

Rev 26-04-26a

Good morning. Welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 26th of April, 2026.

We continue our study in the book of Revelation. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and we'll begin. Father, how grateful we are for your many provisions, the things both seen and unseen that you perform on our behalf, both our blessings and our challenges.

We thank you for this portion of your word and ask that you will bless it to the benefit of each heart as we think about it, not only in terms of its meaning for the future, but its application in the present. We ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

We are in Revelation chapter 16 and looking at the bold judgments and moving into chapter 17 and 18, which deal with the scarlet woman, the scarlet beast and the fall of Babylon the great. This is a beautifully organized book. The book of Revelation begins with the glorified Lord Jesus presenting this revelation through the angel, through the apostle John to the angels of the seven churches, to the local congregations of the day and ultimately to us.

Fundamentally, it is organized on the principle of sevens. There are seven churches represented by seven lampstands ministered to by seven messengers, seven angels. Angelos in Greek, of course, meaning messenger.

We think these are the pastors of those churches and it can be a bit confusing distinguishing between the heavenly angels and the earthly angels. But once those messages are delivered, we think about the seven different types of church and the challenges that they face, the failures that some in those churches perpetrate, others who have not soiled their garments, who are enduring and being faithful. We see the overcomer blessings.

This is the threshold of the book. What does it mean for the church? So these past several lessons, we've been endeavoring to respect that emphasis of the book and look at it not only in terms of its prophetic value and what it means in terms of the world map and agencies and powers, economics and armies, but what we take away, what we endeavor to implement in our own thinking and in our own lives. And we derive that emphasis from that opening section of the book, the seven churches.

What I find interesting, have you thought about this? Remember, once we get that perspective, then in chapter four, verse one, John hears the words, come up here. I will show you things that are shortly to come to pass. And we have the heavenly scene.

We have the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ change from the glorified Lord of chapter one to the lamb as it had been slain slash lion of the tribe of Judah and root of David. The glorified Lord and his direct relationship with the church in those first three chapters suddenly is revolved away. It

reminds me of the old days.

Most of you may not be old enough to remember this. I know a few of you who are very well familiar, but they used to have a thing back in the forties and early fifties called revolving bandstand. You would go to a supper club or something and they would have these dance bands and there would be a revolving platform on the stage and they might have three different bands.

And so one band would come to the front and play one of their songs and then it would revolve away and the next band would come and play one or two of their songs. And the revolving bandstand was sort of a gimmick to bring people into these clubs and the band still exists. It's just not playing at the moment.

It has revolved away. And another one is making its music and presenting its style and appealing to people on its level. Same thing here.

The Lord Jesus appears as the head of all things to the church and communicates with his body, the church through those first three chapters. Then in chapter four, the bandstand revolves. And now he is presented in his relationship to Israel primarily first and foremost, the lamb as it had been slain and the lion of the tribe of Judah and the root of David.

Those three appellations are all given to us as the scroll becomes visible with its seven seals. Who is worthy to open the scroll? Here's my question. What do you remember once the scroll appears in the hand of the Lord God? And the question becomes, who is worthy to open the scroll to read it and to look upon it? Do you remember John's reaction when they can't find anyone? He weeps.

Time, quote unquote, seems to be frozen in heaven until someone worthy to open the scroll, to break its seals, read its contents, to look upon it, to implement its plan and purpose until that person is found. John weeps and weeps intensely. I've had a hard time figuring out why he would weep.

But back to my question, was there any anticipation or delay or search for someone worthy when it came time to blow the trumpets? Was there any search or necessity to find a worthy person to lead the effort when the thunders begin cracking in heaven? Or now in our context for the bulls, is there any question? Is there any search? Everything seems to hinge on that initial identification of the Lord Jesus Christ as the key. And the understanding we have of not only the trumpets, the thunders and the bulls, but also the other sevens that we see in that interregnum, that distance between chapter 8 and chapter 15 and 16, we have this long delay that we've been looking at. Not so much a delay as an illustration because once we have the seventh seal in chapter 8, we have the trumpets in chapter 9, then the mighty angel with the little, and it's unfortunate in chapter 10 because it says the little book.

In both cases, the Greek word is identical. It is Biblion and Biblion is translated scroll. They didn't

have books in these days.

Books wouldn't be invented for a couple of hundred years. This is a scroll written on both sides that the Lord Jesus breaks the seals and unrolls. And I believe it is a smaller version of the same scroll.

So when it says this angel coming down from heaven in chapter 10, verse 1, clothed with cloud and a rainbow on his head, his face like the sun, his feet like pillars of fire, he is a representative angel. He is the angel of the Lord Jesus. No doubt the same angel that is mentioned in chapter 1 in the opening verses.

This angel is so like the Lord Jesus in his appearance. He speaks for the Lord Jesus. He acts for the Lord Jesus.

He looks like the Lord Jesus as should we. But he had a little scroll in verse 2 open in his hand and he set his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land and cried with a loud voice. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices.

When the seven thunders uttered their voices, I was about to write. I heard a voice from heaven saying, seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered and do not write them. The angel whom I saw standing in the sea and on the land raised his right hand to heaven, swore by him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, that there should be delay no longer.

But in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished as declared to his servants the prophets. Then you go on to have John consuming this little scroll. This is as much of the scroll as humans can understand.

There is a part of it that only the angels understand, perhaps. There is a part that operates at a level in heaven that is beyond our comprehension. So we have an extract.

We have the pertinent portions that are given to John to consume, to digest, and then to communicate. And that is what we have as we go forward with the two witnesses, who I think are John and his brother James. Then we have the woman, the cloud, and the child, and the dragon.

We have Satan cast out of heaven, the woman persecuted, then the beast from the sea, the lamb, and the 144,000. And we have the menorah. I think this is another one of the sevens that you have in chapter 14.

We saw those three angels on each side with the Lord Jesus in the center. And I think that is worthy to be included with the seals, the trumpets, the thunders, the sickle angels, the announcing angels, the command angels that are contained in chapter 14. Then we have seen the prelude to the bowl of judgments here in chapter 15, which is the return of the 144,000 that sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the lamb.

And there is a symmetry here. There is a beautiful moving back out. It is chiasmic in a sense, returning to the first time we saw the 144,000 sealed on earth.

Now they appear to be in the heavenly Mount Zion. But this then brings us to our current chapter, the angels who pour out their bowls. But there is no further search for someone worthy.

Everything was initiated by the Lord Jesus. Everything was brought forth and moved forward by the opening of those seals. And now we are moving out to look at Babylon.

So you remember the content of these bowls. We have seen these in detail, the sores, the sea turning to blood, the waters turning to blood, men being scorched, darkness and pain. In the sixth bowl, the Euphrates, which formerly had been blood, now is dried up.

Verse 12, we will pick up here. The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. Its water was dried up so the way of the kings from the east might be prepared.

Because this is going to set up the final conflict at Armageddon. But notice verse 13 and 14. This is where we interestingly launch into our discussion of Babylon.

You would think that does not come until the next chapter. But I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

And then we have the wonderful words of the Lord Jesus, reassuring the people of God, both earthly and heavenly. Behold, Jesus says, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.

This applies from the time of Pentecost, right down to the present. If we do not remember anything else from the book of Revelation, this sums up its importance to us. The Lord Jesus is coming.

And when He comes, there is going to be a great deal of loss. Those who think they stand should take heed, lest they fall. Those who are rich in this world may end up being poor in the future.

The first shall be last. The last shall be first. There is going to be perfect justice.

What seems to be fair, what seems to be right in the eyes of fallen humanity, is going to be in stark contrast to the perfect righteousness and justice of God. We saw this declaration in the midst of the bulls, righteous and holy are your judgments, O God. You remember this in verse 5 of chapter 16.

I heard the angel of the water say, You are righteous, O Lord, the one who is and who was,

because you have judged these things. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink, for it is their just due. And I heard another angel from the altar saying, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are your judgments.

A twofold affirmation of God's righteousness and justice. The world today wants to tell us that biblical values, Christian ethics and morals are out of style, out of touch, are unfair, are unkind, are unjust. And this is ever the contrast.

And there is a fundamental contrast that runs as a thread throughout the scriptures that we are going to see this morning. But they gathered in verse 16 of chapter 16 together to the place called in Hebrew Armageddon, Armageddon. Then the seventh bull, the seventh angel poured out his bull into the air.

One of the things you notice in this outside bracket, if you look at the seals, see the other sevens in the middle and come to these bulls, the seals were undirected. When a seal is opened by the lamb, things happen on the earth, but the seal isn't picked off of the scroll and thrown at someone. It isn't dropped and becomes as big as a boulder and smashes things on the earth.

The seals unfold the purpose of God and things are allowed on the earth. Later things will be caused on the earth, but in contrast with the seals and to some extent, the trumpets, the unknown content of the thunders, the work of the sickle angels and the announcing angels, the commanding angels that we saw here, each bowl has a target. God directs the pouring out of these bowls specifically on a particular thing.

So in chapter 16, verse two, the first angel went and poured his bowl upon the earth. The second bowl is poured out on the sea. The third bowl is poured out on the rivers and springs of water.

The fourth bowl is poured out on the sun. The fifth bowl is poured out on the throne of the beast and on his kingdom. So when it is poured out on his throne, his kingdom becomes full of darkness and those in that kingdom gnaw their tongues because of the pain.

Pay attention to those things that represent, attach to, symbolize human speech, communication, and they are gnawing their tongues. This is going to produce speech that is full of pain, full of fury, full of bitterness. This may also be literal expression of pain, but the tongue, as we've seen it in James and elsewhere, is the metonymy of the part for the whole.

It is the metonymy of the adjunct. It is that which is used to communicate and to produce speech. So they gnaw their tongues because of the pain, but they use those tongues to blaspheme the God of heaven because of their pain and their sores, and they do not repent of their deeds.

Repentance is also something that is spoken, is expressed in verbal terms. Then the sixth angel pours out his bowl on the great river Euphrates. Three unclean spirits out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

Each member of the unholy trinity, Satan, the first beast, and the false prophet, the second beast, each have a particular thing that issues forth from their mouth. This is a threefold anti-gospel, if you will. It is a message of falsehood and deceit.

It is a message to incite rebellion and bitterness and hatred toward God. It comes from the mouth. They are spirits of demons, verse 14, performing signs, going out to the kings of the earth, going out to the whole world to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

We hear today in our environment how there is incitement to violence. People use their mouths, use their words, use their podcasts and their quote-unquote news reporting to instill in people a point of view that contains bile and poison and vicious opposition and hatred. It is irrational.

It is often illogical. It is completely inconsistent and hypocritical. I'll give you one example.

There was another attempt to perpetrate some form of violence at the White House Correspondents Dinner. As this hit the news, it was put into an article on the AP News website, who purport to be more objective than other outlets. I fear they don't achieve their objective.

You've seen this. If you look at any sort of articles on the web, they will put the article out, and then they allow comments below. One of the first comments, and I thought it was odd because as it got older and older, they kept floating it to the top.

As other people would comment, their comments would drift below. I don't know if someone was arbitrarily moving this comment up, but it contained just two words. The headline was that Mr. Trump was unharmed after yet another assassination attempt at this dinner.

The comment was, aw shucks. Many comments underneath expressed a similar disappointment that our president, the leader of our nation, and our representative to the world was not killed by an assassin's bullet. There were similar comments made on preceding attempts.

These are the same people who believe that undocumented aliens should be allowed into the country regardless of criminal history, regardless of what they may have done. They decry the blowing up of boats that bring untold numbers of fentanyl and other drugs into our country. The justification was, well, Mr. Trump is responsible for the death of untold thousands of people around the world, so it would be only just if someone killed him.

Yet, those who traffic in drugs and are responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of people directly traceable to their efforts get a free pass and are encouraged and aren't mourned when they pass. I only bring this up not to be political. It should scare us all.

The ability we have to be blinded to our own hypocrisy, to our inconsistency, to our lack of attachment to objective standards of righteousness. This is why, leaving all of that aside, people are going to believe what they believe. And my encouragement is, I don't think it's useful to try to

chime in to these rants and Me Too comments that are under articles, whether you agree with them or not.

No one's mind has changed. There is, I think, an arrogance of making some sort of point in a clever manner or a popular manner that appeals to someone's sense that, well, I've done something. I've influenced the world in some way.

No, we haven't, and we're going to see why here shortly. Don't be dragged down to that level. Our response when we see evil in the world, when we see hypocrisy, when we see this kind of attitude, people gnaw their tongues and blaspheme the God of heaven and everything that He has created that is righteous and holy and good.

They hate His standards. They hate His justice. They never agree, and there's no persuading them at this point.

Anyone who was going to be persuaded has responded earlier on. The temple is full of God's glory, and He says there is no more room for repentance. There is no sacrifice remaining for sin, just the fearful expectation of judgment.

So these demons go out and perform signs and convince the whole world, the kings of the earth, to send their armies to Armageddon. This is policy. This is persuasion.

This is a position. We need to do this. They have been persuaded by something that came from the mouth of Satan, the mouth of the beast, and the mouth of the false prophet.

A case has been made. Israel has to go. This is the cause of the world's problems.

We're never going to have peace in the Middle East until we eliminate Israel. All the rest of us can get along because we all hate the God of the Jews and the God of the Christians. So let's wipe the last of these people out.

Something has happened to the Christians. They seem to be gone for all intents and purposes. Whatever is left representing Christianity is false, but those Jews, the original people of God, must go.

This is the frog demon message. And you can see how people will jump on that bandwagon and feel self-righteous that they must perpetrate this slaughter that they plan. So the seventh angel pours out his bowl.

A loud voice came out of the temple of heaven from the throne saying, it is done. Noises, thunderings, lightnings, a great earthquake, the great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake as has not occurred since men were on the earth. And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and great Babylon was remembered before God to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

Why Babylon? Why the fierceness of God's wrath poured out? Why with this great earthquake do the islands and the mountains flee away? Great hail from heaven fell upon men, each hailstone about 200 pounds. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great. That brings us to chapter 17.

Babylon is mentioned here. What does it mean? We'll see it when we come back from the break.