

## Home Group Leaders Discussion Guide

### I AM the Alpha & Omega—Revelation 1:8, 21:6, 22:13

*Jesus said, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." (Rev. 22:13).*

By now, I would hope, we have grown to expect BIG, BOLD, AUDACIOUS statements from Jesus (which is why we're taking the time to look at these "I AM..." statements). These statements are NOT flowery, sentimental, oration. These statements are definitive; they have teeth; they are divisive; and they can be quite troublesome if 1.) you don't believe them to be true; or 2.) you prefer a tame, domesticated Jesus. But if we take Jesus at His word—if we take His own statements seriously—this is someone we all must contend with. These are not words, this is not a person, that can simply be ignored or disregarded.

Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. It would be like saying, "I am the A and the Z." Revelation 22:13, then, is a commonly used literary device in Scripture known as parallelism. This is probably the simplest form of parallelism...stating the same thing in a slightly different way, compounding the effect

We can simplify the point down to this: This thing we know as "life" is all about Jesus (the logical implication being that it's not about us—individually or collectively). Life is by Him, and for Him, through Him, and to Him. Jesus created life; Jesus sustains life; Jesus redeems, restores, and renews life. Apart from Jesus there is no life. This is the reality of the situation whether we "believe" it or not, whether we like it or not.

As Paul put it, *"For by Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."* (Colossians 1:16-17)

And the amazing thing, the truly incredibly, unbelievable thing, is that this Jesus wants us to know Him in a very real and personal way. He invites us and desires us to get to know Him, enjoy Him, and become like Him (which is what we were created for to begin with). We—individually and collectively—were meant to live life in intimate connection to Him. Only then can we experience life that is truly life.

To try to say all this another way, the existence we experience from birth to death is completely meaningless apart from Jesus. Life was going on before us, and it will continue to go on after us. In the grand scheme of things, we are pretty inconsequential. Our lives—individually and collectively, only have meaning, significance, consequence in connection to Jesus. This is why we've been talking so much during the past year or so about the "with God" life. Because without God, there really isn't much to this thing called "life".

Throughout this series we have been highlighting the divinity of Jesus, and specifically, Jesus' self-understanding of His own divinity. An interesting observation to make from the book of

Revelation, and specifically the statement, *“I am the Alpha and the Omega”*, is in 21:6. If you happen to have a Bible that marks the words of Christ in red letters, then you’ll notice that Rev. 1:8 and 22:13 are in red letters, but 21:6 is not. It appears 21:6 is God the Father saying, *“I am the Alpha and Omega”*. God the Father, and Jesus the Son stating the same thing demonstrates their Oneness. As we’ve remarked throughout this series, the words that come out of Jesus’ mouth are only right, good, fitting, if He is actually God. The writer of Revelation has no qualms denoting their equality.

You’ll notice that up until now all the “I AM...” statements we’ve looked at thus far have come from the Gospel of John. This week’s comes from the book of Revelation...probably the most controversial and misunderstood book in the Bible. With that said, I’d like to point you in the direction of The Bible Project. (So much good stuff from them...it is well worth your time to explore what they have to offer.) Specifically, the link below is of their two-part video on Revelation. I think you’ll find it helpful and insightful. (It wouldn’t be a bad idea to watch the videos as a Home Group and discuss it.)

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/revelation/>

- Q. Imagine having lunch with a friend, family member, coworker, who asked you, “what is the meaning and purpose of life?”, how would you answer them? (We could also add, “And where does meaning, purpose, significance come from?”)**
- Q. Consider all the “I AM...” statements we’ve look at through this series. How do these truths, these realities, affect you/us? How does it give you perspective as you go through life? What sort of confidence and/or courage does it offer you?**
- Q. Respond/react to the statement, “Life has no meaning or significance without Jesus.” Or to ask it another way, “If there is no intentional/purposeful beginning—i.e. if it was just a cosmic accident or happenstance—and if it’s not headed in any purposeful/intentional direction, then what meaning, purpose, significance does life have? If there is no meaning, purpose, significance to life, then wear do values, ethics, morals come into play?**
- Q. Describe your own personal, existential experience of wrestling with and coming to grips with the question of the meaning, purpose, significance of life.**
- Q. If you were asked to share 3 facts about Jesus that are especially significant to you, what would you share? And why are these facts particularly important to you? (This question is straight from the Serendipity Bible for Groups.)**