

KNOWING GOD ... better

The God Beyond Time

Text: Rev. 1:8

INTRODUCTION: I reminded you last Sunday of Paul's testimony that the Lord taught him to be glad to even glory in his weaknesses, because it is in our weaknesses that God shines through with His strength. I have had strong occasion to consider my own weaknesses this week, and to seek to depend upon God's strength rather than my own. In the midst of pondering my own numerous weaknesses, I asked the question, "What is the thing that most constrains me? What holds me back from doing more of what I want to do, especially those things I want to do for the Lord, for the Kingdom, for our church, and for my own family?"

And I thought, I do indeed have many constraints that hold me back:

- Lack of strength and energy, I feel that lack more now year by year.
- Lack of ability, there are so many things I do not know how to do or how to do well.
- Lack of finances, for although I consider myself greatly blessed, many things I would love to do in the name of the Lord for His work and His church are constrained by funding.
- And I could list many other constraints, but thinking through this led me to see what I believe is my greatest constraint.
- Time – I lack the time to do all I could do, would do, long to do for God, the Kingdom, our church, my family. It just seems like there is never enough time.
- And most of the time, before I run out of money, before I run out of ability, even before I run out of strength and energy, I run out of time.
- And I thought, "Lord, is this also a place where I am weak, but You are strong?" And God says "Yes. I am the God Beyond the Constraints of Time."

That is an interesting idea with which modern philosophers would have a heyday.

If you want to see some crazy, confusing, even ridiculous philosophy, just do a web search on the "beginning of time." Except for the few answers that try to address the problem from a biblical perspective, the very best answers can really be summed up as "We don't know when time began." Even Stephen Hawking, who wrote *A Brief History of Time* and then revised it in *A Briefer History of Time* says in a public lecture on the subject that we cannot know because the laws of the universe do not apply to the moment of the beginning of the universe and certainly not to before that moment of beginning. Therefore, from an observational perspective or even from a logical one based on the observed laws of the universe, we cannot know.

Well, I would agree with Dr. Hawking that if we are to know about the origin or the destiny of time itself, we cannot know either by observing the laws of the universe. However, unlike Dr. Hawking, I know Someone who does know, who does understand, and who has revealed certain things about time and about His relationship to time to us in His Word.

By the way, Dr. Hawking realized about a year and a half ago that he was totally wrong about the origin of the universe and the non-existence of a Creator God. He discovered that the God beyond time does in fact exist and always has and always will.

And if you are thinking, "I haven't heard that!" It happened March 14 last year. Stephen Hawking died. Immediately he discovered that his atheistic mind was more crippled than his body and that his greatest illness was not physical but spiritual.

Folks, if we do not understand that the God of the Bible is The God Beyond Time, the God for whom time holds no constraints at all, then we have an opportunity to get to know God better!

Let us begin by looking at

Revelation 1:8 NKJV "I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End,*" says the Lord, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

I. ALPHA AND OMEGA - BEGINNING AND END - FIRST AND LAST

The alpha is the first letter, therefore the beginning of the Greek alphabet. The omega is the last letter, and therefore is the end.

Four times, God uses this designation of Himself in Revelation. First, in Rev. 1:8 above. Then ...

Revelation 1:11 NKJV saying, "**I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last,**" and, "What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

Revelation 21:6 NKJV And He said to me, "It is done! **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.** I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

Revelation 22:13–14 NKJV 13 **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.**" 14 Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

Since the expression "Alpha and Omega" is based on Greek letters, it's use is restricted to the New Testament. However the foundation for that name is in the Old Testament as well, used by God through Isaiah, the prophet.

Isaiah 41:4 NKJV Who has performed and done *it*, Calling the generations from the beginning? '**I, the LORD, am the first; And with the last I am He.**' "

Isaiah 44:6 NKJV "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: '**I am the First and I am the Last;** Besides Me *there is* no God.

Wow! What a verse. This is Yahweh (God the Father) speaking AND Yahweh's Redeemer (God the Son), speaking in unity because They are One God!

Isaiah 48:12–13 NKJV 12 “Listen to Me, O Jacob, And Israel, My called: **I am He, I am the First, I am also the Last.** 13 Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, And My right hand has stretched out the heavens; *When* I call to them, They stand up together.

God being called the first and the last, the beginning and the end, signifies several things.

A. God is, was, and is to come.

Revelation 1:8 NKJV “I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the Beginning and the End,*” says the Lord, “**who is and who was and who is to come,** the Almighty.”

B. God is the beginning and end of all things.

1. God was in charge of the past.

- a. When God was ready to create the universe, it was made.
- b. When God wanted to rid the earth of the human race whose thoughts had become only evil continually and begin again, making a way for redemption, He sent a worldwide flood and saved just eight people in an ark who found grace in the eyes of the Lord.
- c. When the peoples rebelled against God's command to scatter across the face of the earth and to repopulate the lands, and instead gathered themselves at Babel to seek to exalt themselves in the place of God, in a moment God changed them from speaking a single language to multiple languages and sent them scurrying across the face of the globe as He had commanded.
- d. When God wanted to start a nation to use as a Kingdom of Priests, He gave aged Abraham and Sarah a son.
- e. When God wanted to grow that nation in the prosperity of Egypt, He sent Joseph there to prepare a place for them.
- f. When God wanted to bring Israel from Egypt and plant them in the Promised Land, He humbled Pharaoh, opened the Red Sea, marched His people through the wilderness, made the walls of a city fall down like loosely stacked bricks, and slew powerful kings and mighty armies.
- g. When God's own people grew haughty and rebellious, God called pagan nations to conquer them and take them captive.
- h. When God wanted them to return to the land to prepare for the coming of Messiah, He turned the heart of the King of Persia named Cyrus like a river of water, and Cyrus sent the captives back home.

- i. And in the fullness of time, when God was ready, He sent forth His Son, born of a virgin, to live a sinless life and die a sacrificial death, to be the redeemer of all who would trust in Him.
- j. God was in charge in times past!

2. God is in control of the present.

- a. We see that God was in charge in the past because we have His Word which helps us see the past from heaven's vantage point.
- b. We do not have that perspective in the present. We make our observations from an earthly point of view. We are like soldiers in the fog of war.
- c. But God is no less in control. He is firmly in charge.
- d. God is in control in the U.S.
- e. Even on 9/11, God was in control.
- f. During destructive natural disasters like Hurricane Michael, God is in control.
- g. We may not fully see His purposes, but we trust Him to direct our paths.

3. God determines the future.

- a. Interestingly, we actually know more about what God is doing in the future, than we do in the present.
- b. We know because God has declared certain things about the future in His Word.
 - 1) Jesus is coming again!
 - 2) He is going to call believers up to meet Him in the air!
 - 3) There is going to be a time of tribulation on this earth like the world has never seen. Jesus said so.
 - 4) Christ is going to return on a white horse, leading the armies of heaven, and defeating the antichrist and his kingdom.
 - 5) Christ is going to reign on this earth for 1,000 years.
 - 6) And then there is going to be a new heaven and a new earth where those who have put their trust and faith in Christ will live with Him for all eternity.
- c. You can take it to the bank for two reasons:
 - 1) God determines the future.
 - 2) He has told us these things about the future in His inerrant Word.

God is Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End, First and Last. He is, was, and is to come. He determines past, present, and future.

God also calls Himself

II. EL OLAM - EVERLASTING GOD

A. The God of everlasting covenants.

Gen. 21:33 NKJV Then *Abraham* planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there called on the name of the **LORD, the Everlasting God**.

Abraham tried to remind Abimelech of his promise by giving him seven sheep and then naming the well Beer Sheba or Well of the Seven. This was kind of like sending in a warranty card.

When Abraham went back to the well, he worshipped God and called Him "Yahweh El Olam," ... LORD, Everlasting God, because God never has to be reminded of His promises. The warranty never runs out with God.

1. God's promises last forever. God is the Everlasting God.
2. What are some of God's promises to you from His Word?

I will love you. I have good plans for you. I will forgive your sins. I will give you eternal life. I will never leave you. I will always be with you. I will provide for you. I will take care of you.

3. **God will always keep these promises to you, because He is the Everlasting God. God's warranty never expires.**

B. God is an everlasting refuge.

Deut. 33:27a NKJV The eternal God *is your* refuge, And **underneath are the everlasting arms**.

- **God always "catches" His children.**
- **God's children will sometimes fall into adversity.**

- They may fall further than they expect.
- They may fall longer than they expect.
- Ultimately our bodies do indeed fall into the grave.
- But they will not fall forever.

Because underneath, are His everlasting arms! And everlasting means they never go away!

C. He is the God who is everlastingly strong and who loans His strength to those who trust in Him.

Isa. 40:28-31 NKJV 28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? **The everlasting God**, the LORD, The Creator of the ends of the earth, Neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable. 29 He gives power to the weak, And to *those who have* no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, 31 But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew *their* strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

1. Everyone wears out except God.
2. **God never gets tired.**
3. **He loans His strength to those who trust in Him. (Loans rather than gives because it is not a one-time event.)**

III. ATTIQ YOM - ANCIENT OF DAYS

Dan. 7:9-10 NKJV 9 "I watched till thrones were put in place, And **the Ancient of Days** was seated; His garment was white as snow, And the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, Its wheels a burning fire; 10 A fiery stream issued And came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, And the books were opened.

- **God is the everlasting judge.**
- **Three of His everlasting judgments are declared in this passage:**

Daniel 7:11–14 NKJV 11 "I watched then because of the sound of the pompous words which the horn was speaking; **I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame.** 12 As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

13 "I was watching in the night visions, And **behold, One like the Son of Man**, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. 14 Then **to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom**, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting

dominion, **Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed.**

1. The antichrist and his kingdom will be destroyed.
2. The Kingdom of Christ shall be established for eternity.
3. The saints of the Most High shall be given the victory and a part in the everlasting kingdom.

Dan. 7:27 NKJV **Then the kingdom and dominion, And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, **Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.** His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'**

CONCLUSION: Let me close with a question:

- What are you going to do this afternoon?
- What are you going to do next week?
- What are you going to do next year?
- What are you going to do ten years from now?
- What are you going to do a hundred years from now?
- What are you going to do a thousand years from now?
- What are you going to do ten thousand years from now?

Remember how we saw last week that **God created us to live forever, and everybody does,**

- **Somewhere**
- **Doing something**

Where will you be? What will you be doing?