

Rev 25-09-14b

We resume our study in Revelation chapter one. We are reviewing and consolidating our stance. We're getting our feet under us.

We've got our knees slightly bent. We've got our center of gravity over our stabilization here. So that when we get to chapters two and three, we have maximum opportunity to understand, to interpret, to apply in our own lives what the Lord Jesus is going to say to us.

It's been enumerated in the New Testament that there are a total of 14 epistles. When you look at the Pauline epistles and you add the general epistles and they say there's 14. But in another sense, there are 21 because each of these coming up in chapter two and three are an epistle, a letter.

They're short, kind of like Jude or third John, but they are nevertheless letters written specifically to us. And Revelation is such a unique book in that it is very similar to an Old Testament book. And we are going to see even more so here in a minute.

And yet it is a New Testament book. It's deals so much with God's people, Israel, for chapters six through 19. And yet it is encapsulated by those outer chapters and is formally explicitly addressed to the church.

It's unique among the books of the Bible. It is a fitting close as we saw last time to Genesis. So many things that find their beginning in Genesis, find their conclusion and their fulfillment in this wonderful book.

We're going to, now that we have looked at the revelation of Jesus Christ, we've done a thorough job of covering verse one, verse two. The Lord Jesus has a servant named John who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ. All the things that he saw, we saw this is upcoming again in verse nine.

Blessed is he who reads those who hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written in it for the time is near. We observe it, we hear it in a sense of effective hearing and we keep it, we apply it. There's a loose analogy of observe, interpret and apply here and it is for us now.

But we pick up now at verse four. I want to move down to verse four. We covered one word in verse one.

Now we're going to look at one word in verse four. John, what do we know about John? First of all, he is one of the sons of Zebedee along with his brother Jacob or James as it comes down in English. But this is Yaakov and Yohanan, Jacob and John, James and John.

He is the younger. James was the older of the two sons of Zebedee. And he is referred to in the gospel of John four times as the beloved disciple.

This is unique. No other disciple is called this. No one else is referred to in this way.

But in the last half of the gospel of John, you have in John 13, 23, at the last supper, one of his disciples whom Jesus loved. So out here in the margin of Revelation chapter one, when you get to verse four, my suggestion is put John 13, 23, beloved. John 19, 26, Jesus on the cross saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby.

He said to his mother, woman, behold your son. And he says to the disciple, son, behold your mother. As an aside here, a little note that pertains to our ongoing study in the book of Jacob or the book of James, a few pages before this.

And I have suggested, it is my opinion that that book is written not by James, the half brother of the Lord as is traditionally assumed, but by James, John's brother. One of several reasons I've given these reasons before in our study of James, but I will add one to it. This verse, John 19, 26, and if you have a note that Sam thinks James, Jacob, the son of Zebedee wrote the book of James, this is one of the passages that supports it.

When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved, John, standing nearby, he committed the care of his mother to John, not to his half brother, James, who by all accounts was the oldest of Jesus' half siblings. This would have devolved to James. And if he is going to be an inspired leader and an author of scripture, why on earth would Jesus not let the normal course of events in a Bible-believing Jewish family take place and James would undertake the care of his mother? Jesus sets his half brother, James, aside and entrusts Mary's care to the beloved disciple, John.

And I think that's significant. I think there were reasons why James was not qualified. So, and in accord with that, and this is a new idea for me, years and years ago, we did the epistles of John, but if you flip back just two or three pages in your Bible to 2 John, notice verse one of that short letter, "'The elder,' this is John, "'to the elect lady and her children, "'whom I love in the truth, not only I, "'but also all those who have known the truth.'" Who is the truth? It is possible, we've always sort of assumed that the elect lady is a church that John didn't wanna name for security reasons.

The elect lady may in fact be Mary. And this may in fact be a personal letter from the apostle John to the woman that Jesus entrusted to his care, Mary. Interesting idea.

I wouldn't die for it, but it makes you reread that whole letter with new interest. John, four times in the gospel, always in the latter half of the book, he is called the beloved disciple. 1323, 1926, we just looked at.

John 20, verse two, Mary Magdalene runs and finds Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. And then finally, John 21, seven, when Jesus is cooking breakfast by the shore of the Sea of Galilee and the disciples are unsuccessfully fishing, that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "'It is the Lord.'" Peter immediately dives in and swims to the shore. I said

there are four of these, there are actually five, I miscounted, because also later in that same chapter, verse 20, as they're walking on the road, we looked at this last time, what is it to you if this disciple walking behind us says, "Till I come." This is John 21, 20, Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who had also leaned back against him during the supper and asked, who is the betrayer? Now, the reason I review this is twofold.

And these two reasons are related. John passionately loved the Lord Jesus. He was devoted.

He was in that inner circle that Jesus invited to the upper room when he healed the daughter that had passed away, Talitha Kumi, John is there, the Mount of Transfiguration. Jesus said earlier, there are some standing here who will not see death before they have seen the son of man coming in his kingdom. And there is that parallel, which we will see shortly when the description of the Lord Jesus as he appears to John in this chapter compares to the Mount of Transfiguration.

But isn't it worth noting that John is at the Mount of Transfiguration and sees the shining Lord Jesus in his revealed kingdom glory, and he's going to see it again here. So he is said to be one who will tarry until he sees it. And some standing here is more than one.

And so you have Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration. One is going to see the full-orbed revelation of the Lord Jesus, the revelation of Jesus Christ, and he is going to write it down and pass it along to the servants, to specifically the churches. So that's fascinating in itself, that of the available disciples, it is the John who saw him on the Mount of Transfiguration.

It is the beloved disciple who is so close to the Lord Jesus in terms of fulfilling the first and greatest commandment to love the Lord God and the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, and peace. This qualifies John for deeper revelation. Now, here's a quiz question for you.

Can you think of another example in the Bible that compares to this? We've seen five times in the Gospel of John, he is alluded to in a very specific way. Can you think of anybody else that might compare in this regard? Your clue is Old Testament. Let me direct your attention to Daniel chapter nine.

Turn back to Daniel chapter nine, verse 23. "While I was speaking," verse 21, "in prayer, the man Gabriel, "whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning "being caused to fly swiftly, "reached me about the time of the evening offering, "and he informed me and talked with me and said, "Remember, this revelation to John "is delivered from the Lord Jesus." Via an angel. Daniel receives his revelation and the explanation thereof through an angel.

"O Daniel, I have now come forth "to give you skill to understand. "At the beginning of your supplications, "the command went out, "and I have come to tell you, for you are, ' what? "Greatly beloved." Greatly beloved. Abraham is the friend of God.

David is a man after God's own heart. But Daniel is greatly beloved. "Therefore consider the

matter and understand the vision.

"I have come to tell you, you are greatly beloved. "Because of your supplication, "and because you are beloved, "there is reciprocity in this love." You remember our study of the one another's and how important it is that our love is in its best and closest expression flowing in both directions. Love from God for Daniel.

Daniel's love for God expressed throughout this chapter qualifies him. "Therefore consider the matter and understand the vision. "I'm going to explain it to you." Daniel, greatly beloved.

Turn the page to Daniel chapter 10, verse 11. Verse 10, "Suddenly a hand touched me, "made me tremble on my knees, on the palms of my hands. "And he said to me, O Daniel, man greatly beloved, "understand the words that I speak to you." Notice the connection between the love of God for the prophet and the strength and guidance and explanation so that he can understand.

To the extent that we love God and we are the called according to his purpose, all things work together for good. To the extent that we love God and he is able to express his love toward us, what will we receive? Look at Daniel, look at John. Wisdom to give us grace and peace.

Revelation and understanding of that revelation. It is granted to those who love God so that God is able to love them. We want to be greatly beloved so that God shares with us what he is about to do.

Look down the page, Daniel 10, 19. "Then again, the one having the likeness of a man "touched me and strengthened me." This is what we need. We're made out of mud, we are clay, we're dust of the earth, we'll return to it physically.

But God will touch us, God will strengthen us as he does Daniel in verse 18. He said, "O man, greatly beloved, fear not." Greatly beloved, fear not. "Peace be with you, be strong and of a good courage." The revelation is almost more than Daniel can handle, but God gives him strength and gives him wisdom to understand the vision, just as he has done throughout Daniel's career, going back to the beginning of the book and the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar.

God reveals, God pulls the curtain back from what he is doing and what he is about to do for those who qualify. This is who we want to be. I want to be ready, I want to be prepared, I want to be useful.

I want to be read into the picture so that when there's a part to play, my name can be called. Go and do this. And I know the context, I know the order, I know the sequence, I know the purpose, I know what to expect.

I'm not surprised, I'm not shocked, I'm not dismayed, I'm not trembling, I'm not so weak that I can't operate. I am qualified for God to fulfill the promise. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Beginning and end here, Daniel is strengthened. So, look at the connection, look at the similarity between the greatly beloved man, Daniel, and the disciple whom Jesus loved, John. Both of them receive this advanced level of prophetic revelation because they are personally qualified, not only to see it themselves and to understand it, but to communicate it.

We will see similarities such as this, also differences. You remember at the end of Daniel, preview of coming attractions, Daniel is told to seal up the book. John is told to write it down and distribute it.

So that which is sealed up in Daniel is revealed in revelation. So, John, this is all dealing with John. He is qualified to be our messenger because of his beloved status, like Daniel.

We do have a little bit related to John's antecedents in terms of Zebedee and as near as we can tell his mother was Salome, who was also a financial supporter of Jesus and the disciples and is present several times in the gospel accounts. But let's pick up again now in verse four. That's John in a nutshell, author of five books of the New Testament, the gospel, the three epistles and the revelation.

The third John, by the way, is a personal letter to Gaius, just as it's possible. Second John is a personal letter to Mary or at least to a special church. John to the seven churches, which are in Asia.

Right away, we have a connection because this is to be given to, to be shown to the servants of Jesus Christ, according to verse one. Now it is to the seven churches, which are in Asia. Now are all of the servants of Jesus Christ in the seven churches of Asia? There's none in Berea, there's none in Antioch, there's none left in Israel, there's none in Colossae or Miletus or any other places that have been evangelized, there's none in Rome, none in Thessalonica, none in Macedonia.

What do we know by looking at verse one and looking at verse four? These seven churches are representative in the same way that Paul's letters to Timothy and to Titus are representative. These recipients, these first readers are a proxy for all those who should read and learn from what is said to them in their specific circumstance. We don't say anything like pastors don't need to pay attention to first and second Timothy or Titus.

We understand that Timothy is a model for us. He's a proxy and what is told to him applies to all of us. And by extension, what is said about pastors is said about everyone who has a spiritual gift.

The principles apply. We learned this by observing and interpreting the Old Testament. What is said to Israel by way of moral principles and God's desires and God's character is unchanging and is equally applicable for us even though we are not the original recipients.

We understand timeless truths that are pertinent to us even though we are not a part of the original addressees. To the seven churches, which are in Asia, they have not yet been named.

So it's gonna narrow down.

We start with servants of Jesus Christ. Now it's the seven churches in Asia. Well, there are more than seven churches in Asia.

Which ones are they? We don't know yet, but this is telling us be ready to understand that they are representative and not limiting features. Grace to you and peace from him who is and was and is to come. We looked at this last time and from the seven spirits who are before his throne.

We looked at that last time. Let me just say about the seven spirits. They are alluded to four times.

Here, chapter three, verse one, this is the Lord Jesus speaking to the messenger of the church in Sardis. These things says he who has the seven spirits of God. We saw that they are a possession.

They are held as it were in the hands of the Lord Jesus. He says, I have them. I possess them in the idea or sense that he controls them.

They do his bidding. They are his agents. You find it again in chapter four, verse five, where around the throne, 24 thrones, 24 elders, clothed in white robes, crowns from the throne precede lightnings, thunderings, and voices or sounds.

Seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. Seven lamps of fire, the seven spirits of God. And again, in chapter five, verse six, I looked and behold in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures and in the midst of the elders stood a lamb as though it had been slain, seven horns, seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

We will parse the details later on, but this is why I personally don't understand this to be the Holy Spirit. There are those who go to Isaiah 11, one and two. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.

I don't think it's one and two. It's Isaiah 11. I wrote that down in haste.

Let me just look it up. It's two and three. There shall come forth a rod from the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. If you count those characteristics, including of the Lord at the beginning of verse two, there are seven characteristics. It's the spirit of the Lord, wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, fear of the Lord.

Begins and ends, spirit of the Lord, fear of the Lord. And so there are those who take that seven

and say, that's the Holy Spirit and he is sevenfold and he's depicted as the seven spirits before the throne. It's possible, wouldn't argue with anybody.

But interestingly, in our context, when you look here, when the God, the Father is referenced, his characteristics are multiplied. He is the one who is and who was and who is to come. The Lord Jesus in verse five is going to have a sevenfold description in verse five and verse six.

The seven spirits are just named by their location. If this was a co-equal, co-eternal member of the Trinity, one could imagine or expect that his deity characteristics and glory would somehow be referenced the way the Father and the Son are. But these spirits are simply noted as being before the throne.

And in the ancient world, when there was a throne with a potentate sitting upon it, those who surrounded him are his cabinet. They make things happen when he speaks. And these seem to be agent types rather than co-equal with the Father and the Son.

Holy Spirit is going to come up, but not here in my view. Feel free to disagree, research it for yourself. And so that brings us now to verse five.

And once again, we are reviewing from Jesus Christ. If you want to number these, you can put little numbers in circles in your Bible. You can list them on a piece of paper, but there are seven attributes, seven aspects of the Lord Jesus that are in view.

Number one, he is the faithful witness. That's a present case. He is the witness.

His record in scripture, his presence in our souls, if we have his word and keep it, it's a constant witness. It's a daily witness. He is an ongoing representation of the fullness of deity and bodily form.

He is the head of all things to the church and he witnesses to us. He reveals wisdom. He gives us strength, unity, imparts his spirit to us.

Faithful witness, that is. He is the firstborn from among the dead. That's a historic fact, right? That's a was.

He is the faithful witness. Being the firstborn from the dead alludes to something that happened once for all in the past. Thirdly, he is ruler over the kings of the earth.

He has that status in the same way that David was anointed king over Israel and was the anointed king when he was in the cave of Adullam, when he was fleeing from Saul, when he spent those years in the wilderness accumulating mighty men and so on. It was a status that had yet to be fulfilled until the future. And this is an is to come.

The actuality of Jesus' status as ruler of the kings of the earth is to come. So these first three, do you notice? There's an is, there's a was, and an is to come. And that's important.

But the fourth is separated. Notice it says to him, and it's gonna be picked up in the next verse, to him be glory and dominion, right? But to him, and now we're gonna get some more description. To him, we're gonna ascribe something, but how is he described? The one who loves us, remember, that's a present participle.

That's an is. He is the one who loves us and released us from our sins by his blood. We talked about this last time.

We do the washing of our robes. We cleanse ourselves. And we've seen those references and we'll note them as we go.

But Jesus in the past released us. It's an heiress. He freed us from sin by means of his blood atonement.

That's a was. And makes us a kingdom and priests to God and his father or his God and father. Either way you wanna distribute that adjective.

That is a present reality that again, awaits a future fulfillment. Is, was, and is to come. That's six of the seven characteristics, right? Six is the number of human history.

Six is the number one short of completion. And then we have the seventh and it picks up the to him be, and it separates this last one. So we have three that are descriptions.

We have three that are about to attribute or ascribe something to him. Now we have the last to him be once again, glory and dominion forever and ever. And that's the seventh.

He is the one who will possess glory and dominion forever and ever. And so is, was, is to come. Is, was, is to come forever and ever.

That's the perfect seven attributes of Jesus Christ. Now, what is the application of that? We are related to God through him. What a privilege.

Ephesians chapter one, in him we have, in him we are, in him we have been. All of the wonderful things belong to this Jesus. He is, he was, and he is to come just like his father.

That's his deity. But these accomplishments are reflective of his victory in his humanity, in his human flesh. And he is the uniquely born one, the unique son of God, and bridges the gap between heaven and earth.

And we are intimately related and united with God through him. Never said of Israel, only the church, only us. That's why this message is so important.

Look at verse seven, behold, he is coming with clouds. We saw the references. He comes with 10,000 of his holy ones in Jude.

And here's our final point this morning. Every eye will see him, even they who pierced him.

Every eye will see him, even the ones who pierced him.

What does this require? If Annas and Caiaphas and the Jews that were a part of the Sanhedrin who pierced him, and this goes back to Zechariah 12.10. Put the note in the margin if it's not there already. Pierced, this is a direct link back. It's like a URL, it's a hot link.

Click it and there you are, Zechariah 12.10. I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication. What characterizes John and Daniel to qualify to receive and communicate this revelation? Supplication, men of prayer, men of intimacy, intimate relationship with God through, in John's case, through Christ. Spirit of grace and supplication.

Then when is the spirit gonna be poured out? What is the new covenant to Israel? I will pour out my spirit. It's quoted by Peter in Acts. This is that which Joel the prophet talked about.

Your old men will see visions, your young men will dream dreams, your sons and daughters will prophesy. This is the outpouring of the spirit. He says this is the first expression, the first adumbration in Acts chapter two.

It's gonna come to its fulfillment in the literal millennial kingdom of Christ. So they will look on me whom they pierced. Now the ones who pierced him isn't every Jew that ever lived.

It's not all the Israelites between then and now. It's that generation. They have to come back to look on him whom they pierced.

And it is an allusion to the resurrection of Old Testament saints at the second coming. He will come with clouds and they will see him. They have to be raised.

This is Daniel 12, one and two. They will mourn. What does Daniel 12, one and two say? At that time, Michael shall stand up, the great prince who stands watch over the sons of your people, Daniel, Israelites, sons of your people.

There shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. Even to that time. This is our three and a half years of tribulation in that 70th week.

The last half is the great tribulation. And at that time, your people shall be delivered. Your people shall be saved.

Everyone who is found written in the book. There were unbelievers in Israel, but they were the location for those who were believers. And if they're written in the book, they will be delivered.

Verse two, many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. Not everyone, but many. Some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament. Those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever. But you, Daniel, shut up the words and seal the

book until the time of the end.

Many will run to and fro. Knowledge shall increase. So for those who pierced him to look upon him, they've got to come back.

And once again, at the end of their life, their next conscious observation is gonna be at that resurrection. When we get to chapter four, we'll talk about the difference. But it closes here in verse eight.

Many of the tribes of the earth will mourn. This is patently obvious. The tribes of the earth who fall under that Romans 1 description, who have rejected God and his son and his salvation, when he returns, all of the atheism and all the agnosticism is gonna melt away.

And it doesn't say they will respond or they will fall to their knees and worship. They mourn. They wish it wasn't so.

They don't repent. This is the sad news. At the revelation where there is no longer any ability to refute or to argue or to reject or to come up with some other explanation, it is obvious, it is manifest without any possibility of refutation, they still don't repent.

We'll see this later on in the book. They'll cry out for rocks to fall on it, but they don't repent. They don't turn.

They mourn. I wish it wasn't so. Rats.

Finally, verse eight. I am the alpha and omega. Scratch out the beginning and the end.

It is not there. Says the Lord who is and who was and who is to come, the Pantocrator, the Almighty. Pantocrator is used of God only in the book of Revelation and one other place.

The only place it's not used in Revelation is 2 Corinthians 6.18. And it is an Old Testament quote. Paul sort of synthesizes 2 Samuel 7.14 and Isaiah 43.6. 2 Samuel 7.14, Isaiah 43.6. Remember 7.14 of 2 Samuel. This is God's covenant with David.

I will be a father to you and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty. Pantocrator. Every other use of that is in the Revelation.

Let me just give you these real quickly because every single one of these is manifestly God the Father. Our passage, chapter one, verse eight. Revelation four, verse eight.

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty. That's the one sitting on the throne. So 1.8, 4.8. The third one is 11.17. Revelation 11.17. We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty for taking charge of the world.

That's God the Father. Revelation 15.3. Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God Almighty. This is the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Talking about God the Father. Revelation, that was 15.3. 16.7. Yes, the Lord God, the Almighty, true and just are your judgments. That's the voice from the altar speaking about God the Father on the throne.

Revelation 16.14. The armies of the world are gathered in the Valley of Armageddon to assemble them for battle on the great day of God Pantocrator. God the Almighty. Revelation 19, verse six.

That was 16.14. 19.6. Hallelujah for the Lord, our God, the Almighty reigns. This is spoken at the wedding supper of the Lamb. Finally, we have it two more times.

Revelation 19.15. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. The wrath of God. We saw this in Romans.

That's the wrath of God, the Father, God Almighty. He will tread the winepress. That's the Lord Jesus.

But the wrath that is being fulfilled is God Almighty. That's God the Father. Finally, 21.22. Revelation 21.22. If it wasn't explicit elsewhere, when it talks about there's no need of the sun or the moon, the Lord is the light, the Lamb is the light.

And in 21.22, the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple in the new Jerusalem. The Lamb is one person. The Lord God Almighty is the Father and they are the temple in the new Jerusalem.

What is the significance of this? Once again, we open and close with the author of this message. It is God the Father. He is the Almighty.

It is his plan and purpose that is being fulfilled. We are related to him through the Lord Jesus Christ and through the Lord Jesus Christ, we receive this wonderful revelation. All right, that brings us to this last section.

And we're going to see the revelation of Jesus Christ beginning in verse 10. This is fascinating. Can't wait to dig into it.

We'll see that Wednesday evening. Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the privilege, the inestimably great opportunity that we have to be related to you, to be blessed by you, to have a future and eternal life with you because of the Lord Jesus Christ, because of his faithfulness, his obedience, his willingness to fulfill your plan and purpose in a self-sacrificial way that expresses your love, your power and your glory.

We pray that as we appreciate him and come to understand this message from you, that God, the Holy Spirit will help us to see how it should change us, change our minds and change our hearts as we live our lives, as we speak, as we accomplish tasks, as we reflect on who we are and why we're here and the near at hand return of the Lord Jesus to take us on high and see

the fulfillment of all of human history as it unfolds and is revealed in this great book. We pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.