

# 1. WHO IS THE ALPHA & THE OMEGA?

## (God the Father? Jesus? Both?)

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**"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the LORD God, Who is and Who was and Who is to come, the Almighty (Revelation 1: 8)**

**We** often hear the statement, "Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega". This is usually based on **Revelation 1: 7**. Some Red Letter Bibles place the words, "I am the Alpha and the Omega" in red, thus attributing them as being direct speech from Jesus himself. However, this is unwarranted as I will briefly outline. But let's start at the beginning of this Book of *The Revelation* before drawing any hasty conclusions.

*The Apokalypsis of John* (as per the heading of the Greek MSS) or as we now know it, *The Revelation* opens with the words, **"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his bond-servants ..."** Isn't that 'revealing' (pardon the intended pun) !? It's not what we would expect if Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, for the risen and now glorified Jesus Christ (i.e. the Messiah or the Anointed one) is **given a revelation from God.**

Quite clearly, Jesus is not, cannot be, the All-knowing Almighty God, for even though now taken up into heaven he must still be **"given"** the message from **"the God"** (the Greek text usually has the definite article as it does here) to pass on down the line to other duly-appointed agents — who are identified as **His angel** and **John**.

My question then is, if Jesus is the LORD God Almighty, the Alpha and the Omega (as 'orthodox' trinitarian doctrine teaches, and as we are told we have to believe, is "co-equal" with his Father God) why does he need to be **"given the revelation"**, and why must he be commissioned to **"show"** it **"to his servants"**? Being given a revelation and receiving a commission from **"the God"** surely shows Jesus cannot either be omniscient, nor the Almighty?

We are clearly told that this Eternal and Almighty One is **identified as Jesus' own "God and Father" (v. 6)**! This is consistent with the entire NT where Jesus has a God Who is always over and above him --- even **after Jesus had been raised and glorified.**

Furthermore, **this God and Father of Jesus designates Himself** (in the singular, by the way) as, **"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End ... the Almighty" (1: 7).** The Almighty (the *Pantokrater* or *El Shaddai*) is a designation **never once applied to Jesus in Scripture, but always and invariably is ascribed to the Father Who, in verse 6, is called "His (i.e. Jesus') God and Father"**!

So, we see this in the ultimate book of the Bible where Jesus still has a God over and above him. You will recall He says this any number of times in his communications with the 7 churches by calling God **"my God"** (e.g. **3: 2, 5**) and four (4) times in one verse in the letter to the Church at Philadelphia (**3: 12**), and **"my Father"** numerous times. So, **Jesus, in his post-resurrection**

**status** — just as he did as he walked upon this earth — **still has a God Who is superior to him!** (But does God the Father have a God? To ask this is to answer it.)

## IN HEAVEN JESUS IS A FELLOW-WORSHIPPER WITH THE SAVED!

As an aside, but in support of this truth, I find it incredibly telling to read that Jesus, the Lamb of God, leads the worship of the redeemed congregation in **15: 3-4**. **Chapter 15** informs us that Jesus sings a song of worship and praise to the LORD God, the Almighty, for he sings in praise:- **"Who will not fear, O LORD, and glorify Thy Name? For Thou alone art holy ..." (15: 4)!**

Jesus, as he did on earth, knows the Father seeks true worshippers to worship Him **in spirit and in truth (John 4: 4: 23)**. And the risen Jesus is **himself** in heaven just such a worshipper! **And his worship includes the confession that His God and Father "alone is holy"**. (This is also confirmed in **Hebrews 2: 12** where Jesus is said to **"sing Thy praise in the midst of the congregation"**.) **So, Jesus worships God!** Jesus gladly confesses that His God and Father alone is the ultimate source of all holiness and righteousness in all creation.

In *The Revelation* whenever Jesus is worshipped it is always in association with the One Who sits on the Throne. He is either the Lamb of God or the son of God or the Christ of God who sits at the right hand of the God by invitation and in fulfilment of God's prophetic announcements many places in the OT (such as **Psalms 2; 89: 20; 110:1; 132: 11, 17-18; Daniel 7: 13-14, 27**, etc.) God raised him from the dead as the reward for his faithfulness to the Great Commission his Father had given him.

**Why, if Jesus is a true worshipper of God himself, is his worship not trinitarian?**

## THE HOLY SPIRIT IS NEVER WORSHIPPED IN HEAVEN!

And, pray tell, where can we find anywhere in the Bible, yet alone in *The Revelation* which is the capstone to the entire Biblical corpus, a so-called Third Member --- 'God the Spirit' (a description found nowhere in the Bible) --- being worshipped?

"God the Holy Spirit" is notably absent from any worship! Yet we go beyond Scripture in our church praise and worship to worship God as a trinity of Persons. If Scripture is your authority, if Scripture is my final authority, where do we find anywhere where the angels, the elders, the four Living Creatures, the saints, and supremely Jesus Christ himself singing praise -- as we often do Sunday mornings --- to "The Three in One"? I will be so bold as to say, this is not authorised worship. It is, to use an Old Testament picture, **strange incense** and **strange fire (Ex. 30:9; Num. 3: 4)**.

Back to the description of God being the Alpha and the Omega: It is only used three (3) times in the entire NT and all 3 occur in the book of *The Revelation*. The other two times are at **21: 6** and **22:13**. ( <sup>1</sup> )

Note that the Speaker identifies himself in both **verses 4** and **8** as **Him Who is and Who was and Who is to come**. This one is clearly distinguished **from the seven Spirits who are before His throne; and from Jesus the Messiah, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead ..."**

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<sup>1</sup> As in the first reference at **1: 8** the other two times have the LORD God speaking about Himself. It never is said of the Son of Man, nor to the Son of God.

So, there is only One Who is the Almighty / LORD God nominated here. (Note also the singular personal pronouns describing Him and the singular verbs agreeing!)

To repeat: This description of the Eternal One can only fit the Father God and is not Jesus, who is subsequently defined in **verses 5-6** as **the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth ... who has made us to be a kingdom, priests to his God and Father**".

### **OBJECTION: BUT DOESN'T JESUS CALL HIMSELF "THE FIRST AND THE LAST"?**

No doubt you will remind me, "But hang on Greg, what about **1: 17** where Jesus says of himself, **"I am the first and the last ..."**? Isn't that equivalent to saying, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last?" Good question!

Well, just look at how Jesus defines his own status. He qualifies what he means by **"the first and the last"**. He adds that he is, **"the living one; and I was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades"** (1: 17-18).

**Jesus' own faithful testimony is that he is the first and the last in a specific category; he is the first and the last of those who have died and have now come to life again via resurrection.**

There is a very good reason why Jesus is said to be **the firstborn out from the dead ones** (Col. 1: 18; Rev. 1: 5). <sup>( 2 )</sup>

**The unambiguous teaching of the entire Bible is that God alone has immortality and cannot die!** (Yet a popular song often sung in trinitarian churches is that God was the Lion and the Lamb Who was slain"! But God cannot die says my Bible.) **To say otherwise is not only an illogical contradiction** — for even God Himself cannot be both immortal and mortal at the same time if language is not to be emptied of any signification.

No, this is disobedience to unambiguous revelation if words are to mean anything (I am aware that the doctrine of the Trinity makes it that only the "human nature of Jesus died", whereas, to the contrary, Jesus says, **"I was dead"**! And **Romans 5: 10** says **"God reconciled us to Himself by the death of His Son"**. So, **the Son himself died** --- not just a so-called human nature. To repeat, Jesus himself testifies, **"I was dead"**. Are we listening?

Have you noticed that the original Greek does not have Jesus claiming to be the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the One who was and Who is, and Who is to come and who can never die? **Jesus uses different words when describing himself as the first and the last.** <sup>( 3 )</sup> He does **not** say he is the Alpha and the Omega!

Jesus has already been introduced as **"one like the Son of Man"** (1: 13), which was Jesus' favourite self-description during his ministry on earth. The figure called the Son of Man (revealed for instance, in **Daniel 7**) is a glorified 'human being' and you will recall in Daniel's vision, that the Son of Man is brought up to the Ancient of Days to **receive** an everlasting Kingdom from God on behalf of the saints. In *The Revelation* John thus sees in the glorified Jesus the fulfilment of that

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<sup>2</sup> This is the literal translation of the Greek text ... πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν

<sup>3</sup> ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος ... **not** the words of the Almighty earlier in **verse 7**, 'Εγώ εἰμι τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω.

vision and indeed, of the many prophecies that God would exalt to His right hand a worthy man to fulfil His redemptive purposes for the world.

Jesus alone of all human beings is so far the only one to have been raised from the dead to immortality. He is called **the firstborn out from the dead ones** (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1: 5). (<sup>4</sup>) Which is to say, he is the first and the last, the beginning and the end of the saving process God has been working through him --- **"God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5: 18-19).**

God has no other plan or method or person in all creation able and worthy to save us. Jesus alone encompasses all of God's plans to redeem creation. As the Son of Man, as the first and the last in the category of men who have died and who have been raised, Jesus has been given **"the keys of death and Hades"**. God has rewarded him, given him this authority over all mankind.

On the other hand, the One who is alone the Alpha and the Omega, the Creator of all things, is in another entirely different category altogether. The LORD God, the Almighty is still, as Jesus prayed in **John 17: 3, "the only true God"** and Jesus is still — even now after having been exalted to God's right hand in heaven — **"the Christ whom You, Father, have sent"**.

There surely can be no excuse for confusion, conflation, or confounding the persons!

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<sup>4</sup> This is the literal translation of the Greek ... πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν