

I.N.I.

Good Friday
April 18, 2014
John 19:30

In Christ Jesus, whose name is wondrous love, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

Do you know the two Greek words *alpha* and *omega*? They are the first and last letters in the Greek alphabet, just as A and Z are in ours. Do you know that those two Greek letters are also one of Jesus' names? In Revelation chapter 22, the Savior applies this name to Himself. **I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END, THE FIRST AND THE LAST.** What does this name mean? Why is it such a name of wondrous love for our Savior?

Well consider how we use those two letters in our language. When a rental or hardware store advertises, "We have everything from A to Z," we know what it means. It's claiming, "We have it all. Everything you need you can find here. We are all-sufficient." This claim may or may not be true. But when Jesus says, "**I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA,**" it's wonderfully true. He has it all. He is all-sufficient. There is nothing missing. He is all we need for salvation.

Names of Wondrous Love—THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA

I. Jesus has all we need for salvation.

Scarcely had the sponge soaked with sour wine moistened Jesus' parched lips when we hear Him speak, **IT IS FINISHED.** Although only one word in the Greek language, these three little words in English are words of great significance to the world. Nor are we exaggerating when we call them some of the most important words in the history of the world. **IT IS FINISHED,** Jesus said, not with the whisper of the dying that you have to bend low to hear. No, He spoke, as the gospel writers tell us, with a loud voice so that all might hear. **IT IS FINISHED,** He wanted the whole world to know. What was finished? What is the "it" of which He spoke?

Was He referring to His agony and pain? Was death now bringing Him sweet relief from the inhumane torture, the hatred and anger that pierced His heart? Was it His life to which He was referring?

To find the answer, we need to listen carefully as our Savior speaks from the darkness on Calvary. We need to look closely at His face. His face, bloody and bruised, is yet bright and at peace. His words are not the words of a man who is being conquered by death, but the words of a soldier who has conquered in the battle. They are the words of a Savior whose mission has been accomplished. They are the words of **the Alpha and the Omega** whose work is all-sufficient for our salvation.

That's right! With these words Jesus was telling all who would listen, "*I have won. My work of salvation is done. All the prophecies concerning My suffering and death have been fulfilled. All of the ceremonial laws and animal sacrifices of the Scapegoat, the lambs, the bulls, the Great Day of Atonement, the Passover, the Sabbath all have come to an end for they have been fulfilled in Me. I have opened wide the gates of heaven for mankind. I have kept all of the law perfectly for every person. I have paid for all sins. Not one sin is left, whether seemingly large or small. I have suffered the agonies of hell that were reserved for sinners. I have endured the full punishment and anger of My Father over sin. I have shed My precious blood to redeem all mankind. And now, it—My work of salvation—is completely finished.*" Not a single sin in the countless number from the beginning of time to the end of time was left unpaid. From His cross the Savior could turn His gaze from the first sinner to the last and see no one whose guilt He had not covered.

Don't His words **IT IS FINISHED** show His wondrous love for sinners? The ancient Greeks wrote that one Greek word "**Tetelestai**" on tax bills to show that they were paid in full. On Calvary, Jesus wrote "**Tetelestai---Paid in Full**" with the crimson ink of His blood on the bill of sin we had run up before God. "**Finished, paid in full,**" he said, "*not one more penny needs to be added.*" In these words we have the summary of our salvation, the truth Paul expressed so well when he wrote, **THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION TO THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS** (Rom. 8:1). Because of these words, we see that Jesus truly is **the Alpha and the Omega.**

One day a man came to the pastor and asked rather sarcastically, "What must I do to be saved?" Knowing the man was not serious, the pastor answered, "It's too late." The man became alarmed and asked again, this time more seriously, "No, no, what must I do to be saved?" Again the pastor answered, "It's too late," and then added, "It's already been done." Thank God we know our salvation is all done. Thank God we know that when we call Jesus *Alpha and Omega*, we are saying He is the only Savior we'll ever need.

II. Jesus has all we need for heaven.

Our text tells us that having victoriously shouted **IT IS FINISHED**, Jesus **BOWING HIS HEAD, GAVE UP HIS SPIRIT**. How different His dying is from ours. We die because we have to. Our lives are snatched from us. We cannot prolong life for one second more. Jesus died not because He had to but because He wanted to. He once said, **I LAY DOWN MY LIFE THAT I MAY TAKE IT AGAIN. NO ONE TAKES IT FROM ME, BUT I LAY IT DOWN OF MYSELF. I HAVE POWER TO LAY IT DOWN, AND I HAVE POWER TO TAKE IT AGAIN.** (John 10:17,18). Now He has proved it. Death stood near the scene on Calvary that day, not daring to approach the Lord until summoned by Christ. With His work of salvation finished, Jesus was ready to return to the heaven from which He had come. Luke tells us the words with which the all-sufficient Savior entrusted His soul into the hands of His Father. Jesus prayed: **FATHER, 'INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.** (Luke 23:46).

And what about us? Yes, we must die. No, we can do nothing about it. There's no putting death off for one second. Death's cold hands will someday come knocking at the door of our hearts. Death rightly has been described as the king of terrors. But what is it that makes death so terrible? It's more than just the physical pain and the natural shrinking from such a scary ordeal. It's more than the tearing away of those close bonds with loved ones and the end of living here on earth. What makes death so dreadful is the knowledge that a person's soul must stand before the judgment seat of a holy and righteous God.

For us who stand at the foot of our Savior's cross this Good Friday, death has lost its sting. It's like a lion whose sharp teeth and claws have all been pulled. Though death still growls, it can't bite or slash us any longer. Our Jesus has fully paid sin's wage. Someone has beautifully stated it this way: "Now we can fall asleep in Jesus' wounds, knowing that the last beating of our hearts will be a soft knocking at heaven's door." When that door opens, we will be home with Jesus, **the Alpha and the Omega**, the One who is all we need for heaven.

This Good Friday we sit beneath the cross of Jesus. That's our Savior dying there. He also shows us how to die. When we as God's children give up our souls, we hand them over to the One who is no stranger or enemy. Instead, we commend our souls into the warm hands of our eternal loving Father. The One who is all we need for heaven will cradle us close and carry us home to the rooms He prepared for us on that Good Friday cross. And as Easter followed that first Good Friday, so another glorious Easter will dawn to bring our sleeping bodies to a joyful resurrection and to endless glory. Because of that all-sufficient Savior and His wondrous love, heaven is our eternal home.

We may have our doubts about the rental or hardware store that advertises it has all we need from A to Z. I'm sure there have been times when that store has had to eat its words. When Jesus says, **I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END, THE FIRST AND THE LAST**, we can take Him at His word. He truly is all we need for salvation and all we need for heaven. He is all-sufficient! Jesus did not come down from that cross until **ALL WAS FINISHED**. He hung there and died there because of His great love for us. What a wonderful name of love **THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA** is.

Praise, honor and glory to our Savior whose name is wondrous love.

It is finished, hear Him cry! As He points us to the sky,
All is done for us alone, for our sin He did atone.
Simply to His cross we cling then forever we will sing,
Heavenly Praises to our King.

Amen.