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FATHER

The emancipation of the believers from slavery marked them off from other people as His adopted children. His care for them is frequently compared to that of a father (Hosea 11:1; Deut. 14:1; 2 Samuel 7:14; Psalms 2:7; 89:26; Deut. 1:31; 8:5; Isaiah 1:2). On the other hand, a response of filial love expressed in obedience was required from them (Jeremiah 3:9; Malachi 1:6), and since it was so often refused, a more restricted conception of the fatherhood of God resulted. According to this deeper view, he is the Father of the God-fearing among the nation rather than of the nation as a whole (Psalm 103:13; Malachi 3:17).

The number of instances of the word "Father" as applied to God in the Gospels is more than double the number found in the remaining books of the NT. In the Gospel of John alone 107 times used. Two points in connection with Jesus' use of this title are of special interest:

First: He never joins His disciples with Himself in allusions to His relationship with the Father in such a way as to suggest that their relationship to God is of the same kind. He was aware of standing in an intimate and unparalleled relation. He claimed to be the preexistent eternal Son, equal with the Father, who became incarnate for the fulfillment of his purpose of salvation, being appointed by Him sole Mediator between God and men (Matthew 11:27; John 8:58; 10:30, 38; 14:9; 16:28; 3:25; 5:22).

Second: When he speaks of God as the Father of others He almost always refers to His disciples. While accepting the teaching of the OT that all persons are children of God by creation and receive his providential kindness (Matthew 5:45), he also taught that sin has brought about a change in men, necessitating rebirth and reconciliation to God (John 3:3; 8:42; 14:6). In accordance with this, the apostles teach that one becomes a child of God by faith in Christ and thus receives the Spirit of adoption (John 1:12; Galatians 3:16; 4:5; Romans 8:15). $\Sigma\omicron\nu\sigma\eta\iota\pi$ leads to likeness and inheritance (Matthew 5:16; Romans 8:17, 29; I John 3:2). The Father is revealed as sovereign, holy, righteous, and merciful. Prayer may confidently be offered to him, but only in Jesus' name (Matthew 6:32; John 17:11, 25; 14:14).

ALPHA AND OMEGA

The rendering of the Greek expression to $\text{\AA}\lambda\eta\alpha\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \tau\omicron\ \Omega$, which is found in three places in the NT (Revelation 1:8; 21:6; 22:13).

In this phrase there is probably a reference to the Jewish employment of the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet to indicate the totality of a thing. "The symbol t' was regarded as including the intermediate letters, and stood for totality; and thus it fitly represented the $\Sigma\eta\epsilon\kappa\iota\nu\alpha\eta\forall$ - It is a natural transition to the thought of eternity when the expression is related to time.

The expression is essentially the same as Isaiah's words, "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God" (Isaiah 44:6). Thus it is a claim that the one to whom it refers is the Eternal One.

The expression in Revelation 1:8, due to the explanatory phrases that modify the subject, refers to the eternity and omnipotence of the Lord God. In 21:6 it is further defined by the words "the beginning and the end," and in 22:13 by the words "the first and the last." The thought conveyed in the second and third occurrences is the same.

In patristic and literature the expression referred to the Son. It seems clear, however, that the first two occurrences refer to the Father (1:8; 21:6), while the third properly refers to the Son. On its last occurrence (22:13): The phrase is applicable in many senses, but perhaps it is used here with special reference to our Lord's place in human history.