

The “I am” sayings of Jesus. 8 “I am the Alpha and Omega”
The Revelation to John, chapter 1, verse 8; and chapter 22, verses 12 – 17

As we begin the last of these ‘Sayings of Jesus’ it is worth reading Revelation chapter 1, verses 8 – 20. This gives a description of the risen, glorified Lord Jesus Christ in all his majesty. One of the older commentators (G Campbell Morgan 1912) on the Book of Revelation said “*there is no book in the Bible to which I turn more eagerly in hours of depression than to this, with all its mystery, all the details of which I do not understand*”. This book gives a reassurance to the Christian believer that, in spite of appearances, the Lord God is still in control. He will bring all things to an end in line with his perfect will.

‘A’ – Alpha is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and - ‘Ω’ – Omega the last letter.

Notice that chapter 1, verse 8 reads “ *‘I am the Alpha and Omega’ says the Lord God who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.*” This is the Lord God himself speaking. Chapter 22, verse 13 reads “*Behold I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay everyone for what he has done. I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.*” The angel (in verse 8) finishes speaking at the end of verse 11. Verse 12 and following is the Lord Jesus Christ himself speaking (see verse 16). Here we have an equality between the Father and the Son. For me, this links the authorship of the Book of Revelation to the writer of the Gospel of John, see John chapter 10, verses 29 – 38 and chapter 14 verses 7 – 11; also with the writer of the First Epistle of John chapter 2, verses 22 – 23.

“I am the Alpha and Omega says the Lord God, who is and was and who is to come, The Almighty”- verse 8

Here at the beginning of the Book of Revelation we find a link, not only to Genesis 1, verse 1, but also to the Gospel of John, chapter 1, verse 1 and the First Epistle of John, chapter 1, verse 1. In the beginning God was! He is beyond time. When Moses asked for the name of God, the reply in Exodus 3, verse 14 was “I AM WHO I AM” - the One who exists. The name remembered as YHWH, handed down to us as JeHoVaH and used in some of our well known hymns. He is the One who is in control of all things and on the coming “Day of the Lord” will make all things new. For encouragement see for example 2 Peter, chapter 3, verses 11 – 13.

“I am the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” - chapter 22, verse 13

In Revelation chapter 22, verses 8 - 9, John makes clear that he personally had witnessed in a vision the coming glory of a new heaven and a new earth. His guide had been an angel, a “fellow servant” of the Lord God. It is this angel who speaks in verses 9 – 11. The focus then changes in verse 12 to the one who is “*coming soon*”, to the Lord Jesus Christ himself. This is the one who is “*the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.*”

He is the Alpha, the One who was there at the creation of all things. Read John chapter 1, verses 1 – 5; Colossians chapter 1, verses 15 – 20 and Hebrews chapter 1, verses 1 – 2.

He is the Omega, the One who will bring this age to a close with his return in glory. Read Matthew chapter 24, verses 29 – 31; Matthew chapter 26, verses 63 – 64 and Revelation chapter 1, verse 7.

In reading the Book of Revelation along with the Book of Daniel, it is easy to get distracted by the descriptions of “*the beasts*” and the signs and wonders. Both these books were written in times of uncertainty. The future of the People of God seemed to be doomed, with exile and persecution a present reality. The books were written to give encouragement and hope to the faithful believers and included in our Bibles so that we too may be encouraged in these uncertain times in which we live.

A reminder that we need to pray at this time for fellow Christians in Afghanistan and its neighbouring countries! The success of the militants in Afghanistan will no doubt encourage extremists in other volatile situations and Christians are seen as an easy target.

Some lines from an old hymn

*Who is he on yonder tree
Dies in grief and agony?*

*‘Tis the Lord! O wondrous story!
‘Tis the Lord! The King of Glory!
At his feet we humbly fall,
Crown Him, crown Him Lord of all!*

*Who is He that from His throne?
Rules through all the world alone?*

*‘Tis the Lord! O wondrous story!
‘Tis the Lord! The King of Glory!
At his feet we humbly fall.
Crown Him, crown Him Lord of all!*

Benjamin Russell Hanby (1833-1867)