

## HIS NAME IS WONDERFUL

## STUDY FIVE

## He's the Alpha and the Omega

*Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13*

*He is the beginning and the end of all things. He knows the ending from the beginning. He knows how the pattern fits together. He puts it together in perfect fashion, and it makes absolutely perfect sense. Every death. Every birth. Every achievement. Every failure. Everything that surprises you and me. He knows the beginning, the ending, and the reason why in-between.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**N**OTHING lasts forever. At least that's what many people believe. Every relationship eventually ends. All people eventually die. Even the earth will eventually pass away.

But it's not true that *nothing* lasts forever. While *human* relationships may end, a relationship with God lasts forever. Everyone eventually will die a *physical* death, but those who place their trust in Jesus are born again into a new, everlasting life with God. One day, God will *resurrect* His children's failing bodies with eternal bodies and *replace* this broken earth with a new one.

It's better, therefore, to say that no *worldly* thing lasts forever (*1 Corinthians 7:31*).

Anything of God, however, will last forever because God Himself is eternal. He has always existed. He was present at the beginning of time, before He created anything, and He will be present and actively involved in His creation for eternity, when all things reach their consummation according to His perfect plan.

This *Searching the Scriptures* study explores Jesus Christ's identity as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Discover what it means to follow an *eternal* savior who is the most qualified to guide lost souls on their journey from earth to heaven.



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## He's the Alpha and the Omega

*Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13*



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

God not only is an *eternal* God. He also is a *personal* God. He cares deeply for His people, and He desires to have a personal relationship with all His children—a relationship that will last for eternity. Pray to God as you prepare to engage with Him through His Word today.

*Father, thank You for being the Everlasting Father—for being the one who was and is and is to come. Speak to me through Your Word today. Through my study, draw me into a deeper relationship with You that will last forever. In Jesus' eternal name, amen.*



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

To highlight God's eternal nature, the authors of the Old Testament often referred to Him as *El-Olam*. The Hebrew word *olam* was a common term that typically referred to a long *duration* of time. Yet it also referred to a distant *point* in time—either far in the past or far in the future.

After Abraham and Sarah had their promised child Isaac, Abraham built an altar to *El-Olam*. According to *Genesis 21:33*, what does this name mean? \_\_\_\_\_

Not only is God the Father everlasting, but Jesus Christ the Son is also eternal. And the plan of salvation Jesus offers has been central to God's plan from the very beginning of history.



### Observation: The One Who Was and Is and Is to Come

In *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, Pastor Chuck Swindoll explains how he develops life-changing application based on Scripture. This process always begins with observing a passage. Understanding the Bible isn't "complicated," he says, "It just takes some intentionality."<sup>1</sup>

No book of the Bible feels more complicated than Revelation. An intentional reading, however, will show this prophecy to be like a magnificent opera artistically telling a powerful story that reveals a message of hope to desperate Christians everywhere—a message about Jesus Christ's imminent return to earth.



## He's the Alpha and the Omega

*Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13*

In Revelation's overture, in what six ways did God describe Himself in *Revelation 1:8* (see the NASB translation)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

The first movement of Revelation begins with Jesus appearing to John. How does Jesus introduce Himself in *1:17–18*? What overlap do you notice between the Father's self-description and the Son's?

Revelation punctuates the melody of Jesus' impending arrival with the harmony of His identity as the Alpha and the Omega. This theme crescendos until the climax of the book in *21:1–7*. What did John see in *21:1–2*?



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What did John then *hear* in *Revelation 21:3–7*? What did the Alpha and the Omega promise He would do?

With the coda in *22:12–13*, Revelation concludes just as it began. What promise of hope did the Alpha and the Omega offer at the end of this *magnum opus*?

*We need a regular reminder that our God is above all. The Alpha and the Omega—the one responsible for the beginning, continuation, and end of it all—is saying, “That is exactly the way I want it. That is precisely as I have planned it.” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



### Interpretation: The Eternal Savior

Interpretation moves from intentionally reading Scripture to determining its meaning with care. What does it mean that Jesus Christ is the Alpha and the Omega? The answer may not be obvious to modern readers, but it would have been clear to Revelation's original Greek audience. This is because *alpha* is the first letter of the Greek alphabet, and *omega* is the last.



## He's the Alpha and the Omega

*Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13*

What are the English equivalents of *alpha* and *omega*? What does Jesus' identity as the Alpha and the Omega suggest about His nature?

The early church wrestled with a heresy called Arianism which suggested God the Father *created* God the Son. Based on this study, how would you respond to someone who argues for this perspective today? Include some Scripture references in your discussion.

The Greek word translated "end" in Revelation 22:13 is *telos*. This term often refers to the completion of a period of time, but it also can refer to someone's purpose or goal. Based on these definitions, in what sense is Jesus Christ the *telos* of God's creation?

*Jesus Christ represents both the source and the goal of all of life. That's why I say, "If you don't have Christ, you don't have direction." —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



## He's the Alpha and the Omega

*Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13*

Decades before God sent John the fantastic visions of Revelation, the apostle Paul affirmed, in his own way, that Jesus Christ is indeed the Alpha and the Omega.



### Correlation: The All in All

False teachers in city of Colossae had infiltrated the church, and the weeds of their corrupt doctrine threatened to choke out the apostolic tradition. In response, the apostle Paul wrote a letter to warn his readers about these wrong teachings so true believers could cultivate the truth.

The key part of Paul's letter to the Colossians is the beautiful hymn in *Colossians 1:15–20*. The theme of this hymn can be summarized in one sentence, "Jesus Christ is supreme." Part of Christ's supremacy is His role as the Alpha and the Omega.

What statements in this passage affirm Jesus as the Alpha?

What statements in this passage affirm Jesus as the Omega?

Jesus Christ Himself crafted creation, and He dictates its ultimate purpose and destination. Paul recognized the importance of this truth, and he built his life upon it. How can faithful Christians follow Paul's example today?



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### **Application: The Beginning and the End**

Jesus being the Alpha and the Omega may feel like an abstract idea, but this truth has very concrete applications regarding four realms of human existence:

1. *The presence of our lives*—from womb to tomb, He directs everyone's destiny.
2. *The purpose of our existence*—from the greatest to the least, He determines a unique plan for everyone.
3. *The circumstances of our surroundings*—from the good to the bad, He will stay with you through it all.
4. *The results of our efforts*—from private to public acts, He deals out rewards according to everyone's deeds.

The purpose of Revelation was to share a message of hope with Christians facing persecution by the Roman Empire. How does seeing Jesus as the Alpha and the Omega offer hope to modern-day Christians struggling in their own cultural circumstances?

Have you ever found yourself in a season of great struggle where you couldn't help but wonder, *Why?* In these times, it can feel difficult to see how God can make something good out of something so bad. How has the Alpha and the Omega brought you through a time like this in the past?



## He's the Alpha and the Omega

*Revelation 1:18; 21:6; 22:13*

What would the non-Christians you know say is their purpose in life based on worldly wisdom? How are these purposes different from the true purpose the Alpha and the Omega has set out for His own people? How is Jesus' purpose better?

The Alpha and the Omega. The beginning and the end. The one who was and is and is to come. The eternal Savior. Jesus Christ wasn't created, and He will never be defeated. In this truth, those who trust Him find their hope—hope that they will forever live with Him in paradise.



### A FINAL PRAYER

As you conclude your time in God's Word today, offer this prayer from Pastor Chuck:

*Father, I express gratitude for the very presence of life and for the ultimate purpose of my existence. In the myriad of responsibilities that are Yours, You have been pleased to care for me. Thank You for washing me from my sins and cleansing me by Jesus' blood. He is the Alpha, the Omega, the beginning, and the ending. In His strong name I pray. Amen.*

#### ENDNOTE

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 79.

