

## THE 'I AM'S' OF JESUS

### Part 9

## I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA

*Based on the book: "The Great I Am's of Jesus."*

*By Anthony Coniaris, Light and Life Publications*

In the last book of the Bible, the Book of the Apocalypse, we get the phrase, *"I am the Alpha and the Omega... he who is and he who was and he who is to come, he who holds everything."* (Revelation 1:8) *Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, λέγει κύριος, ὁ θεός, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντοκράτωρ.* Past, present, future... eternity, everything.



The first letter of the Greek alphabet is Alpha and the last letter is Omega. It is like saying in English... the A and the Z. The Greek alphabet has twenty-four letters and the Latin alphabet has twenty-six letters, other alphabets have thirty or so. In any case with these thirty or so letters, we can create millions of words in all sorts of languages.

The phrase Alpha and Omega is used three times in the Book of the Apocalypse. (Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13) The first two times it is used to describe God. The third

time it is applied directly to Jesus. *“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.”* (Rev. 22:13) *ἐγὼ τὸ Ἄλφα καὶ τὸ Ὠ, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ τέλος.*



Both among the Jews and the Greeks, “the beginning and the end” was a title for God. Isaiah hears God say, *“I am the first and I am the last, besides me there is no god.”* (Isaiah 44:6). Among the Ancient Greeks, Plato refers to Orpheus in his *Laws* in describing *“God, who, as an old tradition tells, holds the beginning, the end, and the centre of everything.”* «ο μὲν δὴ Θεός...αρχὴν τε καὶ τελευτὴν καὶ μέσσα τῶν ἀπάντων ἔχων...»

In speaking to a pagan audience, who would have revered the symbology of the circle, the shape, St Clement of Alexandria explains that God, Divinity, is the circle of being. And that our knowledge of God comes through the Word of God - ο Λόγος του Θεού. And I quote: *“This circle, that is the Son and Word of God, unites all the powers that exist. That is why it is called the Alpha and the Omega. The end becomes the beginning and the beginning becomes the end without any break.”*

OK, so we have established that we Christians understand the being of God in a **circular** shape. Eternity, continuity, fullness.

The same does **not** apply to created things, humans included. Trees, plants, animals, even planets and stars. Everything that is born, has a beginning and everything that dies has an end. That is not circular, that is **linear**..., a line with a

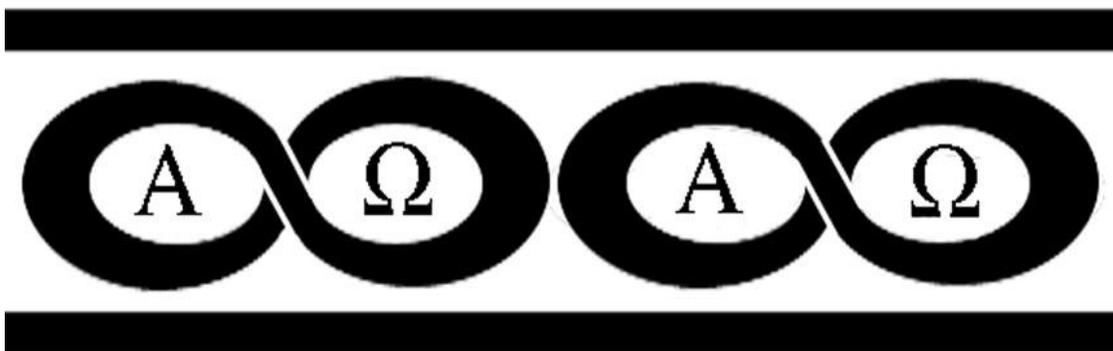
starting point and an ending point. There was a time when I and you did not exist. And there will come a time when most of us will stop existing. That is none other than the phenomenon of death.

However, there is a way that the linear can converge into the circular. There is a way the linear, human existence can converge and become one with the circular, divine state of being. It is called by a number of names in our two thousand year old Tradition:

*Koinonia* - communion;  
*methexis* - partaking;  
*theosis* - deification;  
*soteria* - salvation.

Let us list some synonyms to the Alpha and the Omega so that we can better understand this Christian perspective. We have...

beginning and end;  
origin and destination;  
source and fulfilment;  
motive and purpose;  
birth and completeness;  
creation and deification.



*"I am the Alpha and the Omega...*

*he who is and he who was and he who is to come,*

*he who holds everything [ο παντοκράτωρ]."* (Rev. 1:8)

*"I am the Alpha and the Omega...*

*to the thirsty I will give water freely from the spring of the water of life."*

*(Rev. 21:6)*

*"I am the Alpha and the Omega...*

*Let the one who is thirsty come;*

*and let the one who wishes...*

*take the free gift of the water of life."* (Rev. 22:13)

Amen.

*Next week, we shall continue with part 10 of our series on the "I AMs of Jesus".*

*We shall be talking about "I am the Good Shepherd" - Εγώ ειμί ο ποιμήν ο καλός.*

*You can catch up with the series on Twitter. Follow us @stgeorgerosebay.*

*Sermon given by Fr Gerasimos Koutsouras*

*St George Church, Rose Bay, Australia*

*Sunday, 14th of April 2013*

