

Session 3 Jesus as the Alpha and Omega

Please refer to the teaching notes for this message.

INTRODUCTION

This is one of the most significant truths. That's why I wanted to go in the other direction in the book of Revelation, the revelation of Jesus and the Father as the Alpha and Omega. It's the most repeated truth in the book of Revelation about God. Jesus twice declares this truth about Himself, and the Father only speaks two times in the book of Revelation. On both occasions, He said, "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (Rev. 1:8; 21:6).

This most significant truth is also a most challenging truth to grasp. Because our finite mind is so unfamiliar with the truths related to Jesus as Alpha and Omega, the truths of His sovereignty and all the attributes of Him being the sovereign God. It's a very challenging truth. Here's what I want to urge you to do: not to rush over this quickly, for example by reading it and saying, "Alpha and Omega, OK, got it! Next verse..."

No, stop. This is the Mount Everest of the Body of Christ. This is the giant mountain that we will be scaling even in the age to come and throughout all eternity. This is one of those titles where you stop and ask the Holy Spirit, "Teach me, Holy Spirit." I've prayed that prayer many times about this aspect of Jesus: "Holy Spirit, You said You would declare Jesus to me" (cf. Jn. 16:15). "Declare Him to me. Speak to my heart in a way that I can understand. Declare Him to me as the Alpha and the Omega."

"I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END"

Paragraph B. Jesus described Himself two times this way: once at the beginning of the book of Revelation, and once at the end. When He appears to John in Revelation 1:10, John says, "I heard a voice behind me, like a trumpet" (Rev. 1:10, paraphrased). The voice behind him was Jesus. John turns around and Jesus says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (v. 11, NKJV). This is the very first utterance Jesus makes in the book of Revelation.

At the end of the book, in chapter 22, at the very end, He appears to John and says it again: "John, know this: I am the Alpha and the Omega" (Rev. 22:13, paraphrased). We know that in everything that happens, all the events of the book of Revelation, He is sovereign over all. That's what He's saying: "I have total control over the Antichrist. I have total control over the New Jerusalem. I have total control over the Book of Life. I have total control over all the angels and the judgments. The Holy Spirit goes forth to do My bidding, to glorify Me and to fulfill My purpose and the Father's purpose."

The point is that we have every reason to be confident, even in the midst of these fearful events, with these dynamic promises. When the enemy comes and says, "They're not going to happen anyway," we can say, "He is the Alpha and Omega. He is the Beginning and End of everything to do with power and wisdom and love and all the promises of God, and all the enemies of God will be brought to their completion in the purpose of God."

Paragraph C. Again, like the Son, the Father made this statement at the beginning and the end of the book. These are the only two times in the book of Revelation that the Father speaks. He "comes out of the shadows," so to speak. He's always hidden behind the scenes. John doesn't see His face, but John hears His voice and He says twice, at the beginning and the end of the book of Revelation, "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (Rev. 1:8; 21:6).

Paragraph D. The Alpha and the Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. The *alpha* is where the Greek alphabet starts and the *omega* is where it ends. Right from the beginning, this is remarkable: that the God of Israel would have as one of His eternal names and titles, a Gentile, Greek name. This was mind-blowing to John, undoubtedly, and to Jewish believers. When we read the Old Testament, the titles of the God of Israel are profoundly Hebraic. The Father's first statement in the book, in chapter 1:8, and Jesus' first statement in the book, in verse 11, both identify with a Greek name.

This is remarkable. What They're both saying is this. They're saying many things, but it's a statement of Jesus' compassion and His commitment and His zeal for the Gentile nations. He's saying, "I identify with them. In My deity, I will win them and bring them into My kingdom with power." Most of John's readers, most of the people who read this letter that John wrote, were Greeks. They understood what the phrase meant. It declared the completeness, from A to Z. We might say, "They know the A to Z of mathematics," or "the A to Z of science"—which means they know the beginning and the end and everything in between. "They know the beginnings, they know the big stuff at the end, the really complicated stuff, and everything in between."

Jesus is saying, "I possess total sovereignty. I have complete power and authority and insight into everything." That's what He's saying.

HE IS INFINITELY TRANSCENDENT IN ALL OF HIS QUALITIES

Paragraph E. This title emphasizes His sovereignty. To be sovereign means He has all power. He possesses all power. In other words, He possesses absolute freedom. No one else in existence has absolute freedom. No one can interfere with His will unless He allows them.

You've heard the phrase, "That guy is as free as a bird!" A bird isn't that free. A bird can fly here and there. They're restrained by the food source, they're restrained by the weather, they're restrained by the laws of gravity. They're restrained by a limited amount of strength. They're not free. They're confined to many laws of limitations. Jesus is saying, "I'm sovereign. I have absolute freedom. There's absolutely nothing that can hinder Me or cause Me to be different unless I decree it so."

The reason we have a free will that affects Him is only because in His sovereignty He said, "I want them to have a free will that moves My heart." That's why we have it. The only reason the devil exists is because Jesus allowed the devil to exist. It wasn't a surprise event: "Oh no, evil exists! What are We going to do with it?" Because the Lord allows the free choice with real temptation, the temptations of the devil, and a real option that affects a limited sphere of His eternal empire forever and forever.

He said, "In My plan spanning billions of billions of billions of years, I allow that infringement of My kingdom to give a real temptation, to give a real free choice, and in My sovereignty I've allowed that to happen."

The point is this: even the negatives that exist don't infringe upon His sovereignty and His freedom. To have total sovereignty implies that He has various attributes that only God has. He has the attribute of transcendence.

Paragraph E. Transcendence means that He is infinitely superior in all of His qualities. His power isn't just greater than the created being that has the most power. He isn't just over them; He is infinitely greater in power than the created being that possesses the most power. His love isn't just superior; it's infinitely superior. His

wisdom isn't just better than the wisest archangel; it's infinitely better. That's what the word *transcendence* means.

For Him to be sovereign, to have absolute freedom, He must possess transcendence, absolute superiority in every single attribute that He possesses. It's remarkable that He has that kind of authority. His power can't increase or decrease. He has all of it. Even those in the realm of darkness who misuse their power, use it under His guide and under His leadership. The choice is real that they make, but they only have the ability to make the choice because He gave them the power to make it. There's no doctrine more satisfying or that gives the saints more confidence than His sovereignty. Even the fact that He loves us: if He wasn't sovereign, if He wasn't the Alpha and the Omega, if He loved us but didn't have perfect power, the enemy could command triumph over Him if He loved us and couldn't do anything about it. His sovereignty gives us such confidence when we really take hold of this.

Having said there's no doctrine more satisfying to the saints than the sovereignty of God, let me now say this: there's no doctrine more hated by unbelievers than the sovereignty of God. They don't like God having absolute control. That offends them. God is the only One who is a law unto Himself. They don't like it. Because He is sovereign, His standards are the absolute ones. All who say no to His standards ultimately come into judgment if they don't repent and receive the grace of God. There's no doctrine that bothers unbelievers more than this doctrine of Jesus being the Alpha and the Omega.

It involves His deity, His sovereignty as God. When He says He's the First and the Last, that means He's sovereign as a man. He has sovereignty as God, Alpha and Omega, and He has sovereignty as a man, the First and the Last.

OUR SELF-EXISTENT, SELF-SUFFICIENT CREATOR

Paragraph E. He possesses self-existence. There was never a time when He didn't exist. This stretches our mind; this challenges our thinking. We're finite. We will go on forever, but we obviously have a beginning. He has no beginning. He eternally preexisted: long before the creation of the heavens and the earth, He existed with the Father and the Spirit.

Not only is He self-existent; He's self-sufficient. He has no need. He doesn't create the human race because He's lonely. He doesn't create the human realm to meet a need in His heart. He creates the human realm because He is the fountain of desire. His desire doesn't imply lack; He's completely satisfied within the fellowship of the Trinity. He's in overflowing love, in desire. In that love and desire, the very fountain of love and desire, He declares in His sovereignty, "I want to share My joy and My love with a race called human beings."

He didn't create humans because He was lonely or had an unmet need. He created humans because He was so satisfied in the overflowing joy and love He possesses. He wanted to share it because love demands to be shared, to be love.

HE EXHAUSTS THE VERY VOCABULARY OF EXCELLENCE

Paragraph E. Because He's sovereign, He's omnipresent. He's omnipotent and omniscient. Most of you know those words. *Omnipotent* means He has all power: "Omni-power," all power. He has all knowledge: the Greek word *science* is the word *knowledge*. He's *omniscient*. He's *omnipresent*. He's all-present. He's everywhere.

He's fully attentive to what's happening everywhere, even down in hell (Ps. 139:7-10). He exhausts the very vocabulary of excellence. There are no human words that can describe what is implied by His possessing sovereignty with absolute freedom, with an infinite supply of power, love, and wisdom. He has all love, so He desires the best for everyone. He has all wisdom, so He knows the best. He has all power, so He can actually accomplish the best. If He lacked any one of those three, He wouldn't be sovereign and His purpose could be undermined. If He had perfect love, all love, but He had no power, His love could be stopped. If He had perfect love and power, but He didn't have wisdom, He might misapply His love. If He had total wisdom and total power, but not love, He would have another plan that wouldn't be centered on love. But because of His omnipresence, and the fact that He has all power, all wisdom, all love, He has awareness in His active presence everywhere in the created order. Because He's Spirit, He can do that. That's the most remarkable truth.

These attributes all combine together under this title, this name, "Alpha and Omega": "I'm the beginning of all love, all power, all wisdom, and all presence. I'm the end of all love, all power, all wisdom, and all presence. I'm everywhere. I'm not just the beginning and the end; I'm everything in between. Everything comes to wholeness under My leadership."

This is the first declaration that Jesus makes in the book of Revelation. Again, it's one of the final statements He makes at the end, in chapter 22. He's saying to the saints in the first century, "I know and understand what you're going through." Many were being persecuted. He described the enemies of righteousness becoming even more intensely evil, beyond what they were even in the first century. Jesus was saying in the first century, "It's going to be worse before it's over." It's 2,000 years later, but it will be worse. "I want you to know, even when it's more severe at the end of the age, My power is sufficient then. Therefore it's totally sufficient now. Therefore, throughout all of church history, My power, My love, My wisdom is attending to all of your needs. I know all of your enemies. None can surprise Me. None can outwit Me; none can outrun Me. None can out-power Me. I have complete control over everything. You're Mine, so you have it made forever. I'm the Alpha and the Omega." That's what He's saying.

PERFECTLY AIMED ARROWS THAT UNFAILINGLY HIT THEIR MARK

Paragraph F. Again, let me repeat for the sake of emphasis that this is the vision Jesus is about to give John. Remember, we're in chapter 1. He hears a loud voice like a trumpet. He turns around and here's this glorious Man who is fully God and fully Man, with eyes like fire and a face like the sun. He looks right into John's eyes: "I'm the Alpha and the Omega." John is absolutely overwhelmed by what he sees, but also by the power of what this Man says to Him. Jesus says very little in that vision. He only speaks a few phrases, but those phrases are like arrows that strike his heart, like perfectly aimed arrows that strike him and hit the mark. He says, "John, I'm about to show you the events that will take place where the hostility against My people will go far beyond what it is now in the first century; but My power will be sufficient and the greatest revival in history will go along with that hostility. All this will I show you. I have a lot to tell you, but I want you to know this: none of it needs to move My people."

"THE LORD SAT ENTHRONED AT THE FLOOD, AND THE LORD SITS AS KING FOREVER"

The verse that I love so much related to this is Psalm 29:10. The Lord sat enthroned. He was on His throne at the time of Noah's flood—the greatest crisis in human history. The whole known world was flooded. Everyone was slain, everyone died, with the exception of eight people. That's unparalleled. There's nothing like this in history. That's why Jesus compares the events of the second coming to the days of Noah. It's the greatest crisis in the human race.

Someone might say, “In that crisis, where was the Lord at?” The psalmist tells us, David tells us: He was sitting on His throne in complete power during the flood (Ps. 29:10). He wasn’t moved from His tranquility and from His absolute confidence in His plan, His power, His love, and His wisdom; and the Lord sits in that same posture, on that same throne forever and forever.

What Jesus is telling John is this: “Throughout all the book of Revelation”—and therefore all the lesser events throughout church history in our individual lives—“I sit enthroned as King. I’m the Alpha and the Omega. You need not waver; you need not lose your confidence. Whatever you lose through persecution or the attack of the enemy, you’ll receive fully beyond anything you can imagine forever. You can’t lose anything that’s good, really, that you won’t get back forever.” Jesus is saying, “I promise you that. I’m the Alpha and the Omega. I have authority to follow through on this promise. I have all the power, all the love, and My presence is everywhere. It’s My plan that I’m administrating. The enemy is so small compared to who I am.”

Some people have this idea that the enemy is so powerful. Compared to us, he *is* so powerful. Compared to Jesus, he’s nothing. It’s not even close. It’s not this hostile battle between Jesus and Satan. Jesus is infinitely superior to Satan. At the end when He stands before the Antichrist, He blows on him and the Antichrist is destroyed. Jesus doesn’t lift a finger. It’s over (2 Thess. 2:8). Because of His sovereign freedom, He’s unrivaled by any hostile power. He’s undisturbed by any attack of the enemy. It’s a most remarkable reality.

IN CHRIST DWELLS ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD IN BODILY FORM

Top of page two. Paragraph D. As the Alpha and Omega, He possesses the fullness of God. He is coequal as God. He’s as much God as the Father and the Spirit. Everything Jesus has, the Father has given to Him. In Jesus dwells all the fullness of God in a human body (Col. 2:9). Beloved, this is so staggering, and we all know this. This is so staggering, that the Alpha and Omega is a human. We’re talking about a man who walked the streets of Galilee. We’re talking about a man who ate and slept and was born as a baby and grew up, who had all the experiences of life in terms of righteousness and goodness. All the fullness of God dwelt in Him in a bodily form. As the Alpha and Omega, He’s fully God.

THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD

He’s the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). Someone says, “What does God look like?” Look at the face of Jesus and you understand what the invisible God, the Father, is like. 2 Corinthians 4:6: the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus. Look at His character; look at His face. Look at the way He spoke, the way He lived, and the way He acted, and you’ll see what God is like.

THE EXACT REPRESENTATION OF THE FATHER

Hebrews 1: He’s the very brightness of the Father’s glory (Heb. 1:2-3). He is the express image of God’s person. He is the express image. I like the phrase that some translations use, “The exact representation,” instead of the phrase, “The express image.” He is the exact representation of the Father. All that is included in this title, “Alpha and Omega.”

Roman numeral III. As the Alpha, He is the first cause. He is the source of everything. He is the source of all power. It came from Him. If there’s any power that exists anywhere in the created order, it was given to them or to that sphere of life by Jesus. He’s not only the source, but the cause of that power. All power exists because He wills it to exist. He can’t gain power; He can’t lose power. It’s all His from the beginning. The Antichrist

isn't the source of power; he has delegated power. He has power that's only given to him for a short amount of time, and then it will be removed.

This statement that He's the Alpha would encourage the saints being persecuted. Again, Jesus is telling the saints of the first century, "As bad as it is, it will get worse in terms of hostility at the end of the age. When it's worse, My power will be manifest beyond any time of history and there will be total victory for My people. Be encouraged: even as bad as it is now, I have authority and power even when it's worse. How much more can you walk in victory now?"

That's what He's saying. Jesus is the Alpha. He is the cause and source of creation. He is the Alpha of redemption. He is the Alpha, the source of the leadership of human history. He has directed the nations. By Him all things were created (Col. 1:16). Everything in heaven, everything on earth was created by Him. The Bible identifies Jesus as the Creator under the Father's authority. It's the Father's authority and the Spirit is brooding over the earth, but it's only when Jesus said, "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3) that the Spirit moved and fulfilled the Father's plan.

It's so remarkable! The Father had the plan. The Spirit's presence was operating in manifest power, but the earth was still formless, void, and dark. Here's the Spirit brooding over a dark earth with the total power of God, but the earth stays dark. The Father has already agreed. "Yes, light will come." The Spirit has the power. Why does the darkness remain? The darkness didn't leave until the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus, said, "Let there be light," and the Spirit said, "Yes."

The Spirit breaks forth in power at the word of Jesus. He's identified as Creator in many different scriptures, but it's under the Father's authority and through the power of the Spirit.

JESUS UPHOLDS EVERYTHING BY THE WORD OF HIS POWER

Paragraph B. Jesus upholds everything (Heb. 1:3). Even now, He speaks His word to energize the created order. If He ceased to speak like He did back in Genesis 1, the created order would breakdown. It would diminish in strength, it would fragment, and it would be destroyed. The created order doesn't have its own power source that can be sustained indefinitely. It's sustained forever because the One who said, "Let there be light," continues to speak over, energize, uphold, and give life to the created order.

I tell you, beloved, there's nothing and no one like Jesus of Nazareth. The people say, "Well why do you say your religion is different than our religion: Buddha, Muhammad, or the other religions?" There's no one who has a man who is the Alpha and the Omega. There's no one who has a man who was perfectly righteous and offered Himself as a sacrifice for sin. These other world religions are led by men. They're not God, they're not the Creator, and they're not the substitute for sin. They didn't live innocently and pay the price for the guilt of the nations in order to cleanse the nations. It's completely different from every other world religion. It's not even comparable. It's not about, "We think ours is better." It's not about ours being better and someone else's being worse. It's about the God-Man, the uncreated God who became human, who paid the debt for sin and offered forgiveness for free because of His blood. He has all the power of God. If you have that in place, you have Christianity. We don't have to cower before the world religions and get lost in some of the rhetoric, religious rhetoric of, "Who's better and worse?" and, "We're all the same."

No, we're not even close to all the same. Because of that, we can act in kindness and humility, because we're so confident in who it is we represent. We don't have to get in a bad spirit and argue, because it's all so confident, so finished, and so settled.

HE POSSESSES PREEMINENCE IN POWER OVER ALL THINGS

Paragraph C. As the Alpha, He has the first place of authority. He has the first place of honor over everything. "He is the head of the body, that in all things He might have preeminence" (Col. 1:18). He possesses preeminence in authority. He possesses preeminence in power over all things. That's part of being the Alpha.

Beloved, when the revelation of Jesus is, not just the Savior who forgives, but the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and end of all power, all wisdom, all love, all presence, self-existent, self-sufficient; when we see that our Savior who forgives us has that kind of authority, wisdom, love and presence, it opens up a whole new world to us in our thinking. We can have confidence before every single hostile assault against us. Why? Because of who it is we're connected to and in relationship with.

THE ULTIMATE PURPOSE TOWARDS WHICH EVERYTHING IS DIRECTED

Top of page three. He isn't just the Alpha; He's the Omega. He's the end of all things: not just the beginning, not just the source, but the ultimate purpose, the ultimate end, the ultimate goal—the final reason. There might be a number of reasons for something. He is the final reason for everything good. All things are created through Him, but they were created for Him as well (Col. 1:16, 20). He is the reason; He is the goal. That's the goal, to be pleasing to Him and to walk in partnership with Him forever. That's the goal; that's the end game. He is the Omega. He's the end of the story. The story never ends in terms of time and eternity, but the end purpose is that He would be magnified and we would walk in this mutuality of relationship with Him as His eternal companion, forever as the joy of His heart, His partner forever—to fill the earth with the glory of God.

All creation, all individuals who say yes to Him, find their ultimate meaning in relationship with Him. We don't need to drink from other wells to be satisfied. We don't have to drink from other streams in order to enter into our purpose. What I mean is this: our spirit, our soul, is invigorated by interaction with this Man.

Paul assured the Philippians that the God who began a good work in us will be faithful to complete it (Phil. 1:6). Beloved, stop searching. This Man will bring the purpose of your life to completion. He holds the key of purpose to your life. We don't have to search for the purpose. We may not know the specifics of our assignments in every season of our lives; we may not have perfect clarity about our assignment, but our purpose we have clear: it's to love Him, to partner with Him, to worship Him, to give Him preeminence in our lives. That's the reason we exist. We don't have to search for the purpose of life. We have it; we've got it.

Someone says, "Let's get realistic." No, *that's* realistic. He isn't just a means to an end; He is a means to an end. Because of Him, as the means, as the way of forgiveness and the power source, He is our means to the end of great blessing. But He's more than a means to an end: He is the end. He is the end. He is the means and the end. That's what He was saying to John here: "I'm the Alpha and the Omega. I'm the means, I'm the end of everything that's loving and righteous and good."

ISAIAH 40: THE PREMIER CHAPTER OUTLINING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

Roman numeral V. The term that Isaiah uses, or the theme or truth that he uses more than anyone else, is God as the sovereign Creator. He paints the picture of God's sovereignty with more detail. He possesses all power, but

not only that. Power is not enough for sovereignty; you have to have wisdom, love, and presence in there as well. God is sovereign as the Creator.

This seems to be one of Isaiah's favorite themes related to God. We go to the book of Isaiah, and I'll give the briefest outline, and we find in Isaiah 40 one of the clearest snapshots of the implications of God having sovereign power as Creator. We relate to Him as the Alpha and Omega, using a New Testament term: God never used the term, the name or the title, until Revelation 1. The Father used it in verse 8 and Jesus used it in verse 11. It's a brand new name. The God of Israel going by a Gentile name? I don't know what Israel would have done if Isaiah came out with that name. We don't have to know, because He didn't. But the truth of that title is that God is the sovereign Creator. All of this is involved in what we've been looking at.

Paragraph A. I give a quick outline of Isaiah 40, which to me is the premier chapter outlining the sovereignty of God and our practical response to it—in New Testament language, the implications of the Alpha and the Omega and how we respond to it. I have here that Isaiah outlines seven promises related to Jesus' second coming in chapter 40:10-11. Again, chapter 40 is the premier exhortation. In verses 10-11, the Lord gives seven promises related to having total victory over the enemy and righteousness being supreme and love going forth in salvation and redemption.

There are seven promises. The question is asked, "Does He have the power to follow through on the promises?" Those are big promises He gave. Isaiah answers the question without bringing it up, because it's the unspoken question. He declares in verses 12-14 that God has all wisdom—total wisdom. In other words, He can fulfill those promises. He knows what to do. The enemy isn't going to trick Him. There's no surprise attack. He has perfect wisdom. He has searched out everything.

HE MEASURES THE HEAVENS WITH THE SPAN OF HIS HAND

Isaiah goes on and says, "Not only that: He has all power" (Isa. 40:16-17, paraphrased). You might add this to the notes: verses 18-26 talk about the power and break it down. He ends the exhortation by telling the people of God how to respond to the sovereign Creator who has all wisdom and all power. He has the power, so He can do it, but He also has the wisdom. He knows what to do. We know though the rest of the Bible and all throughout Isaiah, even in Isaiah 40, that He has love; He cares. That's communicated in verses 10-11. He's the Shepherd who will carry His people Himself. He loves them so much that He Himself will carry them.

Let's look for a moment. Let's break down this chapter. He has all wisdom as the sovereign God. Isaiah says, "Let me ask you a question: who is the God who measures the heavens with the span of His hand" (Isa. 40:12, paraphrased)? It's remarkable. He can measure the heavens by just moving His hand. He can measure the heavens. That's trillions of light years! He can calculate the intricacies of the dust of the earth. Not only the little fragment of dust—He can count every single piece of dirt or sand, every piece of dust. Every one of them He can calculate. He can analyze every single piece of dust. He can evaluate everything, big or small: no matter how vast, no matter how intricate, no matter how seemingly hidden, how seemingly not noticed by anyone else. When He rules the nations, He says, "No detail is too big or too small. No enemy is too big or too small to get past My discernment."

Then He goes on, and you can read verses 12-14: they're brilliant, but they're about the Alpha and Omega, the God who has everything, from A-Z.

Paragraph C. Isaiah say, “OK, in His wisdom He gets everything. Now let’s look at His power. He can overpower easily all opposition. The devil is no problem. The Antichrist is no problem to Him. Demons are absolutely no problem” (Isa. 40:15-17, paraphrased). Then he goes on and breaks it down: “He has power over all the earthly forces” (v. 18-24, paraphrased) “and all the heavenly forces” (v. 25-26, paraphrased).

Look at verse 15. The nations are nothing; they’re a drop in a bucket. It doesn’t mean they have no value to God; as a resisting force, they’re nothing to God. He isn’t saying the nations have no value to Him. His inheritance is the nations in terms of a force that can resist and stop Him. They’re less than nothing (v. 17)—not even a breeze. They’re no challenge whatsoever.

SCARCELY ARE THE NATIONS PLANTED THAN HE BLOWS ON THEM AND THEY WITHER

Verse 23. Let’s get down to the leaders then: all the princes, all the kings of the earth: the judges of the earth who make all the decisions for the nations. These kings and judges think they make the final decisions for the nations. Scarcely are they planted than God blows on them and they wither (v. 24). Scarcely is a nation planted that’s hostile towards God than He blows and the empire is gone. This has its ultimate fulfillment in the Antichrist’s empire at the end of the age. In 2 Thessalonians, Jesus actually blows on the Antichrist and fulfills this verse to the ultimate degree (2 Thess. 2:8). This verse is true throughout history. He says, “There are no nations, there are no governments, there’s no world leader who can stop Me.”

What about the powers in the heavens? That will be very relevant. In the generation of the Lord’s return, the stars and things and space, in all their different categories, will come and touch the earth at different times. The sun will no longer shine; the moon will be in disorder. Meteors and things like that will touch the earth.

The Lord says through Isaiah, in verse 26, “Lift up your eyes. Read Revelation 8-9 and see all the disturbances in the heavens. See who created all the stars. Don’t worry about the stars falling like a fig tree. God knows every one of them. He knows every one by name. There are trillions and trillions. He has them all discerned, in place, and named. There are no problems there” (Isa. 40:26, paraphrased). All the powers in the heavenly realm are no contest for God.

Top of page four. Isaiah says, “What are you going to do? How are you going to respond to a God who has this kind of power? Are you going to continue to be fearful, passive, bewildered, confused, overwhelmed by the enemy?”

“MY WAY IS HIDDEN FROM THE LORD, AND MY JUST CLAIM IS PASSED OVER”

Verse 27. He says, “Let me tell you what to do with the revelation of Jesus, the Alpha and Omega. Why do you say, O Jacob”—or Israel—“My way is hidden from God? My just”—or fair—“treatment is being passed over by God”” (Isa. 40:27, paraphrased).

Israel says, “I’m not getting a good deal with God.” That’s the main complaint of the whole human race from Adam all the way to the end. We can all find ourselves in this verse. God says, “Isaiah, touch the relevant question. They think God doesn’t see them and they think they’re not getting fair treatment by Me—that their just claim is being overlooked. Tell them I see them and tell them I’m treating them better than they can ever deserve, and they’ll see it when it’s all done. When all the information is on the table; when they see it all in the age to come; they’ll see they got a far better deal than they ever could have imagined. I’m not just making their

month better, or their season of their life better. I'm preparing their heart for right choices that will matter forever and forever and forever. They'll really appreciate My leadership when they see all the information."

We get locked into, "We want March and April to be easier!"

The Lord says, "Well, I do, too, but I would rather your eternity be better. So we're working on a plan that will really work for you."

"Well in the mean time, God doesn't see me, and my way is hidden. He doesn't know I'm here. My just claim, my fair treatment isn't happening."

"THE EVERLASTING GOD, THE LORD . . . NEITHER FAINTS, NOR IS WEARY"

The Lord says, "Tell them this," in verse 28: "No, I didn't faint. I didn't take a nap. No, I'm not tired" (Isa. 40:28, paraphrased).

I remember the little girl at the church service I was at one time. We were singing, "He is exalted. He is exalted." She was out in the foyer going to the car saying, "He is exhausted! He is exhausted on high! The angels adore Him on high!"

No, no! That's not what's happening. He isn't exhausted. "If He isn't taking a nap and He isn't tired, why is He not helping me?"

The answer is, "Tell them, My wisdom is unsearchable. I have layers of strategy for their ultimate good forever. Tell them to trust Me. I'm not just trying to make their next six months better. I have something to make their eternity better. They'll be forever grateful for what I'm doing. My understanding is beyond what they can see right now. I'm not napping. I'm not tired. I haven't lost enthusiasm for them."

"God doesn't love me. Where's He at?"

"Tell them I've a plan with many levels they can't understand. Then tell them this."

They'll say, "OK God, You know what I'm doing. I trust You. I'm so weak. I'm at the end. This is it."

Well, when you say, "I'm just going to give up on God," the options are really bad. Don't give up on God.

The man says, "I'm really weak."

"EVEN THE YOUTHS SHALL FAINT AND BE WEARY"

In verse 30, the Lord says, "I hear you. I'll even increase the issue. I'll tell you how much I understand how weak you are. The young people will faint. I get it: they're weary. They think they can't keep going. Some of the young men"—He really highlights the young men—"will utterly fail in some of the decisions they make and some of the choices they make, but I'm not giving up on them. I know they're weak; I know they're weary. I know they think I'm not watching. Some of them will utterly fail. Tell them this: I'm the Alpha and Omega" (Isa. 40:30, paraphrased). Again, I'm using the New Testament language."

“THOSE WHO WAIT UPON THE LORD SHALL RENEW THEIR STRENGTH”

Tell them to wait on the Lord. Not just to bide time: wait on the Lord, to engage with Him.” It’s called prayer and the Word, talking to Him.

“Well, I failed. I’m weak. I’m filled with self-pity. I have no hope. I want to give up.”

“Tell them to take their Bible out and talk to Me. Here’s what I’ll do. I’ll give them strength. Little by little they’ll mount up with wings like eagles. They’ll run and not grow weary” (Isa. 40:31, paraphrased).

This is the practical response. People say, “No I need something practical.”

Beloved, when the Word of God enters your heart because you take time to wait, you realize no one can do this for you. It gives you perspective, the fog clears, the smoke in your eyes lifts, and you receive understanding of God’s commitment to us and the fact that He has all wisdom, power, and love. He sees everything and He’s with us and the plan is forever. It completely begins to make more sense. No one can wait on the Lord for you. No one can engage with the Lord for you. Waiting on the Lord doesn’t mean biding time; it means attending to His heart. It’s like the waiters in a restaurant: they come and wait on your table. They attend to you. To wait on the Lord means to engage with His heart, to attend to what He’s saying and feeling. Give yourself to that. We call it prayer and the Word: talking to God with an open Bible.

ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR THE GOOD OF THOSE WHO LOVE HIM

Paragraph E. In the New Testament, the confession is this: “We know that God works everything for good” (Rev. 8:28, paraphrased). That’s the fruit of the revelation that He is the Alpha and the Omega. When the enemy comes and says God is a liar, or God doesn’t see you, or God is taking a nap, or God is weary, or you’ve been mistreated, you say back, “Thus says the Lord.” You can quote Isaiah 40 if you want. You can say, “Everything works together for good for the people who love God, who give themselves to God. That’s my testimony. That’s where I take my stand. I’m not yielding to the fear when the weariness is mounting up. I’m not just giving up. I will speak the Word against it.”

“ALLELUIA! FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNS”

At the great marriage supper of the Lamb, we say in essence the same thing. In Revelation 19:6, this is the confession at the marriage supper: “Hallelujah,” which means, “I agree. Praise the Lord!” God is omnipotent. He is reigning. Through the crisis of the flood, the crisis of the Great Tribulation, the crisis of our individual lives, we agree with God. Hallelujah! It means, “Praise be to God,” but it also means, “I agree with Him.” “I agree with Isaiah 40. Jesus is the Alpha and Omega. He reigns. Even though there’s a flood, He sits enthroned over the flood. He sits enthroned forever and I’m His beloved. That’s my confession: the Lord God Omnipotent reigns.”

In the last session, I looked at how to apply this using the ARK method. A, we agree with it. R, we ask for revelation. K, we keep the prophecy, or we respond to it in our individual lives. What I mean is that we need to say to Jesus the simple phrase: “We agree with You. You’re the Alpha and the Omega.”

Beloved, I love to say that phrase to Him. Say it with gratitude and affection: “You are.” Just declare it to Him. Just whisper it to Him. Many believers have never said that to Jesus. Say, “You are.” Not just when you’re in trouble. “You’re the Alpha and Omega. I love this about You. Thank You that You’re the sovereign God who is the Creator, who is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, self-existent, self-sufficient, preexistent”—which is

the same as eternally existent. “You’re all those things, God.” That’s what it means to say, “You’re the Alpha and the Omega.” Tell Him, “You’re the Alpha and Omega. You’re the God with all power. You’re the God with all wisdom. You’re the God who is everywhere. You’re the God who loves the Gentiles, those who were outside the covenant.” That’s what we do with A.

R is really simple: just ask Him for revelation. “Holy Spirit, teach me. I don’t know much about this. I have a few notes, but it doesn’t touch me. Holy Spirit, escort me into living understanding so that I feel the power of it.”

K: how do you respond to it? The way we respond to it is that when we get fearful, or lethargic, or passive, we keep the prophecy by committing ourselves to live under that banner. We say, “No, I’m not living with passivity. You’re the Alpha and Omega. I will respond to You in an appropriate way. Everything is for You. My whole life is for You. I won’t draw back in passivity. I will relate to You as the Alpha and Omega. All power is Yours, all love is Yours, the very end of every purpose is You. I give myself to You afresh.”

THE EVIDENTIAL POWER OF BEAUTY

I want to end here in Roman numeral VI. You’ll love this. There’s a book I’ve read over the years by Thomas Dubay, *The Evidential Power of Beauty*. I really recommend it. We have it in our bookstore. We’ve had it for years. Thomas Dubay is talking about the beauty of God. I just mentioned three chapters here. He talks about the beauty of God in the macro, the vastness of the universe. When we see who Jesus is in the vastness of space that He created, we think, “Who are You?” Then we look at who He is in the micro, the tiny universe of the subatomic particles and DNA—He created all that. We see the gap between the vast stars of Isaiah 40 and the dust, the smallest particle. Probably if Isaiah had been writing today, he would have talked about atoms. No one knew what an atom was back in Isaiah’s day, so he said “the dust.”

Beloved, when I read this book, I say, “Jesus, who are You?” Let me give you a fact or two. Paragraph B. We’re looking at what you can see in the telescope or what you can see in the microscope. Let’s go with both extremes. The sun is a million miles in diameter. That’s a big sun! You can fit a million earths into the space of the sun. The sun isn’t one of the big stars in our galaxy. It’s kind of a medium star. You could fit a million earths into that one space. The surface is two million degrees hot. Catch this: the energy the sun releases—these are round numbers—is the equivalent of 100 *billion* hydrogen bombs per second. Per second! That’s how much energy is coming off the sun, 100 billion hydrogen bombs every second. In that second, it’s burning up four million tons of matter. Every second.

At this rate, the sun is wearing out; we only have six billion years more unless Jesus speaks another word to prop it up again: only six billion more years because we’re losing four million tons a second. In six billion years, the sun will wear out. That’s one medium-sized star in the Milky Way Galaxy.

Paragraph C. There are 100 million galaxies. The Milky Way is one. The diameter of the known universe is fifteen billion light years. Fifteen billion years is how long it takes a ray of light to go from one end to the other. That’s who Jesus is, and He created this. That’s only the part we know about, the known universe!

Paragraph E. That’s the macro. Let’s go down to the micro. This book breaks it down. It’s fantastic. I read it over and over and say, “Who are You? Jesus of Nazareth, who are You?” This Man who walked on the streets, ate and drank with them; who is this Man we’re worshiping tonight?

There's great complexity in a cell—in the tiniest bacteria. The cell of the tiniest bacteria is made up of 100 billion atoms. One cell of bacteria contains 100 billion atoms. Catch this: this cell has enough information to fill up the thirty volumes of the Encyclopedia Britannica. All thirty volumes could be filled up with the information in every cell, if it was all known.

You can just read the rest. It's mindboggling. My point is, this is who He is. He's the Alpha and the Omega, and we love Him.

MINISTRY TIME

Amen. If you're like me, these are great points, great ideas. I want to feel them; I want them to touch me. The Holy Spirit says, "Wait on Me. Attend to My heart. Take My Word. Ask Me to show you. Stay with it. You'll mount up with wings like eagles."

"Yes, but I've utterly failed."

One gal says, "I'm a young lady; do I count?"

Yes, you count too.

"I've utterly failed."

I hear an old guy say, "I failed!"

You're in, too. I don't care: it's the greatest sin of a young man and every other sin of every grouping of people.

He says, "If they'll attend to Me and wait on Me, I'll reenergize them and give them a new start. I'm the Alpha and Omega. I have all the power to bring this to pass. I can bring this to pass for them."