

Rev 26-02-25a

Greetings fellow members of Grace and Truth Bible Church and other interested parties who love to study the Word of God and dig deep into its truth and receive the blessings of fellowship in it. This is the 25th of February 2026. We're in Revelation chapter 12 and we're continuing our study of the unfolding judgments that began with the seals.

We are now at the end of the angels who sound the trumpets and we will see the introduction of seven personages in this final section of the trumpets. Let's ask God's blessing on our fellowship and study and we'll begin. Father we are so thankful for the nutrition, the nourishment, the strength, the encouragement that comes from your Word.

We thank you for its preservation. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ who authors it, who embodies it, who delivers it to us and nowhere more fruitfully and clearly than in this final communication that he entrusted through the angel to his servant John. We thank you for the privilege of studying together and we ask your blessing upon us as we do so.

May the Holy Spirit find us ready pupils, interested and able to retain what we see and learn so that we can apply it and be more thoroughly equipped for every good work. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

Let's read our passage. There's a lot to say. I am fascinated by the two witnesses.

We've talked about them many times previously. I will just leave you with one final thought and this has to do with that which issues forth from their mouths. You remember that the mouth is a symbol for the spoken word and this is going to recur again in our passage tonight.

So it's worth reinforcing our understanding of this. But you remember that as they prophesied, if anyone wants to harm them in chapter 11 verse 5, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. They do not devour their enemies.

They do not swing a sword. They don't bend a bow. They don't throw a spear.

They don't thrust with a javelin. They don't ride around in a chariot slaying those who oppose them. All they do is speak the truth.

And this is helpful to us. A word fitly spoken, Proverbs tells us, is apples of gold in pictures of silver. The power is in the word.

This is true in so many different venues. We attend church. We listen to Bible teachers, hopefully faithful Bible teachers, but the power and the authority is not in the teacher.

It's in the message itself. To the extent that the truth is proclaimed, that it is communicated, that it is taken in and absorbed as John eats this little scroll, the power is in the word. The word of God is alive and powerful.

So as the word issues forth from the mouths of these witnesses, it is the word that is a flame that devours. And we can't help but think of Jeremiah 23, 29, is not my word as a fire, saith the Lord, and a hammer that breaketh the rocks in pieces. I like to quote it in the King James.

And you recall that in the book of James, on the bad side, you can also have not God's fire, not holy fire, but strange fire, evil fire, and destructive fire. And this is James 3, 6. We saw this in our James study. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body.

And it is helpful really to read that entire context talking about the tongue, because it reminds me of a poem that I saw in a graveyard. I was riding my bicycle one time through a cemetery when I was a Marine at Fort Sill, not a lot to do on a Saturday. Rode my 15-speed bike into the cemetery, and I came across a grave marker.

And there was a little short poem on it. And it intrigued me. I just looked it up this past week and found out who wrote it.

It was a guy that wrote it about 120-odd years ago. And it was part of New Thought and so on. But here's the gist of it.

Mind is the master power that molds and makes. And man is mind. And evermore he takes the tool of thought, and shaping what he wills, brings forth a thousand joys or a thousand ills.

What we think can either bring a thousand joys or a thousand ills, depending on how we use the tool of thought. It's the same with almost any tool, including most recently our discussions about artificial intelligence. It's a tool.

It can permit great accomplishment. It can enable great productivity. But it can also be a tremendous weapon of evil.

The tongue is the original of this. And if you read James chapter 3, not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. Sobering thought.

I had to chew on this a good while before I decided to leave the Marine Corps and take a different path. We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he's a perfect man, able to control his whole body.

When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can guide the whole animal. Consider ships as well. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot is inclined.

In case you're wondering, I'm reading this from the Berean Standard Bible, just so it will strike our ear a bit more freshly. In the same way, in the same way as the horses with bridles, in the same way as the ships with rudders, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it boasts of great things. Consider how small a spark sets a great forest ablaze.

The tongue also is a fire, a world of wickedness among the parts of the body. It pollutes the whole person, sets the course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, but no man can tame the tongue.

It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With the tongue we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing.

My brothers, this should not be. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? My brothers, can a fig tree grow olives or a grapevine bear figs? Notice that in those two plant illustrations, figs are there both times because James is writing to a Jewish Christian audience, and you know what figs in the fig tree represent biblically. It's all about Israel.

In the same way, neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good conduct, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. You look around at the world today, what is being said, the hate, the vindictiveness, and the bitterness that is being expressed with the tongue, and it's not done in humility.

And I am scared when I see people so convinced that they are right, that they're not susceptible to correction, or to refinement of understanding, or to hearing the other side. And even if you don't change your mind in principle, to be better informed, and to develop answers for legitimate objections, and valid problems that are pointed out, so that there can be an area of common ground where even people who have a different understanding can unite. Our country used to have a greater degree of common ground.

It seems to be shrinking to the point that the two circles in the Venn diagram are separate altogether. But how can we know? You can't trust the thing that says I am right, because everybody's got it, and it is pegged at a hundred for people that are diametrically opposite in their beliefs from you or me. So the sense that we are right can't be trusted.

So how do I know I am right? There are two sides of this coin. One is, where is the word of the Lord? Be a Berean. I think it's Acts 17 or somewhere in there, where the Bereans were searching the scriptures to see if these things were so.

It is the scripture. It is an outside source that is a benchmark, a valid measure of what is true and what is right. There are different interpretations of the word of God, but that's where we ask and seek and knock and cultivate the ministry of the Spirit.

The Pharisees had the word, but they twisted it and abused it because they had an agenda, and they didn't have the second part of the equation, which is humility. I once heard humility defined as teachability. Am I willing to calm down instead of reacting against a point of view that I disagree with or a person I disagree with and have the self-discipline and the humility to

bridle my tongue? Sometimes you use the bridle to stop the horse altogether, right? It's not necessarily time to gallop or even trot, certainly not go to a breakneck speed and end up having your horse stop and get thrown.

Bridle the tongue, have the discipline to hold our tongue and listen, formulate an ironic response to be a source of peace, not a source of conflict. We certainly do not compromise on the essentials of the faith. We can have righteous indignation when there is rebellion.

There is the sin of the high hand. There are those who are Satan's own minions, wittingly or unwittingly. There is a time and a place for vocal strident opposition.

That's what these two witnesses will do. But you will notice John consumed the little scroll first, and he was given a commission to prophesy. So, as individuals, and without such a commission, we want to be careful.

We want to be characterized by humility. Humility. Jesus said, I am meek and lowly in heart.

He knew when it was time to cleanse the temple with a whip of cords. He knew when it was time to sit by the seaside or on the side of a hill and present truth for the taking. Truth on offer.

And that truth is God's word. Is not my word like a fire, saith the Lord, and like a hammer? Let that hammer break the rocks in pieces. Let that fire do away with that which characterizes the enemy, their arguments, their positions, their priorities, their agenda.

So, back here to our side passage in James 3, we are to show wisdom and understanding. This is verse 13 of chapter 3 of James. Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it.

We should be examples. If someone says, let me think about the people I know. Who is wise? Who really has understanding? Wouldn't it be wonderful if people who know us would come up with our name? I have to tell you, of the people I know, fill in your name here.

They're really wise and understanding. I can talk to them. I can listen to them.

Because they're characterized by humility. They're not pushy. They're not judgy.

They're not abrasive. They're not corrosive. They're not bilious.

You don't give them a topic and you got to sit back for 15 minutes and listen to them obloviolate. Who is wise and understanding? Let him show it by his good conduct, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. If you're understanding, genuinely so, be characterized by humility.

If you harbor bitter jealousy, selfish ambition in your hearts, and this bitter attitude and selfish ambition, the ambition is, I want to silence the people that don't agree with me. They are so clearly wrong. They are so obviously mistaken.

They are harming. They are setting back. They are corroding and eroding everything that I hold dear.

So my selfish ambition is to stuff them back into their can, to put them back into the box that Pandora sprung out of. If you harbor bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, don't boast in it. Do not deny the truth.

And it's so easy to be personally invested in an argument or a conversation or a conflict of positions. We take it personally and the discussion goes radically north. That's what we say in the South.

Such wisdom, verse 15, does not come from above. The kind of quote-unquote wisdom that makes ourselves an issue and ends up denying the truth, that doesn't come from above. It is earthly, unspiritual, and, wait for it, demonic.

Demonic. That lack of self-discipline on our part and politics and world events and social issues are Satan's own trap. It is a trap and a snare.

It's well camouflaged. You can be sitting there with peace and sparrows tweeting and all is well. Something comes up and we are immediately tempted to go off.

Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist. I'm jealous because you people have a platform and are standing on a box and you're making your policies happen. You're getting yourselves elected and changing the laws and the times and you're costing me money and so many other things, costing me my peace of mind, destroying what I hold dear and what some of us wore a uniform to fight for.

It's annoying almost beyond our ability to constrain ourselves. But that's jealousy and selfish ambition. That's exactly what James is talking about here.

Keep in mind now we're in Revelation, but we are talking about what issues forth from the mouth. We have to bridle our tongue. There is a time and a place for God's fire to issue forth, and there are people who are commissioned to do so.

This is your job. Eat the scroll, stand in the square, and if anyone opposes you, the fire will come forth. The fire will do the consuming.

The witnesses do not take up arms and slay their enemies. The fire does it. It's God's own fire.

God's word is the fire. And it is a hammer. And when you think that there's intransigence and people who will not listen and cannot be convinced, there is only one power on this earth that can do so, and it is the word of God.

Don't rely on historical arguments, experiential arguments. This is what I have observed. I am an eyewitness to the failure of this policy.

Can't you see? Don't you know? Appeals to logic. Let me point out the fallacy. Let me point out what you're not talking about.

It's the word of God. If you genuinely care about someone and your reason for discussing with them is you want them to come out of darkness into the light, you want to help them reach a place of blessing and fruitfulness and closer relationship with God through Christ, there's only one way to do it. God's word is a fire and a hammer that can break those rocks in pieces.

And the first place it to hack and burn and smash rocks is my own soul. I don't have any business. And again, it's a sobering responsibility to be in a position to communicate the word of God.

It has to have burnt and hammered the communicator first. Or it is blatant hypocrisy and pharisaical and will come under the condemnation that the Lord Jesus pronounced on the Pharisees. And you want to talk about scary.

There's nothing more sobering than coming under the condemnation from the lips of the Lord Jesus himself for being a whitewashed tombstone. All of us as believers are witnesses. We are the body of Christ.

We are here representing him. And the point of the spear in our witness and our presence and the light that we shine from God is what we say. It is the tongue.

And you see that truth reflected from Genesis to Revelation. And we see it in our passage here. Where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, James 3.16, there will be disorder and every evil practice.

And unbridled tongues are wrecking our world. And the last thing we want to do is chime in and be another source of destruction. The wisdom from above, this is James 3.17. The wisdom from above is first of all, pure.

We don't adulterate it with emotion, with attitude, with let me shout it louder and it will make more sense to you. Wisdom from above is first of all, pure. Then, peace loving.

It's pure truth. And I'm aiming for peace. I am using the diplomatic solution before God's judgment comes.

I'm suing for peace. Blessed are those who strive for peace. Jesus said, Matthew 5. Pure, peace loving, gentle, accommodating, full of mercy and good fruit.

When you come away from a conversation, are you shaking your head saying, just totally got away from me again. I said things I shouldn't have said. There's anger.

There's a split. That didn't go well at all. The fruit of good conversation is purity, peace, gentleness, accommodation.

It's not my place to judge. Let me give you some truth and I'll let the Holy Spirit hammer away at your heart and your mind and the path that you are on. Let the Holy Spirit do his work.

It's very similar with his convicting ministry for those who aren't saved. Full of mercy and good fruit, impartial. I'm not on a mission to win you to my side and get your vote or your support or whatever.

Impartial and genuine, sincere, aiming for what is highest and best. Finally, last verse in James 3, verse 18, peacemakers who sow in peace reap the fruit of righteousness. Isn't that something? We lay hold of righteousness by faith.

We also reap the fruit of righteousness by being those who plant the seeds of peace. Plant the seeds of peace. There's a measure for a conversation.

If it turns into politics or social issues or, you know, very closely held opinions about almost anything, have we planted the seeds of peace? Those seeds have to have the eternal life that is in the word of God. Well, back to our passage. This is what we mean when we're talking about that which issues forth from the mouth.

So I wanted to review that from the witnesses. And there is a time and they end up being destroyed by their opponents when God's very carefully designated time of their testimony is complete. They are killed and they don't fight to the death.

Their enemies make war against them, overcome them and kill them. And in the realm of conversation and witness, there are those who will not listen, who will never pursue peace themselves. They will use your words as an occasion to attack you.

They will go ad hominem and attack you personally, question your integrity, your morals, your smarts, your ancestry, your very existence on the planet. How can you live on stolen land and this sort of thing? Completely, wildly illogical, nonsensical, radical, extreme. And in the social sense, you are dead to them.

You are a hopeless case. They will kill you in terms of we're having no further conduct conversation. You're hopeless.

I know who you voted for. I know the positions you support. I have no truck with you.

You're dead. But you had a time of testimony. God determines the length.

And when you get killed, let it be. God will resurrect you as a witness in his own good time and way. They didn't try to resurrect each other.

One of them didn't die first and the other ones get in the paddles, pounding on the chest, clear chunk and trying to. When you're done, you're done. And we need to know we're done.

Let God determine the time of the resuscitation, the revival, the renewal of any witness we may

have. So there's wonderful application in these future happenings. These are not simply fables.

They're not aphoristic stories. This is really going to happen. But it is given to us in language that allows us not only to anticipate future events, which we will see.

But also, as with the Old Testament, as with the New Testament witness, the narratives to make application in our own lives, because the principles are timeless. God's word is eternal. The grass withers, the flower fades, the word of God abides forever.

But this is going to help us understand chapter 12. So after the resurrection of the witnesses and the great earthquake, 10th of the city falls in verse 13 of chapter 11. In the earthquake, 7,000 people, 7,000 names, you remember last time? These are people that are known.

These are celebrities. You see what happens if one celebrity has an event in their life. They get killed by their son, or their mother gets kidnapped, or something else that's been in the recent news.

It's around the world with electrified interest on the part of all. 7,000 names are going to die when these witnesses are raised. And you get the idea that, again, if you understand this, and I think it can be both literal and figurative at the same time, but all of these that come out and completely condemn and explain away the witnesses and their message, when these witnesses are raised back up and ascend to glory in the sight of everyone, 7,000 well-known people die.

7,000 names. And interestingly, one of the places you find this same number is when God is talking to Elijah, and Elijah says, I'm all alone. There's no one left.

And God says, I have 7,000 who have not bowed the knee to Baal. God's got his 7,000. They are going to live.

They are going to raise. They are going to enjoy the fruits and the benefits of the millennial kingdom. These 7,000 that have been speaking for Satan and his agenda, slain.

Interesting. Second woe is passed. Third woe is coming quickly.

Seventh angel sounded, verse 15, Revelation 11. There were loud voices in heaven saying, the kingdom singular of this world has become that of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever. Now, we're going to see several times in this section, including what we have just seen, that this is not a chronological presentation.

John is viewing things from a heavenly perspective, and time isn't the dominant way that issues and events are sorted or settled. There is an element of back and forth in terms of time, and we're going to see it here shortly. But when the seventh angel sounds, it says, the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever.

The next verse doesn't say, and behold, the throne of David descended out of heaven and

landed in Jerusalem, and the Lamb, as it had been slain, sat down upon it and wielded the iron scepter, and lo, he began to reign. This is a point in time where it says, the kingdom of which Satan has been the ruler, the kingdom that he offered the Lord Jesus during the temptations in the wilderness, has become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ. Our Lord is God the Father.

His Christ is the Lord Jesus, and there has been a transfer of the kingdom of darkness. It has now been conquered, taken, overcome, and belongs to the Father. He is taking it back, and his son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is going to rule over it.

But where are we in the book of Revelation? We're only halfway through, and the seventh angel has not yet sounded his trumpet. If it's all about the kingdom, and the kingdom has been won and now belongs to the Father and his Christ, well, put a period in it. Bring down the new Jerusalem.

Let's finish up. Notice that there are things that are true materially so, factually so, and yet are not chronologically so from a human perspective. I'll give you another example of this very quickly.

This is actually something we were going to look at in the future, but the Lord Jesus says in Luke 10:18, I saw Satan fall like lightning. Did Satan fall at the point that Jesus sent his disciples out to witness? Did he fall in the past when there was rebellion in heaven, and he perpetrated the five I-wills, and he was cast down to the earth, and Adam and Eve certainly met him in the garden in the form of the serpent? Is he going to be cast out in the future as we're going to see in the next chapter? But Jesus says, I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning, and that's what's coming up in our chapter 12, where the fiery red dragon in heaven, in chapter 12 verse 3, tail draws a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. The dragon stands before the woman.

The woman flees, and there's war in heaven in verse 7, and in verse 9, the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old called the devil and Satan who deceives the whole world. He was cast to earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Great dead seas of ink have been deployed in commentary.

When did Satan fall, or when will Satan fall, or to what extent does he fall in eternity past, at the beginning of human history, at the point that the Lord Jesus is on the earth, at this future point during the tribulation? Did he fall? Has he fallen? Will he fall? Yes. The answer is simply yes. It is a reminder to us that we are time-bound and our perspective is limited.

We need to be aware and not try to impose our earthworm perspective on things. John 16:11, when the Holy Spirit comes, he will convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment, of sin, because they believe not in me, righteousness, because I go to the Father, of judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. Jesus hasn't gone to the cross yet in John 16.

At what point did he now stand condemned? These are things that are heavenly judgments and take place outside of time. If there's one single verse that sums this up as well as any, and we can talk about our already not yet salvation, we are saved and we have eternal life, but we do not yet fully experience it, there are phases, there is a process. What God does is often a process.

You look at John 12, 31, and if there's a single verse to put out beside Revelation 12, it is John 12, 31, where the Lord Jesus, in context, is speaking to his disciples and predicting his death. In verse 23, the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a seed.

Now my soul is troubled, verse 27. What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? No, it is for this purpose that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.

Then a voice came from heaven. Talk about anticipating the revelation. I more and more believe that John, if he hadn't already written it, I think he wrote the gospel of John when he was told by the Lord Jesus, write the things which you have seen at the beginning of our study in Revelation.

A voice came from heaven. I have glorified it and will glorify it again. God's name.

The crowd standing heard it and said it had thundered. Others said an angel had spoken to him. In response, Jesus said this, this sound, this voice was not for my benefit, but yours.

Now judgment is upon this world. Now the prince of this world will be cast out. Now, circa A.D. 27, what does the Lord Jesus mean by now? What did Paul think when he expected the return of the Lord Jesus and lived in that light and said, you need to be ready for the return.

We have to elevate our perspective in that sense. So in chapter 11, as we conclude the seventh angel sounds in verse 15, there are voices in heaven. The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.

He shall reign forever and ever. It's an already not yet statement as with so many others in scripture. The 24 elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worship God saying, and look at what they say.

Remember they fell on their faces and worshiped once before. And at that point, they celebrated creation. This was in chapter four, verse 11, you are worthy, our Lord and God to receive glory, honor, and power for you created all things.

And by your will, they existed and were created. They then sing a new song in chapter five. You're worthy to take the scrolls, talking to the lamb, take the scroll and open its seals for you were slain and have redeemed them to God by your blood out of every tribe, tongue, people, and nation, and have made them Kings and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth.

So in the previous two celebratory songs in which the 24 elders participate, they celebrate God, the father as creator. They celebrate God, the son as the redeemer. You can talk about the father and the son, they are united in these activities, but is redemption in that one.

What are they celebrating this time? In verse 17, the one who is and who was and is to come because you have taken your great power and reigned. Redemption was in the last song they sang in chapter five. Now it is reigning.

Now is the time of the kingdom. We are in the redemption phase. There's people that want kingdom now.

And we're kingdom people doing kingdom work and King Jesus, this and King Jesus, that they don't know what spirit we are of. We are in the redemptive phase. We are living under the blood of the lamb as it had been slain.

We are washing our robes and making them white. We are living and breathing in humility and in wisdom. This is not the time of warfare and confrontation.

This is not the time to build the kingdom, take the kingdom, work in the kingdom, praise the King. We praise our redeemer. We celebrate our redemption.

Now there is a time coming for the kingdom, but it is not yet. And all of this kingdom talk is Satan going up the works by distracting people with something they can't yet attain or participate in. This is not the time of the kingdom.

The nations were angry and your wrath has come in the time of the dead that they should be judged and that you should reward your servants, the prophets, the saints, those who fear your name, small and great, and will destroy those who destroy the earth. Let God do the destruction. We don't need to destroy their position.

We don't need to destroy them with arguments. We don't need to destroy their politics or their social issues, wisdom, humility, and peace. Time to pause and take our break.

Certainly wonderful application here as we move into chapter 12 and that's where we will resume when we return.