



Week 3 Session Guide

Alpha and Omega

HE WHO WAS, AND IS, AND IS TO COME (Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet)

Introduction:

He is before all, and He will have none before Him. He shares His glory with no one. He is exclusive and expects us to follow Him exclusively. We are to have no other gods before Him. In our lives, He can have no rival, for He has no rival, no one even close. “You, said Jesus, cannot serve two Lords for you will love the one and hate the other” (Mt. 6:24). To accentuate the point, He said further that you and I cannot be His disciples if we love our own lives or have more affection for any other including parents, spouses, and children, those for whom we feel the greatest natural affection and responsibility (Lk. 14:26). They too must come after Him.

His name, Alpha and Omega, tells us that He precedes all, and that He encompasses all, and that He rules supreme over all, and that we, like it or not, are answerable to Him in and for all things. We owe Him our allegiance and much more.

In Genesis:

The very first words in the Holy Bible make all that we have said abundantly clear: “In the beginning God created...” There was nothing before Him, not of a spiritual nature, not of material origin, and there can be nothing after, for in Him all things continue; He sustains the created order.

In Deuteronomy:

In the Book of Deuteronomy, we find the first command repeated, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (6:4), and is followed by the only reasonable conclusion, “And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (v. 5). Upon these two brief propositional truths, reflected in the name Alpha and Omega (although the actual name does not appear until we arrive at the last book of the New Testament, Revelation), the fact that while there are and have been countless idols and false gods of all shapes and sizes, there is only One True God (1 Thes. 1:9).

In Isaiah:

The seeds of the direct revelation of the name Alpha and Omega are found in the Book of Isaiah, the Old Testament prophet. The name itself is not used in the Hebrew, but the essence of it is in plain view where God Himself and the prophet refer to Him as “the First and the Last” (Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12). This is the One and Only, all encompassing God. The LORD Himself says “I know no other” (Isa. 44:6-8). He mocks the idols and abhors

those who bow down to the works of their own hands. Of the same tree, He says, they cook their food, build their houses, warm their bodies, and make their gods (Isa. 44:8-20). Absurd! We who believe stand in a privileged place. Of us God says, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me" (Isa. 43:10).

In The Book of Revelation:

Appropriately, John, the Revelator reveals the fullness of the name Alpha and Omega in the final book of the New Testament, The Book of Revelation where the things that are not yet, but will be, are set forth. This amazing prophetic book deals primarily with the things of the end, the end of the present age, but also wonderfully pivots toward "things to come", which makes it a most fitting place to reveal the full import of the name, "The Alpha and Omega". Revelation deals with end things in broad detail, but also flings us into the highly anticipated realm of the eternal future.

Jesus, The Alpha and Omega, will judge the whole created order and reward every moral being according to His gospel. He will reward each one for their faith and obedience or unbelief and rebellion (Mt. 25:31-46). He will also bring the birth pains of the material universe to an end (Rom. 8:19-25), when He engulfs it in purifying fire (II Pet. 3:6-12), with the view of renovating it that it might be fit for the eternal habitat of God, the redeemed people, and holy angels He has preserved (Isa. 65:17; II Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1-5). The very essence of the name Alpha and Omega is demonstrated through the future historical realities to be played out according to the prophetic word here expressed.

The whole matter and import of the name may be felt and understood in Revelation 21:6-8 which says, "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Discussion Questions:

1. Read several of the following passages from the Book of Revelations and note the settings (you will need to read the context to get the meanings) and accompanying truths about the Alpha and Omega (Rev 1:4, 8, 11, 17-18; Rev 2:8; Rev 4:8; Rev 11:17; Rev 16:5; Rev 21:6; Rev 22:13)
2. When we read the above and think about what Alpha and Omega means, what do we learn about God?
3. As we grasp and acknowledge these realities about God through the name Alpha and Omega, what responsibilities weigh upon us? What are some of the appropriate responses to those truths? Explain, as best as you can, your conclusions.
4. If you had to tell someone briefly what Alpha and Omega means in your own words, what would you tell them? What blessings/benefits come with knowing God as Alpha and Omega.