### “Created the Worlds” by S. Finlan, at First Church

October 7, 2018

**Hebrews 1:1–4; 2:9–11**

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.3He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. . . .

2:9 We see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor. . . .

10 It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

**Mark 10:13–16**

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. 14But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. 15Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” 16And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.

I have to warn you that the first part of the sermon will not be down to earth at all, since Hebrews is talking about the cosmic order. The second part of the sermon, where Jesus talks about receiving the kingdom like a little child,will be more down to earth.

In Hebrews we see a clear hierarchy: God, Jesus, angels, humanity. Let’s start at the bottom. We humans are a little bit lower than the angels, and Jesus was *made* a little lower than the angels, was made human “for a little while” (Heb 2:9). But Jesus, as Son of God, reflects “God’s glory” is “the exact imprint of God’s very being,” and is “much superior to angels” (1:3–4). Even more amazing to me is verse 2: “through whom he also created the worlds.” Through Jesus, God created the worlds, plural! How many worlds? We don’t know. But it seems to say that Jesus and God worked together, in creation. Further, they work together in bringing many children to salvation (2:10). The purposes and deeds of Jesus and the Father are perfectly coordinated.

I want to dwell for a moment on Jesus as God’s co-creator. This is one of four passages, from four different parts of the New Testament, which say that Jesus was the creator or co-creator. There is a gospel passage, a Pauline letter, a deutero-Pauline letter, while Hebrews is from the catholic, or general, epistles. Actually, Hebrews is not really a letter, but a sermon. It has no personal greetings, does not address problems in a church, and does not claim to be written by Paul. Hebrews is anonymous.

The most well-known passage is John 1, where the Word was “in the beginning with God,” and “All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being” (John 1:2–3). In both Hebrews and John, Jesus is the Creator, with the Father’s creative power working *through* him.

A similar point, but at much greater length, is made in the letter to the Colossians: “in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him” (Col 1:16). So Jesus is the co-creator. In some way, the creation was also “*for*” him.Further, he created the heavenly powers: the thrones, dominions, and rulers. Most scholars believe these refer to cosmic powers, heavenly authorities. So Jesus is the father of both the invisible cosmic powers, and of the human race.

Then we have a long and complicated passage in Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians: “there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist” (1 Cor 8:6). Again, it is *through* Jesus that “we exist.” And Paul makes it very clear that Jesus is Lord. The Father is called “God,” but Jesus is called “Lord.” This happens throughout Paul’s letters. In the Old Testament, “God” and “Lord” are the same person, but in Paul’s letters, “Lord” refers to Jesus, and he understands many Old Testament references to “Lord” to refer to Jesus.

As for Colossians, many scholars think it could be co-written by Paul, while others call it deutero-Pauline, written by a disciple of Paul’s. But written or. So we have three or four different New Testament authors saying that the creation of the world or “the worlds” happened through Jesus. Obviously, this is hugely important. It tells us about who Jesus was before he came to this earth, and why he has such divine power.

Now, think about this: If Jesus is the Creator, then how hard would it be for him to work miracles, or what *seem* like miracles to us?

This is also why I consider Jesus the Savior, not because of his death, but because of his divine identity, his creator power. For me, Jesus is Savior in exactly the same way that he is Creator. He was the life-giver in the beginning, and he is the *eternal* life-giver now. Further, he extends salvation the same way that he extended healing. Salvation and healing were linked, in his ministry; he often said “your faith has saved you” to people whom he healed (Matt 9:22; Luke 7:50; 18:42). Salvation is the gift of life, and his healings restored full life to people.

Now I would turn to the Gospel reading. Let’s see what kind of Creator he is. Parents are bringing children to Jesus, and despite the apostles’ attempts to brush them off, Jesus says, “let them come.” Further, he says to the adults that they need to *receive* the kingdom like a little child. He is recommending child-like sincerity and simplicity. He is not recommending a child-like *mind,* but a child-like *heart*—the sincerity of the child, the trust of the child, the curiosity and the joy of a child. He is calling for *receptivity*, for a child’s enthusiasm—just the things that start to fade away as we become adults.

Why did the lectionary choose two such different passages? Maybe to show both the transcendence and the immanence of Jesus, his divine power, and his approachable friendliness. This reminds me of a passage from Isaiah: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite” (Isa 57:15).

Jesus is high and holy and full of creative power, but he is also close to children and near to the humble of heart. This man who was “the imprint of God’s very being” (Heb 1:3), is also the friend of all the “pure of heart,” all who are “honest and good [of] heart,” and I am using phrases from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, there (Matt 5:8; Luke 8:15).

Our creator did not give us a corrupt and wicked heart, nor did Adam corrupt all human hearts down through time. Rather, Jesus says, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (Matt 5:8).

Is it possible that the actual Creator of the world is also this friendly and optimistic teacher? It *is* possible. It is true! Can it be, that the virile and powerful God of the Old Testament is also the considerate and compassionate God of Jesus? It can. Is it true that the creator of worlds is also the creator of joy within our fellowship here today at First Church? Are we important enough for Jesus to care about us? We are, indeed.