

Rev 25-11-16a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 16th of November, 2025. We're in Revelation chapter three.

We are going to finish the church in Philadelphia and move to the church in Laodicea this morning. If the creek don't rise, we should be at the threshold of chapter four by the time we conclude. Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and our time of study and we'll begin.

Father, what a blessing it is to be in the family of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be related to each other, to have that familial love and opportunity to bear one another's burdens even as we shoulder our own load. We thank you for the sustaining grace that comes to us through your word and the constant presence of your spirit. We ask that as we look at this portion of your word together that your spirit will be our teacher, impress it on our hearts in a way that is meaningful, that we can see clearly the pertinence and application as we face the tests and challenges and opportunities that come to us each day by your grace.

We ask it in Jesus' name, amen. Reading our passage labeled the faithful church in my new King James, to the messenger of the church in Philadelphia, write, these things says he who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David, he who opens and no one shuts, shuts and no one opens. I know your works.

See, I have set before you an open door and no one can shut it. For you have a little strength, have kept my word and have not denied my name. Indeed, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but lie.

Indeed, I will make them come and bow before your feet and to know that I have loved you. Because you have kept my command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world to test those who dwell on the earth, the earth dwellers. We will see that phrase multiple times over and over again throughout the book.

It refers specifically to unbelievers, unrepentant, rebellious individuals who despite everything that happens in the subsequent pages of this book are not interested in changing their mind, changing their ways or recognizing that it is the severity of God that is leading them to repentance, is giving them the opportunity to repent, is showing them that there is something wrong. I am coming quickly, verse 11. Hold fast what you have that no one may take your crown.

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of my God, the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God and my new name. He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches.

There are four or five things here that we're just going to summarize by way of conclusion. We

have looked at this letter for a few sessions. First of all, Jesus' introduction.

He who has the key of David, he who opens and no one shuts, shuts and no one opens. You know that the reference here is to a specific name attached to this key. It isn't the key of heaven.

It isn't the key of God. It isn't the key of the nations of the earth. It is the key of David.

Why is it named the key of David? Think about the fact that David is God's man of the hour. He is the anointed King of Israel and Jesus is David's greater son. So to have the key of David is to have the authority to have the right to the throne of Israel specifically.

Why is Jesus referring to himself in terms that speak of Israel when he's talking to the church? We saw this last time Eliakim replacing Shebna in the office of steward or the guardian of the throne room, if you will, for the King of Israel. And that Shebna would be replaced as an unfaithful and nefarious abuser of that office. And God is going to remove Shebna and replace him with Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah.

And he will have the key of David. He will open and no one will shut. He will shut and no one will open.

Why does Jesus reference this in his self-introduction to the church in Philadelphia? Remember that David is party to the Davidic covenant which says that there will be a permanent dynasty in David's name, David's house, David's sons. Jesus is David's greater son. So when Jesus introduces himself as the one having the key of David, this first of all speaks of the permanence.

Time and again, you see references, whether it's in Daniel, other prophetic Old Testament passages, or in the new that the kingdom the Lord Jesus is going to be king of is without end in the sense that no one is going to attack it, overcome it, conquer it, bring it to an end. It will last as long as God wants it to. In Revelation, that's a thousand years.

So his kingdom will have no end. This is the permanence. And it goes all the way back to David.

So the key of David is a privilege that harks back to this permanent promised kingdom guaranteed by God's character and God's word that it will be such that David will not lack a son to sit on the throne, la'olam, unto the ages. So it is permanence. If you're taking notes, there's going to be three features of this key.

First of all, it is permanence. What is the application to us? The gifts and the calling of God are without revocation. God has made us great and precious promises.

And if we are aware of the conditions under which we are heir of those promises, God's side is never going to fail. We're not going to place our faith in him and suddenly regret it and come up short because God got busy somewhere else. It may seem from time to time that God has forsaken us.

You think about the Lord Jesus performing his work on the cross. There are times when the sky is dark. There are times when the pressure is severe, but like the fallen tent of David, it is going to be raised up again.

God has a greater purpose in allowing Israel to fail as a nation, in allowing the Davidic kingship to go into hiatus for a time. We can look at our lives and say, where are the promises of God where there will be safety and peace and prosperity? Even in those times when we have done nothing wrong. And notice this is given to the most faithful church in the list.

Philadelphia is commended and has virtually no criticism whatsoever. And yet the key of David, even the first recipients of this letter and everyone since can look and say, where's the throne of David? Where's David? Where are the sons of David? What happened to the Davidic covenant promises? Jesus says, I have the key of David. So this authority is permanent.

And though it may be invisible to us, Jesus is in fact the son of David. He is the anointed King of Israel. He has not yet come into the fullness of that millennial rule, but he will, it is certain.

But there is a time when it is in suspension in much the same way that our salvation shedding this failing body and fallen nature to be promoted, to be like Him. A body that lasts for eternity, a soul that is free from the pull and the drag of our sinful nature and subject to temptation from the devil and from the world and so on. We are saved.

We have that anointing, if you will, that promise of full salvation, but we're in a period of waiting. And this period has a purpose in God's plan. The suspension, the breaking out of the dry branches of Israel from God's plan has a purpose.

And when that purpose is fulfilled, that tree will once again have the branches of Israel regrafted in and it will move forward. And there will be a son on the throne of David for 10 centuries. That's longer than anyone ever ruled in Israel.

The entire kingship didn't last that long. So what is the key of David? Permanence is the first feature of this. Secondly, this is a rulership that is representative of God, is a service to God Himself.

David was a king who would rule God's way. He's a man after God's own heart. He wants to please God in the performance of that rulership.

It's hard to find leadership that is dedicated to something greater than themselves, isn't self-interested, isn't unpredictable and unreliable. And this is a dynasty that God Himself is going to uphold. So permanent in accordance with God's will and enabled and empowered by God Himself.

Eliakim was made steward. And where we're going with this is you will remember in Ezekiel 28, Satan in the description that is titled to the King of Tyre. Remember in the King James, it said something about his pipes and his tablets were perfect and sealed with gold and one thing and

another.

And when we looked at this in Hebrew, as the guardian cherub of the throne room of God, Lucifer, Satan was once in the same type of role as Shebna. And there is a reason why you have Shebna who is unfaithful being replaced by Eliakim who is faithful, who is going to be the replacement who will do what the first one did not. And to open so that no one can shut, to shut and so that no one can open is reflected back in the King of Tyre passage in Ezekiel 28 and in the Isaiah 22 passage referencing Eliakim replacing Shebna because Shebna is unfaithful.

Shebna once had the control of access to the King but he is corrupt, he's self-interested and he is replaced with Eliakim as the chief steward who will open and no one can shut, who will shut and no one can open. And the Lord Jesus is here with the key of David. And remember the entire messianic program is a picture.

The Lord Jesus as David's son becoming the King of Israel, Israel is God's people and as such foreshadows God's future eternal kingdom. And who rules that future kingdom? It is in fact, God himself. You have two anticipations of the eternal kingdom of the father.

Remember in terms of kingdoms, there are three. There is the nation of Israel. That's a kingdom with a King.

It anticipates and is actually fulfilled in the millennial kingdom, which is the kingdom of the son, David's greater son. Becomes the King of that kingdom. So you have Israel under David as a united nation for a relatively short period of time followed by the kingdom of the son, which is a thousand years according to revelation followed by the eternal kingdom of the father.

In the same way that the Lord Jesus will rule in the millennial kingdom with David and his sons co-ruling with him. In the kingdom of the father, the father is the King and the Lord Jesus is at his right hand. He is the lamb and he will be the one who opens and no one shuts.

He can open the gates as it were of the new Jerusalem to allow those in who he has judged qualified for that privilege. I will give you the right to the tree of life and the paradise of God. That is access to the new Jerusalem, access to the presence of God himself, brokered, monitored, controlled by the lamb, the Lord Jesus.

So you see here the consequences of unfaithfulness. This is Satan in eternity past. This is Shebna in Isaiah 22 during the days of Hezekiah.

This is the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus who first is sacrificial and is faithful unto death. And for this reason, God has raised him, elevated him and given him a name above every name so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. Yeah, this notion that we have seen of someone bowing at the feet of those who have been faithful as the Lord Jesus was faithful and will rule with him as the Lord Jesus will rule.

So this is why Jesus doesn't picture himself as having the key of heaven or the key of the

kingdom. It is the key of David. And interestingly, when he references the temple of my God and the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven, we know about this and take it for granted because we've read the last three chapters of Revelation.

It is in 21 and 22 that you see the city coming down out of heaven and being described. And the Lord Jesus is aware of the fact that this is a book that will be read and reread, will be heard and heard again and heard again. Once you get to the end and see this city coming down out of heaven, there's been no previous reference to a city coming down out of heaven, but it's referenced here.

And this is 20 chapters ahead of where that event is described in detail. So you can see that this book from beginning to end assumes that it will be studied as an entirety, as a whole, and not taken in isolation. So he says, I've set before you an open door and no one can shut it.

You have a little strength, have kept my word, and have not denied my name. Faithfulness makes it possible for the Lord Jesus to place before us great potentials. I can't help but anticipate what's coming up in chapter four.

You can flip the page. And after we see the church in Laodicea, that letter, that message, and we have completed the letters to the seven churches, notice what it says in chapter four, verse one. After these things, I looked.

This is John, who is in exile for faithfulness and testimony and witness to the Lord Jesus. And behold, a door opened in heaven. Who is it that has the key of David and can create open doors? John is faithful.

John has followed instructions exactly. He didn't expect anything special to happen. As far as he knows, up until you get to chapter four, the Lord Jesus is dictating messages to give to the churches he's familiar with in Asia.

But after this, he is suddenly in the spirit. Here is this door open in heaven. He's faithful on earth.

There's an open door in heaven. If you don't remember anything else from this morning, our faithfulness, without having a specific promise, without knowing exactly what the details are of the overcomer promises being fulfilled, we have them in something of a cryptic form. We have these symbolic representations.

When Jesus says, I will write my name on you as a pillar in the temple and those who are faithful and become those pillars will never go out. Well, if you took that literally, if I get stuck in the temple as a pillar and I'm there as a big sign with three names on me, how am I gonna enjoy access to the new Jerusalem? How will I dwell in it? How will I go down and pick fruit off of the tree of life and drink water from the river of life? And how will I enjoy all of those wonderful benefits and sights and visions and experiences if I'm stuck in the temple as I'm a big granite or marble pillar, well, that's no fun. Well, obviously this is a metaphor that means that you will

forever be a witness, a testimony to the grace of God, to the fulfillment of all of the promises that will come to pass in eternity future in the new Jerusalem and a reflection of the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

These names being written, this is of course a metaphor. You're not going to actually be some sort of roof support in a physical temple, but the temple is the place of the worship of God. And those who approach God will be aware of those who were faithful in life and have moved into that realm of blessing and fulfillment and future opportunity.

That's what these names represent. Anytime someone looks at us in the eternal future, if we are this kind of overcomer, they will be reminded of the grace and the power and the beauty of God, the Father, of the grace and the power and the beauty of the new Jerusalem, which reflects God's character and God's faithfulness and the permanence of his rewards and the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Those three names written, anytime someone chooses to come and worship the Lord, these faithful individuals will be testimonials as pillars in the temple, the place of worship.

So what an opportunity to be that fulfillment. It's hard for us to grasp because these are things in dimensions above and beyond what our earthworm mind can comprehend. We trust that when language is strained to communicate to us the wonder and the beauty of these opportunities, that whatever it is, it is beyond imagination and it is something we will very much want to qualify for.

So this is what is given to those who are faithful, those who, as Jesus says, have a little strength, don't have to have a lot of strength, don't have to perfectly meet every test, but if we fail, by God's grace, through God's strength and provision, we pick ourselves up. We confess our sins. We allow him to cleanse us.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from sin so that we become those who wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the lamb. You have a little strength. You have kept my word and have not denied my name.

I cannot tell you the multiplication of throwing over Christian faith that is going on as we speak. This deconstruct, reconstruct, the Bible's not inspired. Jesus was a nice guy and had some words of wisdom and you don't even wanna know what is being said about the book of Revelation and I've surveyed the most recent 15 or 20 books that have been written about Revelation.

There are a few that are wonderful, faithful commentaries, but I found three out of 20. The rest of them deny that Revelation ought to be in the canon. It's not inspired.

Jesus never said these things. This was John. He was mad at the Roman empire and Jesus would never be this person.

He would never say these things because Jesus was all about non-violence and non-

judgmentalism and that he would never perpetrate judgments that resulted in the death of vast quantities of people and they want Jesus to remain the slain lamb, the one who came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many. They want to keep Jesus in the box of his first coming and they don't want him to come back as the mighty God to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given for judgment and to reward those who are faithful and to judge those who are unrepentant, who resist and oppose and to cleanse and purge creation of those elements that are inherently and viciously unrepentant. So no one can shut.

You have a little strength. You've kept my word. You have not denied my name and these who are in the synagogue of Satan, of course, synagogue speaks of these who have a form of godliness, but deny its power.

This is religion. So he says in verse 11, I am coming quickly. This follows verse 10.

You have kept my command to persevere because you have kept, you have guarded, you have valued this command. You have preserved it to be patient, to stick with it. It's not easy to stick with it.

We are pulled in so many different directions. We don't always see a cause and effect result. Well, you know, I went to Bible class on Sunday and look at how blessed I am on Monday.

We don't always see that. And it is a choice. We choose to believe in the onslaught of negative feedback, of criticism, of denial of scripture, denial of God, denial of Christ, denial of values that have formerly characterized our society and our culture.

Everyone throwing those over and saying, I have a better way, the pull of short-term gratification. It's hard to persevere, but to those who persevere, the Lord Jesus says there is a test that is coming upon the entire earth. It is a trial.

It is a tribulation. And it is gonna test everyone on the earth. You have already demonstrated that you can be faithful in the face of adversity, hardship, lack of personal gratification.

You keep going because you love God and you trust Him, not because He's bribing you with blessings or encouraging you with more and more carrots and fewer and fewer sticks. We know whom we have believed, like Paul. We are persuaded that he's able to keep what we have committed unto him against that future day.

We will stick with it and persevere because we know God, we believe God, we trust God, we love God. And for no other reason, bank account may not get any bigger, hardships and trials, sufferings of various kinds may not be ameliorated or diminish, doesn't matter. I am motivated by hope of that future time when my faith will be vindicated, I will be closer to God in and through the Lord Jesus Christ and that's what I want, that's what I want.

I love God. When you love something or someone, you wanna be close to it, you wanna be

interacting with it, you want to have fellowship with those whom you love and you hope that this is reciprocal love, one another love. You can't beat it, but we have to see beyond.

The carnal mind cannot understand the things of the spirit, they're spiritually discerned and we have to be spiritual people. And that's what the people in Philadelphia were. You have not given in to the synagogue of Satan, those who say they're right and you're wrong, they have a better way, they're fueled by Satan.

Look around at the things that are going on in the news and the socialistic, communistic, far left radical ideas that impugn and viciously attack traditional Judeo-Christian values that are sourced and rooted in the Bible itself. It's heinous and it is designed by Satan to deflect, to distract, to deceive those who are trying to please God. That's what's going on.

If we recognize that, we will persevere. You have a little strength, you have kept my word, you have not denied my name. I don't care what people say about the veracity of the Bible, I don't care if people say you Christians are responsible for all of the bad things that have happened in history and now, you all are in the way, you're a thorn in the flesh and a stick in the mud and a drag on progress.

We do not deny his name. I am not just a Christian, I am privileged to be a Christian. I counted an honor to bear the name of Jesus Christ and you're not gonna get me to put it under a bushel, to deny it, to pretend like I'm not.

And you have seen in recent days with those who have been vocal Christians and have suffered, in some cases, an ultimate price for it, have inspired others to be more vocal about their faith. Don't be abashed, don't be ashamed, don't decide that, well, I will not be someone who's got a name written on me. If we do not deny his name, he's gonna write his name on us for all eternity.

Do you see the connection here in Philadelphia? This is the reward. So I will keep you from the hour of trial. There's a wonderful study that you can do on the difference between an hour and a day in scripture.

A day references a longer period of time. This makes common sense to us. So the day of the Lord comprehends at least seven years.

The hour of the Lord's return is an event, a specific happening within that period. So you have, for example, I'll give you this real quickly. In the Old Testament, a day would be a period or a time of either judgment or blessing, a season where God is fulfilling a specific purpose.

So you have the day of the Lord. Here's a couple of representative passages. As you know, there's just dozens of these, but look at Isaiah 13, verse six, Joel 2, verse one, Amos 5, 18.

In that day, over and over again in the prophets, Isaiah 2, verse 20, Isaiah 4, verse one, Isaiah 10, verse 20. We don't have to look these up. You're familiar.

And you find this as well in the New Testament. So the day of judgment is mentioned in Matthew 10, 15, or second Peter chapter two, verse nine. The day of Christ, Paul mentions it in Philippians chapter one, verse six and verse 10.

You have the day of wrath in Romans two, verse five. Remember that Romans chapter two, after chapter one, those who suppress the truth and unrighteousness and God turns them over. And you, oh man, in chapter two, what's going to happen in the day of wrath? Are you one of those who by patient continuance and well-doing seeks for glory and honor and immortality, or are you going to fall under judgment? There is the day of salvation, second Corinthians chapter six, verse two.

And you remember the introductory chapters in Hebrews where you have the day of deliverance. An hour by contrast is often a climactic turning point. It is a happening within a day.

Then there is a moment, there is a short period where everything changes. So Jesus uses this frequently in the gospel of John. Well, you can't believe, nobody thinks the apostle John wrote Revelation.

And the more I studied, the more convinced I am that he totally did. Probably used a different amanuensis because he is in a divinely inspired trance, if you will. He is in the spirit and he is verbally describing what he sees.

And I think there is amanuensis frantically writing down as John describes in real time, his vision. Someone is trying to write that down and it's shorthand, it's quick. He doesn't have time to sit and contemplate fine points of Greek grammar and try to pick.

He's writing as fast as he can scribble while John details what he is seeing in the spirit. And people would say, well, John couldn't have written it. Look at the difference in style.

Look at the difference in situation. John had time to craft the gospel of John from his memories and to select the seven signs under the inspiration of the spirit, of course. But he's got time to smooth that out.

And to, these are written that you may believe, but this vision, can you imagine trying to get this all down in real time as it is being viewed, all of the details? And they say, oh, the Greek in Revelation is just terrible. Well, please, you claim that you go back and judge things in terms of history and context and the first audience of the day. Well, why don't you do that and understand that that is a complete explanation for why the style is a little different.

The hour, my hour has not yet come. John 2, verse four. Chapter two, wedding feast of Cana, talking to his mother.

John 7, verse 30. John 8, verse 20. My hour has not yet come.

Then later on in the very same gospel, the hour has come. John 12, 23. John 13, verse one.

John 17, verse one. So the hour has not yet come. If you're writing these down, John 2, four.

John 7, 30. And John 8, 20. The hour has come, John 12, 23.

John 13, one. And John 17, one. It is enough to know that in the earlier phase of Jesus' ministry, his hour had not yet come.

The day of his appearing comprehends everything from the birth in Bethlehem to his ascension from the Mount of Olives. That's the day of the first advent, the first coming. His second coming will be the day of the Lord and it comprehends over seven years.

So Jesus' hour, what's involved in that hour? It spans some time. It's not a literal 60 minute hour, but it includes his betrayal by Judas, his arrest by the religious authorities, his trials most of the night, his beatings, his mistreatment, scourging, crown of thorns, blindfolding him, beating him, pulling out his beard. Who touched? Doesn't say pulling out the beard.

That's assumed from the prophecies of how he would be treated in the Old Testament. His death, his resurrection, and his glorification. That is the hour that had come.

And of course, what is the purpose of that hour? It isn't abuse and mistreatment of the Lord Jesus. Its purpose is through suffering, through sacrifice, to demonstrate God's love, to demonstrate the heinous severity of sin. Those who don't like the judgment that is pictured in Revelation or indeed in much of the Old Testament, how could Jesus be named for Joshua when he went in and wiped out man, woman, and child, just slew everything in sight, killed little babies? That can't be God.

That was a misunderstanding. Somebody didn't know what God was talking about. Not at all.

There is a message in that. Is God just cruel and heartless and delights in shedding blood? It is a reflection of how serious sin is. Those who resist the notion of judgment in Scripture resist the idea that sin is any big deal.

Look at the consequences. Look at the severity of judgment on sin. The punishment fits the crime, right? You commit a misdemeanor, you get a traffic ticket, you send them \$150, and the ticket's over with.

Crime, punishment. You murder somebody, that's a much bigger deal. If the judgment is severe, instead of saying, well, this can't be God, he doesn't fit my definition of what God is, I want the gentle Jesus with a child in his lap and with self-denial, and we will conquer by passive non-participation and so on, this is man's notion.

This is the devil's lie. God has said, Eve, that in the day you eat the rave, you will not die. God knows that you'll be wise, you'll be like him.

You can make God-like decisions and judgments if you eat this fruit. There's no big consequence, it'll be a plus. It's the devil's lie, it's the first lie.

You'll know as much as God. You can decide whether or not you agree with God. You will not die.

Consequence is not that severe. Watch out. Millions of books have been sold in the last 20, 25 years, reinterpreting revelation to take away the power of the description of the judgments of God.

Believe it. It is the inspired word of God. It has come through the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

And as such, we will be kept from the hour, the event, when others in the world are brought as close as God can bring them to a point of repentance, God will do whatever he has to do. He has already demonstrated his love in the sacrificial coming of the Lord Jesus. If you're not persuaded, if you're not drawn by the expression of God's love, will you be persuaded and drawn by the expression of his wrath? That's what revelation is.

Do you notice how many times we will see it? Despite all of these judgments, they did not repent. They did not change their mind. Romans chapter one, God gives them over and they still do not repent.

Someone could make the argument, well, all you did was try to attract me with love. If you had showed me some of the severity of the judgment, I would have changed my mind. God is proving that that is not the case.

The first coming, love. The second coming, judgment. That is the day of the Lord.

And there is an hour of trial, hour of testing comes on the whole earth. If you've already demonstrated that you persevere in the face of opposition, criticism, puerile, vicious, insensitive criticism and judgment, you persevere, you hold fast to his name and don't deny it. You don't need that trial.

And Jesus says, I will keep you from it. You don't have to go through that. You've already showed that you can pass that test.

You don't need to be tested again. I would rather pass the test now than face the test that the whole world is gonna undergo because it's gonna be much more severe. What will it take to convince you? And God will keep turning up the heat on those judgments.

You notice seals, trumpets, we assume the thunders and the bulls increase in severity as they go. What will it take to get you to change? And ultimately nothing works. So hour versus day, a lot we could say about that, but our life is a day.

We have a morning, we have a day, the sun sets in the evening, that's our life. There is an hour of testing. There is an hour of trial.

We succeed now, we don't need another hour. Interesting to go back and think about the 10 days in Smyrna. But having said that, this is the promise to Philadelphia.

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. When we come back from the break, we will start the seventh and final letter that the Lord Jesus authors to the church at Laodicea.