

Andrews University

## Digital Commons @ Andrews University

---

Memory, Meaning & Life

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

---

5-14-2010

### Science And The Cosmic And Trans-cosmic Christ Of Scripture

Martin Hanna

Andrews University, mhanna@andrews.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/mml>

---

#### Recommended Citation

Hanna, Martin, "Science And The Cosmic And Trans-cosmic Christ Of Scripture" (2010). *Memory, Meaning & Life*. 29.

<https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/mml/29>

This Blog Post is brought to you for free and open access by the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Digital Commons @ Andrews University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Memory, Meaning & Life by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Andrews University. For more information, please contact [repository@andrews.edu](mailto:repository@andrews.edu).

# Memory, Meaning & Faith

[Main](#)

[About](#)

[Archives](#)

May 14, 2010

## Science And The Cosmic And Trans-cosmic Christ Of Scripture



*Yours truly,  
J. H. Kellogg*

### Christ, Cosmos, And Science

An early Adventist scientist, Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, sought to re-define Adventist theology by viewing God, not as a personal Being, but as an impersonal essence and influence in nature. When Kellogg discussed these ideas with Ellen White, she told him: “Those theories are wrong.” “Never teach such theories in our institutions; do not present them to the people” (MS 70, 1905; Biography, 5:281).

One reason some Adventists were seduced by Kellogg’s teaching is because “the path of error often appears to lie close to the path of truth. . . . But the mind enlightened by the Holy Spirit may discern that it is diverging from the right way. After a while the two are seen to be widely separated” (Testimonies, 8:290-291).

On the one hand, in *Jesus Through the Centuries*, Jaroslav Pelikan highlights the scientific impact of the biblical path of truth about the cosmic and trans-cosmic Christ.

The identification of Jesus as Logos also made intellectual, philosophical, and scientific history. For by applying this title to Jesus, the Christian philosophers of the fourth and fifth centuries who were trying to give an account of who he was and what he had done were enabled to interpret him as the divine clue to the structure of reality (metaphysics) and, within metaphysics, to the riddle of being (ontology)—in a word, as the Cosmic Christ” (58). “That harmony, binding together the atom and the galaxy, was

expressed in a cosmic systema, all of it brought about by the magnificence of the Creator-Logos” (65). “The Enlightenment’s quest of the historical Jesus [as an alternative to the Christ of faith] was made possible, and made necessary, when Enlightenment philosophy deposed the Cosmic Christ” (182).

On the other hand, the path of biblical truth seems incompatible with some perspectives on science expressed by Matthew Fox in his book: *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*.

“Religious believers and all citizens of our planet need to hear the vast and awesome mystery of the scientific story of our origins. The archetype of the Cosmic Christ encourages us to reverence our origins in a way that the anthropocentric religious paradigm of the Enlightenment era could not. It also encourages us to reverence our divinity and our responsibility as co-creators in a way that the Enlightenment paradigm did not” (1). “Divinity is found in all creatures. . . . The Cosmic Christ is the “I am” in every creature” (65).

### The Cosmic And Trans-cosmic Christ Of Scripture

The legitimate effort to separate from the path of error should not lead to the neglect the path of truth concerning science and Christ. This includes the cosmic and trans-cosmic dimensions of the biblical title “Christ” which means “anointed person.” The Old Testament refers to the anointing of priests (Exod 29:1-9), kings (1 Sam 10:1; 2 Sam 2:4; 1 Kings 1:34), and prophets

(19:16). However, the New Testament refers to Jesus alone as “the Christ” (Acts 2:27, 31). The Samaritans looked for Christ (Jn 4:25) and the Jews expected him to perform miracles (Jn 7:31). Claiming the title of Christ, Jesus announced a universal worship of God which is not limited to the religious centers of the Samaritans or the Jews (4:21-26). The cosmic and trans-cosmic scope of Christ is also manifest in his ascension to God’s right hand to pour out the Spirit on all flesh (Acts 2:17, 32-33) to empower the preaching of the gospel to all nations (2:1-5).

The scope of Christ may be further clarified by a study of the biblical use of the word cosmos (translated as “world” in English Bibles). “Christ, the Savior of the cosmos” (Jn 4:42), is trans-cosmic since “the cosmos was made by him (Jn 1:10). Christ is also cosmic in that “he was in the cosmos” (Jn 1:10). As the trans-cosmic Christ, he says: “I am not of the cosmos” (Jn 8:23; 17:14, 16). As the cosmic Christ, he says: “I am the light of the cosmos” (Jn 8:12). Christ is cosmic in that “God . . . sends His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom 8:3). Christ is trans-cosmic in that he is “separate from sinners, and . . . higher than the heavens” (Heb 7:26).



The trans-cosmic “God was in [the cosmic] Christ reconciling the cosmos to himself” (2 Cor 5:19; cf. Rom 11:15). “In him dwells the [trans-cosmic] fullness of the Godhead bodily [that is, within the cosmos]” (Col 2:9). Christ, who was trans-cosmic “in the form of God” and “equal with God” (Phil 2:6), became part of the cosmos in “the form of a bondservant” “in the likeness” and “appearance as a man” and “became obedient to” “the death of the cross” (Phil 2:7-8).

Biblical texts on the relation of Christ to “all things” also indicate the cosmic and trans-cosmic scope of his ministry. “There is . . . one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things” (1 Cor 8:6). God will “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth” (Eph 1:10). “God . . . created all things through Jesus Christ” (3:9) who is “head over all things” (1:22) and “head of all principality and power” (Col 2:10). He “is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (1:17). “In the beginning was the word (logos). . . and the word was God [trans-cosmic]. All things [in the cosmos] were made by him . . . and the word was made flesh [in the cosmos]” (Jn 1:1, 14).

### **Ellen White’s Perspective**

Ellen White does not use the English words *cosmos* and *cosmic*. However, her perspectives on Christ-centered science-theology dialog are based on the

biblical texts surveyed above.

“The great storehouse of truth is the word of God—the written word, the book of nature, and the book of experience . . . Here are the treasures from which Christ’s workers are to draw. . . Through his own appointed channels the Lord will impart a knowledge of himself to every seeker. . . Natural science is a great treasure house of knowledge from which every student in the School of Christ may draw. . . It is the written word that a knowledge of God is most clearly revealed . . . This is the treasure house of the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Christ Object Lessons, 125-126).

White charts the separation between the apparently close paths of truth and error with regard to the cosmic and trans-cosmic Christ. On the one hand, she rejects the blurring of the distinction between God and the cosmos by some “who question the reliability of the Scripture records . . . [and] attribute infinite power to nature” (Testimonies, 8:258).

“Vital power is attributed to matter, and nature is made a deity. . . This is false science; there is nothing in the word of God to sustain it” (259). “God’s handiwork in nature is not God Himself in nature. . . We are not to regard nature as God” (263) “Above all lower orders of being, God designed that man, the crowning work of His creation, should express His thought and reveal His glory. But man is not to exalt himself as God” (264).

On the other hand, White uses body language to highlight the close relationship between Christ and the cosmos.

It is “the work of God’s dear Son . . . to link the created with the Uncreated, the finite with the Infinite, in His own divine person” ([Review](#), Jan 11, 1881). “Every church member should feel an interest in all that concerns the human brotherhood as well as the brotherhood in Christ” ([Testimonies](#), 7:392). “Let us bear in mind that Christ is the great central heart from which the lifeblood flows to every part of the great body of humanity. He is the head from which extends the nerves that reach even to the most remote and most minute parts of the body” ([Review](#), Oct 16, 1894).

Ellen White also uses body language to describe the role of the cosmic and trans-cosmic Christ when “the great controversy is ended. Sin and sinners are no more. The entire universe is clean. One pulse of harmony and gladness beats through the vast creation. From Him who created all, flow life and light and gladness, throughout the realms of illimitable space. From the minutest atom to the greatest world, all things, animate and inanimate, in their unshadowed beauty and perfect joy, declare that God is love” ([Great Controversy](#), 678).

My study of the biblical perspective on the cosmic and trans-cosmic Christ leads me to conclude, with Ellen White, that the path of truth may not be at the opposite extreme from a path of error. Both extremes may be erroneous. The biblical truth about Christ corrects two extreme errors: (a) that Christ is simply a part of the cosmos or (b) that Christ is separated from the cosmos. In contrast, the Bible teaches the truth that Christ is both distinct from and closely related to the cosmos. Therefore, the cosmic and trans-cosmic Christ should be the center of the Christian interpretation of relations between science and theology. Martin Hanna has previously written for *Memory, Meaning & Faith* on:

- [The Biblical Worldview And Laws Of Nature](#)
- [Science-Theology Relations](#)
- [The Cosmic Christ According To Matthew Fox](#)

Posted by [Martin Hanna](#) on May 14, 2010 in [Historical Theology](#), [Science and Theology](#) | [Permalink](#)

[Save to del.icio.us](#) | [The Way...](#)

## Comments

 You can follow this conversation by subscribing to the [comment feed](#) for this post.

So then Dr. Hanna, one cannot perceive truth by the means of the mind but only with the mind of Christ that calibrates our senses to perceive the cosmos and coordinates the minds of His children to reveal a trans-cosmic perspective? Could this be the work of His Holy Spirit bringing us into harmony? I am sure you know why I like where you are going with your article:-)

Posted by: David de la Vega | [May 14, 2010 at 08:17 PM](#)

I appreciate the article. In this spring classes I did a little search about the view of Hinduism about salvation, and I saw that the confusion in their soteriological formulation was due to their lack of precision in the definition of what is TRANSCEDENT and CREATION. And many of their philosophies are present today in many science cycles. In Adventism also the concept of God was foundational to the formulation of soteriology and ontology. A warning is given by EGW that ideas about God will be debated in the last days which she named the Omega Apostasy. DO you think Dr. Hanna that it has to be with this relation between Christ, Holy Spirit and science (evolution)??

Posted by: Rodrigo Galiza | [May 15, 2010 at 08:18 PM](#)

Yes Rodrigo. For Ellen White, the climax of apostasy from Christ and the climax of faithfulness to the gospel of Christ will be connected with scientific issues. As a result, Christ-centered Christian education should be engaged with the study of advanced science as a preparation for the final proclamation of the gospel. This authentic Christian education has cosmic implications for human beings and for angels. These points are evident in the following quotation.

“The schools established among us are matters of grave responsibility; for important interests are involved. In a special manner our schools are a spectacle unto angels and to men. A knowledge of science of all kinds is power, and it is in the purpose of God that advanced science shall be taught in our schools as a preparation for the work that is to precede the closing scenes of earth's history. The truth is to go to the remotest bounds of the earth, through agents trained for the work. But while the knowledge of science is a power, the knowledge which Jesus in person came to impart to the world was the knowledge of the gospel. The light of truth was to flash its bright rays into the uttermost parts of the earth, and the acceptance or rejection of the message of God involved the eternal destiny of

souls" (Christian Education, 83).

Posted by: [Martin Hanna](#) | [May 16, 2010 at 03:47 PM](#)

You are quite right David. "The mind of Christ" (1 Cor 2:16) is the key to the correct "spiritual evaluation of all things" (2:15).

Posted by: [Martin Hanna](#) | [May 16, 2010 at 04:22 PM](#)

That is a great EGW quote, Martin, about God's purpose that "advanced science shall be taught in our schools as a preparation for the work" in the last days. Presumably this involves the medical work and the scientific study necessary for that, but I can also see a role for the importance of science in the work of apologetics and evangelism, undermining the claims of purely naturalistic and materialistic science. These days, "advanced science" seems so connected with the work of undermining faith, it is refreshing to see a reminder that it can be pursued to the glory of God.

Posted by: [Nicholas Miller](#) | [May 18, 2010 at 08:58 AM](#)

## Verify your Comment

## Previewing your Comment

Posted by: |

This is only a preview. Your comment has not yet been posted.



Your comment could not be posted. Error type:

Your comment has been posted. [Post another comment](#)

The letters and numbers you entered did not match the image. Please try again.

As a final step before posting your comment, enter the letters and numbers you see in the image below. This prevents automated programs from posting comments.

Having trouble reading this image? [View an alternate.](#)



[Contact](#)

[Archives](#)

[Feeds](#)

Powered by [TypePad](#)

Copyright © 2010 Andrews University