



## Groups



**Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!** If you've never used our Study Guides before, you'll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of the last page.

**NEW this year:** These study guides will be written by thoughtful and experienced Life Group Leaders. As always, use these guides as a head-start in your own preparation as the needs and culture is different from each group. And of course, please continue to give us feedback.

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### LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

for the Monologue Sermon given on April 16, 2023

by Pastors Leah Knight-Breton & Jon Kim

**"I AM the Alpha and Omega"**

Question: What does the Alpha and Omega mean and why is it significant to me?

Bottom Line: Recognizing Jesus as ALPHA and OMEGA gives clarity to our present circumstances, because it gives meaning to our past and brings hope for our future.

Intro:

Welcome back on the other side of a beautiful and meaningful Easter and Holy Week celebration at Grace Chapel. Across our campuses, there was so much to be thankful for and if you have not already, you are encouraged to take some time in prayer and reflect on Jesus' resurrection and the life He invites us to.

Throughout Lent, we learned about Jesus' "I AM" statements from the Gospel of John. Today, we want to read and discuss another powerful "I AM" statement from Jesus – this time from the book of Revelation. In John's Gospel, Jesus took ordinary everyday metaphors like "light," "doors," "bread," "shepherds", etc. and attached cosmic meaning to them. In this verse in Revelation, He is taken a cosmic concept and our job is to see how it impacts our lives personally.

Let's take a moment in prayer to ask God to guide our time today.

### **Main Scripture Reading: Revelation 1:8**

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

### **Group Discussion Questions**

Q - Leah summarized this passage with this quote from Eugene Peterson:

**"Alpha and Omega include between them all the letters. Anything written must use the letters of the alphabet. This is the world that God created. You and I and everything in it. This Jesus that we learned about in the Gospels, who brings justice and mercy and life and resurrections is the Jesus at the very beginning, will be at the end, and is everywhere in between." - Eugene Peterson**

What first comes to mind when you hear the terms "Alpha and Omega?"

Q – The challenge of this passage is that the "Alpha" and "Omega" concept is so big and encompassing that we might feel that our lives are trivial and our circumstances are unimportant in the scope of it all. It would be helpful to realize that ultimately, the message of Revelation is about because Jesus has secured the victory of over evil, sin, and death, we can experience salvation, love, and life now and forever. And that truth gives meaning for today.

So to bring it narrower, let's consider the first half of the sermon that Pastors Jon and Leah gave where they focused on the "Alpha" (i.e. the "beginning"). The first point was how "trusting Jesus as our Alpha can give meaning to our past." How can placing our trust Jesus give meaning or even redefine our past?

Q – At one point in the message, Jon told a vulnerable story of how he didn't make the high school basketball team and he tried to play it off to his friends that he didn't really want to anyways although he was clearly upset. The point he was making that we are constantly told in our society that we ought to have "no regrets" or that regret is terrible. Here is an excerpt from their message to unpack this teaching:

"But research tells us that regret is a normal human experience that can actually help enhance our sense of meaning and become better problem solvers. But because we often live in regret and shame of our past, we aren't honest to ourselves, to others, or to God.

An Alpha and Omega God doesn't forget or minimize or exaggerate or numb from the pain of the past. The beginning of healing from our past happens when we let the God of the beginnings bring meaning to our past, and it starts with naming it. But it's so hard. It's not easy to name things in our past that we feel like are shameful, traumatic, embarrassing, humiliating. But naming those painful or shameful experiences can be incredibly helpful."

- How can seeing regret as a learning experience can serve us for our present and future? And how can our faith in Jesus help us even more as we explore our regrets?

Q – Logically, the second half of the message focused on Jesus being the "Omega" – the end or completion of things. From a contextual and historical perspective, we ought to remember that the writer John is writing this towards the end of the first century as a protest against Rome and their emperor Domitian. Among his points is that Jesus is the true Lord or "Emperor" and that His Kingdom is and will be greater than what Rome or any earthly kingdom can ever be.

John is also writing this apocalyptic literature to raise courage in the early church to grow in their faithfulness in Jesus. Revelation wonderfully bookends the I am statements again in Chapter 21 – "He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Revelation 21:6."

As we consider Jesus being the Omega, how does this give hope to our future both in the big picture totality of our lives, and also in our everyday lives?

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As we conclude, let's spend a few moments in prayer asking Jesus to help us live with greater trust and with meaning and hope in our lives.

**Homework Until Next Time:**

Ask the members of your LG to complete the Discipleship Planning Tool and the GPS Assessment Tool before your next meeting. Here is some fresh language:

*We're all on a journey; where is yours taking you?*

The beauty of the way of Jesus is that it's not just good for us, it's good for the world around us. But that kind of beautiful life doesn't come from just hearing the words of Jesus; it comes from putting them into practice. Three kinds of practice, actually:

- The with-God life of our personal habits and routines;
- The with-others life of our genuine and life-changing relationships; and
- The for-the-world life that makes an impact beyond our immediate homes and families, into our communities and beyond.

Growing as disciples of Jesus will make a Kingdom difference in our world and a transformative difference in our lives as believers and as a group. And these resources are helpful in identifying the next steps for our journeys.

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**Support for the Leader (These Teaching Points are provided to help the group leader make connections from the message to their group with both insights from the Biblical text and also opportunities in the life of our church).**

**How to Use These Study Guides:**

- Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
- Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
- You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
- Don't feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
- If your group meets over Zoom:
  - You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
  - Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.

- Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

**Group Leader Support:** Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Grace Lee from the Group Life team.