

Jesus: The Alpha and Omega

INTRODUCTION

This may sound like an overstatement, but it's not: The revelation of Jesus as the Alpha and Omega is one of the most significant revelations in the book of Revelation. I want to get your attention with that statement because it's not only one of the most significant revelations, it's one of the most challenging to our minds because it denotes or describes Jesus in His vastness. That's the very thing that He excels at: the vast and the eternal. It challenges our minds because our minds are finite and small.

What happens is that often we'll read this self-description, "The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end," and say, "OK, good." Then we move right on and fail to understand the significance of it. My point isn't that we're going to understand it all, but we want to go after it. You want to contend with it; you want to set your heart to have insight on this truth. Of all the truths in the book of Revelation, I would highlight this title of Jesus at the very top of the list. I mean, there might be a few other truths that would be at the very top like this, but Jesus as the Alpha and Omega has vast implications.

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN BESTOWING REVELATION

In John 16:14, Jesus said, "When the Holy Spirit comes, He will take what is true of Me and reveal it to you" (paraphrased), but the implication is, "if you ask Him, or if you want Him to, He'll take what is Mine and give it to you." The implication is, "if you really want Him to give this particular thing to you" —whatever is true of Jesus, and you set your heart on it and ask the Holy Spirit to lead you into that truth. I don't mean just a one-time prayer; rather, you make it a goal. "Holy Spirit, in the next few years I want to go somewhere in this particular truth."

That's one of the truths I've really locked into in the Holy Spirit, this truth of Jesus as Alpha and Omega. I groan it and pray it many times: "Holy Spirit, show me Jesus as the Alpha and Omega." Again, this is most significant, but it's also most challenging to our small minds. We need a spirit of revelation. I guess it's not that surprising, but as I've studied the commentators on it, I'm surprised that there's not much on this. I've read many different commentaries, and mostly there are only a few sentences and then it moves on because it's such a challenging truth.

"I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA"

Jesus describes Himself with this title twice, at the beginning of the book of Revelation and at the end. This is His first description of Himself. So the book is about to be given to John and Jesus says, "Know this first, I am the Alpha and Omega." Then, after the book is completely given to him at the very end, He says, "John, let Me tell you again who I am. I am the Alpha and the Omega." Jesus mentions this about Himself. It's not an angel describing Him. Jesus says very few things about Himself with His own lips, but He says this one twice, at the beginning and at the end of the book, because He's emphasizing that He has power over all the events in the book between those two descriptions. He's saying, "I have all the authority; I have all the wisdom; I have all the love necessary to oversee the unfolding of the events in this book."

This is doubly significant. I mean, not only is that the first thing Jesus says, it's the first thing the Father says. The Father only talks twice in the book of Revelation. I mean, imagine the Father. He only comes out of hiding from behind the veil, so to speak, and only speaks directly twice. What does He say both times? "I am the Alpha

and the Omega.” I mean, you cannot exaggerate the significance of that. Jesus speaks a few other times in the book, but the Father only speaks twice, at the beginning and at the end of the book. On both occasions, this is what He says. So I say, “Holy Spirit, I have to know what this means. I have to go there.”

THE HOLY SPIRIT, THE ESCORT UP THE MOUNTAIN

I want to challenge you to set your heart, not just for a week, because we’re in week seven of a series, but to set yourself for decades. I want to climb this mountain, so to speak. The Holy Spirit is the escort up this mountain, in terms of that figurative language of the knowledge of God being the Mount Everest of the Body of Christ. We’ll need help for this truth to unfold in our spirit. There are six main titles of God in the book of Revelation, and they’re grouped together. Again, that speaks of their significance, that they’re all together and they’re all spoken by the Father and the Son directly.

THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END, THE FIRST AND THE LAST

Now, as we’re covering in this class, there are many descriptions of Jesus, but only a few actual self-descriptions from His own lips. He uses these six titles: Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End, First and Last. So I have it laid out there on the notes. The Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End, they seem—I’m using the word *seem* because I’m on the front end of this; ten years from now I may say, “Wow, that was a very short-sighted statement back in 2009” —but they *seem* like they’re saying the same thing. It’s possible they’re pointing at different things. Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End seem to be saying the same thing, but the First and the Last, which we’ll look at later on in the series, is distinct. It’s not the same. We’ll look at this later, not tonight but later in the series. Jesus is the only One who says, “The First and the Last.” The Father never says that, so this is something particular to Jesus that’s distinct from the Father, that title “The First and the Last.” I believe it has to do with His glory in His humanity. That’s for another session.

These titles mention two polar extremes, the Alpha and the Omega, because what they’re meant to do is to emphasize everything in between them. So it’s two extremes, the far right and the far left, and the meaning is that everything in between is included in this title. In other words, all the events that are described in Revelation 1-21 are under Jesus’ sovereign leadership. Because Jesus is speaking these titles Himself and the Father is speaking them, they’re expressing the guarantee from God that these things are true.

It’s significant that Jesus has the same titles as the Father in terms of being the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End; that they both utter the same titles. This is emphasizing that Jesus has the same glory and the same dignity as God the Father. We’re talking about Jesus of Nazareth, a Man with a flesh-and-blood body, fully God, fully Man, but this Man that walked the streets of Galilee has the same essence of God as the Father does. I mean, this is staggering to the mind. I can’t get over the fact that this Man with a flesh-and-blood body has the same deity and the same glory as the uncreated God, because Jesus is also the uncreated God, like the Father and the Spirit. It’s one thing for the Father to be God, but it’s another thing for a man with a body and a human mind to be equally God as the Father is.

FULLY GOD AND FULLY MAN

First, I will say this. We have all heard, we all know, that Jesus is fully God, fully Man, but we run past that, we run by it, and the awe of it does not move us. Beloved, I cannot imagine anything more awesome than a human being fully God. What Jesus said, not just about the promises, not just about the assurance of victory, but about salvation, we cannot in any way compromise, as is happening so often in the Church today in the context of

tolerance of other religions. Jesus is not like Buddha or Mohammed or anyone in any of the other world religions. He is the uncreated God, like the Father and the Spirit; He is in an entirely different category from the prophets of the world religions.

They'll say, "Well, how can you say that your religion is better?"

"Because the Man who is the center of this religion is fully God, and He became a man and He died so we could enter into salvation." There's nothing like it. We cannot, in the name of humility and unity, even one small fraction of a degree lower the glory and the absoluteness of who this Man is. We can't even draw back one percent in the name of "love, unity, or humility." We have no right. We bow before the awesomeness of who this Man is.

THE FULL GLORY OF THE INVISIBLE GOD

In John 17:5, Jesus praying said, "Father, glorify Me together with Yourself with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (Jn. 17:5). Jesus shared glory with the Father before the world was ever created. He was filled with the glory of God in the full glory equal to the Father before Genesis 1. Colossians 1:15 says Jesus is "the visible image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), meaning the physical image of the invisible God. When we see the humanity of Jesus through the study of the Scriptures, it leads us and gives us insight into the invisible God. Jesus is the physical image, the physical picture of the invisible God because He's the uncreated God, like the Father.

In Hebrews 1:3, the writer of Hebrews says that Jesus is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image, or some translations say "the exact image," of the Father's person. There is no difference in the degree or glory or the reality of deity between the Father and the Son. He is the express, or exact image of the Father's person. I prefer the translations that say "the exact image" of the Father's person. He possesses total deity. The fullness of God dwells in Him.

Colossians 2:9 is a well-known verse. "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). All the fullness of the Father dwells in the Son. He shares the Father's attributes; He possesses equal dignity with the Father. This should be challenging to you. I don't mean it just inspires you. I trust that these truths inspire you, but I'm saying something a little different. Our minds are so small compared to the vastness of the truth, and our spirits are naturally dull compared to the vibrancy of this truth. I'm not saying that as a criticism; I'm saying that so that we measure the challenge before us. I say, "Father, I want to touch more of the reality of who Your glorious Son is. I want to touch more of the reality of who my beloved Bridegroom King is. I want to understand this." The Holy Spirit beckons us to beckon Him. He says, "Do you want to know more about Him as Alpha and Omega? Ask Me. I will take you on a journey."

THE A AND Z OF THE GREEK ALPHABET

We're going to learn some of the natural information about alpha and omega. The Greek alphabet starts with the letter alpha and ends with the letter omega, as most of you are familiar. John was writing primarily to a Greek audience instead of a Hebrew audience. There were plenty of Jewish believers, but he was writing to the seven churches of Asia Minor, to an audience that was mostly Gentiles. So he used the Greek language as a means of writing to them in a way they would understand. His saying "Alpha and Omega" is the same thing as saying in English, "Jesus is the A to Z." He's the Beginning and the End; He's the A to Z of everything. When we say

something is the A to Z, as in, “So-and-so knows the A to Z of mathematics,” or “the A to Z of science,” it means he knows all that is in between. It’s a figure of speech.

THE A AND Z OF EVERYTHING

Jesus said, “I am the A to Z; I am the totality of what it means to be God, but I have all the wisdom to declare the prophecy of this book, the book of Revelation.” Because remember, Jesus is revealing Himself as the Alpha and Omega in context to the unveiling of the prophecy of this book. We can’t just take Revelation 1:11 and separate it and just study “Jesus: the Alpha and Omega.” It’s in the context of the prophecy He’s giving to John. He’s saying, “John, you have to know I am the A to Z of love. I am the A to Z of power. I am the A to Z of strategic of wisdom. I am the A to Z of what it means to be God. What I’m going to tell you in this prophecy, John, you must take at the most serious level possible. In your weakness, you want to take this on the most serious level, because I as the Alpha and Omega am talking to you. I’m not just talking as a shepherd; I’m talking as the One who claims to be the A to Z of love, wisdom, power, and deity itself. I’m about to give you a message that’s commensurate with this title.”

After He gives the message of the twenty-two chapters of the book of Revelation, at the end Jesus comes and says, “I want to say it again: I am the A to Z, the Alpha and the Omega of truth. I want to put an exclamation point on the things I’ve told you in the last twenty-two chapters, John, and I want to affirm that I know everything about wisdom, everything about power, and everything about God. I stand behind the prophecy I just gave you.”

KING OF GLORY, KING OF EVERYTHING

Then, as we’ve already covered, the Father does the same thing. He says it on the front end of the prophecy and on the back end of the prophecy. What Jesus is saying through this title, the Father is saying the same thing. He’s saying He’s the sovereign Lord over everything in existence, as well, not just the events that will transpire in the book. It’s bigger than the events in the book, although that’s the immediate context in which He’s revealing this dimension of His glory. He’s over everything in existence; He’s over every event in history, in all of natural history. It says in Psalm 29 that even at the time of the Flood He sat as King even in that hour of great crisis, enthroned as King in the greatest turbulence in history up to that time.

THE TRANSCENDENCE AND OMNIPRESENCE OF GOD

He’s revealing Himself as fully God, as deity. He’s revealing Himself as transcendent. What that means is that He’s infinitely superior to everything that exists. He’s revealing His eternal nature, His perfect leadership. He’s saying in this one title as the Father that He’s omnipotent; that means He’s all-powerful. Most of you are aware of that. He’s omnipresent, meaning He’s everywhere. He’s omniscient; that means He has all knowledge. Of course the word *omni-* means all. He’s saying, “I have absolute completeness. I have all the power, all the love, all the wisdom, to lead God’s purposes to completion and to bring human destiny to the place that God has ordained.”

VAST, AND YET INTENSELY PERSONAL

That’s not just corporate destiny; this isn’t just who Jesus is before history, this is who Jesus is, actually, even before you. He is the Alpha and the Omega for your personal destiny. I’m certainly not anchored enough in this truth. I’m studying it; I’m challenged by it; I’m wooed by the Spirit; the Spirit is wooing me to go deep, and I’m beckoning the Spirit, saying, “I want to go deep in this truth; I want to know Jesus on this ground.” I want to say

this: As we come into living understanding of Jesus as Alpha and Omega, as challenging as it is and as naturally repelling to our human spirit as this truth is because of its vastness and because of the unfamiliarity of our mind to the vastness of this—it's unfamiliar. Our minds don't even want to go there. It repels the bigness of thoughts that are so unfamiliar. The Spirit says, "Beckon Me; I will take you there."

ABSOLUTE IN COMPLETENESS

He is complete in every way; He is absolute in completeness. As the Alpha and the Beginning—I'm assuming at this point in time that that's saying the same thing, but I'm also aware that the Holy Spirit may be saying "no" in the most general way. They may have different facets of emphasis, those two titles. Jesus as Alpha is referring to His eternal preexistence. As I've already said, He has existed forever as the uncreated God. There was never a time when Jesus was not. In John 8 when He stood before the Pharisees and they said, "Well, Abraham is our father," then Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jn. 8:58). They drew back. They were upset. He said, "I am the uncreated God, like the Father." We're talking about a man walking the streets of Israel. They couldn't comprehend that anyone could make such a statement as that. So when He says, "I am the Alpha," He is referring to His preexistence, to being eternally preexistent before the creation of the world. "The uncreated God" is what He's saying. Jesus uses the title, "I am the Beginning."

THE BEGINNING OF THE CREATION OF GOD

Then, in Revelation 3:14, Jesus is speaking Himself and says this: "These things says... the beginning of the creation of God" (Rev. 3:14). So He says, "My title is the Beginning," and then here in Revelation 3:14 He says, "The beginning of the creation of God." Some cult groups read that and think He was the first One created. That's how they read it, but it's not what He's saying. He's using the word *beginning* in a manner similar to the word *alpha*. He is the Creator: He is the source, meaning He is the beginning of the power. He's at the front of the line of the power that was used in creation.

Not only does He have the power, He's also saying, "I am the Beginning; I am at the front of the line in terms of rank of authority." So it's a statement about His power and a statement about His rank. He's at the front of the class. We might say in English, "He's the beginning; He's the front of the line." He's not talking about the beginning as the first one created, but the first who's the source, the cause, and the reason for creation. Creation begins in His power and in His heart with the Father. That's what He's saying.

PREEMINENCE IN ALL THINGS

Now Paul the apostle touched this same truth in Colossians 1:18. He said, "Jesus is the head of the body, the Church," and, "Jesus is the beginning, that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). It talks about Jesus being the firstborn from the dead. He's the first One raised from the dead, as we will see when we study Jesus as the First and the Last, but it's more than being the first raised from the dead. He's at the front of the line; He's at the first of the class. He's first in power among those who will be resurrected in eternity. There is none like Him. He is the heir; He is the firstborn. He is the first in authority in what He's saying.

Paul said that the point of all this is that you would understand that He has preeminence. Not that you would misunderstand and think He's the best of the created of the human race. He's not the best of created people. The point is this: He has the preeminence, the authority, and the wisdom over all creation. That is Paul's point.

TREMBLING WITH CONFIDENCE BEFORE JESUS

I'm just going to say the same thing again, but I'm going to put it in different words so you can get some handles on this and get it into your prayer life. You and the Holy Spirit can go on a journey together. Again I say, "Holy Spirit, escort me up this mountain of truth. I want to know Jesus this way. I want my spirit to tremble before the glory of who this Man is." Again, as we understand this, it gives us confidence. Beloved, when we get more rooted in this truth, we need not fear anything. If we understand who it is we're connected to, who it is that we are co-heirs with, when we understand who it is, it changes the way we view the future. It changes the way we view trouble. That's one of the reasons Jesus is speaking this truth to the saints, to the churches that were in persecution, because if they could get anchored in this truth, even in the face of death, they would not waiver.

THE SOURCE OF ALL THINGS

If Jesus is merely a provider, someone who provides for our needs, that is not enough. But Jesus says, "Oh, I am far beyond that. I am the Alpha. I am like the Father. I am the Alpha and the Father is the Alpha. I am the source of everything. You are anchored in relationship with Me. Even death itself you can face fearlessly, for even if you lose your life, you live forever, because I am the Alpha." That's what He's saying to them, a persecuted church.

As the Alpha, He is the first cause. He is the source of all things. He is the creative power. He is the genius behind everything. That's what He's saying as the Alpha. In Colossians 1:16, Paul pushes the boundaries of our ability to comprehend. He makes this statement because it's true, but we stand before this awesome truth and we stand almost as beggars, as paupers in terms of the truth. Lord, we hardly grasp what these great truths mean.

THE END PURPOSE OF CREATION

"By Him all things were created, whether in the heavenly realm or in the earthly realm, whether visible or invisible" (Col. 1:16, paraphrased). Everything was created by Jesus, but that is not enough. He is not only the Alpha. It wasn't only created by Him as the source, it's created for Him. He is the Omega; He is the purpose; He is the end reason for why there's a created order. So He's not only the source of creation, He's the purpose of the creation. That's what we'll look at in a moment, that Omega means. He's the goal. He is the end purpose for which creation exists.

I will say this, that when Jesus becomes our Alpha, when Jesus becomes our Omega, even with a little understanding, it opens up a whole new world of possibilities of where we can go with Him in our spirits. "Holy Spirit, let me see Jesus as my Alpha. I want to go on a journey with You, Holy Spirit, into whole new experiences with God." I'm not talking about strange, exotic experiences; I'm talking about my spirit growing in truth and in the fear of the Lord.

THE LOGIC BEHIND ALL CREATION

Jesus is not only the Alpha and the Beginning. He is the Omega; He is the end. He is not the source only, but He is the purpose. He is the reason; He is the logic behind creation. Jesus is the Omega. He is the final reason, but He is also the final authority. What's in His heart is the end product of where the created order is going. This affirms that all creation has its final or highest purpose, its end purpose, in the idea of Jesus Himself. He is the

goal of history. He's not just the One who forgave us to give us a better deal in life; He Himself is the goal for why we have a life.

BRINGING NATURAL HISTORY TO SALVATION AND JUDGMENT

When we connect with that, our spirit prospers. The more we connect with that reality, that He is the reason—it's not just that we would be blessed through eternity, though that is important to Him; He loves our welfare but there's a bigger story even behind that story. He is the purpose. The infinitely good One who is the Alpha is also the final reason for everything He creates. He is the Omega. He is the Beginning and the End of everything. It's orchestrated by the same Man for the same purpose. As the Omega, He's going to bring natural history to salvation and to judgment. All of natural history is going to end in redemption or in judgment, one way or the other. He is the End; He is going to see it to its completion. You can use the word *completion* there as one of the words associated with the title Omega: the completion, the reason, the purpose, the goal, the final authority, the final purpose.

Nothing is outside of Jesus' purpose or authority. Now, again, this encouraged greatly the persecuted saints because they were losing so much in the natural. They had to know that in reality they were losing nothing, because everything had its purpose in Him. The point of the career wasn't just for the sake of the career. It's that we would experience Him and His pleasure in a greater way. That's the purpose of a ministry. It's not just so that we would be blessed, or that we would bless others, though those are important to the Lord, but there's something bigger. He is the Omega behind even the anointing of the ministry He gives you. He is the reason for it at the end of the day. Jesus guides not just human history, but our life personally to its rightful end, to its fullness. He is the way to fullness. He is the Omega. He is the way to fullness, to completion.

Now of course we know that intellectually, but when that gets hold of our spirit, then we don't need to drink from other wells to seek fullness. We all know that He is the way to fullness. He is fullness, but we drink from other wells because we don't really see Him as our Omega yet. I don't say that negatively. I'm certainly at the beginning of the beginning of where I need to be in this, but I want to go after this. I've got a vision to experience Him as the Omega, the completion; that He's not just a means to an end, He is the end. He is the reason itself for why we are saved.

DECLARING THE END FROM THE BEGINNING

In Isaiah 46:10, God is speaking. He says, "Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure'" (Is. 46:10). In other words, "I will see it to an end; I will see it to completion." Jesus is omnipotent as the Alpha and the Omega, because to be the Alpha and the Omega is founded on the reality that He possesses all power, because He cannot be the Alpha and Omega without being omnipotent.

THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNS

In Revelation 19:6, the multitudes around the throne declare, "For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns" (Rev. 19:6). Obviously, omnipotent means, "He possesses all power." It's true of the Father and of the Son. That's inherent in the titles "Alpha and Omega." He has infinite power; it can never be increased. He can never gain more power than He has, no matter how many people come to Him even in salvation. He possesses all power Himself. He is the source of all power that exists. This is the assurance of all His promises, that He's the Omnipotent God. This fills us with comfort. It fills us with courage.

I have a number of passages. The reason I gave them to you is so you could declare them. Again, your spirit may feel unresponsive to these grand truths and your mind may bow down and say, “I don’t want to go there,” because it’s rigorous even to pursue this line of thought. We’re crossing from the familiar to the unfamiliar as those with created, finite minds. This is challenging, but I wanted to give you some verses so you can declare these passages to the Lord, regardless of whether you feel anything while you’re doing it. You say, “Jesus, this is who You are,” and you read these different passages. I wanted to give them to you; I’m just going to point them out one by one. They’re about the omnipotence of Jesus.

THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL BE REVEALED

It’s related to the enemies in the book of Revelation because Isaiah 40 is actually talking about the timeframe in which the book of Revelation unfolds in history, in the generation the Lord returns. Of course, Isaiah 40 has been applicable from the time God gave it to Isaiah, in approximately 700 BC, up to today, 2,700 years later, but it has a particular application in the generation where all the nations see the glory of God together (Is. 40:5). That’s the context. There’s something unusual that’s going to happen when all the nations see the glory of God together. They’re going to be enemies. The book of Revelation lays out the Antichrist and the false prophet.

“HE WILL BRING THE PRINCES OF THE EARTH TO NOTHING”

Look at Isaiah 40:23. We’re talking about Jesus as the Alpha and the Omega. The book of Isaiah develops the theme of the Alpha and the Omega, the First and Last, even more than other books do. Isaiah had a particular connectedness to these truths that Jesus is confessing and declaring about Himself. Read this; it’s talking about Jesus: “He will bring the princes of the earth to nothing” (Is. 40:23)—that means those who are opposing Him, because we know from the Scriptures that the kings of the earth will gather together against Him and against His purposes. But He will bring them to nothing. He will make the judges of the earth useless in their ability to stop His purposes. I don’t care if 200 kings of the earth all come together in unity; they will be useless before the Alpha and Omega.

“SCARCELY SHALL THEY BE PLANTED, SCARCELY SOWN...”

Look at Isaiah 40:24. We’re talking about these kings: “Scarcely shall they be planted” (Is. 40:24)—scarcely shall they come on the world scene; scarcely shall their political careers be sown; scarcely shall their authority be established, when Jesus will blow on them they will wither, and the whirlwind will take them away like the stubble, or the straw. Now actually, in context, this is talking about the Antichrist. Scarcely will he be planted, three and a half years, and Jesus will come and blow on him. His worldwide dominion will blow away just like the chaff in the wind.

That is the Alpha and Omega. I had to read that one, but these other passages are along the same line. Jesus is self-sufficient. He is self-existent, meaning He is the beginning, not just the source but the reason, for the whole created order. Jesus has no origin. God is self-caused; He is not caused by anyone else. I don’t even know how to say it. He is uncreated; He is helped by none. He owes nothing to the world that His hand has created. He loves the world that His hands have created, but He’s not in debt to it at all.

HE HAS NEED OF NOTHING

As human beings, every second of our life we’re dependent on Him, but He’s not dependent on us for anything. He is totally self-sufficient. It says in Acts 17:25, “It is not as though He needs anything” (Acts 17:25). He

desires us, but He does not need us. He chooses to enjoy relationship with us. We don't come to Him and make His day. We don't bail Him out. I mean, we do make His heart glad, but we don't meet an unmet need in His heart. When we come and bring all of our wealth and all of our allegiance to Him, it doesn't add to His strength at all. Emotionally, He enjoys it and finds desire and delight in it, but in terms of His strength, His strength doesn't increase because a billion people will come to the Lord in the great harvest. It's not that because now He has a greater following, His power is somehow enhanced. That's not how it works. Jesus is totally satisfied in the fellowship of the Trinity. He didn't create human beings because He was lonely; He created them to show His glory and because He chose to desire them, not because He had an unmet need. He did not create in a vacuum, or in a need that was unmet.

It says in John 17 that before the world was created, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit enjoyed deep love in their fellowship. He was fully satisfied before ever the earth was created. He created in the overflow of His love, not in a vacuum or in need.

“WHAT DO YOU HAVE THAT YOU DID NOT FIRST RECEIVE?”

Paul said this: “What do you have that you did not first receive?” is the idea. His point is, “Now, what do you have? Do you have wisdom? You received it from God. Do you have strength? You received it from God. Do you have gifts? Well, God gave them to you. Do you have breath? He gave it to you. What do you have that you did not first receive from God?” Paul's logic is, “Now, if you did receive it, if that's true, why are you boasting as though you didn't receive it, as though somehow it started within you, with you as the source?” He says, “Why are you drawing attention to yourself as though you're the Alpha and the Omega of your gifting?” He says, “It was a gift of God because He enjoys you, because He has set His heart upon you. Whatever you receive from the Lord, carry it as though you received it as a gift, not as though it was something that was generated within your own being because of your own inherent goodness of some sort.” We all know that, but how easily the human spirit steps across that line and gets that funny attitude called pride!

STABILIZING AND STRENGTHENING THE CHURCH

We have three or four minutes left. Again, you can read the notes and challenge your mind with these difficult ideas: these ideas that we naturally repel, we read them and they bounce right off, but we say “no.” We're not content with that. We're going after this thing. I think it would be one of the most challenging and probably one of the most difficult truths to make known, the truth of Jesus as the Alpha and Omega. But it's the most satisfying and even the most significant in terms of stabilizing and strengthening the Church for the book of Revelation events, because if Jesus started with this and ended with this revelation, and the Father does the same, you can be sure of the events of the book of Revelation. We must be anchored in this truth. My point is, it is worth the effort.

THE EVIDENTIAL POWER OF BEAUTY

Just a few facts here: I highly recommend a book by Thomas Dubay called *The Evidential Power of Beauty*. How many of you have ever read that book? OK. Two or three of you; that's OK. This book will really stir your spirit in a dramatic way. I take a few chapters, seven, eight, and nine, and I love them; I've read them over and over. They are beyond my grasp intellectually, because what he does is to take the majesty of Jesus into the realm of science. I wanted to give you a little touch. I'm not even quoting the book directly because I have other sources as well, but I'm mostly drawing from him just to stir you up. This is by no means a summary of the book; it's to stir your spirit up a little.

MACRO-, MIDI-, AND MICRO-MARVELS

What he does in this book in chapters seven, eight, and nine is to take three different facets of creation, of Jesus the Creator. He talks about what he calls the “macro-marvels,” speaking of the vastness of the universe, *macro*-meaning *big*. Then he goes to “midi-marvels,” and that’s the marvels of animal and plant life. He puts a whole chapter on it. It’s absolutely mind-boggling, a little deposit of what the truth is about the created order, even in what he calls the midi-marvels. Then he has the micro-marvels, where he takes a very popular, easy, human, friendly approach to the micro world. How vast, how vast the universe is in the cellular level down! There is as much complexity in the human cell as there is in the universe. There’s a universe on the inside as big as the universe on the outside. He takes the microscope and brings us into that world. In the macro, he takes the telescope and shows us a little of how big the world is, and then he takes the microscope and shows us that it’s just as complex on the small level, in the infinitesimal, not just the vastness.

SOME INCREDIBLE FACTS ABOUT JESUS

Anyway, I wanted to stir you with that. I’ll give you a thought or two. This is very hit and miss; a few little quotes. The sun is about a million miles in diameter. It’s approximately a million miles around. He’s got more of the facts in the book there. The earth is about 8,000 miles in diameter. You can fit a million earths into the space of the sun. You can put the earth a million times into the space of the sun. The sun is only one star. The surface of the sun reaches two million degrees Fahrenheit. Now we’re talking about the Alpha and Omega now. We’re talking about a man, who is fully God, who created the sun! We are talking about a Man who walked the streets of Galilee who understood the science behind the sun because He is the Alpha and Omega of the sun. Get this! The sun burns enough energy that it could be compared to a hundred billion hydrogen bombs going off every second. That’s how much energy is coming off the sun. The sun is one star. There are different views, but many say there are a hundred billion stars in the Milky Way Galaxy. The sun is one of them. It’s not even one of the biggest ones! Who is this Man anyway? The sun burns up about four million tons of its own mass every second. Look at this! It loses four million tons of mass every second, and at that rate the sun will exhaust itself in six billion years at the rate that it’s losing mass right now. Look at the numbers there: It’s losing four million tons of mass a second! At that rate, the light will be out in six billion years. That’s how big the sun is. The sun is only one star in the Milky Way Galaxy. No one knows. Some say billions, but some say a hundred billion. There are a hundred million galaxies of which the Milky Way is one of the smaller ones.

THE MEASURE OF HIS LOVE

Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega. Who is He? When He was standing before the Pharisees, they had no idea who it was they were talking to. When He hung on the cross, we cannot imagine what was happening in the fullness of what it meant that He was giving Himself to us, and the measure of commitment He has to us. I already said this, but I’ll say it again: There are a hundred million galaxies in the known universe. The Milky Way is only one, and that’s a small one. The time it takes to travel in the known universe from one end to the other at the speed of light would take fifteen billion light years—fifteen billion light years!

Thomas Dubay only gives a fraction of a percentage of the knowledge that science has in a single chapter. But he stirs your spirit as to who Jesus is. Now the midi-marvels are the marvels you can sense with your five senses. You can discern them without a microscope or telescope. There are ten million species of animal and plant life on the earth—ten million! There are 35,000 species of orchid! That’s just the orchid, 35,000! I gave you a few little things here: There are 40,000 muscles in an elephant trunk.

THE VASTNESS OF A CELL

He goes on and develops the marvel and complexity of what we can measure even with a telescope or a microscope. Then he goes into the infinitesimal, the very small, the micro level, and he develops what is well-known in the scientific world as the complexity of the human cell. A human cell is like a vast city, full of complications and complexity. The tiniest cell is made up of 100 billion atoms. Catch this! A single cell has 100 million atoms. Of course they're all different sizes, but even a single cell has more information contained in it than all thirty volumes of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. There's more information in one cell, in a plant or an animal, than in thirty volumes of that encyclopedia. That's how vast the world is in terms of its smallness.

Each person has a hundred trillion living cells. There are 15 million bacteria in a drop of water. There are trillions of cells in one branch on a tree—trillions! And each one of them is a vast city in its own right, containing more information than all thirty volumes of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega. Who is this Man? He is orchestrating history, unveiling Himself as the Alpha and the Omega.

AGREEING WITH JESUS AS THE ALPHA AND OMEGA

We will end with this. It's the A-R-K principle. In terms of prayer principles, you want to apply this prayer principle to each of these descriptions of Jesus. A: You want to agree with it. Simply say it; declare it to him. Again, my point isn't to make you feel bad, but how many times have you settled your spirit, gotten quiet, and stared at the glory of God by faith, at the throne of Revelation 4, and said to Jesus, "You are the Alpha and the Omega." Just declare it. Agree with who He is. Unless you're unusual, you probably haven't done it very many times in the last ten years, but we want to start getting this into our language. We want to start saying this.

SEEKING REVELATION AND KEEPING THE PROPHECY

Then R: Simply ask the Holy Spirit. In John 16:14, Jesus said, "The Spirit will take what is Mine and give it to you." Say, "Holy Spirit, take me on a journey. Give me more insight into who He is."

Then K is the promise in the book of Revelation, "To those who keep the prophecy" —meaning, those who apply the prophecy to their life. We want to set our heart before the Lord. We want to give our self to Him and set our self to obey Him, to worship Him, to honor Him, to submit to Him as the Alpha and the Omega, not just as One who forgives us, but as the Alpha and the Omega, the source and the reason for the whole created order. "Lord Jesus, I want to give myself to honor You. I want to be a faithful witness based on who You really are. I want to apply the prophecy in my everyday life. I want to encourage you to take this A-R-K prayer principle and apply it to this truth that is not easy to get hold of. But the Holy Spirit is very willing.

Again, you can be sure of this, that if Jesus introduced and ended the book of Revelation saying this about Himself, and if the Father only speaks twice in the entire book, both times declaring that He's the Alpha and the Omega, we can be sure that this truth is bigger than that which meets the eye.

Let's stand.

MINISTRY TIME

So I wanted to push you tonight. I want to stretch your brain. On the way here, Anne said, "How are you doing?"

I said, “Oh, I love Jesus, but I hardly know Him at all. But I love Him.” How many of you feel that way? I love Him but I just don’t know Him. I’m in the book of life. We’ve got a long time to get to know each other, but I want to know Him now. Let’s worship.



IHOPU eSchool

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PRAYER UNIVERSITY

International House of Prayer University eSchool programs take all the training that you would receive in Kansas City to your local context through online courses and group study programs.

Our eSchool credit and enrichment courses are offered in downloadable audio and video, with course notes, study guides, tests, and student forums. All you need is a computer and broadband Internet connection.

For those who would like to study with their house of prayer, church fellowship or home group, we also offer our eSchool courses in a group study format with DVDs and attached notes.

So wherever you are, you can receive training from IHOPU instructors, study at your own pace, and be equipped for ministry.

IHOP.org/eschool



FREE Resources



MIKEBICKLE.org

Online Teaching Library

This library comprises a wealth of resources from over 25 years of Mike's teaching ministry and provides access to hundreds of resources in various formats including streaming video, downloadable video, and audio, accompanied by study notes and transcriptions, absolutely free of charge.



IHOP.org/theprayerroom

24/7 Prayer Room Webstream

The International House of Prayer of Kansas City is an evangelical missions organization centered around the 24/7 prayer room, open to the public day and night. It is a place where we never cease worshipping the Lord and interceding for our world. Join us live via the free 24/7 webstream from the prayer room.

Also on **IHOP.org**: News about our upcoming conferences, Forerunner Bookstore, and more...