Alpha/Omega

December 27, 2026

Lesson Summary

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

Session Outline
1. Who Is, Who Was, Who Is to Come (Revelation 1:4-8)
2. Everything New (Revelation 21:1-7)
3. Come! (Revelation 22:12-17)

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.

Leader Guide

Alpha/Omega

Introduction

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?

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?

The Bride Glorified

Just as chapter 17 was a recapitulation of the seventh cup and the fall of the harlot, Babylon the Great (compare the language of 17:1–3, which clearly introduces a "retelling" with the language of 18:9–10), so chapter 21 recapitulates the glorification of the bride of the Lamb.

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?

Prayer of Response

Thank God for the gift of Jesus. Praise Him for being the Alpha and Omega. Ask Him to help you trust in His plan and pray for anyone in the group who hasn't yet begun following Him. Ask that He would work through your group to bring others to know Him in your community.

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

Additional Resources

- *Exalting Jesus in Revelation* by Daniel Akin
- *Revelation* by H.A. Ironside
- *Revelation Through Old Testament Eyes* by Tremper Longman


GOSPEL CONVERSATIONS
GATHER
GIVE
GO
GROUPS

Historical Context of Revelation

Purpose

Much of the book of Revelation focuses on events at the end of the age (eschatology), more so than any other book in the Bible. But it also focuses on practical choices that believers and unbelievers must make in the course of their lives that have far-reaching consequences at the end.

Author

The traditional view holds that the author of Revelation is the apostle John, who wrote the Fourth Gospel and the three letters of John. Evidences for this view include the following. (1) The writer referred to himself as "John" (1:4, 9; 22:8). (2) He had personal relationships with the seven churches of Asia Minor (1:4, 11; 2–3). (3) His circumstances at the time of writing (1:9) matched those of John the apostle (who was placed in Asia Minor from about AD 70 to 100 by reliable historical sources from the second century AD). (4) The saturation of the book with Old Testament imagery and echoes implies a Jewish writer, like John, operating in overwhelmingly Gentile Asia Minor.

Setting

The initial audience that received the book of Revelation was a group of seven local churches in southwest Asia Minor (1:11; 2–3). Some of these congregations were experiencing persecution (2:9–10, 13), probably under the Roman emperor Domitian (ruled AD 81–96). Others had doctrinal and practical problems (2:6, 13–15, 20–23). Also behind these surface problems was the backdrop of unseen but powerful spiritual warfare (2:10, 14, 24; 3:9).

Special Features

The resurrected, glorified Jesus Christ revealed himself to the apostle John, who had been imprisoned "on the island called Patmos" (1:9). Christ's twofold purpose was: (1) to "unveil" a spiritual diagnosis for seven of the churches in Asia Minor with which John was familiar (chaps. 2–3), and (2) to reveal to John a series of visions setting forth events and factors related to the end times (chaps. 4–22).

Extended Commentary

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

1:4 The naming of the author and audience, plus a characteristic greeting (grace and peace), indicate that Revelation has similar form as other NT letters. It is not some exotic, otherworldly work that cannot readily be understood. The one who is, who was, and who is to come (v. 8) means that God not only exists now, but always has existed and always will. The seven spirits before his throne may refer to: (1) "the angels of the seven churches" (v. 20; chaps. 2–3), (2) other angels seen in the book (e.g., 8:2), or (3) the fullness of the Holy Spirit described in Is 11:2.

1:5–6 Jesus is the faithful witness. The firstborn from the dead looks back to his resurrection, the guarantee of the future resurrection of all believers and unbelievers (20:4–5; 1Co 15:20, 23). Though Christ has all the authority to be universal ruler now (Mt 28:18), he will not fully exert it until his second coming (Rv 19:11–21). Set us free from our sins by his blood does not mean we are automatically saved by Christ's death on the cross, as if all humanity is saved regardless of their beliefs. Revelation stresses the need for repentance (9:20–21) and a faith-response to the gospel (14:6–7). The wording here may mean that believers are already a kingdom and priests in this lifetime (1Pt 2:9).

1:7 This collage of Scripture from Dn 7:13 and Zch 12:10 expresses the theme for Revelation. The reference to mourn is sometimes understood as the response of those for whom it is too late to be saved. But the context of Zch 12:10 indicates the mourning will be true saving repentance, even for those who pierced him (i.e., the Jews; see notes at 7:4–8; 11:13).

1:8 Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, emphasizing that God is the beginning and the end. On the one who is … and who is to come, see note at v. 4.

21:1 While like the present creation in some ways, the new heaven and a new earth will be much different. For example, there will be no sea. However, some believe that "sea" is symbolic for the wickedness of the current created order.

21:2 The bride of the Lamb, introduced in 19:7–9, is now pictured as the holy city, the new Jerusalem (see note at vv. 9–11a). The expression coming down out of heaven is used in all three references to the new Jerusalem (see note at 3:12). Prepared … adorned may mean that the bride will be just as beautiful—and will be for eternity—as she was during the wedding festivities (19:7–8).

21:3–4 God's presence (dwelling is with humanity) will do away with all death … grief, crying, and pain.

21:5–8 In the present creation, a Christian is a "new creation" spiritually (2Co 5:17), but in the new heaven and new earth, the Lord will make everything new. The written Word of God is faithful and true (2Tm 3:16), and the living Word of God is also faithful and true (Rv 19:11). On the Alpha and the Omega, see note at 1:8. Living water (22:17) will always be freely available, and this pictures the word of grace, received through saving faith, that offers eternal life even in the present. But those who remain unrepentant in their sin will experience eternal judgment, the second death.

22:10–12 The book of Daniel was "sealed until the time of the end" (Dn 12:9) to conceal its contents. In clear contrast, and in light of the imminence of the events (the time is near) portrayed in Revelation, John was commanded not to seal up the words of the prophecy of this book. Until the events of the book are fulfilled, people will continue to act in keeping with their nature (filthy … filthy or righteous … righteousness), but when the Lord comes, he will render to each person according to his deeds (20:12; 2Co 5:10).

22:13 On the Alpha and the Omega, see 1:8.

22:14–15, 17 The final beatitude (blessed) of the Apocalypse is an elegant presentation of the gospel, using the imagery of the "new Eden" ("the tree of life") and the eternal city (enter the city by the gates). Wash their robes means faith in the shed blood of Christ. The right to the tree of life is what Adam and Eve were cut off from by their sin. The gates of the city and access to the tree of life are made available to those who believe in Jesus, but all unbelievers, with their various sinful lifestyles, are excluded. With the repeated invitation to come and take the water of life as a gift (i.e., free grace; see Eph 2:8–9), Revelation ends with passionate evangelistic appeal. Though Jews referred to Gentiles as dogs, in this case it more likely refers to false teachers, whatever their ethnicity, as in Php 3:2.[7]

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.
7. Ibid.