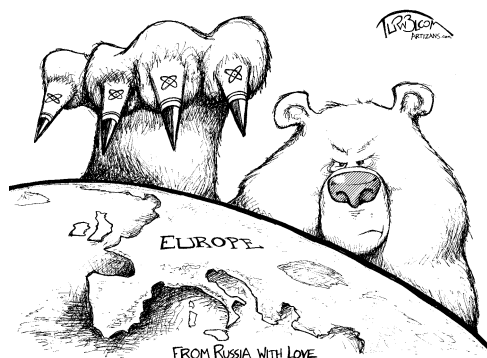


Revelation: Worthy is the Lamb



When I was a college student at Midcontinent, my first and favorite professors was a man by the name of Charles Cloyd. Charles would always be sitting at his desk when we, the students, would come into class. For the first few weeks, we noticed as we entered his class that he would be sitting at his desk with a newspaper, and before he would close it, he would chuckle. It took me awhile to get to know Bro. Cloyd, so at first, we were always afraid to ask him what was so funny, because he hardly ever started class without chuckling about something in the newspaper. As I got to know Brother Cloyd a little bit better, I started coming into class right on time and I would stop by his desk to try to see what he was chuckling over, and on several occasions, I would see political cartoons. It always brought a smile to Brother Cloyd. Pretty soon, he and I had a special relationship as teacher and student, and not only would he shake my theology, but he began to shake my politics.



The picture above is what we call a political cartoon. Without the caption at the bottom, "From Russia with Love," most of us wouldn't what the picture represented. It is a picture of a bear with nuclear missiles for claws, and

the bear represents the former Soviet Union. There was a time when the Soviet Union literally had its claws over all of Europe. I saw a cartoon in Brother Cloyd's newspaper similar to this. Instead of having a picture of Europe, it had the entire globe with a bear reaching over it and an eagle circling overhead. If you knew anything about politics at that time, you knew that was a picture that was trying to portray the Cold War that was going on between the United States of America, represented by the eagle, and the Soviet Union, represented by the bear.

To this day, I am a fan of political cartoons. It is amazing how the cartoonists can use signs and symbols to convey messages and how they can exaggerate things. When cartoonists used to paint Jimmy Carter when he was the President of the United States of America, you couldn't see his face for his teeth. Today when you see a political cartoon of our president, all you see is big ears. A cartoonist can get by with things you and I can't because they are using a special type of literature called a political cartoon. In those signs and symbols, there is usually either a humorous, or very serious, message.

Revelation: Apocalyptic Literature

We have arrived at Exit 66 of 66 exits. As we approach the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, we are studying a type of literature known as Apocalyptic Literature. As we give the big story of the book of Revelation, in order for us to truly understand this final book, we first have to understand the type of literature it is written in. It is written in a type of literature that was written in 200 BC to 100 AD. It was primarily used by the Jews at a time when, as God's covenant people, they were being persecuted, or living in times of suffering, so they would send words of encouragement to each other. Because of the fear that the message would be intercepted and the receiver and the sender would be persecuted to a greater degree, they would code the message. Now, both the person sending the message and the person receiving the message knew the code completely. It was written in such a way so that if the government or the

one doing the persecuting received it, the message wouldn't be understandable.

- **Symbolic, not Literal**

Today, we hear people say the book of Revelation was written so that we cannot understand it. That is not true. It was written so it could be understood by the church. The problem is that some 1900 years later we are not for certain of all the codes to the symbols and the signs. Therefore, this book has been misinterpreted over and over again, and it has been used to satisfy man's fanciful imagination about how the world is going to end rather than fully understanding God's true intent of this final book. So we approach this final stop on Route 66 with true humility. I really feel like we ought to take our shoes off, because we are on holy ground as we study the Revelation of Jesus Christ. In order for us to understand it, the first thing we have to remember is that it is written in Apocalyptic Literature, and the closest thing we have to it today is those political cartoons.

I am not a cartoonists, but there is a cartoon I have always wanted to draw during the political season in the United States of America. It is the picture of a donkey and an elephant trying to squeeze through the door of the White House. Now most of you would know what that would convey; that both the Democrats and Republicans, symbolized in the donkey and the elephant, want to hold the highest office in the land, which is represented by the White House. Now let's imagine something here. Let's say five thousand years pass, but the United States ceases to be after five hundred of those years. Imagine what would happen when an archeologists finds a political cartoon of a donkey and an elephant trying to get into a house that is painted white, and they did not know that the symbol of the Democratic Party was a donkey, or the symbol of the Republican Party was an elephant. They would be lost. They wouldn't know what it meant.

That is our struggle in learning and understanding the book of Revelation. We have to have some idea of these symbols. Just because we are not 100% sure of these symbols, it doesn't mean we cannot study the book of Revelation. It just means we need to approach it in true humility and in true sacredness. Let this not be a book that divides us, but let this be a book that brings great encouragement to us as a church. I think when we see the big picture of the book of Revelation it will be a comfort to us as we close out our study of Route 66. Now, since this book is written in Apocalyptic Literature, which uses signs and symbols to convey a message, don't take the signs and symbols literally. Don't take the numbers literally. See them for what they are meant to do in this book, in this literature; they are meant to convey a message.

- **Cyclical, not Linear**

The second thing you have to remember when studying the book of Revelation is vitally important. The book of Revelation is presenting the events of the church age (the age we are living in) in a cyclical format, not linear. In other words, it is my opinion that if you read the book of Revelation linearly, sequentially, believing all the events are in chronological order, you are going to miss it, and you will misunderstand it. There are some verses of Scripture that I think prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that you cannot read Revelation in a sequential or chronological order and understand the events to be one event following another event, and another event following another event, and on and on. It is not how Revelation was written. It is written in cycles. Let me give you some examples.

Scripture

Revelation 6:12-17:

"When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth

as the fig tree sheds its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll that is being rolled up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the great ones and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"

The picture being painted for us is of the Lord stepping into time and the stars fall from the heavens to the earth, every mountain and every island flees from its place, and there is nothing obstructing the view of man in sin standing in the presence of God, who is holy, holy, holy, on His throne. What you are seeing is the end of time. If the stars in the heavens fall, there will be no more time on the earth.

Revelation 11:15-18:

"Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in Heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever." And the twenty-four elders who sit on their thrones before God fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying,

***"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
who is and who was,
for You have taken Your great power
and begun to reign.
The nations raged,
but Your wrath came,
and the time for the dead to be judged,
and for rewarding Your servants, the prophets and saints,
and those who fear Your name,
both small and great,
and for destroying the destroyers of the earth."***

This is a picture of Christ coming, and when He does, the kingdom of this world is going to be the Kingdom of Christ. He is going to judge the lost and reward the saints. That happened, not at the end of the book of Revelation, but at the blowing of the seventh trumpet. The same thing also happened at the unsealing of the sixth seal. So at this point in the book of Revelation, we have already seen the return of Christ, (the Second Coming) two times, but yet pictured in two different ways.

Revelation 14:14-20:

"Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and seated on the cloud one like a son of man, with a golden crown on His head, and a sharp sickle in His hand. And another angel came out of the temple, calling with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle, and reap, for the hour to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth is fully ripe." So He who sat on the cloud swung His sickle across the earth, and the earth was reaped. Then another angel came out of the temple in Heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, the angel who has authority over the fire, and he called with a loud voice to the one who had the sharp sickle, "Put in your sickle and gather the clusters from the vine of the earth, for its grapes are ripe." So the angel swung his sickle across the earth and gathered the grape harvest of the earth and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia."

In the gospels, Jesus taught that at the end of the age He was going to send forth the angels to separate the lost from the righteous. That is the picture in Revelation chapter 14 again, a picture of the end of time on the earth.

Revelation 16:17-21:

"The seventh angel poured out his bowl (bowl of wrath) into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple, from the throne, saying, "It is done!" And there were flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder, and a great earthquake such as there had never been since man was on the earth, so great was that earthquake. The great city was split into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell, and God remembered Babylon the great, to make her drain the cup of the wine of the fury of His wrath. And every island fled away, and no mountains were to be found. And great hailstones, about one hundred pounds each, fell from heaven on people; and they cursed God for the plague of the hail, because the plague was so severe."

Again, it is a picture of the end of time and God pouring out His wrath on unbelievers. But the unbelievers, even on the day of God's wrath, do not repent; they just curse Him.

Revelation 19:11-16:

"Then I saw Heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems, and He has a name written that no one knows but Himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which He is called is The Word of God. And the armies of Heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, were following Him on white horses. From His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords."

That is Jesus. What I submit to you is if you approach the book of Revelation, at least five times at the end of five different sections, you

have a picture of the end of time. So you are ready for Jesus to come, and then John starts all over again. He builds up to the return of Christ, and then you get a different picture. The next scene starts back at the beginning of the church age, and then it builds again.

- **Seven Cycles**

I propose that Revelation has seven cycles. Each of these cycles serves as a picture that portrays a different view of the church age. The book of Revelation is not written for you to start in chapter 1, end in chapter 22, and think everything happens in chronological order. If you do that, you will come up with a theory about the end times that cannot be supported by the rest of Scripture. I believe it that strongly. You will believe the book of Revelation to be saying things that the other twenty-six books do not say. Therefore, when you take into consideration that this is a special type literature that uses signs and symbols and it is a coded message, and you understand it is not written to be linear, but cyclical in thought, then you will understand there are seven different cycles in the book of Revelation's twenty-two chapters. It was written this way because it was written in a time of persecution and suffering in the church. So that we can wrap our mind around what is going on during the church age, and what is happening to us so that we know how to live, (not so we can speculate how the world is going to end) God gives us a drama of redemption that has seven different plays, if you will, seven scenes, or pictures.

The seven pictures of Revelation are:

- 1. Chapters 1-3**
- 2. Chapters 4-7**
- 3. Chapters 8-11**
- 4. Chapters 12-14**
- 5. Chapters 15-16**
- 6. Chapters 17-19**
- 7. Chapters 20-22**

The first picture, the first thing that God wants the church to see, is in chapters 1-3, and He wants us to know that truth, to get that big picture, and it will be an encouragement to you. Then, He wants us to see the picture in chapters 4-7. Then we lay that picture on top of the picture from chapters 1-3. Then, chapters 8-11 give us a third angle of the church age. When we have that picture, we lay it on top of what we already saw in the first two pictures. Now we have three different views of the church during the church age.

Then we are blown away by the picture we see in chapters 12-14. Now there is no one that can dispute that you can't go from chapter 11 to chapter 12 and read it linearly. It is obvious in verse 1 of chapter 12 that it starts all over again at the beginning of the church age, because you have a woman getting ready to deliver a baby, which is the Messiah. We know that He is not physically born twice! But again, this section ends with the return of Jesus Christ and the separation of the unbeliever from the believer. Once you see that picture, we have something to hang our hat on because now for the first time as the church, we understand in this fourth picture why what's happening is happening during the church age. For the first time in Revelation, we understand that we have an enemy, and he doesn't like God. Because he doesn't like God, he doesn't like us, so what has happened to you is nothing personal. The only reason Satan wants to take you out is because he doesn't like your God. So if you want him to let up in your life, just forsake God and he will leave you alone.

Once we have that truth, we see the picture in chapters 15 and 16. Then once we have that picture, we have another picture in chapters 17-19. We have six different truths at this point, and then we close in chapters 20-22 with seven truths. Seven, to the Jewish person, was the number of perfection, or the number of completion. So the book of Revelation is a book written to the seven churches of Asia Minor that has given us the big story of what is going to happen to the church from it's infancy to our maturity of one day fully being in the presence of God forever and ever.

The pictures in Revelation are like those old fashioned transparencies where you just drop pictures on top of each other. That is what Revelation does; it drops picture number one, picture number two, and so on, totaling seven pictures on top of each other. Each one of these pictures can be viewed separately and teach you the truth, but they were not meant to be viewed in their individuality. They are meant to be viewed together, so that you and I can know how to live as a Christian in the church age. I am going to paint seven pictures for you from the book of Revelation.

Picture One: Seven Churches

The first picture is about a letter to the seven churches of Asia Minor from Jesus, who died, didn't stay dead, and got back up again. They were seven literal churches. Now hear me, these seven different churches do not represent seven different ages of the church age. Do not try to take the church at Ephesus and make it be the New Testament church. Do not take the church of Laodicea and try to make it representative of how the church is going to be before Jesus Christ comes back again. That is wrong; it's in error. This was written to seven literal churches in Asia Minor. Seven, being the number of perfection or completion, is picturing the church in its entirety. It is teaching that during the church age, from the time of Jesus until He returns, you will always find churches like these on the earth, churches like the church at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

So, what is the encouragement? The encouragement is during the church age, Jesus Christ walked among these churches, and He holds the messenger to the church in the palm of His hand. Some scholars believe the messenger is an angel, others believe this is the pastor. But Jesus had a message to His church, and His church came through His messenger, His pastor. During the church age, God will continue to speak to His church through His Word, and the church can know that He will always be with us. Jesus said that in Matthew chapter 28:18-20, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the

Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” That is the truth you have got to believe; Jesus Christ will not abandon His church. There is a strong message and a great promise to those of us who are faithful until the end.

Picture Two: Seven Seals

When chapter 4 starts, John isn’t seeing what is happening on the earth with the churches. He now gets a view of God sitting on the throne. He tries to describe God the Father as Creator, and he struggles to do it. He sees this myriad of four living creatures, these elders, and these angelic beings worshipping God. They were singing to Him about being Creator and about how all things were created. Suddenly John notices there is a scroll in his hand, and a mighty angel steps forward and asks who is worthy to take the scroll from the Father and open it. It is a seven sealed scroll. This is a symbol of the titled deed to the earth, a symbol of God’s will that must be done on the earth. The problem is that no one in Heaven is worthy to bring about God’s will! John begins to weep. He is told to quit weeping and when he turns, he hears the Lion of the tribe Judah coming! When he turns to see that ferocious Lion, he doesn’t see a lion, he sees a Lamb that has been slain. And then, all of creation in Heaven who has been worshipping God, the Father, begins to worship God, the Son. They sing a song, *holy, holy, holy is He, worthy is the Lamb that is slain!*

The Lamb takes that scroll and begins to unloose those seven seals. Immediately, four horsemen appear as the first four seals are opened. There is a rider on a white horse with a bow that goes out to conquer, a rider on a red horse who brings war, followed by a rider on a black horse who brings famine to the poor, but the rich continue to live in extravagance. Then, the fourth rider comes on a pale horse who has the authority to take the life of over a third of the church.

Then we see the fifth seal being opened, and we get a vision into Heaven and there at the altar of God are the souls of those who were beheaded.

As they live in God's presence during the church age, they wonder, "*O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before You will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?*" God tells them to rest because their number is not complete yet.

The scroll that Jesus takes out of the Father's hand is God's will for the earth during the church age; He has the titled deed to the earth. The first thing He has ordained is for the gospel to conquer, and the gospel goes out conquering! But where the gospel goes, war, famine, and death follows. We have a picture of those who were beheaded, those who gave their life as a martyr, praying for God to avenge the blood of the saints. Yes, the church will be persecuted. We will not escape persecution. We will grow from it.

When that sixth seal is opened, you have a picture of nature going berserk because God appears. Suddenly, there is nothing standing between God and sinful man. You would think sinful man would repent but he doesn't. He just prays for a rock to fall on him. He tries to hide from God. The scene ends with sinful man asking who can stand on the day of God's wrath.

Who can stand? That is what chapter 7 is about. Do you know who stands? The 144,000 stand, because they have been sealed by God. Now please don't make the error of reading these 144,000 to be Jewish people. The 144,000 are not physical descendants of Abraham. Again, the church is using the imagery of Israel as the Old Testament Covenant people, knowing now that they are the New Testament Covenant people. So Israel is used to convey the church. What you see here in the 12,000 from each tribe is a picture of the church on the earth during the church age, and we are in battle. But in that same chapter, you don't just see the church who are on the earth, because during the church age, part of the church is on the earth, but part of us will already be in Heaven. So the last part of chapter 7 ends by giving us the second view of the church, and that is the part of the church that is in Heaven. How big is that group? It is so big that

you can't number the group. They are those that washed their robes during the tribulation that came on the face of the earth, which means the church will be victorious through tribulation because there is not anything that can separate us from God! This picture ends with a picture of the church militant on the earth, and ends with a picture of the church triumphant in Heaven. The second picture means that during the church age when Christ walks with His people, the church, we don't fear because the things that are going to happen to the church are going to happen under the sovereign will of God, and we will win!

Picture Three: Seven Trumpets

Now remember, we have these souls in Heaven in the presence of God praying to be revenged. So while the world is persecuting the church, God judges the world. In chapters 8-11, you see the angel coming forward with the seven trumpets. The seven trumpets deal with a third of nature and a third of mankind. Notice that in the seals, only a quarter of the church was affected, but when God begins to judge, it is a third. He starts with disasters on the earth, disasters in the sea, disasters in the rivers, and disasters in the heavenlies. Let me ask a question, why do we in the church call them natural disasters, but insurance companies call them acts of God? You would be mad if we said that hurricane that happened in New Orleans was an act of God, yet that is what the book of Revelation teaches; that God will use natural disasters on the earth, in the sea, in the rivers, and in the heavens, to judge the world that is persecuting the church. When God starts judging, I would think they would repent, but no, they do not.

Next, we have the witness of the church in the form of two olive trees and two lamp stands. Remember, when Jesus sent His disciple out preaching, he sent them out two by two. So please be careful and don't read Revelation chapter 11 and see two human beings that will appear right before Jesus comes. No, this is a fresh picture of the church. While God is judging the world that is persecuting the church, the church is pictured

because God has measured His temple. The temple is not a physical being that stands in Jerusalem; it is a picture of the church. The New Testament pictures the church as the temple of God. The whole purpose of the Old Testament was for us to understand that God was going to send a Messiah to build the true temple, which is His people. And now that church is measured, and it is pictured as two olive trees and two lamp stands. When you read the description, it's exactly the description of the church. We started out with great power and great glory, and we worked many miracles. Before long, the church lost that power and authority. The world began to make fun of the church and literally slew the church. This is teaching there will a time before Christ comes back, towards the end, where the church will almost cease to be. It will be as if the church is dead. Now in your life as a Christian, you would cry if the church was taken away, but the real world will not weep when the church ceases to be. The world will rejoice because they finally got rid of us! They do not want light shining in their face saying what they are doing is wrong. They do not want a group of people being their moral conscience. The world will rejoice. But the church doesn't stay dead! Just like our Lord and Savior come back alive, the church does too. Then we are immediately caught up to God, and the end of the story says that is when Christ comes. Don't think the world is getting by with what they are doing to the church, they are not; it just looks that way.

Picture Four: Enemy of the Church

We have three pictures and now we are going to lay a fourth picture on top of those. This is the center picture; you have three before and three after. The Hebrews, even in their apocalyptic literature, used a Chiasm. It is the ancient technique where they would parallel things, and the thing that didn't have a parallel was the main point. The center picture is a picture of a woman with stars on her head and she gives birth to a baby. As she gets ready to give birth, there is a dragon that is going to devour the baby. This is a picture of the church. It is a picture of the birth of Christ. We are back at the beginning of the church age again, and now we

understand something. The church has an enemy. The enemy is the dragon, and the dragon is Satan. He tried to prevent the birth of the Messiah, but he couldn't. The baby was born and immediately snatched up into Heaven. The revelator doesn't need to tell us about the life, the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus, because we know all of that. So he had Him immediately being snatched up to Heaven, and Satan followed Him into Heaven!

Then a war broke out between Michael and his angels, and a third of the angelic beings who followed Satan. Now Michael didn't defeat Satan; it is an apocalyptic story. Jesus defeated Satan. But the imagery is of a heavenly battle, and Satan loses because of the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. When Satan loses, he gets cast out of Heaven to the earth. Heaven throws a party, because when the church age started, Satan got kicked out of Heaven to the earth! Heaven said the accuser of the brethren is gone, and we don't have to listen to him coming before God day and night! But woe to those on the earth, for the accuser of the brethren has been cast down. Satan is not in a pit somewhere right now, neither is he in Heaven. He is right here in the midst of us, and he is trying to take you and me out. It is nothing personal against you; he just doesn't like you. He hates your guts, and not because of what you did to him, but because of what Christ did to him. You hang with Jesus and you are going to have an enemy. You don't hang with Jesus and you're ok down here on the earth.

Then Satan has three helpers. He has a beast, which stands for world government. He has a false prophet, which stands for world religion. Then there is a city that just appears out of nowhere called Babylon, and the cry is fallen, fallen, fallen is Babylon. Those are the four enemies of the church, Satan, the beast, the false prophet, and Babylon, which is a worldly city. Babylon stands for the world's system of doing things, how the world looks at things. While we are being persecuted in the church age, you need to understand we have an enemy, Satan. He will use government, religion, and the world to come after us, the church.

It is important for the church to remember that Satan is loose and he is on the prowl, and he is coming after us because we are preaching the gospel. The gospel, according to that first seal, is going to conquer; it is going to go forth to the ends of the earth. This fourth picture ends with the end of the world and a separation of the unrighteous and the righteous. It is going to be bad when God harvests the earth.

Picture Five: Seven Bowls of Wrath

Now our fifth picture starts and we see into the very presence of Heaven. In answer to the prayers of those souls who have been beheaded, God begins to pour out his bowls of wrath on the earth, the sea, the rivers, the heavens, and on people. You expect people to repent, to turn to God, but they do not. They curse Him. Now Satan, with the help of his world leader and his world prophet, so to speak, is gathering the nations to come and stand against God for the battle on the great day of God's wrath. In these pictures, we see that we are now getting further and further away from what happens at the beginning of the church age, and getting closer and closer to what is happening at the end of the age when God starts pouring His wrath down on sinful man. And now you have physical beings arraying themselves to battle against God. In chapters 12-14, we learned who our enemies were, Satan, the beast, the prophet, and Babylon. Now, God is going to show us how He judges them in reverse order. He starts with Babylon, then the false prophet, the beast, and then Satan.

Picture Six: The Prostitute and the Bride

This next picture, which is chapters 17-19, it is a picture that is hard for us to understand, but I just want to simplify it. It is the picture of two ladies, a lady in red, and a lady in white. The lady in red is a whore, a prostitute. She is such a lover that she has caused mankind to fall at her feet after her. This is a picture of the world of unbelievers going after the things of the world. They are drunk on her. It is the picture of a city. You see, the closer mankind lives together, the more sinful mankind becomes. That is the picture of the world system. Eventually, the world will all want to live in

the city because the city has everything the world can offer. That is the picture here, and she gets judged by God.

Then a beautiful lady appears in a white wedding dress and she is getting ready to get married. That is the church. And this sixth section ends with a picture of Jesus Christ coming for His bride, the church, and there is a big marriage supper planned. The church is eating at the marriage supper of Jesus, while those people who were gathering together for battle are getting ready to battle. So Jesus comes for His church, He is getting ready to battle the world, and they gather together for the battle, the war. These last three battles have the article 'the' in front of them, distinguishing them as *the* battle, *the* war. These are not three different wars, not three different battles; this is the same battle in three different pictures.

God invites the birds to that final battle. So while God is throwing a supper for us, He throws a supper for the birds. He feeds the birds the flesh of all those who stand against Him that last day on that battlefield. You don't want to be at that supper of the birds. You want to be at the supper of the Lamb.

Picture Seven: The Defeat of Satan

Satan is held for last. We judged Babylon, the false prophet, and the beast, but we haven't judged Satan yet. Revelation 20 does not follow chapter 19 linearly. You do not read Revelation chapter 19, then read Revelation 20 and think there is a 1,000 year reign after Christ comes to gather the church to Himself. No, that's not going to happen. Revelation 20 starts again at the beginning of the church age and it completes the book of Revelation. The picture is of Satan being bound in a bottomless pit for 1,000 years so that he cannot deceive the nations any longer. When it comes to Satan, Revelation teaches he is loose on the earth while he is bound in a bottomless pit. Not many of us can phantom that. You wonder how he can be loose and bound at the same time. He couldn't, if this book's format was linear. He would have to be loose, then bound. If this book is cyclical, it is a different picture.

You see, the first picture of Satan was him being defeated by Jesus Christ, he is kicked out of Heaven down to the earth, and he is persecuting the church because we are preaching the gospel. If you don't preach the gospel, you will not be persecuted. It is that simple. That is why I do not believe the great tribulation will literally be worldwide. Why would Satan stir some of us up when we are absolutely doing nothing? He is just going to let us keep on sleeping. But he is loose because he doesn't want the gospel to be preached. The reason is because he knew that once Jesus died on that cross, raised from the dead, and seated on the Father's right-hand side, he could no longer deceive the nations as he did in the Old Testament period. He cannot stop us from preaching the gospel! So during the church age, Satan is bound in the sense that he cannot stop us from doing what God has called us to do! But at the end of the church age, he will be released. His powers given back to him and he will be the one who will lead this final charge against God. When you read the end of Revelation, the story, it is not even a battle; it is just over. God defeats Satan in the blink of an eye and casts him into an everlasting lake of fire.

Then, all of humanity is pictured at the great white throne, the judgement seat of God. A book is opened, and if your name is not in that book, you will be cast into an everlasting lake of fire. But if your name is in the Lamb's Book of Life, you will be with God forever and ever. Oh and by the way, if while we are being persecuted you lose your life for God's sake, you live and reign with Christ for 1,000 years! You may die, but you will not die. You will be more alive than you have ever been! And if Satan takes your life down here, he just promotes you into the presence of God. Wow!

This section ends with a new heaven and a new earth, and us, the church, living in the light of God forever and ever. Watch this; John sees the church, the bride of Christ. Then he says I want to show her to you. John goes up to a high mountain and an angel shows John the church. When he shows him the church, John sees a city. You are not going to live in the city; you are the city in the city. This city called New Jerusalem is 1500 miles square, 1500 miles wide, 1500 miles long, and 1500 miles tall! That

is a big city! Have you ever thought about how many people you could put in a city 1500 miles by 1500 miles by 1500 miles? You could put a lot of people there. Don't ever let anyone ever tell you that there will not be many people in Heaven! The bride is going to be so big in Heaven, that to describe us, you will have to describe us in language of the city 1500 miles cubed!

You see, now that our mission is over, there is no need for a temple now. There is no need for the sun and moon now. That doesn't mean there won't be, it just means there is no need, because the light of God throughout all of eternity will be fully revealed, and there will be no darkness ever again! Some people believe that the prophecy is being fulfilled and that it is very possible that Jesus could come back at any time. If He does, are you ready? When He steps out on that cloud to call His church, are you ready? We want to close out this series of Route 66 and the book of Revelation in honor of Jesus, believing worthy is the Lamb, believing He is coming, and believing there is no God like Him. The book of Revelation wasn't written for us to speculate about how the world ends, but to cause us to realize that right now we are in a time when we need to be preaching the gospel because He is coming back.