

Rev 25-09-17a

Greetings fellow members of Grace and Truth Bible Church and others who may join us now or in the future. We are studying the book of Revelation. We're in chapter one and we have the entirety of the second half of this first chapter to cover tonight, which we will do so that on Sunday we will begin the letters to the seven churches, starting with Ephesus in chapter two, verse one.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study. And then we are going to see revealed before us the risen Lord Jesus Christ as seen through the eyes of the apostle John. Shall we pray? Father, it is a wonderful privilege that we can come before you because we are priests made so by our high priest, the Lord Jesus, your son, our savior, who even now sits at your right hand and intercedes for us, represents us, receives the prayers that are conveyed by the Holy Spirit and presents them before you for attention and for action.

What a tremendous position we do hold in him. We thank you for that. We thank you for this passage of scripture communicated to you, handed to our savior to be conveyed via the angel to John, from John to us.

And we pray tonight as we look at it together that your Holy Spirit will minister it to our hearts, help us to receive every possible benefit, help us to receive the blessing that is promised at the beginning and the end of this letter, that we who read and hear and keep the words of this book will be recipients of your blessing. That is our goal. And we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. We've already covered and reviewed the first eight verses. I will just say that when you get to verse eight and you see the coming with clouds, this is well attested.

If you get a new treasury of scripture knowledge, there is a double handful of passages where God is associated with traveling on the clouds. The clouds, I should say, the clouds are as dust under his feet. I just want to commend one passage to your attention, and it is Daniel chapter seven, verse 13.

Daniel says, I was watching in the night visions and behold one like the son of man coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the ancient of days and they brought him near before him. The ancient of days, of course, is God the father.

We have that same combination of personages here in these first several verses. You can also find this significantly in, if you just wanted to write these two passages down, Daniel seven, 13, Matthew 24, verse 30, the sign of the son of man will appear in heaven and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. And they will see the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

I believe that much of what John and Matthew have in common is because of the good notes that Matthew took. And I think John conveyed information that was unique to him. Levi, the son

of Alphaeus, Matthew, I think recorded via shorthand because he was a tax collector.

And that's why we have such fulsome accounts of the sermons that Jesus gave in the gospel of Matthew. But Matthew 24, 30, the tribes of the earth will mourn, quoted almost verbatim here in verse seven of chapter one of Revelation. Even they who pierced him.

And for this, if you read the account in Matthew 26, 64, and these dialogues with the high priest, Matthew was not present, but John was. And Matthew, I think in subsequent discussions with John, was able to set down information from John that he did not hear at firsthand as he did with the earlier portions of his gospel. And so in Matthew 26, 64, this, that John witnessed, we know John was present.

He had an in in the household of the priest. And it is through him that we have the record of these dialogues. 26, 64 of Matthew, Jesus says to the high priest, it is as you said, you can look at the context.

Nevertheless, I say to you hereafter, you high priest will see the son of man sitting at the right hand of the power and coming on the clouds of heaven. If you want to talk about they who pierced him, witnessing him coming with clouds, it doesn't get any clearer than Jesus' own words in Matthew 26, 64. Many other passages, you can find those in the new treasure.

We want to move on. I want to ensure that you have an accurate text in verse eight. If you have a pencil or a pen, be ready to mark your page.

In general, with your new King James, when you see text notes that say, here is the reading of the N-U text and the M text, as you know, N-U is the Nessel Allen UBS text, United Bible Society, Nessel Allen, A-L-A-N-D, that's N-U. N is Nessel Allen, U is UBS, United Bible Society. They've done the legwork.

And I agree with their conclusions about 98.5% of the time. They're almost always right. And if you want the explanation for how they drew conclusions, you can get Bruce Metzger's annotated commentary on the variants that are important.

And he explains their decisions, the basis on which certain things were included or excluded. But anytime the N-U and the M text, which is the majority text, anytime the two of those agree, you're on really solid ground adopting that reading. I adopt it in every case in these opening chapters of Revelation.

So when you get to verse eight, when God the Father speaks, we saw this last time, we know it's God the Father because He is the Pantocrator. He is the Almighty. And we established that from scripture last time.

I am the Alpha and the Omega line out the beginning and the end that is added from, it's imported from other places, which is easier to explain. And Bruce Metzger has an explicit note on this verse. It's not easy to explain somebody leaving this out, but it is easy to imagine them

adding it from a future passage.

Line it out. This is God the Father. And this beginning and the end is associated with the Jesus time and again.

And this allays confusion. This is God the Father speaking. We open with God the Father.

We find God the Father again in verse four, verse one, verse four. And again, here in verse eight, I am the Alpha and the Omega says the Lord God. The later text on which the King James is based left out God for whatever reason, but the best texts says the Lord God.

And this once again runs a string through verse one and verse four and even verse six, the Lord Jesus has made us a kingdom and priests to God and His Father or His God and Father, either way says the Lord God who is and who was and who is to come. This goes back and picks up verse four. This establishes in a threefold way, verse one, verse four, and verse eight, that everything that is to follow is sent to us by our God and Father, the Almighty.

That brings us now to verse nine. We're going to pick up now and Lord willing between now and our conclusion of the second session this evening, we will have arrived at verse 20 and completed it. So pray for me.

Verse nine, I, John, we have already reviewed John last time, your brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ. Notice the word kingdom there. That's why it's important to see it back in verse six.

He has not made us Kings. That's all chiefs and no Indians, too many Kings. He has made us a kingdom.

We are all priests under our high priest, the Lord Jesus in the order of Melchizedek. You can go to Hebrews that spends chapters studying this and communicating it in the tribulation and kingdom and patience. We are all going to be tested.

This is not tribulation capital T. You might say, this is not the time of Jacob's trouble. It is not the last three and a half years of the 70th week that we are about to see unfold later in this book. This is what the Lord Jesus promised in this world.

You shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer. I've overcome the world tribulation. He is our brother and companion.

Notice. He does not say I'm an apostle. Listen to me.

I'm your brother. I'm your fellow sufferer. I am your fellow burden bearer.

I like you look forward to the kingdom. We have need of patience to inherit the promises of Jesus Christ. It's meaningless.

Suffering is meaningless. If we don't see a connection to the Lord Jesus, some form of fashion, many different reasons why believers suffer sometimes for discipline, sometimes to reflect God's glory, sometimes to benefit those in our periphery. We are the one who suffers, but God uses our situation as an opportunity to bless and to encourage, to train up believers that are around us.

And many times we have difficulty seeing what the purpose of our suffering is, but we trust our God and recognize that John, our brother companion in the tribulation kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ was on the island that is called Patmos. We've seen this. It's off the shore of Southwestern Turkey, modern Turkey, about 24 miles.

Um, those of you that have ever seen Catalina off the coast of, uh, California, those who have been both places will say there is an eerie resemblance of the Isle of Patmos. Uh, it's about six miles wide, 12 miles long, give or take. And, uh, about the same distance off the coast.

And it's also off the West coast. Um, John, by the way, was by the records we have from, uh, early church fathers. If those can be trusted, uh, he was, uh, exiled to Patmos by Domitian in about 94 and he was released upon Domitian's death in 96.

Uh, he had labored among these churches in, uh, the Roman province of Asia. And he was known to them. This is why he had simply say, John, he doesn't have to give any additional qualifiers.

Doesn't have to establish this authority. They know him. And the Lord Jesus sends him back to ones that he has, uh, been working with earlier.

Uh, and once again, he is there for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. This links directly back to verse two. He bore witness to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

But you could imagine that such a fruitful and long lasting ministry as the apostle John had to suddenly be exiled and put on the island. Imagine the months that passed and he's thinking, why am I here? I'm an apostle. How can I do my job? It's fascinating to look at the distance between visions for prophets in the old Testament.

We noted this when we did the book of Daniel. We noted this when we did the book of Ezekiel, there are dated prophecies. When you look at many of these old Testament prophets, we've inserted them into the reigns of the Kings that were in Israel up until the Babylonian captivity and seen the context, the spiritual national context where these Kings were ruling in the Northern Kingdom or the Southern Kingdom and prophets were given a word from the Lord.

But the distance of time, I was reviewing Daniel and noticing the distance where he is serving in the Babylonian government, in the Medo-Persian government and all the way down throughout his life. And there are large gaps where there is to quote a phrase, no frequent vision in the same way that there's 400 years between Malachi and the coming of the Lord

Jesus. And the gospels that record his first coming were some years after his ascension.

In any case, he is here. Verse 10, I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, in the spirit. This is a both-and use of spirit similar to when you read John chapter three and you have the use of pneuma, the wind blows where it wills, the spirit of God moves where it wills.

It's a both-and. To get some clarity on this, just flip over a page or two in your Bible to chapter four and look at verse two. John looks, there's a door standing open in heaven.

He hears a voice come up here. I'll show you things take place after this. Immediately, I was in the spirit.

The new King James makes that a capital S in both of these passages. I have no argument with that, but he is in the realm of the spirit. He is in the area where the carnal mind cannot understand what it is going to see because they are spiritually discerned.

Our spiritual discernment comes to us through God's Holy Spirit. He is in the world of the spirit, the realm of the spirit. He is in the dimensional space where the Holy Spirit can bring to his vision and to his hearing things that are not a part of the natural world.

So we don't have to solve the problem should we capitalize the S or not. Both things are true. Back to chapter one.

I was in the spirit on the Lord's day. This is not Sunday. And whatever I have said in the past, I keep learning.

And I think I took this to be Sunday. You can go back and look at Paul and saying they were worshiping on the first day of the week. Set aside when you gather on the first day of the week and I'll take it to the poor saints in Jerusalem and so on.

But the notion that worship should take place on Sundays was nascent. It wasn't formalized. Sunday wasn't called the Lord's day until three or four hundred years after this in the Catholic church.

This is I was in the spirit. And if you look at the Greek here, it says in the spirit. And that's the word and E.N. in Greek.

And then when it says on the Lord's day, it's the very same preposition. A fruitful way to translate this. And then we're just going to move on.

I was in the spirit in the day of the Lord, the Holy Spirit. John is already thinking about what the Lord Jesus spoke back in Matthew chapter twenty four and Luke chapter twenty one and the Mark chapter thirteen and these other places where Jesus was telling his disciples what the day of the Lord is going to look like. Hope I got those chapters right.

I know Matthew twenty four is right. Pretty sure Luke twenty one is right. I think Mark thirteen.

But you can find those. Look them up. Don't don't trust my ever more permeable and perforated memory.

But. I was in the spirit in the day of the Lord. See how that sets us up for what's coming, because this entire seven year period that is about to unfold, this entire witness to the seven churches and what it takes to be an overcomer and what the rewards will be, what the consequences will be for failure is all referencing and in the context of the day of the Lord.

So my suggestion, mark your Bible as I have. John says, I was in the spirit in the day of the Lord. Much more fruitful than it was Sunday.

And I heard behind me a loud voice as of a trumpet. Trumpets are a call to action. Especially in the ancient day.

A call to action. I heard a loud and the word for voice and sound are interchangeable. It's it's phony in in both cases.

So I heard behind me, but we know that it's voice here because verse eleven starts with the saying. So I heard a loud voice as of a trumpet. This is the force of it, the clarity of it, the startling call to attention of this voice.

We saw the comparison of Moses, who first saw the burning bush and then. Heard the voice of God here. John is.

Is meditating and reflecting and recycling what he remembers the Lord Jesus teaching about the day of the Lord. He's in the spirit. He's visualizing it.

He's anticipating it. He is thinking about it and praying over it much as Daniel did in Daniel chapter nine. You look at the whole run up to the 70 weeks message that he receives from the angel Gabriel, and he is in prayer.

He is in reflection and meditation of God's deliverance and the solution for Israel's sin. Same thing here. What is so when he hears it? Before he turns around, this is what he hears saying, get your pencil out and line out.

I am the alpha and the omega, the first and the last, and it's not there. It's a later edition and it interferes with where we're going. The verse should read verse 11.

I heard a loud voice as of a trumpet saying, what you see right in a book, everything between saying and what you see, line it out. It's not there. What you see right in a book and send to the seven churches line out, which are in Asia.

That's not there either. What you see right in a book and send to the seven churches to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, to Laodicea. And if you find it helpful, my personal memory aid is every smiling person, thy sorrows fill loudly.

Every Ephesus, smiling Smyrna, person Pergamos, thy Thyatira, sorrow Sardis, fill Philadelphia, loudly Laodicea. Works for me. They are listed here.

After he hears this, the entire list of seven churches is given. What you see right in a book and send it. Then verse 12.

Now watch closely here. Just like John, we've heard the voice of the Lord Jesus. You're going to see some things.

You've got to write them down. I wonder if somewhere off camera, not recorded in the gospels, the Lord Jesus said to Matthew, Hey, Levi, Matthew, take notes. You're going to be writing this stuff down.

Take notes. What you see, right? Record it and send it to these seven churches. Verse 12.

Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me and having turned. Remember Moses turns aside to see, then he hears. John hears, and then he turns twice in this verse to see.

Difference in the old Testament and the new, difference in the shadows and the reality, difference in the prospect of the Lord Jesus coming in the flesh and the ascended and glorified Lord returning to speak as it were to John. A whole mirror image, if you will, of revelation. Having turned, I saw.

So I circled in verse 10. I heard behind me a loud voice and in verse 12, I saw. Now he hears the voice.

It says, what you see, write in a book, send it to these seven churches. And John says, I know those churches. I can even, I've got a mental map.

They're all in a upside down check Mark shape. They're in a seven shaped. It's almost, it's a flattened circle.

You can draw one line and connect all seven in order. So then he turns and you would expect when I turned, I saw the owner of the voice. That's not what he sees.

This ought to be surprising to us. I turned to see who was speaking to me, but he didn't see the speaker. What does he see? There's a powerful application here for you and me.

What does John see when he turns in response to the word of the Lord? He sees the lampstands, which will soon be explained to us as the churches. When the world hears the word of God and they turn to investigate, they want to see what is the source of this word? Who are they going to see? They're going to see you. They're going to see me.

We are the body of the Lord. We are the churches. And the first thing John sees when he hears the word of the Lord, he sees the lampstands.

He sees the representation of the churches. This is the first foot forward, if you will, to the world. The visibility of the Lord Jesus is the church.

It's believers. It's us, whether for good or for ill. Some of these churches are going to be commended.

Others are going to be chastised. But as soon as he turns at the sound of the word of the Lord, he doesn't see the Lord. I would have expected the later description here, but we have a whole description that comes after seeing the lampstands.

So I saw seven golden lampstands. Gold speaks of value. It speaks of incorruptibility.

It doesn't rust. It doesn't get moth-eaten. It doesn't turn into something else.

It doesn't degrade. Seven golden lampstands. And this lampstand is not a lamp.

The lampstand is not a cooking pan. but we're going to flip over a little bit here to see whether I should wait until chapter... We'll do it now. Flip over two pages at the end of chapter four.

A lot of links between this portion of chapter one and chapter four. You've got lampstands, right? What does the lampstand do? No one puts a lamp under a bushel. They put it on a stand so that it can be lifted up and shed its light and be seen and benefit others, right? Chapter four, I looked, door opened in heaven.

I was in the spirit. Verse two, a throne in heaven and one sat on the throne. Who is this? This is our God and father.

And he who sat on that throne was like a Jasper and a Sardius stone in appearance, rainbow around the throne in appearance like an emerald. This is just reaching for description. Around the throne were 24 thrones.

On the thrones, I saw 24 elders sitting, clothed in white robes. They had crowns of gold on their heads, crowns of gold. This gold is a link, a thread that we will see running through and through.

Verse five, this is your note, this is your link. And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. We'll straighten a lot of this out.

Seven lamps of fire were burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God. What did we say about the seven spirits of God in these last few sessions? I don't believe it's the Holy Spirit. These are God's angelic minions who are agents and accomplish His will.

When there's a voice from the throne or the throne room, a voice speaks, these spirits make things happen. They are agents, right? The church is pictured in our chapter, and you can flip back there, as lampstands. Now, this is a bit of a stretch, but wouldn't it be wonderful if the church arrives in heaven so that these torches, these lamps, can be placed on the lampstands?

You've got seven lampstands on earth.

You've got seven lamps in heaven. And in chapter four, when the voice says, come up here, now you're looking at the seven lamps. So there is an oblique support for the idea that the rapture takes place.

And we'll see this when we look further. But lamps and lampstands go together. You know, love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage.

Lamps and lampstands go together. You've got seven lamps in heaven. You've got seven lampstands, which are designed to support and to be a part of the agency of the lamp.

And as servants of God, when we move into the eternal future, will we be a part of the agency by which God does things as he has done from creation forward through angels? We will be a team. In the same way that you have Israel as God's people, you come to the New Testament and now you have Gentiles as well as Jews made a part of the team. Humanity moving into heaven becomes a part of God's team.

And you have this beautiful symmetry of seven lampstands, seven lamps. And they specifically speak of the agency by which God's glory shines. God's work is accomplished.

Just a thought. So back to chapter one. I saw seven golden lampstands.

And in the midst of the seven lampstands, one like the son of man, you can't help but think back to Daniel 7, verse 13, one like the son of man, clothes with a garment down to the feet, girded about the chest with a golden band. You've got golden lampstands. And on his chest, you have a golden band.

In our modern military, we like to put rank insignia on a cover or on the shoulders or on the collar. They didn't have the same kind of clothing in the ancient day. And if you wanted to display high rank, you had a chest band.

Think of the breastplate of the high priest. In the same way, this personage, the son of man, has around his chest this golden band. It is a badge of rank.

The more practical girding about the waist, the strap or the tie girding about your waist, this, the priests wore a belt, if you will, that tied. And in order to keep their robes unsoiled, they could take the hem and tuck it up into that band and then release it. This is too high for that.

This is not a practical measure. This is a badge of rank. So he has this.

And by the way, if you start numbering these, this is a seven-fold description of the son of man. So he's clothed with the garment down to the feet. Down to the feet, once again, this people of the highest rank had something that went down to the feet because it wasn't going to get soiled because they're not out functioning as day laborers or hewers of wood and haulers of water.

It's sort of like a wedding dresses with a train and other formals that go all the way down to the ground. This is not a working garment. This is a badge of rank.

It is designed to communicate to the viewer that this is a special person engaged in a special function or holding a special office. Down to the feet, girded about the chest with a golden band. So that's two things.

Garment, chest band, his head and his hair are white like wool. White like wool. This is something that you see in Daniel and it is associated with God the Father.

And remembering this is the Lord Jesus who has reversed what happened in Philippians 2 when he came the first time, he emptied himself form of a servant, likeness of men, humbled himself, obedient to death. That has all been reversed. For this reason, God has highly exalted him toward the end of that same chapter, giving him the name that is above every name.

This is the Lord Jesus in his resplendent glory, the resurrected and ascended Lord. And he has resumed, he is no longer emptied of his deity. And in his deity, he shares many of the attributes of God himself or God as he's depicted in the Old Testament.

So you go to Daniel chapter seven, verse nine, thrones are put in place and the ancient of days was seated. We've got the 24 thrones we'll see in chapter four. The ancient of days was seated.

His garment was white as snow. I'm reading Daniel 7, 9 and the hair of his head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame.

Its wheels, a burning fire, fire, whiteness, brightness, all associated with the ancient of days. Something we are going to see in the rest of the book, but it is a reminder that this is the deified Lord. People say, well, if this was the apostle John that leaned on Jesus' breast at the last supper, why does he seem so distant? Why doesn't he go up and give him a hug? Do you remember what the disciples did who were on the Mount of Transfiguration? Peter, James, and John.

Do you remember what they did when they saw the glorified Lord revealed? They fell to the ground. They were afraid. The Lord Jesus is gonna lay his hand, his right hand on John and says, fear not.

By the way, the other two times that Jesus says fear not to his disciples, one is when he walks on the water and approaches them at the boat and they are so afraid. The other is the Mount of Transfiguration. So John is going to immediately remember when he heard the Lord say, don't be afraid, fear not.

And it's because this resplendent view of the Lord Jesus is even more impressive than what he saw on the Mount of Transfiguration. Well, this is a good place for us to stop and take our break. When we come back, we're going to enumerate these features that John sees and lists for us and why in verse 17, did he fall at his feet as dead? We'll see that when we come back.

