

Rev 26-07-08a

Good evening, it is Wednesday night here at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It's the 8th of July 2026. We continue our study in the book of Revelation.

We are approaching the end of chapter 20. We're looking at the great white throne judgment and the details that are included in some ways are quite general. We see through a glass darkly, yet what is there is important for us to understand both in terms of future anticipation and present application.

Let's ask God's blessing on our time in fellowship and study. We'll begin. Father, what a privilege it is for us to spend this time together.

We are grateful that you have granted eternal life to us. You have placed us in your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. We abound.

We are blessed. We are fruitful. We are productive.

We are secure. We have a present hope and a bright future. All of these things because of the tremendous work of the Lord Jesus, who sacrificially came to fulfill your plan and secure our deliverance.

We pray that as we look at the truth of your word together tonight, that God the Holy Spirit will help us not only to understand it and to make application of it, but also to expand our rightful appreciation of our Savior, the Lord Jesus, and everything that you have done for us through him. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Let's look at our passage, Revelation chapter 20. We have survived the entirety of the tribulation. We have examined ourselves in the light of the seven churches.

We have gone with John up to the heavenly throne room and seen innumerable angels, 24 elders on thrones, white-robed throngs, songs of praise, a search for someone worthy to complete the plan of God, its culmination, as detailed in a sealed scroll. The Lamb is found. He is worthy.

And he begins to open that scroll and chapters 6 through 19 unfold as a result. We have been through the seven seals, the seven trumpets. We've looked at the seven thunders and noted that they exist, although we do not know their content, and the seven bulls.

We have seen the interregnums, the intermissions between the unfolding of the sixth and the seventh of some of these series, in which there are visions that detail the woman representing Israel with the crown of twelve stars and the young child that is born. We have seen Satan, the beast that arises out of the sea at his behest, the beast that arises from the land as the false prophet. We have seen this culminating in chapters 17 and 18 with the depiction of mystery, harlot, Babylon, the capital city of Satan, that has existed in a spiritual form since Cain slew his

brother Abel and has only become more clear, more fulsome, more attractive to those who demand an alternative to God and his way and his word.

This results in the final great battle of the tribulation at Armageddon, the reaping with the sickle as it was depicted at the close of the bowl judgments. The earth is reaped. There is blood that spatters the garments of the Lord Jesus Christ at his return as he tramples the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.

And we now have come to chapter 20, where the final reckoning for all of human history takes place. Everyone either has been judged at this point or will be judged at this time. We have already seen by reviewing other passages what we know of the first resurrection and judgment, which is that of, and this will surprise you, what is the first resurrection and judgment? It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the firstfruits. He was raised and he is acceptable in his father's sight. You think about the passage in Philippians three that talks about the Lord Jesus, who did not think equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, took on the form of a servant and came in the likeness of humanity.

Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself, became obedient. This is our model, to understand the will of God for us and to be humble and obedient, whatever it takes, whatever it costs, looking at the example of our Savior and endeavoring by God's grace and through God's strength to follow it. But having done this, having gone to the cross, despising the shame, for this reason God has highly exalted him and given him the name that is above every name.

He was judged, not before he came, but after, because he navigated every test, every temptation, and out of love for his father, out of love for us, in the power of the Holy Spirit in human flesh, the Lord Jesus accomplished the perfect will of God. And when he was raised, he was qualified to enter into his father's presence. He is judged worthy.

And we saw this worthiness at the point that there is a search to find someone who can open the seven-sealed scroll. Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive honor and power and glory and so on. That is the first resurrection and the first judgment.

The second resurrection and judgment is you and me, church age believers, from Pentecost to the rapture. Subsequent to the rapture, we will stand at the judgment seat of Christ. And we have a distinction of who is raised when and who is judged when.

So our judgment is that of works. The fact that we participated in the rapture demonstrates that we are believers. There is no judgment that could send us to the lake of fire at the resurrection of New Testament saints, the rapture.

Our judgment is a judgment of works. Equivalently speaking, there will be works recorded in

books. Those books will be opened and we will be judged according to our works.

What is on the line in this judgment? Future opportunity, inheritance, and reward. We are not greedy. We are not selfish.

We are not self-promoting in wanting to do well at this judgment. Doing well at this judgment, receiving inheritance and reward and opportunity reflects the glory of Jesus Christ because we are nothing without Him. Anything we lay hold of, anything that comes to us now or in the ages to come is entirely because of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Him we inherit. In Him we possess sonship and priesthood and chosenness, election, being the called. It is all through the Lord Jesus.

We like to think when our children do well that it reflects on parents. We must have done something right. Look how well our child is doing.

There is a sense in which parents can be thankful that their ministrations and their efforts to raise a child in the way that he should go bears fruit and they have a happy, successful, productive offspring, one or more. That is gratifying. You hope that as a child you reflect credit on your parents.

That somebody doesn't look at us and say, that person must have grown up like a weed. They haven't been trained. They don't understand the way life works.

They don't understand the value of integrity and hard work and so on. So there is a link. We are also products of our own choices.

Sometimes the best upbringing will not stop someone who is determined to be wayward from going off in a strange direction. But we want it to be in spite of a good upbringing and a solid family home and training and a biblical center to marriage and family. If someone is going to go wayward, we want it to be in spite of giving them the best possible launch.

In the same way, we want to reflect credit on our Savior. We want Him to be glad, in a sense, that He suffered and died to bring us into the fold, to enter us into relationship with the Father. So this is the judgment seat of Christ.

In my notes, you see JSOC all over the place. The judgment seat of Christ. This is the gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and stubble idea.

And you have the necessity for the judgment of our works. So to note a few passages, in case you don't already know them or have them, 1 Corinthians 3, verses 12 through 15. 1 Corinthians 3, 12 through 15.

This is where our works are tested by fire. The person is saved. Sometimes the works are

completely incinerated, and we are saved yet so as by fire.

This is the old gospel song, rusty old halo, skinny white gown. You just barely get there dressed enough to be decent. 2 Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 10.

Believers will appear before the Lord Jesus Christ to receive according to what we have done. Helpful thing to review and remember at the start of the day. Whatever I do today is getting recorded.

We want it to be good things. God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith, your labor of love, your patience of hope, and so on. And this is the second resurrection.

Christ, the firstfruits, then they who are Christ's is coming. You remember 1 Corinthians 15. And we are judged according to our works.

So you can put with this Hebrews chapter 6, verse 10. God is not unfair. God is not unjust.

He will not forget your work and the love that you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. This is love for God expressed in love for others. You have ministered to the saints and continue to do so.

Many times we are the challenged. We are under duress. We feel the pressure and are squeezed under a heavy burden.

And yet we can find ways to be a blessing to fellow believers. This is in the one another circle in particular. All of the spheres of love, you remember them.

The innermost is one another love. And we are careful to express this in the direction of believers who are able to reciprocate. This is how you know whether someone is in the one another love or not in that sphere, in that circle.

Are they able? Are they capable? And do they, in fact, reciprocate? And there is mutual edification. There is being loving toward one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another. If I can forgive someone, can they forgive me? If I can encourage someone, can they encourage me? We, it is easy to recognize the one another circle.

Beyond that is neighbor love. Treat people as we would like to be treated. This is a more general and a bit more distant standard.

If I don't want someone throwing trash over the fence into my backyard, then I'm not going to throw trash over the fence into their backyard. Beyond this is those who are outside. To the extent that it is possible, Paul says, live peaceably.

Don't be a source of conflict. It would be better to be wronged than to be the cause of conflict, dissension. This is the realm of testimony where let your light so shine before men.

This is those who are outside, that they see your good works and glorify your Father. So that is the third sphere. And the Lord Jesus describes that in Matthew 5, verse 16.

3, 4, and 5, as you remember, is the Sermon on the Mount. Let your light so shine before men. They see your good works and glorify your Father.

You want them to be drawn to the Father as a result of our expressed love. The final sphere of love is enemy love. Love your enemies.

Do good to those who hate you. Pray for those who spitefully use you. All of this will be judged.

Our works reflect our understanding of how to manifest love. Don't be inappropriate. Don't try to do one another love to someone who is an enemy.

We curate. We are careful. The Lord Jesus judged the villages to which He traveled during His earthly ministry.

And when there was minimal response, He didn't stick around. He said to His disciples, we must go elsewhere. Now the people are just coming because they want to see a sideshow.

They want to be dazzled by the miracles. The response to the Word, the purpose for which Jesus came, anybody that was going to respond has already done so. Now it's just turning into a circus.

Let's go to another place, another town. The Lord Jesus discerned what the response was. We exercise love and we discern the response.

And we place our map of spheres in such a way that our works please God. We don't cast our pearls before swine. We don't spend time and effort where it is wasted and ineffective.

We follow the example of the Lord Jesus in that regard. This will be judged. What we did today in this regard, think back over the last 8 or 12 hours, depending on how long you've been awake.

Whatever we did today is in the books. Can't change it now. What we can do is review, spot areas of failure, confess them, claim the cleansing and the grace of God, the forgiveness for our mental attitude sins, our verbal sins, sins of the tongue.

And heaven forbid we actually committed overt sins of action. We keyed somebody's car or threw a sack of burning excrement at their door or some other horrible thing. Our challenges are primarily mental.

And that is why God puts the Holy Spirit within us and puts the Word of God within us, because that's where the real battle is. It's not flesh and blood. It's principalities, powers, alternate ways of thinking, priorities and goals and values that are out of line, out of keeping, and in many times in direct opposition to God.

This will be judged. I'm dwelling on this judgment because that is us, that is now. Whatever we did today is in the books.

What we do tomorrow, if God grants us the grace to wake up in the morning and have another day, that has yet to be written. We will determine what is written in the books of works that will be opened at the judgment seat of Christ. Let's take whatever time is left and try to make those pages as clean and bright and full of righteousness by faith as we can.

That is the second resurrection and the second judgment. The first and the second partake of a set of similarities. Both of them result in immortality.

The Lord Jesus was raised immortal. He has died once and will never die again. We will die once and never die again, with the exception of those few that will be translated directly.

This is why scripture will say it is appointed to man once to die and after that the judgment. He's talking primarily about believers, because we know that for unbelievers there is a second death. Scripture is not contradicting itself.

Scripture is talking about specific groups. There is a second death and we're about to see it, but the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and our resurrection are similar in that when we are raised we will be like Him. Immortal, eternal, never to die again.

The third resurrection and judgment is that of Old Testament saints at the inception of the Millennial Kingdom. This is what we are seeing in a general allusion in the beginning of Revelation chapter 20. Adam, Abel, Seth, Lamech, Methuselah, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, on down, the 12 sons of Jacob, good, bad, and ugly.

I think they are all believers. Joseph, the Ephraim and Manasseh, double set, double portion for Joseph and the remainder, Moses, Aaron, her, Joshua. Name your Old Testament saints in the biblical record.

All will be raised. Hebrews chapter 11. These all died in faith, not having received the promise.

As we've reviewed in recent sessions, what kind of promises were given to Old Testament saints? Were they promised streets of gold, gates of pearl, heavenly mansions? What was the promise consistently throughout the Old Testament? Earthly peace, earthly kingdom, earthly prosperity, relief from oppression and attacks by enemies, possession in the land, the land of Israel. They are earthly promises. They have to be fulfilled and you can't metaphoricalize them.

You can't tell Abraham, well, you know, there was a time when I let some great, great, great, great 27 greats, 57 greats, 127 greats after you, these grandchildren got the promises. God made promises to Abraham and he's going to fulfill them to Abraham. They are earthly promises and Abraham will be raised as Job describes.

Those skin worms destroy my flesh. I will stand on my own two feet. I will look through my own two eyes and I will see my Redeemer.

I know he lives and I will stand on the last day and observe him from my flesh, me and not another. Gave you those passages last time. All of the dust passages, they go to the dust, but they return from the dust and dwell for a thousand years so that God literally completely and faithfully fulfills all of his Old Testament covenant promises to his Old Testament covenant people, Israel.

They are not the church. They are not given to Jesus Christ as a special possession as the church is. They have an equally glorious and wonderful place in God's plan, but it is different.

This is the kind of thing that is so hard to explain sometimes when people do not want to be subordinate. Wives submit to your husbands. You can see the flying vegetables before you finish the sentence and it is so short-sighted.

Are enlisted people less valuable than officers? You could really cogently argue the contrary. I would rather have a whole bunch of troops and staff NCOs than a room full of butter bar second lieutenants any day of the week. Yet on paper, officers get paid more, quarters are nicer, and so on.

You say, well, that is so discriminatory. Why does not everybody get paid the same? Why does not a lance corporal get the same pay as a four-star general and so on? There are different roles, different functions, and they are valuable and valued, honorable and honored. To be the best person in a submission role and in a support role and in a get-it-done, boots-on-the-ground, rubber-meets-the-road role is just as valuable in God's sight as a supervisory role, a planning role, an administration role, something that looks like it has more perks in this life.

Remember, the last shall be first. And there are servants who will be much better off in the eternal future than their masters ever were in this life. We have to take the long view.

We have to trust that God is fair, God is just, and God knows what He is doing when He subordinates. It is God who said the elder will serve the younger. Why is any serving at all? I thought serving in slavery were heinous evils.

Not in God's eyes. Why is it God never prohibits slavery? We cannot get past our human self-righteousness in thinking about what God has designed. And Paul tells slaves, if you are assigned slavery by God in this life, be the best slave anybody has ever seen.

Slave the heck out of that thing. Make yourself valuable and indispensable and reflect the glory of Jesus Christ as a slave. That's what the Lord Jesus did.

I just quoted it. He emptied Himself of His divine glory, took on the form of a bond slave, and came in the likeness of man. If the Lord Jesus can do it, we should be able to manage it in

humanity.

We don't have near as much to lose as the Lord Jesus did in being willing to serve. Remember He said in another place, the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. Set aside self-interest, self-gratification, and look for ways to serve.

That's going to be our judgment. Now, when the Old Testament saints at the third resurrection are raised, it differs from the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and it differs from the resurrection of the church in that it is not a resurrection to immortality. It is a mortal resurrection.

It is an earthly resurrection, earthly bodies, earthly existence capable of death and sweating and all the other things that we have seen to receive the fulfillment of the earthly promises. That's not the final conclusion for them, but all of the hardship, the defeats, the faithful people trapped in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation that went out under divine discipline, national discipline, and yet there were faithful individuals like Daniel and Hananiah and Mishael and Azariah and Ezekiel and so many others who went out into captivity despite the fact that they were wonderful, godly, faithful believers. What happened to the fulfillment of promises for them when they were premier in their generation? They are coming back and they are going to enjoy the fullness that was promised to them as those who place their faith in God.

They are the righteous, that God will not allow to be moved. They had a hard time in the first go-round. They are going to come back and for a thousand years, longer than any Israelite kingdom or land possession, ten centuries, God's faithful Old Testament saints, Adam and Eve, Abel and Cain.

Cain is probably not going to be in the land. He and a lot of people like him who are believers. As an unbeliever, you don't offer a sacrifice to God and have a conversation with God afterward.

God protects your life with a special mark. This is a relationship of a wayward son, not an unbeliever. Cain's not an unbeliever.

Judas is not an unbeliever. I'm sorry, we've gone over this many times. They will come back and depending on the judgment of works that takes place at the beginning of the millennial kingdom, you have the passage where it says that Israel will pass under the rod.

You remember this? This is Ezekiel 20, verse 37. God says, I will make you pass under the rod and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. Passing under the rod means there are those who will be judged worthy based on their previous earthly life to live in the land proper, to dwell in their tribal allotment, to have short journeys to the millennial temple and to the millennial Jerusalem and to see the Lord Jesus and David and his sons ruling on the throne in Jerusalem.

You have to qualify for that. You have to pass under the rod into others. The rod will come down, tap them and say Timbuktu for you.

Southern tip of South America for you. Greenland or Antarctica for you. Tip of an island off the coast of Alaska for you.

They will pass under the rod. This is a judgment that takes place at the beginning of the kingdom. Earthly people, earthly inheritances, earthly rewards, earthly opportunities in the millennial kingdom.

This is the third resurrection. It is a mortal resurrection. There are those who, because they've done well, they are going to last the entire 10 centuries.

The record, as you recall, for Methuselah was 969 years. You only have to beat that by, what is it, 31 more years to get to a thousand. That's the kind of mortality that will exist in the millennial kingdom.

That is the third resurrection. You can look at it as, in parentheses, a resuscitation. This is human body 2.0. Not immortality, not divine issue, eternal permanent, human body 2.0. That is the third resurrection and the third judgment.

It is also based on works. Those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, sought for honor, glory and immortality, they will receive commensurate reward and inheritance in that kingdom age. Then comes the age, the end of the age, the judgment at the end of the age.

This is what we see in chapter 20 here, where when the thousand years have been completed, in verse 7, Satan will be released, goes out to deceive the nations which are on the four corners of the earth. Gog, Magog, gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. When you see the sand of the sea, this is always earth dwellers.

God told Abraham, your descendants will be as the sand of the sea. Well, there is at least an equal number of people who do not want to submit themselves under the mighty hand of God so that he can exalt them in due time. They are cut from the same cloth volitionally, choice-wise, as Satan himself.

They will have either been earthly survivors of the tribulation, or they will have been born in the early centuries or the mid-centuries of the millennial kingdom. They will come to maturity. They will see what is going on.

And with full visibility, like the angels in heaven, like Satan himself, there is nothing hidden. There is nothing that has to be taken on faith. Everything is open and visible, and you make a choice.

I don't like this. I don't want this. Like the old Anderson commercial, I'd rather do it myself.

I'd rather set the standard of righteousness. I would rather be on my own. The problem is, anything that is disconnected from God is like a piece of vegetation.

You disconnect it from the roots where life and nourishment come from. It will inevitably wither, die, rot, and corrupt what is around it. There is no life apart from God.

And this is what human history has been a demonstration of. Any time man, by man's efforts, tries to pull himself up by his own bootstraps, tries socialism, tries communism, tries all different kinds of human solutions to man's problems, our fallen nature corrupts it. The bad ideas of Satan, it all ends up imploding, destroying, corrupting, and millions die as a result.

It always fails. If you can bear to get through it, watch Mel Gibson's movie *Apocalypto*. If you want to see what happened in South America with completely godless cultures, heads rolling down the sides of ziggurats, blood coming down in channels, that's my mental picture of Satan as the god of this world, having entire continents for centuries to try to demonstrate that he can make a paradise.

He can make a Shambhala. He can make a Nirvana that, apart from God, gives everyone peace, happiness, joy, fruitfulness, and productivity. It always rots from the inside out.

So this culminating rebellion, all those who reject God and reject His Son, the Lord Jesus, who is visible and open. This is not faith. Faith is what you can't see.

Everybody can see it, and looking at it, they will reject it. This is why I've said it almost a hundred times. You can't just send little babies to heaven and expect that they're going to go into the eternal future, because just like in the millennium, when individuals come and see God, like Satan, like the angels who fell, they see it, and they don't like it, and they choose against it.

You're not saving someone simply by putting them in the presence of God. There are those who hate the presence of God. Look at the Pharisees in the presence of Jesus.

They hated Him. So this rebellion will out everyone who has been chafing and simmering and abrading under the iron rod rule. And when Satan is released, this is their Messiah.

It's a reverse salvation for them, and they will gather to Satan. And God has reserved Him for this very purpose. He is the magnet that will draw all of these iron filings out of the saved and the camp of the saints.

So they go up on the breadth of the earth. They surround the camp of the saints in the blood city. Now we don't know the details.

Fire that comes from heaven from God and incinerates all of these is a good metaphor for whatever is going to happen in detail. It may actually be that one great giant bolt of fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours them. I personally think this anticipates the lake of fire.

They're going to be slain in some fashion and will still face the judgment of works represented

also in the sheep and goats scenario of Matthew chapter 25. You notice that in all cases, whether it is the great white throne, whether it is the sheep and goats, whether it is this judgment, the end of those who reject God is fire. You don't live in fire.

You perish and are destroyed and are no more in fire. Ashes are not the same as a living person and fire incinerates and what is left is merely ashes and smoke. So fire devours them.

They are devoured. They're not tormented. They're not tortured.

They're devoured, consumed. They are no more. The devil who deceived them is cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and false prophet are.

They will be tormented day and night forever and ever. I don't understand this. I know that it is separate and distinct from what happens to human beings in the lake of fire.

Human beings are incinerated and destroyed. Angels seem to be made out of different stuff. They exist outside of time.

They existed before time, before this heavens and earth, before this universe. They live in a different realm and their judgment and the attendant sentence, the lake of fire was prepared for the devil and his angels. Whatever it is, it's beyond what we can understand.

So it does not bother me that these three individuals who are angelic in origin have a separate and distinct description of what they undergo by way of judgment than humans. Then, verse 11, great white throne to him who sat on it from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. We're going to go to the break here, but think about this now.

Before the great white throne judgment, the heavens and earth, as we now know them, flee and have no more place. They disappear. This is to me the simplest way to understand this.

Imagine that this universe is running on a wonderfully gigantic heavenly computer. It's a program that's running. Pick the program that you like the most.

It's a word processor. It's a video game. It's your browser, shopping on Amazon, whatever it is.

It is running. It has all kinds of capabilities. Then you close it.

And when you close it, you have a history. You know what it did when it was running. But if you close it and then you delete it, it can't run again.

Where did it go? Well, there's no more place found for it. There's no setup program. There's no executable to click and start it running again.

It was running. It served its purpose. It has been closed and deleted.

That's what happens to this universe, this heavens, and this earth. They flee away. No more place is found for them.

Think about this as we go to the break. This is before the great white throne judgment. If there is no more heavens and there is no more earth, how do you get the sea being mentioned in connection with the great white throne and in the first verse of the next chapter? Ponder that as we go to the break.

When we come back, we'll see if we can answer that question.