

## Scripture Reading:

**Genesis 1: "1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."**

**John 1: " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."**

**Revelation 1:3 "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near... 8 "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."**

**Revelation 21:1 "1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. 4 And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." 5 Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful." 6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End."**

**Revelation 22:12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work. 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."**

### The Beginning and the End

Here at Church of the King we strongly believe that the gathered Saints are blessed and empowered each week as we lift up our hearts & voices together in worship! We believe that we are convicted, instructed, strengthened and encouraged as we hear the Scriptures expounded in preaching and gather around the Lord's Table:

- Blessings that are commonly called Word & Sacrament.

We focus on expositional preaching which means taking the Scriptures verse by verse.

- There are also times and seasons where we preach on particular subjects or seasons and this morning will be such a sermon!

We are celebrating the first Sunday of advent and I want us to consider the important role that advent plays in our remembrance of the Church calendar & how it reminds us of the importance of Jesus being at the center of all history! Sermons can also have many different types of emphasis: Some are convicting, others challenging, still others primarily instructive.

- This morning I hope to bring a very encouraging message where we simply review and rejoice in what we should all know very well.
- I would certainly hope that all of this morning's texts were very familiar to all of us!
- Jesus proclaims Himself to be the Alpha and the Omega: The beginning and the end!

-- Jesus created all there is including mankind in His own image.

-- Jesus redeemed His people and all of creation at the cross.

-- Jesus reigns forever as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

- This is what fallen man and the world have rejected and this is what we, as faithful servants of Christ, must affirm and believe!

**So, this morning I want to again briefly review how the church calendar teaches and reminds us that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega and consider the centrality of Jesus in all of history.**

- **Here at Church of the King we try to have a proper focus on the church calendar without having a slavish devotion to it.**

**You can find resources that have prayers and colors and robes and readings for just about every Sunday, or even every day of the year...**

**But sadly in most of the Churches where you would find such things, they have left Jesus far behind.**

**This was the case with the Pharisees and Sadducees which Jesus encountered in His earthly ministry:**

- **They knew all the details and procedures of the Scriptures and yet failed to recognize the very deliverer that God sent into their midst who was foretold by the very Scriptures!**
- **We certainly do not want to follow that sad tradition!**

**However, just because something can be abused is no reason for us to ignore or avoid a practice that can build our faith and the faith of our children.**

**Last week we came to the close of ordinary time and now we have Advent which is both the beginning the end of our Church calendar.**

- **This is true because the purpose of the church calendar is to remember the work and ministry of Jesus!**
- **All of history revolves around Jesus and a proper use of the Church calendar reminds of us this.**

**Jesus is the beginning and the end of history: He is the Alpha and Omega as He declared in Revelation!**

**The Bible presents Jesus as the creator of the heavens and the earth!**

- **The Bible reveals that Jesus comes at the center of history to redeem His people and to bring forth the New Creation.**

**AND the Bible teaches that Jesus will return at the end of the age to judge the living and the dead.**

**So, it is proper in the season of Advent to remember that Jesus came as the Savior of the world AND that Jesus will come again as the final judge of all the world.**

- **Thus Advent is both the beginning and the end of the Church calendar year.**

**Our annual journey begins at the beginning with the birth of Christ:**

- **Remembering as John does in his Gospel that Jesus is the very Word of God who created all there is who now comes to us in the flesh.**

**From Epiphany Sunday until Psalm Sunday we remember the earthly ministry of Jesus: Epiphany means manifestation and just as the Magi came to see the new born King, we long to learn more and more about the life of Jesus year after year!**

**With Palm Sunday we enter what is called Holy Week:**

- **Remembering that Jesus entered Jerusalem to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.**

**Jesus is rejected by the religious leaders and executed by the Romans demonstrating the truth that Paul rightly declares in Romans chapter 3:**

- **That BOTH the Jews & Gentiles stand guilty before our Holy God.**

However, on Good Friday and Easter Sunday we learn that what Satan and the world meant for evil, God intended from eternity past for good as the penalty for sin is paid and the wrath of God satisfied at the cross!

- God then demonstrated the power of this redemption by raising Jesus from the dead: The first-fruit of the Godly harvest to come.

Jesus spends another forty days with His disciples on earth instructing them and giving them the Great Commission.

On Ascension Sunday we remember that Jesus has ascended to the Father's right hand in heaven where He rules until all the nations of the earth are subdued and the knowledge of the Lord fills the earth.

With Pentecost Sunday we remember how this great task is to be accomplished:

The Spirit of God, the Comforter Jesus promised, descends upon the Church giving them the power & courage they need to carry out the Great Commission.

We have learned to see the Book of Acts as the story of how the Spirit of God will bring glory to the Son by filling the earth with His Kingdom.

- We begin what is called ordinary or normal time in the Church calendar with Trinity Sunday, the first Sunday after Pentecost.

Here we focus on the Triune nature of our great God and remember that each person of the Trinity is intimately involved in our salvation.

The weeks of ordinary time are counted from Pentecost Sunday until the first Sunday of Advent: During ordinary time we remember each year that Jesus told us to observe or obey all that He had taught!

To be honest when I first began to consider the importance of the Church calendar, I thought this amounted to a big hole in the whole process!

- I thought, what, did they just run out of things to focus on after Pentecost?

As I have studied and practiced these things over the years I have come to realize that ordinary time is a vital part of our remembrance: It is in these weeks, just as it is with the days, weeks and years of our lives, that we learn to obey the commands of Jesus:

- Where we learn to take seriously His admonition: IF you love Me, keep my commandments!
- Thus, when we come again to Advent we should see how it is both the beginning and the end.

Coming at the end of our ordinary time, we remember that Jesus will come at the end of time as the just judge of the living and the dead.

As we learn from the parable of the wheat and tares, the weeds will be gathered up and burned:

- The wicked will be judged and removed.

And we as His Saints will also face a purifying judgment that Paul alludes to in I Corinthians chapter three:

“7 So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase...

10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”

- Thus, having moved from the beginning to the end, we prepare to begin at the beginning again as we celebrate of the season of Advent in anticipation of the joy of Christmas!

We move through this year after year to help us remember that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega:

- The beginning and the end!
- We must remember that this is true for all of history and should be true in all of our lives.
- All of us here at Church of the King along with our covenant children who have been baptized are called upon to live as those who bear the name of Jesus!

I want to take just a moment to consider what that means... The Bible begins with these familiar words: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

The Apostle Paul in writing to the Saints at Colossi reminds us of the importance of this for our lives: “13 [The Father] has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. 15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.”

Jesus is the creator of time and space! We are reminded of this in the opening verses of John’s Gospel where we read, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God!”

- Jesus as God existed before the beginning of time...
- And thus only He can rightly claim to be the Alpha and Omega!

Thus, Jesus is present at the beginning of history and Jesus comes at what many consider the center of history:

- As John goes on to say at verse 14, “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us!”
- Because of the penalty and gravity of sin, God must become man to save man!

Jesus comes to offer Himself as the perfect obedient man and as the very Son of God with the power to take upon Himself the wrath due for all of our sins.

- Jesus comes to earth to save His people from their sins and to bring forth the New Creation.

It is always good to remember the big picture of history:

- We have creation and fall and the decline of mankind from the garden to the cross.
- We have New Creation and redemption and advance of the Kingdom from the resurrection to the White Throne judgment.

**This view of history stands in stark contrast with the view presented by the rebellious men of today...**

- **They replace the glorious creation of Jesus with evolution and deny the fall of man into sin.**

**Rather than decline, they see mankind moving from the primitive to the more advanced.**

**They deny that Jesus was a real man and that men were in need of a Savior. Rather they believe that the advance of man will come through his own wisdom and knowledge:**

- **The great lie of the garden and of the enlightenment, which sadly pervades almost all modern thinking today.**

**They deny the Light of the World and turn to their own lesser lights...**

**As John proclaimed: “10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.”**

**As we obey the Great Commission we must confront such unbelief with the power of the Gospel both in word and in deed:**

- **We must proclaim the truth and we must live the truth!**

**We should do so with great confidence because John understood that God from eternity past had chosen those who would hear and respond!**

**John goes on to proclaim:**

**12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”**

- **May we always remember that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega!**

**Communion Meditation: Psalm 108:**

**“A Song. A Psalm of David. O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. 2 Awake, lute and harp!**

**I will awaken the dawn. 3 I will praise You, O Jehovah, among the peoples, And I will sing praises to You among the nations.**

**4 For Your mercy is great above the heavens, And Your truth reaches to the clouds. 5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, And Your glory above all the earth; 6 That Your beloved may be delivered, Save with Your right hand, and hear me.**

**[Psalmist reflects on God’s victories]**

**12 Give us help from trouble, For the help of man is useless. 13 Through God we will do valiantly, For it is He who shall tread down our enemies.”**