact that we can't escape to some neutral zone when it comes to origins. The idea of religious neutrality is really a myth in itself because it isn't possible to set your ultimate beliefs aside. We want to continue on with that thinking and begin this lesson by comparing an ancient unbelieving text alongside the biblical text of Genesis. Our goal is to use what we might call our Ultimate Belief Strategy (UBS) to see what basic assumptions lurk beneath what is being said in these texts. Using our biblical DVP we can properly understand how man corrupts God's word.

## HVP Origins vs. DVP Origins

We are going to be comparing an ancient Babylonian text called *Enuma elish* to the biblical account of Genesis. Both of these texts are about origins, both of them were written about the same time. We are going to do an experiment by observing how HVP takes DVP and completely corrupts it.

## Background

Pieces of the Babylonian text called *Enuma elish* were discovered between 1848 and 1876 from King Ashurbanipal's Nineveh library (this king lived during the time of II Kings). Later findings suggest the story was composed at least by the time of the Exodus. The *Enuma Elish* has about a thousand lines and is recorded in Akkadian on seven clay tablets, each holding between 115 and 170 lines of text.

Dr. Alexander Heidel of the University of Chicago describes the text:

*Enuma elish is the principle source of our knowledge of Mesopotamian cosmology . . . Yet, Enuma elish is not primarily a creation story at all. . . Its prime object is to offer cosmological reasons for Marduk's advancement from the position as chief god of Babylon to that of head of the entire Babylonian pantheon. This was achieved by attributing to him the defeat of Tiamat and the creation and maintenance of the universe. . . Next. . . Babylon's claim to supremacy. . . was further supported by tracing Babylon's origin back to the very beginnings of time and by attributing her foundation to the great Anunnaki themselves, who built Babylon as a dwelling place for Marduk. . . Our epic is thus not only a religious treatise but also a political one.[2]*

Notice how he says,

*"Enuma Elish is the principle source of our knowledge of Mesopotamian cosmology."*

Cosmology is a worldview of what the universe is all about. *Enuma elish* is the cosmology of the Mesopotamians (i.e. the people that lived back in Bible times that occupied modern day Iraq). So, *Enuma elish* is our principle source for understanding what these people believed the universe was all about. He goes on,

*"Yet Enuma Elish is not primarily a creation story at all."*

So, here we have this cosmology with a focus on political struggle. But we are told that *Enuma elish* is not fundamentally a creation story. Well if it's not primarily a creation story what is it?

*"Our epic is thus not only a religious treatise but also a political one"*

It's an epic or grand story that illustrates the supremacy of Babylon over all the other cities of the country, and especially the supremacy of Marduk over all the other Babylonian gods. But why is this epic communicated within a creation framework? Any guesses?

This question takes us back to an important point from previous lessons - you can't say anything about anything without saying (by implication) something about everything. Why is this? Because whenever man deals with a profound topic he is unconsciously admitting that origins give the framework for the topic. Origins explain why history is the way it is and why things the way they are. Starting points determine conclusions and every epic has a view of origins, because that sets the framework and gives ultimate meaning to the epic.

## **Modern Day Epic**

Let's quickly look at a more modern day example. Think of one of the greatest epic movies in the past several decades that was cosmic in scope, had several sequels,

made a lot of money, and became very popular...Star Wars. This modern day story contained all the ingredients that would classify it as an epic, in the sense that it was cosmic in scope.

Star Wars pictured a whole universe by using the storytelling genre of science fiction. This allowed Spielberg to get outside of the universe we live in and see it from the standpoint of fiction. However, Spielberg was not able to communicate his story without providing an ultimate origins framework to build within. Do you remember the God substitute in the movie? It came up over and over. The force.

Isn't that interesting, not the person, but "the force." What Spielberg did there was what every pagan writer or author does, i.e. he converts the personal sovereign God into an impersonal force. Paganism always does that. When they spoke of the force, what did they talk about as far as light and darkness? You remember the phrase, the \_\_\_ side of the force. There was a good side of the force and a dark side of the force. In other words, the force is not only impersonal but it's also good and evil. And that's what paganism always does to the gods and goddesses, ALWAYS, in every century, every continent, every race and every people. The structure is always the same. It's universal.

### **Proper Observation**

As we begin to look at this text we will want to apply good observation skills. In the way that Genesis teaches us about God and his character, we want to allow the *Enuma elish* to speak for itself. We want to ask, "What does *Enuma elish* teach us? What are the core principles in this text?" And by doing this we're going to see some reoccurring HVP strategies. Interestingly enough it's always the same kind of strategy. Later, when we compare the ancient *Enuma elish* with modern cosmic evolution guess what we discover? The same kind of HVP strategy still is being used today!

### **DVP Strategy Applied**

One more important thing should be considered before we get into the comparisons. Don't run into life without your DVP. Don't ever watch a movie, read a book, take a class or study a subject with the Bible still on the shelf, divorced from whatever you're looking at. If you do you will always unconsciously slurp up HVP. Before you study anything, before you watch any movie, before you read a book you always ask yourself, "What do I already know from the Bible about this subject?" What is the DVP on this matter?

So in this case we are going to read a piece of unbelieving origins material, but we are Christians. Before we even get to the literature we need to prepare ourselves as Christians.

This is our DVP Strategy applied. We are going to read a pagan text and as we approach we need to be asking ourselves, "What do we already know about *Enuma elish* before we even read it?"

This is where we have to really use our mind. What do you already know up to this point? First of all, we know it was written by Babylonians about the time of Moses. So, that tells us that the people who wrote it are the descendants of Noah's sons. Second, we know that everyone who got off the ark had the same creation story (Genesis 1-2:4).

Earth's entire population was "on the same tablet", so to speak. Well, what happened? Everyone had the same creation story, but something happened because here we have a different account of origins. So here we are in Babylon about 1,000 years after the Flood and this religious political treatise is written.

### Comparison of Texts

Below we will begin our comparison. Now realize that we are not going to go through the whole *Enuma elish*, as it is rather long. The numbers next to the quotes will help you see what content has been cut out for the sake of summary.

The name "*Enuma elish*" is the first two words of the story, which are "When above." Ancient documents were titled for the first two or three words in the document. Genesis in Hebrew isn't called Genesis; it's called Berith, "In the beginning." All the books of the Bible were originally referred to by the first word or words of the text. So *Enuma elish* just means "When above".

Lets start with reading a summarized account:

- 1 "When above [*Enuma elish*] the heaven had not (yet) been named,
- 2 (And) below the earth had not (yet) been called by a name,
- 3 (When) Apsu primeval, their begetter,
- 4 Mummu, (and) Tiamat, she who gave birth to them all,
- 5 (Still) mingled their waters together,
- 6 And no pasture land had been formed (and) not (even) a reed marsh was to be seen;
- 7 When none of the (other) gods had been brought into being,
- 8 (When) they had not (yet) been called by (their) name(s) and their destinies had not yet been fixed,
- 9 At that time) were the gods created within them...

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13 They lived many days, adding years (to days)...

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20 The divine brothers gathered together.

21 They disturbed Tiamat and assaulted(?) their keeper,

22 Yea, they disturbed the inner parts of Tiamat,

23 Moving (and) running about in the divine abode(?)...

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30 [Marduk] took from [Kingu] the tablet of destinies, which was not his rightful possession. ...

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40 After he had vanquished (and) subdued his enemies...

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50 Strengthened his hold upon the captive gods;

51 And then he returned to Tiamat, whom he had subdued.

52 The lord trod upon the hinder part of Tiamat,

53 And with his unsparing club he split her skull.

54 He cut the arteries of her blood,

55 And caused the north wind to carry (it) to out-of-the-way places.

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60 [Marduk] split [Tiamat] open like a muscle into two (parts);

61 Half of her he set in place and formed the sky (therewith) as a roof.

62 He fixed the crossbar (and) posted guards,

63 He commanded them not to let her waters escape.

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70 And a great structure, its counterpart, he established, (namely) Esharra [earth],

80 He created stations for the great gods;

81 The stars their likeness(es), the signs of the zodiac, he set up.

82 He determined the year, defined the divisions...

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90 Punishment they inflicted upon [Kingu] by cutting (the arteries of) his blood.  
 91 With his blood they created mankind;  
 92 [Ea] imposed the services of the gods (upon them) and set the gods free.

## Similarities Between Genesis & Enuma Elish

The goal of any good counterfeit is to appear very similar to the original. Even Satan mixes truth with error. It's no different in this situation. The Babylonians mixed HVP with DVP and came up with something that sounds quite familiar to Genesis.

Genesis 1	Enuma Elish
God creates heaven & earth (Gen. 1:1)	Heaven & Earth present but nameless (Line 1, 2)
God is Spirit and creates by speaking all matter into existence. God is independent of matter. (Gen. 1:1; 3)	Divine spirits and cosmic matters coexist. Apsu the god of fresh water & male fertility. Tiamat, wife of Apsu, the goddess of the sea, chaos. Create through reproduction. (Line 4, 5, 7, 9)
earth is desolate w/ darkness over deep (Gen 1:2)	primeval chaos; war of gods against Tiamat (the deep sea) (Line 3-5)
2nd day: sky dome (Gen 1:6-8)	creation of firmament (dome) - Line 61
3rd day: dry land (Gen 1:9-11)	creation of dry land (Line 70)
4th day: heaven lights (Gen. 1:14)	creation of heavenly lights (Line 81, 82)
6th day: creation of humans (Gen. 1:26)	creation of humans (Line 91)

If it's true that the Babylonians made this up, isn't it striking that we have two different civilizations remembering the same order of events?

When modern scholars first began to analyze ancient pagan texts like Enuma elish, many of them interpreted them from an evolutionary perspective. Because of the similarities they thought they could see a gradual evolution from these earlier, more speculative, polytheistic stories to the later, loftier, monotheistic Genesis. In other words man went from worshiping many gods in his early existence to a more advanced worship of one god.

Scholars explained this as another illustration of evolution's ever upward development. It also "explained" the Bible by showing that it came not from God but from prior pagan stories.

Time proved them wrong. Two major conflicts arose with this evolution-of-religion idea. First, as more evidence of early religious beliefs was found, it showed that the earlier stories were more monotheistic; they "remembered" the existence of a Supreme Being who created all things and were not truly pagan at all. Later stories "forgot" the Supreme Being and replaced him with "the richest and most extravagant rituals, gods and goddesses of the most varied kinds". Unbelief, in other words, developed later out of earlier Bible-like beliefs. This is opposite to what the evolutionary theory would predict.

A second conflict became apparent when it was discovered that some isolated tribes in remote parts of the modern world had origin stories that were genuinely monotheistic and truly "creationist". These tribes had somehow preserved ancient, pre-pagan beliefs. Since there was no evidence of contact with Christian missionaries, where did such "primitive" tribes get the "advanced" truths seen in Genesis 1? Their pre-pagan concepts are surprising.

Study of African tribal origin stories shows several examples of belief in creation out of nothing. In North America, "the Wiyot in northern California. . .say: 'The Old Man Above did not use earth and sticks to make men. He simply thought, and there they were.'" In India the Santal people have an oral tradition about "Thakur Jiu" (translated = "Genuine God"). Thakur Jiu created the world and the first human pair Haram and Ayo who fell into sin.

In Southeast Asia the Karen people have hymns in their oral traditions about the eternal Creator, Y'wa, that predate all contact with missionaries:

*Who created the world in the beginning?  
Y'wa created the world in the beginning!  
Y'wa appointed everything.  
Y'wa is unsearchable! . . .  
The omnipotent is Y'wa; him have we not believed.  
Y'wa created man anciently;  
He has a perfect knowledge of all things!  
Y'wa created men at the beginning. . . .  
He appointed the "fruit of trial"  
He gave detailed orders.  
Mu-kaw-lee deceived two persons. . . .*

If these minority examples show nearly a complete survival of an ancient monotheism, then in the majority of outright unbelieving origin-myths partial survival would be probable. In other words, underlying HVP are buried truths of origins that testify to original revelation passed down through Noah (Isa. 40:21).

## Differences Between Genesis & Enuma Elish

Understanding the key differences with the two origin accounts will help you in understanding how HVP compares to DVP in the area of beginnings. There are some very important differences that need to be digested here. We will be referring back to these HVP strategies over and over again.

### Creator-creature Distinction vs. Continuity of Being

We observed in Enuma elish that there is no clear distinction between the gods and goddesses on one hand and the material universe on the other. Apsu, Tiamat, and Mummu are all "water deities". Note the line at the beginning where they "mingled their waters" and the later line where Marduk split open Tiamat and made the sky from her. In the unbeliever's mind, the material world and spirit beings are very closely identified with one another.

Note, too, that from the matter-spirit beings Apsu, Tiamat, and Mummu come forth all the other gods and goddesses. These new-born deities are said to have "disturbed the inner parts of Tiamat. . .the divine abode" as though Tiamat was their home. Paganism thus thinks of everything originating from a chaos, including the gods.

In the Genesis text, however, God is wholly separate from the universe. He is prior to all things. All else originates from Him. They come into existence, not by transformation from His Being, but by His spoken Word they come into existence from nothing (creatio ex-nihilo). There is thus an absolute, transcendental distinction between the Creator and all else.

Over against the Bible's Creator-creature distinction, HVP insists upon the unity of creator(s) and creations. Gods, men, animals, and rocks are all part of the same existence or being. This is the doctrine of the Chain of Being or Continuity of Being, a doctrine you will find lurking in all forms of paganism from ancient times through New Testament times (where it was related to the Gnostic heresy) to modern cosmic evolution. You will hear about this false doctrine again and again in the following chapters. It is spiritual poison.

Implied by the Continuity of Being idea and overtly present in some pagan origin-myths, is the concept of spontaneous generation. Since the universe basically is of one kind, everything within it differs only in degree. Thus the universe has power to bring

forth life from non-life all by itself. Man is just a part of Nature. Contrast this situation with the Bible's teaching about non-transgressable boundaries between man, each kind of animal, and each kind of plant (Gen. 1:11-12, 21, 24-25, 27).

An apparent corollary to the Continuity of Being is that the spontaneous transformations take vast amounts of time. Note the line in Enuma elish, "They lived many days, adding years (to days)." Contrast this slowness with the suddenness of God's creative work (Ps. 33:9) done in six days (Exod. 20:11).

The first fundamental contrast between Genesis and ancient paganism, then, is between the Creator-creature distinction and the gradually self-transforming Continuity of Being. That is not all; there is a second, equally fundamental contrast that you must also learn to recognize.

### **Personal Sovereignty vs. Impersonal Chance.**

In reading the Enuma Elish did you observe who, if anyone, was in control? If we had gone through the entire Enuma elish text, we would have seen vividly that the creation of the universe was done by a squabbling committee without a chairman! First, Apsu, Tiamat, and Mummu "begat" all other gods. Then Marduk somehow arises and vanquishes the three original water deities.

Dr. Heidel's quote above tells us that the story was, among other things, a political justification for the power of Babylon. Bluntly stated, the story justifies Babylon by showing that Babylon's god, Marduk, could beat up all the other cities' gods! Put in more contemporary language, the story teaches that historical processes going back to origins ordain Babylon's dominance.

Observe carefully what is going on here. If today Marduk beats up all the other gods, what about tomorrow? Will another god, younger and stronger than Marduk, rise up and triumph over him? On the polytheistic basis of Enuma elish what assurance would a Babylonian have about the future? Who is in charge in the final analysis?

The pagan mind, when faced with this dilemma, usually tries to appeal to something "behind" the gods. Note in Enuma elish the reference "[Marduk] took from [Kingu] the tablet of destinies." Later pagans in Greece and Rome spoke of this mysterious, unknowable something in back of the gods as Fate.

Resorting to an unknowable fate, however, doesn't do much. It still leaves one in darkness. Who will dominate the counsel of the gods tomorrow? No one, including the gods, knows! It comes down to what we moderns call Chance. Chance alone is the final backdrop of existence in the unbelieving worldview. Of course, this Chance is also impersonal. It is thought of as an impersonal tablet, not a god.

Opposed to this Chance-run, squabbling committee idea of origins, is the Bible's orderly dominance by the one, personal Creator-God over all else. God merely speaks His Word, and it comes to pass (Ps 33:9). God promises Adam that the seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). History will certainly turn out the way God and God alone says it will.

<b>DVP of Origins</b>	<b>HVP of Origins</b>
<b>Creator-creature distinction</b>	<b>Continuity of Being</b>
2 Levels of reality	1 Level of Reality
God    man   nature	god(s) > man > animals > rocks
<b>Personal Sovereignty</b>	<b>Impersonal Chance</b>
God in control; man responsible	No one in control; man a victim

## Conclusion

I want to summarize what we're saying by setting paganism off from Biblical faith. We've talked about paganism, we've said there's no neutrality, that everyone knows God exists, that God has set eternity in men's hearts, that the preconditions for knowledge is that the universe is stable and for words to have meaning there must be context, but ultimately the bottom line is there are only two contexts. One is the Creator-creature context; the other is the Continuity of Being context. You cannot get these together. Every man is in one or the other; every man understands the world in terms of one or the other views. There may be different names to it. It may be expressed in equations and scientific language, but after all is said and done you still wind up in one of these two camps, always! These are fundamental distinctions that are diametrically opposed to one another.

We really need to pay attention in our day because of all the tendencies toward eastern thinking. All the New Age/Eastern religions believe the Continuity of Being built throughout them. They all believe there's just a relative difference between God and man, if there even is a God. God is a super man who is stronger and wiser than we are, but there are many shades of difference between Him and us. In the Scripture He is totally other, He is totally by Himself, He is not in any way dependent upon the creature.

How do we as Christians describe our God? We believe in a personal sovereign God who existed eternally before the universe and requires nothing outside of Himself to exist. He is the I AM. The God who is!