

## **JESUS IS RULER: Revelation 1:5**

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ . . . the ruler of the kings of the earth” (verse 1; verse 5).

God reveals the Lordship of Jesus Christ in Revelation. Religious leaders misappropriate this book to try to reveal everything except the Lordship of Jesus Christ, from prophecies about Russia and China, the Jewish nation in the year XXXX, the Second Coming of Christ, and a host of unrelated time-sequenced events alleged to be in our religious future.

Using scripture to interpret scripture (relying entirely on God’s word), the church can apply the combined books of the bible to fully explain every thought, concept, symbol, picture, and any part of any vision identified in Revelation to know everything the Father wants the church to know about His Son, Jesus Christ, from reading and understanding this book.

“Jesus Christ . . . the ruler of the kings of the earth” is the third of three statements about Jesus presented early in Revelation (chapter 1, verse 5). Knowing Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth is as important as knowing Jesus is the faithful witness and the first-born of the dead.

After Jesus ascended, God exalted Christ “far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age (from the time of the Caesars until Christ Returns), but also in the one to come (Eph 1:21).” The early church did not require additional proof Jesus was the reigning ruler of the kings of the earth. They believed God’s word. At great risk, they faithfully declared Jesus as the reigning King above all kings of the earth. They were persecuted and killed for it (no king was above Caesar).

But the unbelieving Jews, the high priest, priests, Counsel, and nation of Israel who had rejected and killed Jesus, rejected God’s word regarding Jesus as the Messiah and reigning King of the world. They required real, materialistic, dispositive proof Jesus was King above all kings, as prophesied, before they would be judged and destroyed in the day of Jesus’ wrath in 70 A.D.

God chose two striking scriptural proofs to tell the Jewish State in the book of Acts, the Roman Empire, the church today, and men for all times that Jesus is indeed ruling. These are the two most important scriptural events confirming Jesus had taken His position as ruler of the kings of the earth. These events provide the independent proof sufficient to hold the Jewish high priest, Apostate Israel, and the Roman Empire responsible for rejecting Christ as the supreme ruler of this world.

The first proof is found in the second chapter of Acts on the day of Pentecost. On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came, the apostles spoke in another language as the Spirit gave them utterance, there were about 18 different nations represented, and no one understood what was going on. Peter began explaining it to them, Acts 2:15-18, "These men are not drunken, as you suppose, for it is *only* the third hour of the day; but **this is that which was spoken through the prophet Joel** (Peter quotes verbatim from the second chapter of Joel) ‘AND IT SHALL BE IN THE LAST

DAYS (the last days of the Jewish system, the Old Covenant), God says, THAT I WILL POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT UPON ALL MANKIND; AND YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, AND YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, AND YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS; AND UPON MY BONDSLAVES BOTH MEN AND WOMEN, I WILL IN THOSE DAYS POUR FORTH OF MY SPIRIT AND THEY SHALL PROPHECY.”

So far, so good . . . we can understand all of that. It is speaking of the events taking place on the day of Pentecost, and the events that will take place as the gospel begins to spread. The old men would dream dreams, the young men would see visions, and the sons and daughters would prophesy. The Holy Spirit was being poured out.

Now the problem comes when we read on. In Acts 2:19-21, Peter continues to quote from Joel chapter 2, "AND I WILL GRANT WONDERS IN THE SKY ABOVE, AND SIGNS ON THE EARTH BENEATH, BLOOD, AND FIRE, AND VAPOR OF SMOKE. THE SUN SHALL BE TURNED INTO DARKNESS, AND THE MOON INTO BLOOD, BEFORE THE GREAT AND GLORIOUS DAY OF THE LORD SHALL COME. AND IT SHALL BE, THAT EVERYONE WHO CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.”

And there's the problem . . . for centuries, the church has never understood these verses; but it offered as many opinions about what these verses mean as there are commentaries selling countless scenarios. None of the explanations match the level of significance expressed in these verses. Since neither the commentators nor the churches have ever understood it, failed to accurately explain it, but are expected to effectively deal with it, religious leaders did the only thing they know how to do under these circumstances: they unequivocally point to the future and say these events will take place at the end of the age when Christ Returns (they concluded we should all be clear on what it means by then).

What the elite scholars, commentators, and religious leaders who published these mighty works of men did not calculate were all of heaven's richest blessings and greatest help in the times of need the church would miss-out on by not believing God's word and not understanding the Lordship of Christ as revealed in Revelation. These writers simply had no idea what their misdirected works would cause the church to miss-out on. The missed-blessings are in the realm of "exceedingly abundantly beyond anything we could ask or think." Their minds could not possibly comprehend them. These are the riches of heaven found only in Christ and in the second half of the Gospel (described mostly in Hebrews) which is accessed only by faith and believing God's word in areas they rejected, usually by pushing them over-yonder after Jesus Returns.

Now Peter's explanation in the second Chapter of Acts was: You (Jews) are witnessing the fulfillment of the prophesy from Joel chapter 2, and not something that would be fulfilled 2,000 – 3,000 years down the road. Peter told them the prophesy from Joel chapter 2 is being fulfilled before your very eyes, right then as Peter spoke.

To finally understand this, we need to go back to Joel to examine the context of the prophesy. In Acts, Peter quoted Joel 2:28-32 and stopped after quoting only the first half of verse 32. The last half of verse 32 (which Peter did not quote) was probably evident to the Jews and its meaning very plain to the Jews in Peter's day. But its meaning has not been evident to the church for centuries. The last half of verse 32 explains what the blood, fire, smoke, the sun turned into darkness, the moon turned into blood is all about before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. The last half of verse 32 says, "**For on Mt. Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape**, as the Lord has said, even among the survivors, whom the Lord calls."

In other words, whenever all of this begins to happen, whenever I display the signs in the sky and on the earth, when the Jews see blood and fire and columns of smoke, and the sun is turned into darkness, and the moon into blood . . . when all of this begins to happen, on Mt. Zion and in Jerusalem, "**there will be those who escape.**" **Escape what? Jesus tells us the answer in Matthew, chapter 24. Jesus is talking in very prophetic language, somewhat like Joel is using. Jesus is talking about the destruction of the City of Jerusalem that is coming upon the Jews. Jesus says when you see these things begin to come to pass, flee and get out of the city. Pray that your flight be not in the winter. Pray that you will not be with child in those days. But when you see it coming, get out! And Joel 2:32, the last half of verse says, "there will be those who escape," (some of them will get out).**

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the destruction of Jerusalem are intimately connected to the same event. In Acts 2:17-18, the Spirit is poured out. The next verses, Acts 2:19-21, describe the destruction of Jerusalem, written in vivid language. **The destruction of the nation of Israel was the sign that Jesus is enthroned in Heaven at the Father's right hand, ruling over the nations, and bringing vengeance upon His enemies.**

**Matthew 26:64 clinches this application: "Jesus said to the high priest, 'You have said it yourself; nevertheless I tell you, hereafter you shall see the SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, AND COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN.'"**

**Jesus told the high priest Jesus was coming in judgment upon Jerusalem. Throughout the Old Testament, the "Clouds of Heaven" signified the presence of God in judgment. The destruction of Jerusalem was the first demonstration of His authority as ruler of the kings of the earth with the power to judge His enemies. When Jesus destroyed Jerusalem, the Old Temple, and the Old Covenant system, Jesus judged Apostate Israel and destroyed it. That Old High Priest lived to see the "SON OF MAN . . . COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." With the old Temple destroyed, the Father and His Son, Jesus, made their abode in their New Temple, the Church.**

The book of Revelation reveals the Lordship of Christ. It is not a prophecy about Russia or China, the Jewish nation in the year XXXX, the Second Coming of Christ, or events yet to occur

in our future. It tells the church Christ is ruling and reigning over everything in this universe. Destroying Jerusalem, the Temple, and the Old Covenant system were His first official acts as Ruler of the kings of the earth in 70 AD. Later, Jesus shattered the entire Rome Empire in 476 AD in the day of His wrath. Throughout the centuries, Jesus has judged many others among the nations. He has filled them with corpses and shattered the chief men over a broad country (Psm 110:5-6) just as the Old Testament prophesies described it.

**In Rev 1:17-18, Jesus says, ‘I am the first and the last, and the living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and the grave.’ He is summarizing His Kingship. It encompasses His ascension and His exaltation by God. When Jesus ascended, The Father exalted His Son. That is when Jesus became Lord (ruler) of the universe and received everything the Father describes in Eph 1:21-23, Matt 28:18, Phil 2:9, and other verses. That is when Jesus stretched forth His strong scepter (a King’s ruling instrument) from Zion (His people, the church) and He rules in the midst of His enemies (Psm 110:2). Jesus will rule until the Father makes Christ’s enemies a footstool for Jesus’ feet (Psm 110:1).**

An interesting aspect of Jesus’ rule is Eph 1:22-23, “And He put all things in subjection under His feet.” There is nothing in this universe, small or large, important or unimportant, that is not under Jesus’ control, “and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” **Everything that Christ has done, everything that God has made Christ to be, everything that He willed, is for the sake of the church. Christ has dominion and authority and power, not just so Christ can rule, but so Jesus can rule for the sake of the church. Everything Jesus does is for our sake, because He is Lord (Ruler). The church needs to know that.**

When the early church confessed Jesus is Lord, this meant they came in conflict with the State; they came into direct conflict with the Roman Empire. More than a few Roman providences required the official worship of Caesar as lord, as a god. The Christians in Asia, for example, lived in the center of Rome’s Emperor worship. They had to face the Roman Empire’s mighty power, not just its military power, but its religious power, hence the worship. Early christians faced all of that.

**But the early church’s greatest enemy really was not Rome. The christians’ greatest enemy upon the earth was Apostate Israel, the Jewish nation, because Apostate Israel used the power of the pagan Roman Empire to try to stamp-out Christianity. Acts 17:7 gives us an example, begin reading in verse 5, “But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the marketplace, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and coming upon the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. And when they did not find them, they *began* dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, ‘These men who have upset the world have come here also; (now notice the charge they bring against them) and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decree of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus!’” The charge the Jews brought against the**

christians is they refused to recognize Caesar as Lord. They recognized another Lord. They recognized Jesus as Lord, not Caesar.

This is huge. This is Israel of the Old Testament, who had God's divine revelation. They are accusing the christians of being unfaithful to Caesar. The Jews used the same tactic when they crucified Christ, John 19:12, "As a result of this Pilate made efforts to release Him." Pilate, a Roman official, actually wants to release Jesus, and Pilot made sincere efforts to release Him. "But the Jews (the people of God in the Old Testament) cried out, saying, "If you release this Man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes Caesar." Verse 15-16, "They therefore cried out, 'Away with *Him*, away with *Him*, crucify Him!' Pilate said to them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, "We have no King but Caesar.' So he (Pilate) then delivered Him to them (the Jews) to be crucified."

Luke 23:2, "And they (the Jews) began to accuse Him, saying, 'We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar (that was a lie: Matt 22:21, Jesus said render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's), and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." The Jews charged Jesus with denying that Caesar is king, denying that Caesar is Lord.

The danger that the early church faced was that they would compromise Jesus with Caesar. The early church realized Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth. They knew Jesus is ruler over Caesar. Many in the modern church have trouble by not realizing Jesus is the supreme ruler of all of life today. The impacts of denying the biblical truth that Jesus is Lord and the ruler of the kings of the earth now are substantial. A brief review of how we placed ourselves in conflict with God's word may help to correct our mistaken beliefs.

Let me read for you some statements by British theologian, Lesslie Newbigin. In his book, "*The Gospel in the Pluralistic Society*," he says once upon a time, Europe was shattered by religious warfare. Men and women were willing to kill one another over which god they chose to worship (very similar to the Bishops killing one another in 325 A.D. over whether Christ was the Son of God or God Himself, all of which gave rise to a directive from Ceasar to draft one statement both factions could live with to stop the Bishops from killing one another, which gave life to the man-made doctrine of the trinity). Then in the 17th and the 18th centuries, science came into its own giving rise to the secular faith. Henceforth, Europeans and their descendants stopped killing one another over religion. They professed a new basis for public truth that was to be determined by science (scientifically). Testy religion was regulated to the realm of private truth. He says the church largely went along with this new scientific, fact-based, public, value decision.

He continued, privatizing the faith meant trivializing it. No longer did the church forthrightly proclaim Christ as public truth, which is the most important fact and value of our existence. Instead, Christian faith was regulated to the same realm as mere opinion and preference. Right up to the present, many Christians continue to interpret and understand the faith in individualistic

and privatistic terms (defined as, *the attitude of being uncommitted to or avoiding involvement in anything beyond one's immediate interests*) which is a distortion of the Biblical witness.

I think he is right. With the rise of Darwinism and other types of thought that were used as a basis of determining what is true and not true, the rise of the secular state, welfare (removing the responsibility for care of the poor from the church), and the State's take over of the education of our children, and the rise of an alleged better educated and enlightened society with the social reengineering we are experiencing today, we have regulated our faith to the realm of private truth. Many today say Jesus is Lord in a spiritual sense. He is Lord of my life, but He is not Lord of society or anything in this world.

Francis Schaeffer said, "Personal peace and affluence has individualized Christianity to the extent that it offers plenty of comfort and assurance for the believer's private life and expects no significant conflict with the surrounding public life."

The danger that the seven churches in Asia minor faced, the danger that the early church faced, and the danger that we face today, is that we make Jesus Lord of our private lives but He is not Lord of our public life.

Revelation is written to show the early christians that Jesus is Lord, that He is the ruler of the kings of the earth. He is Lord of everything in this world. Today the church needs that message because we are tempted to bifurcate our lives and compromise both our faith and beliefs with false religion. We are subjected to threats by Christ's enemies. We are asked, even by fellow Christians, to compromise with beasts and harlots in order to save ourselves from persecution just as these people persecuted. We are faced with the same charge they were faced with. It was very real to them. It is Jesus or it is Caesar! It is real to us. It is Jesus or it is Satan, whatever form he may take.

If Jesus was not ruling then or now, if Jesus was not the King of kings and Lord of lords, if He was not the ruler of the kings of the earth, there would be no opposition from the enemy, there would be no persecution. The more the christian keeps her faith private and not on display to the world, the less persecution and opposition she will experience from the enemy. Satan challenges all who declare Jesus is Lord of all, not just the church. Satan persecutes believers who correctly proclaim Jesus is the ruler of the kings of the earth. Surprisingly, some of the strongest persecution often comes from within the church itself from those who reject God's word preferring to believe Jesus will not reign, for example, until He Returns (conduct resembling the unbelieving Jews).

The only people on Earth who can let the world know Jesus is ruler of the kings of the earth is the church. Christians who separate their public lives from their private faith to avoid persecution and opposition from the enemy, need to know the truth of Revelation . . . Jesus is ruler of the kings of the earth for the sake of the church.

The second scriptural proof that Christ is ruling is I Cor 14:21. For thirty years, I studied this passage. I did not know anything about what Paul was really talking about until I decided to look to scripture to interpret scripture. This entire chapter talks about speaking in tongues and prophesying. Quoting from Isaiah 28:11, Paul says in verse 21, "In the law it is written, 'BY MEN OF STRANGE TONGUES AND BY THE LIPS OF STRANGERS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE, EVEN SO THEY WILL NOT LISTEN TO ME,' says the Lord." What does that mean? Verse 22, "So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers."

**Unlike what most charismatics claim today, speaking in tongues is not a prayer language, an ecstatic utterance, or a feeling that comes over a person that cannot be controlled. It is a sign, not to those who believe, but to the unbelievers. In Paul's day, the believers were the Christians. In the context of the New Testament, the unbelievers were the Jews. Paul is saying speaking in tongues is a sign to the Jews.**

Go back to Isaiah 28:11-12. The miracle of tongues in I Cor 14:21 is the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in chapter 28, where Isaiah says, "Indeed, He will speak to this people through stammering lips and a foreign tongue. He who said to them, 'Here is rest, give rest to the weary, and here is repose,' but they would not listen."

He then describes how Israel was unfaithful, and in verse 15, "Because you have said, 'We have made a covenant with death, and with Sheol (the grave) we have made a pact. The overwhelming scourge will not reach us when it passes by, for we have made falsehood our refuge and we have concealed ourselves with deception. Therefore thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I am lying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone *for* the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes *in it* will not be disturbed (disappointed), and I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the level; then hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and water will overflow the secret place.'" In other words, I am going to bring judgment upon Israel. He says when I bring judgment upon you in that way, verse 18, "your pact (covenant) with death will be canceled, and your pact with Sheol shall not stand."

Now listen to what he says in the last part of verse 18, "When the overwhelming scourge passes through, then you (Jerusalem) become *its* trampling *place*." Jesus said, "Jerusalem shall be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24). Isaiah 28:19, "As often as it passes through, it will seize you. For morning after morning it will pass through, *anytime* during the day or night. And it shall be sheer terror to understand what it means." The sign of Pentecost was speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues was a sign to unbelieving Israel that the cornerstone had been laid (it had come). Israel had rejected Jesus to their own damnation and their judgment was approaching ("sheer terror to understand what it means").

One more verse to confirm that: Matthew 21:42, "Jesus said to them, 'Did you never read in scriptures, THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED, THIS BECAME THE CHIEF

CORNERSTONE; THIS CAME ABOUT FROM THE LORD, AND IT IS MARVELOUS IN OUR EYES?'" He is talking about the stone. Verse 43, "Therefore I say to you, **the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will shatter him like dust.**" That is exactly what Jesus did to the entire Jewish nation in 70 A.D. Verse 45, "**And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard His parables, they understood that He was speaking about them.**"

**If His enemies are destroyed and scattered, as Jesus said they would when the chief cornerstone comes, then Jesus is ruling. He is Lord of lords and King of kings. The two passages of scripture that prove Jesus is Lord and is the reigning ruler of the kings of the earth are: Acts 2, the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy; and 1 Corinthians 14, speaking in tongues.**

When Jesus destroyed Jerusalem, as He said He would, that event proved that He had taken His place at the right hand of God and was reigning over all creation. When they spoke in tongues, that assured the unbelieving Jew the cornerstone that God had been talking about in Isaiah had been laid in its place (it had come). In scripture, the promised destruction of Jerusalem is considered to be an aspect of the work of Christ intimately connected with His work of redemption. The work that Jesus came into the world to do was not completed on the cross. While He was hanging on the cross, Jesus said, "It is finished," but there He was talking about the sacrifice for sin and the Old Jewish Covenant System. Just before He died, He said, it is finished.

That was not the end. Jesus had to be raised from the dead. He had to ascend. He had to be exalted. Jesus had to receive from the Father the power of the Holy Spirit and send the Spirit into the world. Jesus then had to destroy the entire Old Jewish System. Jesus destroyed it entirely in 70 A.D. Daniel 9:2, "the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely 70 years."

Jesus said if you want to understand it, know what I am talking about in Matthew 24, "Let him that reads understand." Let him read what? Let him read the book of Daniel, and that will tell you. The book of Daniel, chapter 9, tells us all about it, verse 24, "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city."

Now, the church had no problem interpreting the seventy weeks of Daniel until C.I. Scofield wrote his bestseller in 1909 and revised it in 1917, called the Scofield Reference Bible. Scofield muddled it all up because he asserted, "The seventieth week, the last week, does not happen until just before the Lord comes (Returns)." Scofield added, "There is a prophetic gap between the 69th week and the 70th week." Millions of people believed him, and still believe him. There is not one iota of scripture anywhere that even hints his statement might be true. He just made it up.

Daniel 9:24 says, "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and on your holy city." Daniel then describes what is going to happen, "To finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to make atonement for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy *place*." Then Daniel describes something else that will happen, verse 26, "Then after the 62 weeks, the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary." Scofield says that refers to an antichrist. There is not a passage of scripture that backs that up. That was all in his head. This is another assertion Scofield just made up.

Who destroyed the city and the sanctuary? The Roman Generals destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple! Verse 26 cont'd, "And its end will *come* in with a flood (Isaiah 28:17 said the same thing, 'and the waters shall overflow the secret place') even to the end *there* will be war; desolations are determined. And he will make a firm covenant with many for one week, but in the middle of the week he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations *will come* one who makes desolate, even until complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate."

What was to happen in these seventy weeks? The Messiah was to come. What was He to do? He was to finish transgressions. He was to make an end to sin. He was to make atonement for iniquity. Christ did all of that. Christ brought an end to the power of sin. Christ made atonement for all iniquities. Christ brought in everlasting righteousness. Christ sealed up vision and prophesy. He fulfilled vision and prophesy. Christ anointed the (new) most holy place (not made with human hands). Hebrews 9:24, "For Christ did not enter the holy place made with hands, a *mere* copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us (taking His own blood), not through the blood of goats and bulls and goats, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12).

**And the last thing, the complete destruction of the sanctuary (Temple) and the city of Jerusalem. The destruction of the sanctuary and the city is on the same level as finishing transgression, making an end to sin, making atonement for iniquities, bringing in everlasting righteousness, sealing up vision and prophecy, and anointing the most holy place. So, all of that was part of the work of Christ, and Christ was not done until He destroyed Jerusalem, the Temple, and the Old Covenant System. When all of that happened in 70 A.D., that demonstrated, showed, and proved Jesus was the reigning ruler of the kings of the earth.**