

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last,
the beginning and the end.”

Revelation 22:13

Beginning

THE BEGINNING OF ANYTHING is a relative position. Did the twenty-first century begin January 1, 2001, or did it begin January 1, 2000? Depends on who you ask.

We have just celebrated Christmas, the day we traditionally commemorate the “beginning” of Christ on earth. But did He begin in that homely stable, or did He begin in that mysterious, supernatural moment of holy conception? Was it really His beginning for the angel that proclaimed Him to the shepherds? For him, who had known the Son of God from eternity past, it was surely not a point of beginning, but one of the Son’s transition from heaven to earth.

Soon we all will be embarked on another new year, the beginning of which will be noted at the stroke of midnight, New Year’s Eve. But if you are celebrating in Wisconsin, in that moment the new year is already one hour old in New York, while two more hours of the old year still remain in California.

Beyond the ordeal of trying to remain awake until midnight, what, after all, is there about a new year to celebrate? An opportunity for a fresh start? You have, and will always have that same opportunity any other day of the year. An excuse to get drunk, act crazy, and kiss a lot of people? You can do that any time, if you are so inclined.

More often than not, earthly “beginnings” are little more than comforting tent pegs driven into the temporal sod, one more loving embrace of the here and now over the unknown and unseeable. And such things seem inordinately trivial when one is living an eternal life.

Every person on earth, whether they realize it or not, no matter in what their faith is placed, is living an eternal life. But those with no other hope beyond the sod of this earth deny that reality, for, truth be told, their eternity is best avoided.

When a Christian is living an eternal life (as opposed to waiting for his eternity to begin at the moment of his death), when a believer embraces the fact that he is already in the midst of his eternity, then earthly beginnings have little claim on his attention. For such a Christian dwells within a non-beginning, non-ending universe.

In the center of this universe is Christ. And since He is the one who spoke the universe into existence and still holds it together, He is not just its center, its nucleus, but He is its beginning and its end. For someone living in that universe, there are few things more trivial than the beginning of a new year.

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 have been

created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Colossians 1:16-20

“I think all Christians would agree with me if I said that though Christianity seems at first to be all about morality, all about duties and rules and guilt and virtue, yet it leads you on, out of all that, into something beyond. One has a glimpse of a country where they do not talk of those things, except perhaps as a joke. Every one there is filled full with what we should call goodness as a mirror is filled with light. But they do not call it goodness. They do not call it anything. They are not thinking of it. They are too busy looking at the Source from which it comes.”

C. S. Lewis