

BEGINNING AND END

LIKE THE TRITE SYMBOLISM of a gold cross hung from the neck (after all, would you adorn yourself with jewelry in the shape of an electric chair or hangman's noose?), human beings tend to trivialize the role of Christ. Both those within and without the church cubby-hole Jesus into one or a few categories pertinent to their life, picking from a laundry list of His earthly roles.

We think of Him as Savior, Lord, Redeemer, a brother, our Advocate. All valid and true, of course. Those who do not yet know Him personally may think of Him as a teacher, a prophet, a wise rabbi, an all-around nice guy. Again, all valid and true. Even those who subscribe to heretical philosophies may at least assign Him some sort of role, such as the highest created thing, or the man who became a god.

All these, however, are a little like honoring the President of the United States because he drives a bullet-proof car: true, but by itself grossly inadequate.



God's word as a whole, but especially the New Testament, speaks eloquently of how Jesus the Christ, Son of God, is so much more than any one of these specifics so common to our day-by-day existence. Here is the fullness of Christ's role to humanity; here is how essential He truly is:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things

He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:17

have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:15-17

Put succinctly, remove Christ Jesus—the “beloved Son”—and the universe collapses. Everything we know, everything we do not yet know, everything that exists, whether seen or unseen disappears. More accurately, if there were no Christ, the universe would never have come into existence in the first place. Stated in reverse, the existence of the universe proves the supremacy and dominion of Christ the Son of God and His ongoing work, for He is the glue holding it all together.

When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, “Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.”

Revelation 1:17-18

Christ is responsible for creation, and all creation moves inexorably toward Him.



Human beings tend to be myopic: that which is happening *right now*, this day

in their life, is the most important thing to them. And for most (especially the young) the world began the day they were born; anything before that, well, “here be dragons.”

This myopia can also work its way into the believer's walk of faith. It is easy to settle on one aspect of Christ's character, or His one role most important or active in a believer's life, to

the exclusion of the rest. When we think of Him in only narrow terms we miss out on experiencing and appreciating the fullness of Christ.

Is He our Savior and Lord? Indeed He is. Is Jesus our brother, our advocate? Absolutely. Is He our best teacher and model for our life? Of course. But the fullness of Christ includes the fact that He is responsible for speaking the universe into existence, and for sustaining the universe; the Son of God is the one who makes *cosmos* (order) out of chaos.

More than that, all of creation, both the visible and invisible, is ordered *toward* Him. He is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. He is both the Creator and the Destination of all things.



Albert Einstein spent the last 30 years of his life trying to prove a unified field theory—that all physical phenomena should ultimately be explainable by some underlying unity.

Ultimately, he failed.

Thirty years wasted, when all he had to do was read God's word for the answer: Christ.

