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The Cosmic Scope of the Resurrection

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The Cosmic Scope of the Resurrection

Abstract

"The Kingdom of Christ claims all things for Christ, not just humanity, not just some things, but all things."

Posting about Christ's authority from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<https://inallthings.org/the-cosmic-scope-of-the-resurrection/>

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The Cosmic Scope of the Resurrection

Carl Fictorie

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Matthew's telling of the time after the resurrection is quite brief. The women are greeted by the angel and instructed to let the disciples know. Jesus briefly appears to the disciples and tells them to go to Galilee. This is followed by a bit of political intrigue as the priests buy the silence of the guards.

Finally, the disciples are visited by Jesus one last time and he tells them the following: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."¹

Much is made of the latter two verses. The disciples, and by extension the church they will establish, get a direct command from Jesus to baptize which is the basis for making it one of the sacraments. And they get instructed to "go make disciples of all nations" through that act of baptizing. Together this is commonly known as the Great Commission—the redemption of Jesus Christ is meant for the entire world, and the people of God are commissioned to bring that good news to all the people in the world and invite them into the Kingdom of God.

Certainly, this commission is a good thing. Importantly, it expands the people of God beyond the people of Israel and extends it to all peoples across the globe. But this viewpoint also overlooks the first part of Jesus' words: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Through his sacrificial death and resurrection Christ has defeated evil, undoing the curse earned by Adam and Eve in the garden, and he is now ready to take his place at the right hand of God as King of heaven and earth, able to claim to himself the ruler over all created things. The "go therefore" that follows makes the Great Commission a consequence of Christ's rule over all of creation.

If that claim is correct, that Jesus claims all of creation for himself, it follows that the commission given also encompasses the whole of creation, the entire cosmos. Back in the garden, prior to their sin, Adam and Eve were given a commission as well, a commission to subdue and fill and tend and keep the creation called the Cultural or Creation Mandate. Before the entry of sin into the world, humankind is put into the place of God's stewards of creation. While genuine creatures—embodied beings within the created cosmos—humans also bear God's *imago deo*, and as such are given the unique task to rule and steward the creation. Sin damages humanity's ability to fully realize and live out that task, but the task does not go away with the presence of sin.

Therefore, when we get to the resurrection, where Christ reclaims all things for himself and then commissions the disciples to go spread this good news, it follows that this commission exists within the Creation Mandate. The complete text of the Great Commission does not allow a narrow understanding that is limited to saving souls for Christ or a notion of escaping this world for a distinct heaven. If Christ's claim of authority is cosmic in scope, then our view of the Great Commission must also be cosmic in scope.

Thus, the Kingdom of Christ claims all things for Christ, not just humanity, not just some things, but all things. Christ claims not just our souls, but our bodies, our minds, our thoughts, our ideas, our dreams. And for thousands of years those thoughts, ideas, and dreams were used to take the material in creation and make things: clothes to cover us, fire to warm us and light up the night, tools to help shape the matter in the world, instruments to help us sing praises to the Creator, homes and cities to live in, and much more. These, too, Christ claims for himself. And since the beginning of the universe, the Spirit of God brooded over the creation in great expectation,² claiming the entire cosmos—everything from quarks to quasars—for himself.³

In claiming all these things for himself, Christ points forward to that time described in the last chapter of Revelation where we will see “the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And (we will hear) a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘See, the home of God is among mortals, he will dwell with (us); (we) will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be (our) God.’”⁴ And we will get to see all things made new.⁵ Not all new things and not a heaven that allows us distance from corrupted earth. We will see all the things of this creation remade, renewed, transformed into the glorious creatures God has always planned for them to be.

Ponder the grandeur of the renewed creation in light of the cosmic scope of the resurrection.

1. Matthew 28:18-20 NIV
2. Gen. 1:2
3. Psalm 104
4. Rev. 21:2-3
5. Rev. 21:5