

Rev 26-04-01a

Good evening, this is Grace and Truth Bible Church on a Wednesday night, it's the 1st of April, 2026. We continue our study in the book of Revelation. We are in the early portion of chapter 15.

We also have a short special incorporated into our study tonight in reference to this being Passion Week or the run up to Resurrection Sunday. It happens that our study coincides with truths that pertain to this particular time, the culminating week of the Lord Jesus' ministry. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and we will begin.

Father, thank you for another opportunity to be built up and edified by the spiritual gifts that you have distributed in our midst. The iron that sharpens iron, the support that we receive in intercessory prayer, the joy of fellowship with believers of like mind. We pray that as we look at your word this evening, that the Holy Spirit will superintend, overcome the limitations of the presentation and any distractions or complications that may arise in the administration or reception of the message.

May all of us be found by the Holy Spirit to be teachable and those who will benefit and have our minds renewed by what we see in your word tonight. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen. The book of Revelation, as you know, is often misunderstood, misinterpreted.

It is misjudged. It is said to be syntactically and morphologically awkward. It is accused of having barbarisms and solacisms, poor grammar, that it's a rip-off of Jewish apocalyptic literature, that there were other apocalypses that were better, but this one was chosen because they saw an anti-Roman polemic in it and so on.

I just want to point out that Revelation is beautifully constructed. It reminds me of Isaiah 53, verse two. Anytime you hear criticisms of the form of Revelation, its text, its composition, its structure, just remember Isaiah 53, verse two.

For he grew up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness. And when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

The Lord Jesus didn't come wrapped in attractive packaging to draw attention to himself or produce a following for the wrong reasons. Quite the opposite. We're going to see one of the most significant examples of that in our study tonight.

But Revelation is beautifully constructed. We have seen the sevens that are involved and looking at the Lord Jesus as Christ, our Passover, sacrificed for us, especially this week, anticipating resurrection Sunday. There is intentionality.

There is an inspired beauty and structure in the book of Revelation. For example, you know that there are sevens in this book, and I'll give you a list. I can't give you all the passages.

It would take up the whole first session. You can find these if you look for them. If it just has one or two passages, two references, I'll supply it.

Of course, there are seven churches, Revelation 2 and 3. There are seven spirits, Revelation 1, 4, Revelation 3, 1. Seven candlesticks or lampstands in chapter 1, verse 12. Seven stars, Revelation 1, 16. There are seven lamps or torches before God's throne in Revelation 4, 5. Seven seals, Revelation 5 and 6. There are seven horns and seven eyes associated with the lamb in Revelation 5, verse 6. Seven angels.

These are referenced time and again, Revelation chapter 8, verse 2, 8, 6. We've seen it in our current chapter, chapter 15, verse 1, verse 6, verse 7, verse 8. We'll see them occur again in Revelation chapter 16, verse 1. These are the bowl or vial judgment angels, 17, 1, 21, 9. Seven trumpets. These of course are the angels sounding trumpets in Revelation chapter 8. Seven thunders in chapter 10. We saw in verse 3 and verse 4. There are 7,000 men who are slain in one of the judgments in Revelation chapter 11, verse 13.

The beast, the dragon himself, both have seven heads. Revelation 12, 3, 13, 1. We'll see this again in chapter 17, three different times. There are seven crowns on those heads in Revelation 12, 3. Seven plagues, Revelation 15, our chapter.

And again in 21, 9, there are seven bowls in our chapter, also chapter 17 and chapter 21. There are seven mountains on which the woman sits, Revelation 17. Seven kings associated with the mystery Babylon and the beast on which she rides.

There are other things that if you count them in Revelation, they occur seven times. These are less obvious. The word earthquake occurs seven times.

God's prophets are mentioned seven times. The word blessed, seven times. Christ's sword that issues from his mouth is mentioned seven times.

The word sharp is used seven times, often in conjunction with the sword. The lampstands, lampstand itself is mentioned seven times. Christ's blood is mentioned seven times.

Christ's name is mentioned seven times. The book of life is mentioned seven times. Prophecy itself, seven times.

This book, as a phrase, this book, seven times. The word judgment occurs seven times. The word kingdom occurs seven times.

Reference to the right hand, reference to the saints, reference to God Almighty, day and night, all of these occur seven times in the book of Revelation. Voices or noises, depending on the context, the seven times. The bottomless pit is referenced seven times.

Come quickly, behold, I come quickly, seven times. Jesus lives seven times. And finally, he that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says unto the churches occurs seven times, as you

recall in Revelation 2 and 3. The occasion for me reviewing this is we are thinking about the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

We think of him all the time, never more so than this week, the run-up to his illegal trials and crucifixion and his resurrection this coming Sunday. We commemorate that. But you think of how many times in the book of Revelation is Jesus referenced as the Lamb? You might think seven times, but it's more than that.

It is four times seven. Four is the number of completeness. Jesus is referenced as the Lamb exactly 28 times in the book of Revelation.

The Lamb as it had been slain and so on. So we are engaged in a wonderful study. And part of that is the blood imagery that is used.

The specific phrase, the blood of the Lamb appears twice. We have seen these references in Revelation chapter 7, verse 14, these who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Revelation 12, 11, those who have overcome by the blood of the Lamb.

The song of celebration in Revelation 5, 9. The Lord Jesus is worthy of praise because he has redeemed us to God by thy blood. The actual quote of the lyric there in that song. So direct references to the blood of Christ.

This is what we focus on this week. The blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us from all sin, 1 John 1, 9. Direct references to the redemptive nature of the blood of the Lord Jesus. The central texts that we have seen thus far are Revelation 1, 5. He has washed us from our sins in his own blood.

This is a part of the introduction to this entire book. The first reference to the Lord Jesus. He that has washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Revelation 5, 9, as I mentioned, he has redeemed us to God by his blood. Revelation 7, 14, those that have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Something, it's not quite an oxymoron, but it is a conundrum to wash linen in blood and instead of having it come out dyed red as he who rides forth from Basra with his robes dipped in blood, that's the blood of his enemies in the Old Testament, you have robes washed in the blood and made white.

And this is one of our primary indicators that references to the blood of Jesus Christ are figurative. Not that he did not shed his actual blood, but it's not the platelets and the leukocytes and the serum and the corpuscles that constituted Jesus physical blood that count. It is the redemption, the propitiation, the Passover Lamb aspect of his work that are summed up and metaphorically referenced by the blood of Christ.

It isn't his physical blood. And this is important for some things we're going to see here shortly. So let me ask you, can you think of three things that you would associate with the blood of

Christ? We are believers in the Lord Jesus.

Most of us have been doing Bible study for a while now. If someone said, well, what is the real meaning when you talk about the blood of Christ, if it's not the spots on the shroud of Turin, what is it? What does it represent? What does it mean to you? Here's what I would suggest. First of all, and especially from our study of revelation alone, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses.

John is the foremost of the New Testament authors that point out the cleansing effect of the blood of Christ. So not only in 1 John do we see this, 1 John 1.7, 1 John 1.9, but in the revelation, as we've already seen, Revelation 1.5, Revelation 7.14, we are cleansed, we are purified, and purification fits us for service, prepares us for service. Priests could not serve until they were sprinkled with blood.

The tabernacle implements, the tabernacle itself, the book of the law, the covenant that was made with Israel, all of these things were sprinkled with blood. Hebrews, in the center of the book, makes a big point of this. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission.

With the shedding and the application of that blood, there is cleansing. So that's number one, it purifies and cleanses, and sort of counterintuitively so, that's probably the best way to put it. You wouldn't think, you would think, well, wasn't blood a defiling element in Israel? It forces you to think.

Someone with an issue of blood would be unclean. Coming in contact with blood would make one unclean, and yet contact with the blood of Jesus Christ has the opposite effect, and this forces us to think. Secondly, in Revelation 5, 9, we are told that it redeems.

Redeeming is the purchasing aspect. You are not purchased with gold or silver or corruptible things, you are purchased with the precious blood of Christ, Peter says. You were bought with a price, glorify God in your body.

That price was the blood of Christ. So number one, it has a cleansing effect. When you go to the Lord in prayer and we confess our sins and we say, however you think of it, some of us from long years ago, think of it in terms of 1 John 1, 9, the effects of it, restoration to fellowship, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us.

We want to remember what it is God does when we confess our sins. It has that effect, number one. Secondly, it has purchasing and redeeming power.

We now belong to God. We have been entered by the blood of Christ into the family of God. We have been purchased and adopted as children of God.

We belong to God. He paid a dear price to possess us. And that creates an opportunity to appreciate God, to glorify God and to seek to live in a way that is pleasing in his sight.

We belong to him. We have a covenant relationship with him. And part of our end of that

bargain is to endeavor to be faultless before the throne, as we saw with the 144,000.

Thirdly, there is victory, many promises to overcomers in Revelation chapter two and three that we've reviewed in extensive detail. But remember what it says in Revelation chapter 12 and verse 11. Salvation, you start in verse 10.

I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, salvation and strength and the kingdom of our God and the power of his Christ have come. For the accuser of our brethren who accused them before our God day and night has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the lamb and by the word of their testimony.

And they did not love their lives to the death. Overcame him, the central element is by the blood of the lamb, by the word of their testimony. They did not love their lives to the death.

The blood of the lamb, without that, you don't get to the word of testimony or faithfulness unto death. So there is power in the blood, as the old hymn says. There is victory in and by the blood of Christ.

So that's why when Paul sums up the gospel, I think it's first Corinthians 10. And he says, Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and he was buried and he was raised again the third day according to the scriptures. As predicted, as prophesied, we tend to think according to the scriptures as we read it in the New Testament.

New Testament didn't exist when Paul penned those words or dictated those words. According to the Old Testament, according to the plan and purpose of God for Israel and through Israel to the world. So cleansing, redeeming, and victory come through the blood of Christ.

That's what we celebrate this week. And there is no greater book for understanding the blood, all kinds of blood than Revelation. Revelation has many references to blood and not all of them are the redemptive cleansing and victory power picture that we have just reviewed.

Remember also there are allusions that are indirect to the blood of Christ. In Revelation chapter five, verse six, the lamb as it had been slain. How would you determine that something looks slain? It is stained with its own blood.

And we saw this in Revelation 13, verse eight, the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. This was God's plan. The plan of redemption precedes the founding of the world.

Coincides with the implementation of creation from the foundation of the world, God knew there would be a need for redemption. And we get the idea that creation itself serves the purpose of providing the venue and the occasion. And the revelation of the character of God, his grace, his love, his self-sacrificial work in sending his own son.

So there is this notion of redemption and cleansing and purchase. It is central in heaven. We saw this in Revelation chapter five.

That is how the Lord Jesus is depicted when he takes the seven sealed scroll. He is the lamb that had been slain, but of course he is alive. And there you have an implicit picture of resurrection as well.

And this is eternal in its scope. And so we saw this again in 13, eight, those who dwell on the earth will worship the beast whose names have not been written in the book of life. One of those seven references to the book of life in 13, eight of the lamb who was slain from the foundation of the earth.

Some people try to swap the phraseology around and say that people's names were written in the book of life from the foundation of the world. That's not correct. It's not a right translation.

Now there are other kinds of blood and there's a fascinating study that can be done looking at what blood represents in different contexts. So for example, we have seen not only the blood of Jesus Christ, his son that cleanses us, redeems us and enables and empowers us and gives us the victory. Death, where is your sting? Grave, where is your victory? Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

There's also the blood of the martyrs. We saw this in the souls under the altar in Revelation six, nine and 10. How long, oh Lord? Until we are avenged for our lives being taken.

We have been slain faithful unto death. Be faithful unto death. I will give you the crown of life.

They did not love their lives unto death. They've washed their robes, made them white. They have the word of testimony and so on.

In Revelation 17, when we get there in verse six, you will see the scarlet harlot drunk with the blood of the sanctified ones. Sanctified by the blood of Christ, but their blood has been shed by this system implemented by the first beast, supported and reinforced by the second beast, all enabled and empowered by the ultimate beast, the dragon, Satan. And there is a gambit.

God led the way with the sacrificial system in Israel. There is a sacrifice of the best of the animals that is a short-term loss to secure a long-term greater gain. I sacrifice this animal in worship, in praise, in service to the God of my salvation, the God of Israel in those days.

The Lord Jesus gave himself, laid down his life, and took it up again, short-term loss for a long-term gain. We are called in many cases to live a life of self-sacrifice, love itself, whether it's one another love or love for the Lord that is expressed in faithfulness and obedience requires sacrifice on our part. There are things we forego.

Paul said, I've got the right to lead about a wife. I've got the right to be supported like some of the other apostles. I lay that on the altar that I may fulfill my God-given calling and function.

We sometimes have to do without health or wealth or opportunity or coulda, woulda, shoulda, might have taken a different path early on. Ladies could have had a career, but they decided to

plow their effort and their vitality, their time, their energy into their family in supporting their husband and raising their children in some other area that is reflective of self-denial. This is the essence of faith and our motivation is hope.

We know that there is vindication. Jesus told his disciples, you may have given up houses and lands and gone without time with your family and so on in this special service to be with me during this time of ministry. It will be recompensed a hundredfold in the kingdom.

Don't think that it's all self-abdication and abnegation and that's just how it's gonna be eternally. Short-term, we live for God. We live for others.

We live a life of service and sacrifice, not because we're making an investment and it's gonna be like Bitcoin or something where, oh, if I had only gotten it when it was \$7, I'd be a millionaire now. But we recognize that God is not unrighteous to forget our work and labor of love in that we minister to each other. God keeps track.

I am content that God knows and God will figure out what happens in the future. I'm not measuring my mansion. I'm not measuring the walls of the new Jerusalem.

I am content that my heavenly father loves me and will care for me by grace through the Lord Jesus Christ and I leave it in his hands. Whatever he's gonna do is gonna be for my good and his glory and that's good enough for me. I don't have to know the details.

So martyrs shed their blood. They are faithful unto death, as in Smyrna. They do not love their lives unto death as we've seen here in Revelation 12.

Ultimately, these chapters that are upcoming in Revelation, we are going to see that the world is going to end up shedding its own blood because it has not claimed the blood of Christ. The world, especially as culminating and summed up in the time of Jacob's trouble is shedding the blood of God's saints. The Lamb of God shed his blood for the saints.

Babylon is going to shed the blood of saints and that is martyrdom and that is something for which Babylon and everything it represents is going to pay in spades. But blood is used to represent sacrifice, the martyrs, their blood is shed and they die in hope. They will rest in hope.

Robes will be given to them. Those souls under the altar, wait, there is vindication coming. You can see the pattern summed up in the Lord Jesus Christ, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and is now seated at the right hand of the Father.

And we will be with Him when He comes to take us to Himself. So there is judgment associated with blood. And this goes all the way back to Exodus.

Remember the Nile turning to blood in Revelation 8, verses seven and eight. This, by the way, this point, if you want to label it, is the wrath and judgment imagery that judgment represents, that blood represents in judgment. The Lord Jesus shed His blood specifically.

He wasn't hung by the neck until dead. He wasn't stoned until He was dead. He shed His blood.

And there's a reason for that. It is the emblematic picture of sacrifice. It goes back to Passover.

It goes back to the day of atonement and the Azazel goat. It goes back to the cleansing of the leper in Leviticus 14. Blood is involved.

The life of the flesh is in the blood. And the Lord Jesus bore our judgment by shedding His blood. And there will be judgment for those who do not wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

So in Revelation 8, seven and eight, we saw that water became blood. When the first angel sounds his trumpet, hail and fire follow, mingled with blood. They're thrown to the earth and a third of the trees are burned up and all green grass was burned up.

The second angel sounds and something like a great mountain burning with fire is thrown into the sea and a third of the sea became blood. This isn't the blood of Christ. This is the blood of judgment.

This is the blood of the Nile in the days of the Exodus. In Revelation chapter 11, verse six, you may have not registered this very fully, but remember the two witnesses have power to shut heaven so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy. And they have power over waters to turn them to blood.

They have the power, the two witnesses, to turn water to blood. This is blood representing righteous judgment on wickedness, on rebellion, on hardheartedness. And it is an opportunity for those who see these things, they haven't died yet, but that which should be a source of life, rivers of life, waters of life, it turns to blood.

What should be beneficial becomes judgmental. In Revelation 14, 20, we just saw this where blood flows from the wine press. When the grape reaping angel puts in his sickle and those grapes are gathered and put into the wine press of the wrath of God, blood flows from the wine press.

This is not redemptive blood. This is the blood of judgment on rebellion, hardheartedness, rejection. These are those who suppress the truth and unrighteousness.

The last half of Romans chapter one. We're going to see in Revelation 16, verses three through six when we get to the bowl judgments that the seas and rivers are going to become blood. This is blood on a massive scale.

It's not the blood of Christ. This is retribution on those who did not put blood on the doorpost, who have not been cleansed and sanctified and purified and enabled and empowered by the blood of Christ. They will now suffer judgment represented by blood.

We are moving toward, and this is what we'll see in the second session, the bread and the cup

in the upper room. That took place in this week, as you know, the night before he was crucified, Jesus took bread and broke it, and he took the cup and told his disciples to share it. Think about John chapter six, unless you eat my flesh and unless you drink my blood, you have no part with me.

The disciples are told that the cup they partake of in the upper room, Jesus said, this is my blood, which is shed for the remission of sins. This is my blood, which is shed for you. Drink ye all of it.

You think, well, there is a symbolic link to John chapter six, but notice in Revelation 16, chapter 16, verse six, if you're in chapter 15, just flip over, and this is our last passage before the break, but 16, six, there's a loud voice from the temple, go pour out the bowls of the wrath of God. So the first went and poured out his bowl on the earth and a foul and loathsome sore came upon men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea and it became blood as of a dead man.

Every living creature in the sea died. The third angel pours out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water and they became blood. And I heard the angel of the waters saying, you are righteous, O Lord, the one who is and was and who is to be.

You have judged these things. They have shed the blood of saints and prophets and you have given them blood to drink for it is their just due. If you don't drink the blood that is on offer from the Lord Jesus in John chapter six and in the upper room, you end up drinking blood in an entirely different way.

Revelation 16, six, powerful imagery, sobering to think about. It reminds us of the importance of our lives as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ to know who we are, to know why we're here and to know where the power resides, what the plan and purpose of God is for our lives, both now and in the ages to come. So it's fascinating.

It ties in directly with the season and with where we are in the book of Revelation. We'll continue this study when we come back from the break.