

Orlando Bible Students Newsletter

Volume 24, Number 1

February 2023

Alpha and Omega

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” (Rev. 22:13) To understand these words, we go to John 1:1-3, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.”

In these verses “the Word” is a translation of the Greek word *Logos* [Strong’s #G3004], and signifies mouthpiece or special messenger. This was Jesus’ name while he was a spirit being in heaven prior to being made flesh. Additionally, the phrase “was with God” in John 1:1 should read “was with the God,” and the phrase “was God” should read “a god was the Logos.”—vs. 1 *Emphatic Diaglott*

While Jesus was a human being on earth, he was holy and perfect, sinless, separate and peculiar from all others. (Heb. 7:26) As a result, “he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” (Matt. 7:29) “The officers to the chief priests ... said ... never man spake like this man.”—Matt. 7:45-46

Whatever others thought or said of him, he claimed to be sent of God. “I came down from heaven.” (John 6:38) “I am the living bread which came down from heaven.” (John 6:51) Before the Pharisees, he declared, “I know whence I came and whither I go. ... I am from above ... I am not of this world ... for I proceeded forth and came from God ... he sent me.” (John 8:14,23,42) In John 8:58 he adds, “Before Abraham was, I am!”

These scriptures confirm for us the

pre-human existence and glory of our Lord, as he expressed it in John 17:5, “O Father glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” Additionally, the Apostle John writes regarding Jesus, “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.”—John 1:10

The only way we can understand Jesus to be the Alpha and Omega, the beginning, and the end, is to recognize that he was the first, only and last direct creation of God. (Rev. 1:8; 3:14; 21:6; 22:13) “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: [created before the rest of creation]; For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible ... And he is before all things and by him all things consist.”—Col. 1:15-17

Jesus had left his spiritual wealth behind by humbling himself to be made flesh and taking the form of a servant. As a man Jesus had none of the world’s possessions. “The Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” (Matt. 8:20) Jesus further humbled himself becoming obedient unto the death of the cross. Because of his faithfulness unto death, “God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:7-11

To learn more, see our offer for the free booklet *Jesus the World’s Savior* on the back page of this newsletter. ■

God Shows Mercy

“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.” (Micah 7:18) Certainly, after reading our theme verse we should immediately conclude that there is no God greater than the true and living God. We know him as “the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” (Matt. 22:32) He is the author of the wonderful “plan of the ages,” and the giver of “every good gift and every perfect gift.” (Eph. 3:11 *Emphatic Diaglott*; James 1:17) He is so great, that even one of the scribes to whom Jesus spoke, responded after hearing about the majesty of God, “Well, master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God, and there is none other but he: And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength ... is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” (Mark 12:32,33) Truly, no god of man’s imagination can compare with the one God of love, compassion, mercy, wisdom, power, and justice.

Even when man fell in the Garden of Eden, we know that the penalty for disobeying God was a just one. (Gen. 2:17; Gen. 3:17-19) Through his mercy God provided a way of escape from the penalty of sin and death that came upon all of mankind because of Adam’s transgression. In Genesis 3:15, he promised that the seed of the woman [Christ], shall crush the serpent’s [Satan] head. This is further shown to us in the words, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16,17; Luke 1:50) Similarly, “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved) ... through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith, it is the gift of God. (Eph. 2:4,5,7,8) Thus, we should see that “God our savior” makes our salvation from sin and death possible “through Jesus Christ.”—Titus 3:4-7

“Good Tidings of Great Joy”

Concerning the “good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people,” (Luke 2:10), these pertained to the birth of Jesus. We also recall the words that pertained to our Lord Jesus and found in Isa. 61:1-3: “The spirit of the LORD God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison house to them that are bound, ... to comfort all who mourn. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, ... the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”

Through the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the footstep followers of the Lord are ordained or commissioned to preach the Gospel. (Luke 4:17-21; I John 2:27; I Peter 2:9) Paul said in I Cor. 2:2 and 9:16, “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” and “woe is unto me if I preach not (Continued on next page)

Sacrifice of Praise

David associates the altar in the Tabernacle of God—symbolic of sacrifice—with the voice of thanksgiving. This indicates that wholehearted thanksgiving calls for sacrifice. (Ps. 27:6) Nothing short of this should be considered an adequate response to the Lord in return for all that he has done for us. The Apostle Paul expresses this thought, saying, “By him [Jesus] therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.” (Heb. 13:15) Here, Paul may have had in mind the statement of Hosea 14:2, where the prophet speaks of rendering to God the “calves of our lips.” In any case, the thought is that true Christian thanksgiving involves sacrifice, as foreshadowed by the typical sacrifices of the Tabernacle.

There are various ways by which we can offer the sacrifice of praise to God. We can sing hymns of praise which, without doubt, is pleasing to him. We should also express our thanks to God by means of prayer. It is a blessed privilege to pour out our hearts to him in praise and adoration, telling him how much we love and appreciate him. (Ps. 22:25; 34:1; 109:1) Such incense of praise is a sweet-smelling savor to our Heavenly Father. It is this form of praise that is pictured more particularly by the offering of incense at the Golden Altar in the Holy of the Tabernacle.—Exod. 30:1-8,34-38

Although prayers, adorations and praises might be considered the most direct offerings of incense to the Lord, he has so arranged matters that we cannot offer these sincerely and acceptably except as we have his spirit. That Christ might be formed within you—his mind and principles—you are to “live according to God in the spirit.” (I Pet. 4:6) If we have his spirit, while we offer incense on the Golden Altar, we will also be offering upon the Brazen Altar in the court good works. “As we have therefore opportunity,” we will seek to “do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”—Gal. 6:10 ■

“Good Tidings of Great Joy” *(continued from previous page)*

the Gospel.” Similarly, we read in II Tim. 4:2, “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season (both when it is convenient and when it is not) ... exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.”

The message to the world from the Father through his people is to “fear not,” for God is both gracious to forgive, and has provided a ransom price to take away the sins of the world—his only begotten son Jesus. (John 1:29-34; I John 2:2) Therefore, we should give to the world the hope and encouragement of God’s Word that there are indeed better times ahead for them. (Isa. 9:6) We are to plant the seeds of hope that will one day grow and bear fruit when in Christ’s earthly kingdom the eyes of all mankind will be opened to see the blessings God has promised. (Matt. 6:10; Isa. 35:5-10) “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”—Isa. 25:9 ■

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