



One Page Sermon

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Jesus as Presence and Schrodinger's Cat

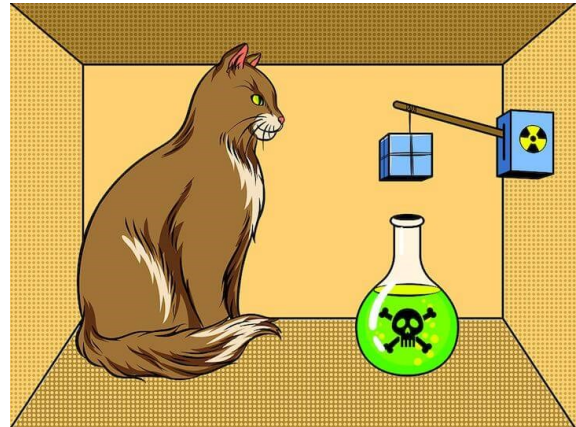
Erwin Schrodinger, an early 20th century physicist and pioneer of a new field known as Quantum Physics, posed a thought experiment to explain a strange phenomenon of quantum mechanics. Quantum mechanics was a breakthrough idea that undercut assumptions that had been made about the way the world works since Newton. Under Newtonian physics, there was an idea that eventually human kind could figure out the world.

If we observed enough in nature and collected enough empirical data, we would be able to understand everything about how the universe operated. The discovery of quantum mechanics changed that. We do not live in a Newtonian world of elegant formulas and observable data. Instead, we live in a quantum world where uncertainty is always present waves and photons can exist in two states at the same time. This remarkable idea was called a "superposition."

I do not claim to understand Quantum mechanics and all of its implications, but I find it remarkably interesting that it is now accepted as fact that some things are impossible to know. When measuring things on a quantum scale—where the tiniest building blocks of matter exist—it is impossible to know BOTH a particle's position AND its velocity. One can know where something is and you can know where something is going. You cannot know both.

Maybe I'm the only one, but I feel that the theological implications of this are enormous. For generations people believed that science would move God out of the picture. That knowing the universe was only a matter of time. Yet it turns out that mystery is a fundamental element of existence. When talking about particles, one can know where something is or where it is going, but never both. Perhaps it is God that can fill in the gaps in the mystery.

Jesus is the Way. Jesus is a path. Jesus is a way of life, someone to follow. Jesus is the way to the place where we are going. Jesus is also presence. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is named before birth as Emmanuel, which means God with us (Matthew 1:23). In the middle of the Gospel, Jesus says, "Where two or three are gathered in



A visual representation of Schrodinger's cat, in which a radioactive atom could set off a Geiger-counter, which would release a poisonous gas, and all outside observation is impossible because it is all inside a sealed box. Since we would never know when and if the radioactive material decayed enough to trip the Geiger-counter, Schrodinger posits that the cat is both alive and dead at the same time.

The cat is in a superposition—a state in which two apparently opposite realities are both true. To be clear—Schrodinger never actually created this contraption. It is purely a thought-experiment, and no cats were ever harmed for this demonstration.

my name, I am there" (Matthew 18:20). Finally, at the end of the Gospel, after the resurrection, Jesus gathers with the eleven and in the midst of their worship and their doubt he says, "I will be with you until the end of the present age" (Matthew 28:20). Jesus is present. This is one of the great holy mysteries of our faith. While no longer walking the earth, Jesus is still present.

At the same time, Jesus is the way. He is both our location and where we are going. Jesus Christ defies the fundamental quantum mystery of the universe.

Mystery is a part of the universe. It is embedded into the very fabric of existence. Perhaps God may lie in the gaps of our knowledge, not to be edged out if we only gain enough knowledge. Mystery is not something to be feared or explained away. A mystical knowledge of Christ can come from prayer, from study of Scripture, from practices like meditation or lectio divina. Dive into the mystery—the unknowable and experiential and discover the paradox of Christ who is both present and the way.