

Gen. 1:1-5

Jan. 8, 2023

John 1:1-5; Revelation 1:8

## Alpha and Omega Beginning and End

Have you ever heard that expression "from soup to nuts?" It's an American English idiom derived from the description of a full course dinner in which diners progress from soup to a dessert of nuts. It conveys the meaning of completeness, "from beginning to end."

Now, we read in the last book of the Bible this: *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. The New Testament was originally written in Greek, so of course, Revelation was written in Greek. Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last letter. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," means, "I am the A and the Z" or "I'm everything from A to Z," complete from beginning to end.

## Eternal Creator

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...* Genesis 1:1. We know from geologic evidence that this terrestrial ball is older than we can comprehend. But what was before the earth was formed? What was before the beginning of the universe? Well ... God was. He created the universe and He created time. He is eternal, with no beginning and no end. God is not bound by time (His own creation); He is outside of time. But for us time has meaning ... we can recall the past, we live in the present, and we can conceptualize a future, even if it is unknown. But for God all is in the present.

Sometimes on this earth, with the seas and mountains, the valleys and heavens, we get glimpse of the eternal. God's handiwork can be a window to the timeless. Maybe some of you have had such moments, watching the endless waves of ocean fall on the shore. Maybe you've walked through a winter wonderland just after a new snowfall, the pristine landscape covered with millions of crystals sparkling in an orange-pink hue from the setting sun. All forms stand silhouetted and still, as shadows lengthen across open spaces. The only sound is crunching boots making furrows through a flawless snowy blanket. Forests turn to dark masses and meadows to graying seas, as a rising moon spreads its yellowing light, setting apart individual trees that were mere shadows moments before. There is no earthly sound, only heaven speaks.

Perhaps some of you have been in places, far from city lights, and you looked up into the sky and there was the heavenly panorama, displaying a glory like no other. Maybe you saw the Milky Way, like a long, sparkling cloud, mistily streaming across the sky in all its wonder and hint of the mystery far beyond. As though suspended somewhere between heaven and earth, time stands still in silent darkness, illuminated by that cloud of stars. And the voice of the Creator gently rustles through leaves and boughs, whispering eternal words. Thousands of years ago the psalmist it so well: *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no*

***speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world, Psalm 19:1-4a.***

**From time to time, a few moments of wonder brush against us, inviting a graceful grasp of God's timeless and mysterious presence. Often it is a wordless time — not for lack of words, but not needing words, for the handiwork of our Mighty Creator speaks His thunder. These moments can be interludes of settling within the soul — a time-free epiphany that permits us to touch the fingertips of God's mighty hand and our union with all other beings. And without that touch, we plow through life knowing the world only in feeble fragments. Some of our astronauts have had similar experiences of awe and wonderment upon entering space. Parents or grandparents, pausing to gaze into a child's face, see it in the beautiful innocence of a sleeping child or grandchild. Where have you seen or experienced God's eternal presence? ... We might say, in such moments, that God holds everything from sea to mountain top, from earth to beyond the farthest star ... and everything in between.**

### **Eternal Son Of God**

**The Gospel of John begins like this: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, John 1:1.* Have you noticed, the Gospel begins with the very same wording found in Genesis? In the beginning... Here's why: *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth, John 1:14.* In Jesus the timeless has entered into time, for the purpose of transforming time, so that the chasm between the great beauty of the eternal and the brokenness of the human condition might be overcome.”<sup>1</sup>**

**The point is that Jesus, the human face of God, was and is the very presence of the living and eternal Creator, in personal terms. Jesus is timeless, just as God is. He has existed since before time. He is proof that God is not a distant watchmaker who simply wound up the universe and let it run on its own. No, our heavenly Creator is One who is still involved in life and creation. Most especially, we know that in Jesus God came among humanity to save us from our imperfection and sin – our alienation from God – so that we might return to His eternal presence.**

**Though He began His earthly sojourn in Bethlehem, He was with God, one with God, from before time. *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation... He is before all things, and in him all things hold together, Colossians 1:15, 17.* So, when the Wise Men visited Him in Bethlehem, they gazed into the face of a baby, the King of Israel (as they supposed), but also the face of the Eternal One.**

**We can count on Him because, like God, Jesus is forever steadfast and consistent. He is not driven by impulse or fluctuating emotions, or degraded by the vagaries of time. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever, Hebrews 13:8.* Just think how important it is to know that He is consistent. He doesn't change His mind, saying “your sins are forgiven” and then “oh, just kidding;” that you can have eternal life in Him and then later He says, “Well, not so much.” And through the Holy Spirit we have confirmation of His presence when we ask for His forgiveness and help in all times of our life. The Holy Spirit gives us the assurance of God's personal care.**

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<sup>1</sup>Erling Duus, *The Tragic Sacred Ground*, 1988.

**The Holy Spirit is with us for guidance, comfort, and hope. Our past is covered, our present is guided, and our future is assured in Jesus. In coming weeks we'll look at how He holds the past, present, and future in more detail. God is with us always.**

### **What It Means For Us**

**For the next several weeks I will be talking about what this all means for us. Here's a snapshot of what we'll consider: Since God has the whole world in His hands from beginning to end, and Jesus is the human face of God, the Eternal One, He is with us through all times, and present in the Holy Spirit in all places. He has your life in His hands from birth to death and beyond. This means that you can trust Him through all the times of your life.**

**Past: Jesus can heal your past that needs healing. God has taken care of your yesterdays– all your yesterdays with all your sins, faults and failures have been nailed to the cross. Before we were ever born, Jesus was provided as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. If Jesus has the capacity to take away the world's sin, surely He can take care of yours.**

**As we enter a new year, the Good News is that God has your yesterdays under control. You don't have to let an old sin plague your mind, ... *there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*, Romans 8:1. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us of all our unrighteousness. You can't undo your yesterday, so don't let your yesterday undo you. This is a time for moving on, not getting stuck in some failure of your past. Knowing that Jesus is the Alpha and Omega means that our past sins may be forgiven and that God can heal wounds of long ago. This sets us free in the present.**

**Present: Jesus is your best guide for living today. The Lord Jesus will take care of your "Today's" – if you but ask Him. He is Lord of the present. In the midst of our toil and suffering we are not alone. This is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice and be glad in it. He is Immanuel, God with us, the same yesterday, today, and forever. Today is a special day, because it is a day of opportunities. God has a plan for your life, and today is the first day of the rest of your life.**

**What you do today sets the course for your future. In Jesus you can fulfill your true calling from God. The good you offer today by loving God and loving neighbor creates a foundation for tomorrow. This is the time we all live in and it is discipleship time. (More on this in coming weeks).**

**Make today count for God. Pray, Praise and Worship, share Jesus with everyone you meet. [Work while it is day, the night comes when no man can work.] You can't do anything about your past, and you have to wait for tomorrow to arrive, but you can do something with today.**

**Future: Jesus can lead you toward to your eternal home. God has taken care of your Tomorrow's–that's why we can face 2023 with expectations of great things, because God is already ahead of us. There may be some things that take us by surprise, but there is nothing that will take Him by surprise. "I don't know the future, but I know who holds the future." We can rest assured, *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, ... nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Romans 8:38-39.**

## **Who Was And Is And Is To Come**

**The Book of Revelation is often read as either a book about the past, given as a sign of hope to Christians under persecution, or a book about the future, with hints and clues about the end of the world. But read Rev. 1:4 *Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come.***

**Grace to you from one “who is.” God is. This is the timeless truth that God just is. And we know that God loves His creation – that includes you - because of His revealing Himself to us in Jesus. He is with us in all times and for all time.**

***Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is, 1 John 3:2.* Our hope is in realizing the meaning and power of being a child of God. In Him our sins of yesterday are forgiven. With Him today we can grow in God’s grace. Following Him we are prepared to meet God in our future. This is possible because He is Lord of all time, He is the timeless one above it all. He entered time to be with us through it all. He’s got us covered – our past, our present, and even our future.**

***I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End, Revelation 22:13.* And He is everything in between.**