

## WHO RULES THE WORLD?

When I hear songs like, "OUR GOD REIGNS", and listen to people say things like, "God is in charge of this world", I think that they must have a hard time with their theology. If we think that God is in charge, then we must think that He is incompetent. This notion is just not consistent with the Bible, and if you believe it, you will be very confused.

There will be a time when He will reign, but that time is not yet. Let us see if we can understand what the Bible has to say about who actually rules this world, how it came about, when the rule will change, etc. To do this, let's start at the beginning.

In Genesis 1:1 we read, ***"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*** Now if God created the earth, then it belonged to Him. If not, then who would it belong to? Since it belonged to God, He could do with it what ever He wanted to. So what did He choose to do with it? The answer is found in Genesis 1:26-28, ***"Then God said, `Let us make man in our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, `Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"*** After reading that, can there be any doubt that God gave control of everything on the earth to man? Notice that there were no qualifiers either. God didn't say that man could rule everything on the earth as long as he did a good job, He gave him unconditional control.

Something happened next that changed the control of the earth and everything on it. In chapter 3 of Genesis we read about the deception of Eve and Adam and how they obeyed the serpent rather than God. In Romans 6:16 we read, ***"Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin***

***resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?***

This principle holds true for Adam as well. When He decided to obey the serpent instead of God he became the slave of the serpent and in God's old testament law, the slave owner got all of the slave's possessions when he got the slave. So the rule of this earth became the property of the serpent, Lucifer. God gave man one thing that mitigates the control that Satan can exercise over him, and that is a free will. Because Man has a free will, Satan does not have complete control over him. Notice also that God did not give Adam control over other people, so that could not be transferred. But the fact that man has a free will means that he also has responsibility for his own actions. You should be asking, "Does this line up with other scriptures?" When Satan offered to give Jesus all of the kingdoms of the world and their glory. if Jesus would worship him, Jesus didn't say that they were not his to give. (Matthew 4:8-10) ***"Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, 'All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Begone, Satan! For it is written, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'" In John 12:31 Jesus said "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out." In John 16:11 Jesus said that the ruler of this world has been judged. In Ephesians 2:2 Satan is called the prince of the power of the air. again in Ephesians 6:12 we read, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."*** That is the bad news, the good news is that this rule of Satan will come to an end.

I believe that the Old Testament Law holds some keys to when and how the transition of power will occur. If you read the book of Ruth, you can get some idea of how the laws concerning the redemption of property worked. In the old testament it was hard to transfer property permanently. Every fifty years there was a return of property to it's former owner. This followed an elaborate set of rules. In the case of a man selling himself into slavery, he had to redeem his property from the present owner. The conditions of the redemption were written on the outside of the scroll and the deed was written on the inside. The scroll was then sealed so that the conditions could not be changed. The conditions of redemption could be almost anything

that the two parties could agree on. In the case of Naomi and Ruth, the condition that Naomi's husband, Elimelech, made was that, in addition to money, and other things, The one who redeemed the property had to marry Ruth. The one that had first option to buy the land back was the one who was the last owner. In the event that he was unable to come up with the redemption price, the next of kin would have his chance to do so. And so it would go until someone would redeem. If all of the known relatives were unable or unwilling to redeem, the present owner would keep the property until the year of Jubilee. Every fifty years was the year of jubilee when most would go back to its original owner. You can read about it in Leviticus chapter 25. Do we have some idea about what will happen and when it will happen? I think so. In II Peter 3:3-7, Peter is writing about the redemption of the earth and when it will take place. Then in verse 8 he says, ***"But do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."*** I think that this has great significance. The laws concerning Sabbath year was based on the Sabbath at the end of the week. So you see that the law simply substituted a year for a day when it came to property laws. I think that Peter is saying that the redemption of the earth will be based on a week of thousand year periods. The big question is, "when did the week of thousand years begin?" We don't know that! There have been about six thousand years since the fall of man. If this is true, then we should be coming up on the Sabbath thousand year period. But it is unlikely that Satan will honor the sabbath. A time when all labor ceases. I believe that redemption will take place at or before the Sabbath thousand year period and that the thousand year reign of Christ is that Sabbath thousand year period. There are six thousand years of sin and struggle and then the Sabbath (thousand years) when the earth rests from sin. Let's see if I can make my case.

To prepare you for my argument I am reprinting the fifth chapter of Revelation here. Revelation chapter 5: ***"And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. (2) And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?" (3) And no one in heaven, or on the earth, or under the earth, was able to open the book, or to look into it. (4) And I began to weep greatly, because no one was found worthy to open the book, or to***

*look into it; (5) and one of the elders said to me, "Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals." (6) And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. (7) And He came, and He took it out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. (8) And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (9) And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. (10) "And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." (11) And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, (12) saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." (13) And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever." 14) And the four living creatures kept saying, "Amen." And the elders fell down and worshiped.*

There is so much in here that it is hard to know where to start. I believe that John is seeing a court room in heaven. Seated on the throne is God the Father. He has a scroll in His hand with writing on both sides. As I mentioned to you earlier, this is the way deeds were written. On the inside there was the actual deed, and on the outside were the conditions of the redemption of the property, and the deed was then sealed. In the second and third verses we see that, it appeared that no one would be able to open the "book" or scroll. At that prospect John begins to weep. He knows the great consequences would be that Satan would have permanent control of the earth

because there was no one able to redeem it. Now read verse five very carefully. In it you have some of the credentials of the one that is about to appear. He is the Lion from the tribe of Judah. He is the Root of David. These are credentials that indicate that He is in the line of those who are eligible to redeem. I believe that He didn't come forth right away because He was not the nearest of kin to Adam and so had to wait His turn. Then John sees the Lamb, as if it had been slain. This of course speaks to Christ as our offering for sin. Only He is able to take the scroll and to open it. I also believe that the multitude that John saw contained the Church that Christ had just brought to heaven with Him. They were there to witness their redemption and the redemption of the earth. I think that the seals that are mentioned in subsequent chapters depict the price that Christ paid for us. But not everyone has accepted His provision for their redemption and so they will have to go through the consequences of their sins for themselves. This is called the great tribulation. But we will be spared because we have accepted the provision of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. At the end of the tribulation, Christ will reign for a thousand years. Then there is the new heaven and the new earth where we will live with Christ forever.

If the rapture of the church happens at the beginning of the tribulation, the week of years that the bride and groom are in the wedding chamber corresponds to the seven days that the bride and groom are in the bridal chamber at a Old Testament Jewish wedding and would be the time of the tribulation. The thousand year reign of Christ would correspond to the Sabbath (thousand year period) and that would complete the entire week of thousand year periods. This would end the period that started with the fall of man and would start a new era where we can live with God and Christ as we were meant to from the beginning. The time of testing is over and we have chosen Christ as our Lord and King. We could have chosen others as did many of our fellow travelers on this journey, but we have chosen Him and have accepted His provision for our Sins. So we can live in fellowship with Him forever. There will be a new heaven and a new earth as depicted in the last two chapters of the Bible. To quote the writings of John in the next to the last verse in the Bible. ***"Amen. Come Lord Jesus."***

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