

Rev 25-10-05a

Good morning. Welcome to the Sunday morning services here at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 5th of October, 2025.

We continue our study in the book of Revelation. Quite a fascinating investigation here of what the Lord Jesus had to say in the last words he delivered on this earth to us through the Apostle John. We have the opening covered, chapter 1. We have moved to chapter 2 and we are looking at the 2nd of the 7 churches that were addressed by the Lord Jesus.

We took a break on this past Wednesday night to address some of the current events that are taking place in terms of the Middle East peace agreements and the onward progress of technology that seems more and more to be capable of fulfilling those events which are metaphorically and symbolically represented in our book. We are going to finish up that quick look this morning. We will do a quick review of what we looked at on Wednesday in case you missed it, move forward in the first session, then in the second session we will get back to the church in Smyrna.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and then we will begin. Father, how grateful we are for another time of fellowship, another opportunity to be nourished and built up, strengthened, guided and enabled by your word, the sharp sword that the Holy Spirit uses both internally and externally to enable us to understand your good and perfect will. We pray that as we look at these passages this morning, the Holy Spirit will be our guide, our teacher, that we will understand not only the broad sweep of these situations and circumstances but see their effect and what they require of us by way of personal application.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. This past Wednesday evening, I made a suggestion to you and you will shortly see that I have been utterly and completely vindicated in my speculation, my judgment here.

I'll share that with you in a moment. But the incredible appearance as if a beast rose out of the chaotic sea of the internet in general and communicated in it, through it, by it and from it is the onslaught of artificial intelligence. This is new and different.

It is unlike anything that has ever been seen in the history of the world. It is culture-altering. It is life-changing.

It has impact in every area of life, social, political, economic. The abilities that it confers on human beings who master its controls are staggering, beyond belief. And this comports with what the scriptures prophesy, both in the Old Testament and in the New.

The book under our current gaze, the Revelation, is obviously more and more reflected in the world situation around us. So, I suggested to you last time, I have no idea, I don't think it's original to me, but some of the conclusions could be. But we went to Revelation chapter 13, to

which please turn.

Revelation chapter 13. This is the chapter that details the beasts. The popular terminology for the first beast is the Antichrist.

Revelation nowhere uses that term. Our author does. But oddly, he doesn't use it in this book.

He uses it in his epistle. But we saw this in Revelation 13. Let's just review it real quickly.

John says, I stood on the sand of the sea, and I saw a beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a blasphemous name. Notice, all of the seven heads have the same blasphemous name. They are united in the beast, and they are addressed by a single name.

This is a loose analogy to when we talk about God, we can be referring to any one of three persons, or to all three of them. There is a single name, Elohim, Yahweh, the Lord. God has a personal name, and it can be used of any one of the members of the Trinity, or all three.

It is least used of the Holy Spirit. It is commonly used for the Father in the Old Testament. Of course, you switch to Greek in the New.

But this is important, because name is identity. And whichever one of the heads happens to be in view, it is identified with the beast. You don't see the head and not think of the beast.

They've all got the same name. And notice, it is a blasphemous name. What is blasphemy? This is something that is an affront to the person, and the work, and the glory of God.

It is something which has a spiritual component, negative spiritual component. This is addressed in the Ten Commandments as if someone takes the Lord's name and says, I am a God-worshipper. I worship the God of the Bible.

I worship the Creator God of the Old Testament. I believe in the Lord Jesus, who is His revealed Son in the New Testament, and my Savior. If you take that name, and then you go around acting like a godless, pagan unbeliever, you have taken His name in vain.

Wearing that name, bearing that name should be identity. Identity, it defines us. We have taken the name of God.

We have taken the name of Christ. We are called Christians. That defines us.

That's who we are. People say, well, that's who I am. This is who we are.

And if we act, or think, or speak, out of accord with that identity, this begins to partake of taking the name in vain, and can extend to blasphemy. Blasphemy is deriding, disregarding, scorning, attributing evil to God, misrepresenting and twisting His words and His works, and so on. These are blasphemous names.

So, what would this blasphemy be? All we've seen is this beast rise up so far. What kind of blasphemy would this be? Think back to the five I wills. Remember, it's an easy memory aid to go back to the Old Testament in Isaiah and Ezekiel.

Isaiah comes first, Ezekiel comes after, and your two numbers are 14 and 28. So, Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 are the passages that give us, via the King of Tyre and other metaphors, the representation of Satan and his fall. So, with your fingers still in Revelation 13, you can flip back, if you want to, to Isaiah chapter 14.

Isaiah 14. We want to understand this blasphemy. How are you going to spot the beast, or any one of his heads, or the implementation of the ten horns with the ten crowns, if you don't recognize the name? What is this blasphemous name that is stamped on, is represented on, maybe it's carved into the crowns, of all seven of these heads? Isaiah chapter 14.

This is centered in verses 13 and 14. Start in verse 12. Very familiar passage.

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of darkness. You should have that change in your Bible. This is a commonly misunderstood and mistranslated word in Hebrew.

You can keep it, if you want, but in my humble opinion, this has been misunderstood. Sometimes it's translated dawn, son of the dawn, or son of the rising of the light, but this is the lifting of darkness. In Hebrew, the lifting of darkness.

The word means darkness, and the morning is when the darkness lifts, and I think for a long time this has been confused. My translation is, O shining one, son of darkness, and that's a typical divine play on words and tension in language to get us to stop and think. Lucifer, shining one, but he is the son of darkness.

How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations. I will offer the thought at this time, if it's confusing, just pretend I didn't say it, but in the heavens, time doesn't work sequentially. We saw this in our study of the book of Daniel.

Gabriel can be contending with the prince of Persia and the prince of Greece, and Greece hasn't even arisen as a power yet. But here, you who weakened the nations is both satanic activity throughout history, and specifically in the time we will be studying in the book of Revelation. How the oppressor has ceased.

I got in the wrong column there. I should wear my glasses. You who weakened the nations, for you have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven.

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. I will ascend into heaven. He is no longer in heaven.

This is post-fall. He has been cast out. We will see when we get to the later chapters of Revelation, the story of the woman with the child and the dragon, and knowing he has a short

time.

And again, when you're looking at things from a heavenly perspective, they're not always chronological in the human way of thinking. You have said in your heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.

I will also sit on the Mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the North. This is the highest and greatest seat of power. This is God's abode.

This is God's heavenly temple. It is his throne. And Satan says, I will sit there.

I will be above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High. You will instead be brought down to Sheol.

These claims, these aspirations, these ambitions, these intents and purposes are blasphemous because they are intended to take God's place. We have to be careful of this, even in our common practice. We should not attempt to do things that are God's prerogative.

This is convicting others of their sin. That's a Holy Spirit prerogative. The Holy Spirit convicts everyone, the world, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

We have to be careful not to preach, not to condemn, not to vilify, not to call out and make an issue out of the sins of others. This is a godly prerogative, and this is one of the intrinsic sinful elements in gossip and maligning and backbiting and judging, trying to punish someone because we see that they've done wrong, and trying to inflict some sort of consequences on them, setting ourselves up as judge, judging others instead of judging ourselves. The reason this is such a heinous wrong is it elbows aside God.

Those who want to do this in the realm of evangelism with unbelievers and try to make them aware of their sin and push them into making a decision about the Lord Jesus, it is a wonderful privilege to speak the truth, to let our light shine, to give a reason for the hope that is in us. But if we begin to assume and take the place of the Holy Spirit's role, this is dangerous ground. This is the original set of sins.

This is the pride that caused the highest and greatest of God's creation to be cast out of heaven. But notice the ambitions. I will do what God does.

I will no longer reflect light. I will no longer show forth God's glory. I will ascend into heaven.

It is not our place to elevate ourselves. My old pastor used to say, if God doesn't promote you, you're not promoted. If God doesn't raise you into a higher place or a greater role, don't try to do it yourself.

I will ascend into heaven. This is irrespective, irregardless of God's will, God's plan, God's purpose. I will ascend into heaven.

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. The stars in Job sing together and the sons of God shout for joy at the accomplishment of God's creative work. And the stars are used to symbolize the angels.

So this is going to be ruling authority. Satan wants to exercise ruling authority over God's angels. They belong to him.

They are his to command. I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north. I will be an active participant in the heavenly council.

If there's any plan, policy, purpose to be accomplished, I'm going to have a voice. I will come and grab a chair at the table of the highest government there is, which is God's. That's the mount of the congregation.

This is the mount of the assembly. This is the assembly of God's cabinet, God's staff. We could think of cherubim or seraphim.

We're a little fuzzy on the details of how these individuals in the angelic realm are designated, but he intends to be one of them. I suspect he used to be one of them before he was cast out and he wants to return. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.

The clouds are the hordes, the innumerable 10,000 times 10,000 of the angels. Eventually the clouds will include the sanctified and glorified saints of God. Behold, he cometh with clouds.

These are not vapor clouds. These are a great assembly of individuals. But I will ascend above the height of the clouds.

I will be like the Most High. And that really sums up the other four I wills. The blasphemous name, because this beast in Revelation 13 arises out of the sea, is going to reflect in the same way that we are to reflect the glory of God and the glory of the Jesus.

This beast entity is going to reflect the unglory of Satan, his ambitions, his characteristics, his plan. So when he rises out of the sea and on his head, a blasphemous name, each of the seven heads, this blasphemous name. This is one of the ways that those who are on the earth at the time that this thing takes its final shape will be able to spot it because of the blasphemous nature of its name.

It is by, and of course, name also suggests and implies reputation. This is its identity. This is what it is and what it does.

And for example, you could do this today. My suggestion Wednesday night is that this beast could be AI implemented in and through the global internet. Why? Because the things that we typically dedicate to God, when we want wisdom, James chapter one, if any of you likes wisdom, let him ask of God.

Now, if I want to figure out how to set the points in the distributor on my Ford 2600 tractor, I go

to the internet, pull up tractor girl or somebody who knows how to work on tractors and find the answer. And it's wonderful. It's a information.

This is practical wisdom for material accomplishment of tasks. There's the spiritual component to working on a tractor is what is my attitude? Is this a part of my goals and values and priorities in accomplishing the tasks that God has assigned to me? But I do not go to the Bible and I do not go to the Lord in prayer to tell me how to set the points in the distributor to 0.25. This is practical knowledge. You don't have to pray to get a recipe for banana bread.

You look it up in a cookbook. The internet is perfectly fine, safe, wonderful, useful, fantastic tool for providing practical information. It is becoming more than that in the lives of a lot of people.

When your identity now resides in the internet via social media, and you are who you are because of what you post on your account and what others say to and about you. Now you are moving your identity, which for us should be in Christ into the realm of what do people think? What do my my friends or my followers or those who interact with me? What do they think? If they respond negatively, I'm down. If they respond positively, I'm up.

If they approve, I think I'm doing right. If they disapprove, I'm doing wrong. Pretty soon my standards of right and wrong, good and bad, productive or unproductive are rooted in an online presence instead of my personal spiritual life with Christ.

Now we're getting into the realm of blasphemy because you have taken something that is in and of itself at this point harmless and even useful and good, and you have turned it into something that violates our commandments, that is antithetical to what scripture teaches us about who we are and why we're here. And there are, especially in younger generations of believers, those who are seriously troubled in this area. Too much time online, too much investment in the opinions of others.

It is subjectivity on steroids and it is a sin that turns into a pattern which is evil. So how do we know? Should I cancel all of my internet accounts? Heavens no. It's a wonderful tool.

Food is good. Eating too much of it is gluttony and that's a sin. A little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent afflictions is fine.

Getting drunk is not. Perfectly legitimate things that we over invest in, that we take to excess, become a spiritual problem and can quickly enter us into this realm of disobedience, even leading to intentional or unintentional blasphemy. So as long as we don't have something in our lives, and they used to think this about television and then they thought it about other appearances in modern technology, that it was going to soak up all of our time and attention.

And it can, and it will. There were people who got addicted to talk radio. There are people who get addicted to TV shows that cross seasons and you binge watch.

And there's whole discussion groups where all people do is flesh out the universe of some

program and make up additional stories and live in this universe and go to conventions and Comic Con and the rest of these. It's something that absorbs us to that extent. That's the problem.

In the context we're talking about here, don't get scared of the internet. Don't get scared of credit cards. Don't get scared of digital ID.

This came out Keir Starms. I couldn't think of his name Wednesday night, over in Britain has implemented this. You can't work in Britain if you don't have a digital ID.

Fine. No problem. We've already got digital ID everywhere.

All of your stuff, our social security, our driver's licenses, our healthcare, our military records or whatever else. It's all online anyway. It doesn't impinge on our spiritual identity.

It doesn't affect living our lives as unto the Lord. Don't worry about it. It is going to reach a point in the future after we're gone, where you are forced to choose.

It is not yet. So this beast rises, the beast which I saw, verse two, was like a leopard. His feet were like the feet of a bear and his mouth like the mouth of a lion.

These are references to Daniel, where the lion represented Babylon, the bear represented Medo-Persia and the leopard represented Greece under Alexander the Great. And you can go, the lion with its ferocity and its ability to take prey, the devil roams the earth like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. That's the lion.

And remember Nebuchadnezzar spoke great things about himself and started issuing edicts. And unless you fall down and worship this giant image, you'll be thrown into the furnace of fire. And that's what happened to Hananiah and Mishael and Nazariah.

And it also portends God overcoming it. The devil can roam the earth like a lion, but the lion of the tribe of Judah beats that lion all over. Nebuchadnezzar spoke great swelling words.

Belshazzar had a feast and thought he was secure. You know what happened in Daniel chapter five. But applied to this beast, its greatest weapon is speech, what it says.

And you do know that AI has come to be by the nature of the technology that underlies it, which is LLM, Large Language Models. They've basically taken everything that has ever been said on the internet and fed it in and using algorithms and incredibly sophisticated programming. It can now synthesize and regurgitate.

It can anticipate. It sees the use of language. And you know how when you're trying to type a text on your phone or sometimes on prompts online, it will fill in the next few words for you.

That's LLM technology. But in AI, it is on steroids. When you introduce a topic, when you ask a question, it uses this and you can study that on your own.

The point here is that its power is based on language. Without everything that's ever been said being fed into it, it wouldn't be. It exists because of language.

But as it has co-opted and built itself on top of or been built on top of language, LLM. Babylon. That is the first of the beasts in Daniel.

And it is the first and greatest characteristic here. Out of these three, it's like a leopard. It's speedy.

It's powerful like a bear. The feet of the bear. Again, Daniel chapter 7. A bear.

Think of a bear. It's massive. It's slow and crushing.

You've got a beast that is fast when it needs to be, but it can stand there and crush as well. Whatever it needs to be. If it needs to have alacrity and quickness and flexibility, it's got the leopard characteristic.

But it's got the feet of a bear. It can crush the life out of things. This is aggressive conquest.

Aggressive conquest. That's the bear. This is what the Medes and the Persians did.

So, it's relentless. It's crushing. Grinding domination.

Once it steps on you, you can't wiggle free. So, you could summarize this as brute force and the ability to trample opposition. Feet like a bear.

Trample the opposition. Crushing force. The leopard.

You go to Daniel 7, where the leopard has four wings and four heads, which, of course, is Alexander the Great and his four generals once he dies and his kingdom is divided. The leopard appearance. This is adaptability.

Wide ranging influence. It can be anywhere very quickly. So, if you apply it to this beast, you get the idea that it's going to spread its power quickly across the globe.

No nation has ever spread its power as quickly as the internet in general and AI in particular has done. Never in history. Nothing has gone this fast, this far, and become this powerful this quickly.

It leaps over barriers and borders. Now, instead of national borders and cultural divisions, it's communication, networks, systems of trade. So, rapid expansion and cultural dominance.

Rapid expansion, cultural dominance. Have we seen anything so far that doesn't fit AI and the internet more than anything else in history? And we're only one verse in. Notice that this is combined into a single beast.

It's got seven heads, but it's all part of one entity. So, this beast is embodying Babylon's

ambition and arrogance, Persia's brute strength, Greece's speed and cultural dominance. Remember, because of Alexander, Koine Greek became the language of the Roman Empire before there was a Roman Empire.

So, this metaphor communicates these characteristics to us. I think we are seeing the rise out of the sea. If I'm correct in my speculation, it is a speculation.

I label it as such. Feel free to treat it as such. Give it all the weight that it deserves.

But I think it is rising out of the sea as we speak. I think you are at a distance beginning to see the heads and the horns. We're not under its sway.

It is not forcing decisions on us that compromise us spiritually, but you can easily see how it does. I think, as I said Wednesday, I think the shutdown of churches during COVID was a test case. Can I get Christians to stop going to church? Never in the history of mankind.

Under the wildest persecution by the Catholics, Protestants met secretly. We had a lady visit GTBC years ago, meeting at Godbold's from China, telling us about the underground church in China that had to go underground because of the communist government there. But they still met.

Churches were so largely shut down. There was a remnant that did not bow the knee to Baal. We were one of them.

We meet digitally anyway. But if we met as a group, we would have still met as a group in a room. You cannot let the government tell you not to assemble when the scripture says, forsake not the assembling of yourselves together.

That's a real clear choice. But much of what I would call superficial Christianity, God only knows their salvation status, but I will say that the bigger they are, the harder they fall. And large churches were under the gaze of the government and shut their doors.

And that's a portent of things to come. So the power of speech, the weight of infrastructure, and the speed of digital spread. If you want to summarize these characteristics, the power of speech, this is algorithms, this is media, this is propaganda, the power of speech, that's your lion, the weight of infrastructure, the global systems that you can't do without, commerce, e-commerce, online banking, how can I get to my stuff, you can't do medicine anymore if you don't have MyChart, global systems that cannot be escaped, and the speed of digital spread.

I don't have to tell you about the way things go viral, how quickly things good and bad can spread. So the universal authority that this entity is going to exercise and the dependence that those under it will experience. In verse 7, if you skip down here, it says, was granted to him to make war with the sanctified ones and to overcome them, authority was given him over every tribe, every people, every tongue, and every nation.

It's not yet, but you can see how easily that will come. Dependence on a central system of intelligence, information, the ability to buy and sell when it goes entirely online. You could imagine that cash will cease.

I thought it was a big sea change when I was a sacker at Safeway. Ladies would go to school and learn to run the cash register. And those of you that are old enough, remember the cash registers when there was a really efficient cashier and she could hit those buttons.

She could pick up peanut butter and Kleenexes and whatever's coming across the thing. And she would type those codes and just lickety split. And then we went to barcode scanning and all those ladies are basically out of a job.

Now they just scan instead of typing. You don't have to go to school and anybody can do it. The trained and talented had to take a cut in pay or retire or whatever.

But that was a change in the way we do commerce. But you can imagine now, and it's already implemented in a lot of places you shop, where the self-serve, you scan it yourself and everything is taking place in a computer with barcode scanning and RFID and such. And if the computer says, sorry, I've checked and you don't have money in the bank or sorry, you've been prohibited from purchasing at this store.

How are you going to get out the door? You can't grab it and run. RFID will trigger the alarm at the door. Security will come get you and lock you up.

You can't get it to scan. You can't pay for it. You can't make it your own and take it home.

That technology is already here. Every time you go to the store, you are using the technology that is going to control who can buy and who can sell. So not to panic.

There are many things that are not evil in and of themselves. It is the use to which they are put. There is nothing evil or intrinsically bad about the internet, about being online, about RFID or barcode scanning.

There's nothing wrong with the magnetic stripe on our credit cards. These things are innocuous in and of themselves. Brass is not evil or good.

It's just a metal. You can make implements for use in temple worship or tabernacle worship, or you can make an idol or a molek pot to burn children in. What it's made of isn't what makes it evil.

It is the use to which it is put. This is such an important distinction. Our mouth can be good or evil depending on what we use it for.

Our hands can be good or evil. If your right hand offends you, this is your right hand. This is your strength.

It's used for wonderful things. But if it offends you, Jesus says, cut it off. Better to go into life maimed than to keep your hand and be judged.

What is the use to which it is put? So the discernment, he who has an ear to hear, is going to watch when innocuous, harmless, and even useful and good things are put to an evil purpose. The sword can be used for capital punishment, or it can be used to murder. What is the use to which it is put? We will draw a line.

We will step back. We will disconnect. We will stop at the point that it partakes of blasphemy, disobedience, or impinges in some way on our spiritual identity and our spiritual function.

That only happens if we allow it to, and we can make choices to ensure that our connections to technology are used for good and not for ill. Let's pause here and take a break. When we come back, we'll continue our special study.