

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

Systematic Theology Series

CHRISTOLOGY

The Doctrine of the Person and Work of Christ

UNIT 10: THE RETURN OF CHRIST

Lesson 31

The Cosmic Christ

Making All Things New

The Consummation of All Things in Christ

Key Texts: Ephesians 1:9–10; 1 Corinthians 15:24–28; Revelation 21:1–5; 22:1–5; Colossians 1:19–20

“Behold, I Am Making All Things New” — The Most Comprehensive Promise in All of Scripture

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SERIES VERSE

*“For we do not preach ourselves
but Christ Jesus as Lord,
and ourselves as your bond-servants
on account of Jesus.”*

2 CORINTHIANS 4:5, NASB 1995

INTRODUCTION

The final lesson of Unit 10 moves beyond the event of the return, established in Lesson 30 as the decisive eschatological horizon of the present age, to the cosmic consummation that the return inaugurates: the new heavens and the new earth, the eternal reign of Christ, the face-to-face communion of the redeemed with the God who made them for Himself, and the summing up of all things in the one who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. This is the most expansive, the most cosmically comprehensive, and the most doxologically demanding territory that Christology enters, the eschatological horizon where the entire arc of the Person and Work of Christ reaches its ultimate, permanent, and all-encompassing destination.

The cosmic scope of the consummation is the theological context within which the entire Christology series has been located from its first lesson. Lesson 1 established Christology as the center of all theology, the doctrine that holds every other doctrine together. Lesson 3 established the pre-existent Son as the one through whom all things were created and through whom all things hold together. Lesson 19 established the kingly reign of the exalted Christ as the governing reality of the present age. And now, in Lesson 31, the series arrives at the teleological destination toward which all of these doctrines have been pointing: the final summing up of all things in Christ, the reconciliation of all things to God through Him, and the eternal glory of the new creation in which the Lamb is the temple and the lamp and the Lord of the eternal city.

This lesson develops the cosmic consummation under six headings: the Ephesians 1:9–10 vision of the summing up of all things in Christ (*anakephalaiōsis*); the abolition of the last enemy in 1 Corinthians 15:24–28; the new heavens and the new earth as the renovation and glorification of the material creation rather than its annihilation (Revelation 21:1–5; Romans 8:19–21); the eternal communion of God with His people in the new Jerusalem (Revelation 21:3; 22:1–5); the eternal reign of Christ and the beatific vision; and the doxological conclusion that the Cosmic Christ is Christology’s final word, the one who was, and is, and is to come, the Lamb upon the throne, to whom belongs every blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.

I. ANAKEPHALAIŌSIS: THE SUMMING UP OF ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

Ephesians 1:9–10, The Cosmic Goal of the Eternal Purpose

A. The Mystery of the Divine Will

Ephesians 1:9–10 provides the most theologically comprehensive statement of the ultimate goal of the divine redemptive purpose in all of Paul’s letters: “He made known to us the mystery of His will,

according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth” (NASB 1995). The ‘mystery of His will’ (μυστήριον τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ, *mystērion tou thelēmatos autou*) is the eternal divine purpose that was concealed in previous ages and has now been disclosed in the gospel: the cosmic, comprehensive, all-encompassing plan of God to sum up all things in Christ.

The key term is the verb ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι (*anakephalaiōsasthai*), ‘to sum up,’ ‘to bring together under one head,’ ‘to recapitulate.’ The word is constructed from *kephalē* (‘head’) with the prefix *ana* (‘again,’ ‘up’): to bring everything back under the one Head, to restore the proper order of the cosmos under the Headship of the one who is both Creator and Redeemer. The scope of the summing up is total and without exception: ‘all things’ (τὰ πάντα, *ta panta*) in the heavens and on the earth. There is no dimension of the created order, spiritual or material, angelic or human, cosmic or personal, that lies outside the scope of the consummation. Everything that was created through Christ (Colossians 1:16: ‘all things have been created through Him and for Him’) will be summed up in Christ, restored to its proper order under His headship, liberated from the disorder that sin introduced, and brought to the fullness of the purpose for which it was made.

B. Anakephalaiōsis and the Colossian Hymn

Colossians 1:19–20 provides the corresponding statement: “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” (NASB 1995). The reconciliation of ‘all things’ is accomplished through the blood of the cross, the atoning work that Lessons 20–24 examined in detail is now placed in its broadest possible cosmological context: the cross is not merely the means of reconciling individual sinners to God but the means of reconciling the entire created order to its Creator. The peace made through the blood of the cross is a cosmic peace that will be fully manifest only in the new creation, when the groaning of the creation (Romans 8:22) gives way to the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Romans 8:21).

The reconciliation of ‘all things’ in Colossians 1:20 does not teach universal salvation, the reconciliation of every individual person without exception to God regardless of their response to the gospel. The New Testament consistently affirms the reality of final judgment and the eternal separation of the unrepentant from the presence of God. What Colossians 1:20 teaches is the cosmic scope of the reconciliation accomplished through the cross: the entire created order is brought back into proper relationship with its Creator through Christ, even as those who reject the gospel are themselves excluded from the new creation that enjoys that reconciliation. The cosmos is reconciled; the unrepentant are not part of the reconciled cosmos.

II. THE ABOLITION OF THE LAST ENEMY: 1 CORINTHIANS 15:24–28

Then Comes the End, The Final Subjugation of Every Power That Opposes God

A. The Eschatological Sequence

1 Corinthians 15:24–28 provides the most theologically precise account of the eschatological sequence that accompanies and follows the return: “Then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For He has put all things in subjection under His feet. But when He says, ‘All things are put in subjection,’ it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all” (NASB 1995). The eschatological sequence is: Christ reigns (the present age), He abolishes every enemy, death is the last enemy to be abolished, He hands the kingdom to the Father, and God is all in all.

The abolition of death as the ‘last enemy’ (ἔσχατος ἐχθρός, eschatos echthros) is the eschatological completion of the victory over death inaugurated in the resurrection of Christ (Lesson 26: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’, 1 Corinthians 15:54). The decisive battle was won at the resurrection; the final abolition of death will occur at the return and the general resurrection, when ‘this corruptible must put on the incorruptible, and this mortal must put on immortality’ (1 Corinthians 15:53, NASB 1995). Until then, death remains a present reality that has lost its sting but not yet been fully abolished; the consummation will accomplish what the resurrection secured.

B. God All in All: The Telos of the Cosmic Christ

The ultimate goal of the eschatological sequence is the most expansive theological claim in all of Scripture: ‘so that God may be all in all’ (ἵνα ἢ ὁ θεὸς τὰ πάντα ἐν πασίν, hina ē ho theos ta panta en pasin, 1 Corinthians 15:28, NASB 1995). The Creator’s relationship to the creation reaches its ultimate, unimpeded, fully expressed form: God is all in all, everything in the new creation finds its meaning, its sustenance, its joy, and its ultimate reference point in the God who made it. The consummation is not the absorption of creation into the divine being (the Creator-creature distinction remains eternal) but the full, unimpeded, comprehensive presence of God as the source, the sustainer, and the supreme joy of the redeemed creation. Everything that sin has interposed between God and His creation, the darkness, the disorder, the death, the alienation, has been removed; and God is all in all.

The Son’s subjection to the Father in verse 28 (‘then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him’) does not imply the subordination of the Son in His divine nature, the eternal Trinitarian relations (established in Lessons 3–4) are not altered by the eschatological

consummation. What it describes is the economic dimension of the Trinitarian relationship as it will be expressed in the new creation: the Son's eternal, loving, voluntary submission to the Father's sovereignty, the same submission that characterized His incarnate obedience and that will characterize the eternal Trinitarian fellowship of the new creation. The goal of all history is the eternal, joyful, unimpeded expression of the divine life in the new creation: Father, Son, and Spirit, God all in all.

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them.” | “Behold, I am making all things new.”

REVELATION 21:3, 5, NASB 1995

III. THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH: RENOVATION, NOT ANNIHILATION

Romans 8:19–21 and Revelation 21:1–5, The Material Creation Liberated and Glorified

A. The Groaning Creation and Its Liberation

One of the most theologically significant and most often underappreciated dimensions of the consummation is the scope of the new creation: it encompasses not merely the redeemed human beings but the entire material cosmos that God created in the beginning. Romans 8:19–21 provides the most explicit account of the creation's eschatological destiny: “For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (NASB 1995). The creation that was subjected to futility because of the fall of humanity (Genesis 3:17–19) will be set free from that subjection when the sons of God are revealed in their resurrection glory at the return.

The creation's liberation is not the annihilation of the material world and its replacement with an entirely immaterial spiritual realm; it is the transformation and glorification of the existing creation, the removal of the curse and the corruption that sin introduced, and the restoration of the creation to the fullness of its original purpose and beyond. The new creation is genuinely new in the sense of being fundamentally transformed; it is genuinely continuous with the old creation in the sense of being the same material world that God made, renewed rather than replaced. The resurrection of Christ's body is the paradigm: not the abandonment of the physical body for a purely spiritual existence, but the transformation of the physical body into the glorified, imperishable, Spirit-animated body of the new creation. The same pattern applies to the cosmos: not abandoned but transformed, not annihilated but glorified.

B. Revelation 21:1–5: The New Jerusalem and the Voice from the Throne

Revelation 21:1–5 provides the most vivid and the most personally consoling account of the new creation in all of Scripture: “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them; and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.’ And He who sits on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new’” (NASB 1995).

The phrase ‘no longer any sea’ in verse 1 is not a geographical statement about the absence of water in the new creation; the sea in Revelation’s symbolic vocabulary represents the realm of chaos, threat, and the primordial abyss from which evil arises (Revelation 13:1: the beast ‘coming up out of the sea’). The absence of the sea in the new creation is the absence of everything chaotic, threatening, and resistant to the divine order. And the new Jerusalem descending from heaven is not a spatial location to be mapped geographically but the symbolic image of the fully realized covenant community, the bride adorned for her husband, the people of God in their eschatological perfection, coming into the final, permanent form of the union between God and His people that the entire history of redemption has been moving toward.

The voice from the throne announces the consummation in terms that gather up every pastoral need the present age creates: no more death (the last enemy is abolished), no more mourning (the grief of bereavement is ended), no more crying (the tears of suffering are dried), no more pain (the experience of the fallen body is transformed). And the response of the one who sits on the throne, ‘Behold, I am making all things new’ (Ἴδού καινὰ ποιῶ, *Idou kaina poiō*), is the most comprehensive divine promise in all of Scripture: not the repair of some things, not the improvement of most things, but the making new of all things.

IV. THE ETERNAL COMMUNION: GOD DWELLING WITH HIS PEOPLE

Revelation 22:1–5, The River of Life, the Tree of Life, and the Face of God

A. The Restoration of Paradise and More

Revelation 22:1–5 presents the inner life of the new creation in terms that explicitly echo the garden of Eden and establish the new creation as its ultimate fulfillment and surpassing: “Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit,

yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever” (NASB 1995).

The river of life and the tree of life are deliberate echoes of the garden of Eden (Genesis 2:9–10: the tree of life and the river that watered the garden). The Eden that humanity lost through the fall is restored and surpassed in the new creation: the tree of life is no longer in the center of a garden that humanity was expelled from but is abundantly available on either side of the river of life, its leaves available for the healing of the nations. The curse that fell on the creation at the fall (Genesis 3:14–19) is ‘no longer’ (οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι, *ouk estai eti*), permanently, completely, and forever removed. And the throne of God and of the Lamb, the two-in-one throne that establishes the eternal lordship of the Father and the Son together over the new creation, is in the midst of the new Jerusalem, the permanent, unmediated, ever-present source of the life and the light and the joy of the redeemed community.

B. They Will See His Face: The Beatific Vision

The ultimate destination of all the Christological teaching of this series is stated in three words of almost unbearable simplicity: ‘they will see His face’ (τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ὄψονται, *to prosōpon autou opsontai*, Revelation 22:4, NASB 1995). The face of God, which Moses was told no creature could see and live (Exodus 33:20), which is veiled in the present age by the necessary accommodations of the divine condescension to creaturely limitation, which is glimpsed indirectly in the glory of Christ as the image of the invisible God (2 Corinthians 4:6), will be seen by the redeemed directly, immediately, without veil, without mediation, face to face. The beatific vision is not a metaphor for a vague sense of divine presence; it is the specific theological affirmation that the redeemed will know God in the most immediate, most intimate, and most transforming way that creaturely knowledge of an infinite God makes possible.

1 John 3:2 provides the New Testament’s most direct statement of the beatific vision and its transforming consequence: “We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is” (NASB 1995). The vision is the transformation: to see God as He is, in the full, unveiled, unmediated immediacy of the divine glory, is to be conformed to the image of what one sees. The image of God in the redeemed, which sin has defaced and which the Spirit’s sanctifying work has been progressively restoring in the present age (Colossians 3:10: ‘being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him’), will be perfectly and permanently restored in the beatific vision. The new creation begins in the face of God, seen by those who have been made like the one they see, inhabiting the new creation with the fullness of the glorified humanity that the resurrection of Christ pioneered.

V. THE ETERNAL REIGN OF CHRIST AND THE LAMB ON THE THRONE

His Kingdom Will Have No End, The Supremacy of Christ Throughout All Eternity

A. The Kingdom Without End

The eternal reign of Christ is one of the most explicitly and repeatedly affirmed dimensions of the new creation in the New Testament. Luke 1:33 records the angel's declaration to Mary: 'He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.' (NASB 1995). The kingdom that was inaugurated in the resurrection and ascension, that is being advanced in the present age through the Word and Spirit, and that will be consummated at the return, this kingdom will have no end. The return does not merely bring the kingdom to its fullness; it establishes the kingdom in its permanent, eternal form. The reign that seemed contested and invisible in the present age will be fully manifest, fully uncontested, and fully expressed in the new creation.

The apparent tension between 1 Corinthians 15:24–28 (the Son hands the kingdom to the Father so that God may be all in all) and Luke 1:33 (His kingdom will have no end) is resolved by the distinction between the economic mediatorial kingdom, the specific, limited, enemy-subduing reign that Christ exercises in the interval between the resurrection and the consummation, and the eternal Trinitarian reign that encompasses the new creation. The economic mediatorial kingdom, in which Christ reigns as the appointed representative of the Father's redemptive purposes against the enemies of God, gives way at the consummation to the eternal Trinitarian reign in which Father, Son, and Spirit are all in all. The Son's reign does not end; it is transformed from the specific form it takes in the present age to the eternal form it takes in the new creation.

B. The Lamb on the Throne: The Christological Center of the New Creation

The most striking and the most theologically pregnant image of the eternal reign in all of Revelation is the image of the Lamb on the throne. Revelation 5:6 introduces it: 'And I saw between the throne and the four living creatures and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain' (NASB 1995). The Lamb appears 'as if slain' (ὡς ἐσφαγμένον, hōs esphagmenon), the crucifixion wounds are permanently visible on the one who occupies the throne of the universe. The new creation will be characterized, throughout all eternity, by the presence at its center of the one who died for it. The glory of the new creation is the glory of the Lamb who was slain, the glory that is most fully expressed not in the display of raw divine power but in the voluntary, self-giving, redemptive love that the cross revealed. The Lamb's wounds are not healed in the new creation; they are glorified, the permanent, visible, eternal testimony to the love that created the new creation through its willingness to bear the cost of the old creation's redemption.

Revelation 5:12–14 records the sevenfold doxology of the redeemed community before the Lamb on the throne: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing. To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever” (NASB 1995). The eternal occupation of the redeemed community is the worship of the Lamb, the adoring, joyful, face-to-face encounter with the one whose love for them was demonstrated on the cross and whose glory fills the new creation with light. The worship never grows stale, because the one who receives it is infinite; and the infinity of God means that the joy of the redeemed in the new creation is a joy that will always be expanding, always deepening, always discovering new dimensions of the inexhaustible glory of the one who made and redeemed them for Himself.

VI. DOXOLOGICAL CONCLUSION: CHRISTOLOGY’S FINAL WORD, THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA

This series on Christology began in Lesson 1 with the claim that Christology is the heart of all doctrine, the doctrine that holds every other doctrine together, the center around which the entire theological encyclopedia is organized. It ends, in these final two lessons of the series (with the conclusion in Lesson 32 still to come), at the place where that claim is most fully vindicated: the cosmic consummation in which the one who is the Alpha is also the Omega, the one through whom all things were created is also the one through whom all things are reconciled and renewed, the one who was before all things is the one in whom all things will be summed up forever.

The Colossian hymn, which has appeared throughout this series as one of its most comprehensive Christological texts, reaches its eschatological completion in Colossians 1:18–20: ‘He is the 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’ (NASB 1995). The Christological claim of the hymn is eschatologically completed in the cosmic reconciliation: the one who has first place in everything in the present age will have first place in everything in the new creation; the fullness that dwells in Him is the fullness that will fill the new creation; and the reconciliation accomplished through the blood of His cross is the cosmic peace that the new creation will enjoy in eternal, unimpeded fullness.

The promise of Revelation 21:5, ‘Behold, I am making all things new’, is the most comprehensive divine promise in all of Scripture, and it is spoken from the throne of the one who is identified in Revelation 21:6 as ‘the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.’ The one who began all things will complete them; the one who created the cosmos will renew it; the one who redeemed His people from every nation, tribe, people, and tongue will receive them into the permanent, face-to-

face, unending communion of the new creation. And the one at the center of the new creation, on the throne, as the Lamb, is the same Jesus whose entire Person and Work this series has been devoted to understanding, proclaiming, and adoring: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8, NASB 1995).

Christology’s final word is not a systematic conclusion but a doxological eruption: ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing’ (Revelation 5:12, NASB 1995). This is the word toward which every lesson of this series has been pointing, the destination to which every doctrine has been guiding, the sound that will fill the new creation forever. The study of Christ has not ended with this lesson; it has arrived at the threshold of the eternal vision, the eternal encounter, the eternal joy that is the Christological destination of every person who has come to know Him, and who will know Him fully then, as they have been fully known. To the Alpha and the Omega, to the Lamb upon the throne, to the one who is making all things new, be glory and honor and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Key Texts: *Ephesians 1:9–10; Colossians 1:15–20; Romans 8:19–23; 1 Corinthians 15:24–28; Revelation 21:1–5; 22:1–5; 1 John 3:2; Luke 1:33; Revelation 5:6–14; Hebrews 13:8*

THEOLOGICAL TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Anakephalaiōsis	Greek: ‘summing up,’ ‘recapitulation,’ ‘bringing together under one head.’ From kephalē (‘head’) with the prefix ana (‘again,’ ‘up’). Used in Ephesians 1:10 for the ultimate goal of the divine redemptive purpose: ‘the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.’ The term captures the cosmic scope of the consummation: everything that was created through Christ (Colossians 1:16) will be brought back under His headship in the new creation, restored to its proper order, liberated from the disorder that sin introduced, and brought to the fullness of its intended purpose. The scope is total and without exception, ta panta (all things) in the heavens and on the earth. The recapitulation is not the creation of a new cosmos ex nihilo but the restoration and surpassing of the original creation under the headship of the one who is both its Creator and its Redeemer.
God All in All (1 Corinthians 15:28)	The ultimate eschatological goal stated in 1 Corinthians 15:28: ‘so that God may be all in all’ (hina ē ho theos ta panta en pasin). The Creator’s relationship to the creation reaches its ultimate, unimpeded, fully expressed form in the new creation: everything finds its meaning, sustenance, joy, and ultimate reference point in the God who made it. Not the absorption of creation into the divine being (the Creator-creature distinction remains eternal) but the full,

Term	Definition
	<p>unimpeded, comprehensive presence of God as the source, sustainer, and supreme joy of the redeemed creation, with every interposition of sin (darkness, disorder, death, alienation) permanently removed. The Son's subjection to the Father in v. 28 does not imply eternal ontological subordination but the economic expression of the loving Trinitarian fellowship in the new creation.</p>
New Creation	<p>The transformed, glorified, restored cosmos that will be the permanent dwelling place of the redeemed after the return of Christ and the general resurrection. Distinguished from: (1) the original creation, which was subjected to futility through the fall (Romans 8:20) and which groans in anticipation of its liberation (Romans 8:22); (2) mere restoration (the new creation is not a return to Eden but an eschatological surpassing of it, the tree of life abundantly available, the curse permanently removed, the face of God directly seen); (3) annihilationism (the material cosmos is not destroyed and replaced but transformed and glorified, consistent with the pattern of the resurrection body). Inaugurated in the resurrection of Christ as the firstborn from the dead (Colossians 1:18) and to be completed at the return in the liberation of the creation from its slavery to corruption (Romans 8:21).</p>
Beatific Vision	<p>The direct, immediate, unveiled, face-to-face knowledge of God that the redeemed will enjoy in the new creation: 'they will see His face' (Revelation 22:4); 'we will see Him just as He is' (1 John 3:2); 'then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known' (1 Corinthians 13:12). Not a metaphor for a vague sense of divine presence but the specific theological affirmation that the redeemed will know God in the most immediate, most intimate, and most transforming way that creaturely knowledge of an infinite God makes possible. The vision is simultaneously transforming: 'we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is' (1 John 3:2). The image of God, progressively restored through sanctification, is perfectly and permanently restored in the beatific vision.</p>
The Lamb on the Throne	<p>The central image of the eternal new creation in Revelation: the Lamb appearing 'as if slain' (hōs esphagmenon, Revelation 5:6) occupying the throne of the universe alongside the Father. The crucifixion wounds are permanently visible on the one who reigns, the eternal testimony to the love that created the new creation through its willingness to bear the cost of the old creation's redemption. The Lamb's wounds are not healed but glorified in the new creation. The eternal occupation of the redeemed community is the worship of the Lamb (Revelation 5:12–14: the sevenfold doxology). The throne of God and of the Lamb is in the new Jerusalem (Revelation 22:3), the permanent, unmediated source of the life, light, and joy of the redeemed community. The Lamb on the throne is Christology's final and eternal image.</p>

Term	Definition
No Longer Any Curse (Revelation 22:3)	The eschatological removal of the curse that fell on the creation at the fall (Genesis 3:14–19): ‘There will no longer be any curse’ (kai pan katathema ouk estai eti, Revelation 22:3, NASB 1995). The curse represented the comprehensive consequence of sin on the created order: the ground cursed, labor made toilsome, death introduced, the relationship between humanity and creation disordered. The removal of the curse in the new creation is the comprehensive removal of every consequence of sin: no more death, mourning, crying, or pain (Revelation 21:4). The new creation is not merely Eden restored but Eden surpassed: the tree of life is abundantly available, the river of life flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb, and the bond-servants of God see His face, the direct, unmediated, transforming presence of the God for whom they were created.
Renovation, Not Annihilation	The theological position that the new creation involves the transformation and glorification of the existing material cosmos rather than its destruction and replacement with an entirely new material order. Grounded in: (1) Romans 8:19–21, the creation will be ‘set free’ (not destroyed and replaced) from its slavery to corruption; (2) the resurrection body as the paradigm, the same body transformed, not a different body substituted; (3) Revelation 21:1’s ‘new heaven and new earth’ (where the Greek kainos means ‘renewed,’ ‘transformed,’ rather than neos, ‘brand new of a different kind’); (4) the continuity of the new Jerusalem with the covenant community of the old creation (it descends from heaven rather than being created from nothing). The new creation is genuine continuity with transformation, the same cosmos glorified.
Alpha and Omega	The divine self-designation in Revelation (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13) identifying God and Christ as the beginning and the end of all things, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet encompassing everything in between. Applied to Christ in Revelation 22:13 (‘I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end’) in the context of His promise of the return, the new creation, and the vision of God. The Alpha and Omega designation establishes Christ as the one who encompasses the entire arc of creation and redemption: the one through whom all things were created (the Alpha of creation, Colossians 1:16) is the one in whom all things will be summed up (the Omega of the consummation, Ephesians 1:10). Christology begins and ends with the same Person.
Reconciliation of All Things	The cosmic scope of the reconciliation accomplished through the cross stated in Colossians 1:20: ‘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.’ Not universal salvation (the eternal salvation of every individual person regardless of their response to the gospel) but the cosmic scope of the reconciliation accomplished through the cross: the entire created order is brought back into proper relationship with its Creator, the peace made through the blood of the cross encompasses the cosmic renewal of

Term	Definition
	the new creation. Those who reject the gospel are not part of the reconciled cosmos. The scope is creation-wide, not individual-all.
Kainos vs. Neos	The distinction between two Greek words for 'new' that illuminates the character of the new creation. Neos (νέος): new in the sense of recently originating, not previously existing, temporally new. Kainos (καινός): new in the sense of renewed, transformed, qualitatively different, unprecedented in character rather than merely recent in origin. Revelation 21:1's 'new heaven and new earth' uses kainos, the transformed, glorified, renewed creation, not a brand-new cosmos created from nothing to replace the old. Similarly, Revelation 21:5's 'I am making all things new' uses kainos, all things are being renewed, transformed, glorified, not replaced. The kainos/neos distinction supports the renovation rather than annihilation of the material cosmos in the eschatological consummation.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

A. For the Mind: What Must We Believe?

We must believe that the new creation is genuinely physical, not a disembodied spiritual existence in some immaterial heavenly realm but the renovation and glorification of the material cosmos in which we already live. The same God who declared the original creation 'very good' (Genesis 1:31), who took on flesh in the incarnation, who raised Christ's body rather than merely preserving His spirit, and who promises the resurrection of the body for every believer has not changed His mind about the goodness of material existence. The new creation is material, embodied, physical, the new earth and not merely the new heaven. This conviction should shape how the congregation understands the Christian life, the value of the body and of material creation, and the scope of the hope toward which the gospel is moving.

We must also believe that the scope of the divine redemptive purpose is cosmic and not merely individual. The individual believer is saved; and the cosmos in which the individual believer lives is also being redeemed. The groaning of the creation (Romans 8:22) is not merely the backdrop of the individual's personal salvation story but a participant in the eschatological drama that the return will resolve. The congregation that understands the cosmic scope of the consummation will engage with the material world, with justice, with beauty, with the stewardship of creation, with the full breadth of cultural life, not as distractions from the 'spiritual' concerns of the gospel but as dimensions of the created order that God is moving toward redemption in Christ.

B. For the Heart: What Must We Feel and Desire?

Let the beatific vision, 'they will see His face' (Revelation 22:4), become the conscious goal and the governing desire of the devotional life. Every act of theological study, every act of prayer and worship, every act of obedience and faithful service in the present age is oriented toward this destination: the face of God, seen without veil, without mediation, without the limitation of the present age's creatureliness. The Theology Proper series that preceded this Christology series closed with this vision as the ultimate aim of theology; and the Christology series closes with the same vision as the ultimate aim of Christology, because the face of God that will be seen in the new creation is the face of the one whom this series has spent thirty-one lessons studying: the Lamb who was slain and who lives forever, the one who is the same yesterday and today and forever.

Desire a congregation whose hope is cosmically shaped and not merely individually focused. The hope of individual salvation is glorious; the hope of the cosmic consummation in which God is all in all is more glorious still, because it encompasses the individual hope within the larger glory of the new creation. The congregation that knows that 'Behold, I am making all things new' is addressed not only to themselves but to the entire cosmos will relate to the present world with a fundamentally different posture: not fleeing it but caring for it, not despising it but stewarding it, not indifferent to it but engaged with it as the foretaste of the creation that God is moving toward its eschatological glory.

C. For the Hands: What Must We Do?

- Preach Revelation 21:1–5 as the most comprehensive and the most personally consoling account of the consummation available in Scripture. The sermon's pastoral aim: every specific pastoral need that the present age creates, death, grief, suffering, pain, the experience of injustice and the apparent triumph of evil, receives a specific answer in the 'no longer' of verses 4–5. Preach it not as a distant eschatological dream but as the specific, certain, divinely promised destination of everyone who has received the grace of the first advent and is looking for the blessed hope of the second. The one who sits on the throne says it: 'Behold, I am making all things new.'
- Preach the physical, material, embodied character of the new creation as a corrective to the pervasive folk eschatology of many evangelical congregations: the assumption that salvation means going to heaven (an immaterial spiritual realm) rather than the resurrection of the body in the new earth. The congregation that understands the physical new creation will understand why the body matters, why material creation is not to be despised, why justice and beauty and stewardship of creation are not distractions from the gospel but expressions of the gospel's cosmic scope. Romans 8:19–21 and Revelation 21:1–5 together provide the most effective biblical corrective to the disembodied folk eschatology.
- Use the *anakephalaiōsis* of Ephesians 1:9–10 as the organizing framework for a comprehensive teaching on the scope of the divine redemptive purpose. The summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth, establishes that the gospel

has cosmic rather than merely individual scope: it is not merely the rescue of individual souls from a condemned cosmos but the cosmic renewal of all things under the headship of the one who created them. A teaching series on this text would help the congregation understand their individual salvation as part of a larger story: the story of the Creator reclaiming and renewing the creation He made through the blood of the Son He sent.

- Preach the Lamb on the throne (Revelation 5:6–14) as the most comprehensive Christological vision in Scripture, the one who was slain, who is now enthroned, who will be worshipped throughout eternity. The sermon’s central pastoral aim: the cross is not a historical tragedy that was superseded by the resurrection; it is the permanent, eternal, glory-marked center of the new creation. The wounds of the Lamb are visible forever; the love that drove Him to bear them is the love that defines the new creation. The congregation that sees the Lamb on the throne will see the cross differently: not as a past event to be commemorated annually but as the permanent ground of the eternal joy that the new creation will enjoy.
- Connect the cosmic consummation to the present-age ethical life of the congregation. The new creation is not an escape from the present creation but its glorified destination; and those who know the destination will engage differently with the journey. The Christian who knows that God is making all things new will resist the temptation to treat the present creation as disposable; will care for the body, for the community, for the material world as the foretaste of the new creation; and will pursue justice and beauty and the full flourishing of human life as anticipations of the consummation rather than as distractions from the ‘spiritual’ business of getting souls to heaven.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

OPENING QUESTION

1. What has been your congregation’s functional eschatology, the working, assumed account of what the ‘end’ will look like that shapes the way they grieve, the way they think about the value of the material world, and the way they understand the scope of the Christian hope? Is it the physical, material, embodied new creation of Revelation 21–22 and Romans 8:19–21, or is it a more disembodied ‘going to heaven’? What specific preaching or teaching has most shaped this functional eschatology, and what would you need to preach to redirect it toward the more comprehensive vision of the cosmic consummation?

OBSERVATION QUESTIONS (WHAT DO THE TEXTS SAY?)

2. Read Ephesians 1:3–10 and Colossians 1:15–20 together. In Ephesians 1:9–10, identify: (a) what the ‘mystery of His will’ is; (b) the specific Greek term for the ‘summing up’ and what it means

etymologically (from *kephalē* and *ana*); (c) the scope of the summing up ('things in the heavens and things on the earth'). In Colossians 1:19–20, identify: (a) what was the Father's good pleasure; (b) the scope of the reconciliation ('all things', whether things on earth or things in heaven); (c) the means of the reconciliation ('through the blood of His cross'). How do these two texts together establish the cosmic scope of the divine redemptive purpose?

3. Read Romans 8:18–23. What does Paul say the creation is eagerly awaiting (v. 19), and why has the creation been subjected to futility (v. 20)? What is the specific hope the creation possesses (v. 21: 'set free... into the freedom of the glory of the children of God')? What image does Paul use to describe the creation's present experience (v. 22: groaning), and what does the groaning suggest about the character of the waiting, is it passive or active? How does this passage establish the physical, material scope of the new creation (the creation is liberated, not destroyed and replaced)?

4. Read Revelation 21:1–5 and 22:1–5. In 21:1–5, identify: (a) what is 'no longer' in the new creation (at least three things); (b) the description of the new Jerusalem and what it represents; (c) the voice from the throne and the specific content of its declaration. In 22:1–5, identify the Eden echoes (river of life, tree of life), what is said about the curse (v. 3), the ultimate eschatological experience stated in verse 4, and the specific occupation of the redeemed bond-servants (v. 5). How does Revelation 22:4 ('they will see His face') gather up the entire eschatological hope into a single phrase?

5. Read 1 Corinthians 15:20–28. Identify: (a) the sequence of events in the eschatological consummation (the order of the resurrection, the handing over of the kingdom, the abolition of the enemies, the final enemy); (b) why death is specifically identified as the 'last' enemy; (c) the meaning of 'God all in all' in verse 28, what is being described; (d) how the Son's subjection to the Father in verse 28 should be interpreted (is it ontological or economic?). How does this passage establish the comprehensive and permanent character of the eschatological victory?

INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS (WHAT DOES IT MEAN?)

6. The lesson argues that Colossians 1:20's 'reconciliation of all things' does not teach universal salvation but the cosmic scope of the reconciliation accomplished through the cross, that the entire created order is brought back into proper relationship with its Creator, even as those who reject the gospel are excluded from the reconciled new creation. Is this interpretation exegetically convincing? What specific features of Colossians 1:20's context ('having made peace through the blood of His cross'; 'whether things on earth or things in heaven') support or complicate this reading?

7. The lesson presents the new creation as a renovation and glorification of the material cosmos rather than its annihilation and replacement, the *kainos/neos* distinction in Revelation 21:1 being theologically significant. How does the resurrection of Christ's body serve as the paradigm for understanding the new creation: the same body transformed rather than a different body substituted? What are the pastoral implications of the physical, material, embodied character of the new creation?

for how the congregation understands: (a) the value of the body in the present age; (b) the stewardship of material creation; (c) the nature of the resurrection hope?

8. The lesson presents the beatific vision, ‘they will see His face’ (Revelation 22:4), as the ultimate destination of the entire Christological narrative and as the governing desire that should shape the devotional life. How does the beatific vision relate to the sanctification of the present age: is seeing God’s face the reward that follows sanctification, the goal that motivates sanctification, or the power that accomplishes sanctification? How does 1 John 3:2’s connection between the vision and the transformation (‘we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is’) illuminate the relationship between the beatific vision and the completed glorification of the redeemed?

9. The lesson presents the image of the Lamb on the throne (Revelation 5:6: ‘as if slain’) as establishing that the crucifixion wounds are permanently visible in the eternal new creation. What is the theological significance of this permanent visibility, that the wounds are not healed but glorified? What does it establish about: (a) the eternal significance of the incarnation and the cross for the Christological identity of the eternal Son; (b) the character of the eternal worship of the new creation (oriented toward the Lamb who was slain); (c) the relationship between suffering and glory in the divine economy?

10. The lesson observes that ‘Christology’s final word is not a systematic conclusion but a doxological eruption.’ In what sense is doxology the proper terminus of systematic theology? How does the movement from the doctrinal content of this series (thirty-one lessons of theological investigation) to the doxological eruption of Revelation 5:12 (‘Worthy is the Lamb’) reflect the proper relationship between the intellectual and the worshipping dimensions of the theological enterprise? And how does the entire arc of the Christology series, from the eternal pre-existence of the Son (Lesson 3) to the cosmic consummation in which all things are summed up in Him (this lesson), demonstrate the centrality of Christ in all doctrine?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (WHAT DOES IT DEMAND OF US?)

11. The lesson recommends preaching the physical, material, embodied character of the new creation as a corrective to the disembodied folk eschatology of many evangelical congregations. Identify the specific symptoms of this folk eschatology in your congregation: how do they talk about death, about the hope of heaven, about the value of the body, about their relationship to the material world? Draft the main point and two major moves of a sermon from Romans 8:19–21 or Revelation 21:1–5 that would address the most prevalent form of the disembodied eschatology in your congregation and redirect it toward the more comprehensive biblical vision of the physical new creation.

12. The lesson recommends using *anakephalaiōsis* (Ephesians 1:9–10) as the organizing framework for a comprehensive teaching on the cosmic scope of the divine redemptive purpose. Design a four-week teaching series from Ephesians 1:9–10, Colossians 1:15–20, Romans 8:19–21, and Revelation

21:1–5. What would each week cover? What is the arc of the series from week one to week four? And what specific pastoral and missional implications would each week draw from the theological content, specifically: how does the cosmic scope of the gospel shape the way the congregation understands their individual salvation, their care for creation, their pursuit of justice, and their missional engagement?

13. The lesson closes with the observation that the Lamb on the throne, the wounds permanently visible, the love that bore them the love that defines the new creation, is Christology’s final and eternal image. Looking back over the entire series from Lesson 1 to this lesson, identify the single christological truth that has most transformed your understanding of the Person and Work of Christ. How has it changed your preaching? Your pastoral practice? Your own devotional engagement with the risen Christ? And how does the Lamb on the throne image gather up and display that truth in its most complete and most doxologically demanding form?

14. This is the penultimate lesson of the Christology series. Lesson 32 will bring the concluding doxological meditation on the supremacy of Christ in all things. Having now studied thirty-one lessons across ten units, from the pre-existence of the Son through the cosmic consummation of all things in Him, what is the single most significant impact this series has had on your understanding of Christology? What would you most want the students of this series to carry away as their permanent theological conviction about the Person and Work of Christ? And how does the vision of the Cosmic Christ making all things new provide the eschatological horizon within which every previous lesson of the series finds its ultimate meaning?

PRAYER FOCUS

Open this lesson’s prayer time with a reading of Revelation 5:1–14, the heavenly vision of the Lamb who was slain and who is worthy to receive all authority, followed by the great sevenfold doxology. Read it as the liturgy of the new creation already being practiced in the heavenly realm, already being anticipated by the worshipping community on earth. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders with their harps and golden bowls full of incense (‘which are the prayers of the saints’, v. 8) establish the connection between the present-age prayers of the congregation and the eternal worship of the new creation: the prayers you are about to offer are already, in some theologically real sense, bowls of incense before the throne of the Lamb.

Spend time in extended doxological worship, not petitionary prayer but adoration, following the pattern of the sevenfold doxology of Revelation 5:12: ‘power’ (adore the Lamb as the one who holds all authority), ‘riches’ (adore Him as the inexhaustible source of every spiritual blessing), ‘wisdom’ (adore Him as the one in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden), ‘might’ (adore Him as the one who conquered death and will abolish every enemy), ‘honor’ (adore Him as the one to whom the first place in everything belongs), ‘glory’ (adore Him as the unveiled image of

the invisible God), and ‘blessing’ (adore Him as the source of every blessing in the heavenly places). Let the group spend time with each attribute before moving to the next, inhabiting the doxology not as a liturgical performance but as the genuine, personally felt worship of those who have studied the Person and Work of the Lamb for thirty-one lessons and who know more than they did at the beginning why He is worthy.

Pray through the specific eschatological dimensions of the new creation developed in this lesson for the specific pastoral needs of your congregation. Bring before the Lamb on the throne those who are experiencing the ‘groaning’ of the present creation in the most acute form: the chronically ill, whose bodies groan for the redemption that the resurrection will bring; those who have experienced deep injustice, who long for the consummation in which God wipes away every tear; those who grieve the losses of the present age, who need to know that ‘there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain’ (Revelation 21:4). Receive for each specific need the specific promise of the new creation.

Close with the most comprehensive divine promise in all of Scripture, spoken together as the corporate reception of the new creation’s reality, and as the community’s response to the one who speaks it from the throne:

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them... Behold, I am making all things new.”
, Worthy is the Lamb!

REVELATION 21:3, 5, NASB 1995

Soli Deo Gloria
To God Alone Be the Glory

FAITHFUL TO THE WORD

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