CHRIST IS KING

PART III — THE METAPHYSICAL SIGNIFICANCE

JEROEN SLUITER

Concept & Direction

CHRIST IS KING

PART III

THE METAPHYSICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Visible, the Invisible and the Sovereignty of the Logos

CONCEIVED AND DIRECTED BY

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Christ Is King - Part III: The Metaphysical Significance
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A Note on Authorship

Christ Is King is a human-directed series that I conceived and directed. Its governing convictions, purpose and intellectual direction are my own. Its arguments, structure and prose were developed through an extended process of dialogue, drafting and revision with artificial intelligence.

I used AI as a research aid, interlocutor, drafting tool and editor, including to produce passages of prose. I determined the series' theological and philosophical position, challenged and revised its arguments, selected and approved the final text, and exercised final editorial judgement.

The AI's contributions do not represent personal beliefs or independent testimony. The positions advanced in these books are those I have chosen to endorse. Responsibility for the published work - including its claims, interpretations and any errors - rests with me.

JEROEN SLUITER

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Introduction — What Kind of Reality?

Part II ended with a claim about something that happened: the crucified Jesus was raised. If that claim is true, its consequences extend beyond the survival of one man. Death has failed to exercise the final authority human experience appears to grant it. What, then, is the reality in which such an event is possible—and who is the person over whom death could not retain its hold?

Christianity's answer begins before the tomb, before Bethlehem and before creation itself: "In the beginning was the Word."

In Part I, we examined *Christ is King* as a psychological declaration: humanity's need for meaning, moral orientation and an ideal worthy of its highest allegiance. Part II considered the theological proclamation: the incarnate Son of God, the mediator of the New Covenant and the Saviour through whom humanity is invited into reconciliation with the Father. We now ask what these claims mean for the nature of existence itself.

What is the reality over which Christ is proclaimed King? Does his authority concern only human conduct? Does it extend to the world we inhabit, the universe we investigate and whatever lies beyond our capacity to observe?

Science has transformed our understanding of physical processes. Metaphysics asks about the existence and character of the reality within which those processes occur: why anything exists, what kinds of things exist, and whether physical description exhausts what can be said about them.

Christianity enters this inquiry with a definite account. Creation includes the visible and the invisible. It contains beings whose existence differs from ours, rebellion whose consequences reach into human history, and a Creator upon whom every creature continues to depend. The following investigation examines that account on its own terms, distinguishing its central doctrines from interpretations on which Christians disagree. Its governing question is what follows if the Christ proclaimed in Part II is indeed who Christianity says he is.

The biblical drama unfolds through creation, rebellion, redemption and restoration. Its centre is the person through whom all things exist. The unseen powers matter because they belong to the reality over which his kingship is proclaimed. None can claim an existence independent of him.

To understand that dependence, we must begin with the Logos.

1. The Logos — The Foundation of Reality

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." — John 1:1, KJV

John begins before any human witness could have stood to observe. His subject is the one through whom there could be a world to observe at all. A few sentences later, the claim becomes comprehensive:

"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." — John 1:3, KJV

The distinction is absolute. On one side stands the uncreated God. On the other stands everything that receives its existence. John places the Word on the Creator's side of that distinction. When he subsequently declares that the Word became flesh, the significance depends upon everything he has already said: the one who enters human history is the one through whom history's world exists.

The Greek term *Logos*, translated as *Word*, carries associations of speech, reason and intelligibility. Greek philosophy employed it in accounts of rational discourse and cosmic order. Jewish Scripture spoke of God creating through his word and portrayed divine wisdom in relation to the ordering of creation. John's prologue gives these associations a personal centre. The Word is with God, is God, and becomes flesh in Jesus Christ.

This gives the intelligibility of the world a place within Christian metaphysics. Human reason discovers regularities in nature and expresses them mathematically. Our capacity to investigate depends upon a world sufficiently ordered to be understood and minds sufficiently capable of understanding it. Why should that correspondence obtain?

One philosophical response accepts intelligibility as a basic feature requiring no further explanation. Christianity understands it in relation to the Logos: creation bears an order originating in divine wisdom, and human reason can recognise something of that order. Mathematical description does not establish the Incarnation. It does, however, raise a question to which Christian belief offers a coherent answer about the relationship between mind and reality.

The larger claim concerns existence itself. Colossians 1:16–17 describes all things as created through Christ and for him, and as holding together in him. His relationship to creation continues beyond its beginning. Everything that exists remains dependent upon the one through whom it was made.

Here the declaration *Christ is King* acquires its metaphysical force. A ruler ordinarily governs a world whose existence precedes his authority. Christ's kingship, in this account, concerns the very existence of the world he governs. Every throne, every intelligence and every power belongs to an order it did not bring into being.

Everything that can confront Christ already depends upon him for its existence. The powers that resist his authority possess no existence independent of the one they resist.

The claim will govern everything that follows. Whatever creation contains, and whatever rebellion occurs within it, no creature can cross the distinction between receiving existence and being its ultimate source.

2. The Visible and the Invisible — The Full Extent of Creation

Our first acquaintance with the world comes through perception: objects, voices, bodily sensations, the presence of other people. Instruments extend our senses and allow us to investigate processes beyond unaided sight or hearing. Yet the reach of observation and the extent of existence remain different questions.

Consciousness makes that distinction immediate. We study its neurological correlates and the physical processes associated with perception and behaviour. The relationship between those

descriptions and subjective experience remains philosophically contested. That debate creates a question about mind; evidence for angels would require an argument of its own.

The Christian account of invisible creation is more specific than a general appeal to mystery. Colossians speaks of “thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers” within the things created through Christ (Colossians 1:16, KJV). Scripture describes messengers who speak, beings who worship, and intelligences capable of obedience and rebellion. Its spiritual world is populated by agents with purposes and relationships.

An angel’s invisibility does not make it divine. However different its mode of existence may be from ours, it remains a creature. Its capacities are received, its existence dependent and its authority limited. This prevents the unseen realm from becoming a collection of rival gods whose greater powers entitle them to worship.

For the human reader, the implication is unsettling. We readily assume that human intention supplies the only personal agency acting within the world we experience. Scripture places humanity within a more extensive company of created intelligences. Some serve God’s purposes. Others oppose them.

The distinction between faithful and rebellious beings now becomes essential. Spiritual power, on its own, supplies no assurance of goodness. An encounter could exceed human understanding and still require judgement about the allegiance it seeks. Within the biblical account, the decisive question concerns fidelity to the Creator.

This brings us to the disturbance within creation that gives the biblical narrative its conflict.

3. The Rebellion — From Genesis to the Fallen Angels

The temptation in Eden begins with distrust. God’s command is made to appear an obstacle to human fulfilment, and disobedience becomes a promise of emancipation. The creature is invited to regard dependence upon the Creator as an indignity.

The serpent questions the command, disputes its consequence and offers an elevated condition: “ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (Genesis 3:5, KJV). Humanity is invited to seize a standing it has not been given. The desire is recognisable wherever responsibility becomes resentment at having to answer to any authority beyond oneself.

The rupture reaches into every human relationship. Adam and Eve hide from God. Accusation enters their speech. The ground becomes associated with toil, and their future with death. The narrative gives rebellion consequences that exceed the moment of choosing it. What promises enlargement leaves the human creature afraid and estranged.

Revelation 12:9 identifies the ancient serpent with the Devil and Satan. Genesis itself provides no complete account of Satan’s origin. Scripture’s references to spiritual rebellion must therefore be read across passages whose purposes and settings differ.

Among the most difficult is Genesis 6:1–4. The “sons of God” take wives from the “daughters of men”, and the passage refers to the Nephilim. One longstanding interpretation understands the sons of

God as heavenly beings crossing the boundary of their appointed existence. Other readings identify them with descendants of Seth or with powerful rulers whose conduct corrupts human society.

The angelic reading became influential within parts of Second Temple Judaism. *1 Enoch* develops it through the Watchers: heavenly beings whose transgression contributes to humanity's corruption. Jude 6 describes angels who abandoned their proper dwelling, while 2 Peter 2:4–5 places the judgement of sinful angels alongside its account of the ancient world and Noah. These passages have often been read together with Genesis 6, although the precise connections remain disputed. The fuller Watchers narrative belongs to *1 Enoch*, whose canonical standing differs among Christian traditions.

The interpretation deserves a hearing because of the question it brings into view: could the corruption of human life involve created intelligences other than human beings? Within the Watchers tradition, rebellion crosses boundaries and draws others into its consequences. Its power lies partly in its capacity to spread disorder through what it influences.

The paper's larger argument does not depend upon settling every detail of Genesis 6. The New Testament's account of rebellious spiritual powers is sufficient to establish the theological issue. Humanity's struggle unfolds within a creation in which allegiance to God can be resisted by beings whose capacities differ from our own.

Yet the governing distinction remains. Rebellion takes place within an order the rebels continue to inhabit. They can corrupt what has been given; they cannot become the source from which it comes.

4. Principalities and Powers — The Conflict Behind the Visible World

Daniel 10 offers a glimpse of conflict extending beyond what its human participant can see. A heavenly messenger explains that the prince of the kingdom of Persia has opposed him. Michael, one of the chief princes, comes to his aid. The prince of Greece is also named.

In a traditional supernatural reading, these princes are spiritual powers associated with earthly kingdoms. Daniel's experience places political history within a wider field of agency. While a man prays and waits, a struggle occurs beyond his knowledge.

The passage supplies no simple chart by which modern governments can be assigned spiritual patrons. Its significance lies in the relationship it portrays between visible events and invisible conflict. Earthly power may participate in a drama whose full extent remains hidden from those living through it.

Ephesians gives this conception a direct bearing upon Christian life:

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." — Ephesians 6:12, KJV

The language changes the reader's understanding of opposition. Human beings remain responsible for what they do, yet the struggle reaches beyond the individual adversary. Christian interpretation

has considered both personal spiritual agents and the ways destructive power becomes embodied in institutions and collective conduct.

We know how institutions can acquire a momentum their participants struggle to resist. Incentives reward compliance. Fear discourages dissent. Responsibility is divided until each person can imagine that the decisive choice belongs elsewhere. The result can be a system sustained by people who would recoil from describing its final consequences as their own intention.

Psychology and sociology explain much about that process. Christian theology asks whether spiritual agency may also work through human habits and structures. The institutional pattern alone cannot decide that question. Scripture's contribution is its account of powers seeking allegiance through deception, captivity and the corruption of what was created good.

There is a moral demand within Paul's description. The struggle is "not against flesh and blood". To turn a human opponent into the embodiment of evil is to lose a distinction the passage itself insists upon. The person who persecutes can still be called to repentance. The person deceived can still be released from deception. Christian resistance must leave room for the recovery of the human being caught within the conflict.

The passage's answer is expressed through truth, righteousness, faith and prayer (Ephesians 6:13–18). These are the forms of resistance it places before the believer. The account of spiritual warfare therefore concerns the character of allegiance as much as the identity of an adversary.

That question comes into its sharpest focus when the kingdoms of the world are offered to Christ himself.

5. The Adversary and the King — The Supernatural Conflict in the Gospels

Jesus enters the wilderness, fasts and becomes hungry. The Gospels place the confrontation with the adversary within that bodily vulnerability. The one whom John identifies as the Word made flesh experiences the demands of the human condition.

The temptations in Matthew 4 and Luke 4 concern bread, divine protection and authority. Each presses upon the meaning of his sonship and the manner in which he will fulfil his mission. Then the prospect widens: the kingdoms of the world, their authority and their glory, are offered in return for worship.

In Luke's account, Satan claims that this authority has been delivered to him and that he can give it to whomever he chooses (Luke 4:6). The claim belongs to the tempter's speech. It cannot simply be accepted as an independent confirmation of his rightful ownership of the world.

What the offer demands is plain. Dominion is made available on the condition of misplaced allegiance. Jesus is invited to obtain the kingdoms through submission to the adversary. Read in the light of the Gospel's unfolding mission, the offer presents a route to power that bypasses the obedience and suffering his life will entail.

Consider the temptation from within human experience. We know the pressure to accept compromised means for a worthy end, to believe that sufficient power will allow us to repair the surrender by which we obtained it. The wilderness exposes the surrender at its source. Worship is the price.

Jesus refuses. His answer locates worship and service with God alone. The authority he exercises will remain inseparable from that faithfulness. The King's refusal reveals something about the kingdom itself: its arrival cannot be secured by accepting the adversary as the source of its authority.

The conflict continues in the encounters with unclean spirits. In Mark 5, a man has been driven into isolation, living among tombs and injuring himself. The narrative gives possession a human face before displaying Christ's power. The afflicted person is someone whose life has become captivity. By the end of the encounter, he is seated, clothed and restored to his right mind.

In Luke 11:20, Jesus connects the casting out of demons with the arrival of God's Kingdom. Deliverance discloses the character of his reign. Its authority restores the person whom hostile power has overwhelmed.

The Crucifixion and Resurrection carry that confrontation into death itself. Colossians 2:15 describes the disarming of principalities and powers. Hebrews 2:14–15 connects Christ's sharing in flesh and blood with the defeat of the devil and the deliverance of those held in lifelong bondage through fear of death.

Here Part II's human question returns within a larger account of captivity. The fear that drove Peter to deny Jesus is familiar to anyone who has imagined the cost of refusing a threat. Whoever can threaten our lives can exert a terrible claim upon our obedience. Hebrews places Christ's victory precisely here: in deliverance from bondage imposed by the fear of death.

The Resurrection changes more than humanity's expectations of what follows death. It challenges the power that the threat of death exercises over life.

A person who believes death has been overcome may still tremble before suffering. The change concerns the authority fear can claim. Peter's later witness becomes intelligible within this conviction: the threat remains real, but it can no longer settle the question of whom he must obey.

Christian theology expresses this dimension of redemption through the theme often called *Christus Victor*: Christ's victory over sin, death and hostile powers. Its meaning reaches beyond a contest of superior strength. The one who shares human vulnerability passes through death and releases those whom its fear holds captive.

The conflict remains profoundly unequal. Satan is a creature in rebellion. No created power can diminish God's being or overturn his ultimate sovereignty. The adversary can seek allegiance, inflict harm and oppose faithfulness within creation. His capacity to act remains dependent upon an existence he did not give himself.

The powers may resist the King. They cannot become his equal.

6. The Nature of Evil — Rebellion Within a Good Creation

Cruelty, betrayal and the deliberate destruction of another person's life make evil immediate to us. Explaining its metaphysical character must preserve the seriousness of that experience.

Augustine's account of evil as a privation of good—*privatio boni*—begins with the goodness of created existence. A creature possesses capacities that are good in themselves: intelligence, desire, strength and the ability to act. Evil disorders those capacities and deprives a person or relationship of a good that ought to be present.

Betrayal depends upon the possibility of trust. Cruelty turns the capacity to act into an instrument of another's suffering. Deception uses the power of understanding and speech to obstruct another person's access to truth. In each case, evil works upon something whose goodness makes its corruption possible and its loss grievous.

This gives Christian metaphysics an answer to dualism. Evil has no independent creative foundation equal to God. A rebellious intelligence remains a creature whose existence is good even as its willing becomes disordered. Its malice does not confer the power to bring an alternative reality into being.

The distinction also explains why redemption concerns restoration. What has been corrupted can be healed. What has become estranged can be reconciled. The goodness of creation remains the reason its suffering matters and its recovery is worth seeking.

Yet this account intensifies a question it cannot evade. If creation is sustained by a good God, why is such corruption permitted? Why does the suffering continue?

An appeal to freedom explains something about the possibility of rebellion. A creature capable of love and obedience can reject the good. But the person who suffers another's cruelty may reasonably ask why the freedom of the perpetrator was permitted to become the destruction of the victim. Naming the value of freedom does not measure the wound or establish why this particular suffering had to be allowed.

The problem reaches beyond human wrongdoing to illness, disaster and the suffering of creatures unable to understand what afflicts them. Christian thought has offered accounts of providence, freedom and a fallen creation. None supplies the sufferer with an easy explanation of every loss.

The Christian response must therefore return to the person at the centre of its claims. The Creator enters the condition in which creatures suffer. Jesus experiences betrayal, abandonment, bodily agony and death. The Cross places divine involvement within the wound of creation, and the Resurrection declares that the wound does not possess the final word.

That declaration does not remove every philosophical objection. It gives Christian hope its particular object: the one through whom the world exists has borne suffering within it and is proclaimed victorious over death. Restoration is promised by the one who has entered the conditions from which creation needs deliverance.

To grasp the force of that claim, we must consider what it means for the eternal Son to become human.

7. The Eternal and the Temporal — The Incarnation

Human life unfolds through change. We remember, anticipate, grow and age. We cannot gather our existence into a single possession; we live it moment by moment.

Classical Christian accounts of divine eternity, developed by thinkers including Boethius and Thomas Aquinas, understand God's life as transcending that succession. God's eternity is more than an indefinitely extended duration. The Creator does not depend upon the temporal conditions within which created lives unfold.

How, then, can the eternal enter history? What does it mean for the Word to become flesh?

The Christian answer concerns the person of the Son. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 articulated an account of the one Christ in two natures, divine and human, preserving their distinction within the unity of his person. The Son assumes a complete human nature while remaining divine. His humanity has its reality in the person of the eternal Son.

The claim therefore concerns a human life fully lived. Hunger, exhaustion, grief and suffering belong to the life Jesus actually undergoes. His humanity supplies no costume behind which the divine remains untouched by human experience. The Gospels ask the reader to contemplate the eternal Son living the vulnerability of the condition he has assumed.

At the same time, the Son's divine nature is not converted into a created nature. The distinction between Creator and creature is preserved within the doctrine's account of personal union. The one who belongs eternally with the Father becomes genuinely present in the history of his creatures.

The King enters his own creation.

This changes the meaning of the relationship between the temporal and eternal. Creation is capable of receiving God's personal presence. Human embodiment can become the life through which the Son acts, suffers and reveals the Father. The material world is therefore no obstacle that salvation must discard in order to reach its purpose.

The Resurrection confirms the significance of that embodiment. Christianity proclaims the risen Jesus, and the Ascension in Acts 1:9–11 presents this same risen person as taken from the disciples' sight. His humanity is retained within the proclamation of his exaltation. The Son's assumption of human nature has an enduring significance for what humanity can become in communion with God.

This requires care in expression. The union of divine and human natures in Christ does not mean that every individual is thereby reconciled to God irrespective of their relationship to him. The Incarnation concerns who Christ is; participation in his saving life concerns the reconciliation and transformation to which human beings are called.

The metaphysical implication remains immense. Human nature has been assumed by the Son, and the Christian promise concerns its renewal in him. The destiny held before humanity is communion with its Creator, involving the recovery of the creature's goodness and the fulfilment of its life.

This gives restoration its foundation. The one who brings creation towards its fulfilment has entered its history and raised human life beyond the apparent finality of the grave. The question becomes what his victory promises for the whole created order.

8. The Final Victory — The Renewal of Creation

Revelation brings the conflict into the setting of heavenly vision. A dragon appears, Michael and his angels fight, and the dragon is cast down. Revelation 12:9 identifies him as the ancient serpent, the Devil and Satan. The garden's deception is placed within a drama reaching across human history and the heavenly realm.

The book's apocalyptic form matters. Its visions disclose theological realities through symbols, scenes and dramatic reversals. They require interpretation attentive to their literary setting. A sequence of visions cannot simply be converted into a technical chronology of the invisible world.

The governing proclamation is nevertheless clear: the rebellion does not possess ultimate authority. The accuser is overcome, and the sovereignty of God and his Christ is announced. Revelation 11:15 places the world's kingdoms within that final horizon.

Earthly powers habitually invite people to imagine that their order is permanent. Empires build monuments to endurance. Rulers demand allegiance as though their authority could decide the meaning of a human life. Revelation addresses communities living beneath such claims and declares that the future belongs to God.

The vision includes judgement. Revelation 20 presents the final judgement of the devil and the judgement of the dead. The renewal that follows cannot be made into an assurance that every person or rebellious spirit is eventually reconciled. Christians differ on questions of judgement and final destiny, but creation's renewal alone does not settle those disputes.

Then the scene changes. Revelation 21 presents a new heaven and a new earth. God dwells with humanity. Tears are wiped away. Death, mourning and pain no longer govern the conditions of life.

The one seated upon the throne declares: "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5, KJV).

The promise concerns creation's future. The embodied life that has suffered corruption is brought towards renewal. The account gives material existence a lasting significance: what God has made is capable of a fulfilment beyond the conditions in which we presently know it.

For the person who mourns, the promise is painfully concrete. It addresses tears, death and separation—the things that make human existence vulnerable at its heart. Restoration acquires its meaning from the goodness whose loss we grieve. The final vision answers that grief with the presence of God and a life no longer exposed to death's destruction.

Christian hope does not supply a technical account of how this transformation will occur. It identifies its source and purpose. The Creator who brought the world into being will bring it towards the goodness for which it was made.

But what becomes of freedom? If rebellion is overcome, must the capacity for love and willing obedience disappear with it?

Christian thinkers have distinguished unrestricted choice from freedom fulfilled in the good. A person enslaved by fear, ignorance or disordered desire may possess choices while lacking the freedom to live well. On this account, restoration releases the creature from captivity and perfects its participation in goodness. Communion with God fulfils created life.

The narrative's beginning and end now belong together. Creation originates in divine goodness. Rebellion corrupts what has been given. Redemption confronts that corruption through Christ's life, death and Resurrection. Renewal brings the created order towards its intended fulfilment.

The victory proclaimed is comprehensive in scope. No competing power can establish an enduring sovereignty alongside God. Judgement and renewal disclose the limits of rebellion and the Creator's authority over the destiny of what he has made.

Conclusion — The Sovereignty of the Logos

Part II asked what happened at the foundation of Christian faith. Part III has considered the reality implied by Christianity's answer.

If the risen Jesus is the eternal Logos, his kingship concerns existence at its source. Visible and invisible creation, human life and spiritual intelligence, the powers that serve and the powers that rebel—all belong to an order sustained through him. The conflict can be terrible without becoming ultimate. No creature can make itself the foundation of the world in which it acts.

The human significance reaches into fear itself. Death appears to grant earthly power its most formidable instrument. The Christian proclamation of Christ's victory challenges the authority that this threat can exercise over conscience and allegiance. The person who belongs to the risen King has reason to ask whether survival can remain the highest good.

Christianity places that demand within a promise. The Creator has entered the suffering of creation, and its destiny rests with him. The goodness damaged by rebellion remains the goodness he purposes to renew.

The powers may resist the King. They cannot become his equal.

If that is true, it changes the standing of every authority that asks for our obedience. It changes how we understand freedom, what we owe one another and what we may be required to surrender in order to remain faithful.

The question now passes from the nature of reality to the conduct of a human life within it. What does it mean to live as though Christ is King?

Continued in Part IV — The Philosophical Significance of Christ Is King.

Selected Sources

Biblical quotations are from the King James Version. References throughout the text identify the principal passages informing the argument.

Augustine, *Enchiridion*, chapters 11–12: the goodness of created being and evil as a privation of good.

Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Book V, prose 6; Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, question 10: classical accounts of eternity.

Council of Chalcedon, *Definition of Faith* (451): the one person of Christ in divine and human natures.

1 Enoch, chapters 6–16: the Watchers tradition discussed alongside Genesis 6, Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2. Its canonical status varies among Christian traditions.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraphs 1042–1050: one authoritative Christian articulation of the renewal of creation. The paper does not assume agreement among Christian traditions on every detail of final judgement or eschatology.