

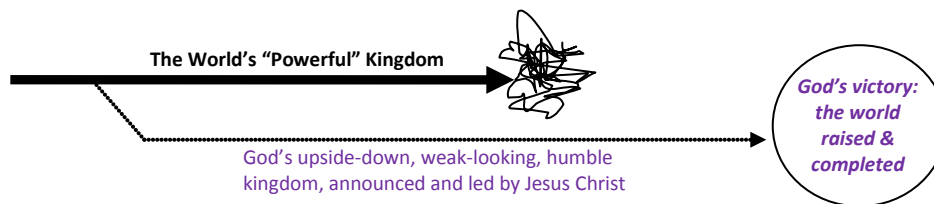
Weekly Bible Study group – January 6, 2010

Reflection by Bob Zurinsky (bob@spu.edu)

The book of Revelation! What is this thing about, anyway?

Full of mystery and controversy. The source of thousands of books and movies and crazy prophecy websites. Debated by biblical scholars and the mothers and fathers of the faith. It was the only book of the Bible that John Calvin refused to write a commentary about, for fear that it would further divide the Church. Is it even possible to understand the meaning of this book, to take away some kind of message from God that is “useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness”?

OK, try this out. Look at this diagram below. Look familiar? It’s the same one that we used to describe the main idea of the book of John. I would like to propose that we can use the *exact same image* to help us understand what Revelation is all about.



It’s true – the language and style of Revelation is VERY different from the gospel of John. But the message underneath that style is essentially the same. It’s a different *form* of literature – it’s a genre called “apocalyptic,” which is a kind of poetry that uses ultra-dramatic images to convey a message about what’s really true in the world. But the content is simple enough: We must choose between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world. And even though it may look like God’s path is weak and powerless right now (like a slaughtered lamb) – take heart, for victory is on the way, and the earth will be redeemed!