Session 4

Alpha/Omega

Revelation 1:4-8; 21:1-7; 22:12-17

Memory Verse

Both the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let anyone who hears, say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely.

– Revelation 22:17, CSB

Alpha/Omega

THEOLOGICAL THEME: The Lord is eternal. He has always been and always will be. He has had a plan from the beginning, and nothing can derail His purposes.

CALL TO ACTION: We are called to live in a way that aligns with God's promises for our lives and the world.

When have you been surprised by a plot twist in a book or a movie?

Maybe when you began reading a book or watching a film, the narrative led you to believe one thing would happen, but then the story turned completely on its head.

One example of this type of storytelling is the animated movie *Frozen*. Princess Anna meets Prince Hans of the Southern Isles and falls in love. He's charming, friendly, helpful, and kind (and they harmonize together so beautifully!), but in the end, Anna learns that Hans lied to her. He manipulated her in a bid for power! In the end, Hans gets his just deserts, and Anna learns a valuable lesson.[1]

If you have seen the movie before, you know what's coming, but the first time, it's hard to anticipate the end when you start at the beginning. The same is true in daily life. We must live each day to see what happens. We can't predict the future.

But today, in our reading, we'll study someone who does know the future. God is eternal—the beginning and the end—and there's no "surprise ending" for Him. His plan is playing out exactly as He intends, and nothing can stop it.

When have you watched a movie or read a book with an ending that surprised you? What happened?

Today, we're going to be exploring God's title as "the Alpha and the Omega." What do you think this means?

Session Summary

God is the Alpha and Omega. The beginning and the end. He has always been, and He always will be. This is a great comfort! He created all things, and He has a great plan to redeem creation and to have all believers to live with Him for eternity.

1. Who Is, Who Was, Who Is to Come (Revelation 1:4-8)

What characteristics of God are proclaimed in these verses?

What does God declare about Himself?

This passage comes from the introduction to the book of Revelation. In this introduction, we meet the human author of Revelation (John) and discover who the original audience for this letter was ("the seven churches in Asia," v. 4). This designation refers to the Roman province in which these churches were located, in modern-day Turkey.[2]

The greeting "grace and peace" is a familiar one in the New Testament (Romans 1:7; 1 Thessalonians 1:1). Christ is the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), and as the Lord extends endless grace to us (Romans 5:20), so we, as His followers, extend it to others. John wrote of the work and person of the victorious Christ. We cannot wrap our human minds around the eternal nature of Christ. He is, was, and is to come (Revelation 1:4). He has always existed and always will.

In verse 5, John described Jesus as a prophet ("the faithful witness"), a priest ("the firstborn from the dead," firstborn being a title of honor), and a king ("ruler of the kings of the earth"—Jesus is the King of kings).[3] At His second coming, Jesus will exert the authority He referenced in Matthew 28:18.[4]

John also noted that Jesus loves us (note the present tense—Jesus loves us actively and presently, not in the past tense). Jesus offers the gift of salvation, freedom, and forgiveness for our sins through His redemptive work on the cross ("has set us free from our sins by his blood," v. 5). But the freedom John described isn't automatic. We are saved by God's grace through faith in Jesus. We must first believe. Jesus also "made us a kingdom" (v. 6). In Revelation, we get a peek into what this means. We were chosen to be "priests" (v. 6), serving God in the world wherever He has placed us (1 Peter 2:9).

Revelation 1:7 features a compilation from Old Testament texts, part of the almost 300 Old Testament references in the book of Revelation.[5] And this section ends with a declaration from God:

> "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the one who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." —Revelation 1:8

Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and Omega is the last.[6] God is both the beginning and the end. He is "the one who is, who was, and who is to come" (v. 8). He was in the beginning, and He will always be. There will never be a time when He is not. He is eternally sovereign and almighty. This is true even in times of persecution and in times when everything feels off. God is almighty at all times, and we can trust Him.

Where do you specifically need the reminder that God is the first and the last right now?

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2. Everything New (Revelation 21:1-7)

What is happening in these verses?

What aspects of God's character are on display in this passage?

This passage picks up just after the final, eternal defeat of evil, and we read about how God will redeem creation. He will make everything new. Our world that is marked by sin will get a divine makeover, and the results will be wondrous. There will be no more death, grief, or pain. We will be eternally secure and safe. There won't be any reason for crying. And all believers will be living face-to-face with God and His incredible goodness for eternity.

John saw this take place in a vision in Revelation 21. He saw everything being made new and heard the voice from the throne proclaiming what was happening. The "one seated on the throne" (v. 5, God the Father) made a declaration. He told John to write down "these words" (v. 5). God's Word is always and eternally "faithful and true" (v. 5).

God the Father declared that "it is done" (v. 6), and then we encounter this title again: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end" (v. 6). He has always existed and will always exist, and He has come through on all His promises. He created the world in the beginning, and John got to see how God intends to redeem the creation our sin corrupted. He is sovereign over all things! He created everything as He intended, and He will end creation as we know it, as He intends, too. Nothing can derail His divine plan! We can trust in His faithful and true words.

In verse 6, God makes a stunning and beautiful declaration:

> "I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life." —Revelation 21:6b

He will meet our deepest spiritual needs, freely, for all eternity! The well of His goodness and grace will never run dry. This ongoing provision and a redeemed earth are awaiting every believer.

Where are you longing most for redemption in our broken world? How are you encouraged by this text?

3. Come! (Revelation 22:12-17)

What attributes of Christ are displayed in this passage? What promises does He make?

What invitation does He issue in these verses?

This passage comes from the very end of the book of Revelation. If you have a red-letter Bible, you'll notice that these words are written in red. This is Jesus speaking! Our past two sections of reading have included proclamations by God the Father, but in this passage, it is the words of Jesus.

Jesus declared that He is coming soon. We know from Matthew 24:36 that only God the Father knows when Christ will return, but Jesus warned His disciples (that includes us) to be prepared for His return:

> Therefore be alert, since you don't know what day your Lord is coming.
> —Matthew 24:42

He is coming soon, and when He does return, He is bringing a reward for His faithful people. Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus spoke of rewarding believers for their good works—even those good works conducted in secret. The Lord sees, and a reward is promised for faithfulness.

For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will reward each according to what he has done. —Matthew 16:27

Jesus went on to use the title God the Father used in our other passages: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end" (Revelation 22:13). Jesus is God, and Jesus is eternal. He has always been, and He will always be. He is the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

The washing Jesus described in verse 14 refers to being washed in the blood of Christ. Blessed are those who believe in Him, for the gates of the city are open to them, and they will have access to the tree of life in eternity! But verse 15 makes clear that this bright future is available only to those who have believed. Those who have rejected Christ (there is no neutral position; you either choose to believe in and follow Jesus, or you don't) remain "outside" (v. 15).

In verse 17, after sharing what will happen to those who don't believe, Jesus offers an open invitation. Come! Not everyone will follow Jesus, but God's desire is not that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). He wants the unbeliever to repent, come to Him, and spend eternity with Him.

If you don't yet have a relationship with Jesus, this is for you! Come! The door is open. There's a seat for you at the table. The water of life is waiting for you. Will you believe?

Are you confident that you have put your faith in Jesus? If not, what is stopping you from doing so today?

Conclusion

God is eternal. He has always been. He will always be. He is so much bigger than us—bigger than we can wrap our minds around.

God is sovereign. He is on the throne no matter what happens. Elections can't derail Him. Our sin and its vast consequences can't derail Him. He has a plan, and it is unfolding, and He can work through our messes for our good and His glory. He created us and the entire world, and He has a good plan for His creation and a good plan for us.

And this eternal, sovereign Creator desires a relationship with you and with me. He desires to know you. He doesn't want anyone to perish (2 Peter 3:9). When John wrote of the "thirsty" in the book of Revelation, he referred to those who understand that they are morally bankrupt. The "thirsty" understand that they are sinners who cannot save themselves. They need help. And Jesus is that help. He is the Good Shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to find the one who is lost and then rejoices when the lost one is found.

If you have never followed Christ, the invitation we read about in Revelation 22 is for you. God is inviting you to come! He loves you so much that He created a way for your sins to be forgiven, and He sacrificed His only Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross in your place to do so. That is how much He loves you.

> Both the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let anyone who hears, say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely.
> —Revelation 22:17

What can we learn about God and His character from our study today?

How is it reassuring that God is the Alpha and the Omega?

Who do you know that needs to hear Jesus's invitation to come to Him?

Memorize

Both the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" Let anyone who hears, say, "Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who desires take the water of life freely.
- Revelation 22:17, CSB

References

[1]*Frozen*, directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee (Burbank, CA: Walt Disney Pictures, 2013).
[2]Christopher A. Beetham and Nancy L. Erickson, eds., *The NIV Application Commentary on the Bible: One-Volume Edition* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2024), 1288.
[3]Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Victorious (Revelation): In Christ You Are an Overcomer* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2008), 22.
[4]A. Boyd Luter, "Revelation," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017).
[5]Wiersbe, 20.
[6]Luter.