

Who is Jesus? Part 4- Alpha and Omega

Written by Calvin Fox

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That we believe Jesus is the expression of the Mind of God and that His Mind is rational has momentous consequences. When Scripture declares, "in the beginning was the Word", it means in the beginning was Reason, Rationality, Purpose, Structure and Design. That Christ the Word created the natural world, sustains it and is involved in it, directing it to predetermined goals requires that we believe that the natural world itself is rational, structured and designed and that it can be known and explained rationally and logically. It is intelligible and makes sense. This is the fundamental, foundational conviction that is the basis for all Science. Christ as the Logos is the clue as to the structure and meaning of all reality and being. Both faith and reason are essential to knowing and explaining reality and meaning.

[See my Essays about the Philosophy of Science and Epistemology on this website] **The Fall and Redemption of the Universe**

If, as Scripture says, all things were created through the Word (or Wisdom) of God and for the Word of God and if it is true that all things hold together in the Word (or Mind) of God, than the Word of God can also be called the Cosmic Christ. This is the conclusion of Christian Philosophers of the 4th and 5th Centuries. Christ is the Source of All- the Alpha and Omega of All.

There have always been those who glorify the irrational. That is very popular thing to do in our times. Both the anti-rational and the anti-intellectual are in vogue in this Age of the intuitive, emotional and romantic. This is ironic because we are also in an age of technology and hard science. We delight in the contradictory and in paradox. We prefer chaos to order, the absurd rather than the logical, the heart over the head. Our explanations for behavior are usually psychological, literally putting the psyche before the logical. We prefer the absurd. Regarding Science we are either philosophical Naturalists or Materialists.

The Cosmic Christ stands over and against all of this and renders such views of reality both futile and false. There is harmony and unity at the core of Reality and in the structure of the Universe. That structure, harmony and unity is in Christ. That is what we declare when we say the Word of God is the Cosmic Christ. This concept is far more common in the Greek Church than the Latin Church. Eastern (Orthodox) Theologians gave it far more gravitas (significance, importance, weight) than Western ones. And this makes for a huge difference in the understanding of Redemption within the Church.

In the West, the result of sin is seen primarily as loss of personal righteousness and a Fall into personal corruption and the spiritual death of individual persons. There is also the Curse of the Natural World in which it, too, is made subject to death and decay, but not much is made of this or of its future redemption. In the East, the consequence of the Fall was primarily the separation of the world from God. It was a fall from Being into non-being. If the Cosmic Christ is at the center of Reality and holds together all that is and that connection is severed by the Fall, the consequence is that the Universe (the Cosmos) loses its center, its unity and harmony and returns to the chaotic darkness and deep from which it was created. (Gen.1:1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, 2 the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep) creation was filling this void and bringing order to this chaos. The Fall reversed creation. Redemption restored Creation. This sounds strange to

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many evangelicals who think of redemption almost exclusively in terms of personal salvation-sinners going to Heaven.

Becoming Eschatological Christians

The Cosmic Christ not only was involved in the beginning of all things, He is involved in the end of all things. Redemption involves far more than the forgiveness of a sinner's guilt and [his] salvation ("Jesus died for me") or even the saving all the Elect ("Christ loved the Church gave Himself for her.") Christ died to redeem all Creation itself, the Creation He had made "in the beginning". That redemption is what we see described in apocalyptic Scripture. That is what we learn about in Paul's letters to the Romans (8:19 For the Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; 20 for the Creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the Creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole Creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; 23 and not only the Creation, but we ourselves, ...groan inwardly while we wait for ... the redemption of our bodies.

And to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 35 But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" 36 Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. 37 And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. 39 Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for human beings, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. 40 There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory. 42 So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

51 Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53 For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. 54 When this perishable body puts on imperishability, and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled: "Death has been swallowed up in victory." 55 "Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The major thrust of this Corinthian passage is that death, all death, decay and corruption, will be utterly defeated and destroyed. Redemption is far wider and inclusive than most evangelicals believe it is. The Tradition in the West is to focus on the meaning of Redemption for individuals or for all the Elect (also individuals). But doing that means that much that is subjected to Death will be untouched by Redemption. Instead, Paul is saying just as all "bodies" have been subject to decay, so all "bodies" (not just human) shall be changed at the last Trump (the Second

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Advent). The planets and stars, all animals and other living things shall be “raised in glory”.

2 Peter 3:5 ... by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water, 7 ... by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved ... being kept until the day of judgment. 10 ... then the heavens will pass away..., and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth ...11 all these things are to be dissolved ... 13 But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth

The Apostle John prophesied , “I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away“ - Rev 21:1

The Apostle Mark quotes Jesus as saying “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.” -Mark 16:15

The Gospel is for the whole creation, not just individuals. Christ died for the Cosmos, not just for the Elect. He is the Cosmic Christ.

We read in John 3:16 that God so loved the world. that He gave His only begotten Son so that ... individuals could have Eternal Life. But the love He has is for the world (kosmos which may be translated as the Universe, i.e.- Creation)

1 Cor 15:25 For [Christ] must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 24 Then comes the End, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power.

Evangelicals must be not only concerned with their personal salvation, but also with “the End“. Christ must be and shall be Lord of all- nothing exempted. God is working His purposes out in History for the End of that History. That End includes the Redemption of all Creation. In fact, only when we become eschatological Christians will we be able to understand what God is about and what our own Agenda needs to be. Beginning with the End we shall be able to confront the Now.