

02-11-01a Revelation

Let's take a moment to prepare ourselves for the study of God's Word. We will pause and spend a few moments in prayer, shall we pray? Father, we thank you for the privilege of studying your Word together. We thank you for all of the gracious provisions that you have made for us, both physical and spiritual.

We thank you most of all for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank you for the truth that you have revealed about Him, and we pray that as we seek to understand more of that truth tonight, that you will be with us, that God the Holy Spirit will lead us into a right understanding that will result in a life that more fully reflects your image and your glory. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. We resume tonight in Revelation chapter 3, verse 12, where we are going to quickly conclude our study of the letter from the Lord Jesus Christ to the church in Asia Minor, specifically the church at Philadelphia, and then we will move forward into the letter to the church at Laodicea. There are a total of seven churches in this group.

Ephesus was the first. John is writing from the isle of Patmos, which is just off the coast of Miletus. You may recall that Paul met the Ephesian elders in Miletus in the latter chapters of Acts on his way to Rome.

Of course, there is no letter to a church at Miletus, probably because there was no Christian community there. When Paul went through some years earlier, there was no reference to any Christians there. But Ephesus is approximately 50 miles from Patmos, so this was not a huge distance to traverse for John to have written down what the Lord asked him to record in terms of messages for these churches, all of which were probably in a single book or scroll and were circulated as a set.

I have a group of books, a set of books. The author is designated simply C.H.M., which is traditional in the Brethren movement, especially of 100 to 150 years ago. They did not want to be glorified or thought much of for writing down their observations about scripture, so many of the Brethren authors would simply use their initials.

But C.H.M. was Charles H. McIntosh, and he wrote some notes on the Pentateuch. It was published notes on Genesis, notes on Exodus, notes on Leviticus, notes on Numbers, notes on Deuteronomy. You can find individual volumes, but really to get the fullness of what he is talking about, you want to have the whole set.

Here you could take an individual letter and study it, but you really gain the greatest benefit by studying the entire set. That is why at the conclusion of each letter it says, let he that has an ear hear what the Spirit says to the churches. You have an individual listening to what is said to all the churches, and that individual for our purposes is us.

We have studied most of what Jesus had to say to the church at Philadelphia. They are entirely commended. There are no real criticisms, which is unique among the churches, because they have kept the word of his perseverance, or hupomone.

We study that in great detail. Let me just direct your attention to one last reference back in chapter 1, Revelation chapter 1, the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his bondservants, the things which must soon take place, he sent and communicated it by his angel to his bondservant John, who testified to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw, or all things that he saw. 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.

This same John is the author of 1 John. He is the author of 2 John. He is the author of 3 John.

And he is a witness to this patience. So, after stumbling around here a little, I finally found my verse. It's Revelation 1, verse 9. I, John, both your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and hupomone of Jesus Christ, he says, I am your brother, Adelphos.

I am your companion, sug koinonos. Koinonia is our word for fellowship. Sung means with.

You stick them together and you get sug koinonos, the fellow fellowship, the together with fellowship. And the patience. Why of all possible options and virtues would this be key? Well, think about our study of this word.

It is the basis for inheriting the promises. Why does it show up in this context? I've done some more work on this since we went through chapter 1, and I just want to quickly give you an idea from verse 9 and 10 here in Revelation chapter 1. I, John, brother, companion in the tribulation kingdom and patience, or patient endurance of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patinos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice.

This intrigued me. I went back as I was working on hupomone and looking at some other things, and I'm not sure that we understood this as well as we could when we first went through verse 9 and 10. John says in Greek here in verse 10, agonamen ennumati ante curiake hamerai.

Agonamen is from dinamai, which normally means to become or to be. This is an aorist middle indicative, so he uses an aorist as an imperfect, a continual state of being in past time. You would normally use the imperfect tense, I was being, but John likes to use the aorist in lieu of the imperfect, and that's what he does here.

So he says I was, and then it says ennumati, in the spirit. The preposition enn can mean in, by, or with. Most of the times in the New Testament when you find this phrase ennumati, it means by the spirit.

For example, if you walk by the spirit, you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. If you were saved by faith, you walk by faith. The spirit saves you, you walk in the spirit or by means of the spirit.

And essentially, I have come to a different appreciation of this phrase than the one that follows it, because if he says I was by the spirit in the Lord's day, this is the adjective kuriake, which is only used twice in the New Testament. Normally, when you want to make a possessive, you say the day of the Lord. We have a lot said in the Bible about the day of the Lord, both in the Old Testament and in the New, and you would say the word for day, hemera, and then follow it with the genitive, the possessive genitive, and call it the day of the Lord.

Here, Lord comes first, and it is Lord's day, and we saw where this is almost universally understood to mean Sunday. But I wrestled with this, and you may have noticed that we did not really arrive at any degree of application from that when we went through verse 10. Why does it matter what day of the week? Why does it matter that it was on a Sunday? Well, you know how this can be.

You look at something and you ask yourself the question, why is it this way? There are no wasted words, there are no insignificant details in the word of God. So I was scratching my head over that again this week, and it finally dawned on me, I think, why we have what we have here. The other place where this is used, Lord's day, is over in 1 Corinthians, and in 1 Corinthians, you will remember in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, Paul is talking about marriage vows and living as you are called, and the unmarried widows and virgins, talking about conscience in chapter 8, and his rights as an apostle in chapter 9, and he eventually moves forward to talking about conduct at the Lord's Supper in 1 Corinthians chapter 11.

These are all things having to do with conduct in the church. He says, I am not praising you, 1 Corinthians 11, 17, since you come together not for the better, but for the worse. When you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized. One of the things that separates the faithful and the mature believers from those who are not, is their conduct at, in verse 20, when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. The phrase that is used here is the kuriakon daiknon, and kuriakon is the same word that we have over in Revelation.

Why is this significant? For one thing, we are going to see kuriakon daiknon again tonight, when we get to Revelation 3.20. I will come into him and sup with him, daiknon. So we will have to understand a little more about what the Lord's supping with someone really means, and what the Lord's Supper is. There is a link between the Lord's Supper and the Lord supping with someone.

You can see how I arrived here, because I was working on the Lord's Supper, I was working on Revelation 3.20, for the church at Laodicea, and all of these things stirred together and gelled in

my mind. The Lord's Supper, and in Revelation 1.10, we have the Lord's Day. Why does it not say, daiknon to kuriu, the Supper of the Lord? Later on, if you go a chapter forward in 1 Corinthians, to chapter 12 and verse 20, I believe it is.

No, it is in 20 of this chapter. He has already talked about eating and drinking the cup and the bread in 1 Corinthians chapter 10. In verse 20, the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God.

I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.

And here, when it talks about the Lord's table, it uses the genitive of kuriu. So why, when we get to 11, does he use the adjective that precedes? Well, to end the suspense, it is emphasis. You are not eating the Lord's table.

You are not eating the Lord's supper. It puts great emphasis on the word, Lord's. He says you are coming together to eat in one place, but you are not eating the Lord's supper.

In Greek, this is very emphatic. The Lord's supper. And that ought to be, if you do all things heartily as unto the Lord, then when you come together to eat, it ought to be done as unto the Lord.

But he says, this is not the Lord's supper that you are eating. And so he uses this rare adjective, only found twice in the New Testament, kuriake. So we say this helps me when I get back to Revelation chapter 1 and verse 10.

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, not the day of the Lord. But the Lord's day. Why would it be emphatic, especially if we have not really found a significance for this vision occurring on a Sunday? Why would it be emphatic here? What is our rule when we had a difficulty in Scripture? What is our approach? Where is the first place we look for clues? We look in the context.

Let Scripture interpret Scripture. What is our context? So I ask myself the question, where is the last place we had the word Lord used? Is this the first place that Lord is used in this chapter? So I go up and find the last time that Lord was used in this chapter. And my goodness, it's just two verses previous in verse 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.

Now who is speaking those words? It is God the Father. A little tricky to discern, but I think we noted this when we went through the first time. The Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, says the Lord.

This is Lord in the Old Testament sense. And in the Old Testament, most of the time when you find the word Lord, it is the Lord God, God the Father. God the Son has really not been revealed yet.

So when we say the Lord here in this context is God the Father, and then just skip a verse and have a verse that mentions the Lord, is this going to be the Lord Jesus Christ or is it going to be the Lord God? Well, assume for the moment that we've maybe mistaken this and that Lord is the same Lord all the way through. In fact, if you start looking through Revelation, you find that Lord almost consistently and completely through Revelation is used of God the Father. Revelation is, after all, a book much in the vein of Daniel and Ezekiel.

And the great and terrible day of the Lord is not the great and terrible day of Christ. It is the great and terrible day of God the Father. The Lord God, Jehovah, is the Father.

With that being the case, I went back and checked all of the commentators to see, well, does anybody think that John is saying something other than I was in the Holy Spirit on Sunday? And yes, there is a school of thought that says, I was by means of the Spirit in the day of the Lord. I was transported by means of the Spirit to the day of the Lord. The only objection that has ever been raised to that view is, well, if it's the day of the Lord, why doesn't he use the genitive of Kuru? Because other places in the New Testament, if you look it up, it uses the genitive.

It has Hemera and then the genitive, day of the Lord. So why not here? If it's the day of the Lord, why doesn't John use the traditional formula? Well, why did Paul not use the traditional formula in 1 Corinthians 11? Because it was very emphatic. You're not eating the Lord's supper.

And John here says, I was in the Lord's day. What has he just said about himself? He said, I am your fellow companion in tribulation and in endurance, but I was taken by the Spirit into the Lord's day. Not the day where man can oppress.

Not in the day where man is in charge. Not in the day when man has a lot to say about circumstances, where the synagogue of Satan is running rampant, where Jezebel and her cohorts and the Nicolaitans are holding sway. I was taken to the Lord's day.

And without belaboring this point, I can take you to the passages in Revelation especially and in the New Testament where the phrase ennumati in Revelation goes forward to, or is used in a sense of instrumentality, by the Spirit. In fact, maybe I will take us to some of those. If you go to Revelation chapter 4 and look at after the first, you know Revelation chapter 4 verse 1 where he says, I heard a voice saying, come up here.

Immediately I was in the Spirit and behold a throne set in heaven and one sat on the throne. He says, come up here and I will show you things which must take place immediately after this. And then by the Spirit he is in heaven.

So every time he makes a change of venue, he was on earth and now by means of the Spirit he is up in heaven. Are you with me so far? We have several other places in Revelation where he makes a change of location and ennumati is associated with it. Turn forward to Revelation 17

verse 3. One of the seven angels says, come I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters.

So he carried me away ennumati into the wilderness. Turn forward to chapter 21 verse 10. One of the seven angels had the seven bowls.

Come I will show you the bride, the lamb's wife. And he carried me away ennumati to a great and high mountain. So every time we find John making a change of venue in terms of what he sees in his vision, it's ennumati.

Well we have ennumati in chapter 1 verse 10. And I would submit to you that what is being said there is, I, John, was by means of the Spirit in the day of the Lord. But he uses the emphatic form of that phrase to say the Lord's day, emphasizing it's the same Lord I just mentioned in verse 8. It's the Lord God.

This is the Old Testament day of the Lord. He's not talking about Sunday. In fact he may be distinguishing it from a reference to Jesus Christ by saying the Lord's day.

Now you say well that's all quite interesting but so what? By means of the Holy Spirit, John sees the future and it's real to him. He senses it, he describes it, he communicates it to us. We've been talking in our last lesson or two about the importance of hope, about the triad of Christian virtues, faith, hope and love.

Faith is the means by which we obtain the righteousness of God. We'll see that in the letter to Laodicea tonight. Love is the greatest.

You get to the end of 1 Corinthians 13, what abides? Faith, hope and love. What is the greatest? Love. Why? Because if you are manifesting love for God and love for your fellow believers, you have fulfilled all the law and the prophets, Jesus says.

Those are the first and greatest commandments. And you could not do that without healthy faith and active hope. So when you have love flowing in the vertical and horizontal directions, that implies and illustrates the fact that you have got faith and hope already squared away.

That's why the greatest is love. Plus you might work up to having hope and you might work up to having faith but if it does not work itself out in love, that's what that 1 Corinthians 13 chapter is all about. If I have faith so as to move mountains but it doesn't result in love, you've got a constipated spiritual life.

It has not fulfilled its purpose. It has been stunted and stopped short. John says, by means of the Spirit I went to the day of the Lord.

How do we get to the great day of the Lord? How do we see our hope? Faith is the substance of things hoped for. Through our faith we look at the word of God and we exercise faith toward it.

God the Holy Spirit transports us just like he did John.

God the Holy Spirit makes our prayers real and intelligible to God the Father. And I think you can substantiate the biblical principle here that God the Holy Spirit makes God's presence and God's day and God's future, the fulfillment of God's promises, just as real to us. He makes God's communication to us real in the same way that he makes our communication to God real.

The ministry of the Spirit is to promulgate and flesh out and substantiate our hope. And that's why John says, I was in the day of the Lord by means of the Spirit when I heard this voice. The letters that are communicated as John finds himself in that day are made real, the vision is made real by the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

So to me there's a lot of freight and I'm still thinking and following the logical conclusions that can be drawn from that. But I just wanted to bring that to your attention because I find it interesting I think it answers some questions and it also bears on our study of hope. Because we can look at the Word of God all day long, we can memorize scripture, we can take notes, but if our hope does not become substantial in our souls, if the future kingdom does not become real to us, what is our motivation for living any differently? What is our motivation for sustaining our faith? What is our motivation for growing in grace and knowledge and in working out our faith and love toward God and love toward our fellow man? Paul says, if we hope only in this life, we are of all men most miserable.

It is really vitally important for us to understand the way hope works. They had this movie with Sandra Bullock a while back called Hope Floats. Every time I think of that movie title I think of the Dove soap commercial because they talk about how Dove floats because it's one quarter cleansing cream.

I have no idea, I never saw the movie, don't plan to see it. I don't know what that means, that hope floats. What I do know is that for a believer, the things that remain, we cannot carry any accomplishment forward with us, we cannot carry any material possession forward with us, what we will carry into the millennial kingdom and into the kingdom of the Father is our faith, our hope and our love.

All of the other things will pass away when you read 1 Corinthians 13, but these three remain. So what should we cultivate? What should we invest ourselves in obtaining and reinforcing and growing? It's faith, hope and love. We've spent a lot of time studying faith.

We know how faith works. We know it's trusting, it's treating as real the promises, principles and doctrines of the Word of God. We know generally what love is in terms of respecting and putting others ahead of ourselves, putting God's will and God's Word ahead of our own plans and ideas.

But hope is sometimes more of a nebulous prospect, a nebulous sort of a concept. And here I think there is a key in Revelation 1, 9 and 10 where everything that John sees in these 22

chapters of the revelation of Jesus Christ comes to him by means of the Spirit and it takes him into what is the content of the book of Revelation? It is the day of the Lord, the day of God the Father. I've got a fascinating little snippet of an article from my sister-in-law this past week on the seven-sealed scroll that forms a large part of the book of Revelation.

And Professor Biola, this article was in their alumni magazine, suggests that the little book that Ezekiel was to eat is the same little book that is found in God's hand when they look through heaven trying to find who is worthy to open the scroll. And then as each of those seven seals is broken, there are results on planet earth and God deals with and judges various aspects of what's wrong on planet earth. And after the seventh seal is broken, then John is encouraged to eat the little book.

And just like Ezekiel, he finds that it tastes like honey in his mouth. And this individual suggests that these are all the same book. And I found Dr. Criswell, that randomly I was editing a sermon today and he started talking about the books.

And he said, I'll tell you what I think. He said, I think the book that had the seven seals on it, he said, I probably am in the minority on this. I don't know if anybody else thinks it, but he said, when I look at the Greek, the same word is used both in, and I didn't write down the chapter numbers, but it's like Revelation 10 and Revelation 17 or whichever place it is where God is mentioned as holding the little book.

And then John is told to eat the book. It's the same. It's a diminutive of the word book.

Instead of biblos, it is biblios. And the IOS is a diminutive. It means a little book.

And Dr. Criswell said, I think it's the same book. I think once that book has been opened, John eats it in the same way that the prophet was told to eat the scroll and then go prophesy its contents. You digest it yourself and then you prophesy, you preach and teach.

And that of course is the model for any preacher or teacher is you have to understand it and digest it yourself, assimilate it yourself before you can communicate it to others. And John digests the book before he writes it all down to present it to others. The content of the book is the day of the Lord and he is taken to the day of the Lord by God the Holy Spirit.

So excursus on Revelation 1.10. Back to the end of our letter to the church in Philadelphia, the threefold promise to the overcomer having been made a pillar in the temple of my God, we saw before that this must be a millennial promise because there is no temple in the kingdom of the Father. He will go out no more. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God and I will write on him my new name.

Well, we saw the allusion to Moaz and Yashin in the Solomonic temple as far as these pillars go.

The names here, the New Jerusalem is itself given a new name later in Revelation. It is called the Bride when it comes down out of heaven and this is a foreshadowing.

Nothing has been said about the New Jerusalem. Nothing has been said about it coming down out of heaven at this point. This is a preview of coming attractions that we are going to find in Revelation 22.

But the name of that city is written on him. Now the name of God written probably harks back to the Levitical high priest beginning with Aaron. God prescribed that the high priest, his turban would contain a gold plate on the front and on that gold plate was written God's name, holy to the Lord.

What does that signify? Well, we need to look up the passage where that takes place because God gives the reason for it in the passage. So turn quickly to Exodus chapter 28 verse 36. Exodus 28 verse 36-38 You shall also make a plate of pure gold and shall engrave on it like the engravings of a seal, holy to the Lord.

You shall fasten it on a blue cord, and it shall be on the turban or the headdress. It shall be at the front of the turban. It shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall take away the iniquity of the holy things which the sons of Israel consecrate with regard to all their holy gifts.

And it shall always be on his forehead, so that they may be accepted before the Lord. Aaron, the high priest, is a mediator between God and men in the area of gifts that are brought before the Lord. You may remember that we've seen the scriptures that talk about how the glory of the nations will be brought into the New Jerusalem.

Even in the kingdom of the Father, it still says that the leaves of the tree will be for the healing of the nations, and the kings of the nations will bring their glory into the New Jerusalem. There are still going to be dwellings outside the New Jerusalem. There will still be kingdoms.

And whether these are solar systems or galaxies, I think it is beyond our imagination what the kingdom of the Father comprises. It's a lot more than a shiny street of gold with a city at one end and a bunch of people looking over the rim of the lake of fire at the other. The kingdom of the Father is huge.

The angels have to live somewhere. All of the resurrected saints of every age have to live somewhere. Eye has not seen, ear has not heard.

Suffice it to say that there will be kingdoms outside the New Jerusalem, and their glory will be brought in. Well, where will these gifts go? And we are probably speaking metaphorically. There's no telling what these gifts actually constitute.

I think it's like an earthworm trying to understand the Empire State Building for us. But the way God communicates it to us is that these gifts are brought in. The sons of Israel have to have their

gifts consecrated before they can be acceptable to the Lord.

Things that are acceptable to God and are tolerable in His presence are inside the city. Things that are not so tolerable are outside the city. If anything comes from the outside to the inside, it has to be brought in by the priest who has that nameplate smack on his forehead, probably right at the same spot that the mark of the beast was on the tribulational pagans.

And it says, holy to the Lord. And he says, it shall be on his forehead, who will take away the iniquity of the holy things that the sons of Israel consecrate. They're going to have something less than perfect holiness.

But because Aaron with this name brings them, they will be accepted before the Lord. So there is a mediatorial function. There are outside things that are brought in.

This brings full circle some of the things we saw in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 with regard to the guardian of the throne room of God known as Lucifer. He corrupted himself in this role, this assigned duty of brokering or buffering things coming to and from God. He began to think that he could run the whole operation without there being anybody actually in the throne room.

So who is going to assume that role? You have the Lord Jesus Christ who is the mediator between God and men and fulfills that role now and will in the millennial kingdom. And as with many of his other functions, he shares that with the faithful. He is the firstborn among many brethren.

There are those who will rule with him on his throne, who will rule the kingdoms of the earth with him, who will share in his heirship and his priesthood and his election before the father. And it appears that one of the overcomer rewards is to share in or be fulfilling a role in this mediatorial function in the eternal kingdom future. It's seen through a glass darkly.

It's after the thousand year reign, but you can see very clearly that the idea of being in the temple is near the presence of God. That's why the millennial language is used. And it goes forward because he not only has the name of God, but the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem.

That is not the Jerusalem of the millennium. It is not the Jerusalem that is over there in Israel now. And think for example at Hebrews chapter 11.

What was Abraham, what were the patriarchs waiting for? Remember Hebrews chapter 11? Why was he approved? Hebrews 11 verse 9 and 10. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he waited for the city which has foundations whose builder and maker is God.

Is the millennial Jerusalem a city whose foundations and whose founder and maker is God? It is

not. Its founder and maker was David. The new Jerusalem is what Abraham was waiting for.

He was looking even beyond the fulfillment of the land promises, the Abrahamic covenant promises. He was looking for the eternal city. He was looking for the new Jerusalem.

That is a pretty long telescopic view. He is looking forward what? 5,000 years to the city whose founder and builder is God? But that is what Abraham was waiting for. These people are going to be involved.

They are going to have the name of that city on them. And he says they will have my new name. So we have seen the idea of God's name, the name of the new Jerusalem, and Jesus says my new name.

When you put your name on something what does it mean? When I put my name on my flashlight it does not mean that Sam belongs to the flashlight. It means the flashlight belongs to Sam. When the Lord Jesus Christ puts his ultimate name, it says later in Revelation he is going to get a name that is known only to himself.

But he is going to write his new name, a name that is not anywhere in scripture, on these overcomers. These things are too much for us. God can't even describe them in detail because we wouldn't even understand.

But by faith we can see what is invisible. Our hope is in what happens in the fulfillment of God's promises and in the fulfillment of God's plan. And whatever it is, the more you love the Lord Jesus the more this is a desirable achievement, a desirable place to be.

God the Holy Spirit can enliven and enrich and clarify our vision of the eternal future, our expectation of the fulfillment of God's promises. If God seems far away, if the promises don't seem real, if they don't seem pertinent, if they don't seem valuable and compelling in our hour by hour, day by day existence, it isn't a matter of going and studying more prophecies so much as cultivating the ministry of God's Spirit. We talk about that at the beginning of each lesson, but it is so important that we let God the Holy Spirit do his work.

He makes God real to the world in his convicting ministry. He makes people without excuse because God has revealed himself through his Spirit. He makes the evidence of creation real to people who see that there is a designer behind the design.

And in the same way, he makes our future hope real. John saw it so clearly that he wrote it down in 22 chapters of the revelation of Jesus Christ. That same Spirit dwells inside you and inside me and can make these things equally clear to us if we encourage his ministry within us, if we seek it, if we are sensitive to it and desire it.

Let's pause here and take our break. And having concluded our study of Philadelphia, we'll move forward to the final letter to the church at Laodicea.

