

Rev 26-04-08a

Good evening. This is the 8th of April, 2026. We continue our study in the book of Revelation.

We are in chapter 15, looking at the great bowl judgments. We have taken a little time to review a couple of important concepts across the last few chapters. We're ready to move forward now and take a look at these as they unfold before us.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study, and we'll begin. Father, how grateful we are for another opportunity to spend time together in fellowship in the study of your word. We ask your blessing on us as we endeavor to improve our understanding, not only of what the content of this chapter and this book presents to us, but its application, its purpose, how it can change us and make us more effective as representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask it in his name, amen. We will read our chapter, at least the first portion of it. If you're not already there, you can turn to Revelation chapter 15.

This is the shortest chapter in the Revelation, and we have seen its contents, singing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb. And in verse five, after these things I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. And it is a reminder that everything that unfolds on this earth shadows things that are in heaven.

In terms of worship, you have the tabernacle. Moses was enjoined in Exodus to make everything according to the pattern that was shown to him in the mount. So the earthly tabernacle in Israel is a reflection.

It is a representation, and obviously a very limited one of realities that are in heaven. This that is opened is the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony. How many times have we seen the word testimony in this book, beginning in chapter one, when John says he is on Patmos for the testimony of Jesus Christ, the testimony of the 144,000, the testimony of the two witnesses, the testimony of the angel back in chapter 14 that preaches the everlasting gospel to those who dwell on the earth, to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, fear God and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment has come and worship him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.

It is of interest that when you think of the content of the gospel message, what is it you must believe to be saved? It was simpler in the Old Testament day, wasn't it? You think of Hebrews 11.6, Hebrews 11.6, talking about the days of faith in the Old Testament. Without faith, it is impossible to please him. He that comes to God must believe what? That he is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him.

In this age, there is more detail and a larger requirement. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that

God hath raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Acts 16.31 to the Philippian jailer, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be saved. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. But what is the content of the everlasting gospel given by the angel in verse seven of chapter 14? Fear God and give glory to him.

He is a God of judgment. What does the Holy Spirit convince the world of? Jesus told his disciples in the upper room, sin, righteousness, and judgment. You could say, I understand that there is a difference between sin and righteousness, but if there is no judgment, if there's no real consequence, if I can sin and get away with it, if I can do good but it's not recognized, you have an incomplete system.

There is sin and there is righteousness and there is judgment. There is a division between the two. There's a separate fate for those who practice having chosen one or the other.

So the everlasting gospel, worship him who, what? Made heaven and earth. He is the creator, Romans chapter one. What may be known of God is manifest in creation.

His eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen in what has been made. So where is the attack on the everlasting gospel? Science attacks the origins and the sources and the design of what has been made to deny the glory of God. The reason I'm reviewing this, you think that we've solved these problems, we've addressed these issues for ourselves in most cases years ago, but remember the testimony.

We are here to bear witness. Let your light so shine before men that they see your good works. They see your good works, but they glorify your father who is in heaven.

Fear God and give him glory. If we want to witness and bear witness to the salvation gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, we need to know its content and we need to understand the basis upon which people will or won't be saved. Then in verse eight, following that, the next angel that follows saying Babylon has fallen, has fallen, that great city.

This is coming up when we get to, we're gonna be in chapter 16 tonight, looking at the bowls. Then 17 and 18, there are two chapters devoted to mystery Babylon and the beast that she rides and so on, but we have anticipation. This is a second point of application.

The first one is know your gospel because we are here in part to be witnesses of it and to it. And it's helpful to know what it is. People will take us down rabbit trails and Satan will inspire diversion, distraction, deflection.

Let's major in the minors and ignore the major things. We need to know what the essentials are. And if we are called upon to have a conversation, know the essentials and don't be spirited away from them by an unclean spirit.

That's first. Secondly, you notice that God lets us know what is going to happen. This is part of his signature.

You can go to the Old Testament prophets. I am the God who tells you what is going to happen before it happens. If your faith ever is tempted to waver and if you're a thinking person from time to time, you can sort of step outside yourself, your Christian faith.

You look at it, put yourself in the shoes of a skeptic or an unbeliever and you think, am I just a victim of time, circumstance, upbringing? My parents, if they had been Buddhists, I'd probably be a Buddhist. What is the assurance we have that our faith is the faith, that what we take for truth is in fact the truth and truth is central. Jesus puts it in the center of his threefold self-description.

I am the way, I am the truth and I am the life. Satan has been throwing confetti in the air to try to obscure the truth of Jesus Christ. He inspired ancient myths about women having virgin births and gods killing one another and man being implicated here and there.

Satan has lit dumpster fires trying to put so much smoke in the air that people think, well, the truth of God is just one of any number of equal alternatives. Those of you that have been looking at the word of God for a while, and that's pretty much all of us, you know that there's a galactic distance between the Bible you hold in your hand and the Quran, the Vedic hymns, the other things that are put forward as being some kind of truth. There are so many unique qualities and we've covered this when we did our fundamentals.

So be aware that when it tells us that Babylon is fallen, is fallen, the great city, notice the tense. It doesn't say Babylon is about to fall. One of these days Babylon is going to fall.

We haven't done the bold judgments yet and we haven't gotten to Revelation 17 and 18 and the angel says, it is fallen. It is fallen as I speak. This tells us a little bit about the revelation.

We are being lifted with John into a realm where time is not restrictive for us just like it isn't for God and I think it is not for the angels. And something can be future and yet true in the present because from your present perspective, it is sure and certain. This is how I view the departure of our believing loved ones.

In one sense, looking at time as it unfolds here, they are not here. Where did they go? Do they exist? Are they conscious? Are they watching? Can I talk to them? But we are thinking in earthly, constricted, chronological terms. From God's perspective and we're going, blessed are those who die in the Lord from now on.

Their works will follow them and so on. Time is no longer a constraint and when you leave this life, you are in a kind of timelessness that's very difficult for us to understand. But you have an example of it here.

Why doesn't it say Babylon is about to fall or be patient and wait. There are things that refer to time and we have to wait. The soul's under the altar.

Be patient, wait a while longer. Wait on the Lord, be of good cheer. He will strengthen your heart.

We have waiting periods in this life but when it comes to the eternal realms, it is the eternal now and so when it says Babylon is falling, the easiest way to understand this, if that gets a little bit mystic, a more practical way to digest it and understand it is when God says that we are saved and we are going to be saved and we have an eternal inheritance, we're not there yet. We haven't gone to glory. We don't know what the dwelling place that the Lord has prepared will be like.

We have suggestions but it is just as certain as if we had already entered into it. Our future salvation, our future inheritance, we can modify it, we add to it, we can affect it in various ways but it is a certainty. It is so certain that God can use the present tense for things that from our perspective have not yet happened.

So that's what you have here. Babylon is fallen, is fallen. Why is it doubled? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Doubling a thing intensifies it and of all of the intensities that you see in Revelation, the fall of Babylon is really the climax of the book.

It is more profound and more space is devoted to it. Two entire chapters to mystery Babylon, its character, its nature, its judgment, its fall resolution by the Lord Jesus Christ. So is fallen, is fallen.

Saints throughout the generations have looked at this because of the pattern of prophecy. We can't look and see Babylon, the scarlet harlot with blasphemies all over her and the cup of the blood of the saints that she's drinking and riding the seven headed 10 horned beast and so on. That is not before us right now.

Yet there are anticipations. There are other entities and powers that fit the pattern right now. The same Satan that is going to inspire that ultimate expression of his endeavor to take the world and dominate it and raise his throne above the stars and above all people, the God of this world, he is at work now.

Jesus said, Satan roams present tense, the earth seeking whom he may devour. His machinations, his designs, his strategies are the same. It is so productive to look at this final expression because it pertains to the anticipations of it that we experience every day.

So instead of saying, well, let's wipe a drop of sweat from our brow with relief because we won't be in the tribulation, it's much more helpful to look at it and say, what is the power by which the saints overcome the beast and his number and his name and his mark? All of these things are said to be overcome. So it's important to pay attention to these. Why is the city fallen? She has

made all the nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

Spiritual fornication is unfaithfulness to God's design, God's commands, God's purpose, God's architecture for a family. You can violate that before you ever get married, it's called fornication. You violate it after you're married, it's called adultery.

The structures for various primary structural components of human civilization and society were designed by God. And fornication is to reject those, to rebel against them, to say, I have a new and better way. And the fornication, it of course, could have a literal component, but it is largely rejection of God in his person, his character and in his actions, the world he has designed, the environment, the standards that he has set, the judgment that he will judge with in the future.

Well, that was in chapter 14, everlasting gospel. We saw the reaping, we came to 15 and the seven last plagues, the great and marvelous last plagues, seven angels, in them the wrath of God is complete. We saw the remainder of that.

You skip down past the song of Moses, song of the lamb, and the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony is open in verse five. Out of the temple comes the seven angels having the seven plagues, clothed in pure bright linen, having their chest girded with golden bands. One of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever.

The significance of this, the four living creatures, to our knowledge, never leave the throne room, never leave God's side. They surround his throne. So if they suddenly have seven golden bowls with contents, they didn't go to the cupboard.

They didn't even go to the temple. We have things that are issuing from the temple. We have things that are voices in heaven.

This, when one of the four living creatures, one of the cherubim, the cherubim, has these seven bowls and hands them to these angels, there is no more direct connection to almighty God on his throne than this. Those who try to disconnect wrath and judgment from God, well, God would never do that, and they're trying to make God in their own image. This is a powerful gut punch to that notion because these bowls in which the wrath of God is completed are handed directly by God to one of the four living creatures.

There's no other place for it to come from. This is God's will, God's power, God's justice, God's righteousness expressed. And it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, people that begin to think that they are going to be buddies with God and be casual and relaxed, and haven't looked at passages like this.

And it is a sober reminder that with all of the grace and we have boldness to come before God's throne, but that is a powerful boldness based on the work of Jesus Christ. Our hearts having

been sprinkled, our bodies washed with pure water through the rent torn veil of the flesh of the Lord Jesus. That's how we have access.

What attitude should we have when we enter the throne room of almighty God, this almighty God with the four living creatures with absolute judgment that will destroy the world in the same way that he created the world with infinite power, infinite grace, but infinite justice. It is motivating to us to endeavor as servants to be found faithful, as family to be found worthy of proximity to the Lord Jesus and proximity to our heavenly father and to be on his good side to put it in the vernacular because he's not fooling around. So those are taken, these golden bowls full of the wrath of God who lives forever and ever.

Why that addendum in verse seven? God who lives forever and ever. We did a forever study last time. There are some forevers and the context tells you, David is gonna sit on his throne forever.

The Lord Jesus will sit on the throne of his father David forever. That forever extends to the end of the millennial kingdom. But in the kingdom of the father, there is no throne of David.

So how long is forever? You must look at context. It's the same as when there is a word like all or every. What is the context? Don't get it wrong.

If all Jerusalem and Judea came out to see John the Baptist, how wouldn't literal are you gonna be? Every single living person, man, woman, child, baby, all of them came to the Jordan. Context keeps us safe from the dangers of wooden literalism. This however, this forever and ever, God lives forever and ever.

That's as big an eternal continuity as you can imagine. And he truly does have no beginning and no end. The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from his power.

And no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed. This is a third point of application for us. Seek the Lord early, call upon him while he is near.

If we fail, if we stumble and fall, if we err and come short, if we sin, once we are aware of it, immediately go to the throne of grace, confession, acknowledgement, godly sorrow if that's appropriate. Some time in reflection on how did this happen and how can I not make this same mistake in the future? But the necessity to accomplish restoration is so important because if you delay, the door can swing shut and there is no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment. I'm quoting Hebrews chapter six.

The rain comes many times upon the field. If you don't start producing crops and thorns keep coming up, that field is fit only for burning and is near to a curse. So it is a reminder that when the temple fills with the glory of God, nobody can go in and out.

We've had angels coming in and out. No one can enter. It is like when Solomon finished the

temple and the glory cloud, people refer to it as Shekinah.

It's a little trivia point that the word Shekinah occurs how many times in the Bible? Zero. Shekinah is not a biblical vocabulary word, but the glory of God filled the temple and this is the radiant, unapproachable level of revelation of His glory. And no one is gonna be able to approach and no one can stop these judgments once they start.

It is irrevocable and unstoppable. We want to be early. We wanna get there quick when grace and restoration and reconciliation are available.

People who take things for granted, lazy. Think about this picture of God and think about spiritual laziness. How compatible are those? How dangerous is it to be spiritual lazy when you have a God such as this? That brings us to chapter 16.

I heard a loud voice from the temple saying to the seven angels, go and pour out the bowls. Who does this voice have to be? The temple is filled with the glory of God and unapproachable. So if a voice comes out of it, who's in there? Only God.

These bowls of wrath in one picture are delivered from God by the living creature to the seven bowl angels. That is the preparation. That is the nature, the scope, the substance of the judgments pictured in these bowls with their contents.

Now we have the command of execution coming from the temple. And there is no question about whose voice this is. This is the voice that spoke from heaven saying, this is my beloved son in whom I am well-pleased.

Hear ye him. When Jesus prays and says, father, glorify your name. And there's a voice from heaven that says, I have glorified it and I will glorify it again.

It is the voice of the father. Go and pour out the bowls of the wrath of God on the earth. So the first went out and poured out his bowl upon the earth and a foul and loathsome sore came upon the men who had the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image.

I'm not sure there's daylight between those two things. Can you take the mark and not worship the image? Can you worship the image and not take the mark? I think these are salient characteristics. Taking the mark is the entrance into this false relationship and worshiping the image is, that's how far down the road you have gone on this irretrievably lost path.

I think this is sort of the beginning and the end and there's a lot of stuff in between, you know, the number and the name and all the rest of it. But this is sort of an A and Z, A to Z type of thing. So these who have the mark of the beast, that's how they got related to him in the first place and that mark is indelible, irreversible.

There are no converts who undo the mark. When you take this mark, you are done and you will

end up all the way down the road at worshiping the image, which in itself is an artifice because the image is not the beast. You got the first beast, you have the second beast who's like the Holy Spirit, he makes an image and it's given life and the ability to speak and people worship the image.

Why not worship the real thing? But however they get looped in, maybe the image is made more palatable, maybe there are layers of deception there where people don't really know the nature of what they have entered into. So notice though, flip back to your trumpets. We've been in this long interval that included the two witnesses and the woman vision with the dragon and so on.

But go back to chapter eight, keep your finger in chapter 16, go back to chapter eight and look at the first angel in verse seven, Revelation 8.7. First angel sounded, hail and fire followed, mingled with blood and they were thrown to the earth. To the earth. If you wanna put a note there, you can put Revelation 16.2 next to 8.7. Circle earth in both places.

And this bowl is poured out on the earth and the result is a loathsome sore upon men, earth dwellers, those who dwell upon the earth. They are the mark of the beast image worshiping guys. Okay, you'll need to flip back and forth here between chapter eight and chapter 16.

In verse three of our chapter 16.3, the second angel poured out his bowl on the sea and it became blood, not just blood, but blood as of a dead one, a dead man, dead man's blood. More about that in just a minute, but turn back to chapter eight and look at verse eight. The second angel sounded, something like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea and a third of the sea became blood.

You understand now why there are those of us who believe that these are parallel accounts, not sequential. How many times are you gonna turn the sea to blood? And once that happens, a third of the living creatures in the sea die in verse nine of chapter eight and a third of the ships were destroyed. And in chapter 16.3, when it becomes blood as of a dead man, every living creature in the sea died.

I would again suggest that as you compare these two accounts, well, was it a third or did they all die? Remember what we said about those who take the mark and who worship the image of the beast? It tells you we're looking at a span of time. When the mountain is first thrown into the sea and the sea becomes blood, it doesn't say it's dead man's blood, but once it turns to blood, it's going to stay blood and it's going to sort of coagulate like a dead person's blood. It's not going to recover.

So at the outset, immediately, a third of what is in the sea dies. And over time, as this blood coagulates, we're talking in metaphorical terms here, I don't know exactly what the physical judgment will be. Could it be red tide? Is it some sort of goo from space? I don't know what it's going to be.

I just know what the result is going to be because the Bible tells us as soon as it happens, at the inception point, a third of the living things are going to die. By the time that blood coagulates, and you know how quickly blood coagulates, it doesn't take long. It's a short term process.

When that finishes, everything in the sea will be dead. So you see the relationship on this second trumpet and second bowl. Okay, back to Revelation 16, verse four.

The third angel pours out his bowl, where? On the rivers and springs of water, and they become blood. Chapter eight, on the trumpets, the third angel sounded, a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch. It fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water.

Name of the star is Wormwood. Third of the water becomes Wormwood. Many men died from the water because it was made bitter.

Third bowl, third trumpet. All three of these thus far have had a very high rate of correspondence, haven't they? But you see more of the impact at the beginning in the blowing of the trumpet. And think about this, even the symbology, it is so beautiful the way God has engineered this set of visions for John.

How long can you blow a trumpet? Even if you're an angel, I assume there's some lung capacity there that's gonna be exhausted. It's not a trumpet that's got a never-ending sound. The angel rears back, takes a deep breath, puts out a blast of several seconds, and then it stops.

And the trumpet blast is used in ancient military terms to initiate actions. They did this all the way up to the days of our US cavalry, the bugle calls. If you couldn't hear anything else, no radios, you can't see signal flags, the dust and commotion, but you hear the bugle call.

And you've heard these in old Westerns, the call to charge, the call to retreat, and so on, taps. But it's got a short duration. It starts something.

When you pour out a bowl, you can pour until the contents are empty, but the contents that have come out, they're not going back in the bowl. You don't write the bowl and then tip it and more stuff comes out, unless you're doing a magic trick. But a trumpet, you can take another breath and blow again.

But there's a difference in inception and in completion. The trumpets get it started. You pour out the bowls, that finishes it off in each of these first three cases, right? So let's quickly move through these last ones.

And this is what we're primarily looking at tonight is this correspondence, because they inform each other. And once we see this connection, it gives us a picture, both literally and spiritually, of what is going on. So you go back to 16, and after this third bowl is poured out, you remember the pattern.

We have the menorah, I call it the menorah pattern. There are three candles going in, just like we saw the three angels before the son of man appeared with his sickle. And then you had three more angels afterward.

So you have three, you have the center element, and you have three more. Look at the letters to the seven churches. The longest letter is to the fourth church.

The fourth church is, you start with Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira. And that's the longest letter. Thyatira was formerly Semiramis.

It was the seat of Babylonian worship, transferred, and so on. So here, when we get to the third angel, we have a little bit of a detour in verse five. So now the angel of the waters says, you are righteous, oh Lord, the one who is, who was, and who is to be.

There's a few text issues, we'll cover those later. Because you have judged these things. The judgment is not quite halfway through, but there is a reminder.

People are horrified by this utter and complete devastation. There is no coming back from this judgment. This is a final judgment.

This is, the ark door has shut, the rain is falling, the waters are rising. There's no coming back. The temple is full, nobody can go in and make appeal.

You are righteous, oh Lord, the one who is and was, who is to be. Because 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. It is an emphatic statement.

And again, as I mentioned earlier, we used to have a pastor that talked about the importance of human beings adjusting our thinking and adjusting our understanding to the justice of God. And if you're a mature believer, then it's maturity adjustment to the justice of God. I've heard that phrase a few times.

But it's true. God's justice, we have to adapt to understand it. It is so intense in some cases that we are taken aback.

This angel comes and says, remember, this is a reminder, you need communication, and you need some stability at this point. If you could see film at 11 of this taking place, it would be shocking. The level of suffering, the level of destruction is horrific beyond description.

The angel comes and says, remember, the eternal God, the one who is, was, and is to be has judged these things. They shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. And remember, an angel has already come and offered the everlasting gospel.

They are without excuse. Romans chapter one, what we know to God is manifest. They have

suppressed the truth in unrighteousness.

They have given themselves over to all of the things in the last half of chapter one. This is their choice, it is their responsibility, it is their accountability, and the righteous judge is meeting out righteous justice. But it's important to remember, and that's why we have this reminder right here after the third bowl.

And I heard another from the altar saying, even so, Lord God almighty, true and righteous are your judgments. Remember when I said Babylon is fallen, is fallen? When you see a thing twice, that's emphatic. We're having it emphasized here.

Just remember, this is the climax. This is essentially going to eventuate in Armageddon. These are the final judgments of four sets of seven.

And we have a double reminder. Yes, Lord God almighty, true and righteous are your judgments. This is God's judgment, and it is true and righteous because he is true and righteous.

It isn't just the consequences of failing to be a good guy, which is what the preterists want to say. Now, after the center post of the menorah, we have the final three bowls. Fourth angel pours out his bowl on the sun.

Power was given to him to scorch men with fire. Remember in chapter eight, verse 12, when the fourth angel sounds his trumpet, a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day did not shine and likewise the night.

Notice when the inception occurs, it's not complete. This is a process that is going to intensify. It's gonna be, it'll knock out a third immediately.

The other two thirds are going to go over time, but you can't help but see the close correspondence of the first four trumpets and the first four bowls. So the fourth bowl scorches men with fire. Men are scorched with great heat.

They blaspheme the name of God who has power over these plagues, and they did not repent and give him glory. Verse nine, chapter 16. After all of this, righteous judgments of God recompense.

This is eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth, blood for blood. These people earn and deserve their judgment. When it comes from God, they do not repent.

They did not give him glory. Verse 10, the fifth angel pours out his bowl on the throne of the beast and his kingdom became full of darkness, full of darkness. They nod their tongues because of the pain.

They blaspheme the God of heaven because their pain and their sores, they did not repent of their deeds. You go back to chapter nine, where the fifth trumpet is sounded. Star falls from heaven to the earth.

To him is given the key to the bottomless pit. He opens the bottomless pit. The sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit.

Very instructive to go back and forth and compare these and see cause and effect, inception and culmination. We'll move on here for our overview. Verse 12 of 16, then the sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, right? Its water was dried up.

So the way of the kings from the East might be prepared. Then you have these three unclean spirits like frogs. Go back to chapter nine, verse 13.

When the sixth angel sounds his trumpet, I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God saying to the sixth angel at the trumpet, release the four angels who are bound where? At the great Euphrates. I don't know how you could possibly line these up any more closely unless you just duplicated chapter eight and nine in chapter 16. And the four angels who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year were released to kill a third of mankind in 815.

The number of the army of the horsemen was 200 million and so on. In our chapter, when the bowl is poured out on the river Euphrates and its water is dried up, John says, I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, out of the mouth of the false prophet. I don't think this is nine frogs.

I think this is one each. There's an unclean spirit frog from Satan himself, one from the first beast, one from the second beast, the false prophet. There are spirits of demons performing signs which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world to do what? The waters of the Euphrates were dried up to clear the way for the kings of the east.

Here, the demons motivate them to cross that dry river and gather for Armageddon, to the battle of the great day of God almighty. Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame.

What an interesting inclusion here in verse 15. One spot of red ink in the middle of the revelation is right here. Jesus says, in case you've gotten all distracted by the prophecy, just remember, I am coming like a thief.

It's interesting he doesn't say I'm coming like a surprise party. I'm coming like the groom who surprises his bride and takes her off for the wedding feast. Wise and foolish virgins, we don't know when the groom is coming, some of them fall asleep, but that's a wonderful positive picture of coming unexpectedly, but more than once, Jesus says, I'm not coming like the groom to

surprise the bride and festivities will ensue.

I'm coming like a thief. When I come unexpectedly, there's gonna be loss and consternation. There's going to be surprise and a sense of danger and jeopardy.

I'm coming like a thief. So what is our application? And we'll close with this tonight. Blessed is he who watches, keeps his garments.

Two things, be watchful. If you are going to be watchful, you have to have an interest, right? You like deer, you sit in front of a big window and watch the woods, wait for the deer to come by. You like thunderstorms, you watch in the direction where the storm is coming and enjoy the lightning.

You watch because you have an interest, you're invested. You don't have to be entertained. You have an inbuilt desire.

So we are blessed if we have an inner desire that we choose to have and choose to cultivate, to watch, to interpret what happens in our lives and in the world around us in the light of the existence of God and our relationship to Him, of the work of our Savior and our relationship with Him. And we watch, we are paying attention. What are the spiritual implications? What are my spiritual responsibilities? What are my tangible earthly material responsibilities in the light of who I am spiritually? But the spiritual defines the material.

It's not the other way around. If you think about idolatry, you start with something material and you try to invest it with power and otherworldly mystic properties. Our faith begins with a heavenly reality that needs to erupt and interrupt and merge into our physical life.

So we watch and keep our garments clean. Notice it doesn't say that you never besmire your garment. You never sin, you never fail, you never mess up, but you keep your garments, you maintain them.

Keep means to maintain. That means wash them, mend them, pay attention to them, realize their importance. And we wash our white linen robes in the blood of the Lamb.

We are watchful and know when we fail and clean that up and redeem the time. But how interesting that we have this reminder in the midst of this very graphic depiction of future judgment, which has its adumbrations and its patterns now. But notice in verse 16, they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon.

We are about to get into the great climactic culmination, fulmination, emanation, and fruition of this entire book. And that's where we will pick up on Sunday. But what a privilege to be on the good side of God's grace, God's love, God's provision.

We have that because of the Lord Jesus Christ and the events that we celebrated last week. His self-sacrificial work on the cross so that we can enjoy this privilege. What a tragedy and what a

great error to take it for granted, to be lackadaisical, disinterested.

And we are reminded right here, the Lord Jesus interrupts. Flip your pages back and forth. If you have a red letter edition, do you see any red ink going back six, eight, nine pages? Going forward, where do you see red ink? The Lord Jesus interrupts right here at verse 15.

Circle it, put a star next to it. What is my responsibility when I wake up tomorrow morning? I've got to be watchful. I've got to be alert.

I've got to remember who I am and why I'm here. And I've got to maintain my garments, righteousness. If I soil them, clean them.

I'm wearing the appropriate clothing for the work at hand. Blessed is he that watches, keeps his garments so that he does not walk naked and you're put to a public shame. That's not what I want to anticipate at the return of the Lord, but that's what will happen.

And there are going to be many believers that are going to be looking for a corner to compress themselves into by failure to watch, failure to heed the words of the Lord Jesus. Father, thank you for this revelation. We thank you for the truth of your word and how powerfully it can affect our thinking, can shape us and recreate us in the image of Jesus Christ.

We pray that as we reflect on these truths and review these passages, that God, the Holy Spirit will impress them on our hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.