

Rev 25-09-10a

Here at Grace and Truth Bible Church on Wednesday evening, this is the 10th of September 2025. We're continuing our study in the book of Revelation. We are moving forward in the text tonight.

We are picking up with a review of verse 4 and entering into verse 5 and 6 and 7 and 8. Hope to cover all of those verses this evening. Let me put it this way, I have notes on all of those verses. If I am effective and organized, we will cover that material.

And it is so critical. It is eminently practical. It's inspirational.

It is motivational. And let's ask God's blessing on our time of study and fellowship, and we'll dive right in. Father, it is such a privilege to pull a chair up to the table loaded with manna from your word, the truth that sustains us, that washes us and cleanses us with the presence and power of your Holy Spirit, the example of the Lord Jesus, the testimony of your word, Old Testament and new.

From Genesis to Revelation, we have the full-orbed expression of your character, your actions in the past with your people, what you do in the present, and what we can look forward to in the future. You are truly the God who is and was and is to come. And we pray tonight as we look at this portion of your word together that the Holy Spirit will minister to each heart, re-inflate our enthusiasm and our optimism about the opportunity that you have given us as we live at this time, in this place, in history, with the wonderful potentials that are ours in Christ.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants things which must soon take place.

And he sent and signified it, clarified it, made it evident by his angel to his servant John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to 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. The time is at hand.

Nothing more pertinent, nothing more directly addressed to us than this revelation. Verse 4, John to the seven churches which are in Asia. The first of an almost uncountable number of sevens are here in verse 4 and twice in verse 4. This is formally addressed.

The immediate recipients are the seven churches which are in Asia. There is a map available on the 2025 Revelation page. If you'd like to pull it up and see the geographic relationship of these seven churches to one another in what is in the modern day, Southwestern Turkey, you can also see on that map Patmos in the lower left off the coast.

You can also see Colossi and Miletus and Troas, a couple of other landmark locations from this time in the first century of this era. And if you look at it, this is a bit of a, I wouldn't say this is an

inspired point, but it is interesting to me that if you took a wide magic marker, started at Ephesus and went north through Smyrna and Pergamos, and then you have to make a sharp southeastern turn and the remaining churches are more or less in a line through Thyatira, Sardis, through Philadelphia to Laodicea, it looks like a seven that has fallen over to the left. So there's a short leg that goes up and there's a longer leg that goes at an angle and it looks like a seven that's just been tipped over to me.

But this speaks of something, this communicates something to us that we'll cover when we get there. By way of review of verse four, John to the seven churches, which are in Asia, grace to you and peace. This is the burden of this message.

The reason this book is written, we should come away with primarily a fresh appreciation of God's grace and a fresh experience of God's peace. If this book has any other effect on us than the desire to worship, to celebrate, to sing the doxology that repeats itself in varying forms throughout this book, we will see it here in short order, an appreciation for God, his grace in including us and giving us life, not only in the present, but in the ages to come. That is the goal.

That is the purpose. It is a message of grace and peace. Who is it from? It is from him who is, who was, and who is to come.

We looked at this last time. This is God the father. Interestingly, this is something I did not cover previously.

There is a Greek grammar problem here. I won't go into great detail except to say that when it says grace to you and peace from him who is, you've got the word from there. And this is a Greek preposition that normally takes a genitive, but the one who is, is not in the genitive case.

It's in the nominative case. In Greek, it is ha-ein, H-O space long E-N, which is a form of the verb to be. This is the one, ha is the definite article, the being one.

It's awkward when you continue because you have ha-on, and I'm sorry, that's first. The being one has a ha-on, H-O space long O-N. The one who was is the same thing, changing one letter, ha-ein, the one who was the being one in the past.

And then ha-er-kaminos, that is from erkamai, which means to come. So the one who is, ha-on, the one who was, ha-ein, the one who is to come, ha-er-kaminos. But all of these are nominative, and they are objects of the preposition.

And by normal Greek grammar rules, they would be in the genitive. Why am I even pointing this out? Who cares? We can see what it means in English. Here's why.

This forces the reader to pause for a second and say, this is an awkward construct. Why is he using the wrong case? And very helpfully, if you look at the Net Bible, they place he who is in quotation marks, because this ha-on is a direct reflection of the Septuagint, the Greek version of an Old Testament passage that we find in Exodus chapter 3, verse 14. Let's turn back,

because that's what this does.

When you hit this rough patch in the Greek, it says, why is this here? But this is one of the most familiar passages in the Bible at the time that this was written. And when you see ha-on, you cannot help. This is like somebody saying, God so loved the world.

You think, whoa, John 3, 16. When you say, the one who is talking here is ha-on, anybody that had any biblical knowledge at all goes back to their Greek Septuagint of Exodus chapter 3, verse 14. So let's turn back there right quick Why is God drawing attention to this passage? How many times have we seen this, where when there's an Old Testament allusion in the New Testament, it may just be a few words, but when you turn back, it's like a footnote.

It's opposite. Go see this passage in fuller detail. So we go back to Exodus chapter 3, verse 14, and we discover that this is one of the most famous scenes in all of the Old Testament, Moses at the burning bush.

And Moses is keeping the flock of Jethro. He sees the strange sight in verse four. He says, when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, Moses, Moses, there is this site.

And I want you to notice the order here. All of this reflects on Revelation chapter one. How does this come about? Moses is out there.

He's been doing this for 40 years, watching the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro. And he is on the backside of the desert and he comes to Horeb, the mountain of God. Verse two, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush.

So he looked and the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. He doesn't yet know that this is the angel of the Lord, that this is a messenger. What he sees is this flame emanating from this bush and the bush is not burning up.

Dry bushes, if you've ever dealt with brush fires, this is not like a hardwood log that's going to sit there and burn and it takes a while for the log to disappear. A dry bush, when it catches fire, there are sparks and a flash of flame. And in a matter of seconds, if not minutes, it has disappeared.

But this is a brightly burning flame and the bush is not being consumed. And it is very strange. So Moses sees it and he says, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn.

He doesn't say, so that I can see if this angel will talk to me. He just says that this does not comport with all of my experience. 40 years in the desert, I've never seen a dry bush do this.

I'll turn aside and see why the bush doesn't burn. So what's the order here? Because when the Lord saw that he turned aside, he called to him from the midst of the bush and called his name.

What is the order here? Moses sees something and he responds to what he sees.

Once he sees this and turns aside to investigate it, God speaks. You know where I'm going here, right? Take a look at Revelation 1. What are we going to see? Beginning at verse 9, John, your brother and companion, was in the spirit on the Lord's day. And in verse 10, I heard behind me a loud voice.

And we have the content of what the voice says in verse 11. Then in verse 12, I turned to see. And when we get here, we'll see that there is great emphasis on this sequence.

John hears something behind him where he cannot yet see, but he responds to what he hears and he turns around and then he can see. Moses, the progenitor of the age of the law, sees something first, turns aside to investigate what he sees, and then he hears the voice of God. More about this when we get to verses 9 and 10, but just note it for now, because our attention has been called to this passage by Ha'on, the being one, the one who is.

Because when Moses hears this calling his name, voice, he says, God says, do not draw near to this place. Take your sandals off your feet. The place where you stand is holy ground.

Then he said, I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now it says father there in the singular, the Samaritan Pentateuch has that plural, the God of your fathers. And you know, when you're doing Exodus, you can investigate that further.

But I've seen the oppression of my people who are in Egypt. If you have something to mark your Bible with, you can circle Egypt. I've heard their cry because of their taskmasters.

I know their sorrows. I've come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, second mention of Egypt, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, land flowing with milk and to the place of, and then he's going to list six inhabitants. The problem is they're currently in bondage in Egypt, but they are going to be released from the power of the Egyptians and they will come and overtake, overwhelm, conquer, and displace the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

How many nations total is God going to deal with in order to restore the land of promise to the descendants of Abraham? Seven. There's a big one to begin with. It's going to take the 10 plagues, quote unquote, to liberate them, to release them from slavery in Egypt.

And then there will be six nations that they will need to defeat in the land to take possession. So Moses has a dialogue with God and without rehearsing the whole thing in verse 13, Moses says, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, the God of your fathers has sent me to you. Remember the emphasis in our early verses of chapter one of revelation, God has sent and signified this message.

Moses says, when I go to these people and say, the God of your fathers has sent me to you, they say, what is his name? What shall I say to them? God said to Moses, I am who I am. And in

Greek, this is haon. Haon, the I am has sent me.

And you see this reiterated. God emphasizes this in that same verse. I am has sent me to you.

Next verse, you shall say to the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has sent me to you. This is my name forever. This is my memorial to all generations.

The Lord God of your fathers, verse 16, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob appeared to me and said, I have surely visited you, seen what's done to you in Egypt. I said, I will bring you up out of the land of affliction in Egypt to the land of Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, Jebusites, land flown with milk and honey, all seven entities mentioned in that one verse. So quickly now there is an allusion back.

This is the same God who spoke to Moses and defeated seven nations greater and mightier than Israel to give them possession of a land of their own, which will eventually become a kingdom. The I am sent ahead of time and signified this message by his messenger, Moses, to the people. God appears to the messenger.

The messenger communicates to the people. There is a conscious allusion to this in Revelation chapter one. God has set this up and orchestrated this both in John's actual experience and in the way John writes it down to remind us that this is the God who is and is always present.

He is the I am at whatever point you want to look at it, whether historically in the present or in the future, whatever point of time you're in, God is present and engaged right now. You can't go to a time where God is not the I am. He is the God who was.

And when you go back to Exodus chapter three, he is the I am back then. He continues to be the I am. He is always going to be the I am.

So back to Revelation, grace to you and peace from ha-on ha-ein ha-er kamanas, the one who is, the one who was, and the one who is coming. The tense here, the coming one, this isn't a future tense. The one who will come, this is a present participle.

He is always the God of the present. He is always the God who was, and he is always the coming one. We tend to think, well, the coming one, he's going to appear in the future when he establishes the new heavens and the new earth.

God is in the present, always the God who has given us a record of his actions, his thoughts, his intentions, his plans and purposes in the past. But he is always the coming one. At whatever point in time you look at him, he is the God who comes.

He's the God who is. He's God who always was. And he is the God who always visits his people.

As you see in Exodus chapter three, tell the people, I have seen their affliction. I am aware. How many times are we going to see Jesus say, I know your works.

I am aware of what's going on in your church in chapter two and three upcoming. But he is a reflection. He is a perfect image of the father.

And we get the description of the father first. The father is the archetype. He is the pattern that is communicated to us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

What's the application of this? If we had to stop right now, all the lights went out and this is all the Bible we got for tonight. What would we take away? Our relationship is with God, the father. Jesus said in John 14, six, you come to the father through me, the way I am the way I'm not the destination.

I am the means by which I am the truth by which I am the life by which you can be related to the father. This is introduced here and it is going to be emphasized over and over again. And from the seven spirits who are before his throne, we covered this last time.

I believe that these are living creatures. These are from the angelic creation. They are God's cabinet.

They are God's implementers of policy. They are his inner circle. They are the ones when he speaks from the throne, they make things happen.

They are not human. They are not the Holy Spirit who is, and this is something of an assumption that affirms itself. But I believe that the Holy Spirit is always referred to in the singular.

And when you see the spirit, when John is going to say, I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, he's in the Holy Spirit. He is spiritually in tune with his life on this earth, with his function as an apostle, his purpose as a witness and one who testifies to the word of God and to Jesus Christ. He is fully functional in that mode.

He is in the spirit. And I think that's capital S and it's singular. We will see this as we go forward.

These seven spirits, we looked at those passages last time. They are going to do things in the upcoming account. So grace to you and peace.

What is the application of this? Grace to you and peace from him who is and was and is to come and grace and peace to you from the seven spirits. It is a reminder that God doesn't just have well wishes. He's not an abstraction.

He's not sitting at a distance. God has immediate agency to bring things about on our behalf. There are seven spirits before his throne who are immediately obedient, who respond as soon as he speaks and says, this needs to take place, make this happen.

They are agents. More about this as we encounter them down the road, but this is part of my personal belief in agency back in Genesis chapter one, with the days of creation, when God says, let there be all throughout the old Testament, all throughout the revelation, we are going

to see that when God speaks, there is angelic activity that brings about his will. We don't see God speaking things into being or speaking a judgment that isn't accomplished by an agent.

We know from the gospel of John chapter one, that the Lord Jesus himself was an agent without him, nothing was made that was made, which wasn't revealed in Genesis chapter one, but it is revealed to us in John chapter one and the pattern throughout the revelation of the old Testament, including the prophet Daniel and Ezekiel and elsewhere, whether it is in the judges, whether it is in the narratives, we are told that the law itself was delivered to Moses via angels by messengers, by intermediaries. So it seems that God has established a pattern of involving his sentient creation in the implementation and the accomplishment of his purposes. So are there angels looking out for us and implementing the answers to our prayers? I have no doubt.

The Lord Jesus said, you need to be careful when you're dealing with these little ones, little ones in the faith or literal children, because they're angels behold the face of my father in heaven. And what God does by way of his personal watch care over widows and orphans and those who are in need, those who are oppressed, those who are persecuted, there is, I believe, angelic intervention. God doesn't speak the prison doors open for Peter to be released.

An angel comes and opens them as just one of innumerable examples. So these seven spirits before the throne, why is that included in this greeting? Why is it included in this introduction? God has intermediate agency by which he ensures grace to us and peace for us. There is active agency.

It's not a principle. It's not a concept. It's a reality.

And it should comfort us. It should encourage us that God has got the means. He's got an entire staff.

And when he speaks, agency takes place and things happen through faithful and obedient servants. We are addressed as servants of God. We should be servants of God.

And when God calls upon us to implement his plans and his purposes, we should be equally faithful, equally obedient, equally leaning forward to do what God asks us to do, charges us with doing. We are the beneficiaries of forgiveness. A great debt has been forgiven us.

We are to forgive those who may be indebted to us. And we are forgiven as we forgive. In the same way, we receive the benefit of God's active intervention and answers to prayer via agency.

And we can be similarly used by God to answer the prayers of others. So the seven spirits before the throne makes a difference. Verse 5, and grace to you and peace from the Father with his very fulsome description, from the seven spirits that serve the Father directly before his throne, and from Jesus Christ.

Now, this is fascinating. This is new for tonight. We get to Jesus Christ.

There is going to be a sevenfold description here of the Lord Jesus. I wrote these down for myself so that I can keep track of them. These are going to reappear.

The Lord Jesus is going to use these characteristics that we find here and later in the chapter, verses 12 through 16. These will show up again. What is the first? It says from Jesus Christ, the first description we have of him, he is the faithful witness.

I just put number one, faithful witness. Now, witness to what? What does Jesus witness to us that we can't witness for ourselves? You can put in parentheses out here, Jesus told his disciples, no one has seen the Father at any time. The Son has revealed him.

The Lord Jesus is a witness to his Father in heaven. He is a witness of heavenly truth. So, that is a heaven idea.

He is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead. Where did the death of the Lord Jesus take place? I have suggested this before. Isn't it interesting that of the various ways that God could have presented the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ at the atoning work, it wasn't done in a heavenly venue with songs of praise from angels.

It was on earth. He was delivered into the hands of men. He was crucified on earth.

He was lifted up on the earth on a cross. So, when it says firstborn from the dead, this is an earthly identity for the Lord Jesus. He was only dead because he came to earth and came in appearance as a man and humbled himself and became obedient unto death.

Here, that's Philippians chapter 2. So, that's the second description. He is the firstborn from the dead. He has opened the gates of death and Sheol so that death no longer has power to take and keep us as human beings.

Firstborn from the dead. The third descriptor here is the ruler over the kings of the earth. This also reminds us that there are time elements here.

Faithful witness, this is what he saw in eternity past before he came. Firstborn from the dead is what happened while he was here. He suffered death.

He was raised and was the first fruits of those who sleep according to Paul. And he is the ruler of the kings of the earth. This is yet future.

Many kings of the earth commit horrible crimes and they have not yet been held to account. Look at the bloody course of history. Look at what has happened both in Old Testament and New.

And there as of now, yet been no accountability for some of these atrocious, criminal, oppressive regimes. But there will be. He is going to be the king of kings and lord of lords at his return.

He is not yet exercising that authority. So, ruler of kings, once again, this is on the earth. So, we started as a witness on earth to the things that he has seen in heaven.

He is the firstborn from the dead in and on the earth. And he will be ruler of the kings of the earth. The fourth description here is the one who loved us.

And that's a bad translation. The fourth description here is the one loving us. This is a present participle.

You tend to think greater love hath no man, lay down your life. The act of love was his self-sacrifice on the cross. That's not what this refers to.

He is the one loving us, present participle. He loved us. He loves us.

He will go on loving us. It is a present participle. It's continuous action.

He is the one loving us. And who washed us. And you have a text note there.

And you need to pay attention. Scratch out washed. The testimony seems to be equally divided, but scripture helps us know which reading is correct.

This is the word, basically, the easy way to talk about it is there's Lutron, L-U-T-R-O-N, and there's L-O-U-T-R-O-N. It's the difference of a present or absent Omicron after the L. Is it Lutron or Lutron? They sound the same, but they have different meaning. One of them means to release, to loose.

Lutron. The other one means to wash. And here we have who released, released us.

Scratch out washed. You can see the text note down there. It says freed, F-R-E-E-D.

But this is from the verb luo. It means to loose, to set free. And I can tell you why I know the answer to this.

Even if you want to argue, well, this text here and that text there, this one says washed. This one says loose. How do you know which one it is? This is the beauty of comparing scripture with scripture.

Do you remember that coming up in the near future, we have the song sung in heaven. If you go to chapter four and John says, I saw the crowd that is celebrating in chapter five, you are worthy to take the scroll. We'll see this when we get to it.

I just want to tell you that the description of these white robed throngs that are in heaven. And John says, who are these people? And the angel says, these are they who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. We'll see these when we get to them.

I've slipped my note on the references. 7.14. Here it is. Flip forward to chapter seven, verse 14.

One of the elders said to me, who are these arrayed in white robes? Where did they come from? I said to him, sir, you know, he said to me, these are the ones who come out of the great tribulation who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. Not everyone who is saved has white robes. Those who have the honor of standing before the throne are those who have washed their own robes.

He doesn't say these are they who wear robes that have been washed by the lamb or by Jesus Christ in some form. They wash their own robes. That's 7.14. You can put with this Hebrews chapter nine, verse 14.

Hebrews 9.14, which says, if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit, singular notice, offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Whose conscience is cleansed? You turn over to Hebrews chapter 10. We have boldness to enter our hearts, having been sprinkled from an evil conscience, our bodies washed with pure water. You can go to 1st John 1.7 and 1.9. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us when we confess, when we walk in the light.

It is a response to our choice, our recognition. We wash our robes and make them white in the blood of the lamb. The Lord Jesus does not do that for everyone.

And so I know in chapter one here of the revelation that this is the one who loved us and freed us from our sins, set us free from our sins by means of his own blood. This is an aorist tense. He freed us in the past.

It was a one-time breaking of the power of sin at the cross. This is not referring to the ongoing sanctification or other things. We have been freed.

The washing of robes and sanctification is a separate issue. This is a one-time breaking of the bonds of sin. We have been set free from the law of sin and death.

Paul goes on about this in several of his letters. So this is the fifth description, the one having released us. This is an aorist participle.

What do you know about this? The action of the aorist participle precedes the action of the main verb. This is the one loving us, present participle, having freed us from sin, our sins, by his own blood. This is an instrumental, by means of his own blood.

That's the fifth descriptor. And in verse six, he does two more things. And we'll see these when we come back from the break.

But these first actions, these first descriptions are what Jesus has done in the past, what he is doing in the present. The first three, he is the faithful witness. He is the firstborn from the dead.

He is the ruler of kings in prospect. They're going to be put under his feet. But he is the one

having loved us and who continues to love us, demonstrating that love on the cross, having released us by means of his blood.

And he has made us, this is what we'll see in verse six. These are things that he has already done, already accomplished. My point being, we're going to see that like his father, the Lord Jesus is, he was, and he is to come.

The things that we're going to see in verse six and verse seven, verse seven explicitly says, behold, he is coming. And these are reflections, his witness to the father. He is the fullness of deity and bodily form.

And like his father, there are things that he currently represents. There are things that he has done in the past that continue to have results in the present. And he is the one who is to come.

And these same qualities that are claimed by God, the father, are reflected in the Lord Jesus. What a wonderful privilege to be in Christ, to receive the benefits of these things, to be connected to God in a very meaningful way, to receive the benefits of what the Lord Jesus has done, what he currently represents, and what he is going to do in the future. This should be a tremendous encouragement for us to be objective about what's going on in our lives at present, to not be defined by circumstance, to not be discouraged by events, but to remember that we are part of an eternal plan that has past actions by God, current implications and standing and status and future hope, future glory.

But let's pause here and take our break. When we come back, we'll pick up here right at verse six, Kings and Priests.