

Rev 26-05-27a

Good evening, this is Wednesday night at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 27th of May 2026. We continue our study after missing this past Sunday in the book of Revelation.

We're in chapters 17 and 18. We will conclude our look at those and move forward, Lord willing, into the early part of chapter 19 this evening. We have a few final observations to make that are pertinent and helpful for us in terms of our takeaway, what we do with this information.

We are going to take a look at the idea of a cup. We are going to look at the content of the testimony of Jesus. We are going to resolve an interpretive discussion that has taken place about Babylon as depicted in these two chapters.

And all of that we will endeavor to cover in two sessions tonight. Let's ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and studying. We'll begin.

Father, what a privilege to spend this time together. We are so enthusiastic to understand more about your plan and purpose. The revelation that you gave our Savior, your son, the Lord Jesus Christ, on our behalf to aid us and guide us in our daily lives and to enable us to be good stewards of time and opportunity as they are given to us by your grace.

We pray that as we study this section of your word together that the Holy Spirit will give us insight and understanding, not only to grasp the concepts that are on the page, but to see how they affect the way we should think and speak and live in the relatively short time that remains to us in this life. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

You will remember, without going into extensive reading, that in chapter 17 there is a depiction of the scarlet harlot, mother of harlots, abominations of the earth. She's drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. The martyrs are the testifiers.

Let me just pique your interest, if I may. Look at chapter 19. This is where we are going.

And look at the city coming down. It is the Lamb's Bride and so on. And there is a voice speaking to John in verse 9. Revelation 19.9. Please take a quick look.

He said to me, write, Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Why are those pregnant words? Because those who are invited to the supper are not a part of the bride. So there are two groups of believers right off the bat.

And he said to me, these are the true sayings of God. Something I would have not thought to insert here if I was just making this up. But these are the true sayings of God.

This is the true word of God. These are the words of God. We are fixed on finding, understanding, and implementing these words of God in our life.

Then he continues. John says, I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, and you notice there is a whole bunch of italics there.

When we get here, we will see what is actually there in the Greek. See that you do not do that. I am your fellow servant.

This is soon Dulas. Soon means with. Dulas is a duly, a servant, a slave.

I'm your co-servant. Soon Dulas. And I am of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus.

Your brethren. This means that the speaker here is a human being, not an angel, because he is a fellow servant and he has the testimony of Jesus. The word testimony there, you might circle it and put out in the margin.

This is the marturia. M-A-R-T-U-R. I'd have to look at the exact form here and we'll get to it.

But this is from Marturion where we get the word martyr from this. It is the witness, the testimony. Martyrs are witnesses.

They testify. It doesn't mean you died. It means you bear witness.

And that is the word that we have back in the sixth verse of chapter 17. I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the Marturion, the martyrs, those who have and bear the testimony of Jesus. We're going to take a look at that concept.

We want to check and be sure that we have the testimony of Jesus. What exactly is that testimony? And this is as good a time as any to take a look at it. If I were to close books, hand out number two pencils and a blue book and said, write down what you think the testimony of Jesus is and give me a reference if you can think of one.

I promise you, seminary notwithstanding, before I was preparing this, I could not have done so. I would have done the English major thing and probably talked all around the point. Thankfully, we have a witness of scripture that tells us exactly what this is.

If you look in Revelation back in chapter 12, we saw this phrase occur. We saw it back in chapter one, if you remember, when John says, I was on the isle of Patmos for the testimony of Jesus. Verse nine of chapter one, I, John, your brother and companion in tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

For the testimony of Jesus, Jesus Christ. We see it again in chapter 12, Revelation chapter 12, verse 17. This is not an exhaustive list.

These are just pertinent ones. The dragon that had gone after the woman that gave birth to the

child and sent the flood after her. And she was given a place of safety in the wilderness.

The earth helped the woman in verse 16 and opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood, which the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. And the dragon was enraged with the woman. And he went to make war with the rest of her offspring who keep the commandments of God.

This would be the word of God. John mentioned back in chapter one and have the testimony of Jesus or Jesus Christ, depending on which text you use doesn't make a material difference. The testimony of Jesus.

This seems to be a pretty important concept. It's the reason John was exiled to Patmos. It is the reason the dragon has gone to make war with people.

They keep the commandments of God. They have the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. And another wonderful occurrence of this is the one we just read in verse six of chapter 17.

The woman, the scarlet harlot is drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the testifiers of Jesus. This is a synonym for those who have the testimony of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

So this is the woman of chapter 17, and we see that she represents Babylon, mystery Babylon, which is essentially the capital city of Satan in the same way that the heavenly Jerusalem has earthly echoes, earthly symbolic permutations. We've had Jerusalem as David initially established and built it. It has come and gone several times in history.

There is currently a Jerusalem. There is going to be a tribulation period Jerusalem. There will eventually be a new Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven and is the dwelling place of both God and man.

The father on his throne, the lamb is the light. The heavenly kingdom of the father will be characterized by its capital city, the new Jerusalem in which we hope to dwell, where we hope to be property owners. Those who have the privileges and the opportunities to serve and to appreciate and to draw near and to give reverence and praise and honor to our savior and to our heavenly father.

No greater privilege. It is worth thinking about and striving toward. This is the alternative.

So in chapter 17, it is presented as allure, as fornication, as enriching those who provide goods and services to mystery Babylon, the scarlet harlot. And it is often interpreted as false religion. And there's a lot of merit in that.

It isn't limited to what some people think is just the Catholic church. Dave Hunt had a book, Woman Rides the Beast. And a lot of people have implicated the Catholic church.

Certainly could be included in this on a lot of counts, but it is not limited to that. This goes back to the earliest days after the flood in the plain of Shinar. And we're going to see an allusion back to the Tower of Babel before we are finished.

But it is that which draws allegiance and guides people and takes the place that God rightly should occupy in one's life. This can be self-gratification instead of living to serve and to please God. This can be the lust for power, for possessions.

It is greed, avarice, covetousness, which is idolatry. It is having any other God other than God. And this can be sensual pursuits.

It can be accomplishments. It can be fame, glory, human accolades and applause. It is put under this large symbol of false religion.

Why? Because this is what fills the vacuum in the human soul that is supposed to be filled by God. So it can take the form of religion in the sense of the gods of the ancient empires, the gods of Egypt, the gods of Assyria, the gods of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome. We have a lot of materialistic gods that are often represented.

But think of chapter 17 as communicating to us the spiritual and religious substitution in the human heart and human soul. And it is done in the aggregate. This isn't just individuals.

Individuals aggregate and group and create organizations and corporations and empires of various kinds, endeavoring to exert power and to accomplish the things that satisfy the human soul. This is why she is pictured as a harlot and a seductress. She has the promise of intense sensual gratification.

And in exchange, she receives. This is where she gets her fine apparel and her adornments. And she gorges herself at the expense of those who are genuine worshipers of God.

And that's what you have in verse 6. Because these two things cannot coexist. You don't have twin cities as you do in some of our states, where there's one right across the river from the other. And it's the twin cities.

You've got Jerusalem here and you've got Babylon there. They are mutually exclusive. And for Babylon to thrive, those who strive to be citizens of God's capital city, the heavenly Jerusalem, are oppressed, persecuted, often to the point of death.

And they are faithful to the testimony that they bear. The word of God and the testimony of the Lord Jesus. It was in prospect.

When you talk about the prophets of old, the Lord Jesus tells the Pharisees, you search the scriptures because you think in them you have eternal life. And it is they that bear witness of me. The Old Testament prophets, the Old Testament saints, bore witness to coming salvation in

sacrifice and in atonement and in redemption.

And as it drew closer and more near, it became apparent that there would be a suffering servant who would bear the sins of the people. It was a far off in the early days of Old Testament history. Later days, later prophets, it becomes more clear.

But all of them had faith, Hebrews 11.6 kind of faith. He that comes to God believes that he exists and believes that he rewards those who diligently seek him. It is worth seeking and finding God.

He is a good God. This is the great debate. We've never seen such bitter vituperation against God and the people of God as has come out in the last 25 years or so with the new atheism.

It really started in the early 2000s with Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, and several others. You had earlier atheists who wrote and sort of made their position clear. But in the last few decades, it has attracted any number of adherents, followers, and those who celebrate and who are enthusiastic about trying to not just disbelieve in God, but to get rid of those who do believe in God.

And I'm reading a book right now by a guy. His first book said, why faith and science are completely incompatible. And in his second book, he says, actually, if we're ever going to make any progress as a human race, we have to eliminate faith and people of faith entirely.

And it is intensifying. Look around at the growth of, quote unquote, democratic socialism, despite its bloody history and its extensive record of failure. It appeals to people who cannot think.

And we have two or three generations now taking over the world who never learned to think. This is what postmodernism is. We've understand why people can be so crazy.

Just remember, they are not operating on the basis of reason. They were never given that skill, never decided to develop it on their own. And they operate on a combination of emotion and shallow and simplistic pre-digested tropes that are handed to them.

And it's easy. It doesn't take effort. It doesn't take thought.

You don't have to go to a quiet place and sort out your goals and values and priorities. Just turn on your phone, hit the social media feed. You will be told what to think.

And it doesn't matter. I would be interested to see, I'm not trying to be political here, but we have a president that has pages of solid, objectively measured accomplishments in ending wars, improving the economy, jobless rate, education, weeding out graft and fraud and evil, improving trade relations, bringing all kinds of fresh resources into our country that benefit every aspect. And you could list all of that.

But when you show that to someone who has had a steady diet of Orange Man Bad on their

phone, the logical processes are not there. Those of us who grew up in a reasonable world cannot figure out how you put those two things on a scale and Orange Man Bad completely disappears anything else. He could cure cancer.

And if you put his name on it, nobody would take the vaccine. It can't be good. There's something wrong.

And I'm not, again, trying to be political. I am using this to make a point. This is the kind of lie that is going to characterize this time.

And as you look around, you can see how the lie works. Why am I pointing this out? Not so that we can sit in our armchair and say, look at these poor people who can't figure things out. The lie is pernicious.

It is subtle. It is intensely deceptive. We are warned over and over again, let no one deceive you.

So instead of looking at all the people and saying, oh, wow, look at how they're being deceived. We should look at ourselves, examine every corner of our mental and spiritual house and get out the leaven. A little leaven can leaven the whole lump.

And to any extent that we are being deceived, we are in danger. It only takes a small gap in the armor. Think about Achilles with his heel, completely armored up.

His mother dipped him in the river and protected him, but she didn't dip his heel. And that's where the arrow hit him. And that's how he died and disappeared in mythology.

And it is a reminder, even secular people understand, that it only takes one small vulnerability to disable and to neutralize us. So while we observe deception and distraction and complete domination of lies, fraud, waste, abuse, the awfulest notions and policies defending criminals and persecuting good people, calling evil good and calling good evil, people with itching ears who, as the Bible says, are looking around for somebody to tell them what they have already decided they want to hear. We observe that, but what do we then go and do? And that's why revelation is so helpful, because we are looking at a future time.

I don't think it's very far in the future, given the rate at which things are disintegrating around us socially and spiritually. But the Lord Jesus gave us this so that we can examine ourselves and ground ourselves in the center of our faith. That's what's going to make a difference.

I'm not going to have to answer for people in some big city or some other state that's red or blue or has a bad policy or perpetrated a bunch of fraud or let loose a bunch of criminals. The Lord Jesus isn't going to ask me about any of that. He is going to ask me how clean and swept was my house and was it then filled with the Holy Spirit and with the Word of God? And did I have the testimony of Jesus? What is the testimony of Jesus? Our same author gives us a really good definition.

Turn with me to 1 John 5, just a few pages back. 1st, 2nd, 3rd John, Jude, Revelation. 1 John 5. We'll begin at verse 6. 6. There is a text problem here that is very evident to anybody who has studied it.

This is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ. Remember, it's the testimony of Jesus, the testimony of Jesus Christ. He came by water and blood.

This is his birth and his death. Water, this is what we say when a woman is getting ready to have a baby, her water breaks. Birth is accompanied by this water.

And there is this symbolic presence of water and blood when the soldier sticks his spear into the Lord's side. Water and blood. It is death, but there is life, the water of life.

He came by water and blood. It is the Spirit who bears witness because the Spirit is truth. The Spirit and the Word, we know the role that these play in our lives.

For there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree as one. If you look at your New King James text note down there, the only four or five very late manuscripts contained these words in Greek.

So the words in heaven, so the Father, the Word, and the Spirit. Someone added this because we have very few references to the Trinity. And somebody thought, well, I know who it is that bears witness in heaven.

And so the words from in heaven in verse seven through on earth in verse eight, you can line those out. But look past that to verse nine. If we receive the witness, this is the martyrion.

This is the testimony. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater. For this is the testimony of God, which he has testified of his son.

If we receive the witness, martyrion of men, the martyrion of God is greater. For this is the martyrion of God, which he has testified of his son. Martyria, the verb form.

He that believes on the son of God has the martyrion in himself, has the testimony of Jesus. So what is the testimony of Jesus? You believe on the son of God. He that does not believe God makes God a liar because he does not believe the record, the martyrion that God martyred of his son.

And this is the record, martyrion, that God has given to us eternal life. And this life is in his son. He that has the son has life.

He that has not the son of God hath not life. This is the witness. John is the same John that wrote

the revelation.

When he says he has the testimony of Jesus, the martyria of Jesus, this is what he's talking about. Jesus Christ is the son of God, and he is the source of life. Placing faith in him grants us by grace, through faith, not of ourselves, a gift of God, eternal life.

This is the witness. There is no other source, there is no other means of deliverance out of this present evil age, out of sin, out of suffering, out of a fallen and satanically ruled world except Jesus Christ. Old Testament saints are going to enter into that salvation when they are raised and experience the salvation in Jesus Christ in the millennial kingdom.

We have already entered into that. It's so easy to get distracted and forget about the Lord Jesus. Life is busy.

It's complicated. It's stressful. It's distracting.

When you want to plop down and take a rest, it's easy to flip on the news and get carried away across the oceans and into the halls of power and into what people are doing, hither and yon, good and bad and otherwise. We are enjoined to remember who we are and why we're here, to have, to treasure, to lay hold of and keep close the testimony of Jesus. What is it? I am not my own.

I was bought with a price. That price was the blood of Jesus Christ. We belong to him.

We have been given many great and precious promises. We have a new and better covenant founded on great and precious promises in Christ. Read Ephesians chapter one, the menorah of things that we have in him.

What a wonderful chapter. Never get tired of looking at it. If you're discouraged, if you're suffering, if any of those things in the Babylon list, and we gave ourselves an acronym to try to remember the deflection and the distraction and the seduction of Babylon to draw us away.

It is drawing us away and seducing us into fornication. Fornication is a departure from what God intended. What did God intend for us? The word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

And if we are drawn into B, building something internally for ourselves, gold and silver, precious stones and pearls. If we are caught up in appearances, what do people think? What am I wearing? How do I look? What's the adulation or lack thereof that other people have with regard to me? The second B, building externally. I've got building materials.

I've got expensive wood. I've got iron and brass. And what is the nature of our endeavor, our ambition? Are we trying to build a legacy, build a reputation, build something lasting in the human realm? That's the second B. Why? This is the cinnamon and the spices and the frankincense, the perfumes, the aromas.

What is it that pleases us and gives us a wonderful sensual atmosphere that is pleasant and impressive and expensive and desirable? All of these things. You go to the L, logistics. Am I consumed with how am I going to survive? What happens if this goes away or that falls through? Or my investments fail or my house burns down or my provider checks out and goes to glory? Or what about this? What about that? How am I going to subsist? How will I get along? And the worries and the cares of this life, you think about the parable of the soils and thorns grow up and choke the word and render it unfruitful.

That's the L. That's the logistics. The O, N, the last two of those where you have these things that draw us away from the testimony of Jesus. What is the core truth that can never fail and never fade? We are held in the hands of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ died for us, saved us, and we are uniquely his. This is where we're going in chapter 19. And this is laying the groundwork.

If you are not seduced away, you become a part of this wonderful bride that is adorned for the wedding in pure linen. Doesn't need any other adornment. It's the righteous deeds of the saints.

It doesn't say, and she's got gold and she's got pearls and she's got purple and she's got scarlet. The white linen is all she needs. It is more beautiful than anything the harlot can drape around herself.

That's where we are heading. So even though your English translation in 1 John 5 uses three different words, witness, record, and testify, it's all the testimony of Jesus. When in doubt, read John chapter 5, 1 John chapter 5. The spirit testifies because the spirit is truth.

Do we believe the news? Do we believe materiality? Or do we believe what God tells us in the spirit and in the word? If we receive the testimony of men, we have set aside a greater testimony, which is the testimony of God. Again, what did Jesus tell the Pharisees? You should be able to quote it back to me as many times as I've quoted it. You search the scriptures because you think that in them you find eternal life, and it is they that testify of me, Jesus said.

The word of God is the testimony of Jesus. This is the testimony God has given to us eternal life, no greater gift. This life is in His Son.

He that has the Son has that testimony, has that faith, that dedication, that forward look that we are getting glimpses of here in the closing chapters of Revelation. If we have that, this fortifies us, it strengthens us and carries us through all of the challenges represented by Babylon. Go back to some of the earlier sevens, what were the challenges for the seven churches? Remember my acronym, every smiling person, thy sorrows feel loudly.

Ephesus, love was the problem. Smyrna, suffering was the problem. Pergamos, the teachings and doctrines of Balaam were the problem.

Thyatira, Jezebel, foreshadowing the harlot herself was the problem, people getting in bed with her. Sardis, like sardines is how I remember it, you have a name that you're alive but you're dead. There's nothing more dead than a can of sardines.

Philadelphia, the hopeful church, the possibility of being faithful, of being commended by the Lord Jesus. And Laodicea, lukewarm. If you're hot, you've got medicinal value.

If you're cold, you've got refreshment value. Being lukewarm, spewed out of the mouth. You are poor, miserable, blind and naked.

Buy from me gold refined in the fires so that you can get clothing and get back to where you need to be. These resources are available. Do not be poor, miserable, blind and naked.

Laodicea, think about these sevens, use them as a measuring stick. Anytime we lose our joy, lose our focus, lose our hope, lose our concentration, pick one of the sevens in Revelation. Any one will do.

Take the seven seals and look at what the world is going to suffer by way of judgment because of its reliance on materiality, material power, material commerce, the false sense of peace that they try to get by treaties and it never lasts. When you look at the horsemen, look at the trumpets, look at the bulls, take any seven and you will find there something that is valuable to measure ourselves. Well, we're going to pause here and take our break.

We're going to enjoy some special music and when we come back, we're going to finish this comparison by looking at Chapter 18, Comparison and Contrast with Chapter 17, the Religious Aspects of Babylon, and then move into Chapter 19. Let's pause here and take a break.