

Revelation 06-02-24a

This is Friday, the 24th of February, 2006. We continue tonight our study in the book of Revelation, picking up right at the threshold of Chapter 20. We're going to take a quick backward glance at Chapter 19 and move into Chapter 20.

Let's take a moment at the outset to follow our customary procedure to ensure that we individually are susceptible to the ministry of God's Holy Spirit and prepared to look into the truth of God's Word. Shall we pray? Father, we are grateful for another opportunity to look into the great truths of your Word, to see in these prophetic scriptures your plan and purpose in the closing days of this age of the Church and of the age of Israel and the opening scenes of the Millennial Kingdom. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ that he came the first time to redeem us and to be the propitiation for our sins and he will come a second time to take us unto himself and then to return to earth and fulfill this final phase of your plan in human history.

We pray that we can understand it rightly, that we will see in it the interpretation and application that will equip us to live the life that you would have us to live in the time that remains to us. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

As I said, this is a transition time. We have spent a lot of our study in the book. These first three chapters showed us the church age.

John at the beginning of it, the seven churches reflecting church age believers throughout this 2,000 year period of church. Then, beginning in chapter 4 and coming all the way up to chapter 20, we have the tribulation period, the seven years that concludes the age of Israel. We have seen in that, in addition to the incidental visions and so on, we have seen the great organizing principles of the seals, the trumpets, and the bowls.

You remember that from our point of view, the seals present the occurrences, the happenings, the events that are going to take place, particularly in the last three and a half years. The first three and a half years is sort of a lull, the calm before the storm. Jesus described this as it was in the days of Noah, when people were eating and drinking and making merry, and marrying and giving in marriage, and feasting, and everyone is saying peace and safety.

There is this false sense of security. It is so often the case, we see this in miniature in our culture, we see it in our times. It has occurred in every generation where people who go down a road of evil, people who, society that goes down an evil road, initially has a false sense of, well, everybody said this was going to be terrible and it is not so bad.

We had the sexual revolution and look, America is still here and we are the superpower of the earth. All down through history, whenever someone first sort of transgresses and trespasses and goes in a bad direction, they say, well look, lightning didn't strike, we are not all dead, we are still here, and there is this sort of false sense of, see there, I told you this was going to be okay, and

then later the hammer falls and the consequences begin to be revealed and by then it is too late. You have gone down a road of no return.

This is going to be the classic case in the tribulation. The first half of it, everybody is going to be saying, this Antichrist guy is great. Look at this.

The Christians have gone somewhere and good riddance. Look at how great earth is. We finally have peace.

Do you hear, like I do, people all over the place saying, you know, religion is what is responsible for all of the evil in the world and warfare and good men do good things, bad men do bad things, but only religion can make a good man do bad things. We are in the post-modern age now, and it is time for us to put religion on the shelf and get rid of it. It served its purpose, people have done religion for these thousands of years, but we have developed beyond it.

We are too intelligent, we are too rational, we are too scientific, so religion, which of course mainly is talking about Christianity, should go. It is passe and it has caused more problems than it has solved. Well, it just makes me tired.

It makes me tired to look at things. I was reading a feminist theologian earlier today. I have seen the work of this woman before.

This woman is the reason that I cancelled my subscription to Bible Review some years ago, because I started publishing her articles in it. Her name is Phyllis Tribble, with one B. It could just as well be with a D and two Bs, in my opinion. But she is a feminist theologian, and what she does, she is a professor at Union Theological Seminary up in New York, which is one of the most liberal quote-unquote seminaries in the country.

But I am just going to give you this as an example. This is like a parallel to what we are looking at here in the Tribulation. This woman is very well respected.

You can search the internet and you will never find a negative review. You will never find somebody lambasting her. You will never find anybody calling her to account.

She just publishes willy-nilly, scatter shot. She writes a book here, writes a review there, writes an article here, teaches a seminary class there, and everybody says, Oh, Phyllis, aren't you wonderful? And she is this liberal, radical, feminist theologian, and she writes on the Bible. She has gone back to the Bible and said, Look at the horrible, patriarchal viewpoint of the Bible.

Look at these abused women. Hagar, what an abused woman. Jephthah's daughter, what an abused woman, etc., etc., ad nauseum.

And she writes books, and they are usually well respected, well reviewed, because, of course, this is one of the sacred cows of political correctness, is to say, Oh, well, sure. And, of course, the

men, we are all watching football, and we say, Fine, if it makes you happy, write your books, and nobody says anything. But the problem is that biblical viewpoint is rewritten, and a new generation of people comes up, and these are the people who are vocal.

These are the people who are speaking, and this is what a new generation of seminarians and Bible college students hear. And nary a shadow falls on the landscape of this feminist outlook, and, well, we have to put the Bible in perspective, and here's all of the problems with it. This woman, Phyllis Tribble, wrote a very favorable review of a book written by two Israeli archaeologists who have written a magnum opus all about how the Old Testament is wrong, and that nothing happened the way the Old Testament says it did until you get down to the time of Josiah.

And you read this, and it reads like a novel. Here's what really happened. There was no exodus from Egypt.

There was no conquest. There was no Joshua. Abraham and Jacob were not even related.

Abraham was the patriarch of the ten northern tribes, and Jacob was the patriarch of the Judeans down south, or vice versa. I might have that mixed up. It didn't really stick in my mind that well.

But, basically, these were local traditions. These were just kind of nickel and dime people scattered around, and when you come down to the time of Josiah, he needs something to unify the people, and so he, quote, unquote, wink, wink, nudge, nudge, discovers the law in the temple that he just had a bunch of people write, and this is a copy of Deuteronomy or something, and everybody's supposed to assemble under this banner, and he uses it a la Constantine to unify his kingdom, and all of this mythology is just made up. And so then these archaeologists go back and they say, well, here's our archaeological findings at Hebron and Shechem and Jerusalem and different places, and notice how all of this reinforces and proves the case.

And so with a little bit of selected archaeological evidence and this imaginative tale of what Israelite history was, it completely eviscerates the Word of God. I mean, it takes every shred of credibility away from it, and someone who comes to this and reads it and has no foundation and has no knowledge and hasn't seen what you and I have seen in the Word of God, it sounds credible, it sounds reasonable. Here is the scientific evidence, and here's, you know, this just sounds so good.

It is the devil's lie. This is the kind of lie. It's very persuasive.

If you read a book by this Phyllis, by the time you get done, you'll be going back and reviewing your Bible notes saying, now, am I sure that that's correct? She is an eloquent and elegant writer. She has beautiful vocabulary, great style, sense of humor, very engaging, very charismatic, very captivating. This is why you don't find any negative reviews of her, because anybody that reads it will say, oh, you know, the book was just a joy to read, and she's clever and it all kind of makes

sense, and she's very laid back and relaxed.

She's not confrontational. She doesn't have an axe to grind or anything, and it is seductive. It's the woman riding the beast, and she's got her alluring garments on, and I don't know if I can adequately convey what a subtle and effective attack this is.

This is what is being read in universities. Bible as literature. Survey of the Bible.

I'm in college. Well, there's Christianity. I used to know people that went to church.

What is it all about? This is what they get. Oh, here's the roots of Christianity. It's in this Judaism that was all made up by Josiah and Ezra and Nehemiah in the post-captivity period, and I have a very solid background.

I know the history. I know some of the reasons that these archaeologists are finding the wrong information, because their dates are 300 years off, and all I can tell you is this is what the woman is going to do. This is what the Antichrist is going to do.

This is how the world is going to be so completely pulled over people's eyes. It's credible. It is desirable.

It's convincing. It's convenient. It tells everybody exactly what they want to hear.

Oh, of course, there is no creator God. There was no Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as we understand. There was no David and Solomon.

David was like a tribal chieftain. The biggest thing he ever commanded was a flock of sheep, and his son Solomon might have been slightly more than he was, but, you know, the whole biblical thing is just a myth, and it's a mythology, and it was designed to unite the people, and look how effective it was, why these Jews latched on to that, and they're still united 2,000, 3,000 years later, and what a clever thing, but, of course, we know better. We're superior.

We've got the science. Well, this is the quality of deception that Satan is capable of spinning, and you can't help but stand back and admire it. It's like I got the same impression after I finished my research on this.

I think as if I was on the plain of Dura looking at the 70-foot-high golden statue of Nebuchadnezzar's making. Remember that, and Daniel, he made that big statue? It's awe-inspiring, the quality of it and the persuasiveness of it and the absolute deceptive message that it bears because somebody who doesn't know is going to read that, and no amount of Bible is ever going to convince them again. You have taken the sword of the Spirit and just deflected it.

It's like judo. You've taken its weight and used it against itself because every time you find a fact about God and His Word and His righteous requirements, oh, yeah, of course, this is all part of

Josiah's big plot. Well, this is the deception that has been going on from the beginning.

Satan did this in the garden, and when we come to Revelation 19, and at verse 17 it says, I saw an angel standing in the sun. He cries out to the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather together for the supper of the great God. I don't know if you remember that we saw this same scene in Ezekiel 39.

If you go back to Ezekiel 39, you'll find that John is seeing the same thing that Ezekiel saw in the vicinity of verse 17, where you have this great feast, so to speak, and God invites these carrion birds and carnivores and what not to come and dine. Let me get down here to Ezekiel 39. But there is consistency in the Word of God, whether you're in the Old Testament or in the New, whether you are listening to an Old Testament prophet or a New Testament prophet.

Look at what God says here. As for you, son of man, thus says the Lord God, speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field, assemble yourselves and come. Gather together from all sides to my sacrificial meal, which I am sacrificing for you.

Now, he's talking to the carrion birds and the scavengers. He says, I'm doing this for you. Remember we talked about last time what it means that these birds are going to be sated, they're going to be stuffed full with the flesh of the enemies of God.

A great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel that you may eat flesh and drink blood. You shall eat the flesh of the mighty, drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams and lambs, of goats and bulls, all of them fatlings of Bashan. You shall eat fat till you are full and drink blood till you are drunk at my sacrificial meal, which I am sacrificing for you.

You shall be filled at my table with horses and riders, with mighty men and with all the men of war, says the Lord God. There are two kinds of table at which you can eat. Both of those tables are set by God.

One of them is the table that David talks about in Psalm 23, that prepares the table before me in the presence of mine enemies. The hidden manna that's promised to the overcomers. The bread and the cup that Jesus shared with his disciples that said, this do in remembrance of me, as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are showing forth the Lord's death till he come.

And then there is this other table, this other meal that is eaten. Jesus said, unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no part with me. You can't be my disciple and so on.

And yet here is a different kind of table. One way or another, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. It is either by inculcating God's word or it is going to be by seeing God's judgment.

It's either a positive table or a negative table. But this is the reason that every knee will bow. This is the reason every tongue will confess.

Those tongues are all going to taste one kind of meal or another. They're all going to recline at that table. And so the fact of this meal is given to Ezekiel and it's given to John.

And you have in this the answer to the objection that was raised to the justice of God when he first created the lake of fire and rendered judgment on Satan and the angels who followed him and said, you are going to go to this place that I have prepared for you. It is the lake of fire. And it has been prepared.

It already exists. Whatever it is, whatever form it actually takes, some kind of physics that we don't have access to, whatever it is, wherever it is, it's already there. The Bible says the lake of fire has been prepared for the devil and his angels.

Why are they not in it? Well, the only conclusion we can draw, why would God let them roam around? Why is there this contest that we see in the book of Daniel where there is a struggle between different angelic forces. You've got the principalities and powers in the realm of darkness and you have those who serve God. And there is a struggle that goes on.

We're going to be seeing this in our next couple of chapters of Daniel. So this tells us that there is some sort of question that is being resolved before this sentence is executed, before this judgment takes place. These carrion birds throughout Scripture are the fallen angels.

Jesus says it in the parable of the soils. Seed falls on hard ground and the birds come and carry it away. This is the function of demons to distract, to deflect, to divert attention away from the Word of God, rob it of its power, rob it of its convicting, sharp sword dividing effect, carry it away, neutralize it, blunt it.

So when they come and dine on this, they don't have a choice. They will come and this will be stuffed in their mouths and this stops their mouths. And by the way, this is one of the last times we're going to see these fallen angels.

As we get into chapter 20, we're going to be watching for the fallen angels and we're going to have to watch very closely because this is one of the last times they're visible at all. And even here we have to deduce that they are the carrion birds, the birds that fly in the midst of heaven. And you go back to Ezekiel 39 and find out that they are also the beasts.

I saw the beasts, the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to make war against him who sat on a horse and against his army. Very interesting here because there are two times that we have the forces of darkness gathered against Christ and his elect, Christ and his white robed throngs, his saints. How are they dealt with here? He comes and slays them with the sharp sword of his mouth, i.e. the saints who are with him, clothed in the righteous deeds and riding the white horses.

This army gathers and makes war. Very critical to observe that in this scene, the battle is fought by those who accompany Christ. The beast and the false prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire, burning with brimstone.

The rest are killed with the sword which proceeds from the mouth of him who sat on the horse. This, of course, is his command. This is the rhomphaia sword we talked about last time.

It's a single blow, a big old sword, this big Thracian sword that is designed to get the job done in one fell blow. It's not a little whittling sword, a little let me carve him up into giblets type of sword. This is a let me cleave him asunder sword.

So that concluded chapter 19, and tonight we start chapter 20. Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. I would submit to you that this angel is Michael, the same angel that we saw previously standing with one foot on the shore and one foot on the sea and so on.

What do I base this on? Well, for one thing, he's got this chain in his hand with which he can bind Satan, and he seizes Satan. This word for seize is krato. Pantokrator is a Greek word that means an overarching ruler.

Panta means all, and krator, krato, has this ruling authority. This guy grabs Satan as the krator, krato, and he seems to be the only angel with the power to do that. We have some interesting observations we can make over in the book of Daniel.

When we get to chapter 10 in Daniel, Daniel prays, and he's in sackcloth and ashes and mourning for three weeks. Finally, the angel shows up, who we might assume to be Gabriel, who seems to perform the messenger functions. He says, I left three weeks ago, but I was held up by the prince, demon, or fallen angel of Persia.

Michael had to come and get me loose, shake me free, so I could come deliver this message. So this angel does not seem to have had the power to overcome the prince of Persia. Michael does, and he seems to be the antithesis.

People like to try to face off the Lord Jesus Christ and Satan. It's Michael and Satan that seem to be foe-anti-foe, and Michael is the stronger of the two, because he's going to take him and bind him. Now, we have other references to this chain that he's got as well.

You can take a look, for example, at Jude 6. It's always neat to quote Jude, because you don't have to give a chapter. You just say the verse, Jude 6. And we have this also in 2 Peter. It talks about the angels who did not keep their proper domain, or their first estate, but left their own abode.

He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, the judgment of the great day. Everlasting

chains. This same idea is expressed in 2 Peter 2, verse 4. If God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.

Pretty much the same idea you have in Jude. Of course, Jude and 2 Peter share some material. So, this would appear to be the same kind of chain that is used to bind Satan.

And perhaps in the same place. This bottomless pit seems to be a place of darkness. This angel coming down from heaven, with the key to the bottomless pit, lays hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, bound him for a thousand years, cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years were finished.

This has ever been Satan's agenda. To deceive the nations. We saw this back in Revelation chapter 12 and verse 9. That this idea of deceiving the nations, this is part and parcel of the whole unholy trinity deal.

And that's the deception I was describing a little bit earlier this evening. And what do you do when you see this? I say, well, somebody needs to write an article about this Phyllis Tribble, and counter all of this bogus material. And when you look at it, you think, where can I begin? This is a whole system of thought, that has tentacles all over the place.

You can't just say, well, you know, you mistranslated this word, or you misinterpreted this verse. It's a viewpoint, it's a mindset. And it's like these people who find a beached whale, and they say, oh, this poor whale is going to die, and they put wet towels on it, and they want to get it back out into the ocean.

But how do you do that? It's just monstrous, it's huge, and there's no place to pry, and there's no place to tie on, and there's no way to get any traction. It's just... And you realize that people who have gone down a road of an alternate way of thinking like this, and you have the same thing in other areas. You have people in atheism, who, it doesn't matter, they can say something about the Bible, and you can correct them, and you can refute them on what they say about the Bible.

They say, oh, the Bible has contradictions. You say, show me one. They show you one, and you say, look, this is not a contradiction, and you explain it.

You can go through... If you ever want to see something along these same lines with regard to the Bible, there's a thing online someplace called the Skeptic's Bible, and it is a litany from Genesis to Revelation of everything that they consider to be laughable or a mistake or a faux pas. You know, the skeptical, atheistic, secular view of the Bible. It's all there, verse after verse after verse, where they're just mocking and deriding and poking fun and making jokes and saying, isn't this ridiculous? And it's the same thing.

I mean, do you want to write the anti-Skeptic's Bible? It's just impossible. The thing is too huge. And it's a reminder to us that it's not our job.

I had to remind my daughter of this the other day. It is not our job. We are not called.

We are not commissioned to go correct and refute people who are wrong and who express a wrong viewpoint and who are broadcasting it. Sometimes there may be a specific point. It might be there's an issue that's being resolved within your family or within your company or within your school or within your social life somewhere or within your organization somehow.

And somebody tries to quote the Bible and say, well, we should do this and so. And you can refute that. I don't mean you should never speak up for the Bible.

But when people are constantly hammering a viewpoint, when they're spewing forth this entire alternate system of thought, well, the thing I was talking to Elizabeth about is there's a girl who's wearing a T-shirt and it's against the rules to wear offensive T-shirts to school. Well, this girl's wearing a T-shirt that's got the cross and the tomb with the stone rolled away. And it's got the big circle with the slash line through it, you know, not.

And it says on the bottom, bad religion. And this is offensive to a Christian who believes in the cross and believes in the resurrection, the empty tomb. And for somebody to openly and blatantly deride this, can you imagine if you put a big face of Mohammed and put a little Ghostbuster cross in? But, you know, the Christians are supposed to roll over and take it and everybody else can scream bloody murder and it's a federal case.

And so Elizabeth came to me and said, you know, this is the second time that this girl has worn this shirt to school and nobody is saying anything. The teachers aren't making her take it off. She finds it personally offensive and I don't blame her.

And I said, you need to just ignore it. There is nothing you can do that is going to do anything but make that situation worse. If you'll call attention to it, you'll make an issue out of it.

It's kind of like, I wish they would not publicize people in the press who do certain stupid things because that's why they do it, is to get their face on TV. So don't give them what they want and people won't do that. And this girl is obviously trying to egg somebody on, trying to create a controversy, trying to create a stir.

And the best thing you can do to really heat coal on their head is ignore them. And you can't, what good could it possibly do? Let's say you go down there and you say, oh, teacher, principal, I am offended to make this girl take this shirt off. So now, in what way is the cause of Christ advanced? In what way is someone more likely to believe the Gospel or get interested in the Word of God? Is there spiritual fruit being born? No.

You've done the same thing that any minority could do who got offended. You're playing the secular game by secular rules, making a secular point. It isn't going to make any spiritual difference, whether or not somebody wears... But you really have to kind of think this through because everybody's gut reaction is take that thing off.

You make me sick. But we have to be innocent as lambs and wise as foxes. We have to pick our battles.

We have to know when we're on solid ground. And you cannot overturn an entire system of thought. This girl who wears this shirt, she's not on the verge of getting interested in the things of God and becoming a healthy, growing, fruitful believer.

She's trying to make a stir. She's trying to yank a chain. And we have to be smart enough to not play into someone's hands, to not get baited and get lured into a distracting, unfruitful mode of operation.

People who want to get the feminist angle and discredit the Bible, people who want to get the non-historical, non-archaeological, non-miraculous, use all of these different things. The Word of God needs no defense. The Holy Spirit is going to evangelize.

He's going to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. And people who respond to that convicting ministry in a positive way and say, I want a relationship with God. I want to be cleansed.

I want to be renewed. I want to move toward the light. I want to live in the light.

I want eternal life. I want Jesus Christ as my Savior. Nothing is going to stop those people.

And when they are asking and seeking and knocking, and when they ask us a reason for the hope that is in us, we can speak. But you are spitting against a tsunami when the forces of darkness align themselves and suck up people who are enjoying the darkness. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.

And we are to be salt and light. We are to be a light shining in a dark place. But we have to be wise in how we do that.

If you are going to be... Jesus said don't put your light under a bushel. Put it up on a lamp stand and let it shine. He didn't say set the house on fire.

He didn't say set the fields on fire. Set everything ablaze. Let the light of the gospel incinerate everything in its periphery.

It's a light. It's disciplined. It's controlled.

It's in a little lamp that sits there with oil in it. And it burns as long as the oil is supplied to the wick. And it's steady and immovable.

And that's what we are to be. We are to be a lamp shining in a dark place. But we're not setting the curtains and the bed linens and everything else on fire.

We don't have to... It only takes a spark to get a fire burning. We are not that. Pass it on.

We are not incinerating the world. We just shine like lights in a dark place. It's our personal walk.

It's our personal example that will draw those who are seeking. You can't push the fire at people. You can't throw Molotov cocktails at people trying to get them to catch you.

You'll want to pass it on. That's Molotov Christianity. You cannot do that.

God does not call us to that. Don't ever sing Pass It On to me. I hate that song because it represents everything that's wrong with Christianity.

We're not here to light fires. We're here to be light. And so this deception is going to be there.

We're going to see it. John said way back, the spirit of Antichrist is already in the world. It's already going on.

Paul said the same thing. Satan is going to be bound and the spirit of Antichrist is going to be gone. And guess what? People will still turn away from God.

There won't be any more deceiving of the nations. And yet, by the time of God Magog, there's going to be this huge group of people. And faith is not the issue.

Deception is not the issue. They willingly look God in the face and say just like the fallen angels did in eternity past, not for me. I would rather be eternally separate than chafe any longer under this divine rule that I don't like.

Wipe me out. I'm just sick of it. And they're going to get their wish.

He is shut up and sealed and he doesn't deceive anyone until the thousand years are finished. After these things, he must be released for a little while. I saw thrones and they sat on them and judgment was committed to them.

I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God who had not worshipped the beast. I suspect that this is the judgment seat for Old Testament saints. And I would, like Rod Serling, submit for your consideration Joseph in Egypt judging his brothers.

They judged him, sentenced him, essentially executed him. Certainly in the eyes of the father, he

was dead. And yet Joseph comes back and ends up judging his brothers.

In the same way, the church is the younger, Israel is the elder, Israel repudiates, the church has for two thousand years. And yet it is likely that those who sit on these thrones and judgment is committed to them, and then you have these who have been beheaded for the witness of Jesus, these who are the representatives of the Old Testament saint brigade standing here being judged. Now, why would God delegate this function? It's an application of the word of God, isn't it? How do you evaluate the fruit of a life? If we learn to evaluate spiritual fruit, if we learn to know what is and is not righteousness, then we'll be qualified to carry out this function.

This is not a judgment by the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is not a judgment by God the Father. These are thrones, plural, and they, plural, sit on them and judge these people. And I don't think it's angels.

It's just the reverse. Paul tells the Corinthians, why are you taking each other to court? Do you not know that we will judge angels? I would say if we're qualified to judge angels, we're qualified to judge Old Testament saints, or those of us in the church age who end up qualifying for this. So, they live and reign with Christ for a thousand years.

The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Now, there are only two resurrections in the book of Revelation.

This is the first, and the resurrection that is coming up here shortly is the second. So, when it says, this is the first resurrection, in what context? I can say I'm sitting in the first row. Well, of what? Is this the first row of any row that has ever been made, or is this the first row in the particular theater or auditorium that I'm speaking of? When you say this is the first of something, you know, George Washington was first in the hearts of his countrymen.

Well, in what context? You have to have a frame of reference for first, and a frame of reference for second. All of the last 15 chapters has been talking about Israel in the tribulation period. Saints in the tribulation period with some flashes, upper and lower angels and church and so on.

But mainly, we've been looking at people on earth and the surviving Old Testament saints who are part of the 144,000 and so on. And we continue in that mode. The great battle that is fought.

Jesus comes down from heaven with his white robed army and rescues those who are on the earth. Then, the souls of those who had been beheaded for the witness to Jesus and for the word of God who did not worship the beast, they lived and reigned with Christ. When it says, they lived, they is the first resurrection.

This is the Daniel 12, 1 resurrection. This is the first resurrection from the viewpoint of the Old Testament saints. How many Old Testament saints were around for the resurrection of the church? Zero.

Where our resurrection is out of time for them. Last Old Testament saints died sometime before Pentecost. And then you have the seven year group who come after us.

But we are, kind of like the Apostle Paul, out of time. Our birth and our death and our resurrection are all invisible to the Old Testament saints. So, from an Old Testament perspective, and you know that John is getting the Ezekielian perspective, if I can coin a term.

The Ezekiel 39 perspective of the great feast for the carrion birds and the destruction of the enemies of Israel. This is the first resurrection for them. And church is not in view.

Church hasn't been in view 15 chapters now. Basically. The rest of the dead.

Who are the rest of the dead? Well, church is already raised. Jesus is already raised. Old Testament saints are now all raised.

The rest of the dead are only and exclusively unbelievers from every age. Everybody that is still dead at this point is an unbeliever. And in particular, they are represented by those who get slaughtered at Armageddon.

That in the same way that the 144,000 represent the Old Testament saints of every age, the slaughtered represent the unbelievers of every age. And the enemies of every age. The woman riding the beast of every age.

All of this has echoes that go back to the beginning of time. Well, this is the first resurrection. This is a good place for us to pause and take a break.

We'll come back and see what it means to be blessed and holy in that first resurrection.