

Rev 26-07-26a

Good morning, it is Sunday here at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It's the 26th of July. It is Sunday.

This is the 26th of July, 2026. We're in Revelation chapter 21. We're going to ask God's blessing on our time of fellowship and study and then we'll begin.

Father, we are thankful as always for your superintending presence in our lives and especially this morning in our assembly. We thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit to enable us to enter into things that are beyond human understanding or our grasp. We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior, who through the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despised the shame.

He is even now seated at your right hand, representing us, interceding on our behalf. What a privilege we enjoy as believers in this age. We thank you for the Lord Jesus and for the way that he has made possible for us to live, to enter into your presence and represent ourselves before your throne.

We pray that as we look at this portion of your word together that the Holy Spirit will help us to understand it and figure out what it means in the hours and days that remain to us in this life so that we can maximize the potential that has been granted to us by your grace. We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Reading our passage, I'm sure I have some cheaters here somewhere. Chapter 21. Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

Also there was no more sea. Then I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. This is what we are going to be looking at in detail this morning, beginning in verse 9. Coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Why is she prepared? What do you know about this? Did God prepare her? Did Jesus prepare her? Did five wise virgins prepare her? Why is she prepared? Remember in the previous chapter, the bride has made herself ready. If we want to be a part of this privileged and glorified group, we make ourselves ready. That is the opportunity day by day, hour by hour in this life.

We make ourselves qualified, eligible to be a part of this wonderful future reality. So she is prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, look, the tabernacle of God is with men.

He will dwell with them. They shall be his people. God himself will be with them and be their God.

God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor

crying. There shall be no more pain for the former things have passed away.

They passed away up in verse 1. Then we have for only the second time in the entire book of Revelation. The first was in chapter 1. The second is here. God, the father himself speaks.

We have voices that come from the heavenly places, but he is specifically identified here as speaking for himself. He who sat on the throne said, behold, I make all things new. He is the one who originated the first creation, this creation, Genesis chapter 1. He is the God.

He is the designer, the architect, the initiator, the enabler for the new creation. It is sourced in him. This, by the way, is a real problem for materialists.

Those who think that there is no need for a God, it is a superstition. They believe that science has answered or will answer all questions. The universe created itself.

There are points of origination. God claims his status as the maker of new things, the creator of what does not previously exist. If you want to stump a materialist, ask them the source of the Big Bang.

Nobody in science can answer that question. Ask them the source of biological life, the information contained in DNA. There is no answer.

There are speculations. There is wishful thinking. But every time they take one of these speculations and model it on the biggest, fastest, most powerful computers that have ever existed, they come up dry.

They cannot find a path from non-life to life because God said, let there be, and there was, biological life. There is no answer for the improvement and the innovation that takes place during the course of the history of biological life, classically represented by the Cambrian explosion. You suddenly have innovation and new structures, new proteins, new extensive sequences of coded information in DNA that cannot be created by the processes of mutation and natural selection.

You can't take seven letters out of a Scrabble box and by duplicating and rearranging and corrupting, end up with the rest of the letters of the alphabet. These were created by God and agency that God invoked in order to bring about the diversity and the beauty and the complexity of biological life. God originates these things, human consciousness, sentience.

I just finished a very interesting book that I've mentioned in previous weeks called A World Appears. And it is a study by a completely secular journalist, an exploration of consciousness. What is the nature of sentience and self-awareness? And he surveys and has gone to interview the leading scientists and the foremost thinkers and researchers in this field.

They have no clue. Those that thought it originated in some part of the brain, the brainstem, have abandoned that theory. You can't get from the mechanics of a brain to self-awareness.

It doesn't evolve. It doesn't come from anywhere except our Father in heaven, the Creator. When all else can be explained away, God's status as the Creator, Romans chapter one, the last half, what being known of God is manifest in creation.

And those who observe the appearance of these wonderful, complex, divinely created things, they can explain away a lot of other things. They can dupe themselves. They can blind themselves.

They can limit themselves to materialist explanations, most of which is an appeal to what God has already created. It's like looking at automobiles running up and down the street and sitting in driveways and saying, where did these cars come from? Well, someone must have created them. Then someone says, oh no, I found the factory in Detroit.

This is where Fords are made. And that answers all questions. Who made the factory? Who came up with the designs? Who produced and provided the materials? Who procured the laborers and the delivery mechanisms and all of the complex systems by which these things are assembled? Materialists say, I found the factory.

So that answers my questions. It's a complete failure. God is the Creator God.

And by way of application, when we look at circumstances and situations in our lives, and we look at cause and effect and the influences and the factors that surround and undergird whatever we face in a day, you think about your circumstances right now. When church is over and you resume life, there are places to be and things to do and requirements and tasks, responsibilities. And we tend to let our lives be guided and directed by these immediate factors when it is important for us to remember that the God who created these circumstances and who created us at this time and in this place to navigate them, His purposes and His design are the issue.

Any godless, materialist, self-indulgent person who is an unbeliever or a faithless believer can be blown about by every wind of doctrine or circumstance. Anyone, any completely clueless, biblically ignorant person can live a life that is impelled by circumstance, by inner desires, by outer influences. Only we who understand who we are and why we're here, understand the presence of the Holy Spirit, have a grasp of the concepts, the promises, the principles, the doctrines, the revelations of the character of God in Scripture, who can rise above the materialistic, mundane world and live a life that reflects God's glory, that shines the light of His presence and His salvation in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

We are the people. This is our calling. So even when we come to a passage like this, God says, I make all things new.

Remember, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation. We are an advanced example of what we are seeing here in chapter 21 and 22. We are already a new creation, unlike anything that has existed in previous ages.

The Old Testament Israelites, the patriarchal believers, the antediluvian people of God, never had the chance that we have to live a Spirit-enabled, Scripture-guided life. We're it. We are the new creation in Christ.

Old things have passed away. All things have become new. Just an anticipation of what we are now seeing.

If we start to lose our place, if we start to forget exactly what we need to be doing, you can start at the beginning. In the beginning, God created. He created this world, this universe, the heavens and the earth.

He has created us new in Christ. Old things are passed away. We don't have to live like people who are clueless.

We are learning the skills and gaining the perspective that will enable us to serve and to function in this coming new creation, the culmination and the fulfillment of everything that God has been doing since He first put Adam and Eve in the garden. I make all things new. And He said to me, write that down.

These are true and faithful words. And if we want to be people of truth, if we want to be people of faith and of faithfulness, these words, God emphasizes it. John heard it and God emphasizes it and says, write that down.

There is nothing more true and there is nothing more faithful than the creative power of God. He engineered our existence. He has engineered our deliverance from a lost and fallen condition in a lost and fallen world with no hope, no life, no future.

This is our Father. He loves us with paternal love expressed ultimately in sending the Lord Jesus Christ who very obviously and gloriously portrayed the sacrificial nature of love, sacrificial towards self, beneficial toward others. I, by God's grace and God's power, turn my eyes away from myself and outward the way the Lord Jesus did.

So don't forget the importance it's emphasized here in verse five. He said to me, it is done. This is a perfect form of Ginnomai.

I used Ginnomai last time or time before as an illustration of one of the conditions that pertain to the people who are outside the walls, the very first one that are fearful and it isn't phobia or phobos. It is Deilomai. It's something that is a middle voice and sometimes a passive voice, something that speaks of a condition.

And so here, this is not tetelestai, which is what the Lord Jesus said from the cross. That is the perfect form of teleo, T-E-L-E-O-O, teleo, which is to finish, to complete a thing. This is Ginnomai, which is to be or to become, to come into existence.

And in the perfect here, it is God saying, it has come to pass. The Lord Jesus finished the work of salvation and its fruit and its purpose and its ultimate goal and destination have now come to pass in the new heaven and the new earth. So you have here, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the same identification we had back at the beginning.

I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. And notice that this is not just God who is identifying himself and talking about himself. His purpose, his interaction, his love for us is expressed.

He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. And he immediately turns the corner into the benefit to us. I will give, says the Father, of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

I find a little buried treasure in this saying of God. Why doesn't he just say, I will give of the water of life freely to him who thirsts? What is the extra detail? I will give of the fountain of the water of life, the source, the origination point for the water of life. Remember what Jesus said on the last great day of the feast, Oh, let him who is thirsty come to the waters and drink, for out of his belly will flow rivers of living water, the source.

He will have access to the source of that water, not just a delivery of water, but it's very fountain. I've always envied, I know some people who have had drilling done on their property and they may find oil or they may find natural gas. And often there is a tap on the well to which you can attach and you can have free natural gas from your own well for life.

Never have to pay for propane, never have to pay for a natural gas meter. You have the source right there on your property and it is unlimited energy, la'olam, unto the ages, to not have to travel through a gate and stand by the shore of the river and partake of the water. You have the fountain.

What a privilege. The word of God is the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ from beginning to end. It is the Lord Jesus who represents the fullness of God in bodily form.

So this is not just some sort of material water to slake a natural thirst. What a wonderful thing to have this fountain granted to us, not just its product. So that is a little hidden treasure here in verse six.

Verse seven, the overcomer, to him who overcomes, I will grant. Every single one of the seven churches in Revelation chapter two and three tells us something about the qualities of an overcomer, what we face by way of challenge, what failure looks like and what persistence and going to the throne of grace for help in time of need can make available. What is the victory that overcomes the world? It is our faith.

Faith is going to God and accessing his resources instead of relying on our own ideas or our own

strength. He who overcomes shall inherit all things. All things.

I will be his God and he shall be my son. We saw the passages where this is an Old Testament concept. It pertains to Abraham.

It pertains to David. It is fulfilled and illustrated in the Lord Jesus Christ himself. But for God to be our God and for us to be his children, there is nothing better.

You can't top it. You can't find something that is even better than the personal relationship with God. He's not just a force.

He's not just a some sort of energy field. He is personal and we have an individual relationship with him through Christ. We come to the father by the Lord Jesus and he is our God.

We have a claim on that relationship. We have privileges. We have opportunities because he is our God and we are his children.

Even in the perfection of the eternal kingdom of the father, there is still this illustration of intimate relationship. The parent-child, there's nothing stronger, nothing more powerful in the lives of people than these family bonds that are a privilege and a blessing. That illustration carries all the way into the eternal future.

And notice it isn't by group. The nation of Israel will be my people. The church will be the bride of the lamb.

Individually, a one-on-one claim on attention, opportunity for fellowship, for communication, for service, for entering into the father's future purposes. He will have more projects. We're not just entering into a state of nothingness, a state of no motion, no progress.

This is the threshold. The kingdom of the father and entering into it and being a citizen of the new Jerusalem is the beginning of unlimited eternal potential, something we cannot even begin to grasp. I was thinking of the thunders.

We have seals, trumpets, thunders, and bowls. And I toyed with the idea of doing a quick study of thunder this morning. I will simply instead suggest to you that when you see thunder in scripture, the thunder on Mount Sinai, this is what the people down at the base perceived.

Down at the foot of the mountain, well away, coming not near, lest ye die. They heard thunder. Moses and Joshua were up on the mountain and they heard the voice of God.

When God speaks from heaven, John at the baptism of the Lord Jesus hears, this is my beloved son. Those in the periphery hear thunder. When Jesus appears to Paul on the Damascus road, he hears the Lord Jesus, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

The others on the road heard thunder. There is content to the seven thunders. John understood it and was about to write.

And God said, no, those words are not to be perceived by those who are not yet able to understand, not yet qualified to enter into it. We will find out if we qualify, if we are overcomers, we'll find out the content of the thunders. It'll be a great series of Bible classes sometime during the millennium.

But there are things that we are not qualified to grasp. We can't enter into. We just trust the father that these are things that he has designed for us.

And a lot of that is represented here. He individually, the overcomer will be my son. He or she will be my child.

But, and we saw this last time and we know what these are, the cowardly, this is the Delos, the Delamai idea, the kind of fear that paralyzes us and prevents us from laying hold of the promises of God by faith. We fear pain. We fear hardship.

We fear loss. And God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of self-control. It's a choice.

When faced with the unexpected, do we react in fear like the disciples in the boat? That was the other use of this very same word. The fearful, you can scratch out cowardly. This is those who succumb to fear.

Unbelieving, this is faithless. Abominable, this is those who know that something is wrong in God's eyes, but persist in doing it anyway. It is a pattern sin.

Murderers, this can be in the same way that adultery can take place in the heart. Murder, hating someone. You see this hate in the political world and even in the social world, the world of ideas, and it is perpetrated over the internet, whether it is people groups who believe they have the right to a land or they sympathize with someone they think has a right to some patch of ground.

And the vicious vituperation, the bitter salacious treatment of others is a sort of attitude that is represented by the word murder in scripture. This is a level of insanity when it comes to hostility towards someone else that goes beyond reason. It is visceral, it is emotional, and it is evil.

We are not to be controlled by this sort of impulse. We are not to be defiled and corrupted by the presence of this unthinking hatred that is the equivalent of murder. And there are people who actually go that far and pull triggers and crash cars into individuals and groups that reach this level of opposition.

It needs to be far from us. Don't let it even get a toehold in our thinking to hate someone because they think differently, because they do not understand what we understand. There is a way that

seems right to a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death, of murder.

But we saw these last time. I'm going to move forward. They will have their portion in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

They will continue forward minus inheritance, minus potential, minus citizenship and property ownership as it were in the New Jerusalem. They will be outside. Their opportunities, their portion, their overcomer blessings that could have been attained, could have been possessed, will go away with everything that goes away in the lake of fire, the second death.

There is no coming back from the second death. And this militates against the idea that, well, maybe somebody could wake up and smell the coffee in the kingdom of the Father. It does not appear so.

There is a permanent assignment. The cherubim in heaven will always be the cherubim. The servant angels and the messenger angels will always be servants and messengers.

There doesn't seem to be promotion or movement or progress in that eternal state. We are determining it right now. And if we succumb to patterned sins and to evil influences, it can permanently remove from us blessing and reward in the future.

It goes into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. We pick up this morning in verse nine. And for the rest of this session, we will be doing well to get through this verse.

And you will see why momentarily. Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues. How many sevens are in this verse? Three, right? The number of perfection in heaven.

Three, like the Trinity. One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues. We are moving into the perfection of perfections.

Three times seven. John says, this angel came and talked with me saying, come, I will show you the bride, the lamb's wife. Now, pop quiz.

There is something that we should remember and it gives us an immediate window into an understanding and an application. Right here. Keep your finger here and turn back a page or two in your Bible or scroll back on your digital copy to chapter 17, verse one.

In my New King James, chapter 17 is subtitled, The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast. Below that, the woman arrayed in purple and scarlet, the scarlet harlot, the mystery, which is Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and the abominations of the earth. How is this vision introduced? 17.1. Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me saying to me, come, I will show you.

What do we have in our passage? One of the seven angels had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues, came and talked with me saying, come, I will show you. In chapter 17, he shows us the corrupt woman. In chapter 21, he shows us the perfected woman.

The same angel. Now this could have been a named angel. Could have been Gabriel.

Could have been Michael. Could have been any one of the other angels that we have seen producing activity throughout this book. Why a seven bowls angel? And it says one of them could have been anyone.

I personally think it is the same one. I think John recognizes him from the chapter 17 vision. Why this association? I have looked to see if anyone had given this much thought.

Most of them just say, well, it is really unclear why it would be this particular angel or this particular representative of a group of angels. Here is my suggestion. Those are the culminating series of judgments.

We know that there is overlap between the seals and trumpets and the thunders, hence my digression on thunder, and the bowls. But the bowls are the final. In the seals, we see judgment at the human earthly level.

Famines, earthquakes, war, death and Hades riding forth. In the trumpets, we see a lot of angelic operation and judgments associated with angels. In the bowls, we see the divine judgment aspect or perspective.

And all of this is initiated by God. The reason the bowls are portrayed last is it tells us that everything that has preceded has been by God's design and at God's behest. The Lord Jesus is given the authority by God himself to begin this process by opening the seals.

God himself concludes it by sending the bowl angels forth. In looking at the capital city of Satan, Babylon, and in looking at the capital city of God, the New Jerusalem, the same angel, a bowl angel, introduces both of those. And it forces us to think about an association.

God's judgments have a purpose. The judgments of God are similar to the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because we have been initiated into that realm of understanding, through disobedience, through obedience, we now see, as John does, the contrast and God's judgment, God's necessary elimination and removal of that which is evil.

This is the scarlet harlot. This is the mystery which is Babylon. It's a mystery.

It has been present but unrevealed. Isn't that what a mystery is? Paul says he's a steward of the mysteries, these things that were not understood in Old Testament days. They were present, they were real, but they weren't understood, they weren't revealed.

That's a mystery. This Babylon, this capital city of Satan, has existed all along, but its existence and its purpose and its nature were not fully revealed until this angel introduces John to it in chapter 17. And it is the judgment of God that is in view.

Here, because of the judgment of God, you have the existence of the new Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven. What is the nature of this revelation? We remember what was seen of scarlet Babylon, the woman riding the beast, in chapter 17, introduced by, I think, this same angel. That was the negative.

That was the knowledge of evil. Here we have the revelation and the knowledge of that which is good. This is the culminating purpose, the destination, the reason for which all of human history has taken place, is to get us to this city, this new Jerusalem, that God has created, that descends out of heaven.

That's what we will look at when we come back from the break. But remember, the role of God as creator necessitates judgment on creation that fails, the clay that spoils in his hand. He is trying to make something, and the clay is having none of it.

Those who willfully reject, who willfully disobey, who willfully decide they've got a better plan, there's a way that seems right to them. It is necessary that this come under God's judgment and ultimately be eliminated from existence so that the purpose of God's creation and God's salvation can be enacted, can be brought into permanent existence. Without judgment, this can't happen.

I think that's why it's introduced. And in our lives, we remember that we are judged according to our works as believers where we will end up in this future. Are we going to be last? Are we going to be first? Are we going to be overcomers? Are we going to be those who are outside because we succumbed to patterned sins and didn't lay hold of the grace of God by faith? Judgment is the proper sphere of the creator.

And it is judgment that both eliminates that which cannot be allowed to continue and enacts and brings into being that which was God's purpose all along, which is blessing and fellowship for those who love him and are called according to his purpose. Let's pause here and take a break.