

The Greatness of Christ

"I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" Rev. 22: 13.

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There is portrayed to us in this short, simply worded, yet striking verse that which commands our attention, calls forth our praise, and bows us in worship. These things are descriptive of some of the all-varied glories of Him who has captivated our hearts and won them for God — Jesus! Precious Name! embracing as it does His downstooping grace and pathway of infinite perfection; of complete submission to, and concert with, the will of God; devotion to the Father and superlative grace to men. Well said were those adoring words: —

"Thy Name encircles every grace

Which God as Man could shew;

There only could He fully trace

A life divine below."

The heart, revelling in the fragrance of that name which is as "ointment poured forth," delights to contemplate some of the higher mysteries of the fame of Him who bore it, our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Only Begotten and Well-Beloved Son.

"Alpha and Omega"

The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, depict the speaking of God, bringing before us the glory of our Lord as the Word. He who in the beginning was with God, a distinct Person; and was God, co-eternal and co-equal, was fully competent to express God whenever expression was called for. Every communication of God to the creature was through the Word. If the prophets were used in times past in the partial speaking of God they spoke by the Spirit of Christ which was in them (1 Peter 1: 11 and 1 Peter 3: 19). In these last days God has fully spoken in the Son (Sonwise), and thus we learn that Christ, as the Alpha and Omega, is the One in whom God is declared; in Him the eternal life, the life of God has been manifested; He is the WORD (John 1: 1), and He is the WORD of LIFE (1 John 1: 1). The Lord Jesus is He by whom God has been revealed in the fulness of His nature as Light and Love. The eternal life which all believers have — a life which has the distinctive character that it is "with the Father," has been manifested in Him. All blessedness has been brought near to man, by revelation, in Him the Eternal Word.

If we contemplate the holiness of God which necessitates the removal in judgment of everything that is contrary to it — everything that has refused divine blessing in whatever way it has been presented — this too finds its expression in the Alpha and Omega. Revelation 19: 11-16, gives us a glimpse of heaven opened that we might behold One who is Faithful and True, who judges and makes

war in righteousness, coming out of heaven to smite the nations and to tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty, and His Name is called "the Word of God." Whether God is expressed in grace or judgment, He is so expressed in Him who is the Eternal Word, the Alpha and Omega — Jesus.

"The Beginning and the End"

This conveys the thought of activity or doing. The work of creation is, in Scripture, ascribed to the Son. He was ever the Agent of the activity of the Godhead. The universe sprang into being by the Word of His power.

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created *by Him* and *for Him*" (Colossians 1: 16).

He is the Beginning, the Originator of every created thing. The creation of man was the outcome of divine counsel. God, Elohim — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — equally participated therein, but the act of creating is attributed to the Son. He is the Beginning and He is the End. He is the Object for whom all are created. He, the Son, was appointed "Heir of all things" in eternal purpose; this necessitated the creation of all things. He shall yet be honoured throughout the bounds of creation. Then, too, as to the New Creation, *He* is the Beginning, who is the Firstborn from among the dead, and the end in view is "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (Colossians 1: 16-18).

Hear His Word in John 4: 34, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me and to finish His work." In John 17: 4, anticipative of the accomplishment of redemption's work, ". . . I have finished the work that Thou gavest me to do;" and also in John 19: 30, when hanging on the Cross, "It is finished." Creation, Redemption, and Judgment are the work of Him who is the Son, Jesus, the Beginning and the End.

"The First and the Last"

The speaking of God, the doing of God, have found an avenue for fruition by Him, and now, in this expression we consider that which sets Him forth in the glory and majesty of His being. He is the great "I AM" (Isaiah 41: 4; Isaiah 44: 6; Isaiah 48: 12). What He is in His own being — beyond all that has been revealed — is indicated in this appellation, "the First and the Last."

As the One who entered man's estate in lowly guise, in whom God has spoken and acted, the devil has attacked Him and has sought to bring Him, in the creature's estimation, down to the level of the creature! Some there are who will own Him as Creator and Redeemer — but a creature still! The blasphemy of it! To say this of Him, even though He be described by such as the highest creature in the universe, is a denial of the teaching of the Word of God and an insult to Him majesty. He is the Christ, "Who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." (Romans 9: 5).

He is the Self-Existent One, Almighty, Eternal One. In Manhood He is saluted in terms of equality, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." God salutes God! O, the glory and the mystery of the Person of Jesus. He said of Himself, "Before Abraham was I AM" (John 8: 58).

Then, too, the Holy Spirit in John 12: 41, records "These things saith Esaias, when he saw His glory and spake of Him."

Read these precious Scriptures of truth — John 8, 12 and Hebrews 1 — meditate on their threefold testimony to Him whom men despise and slight, the Son become Man, our Lord Jesus Christ — "the FIRST and the LAST." Rejoice that the Scripture cannot be broken!

Whilst all this was true of Him and presented in testimony to men — the glory of His Person, His Work, and His Word — did He meet with united acclamation? Nay! John 10: 19; John 9: 16; and John 7: 43, witness that they divided on what He said, what He did, and who He is.

Praise God if through grace our eyes have been opened as the man in John 9. Being introduced to the Son of God believing, we bow at His feet, we worship Him — "The Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last."

The Spirit of God would deepen in us the appreciation of Christ as the One in whom the *Speaking — Doing — and Being* of God is presented to us in this amazing Scripture.

*"The mention of Thy Name shall bow
Our hearts to worship Thee;
The chiefest of ten thousand Thou,
Whose love has set us free"*