

Studies on the Revelation: Lesson #6: The Ruler of the Kings of the Earth

In this week's lesson, we touch on the eschatological biblical themes of the promised Davidic Kingdom and the New/Second Exodus as we explore the phrase, "the Ruler of the kings of the earth". We begin with our study-text from Revelation chapter 1.

Revelation 1:5

And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and ***the ruler of the kings of the earth***. To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood.

This phrase, "the ruler of the kings of the earth" comes from Psalm 89 in which God reiterates His promise made to David. The psalm declares that the kingdom of David will be built up and established, his enemies will be crushed before him, and his seed will inherit his throne and reign forever and ever.

Psalm 89:2-4,20-23,27-29

For I have said, "Lovingkindness will be built up forever; in the heavens, You will establish Your faithfulness." I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have sworn to David My servant, I will establish your seed forever and build up your throne to all generations." Selah.... I have found David My servant; with My holy oil I have anointed him, with whom My hand will be established; My arm also will strengthen him. The enemy will not deceive him, nor the son of wickedness afflict him. But I shall crush his adversaries before him, and strike those who hate him.... I also shall make him My firstborn, ***the highest of the kings of the earth***. My lovingkindness I will keep for him forever, and My covenant shall be confirmed to him. So I will establish his descendants forever and his throne as the days of heaven.

But how would this happen? The following phrases in Revelation 1:5-6 as well as their Old Testament sources give us some powerful clues....

Revelation 1:5-6

And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and ***released us from our sins by His blood***. And ***He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father....***

The phrase, "He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father" is an allusion to at least two Old Testament passages. First, to Exodus 19:6 in which God has just typologically released the nation of Israel "from their sins by His blood" in Egypt. And second, from Isaiah 61:6, a prophecy concerning both the judgment (the day of vengeance - cp. Isaiah 61:2 with Luke 21:22,32) and restoration (the favorable year of the Lord - cp. Isaiah 61:2 with Luke 21:28,32) of Israel.

Exodus 19:4-6

'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself*. Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ***and you shall be to Me a***

kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.

Isaiah 61:1-2,6

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the broken hearted, ***to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners;*** to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord And the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.... ***But you will be called the priests of the Lord; you will be spoken of as ministers of our God.*** You will eat the wealth of nations, and in their riches you will boast.

Based on the contexts of these Old Testament passages, the establishment of the Davidic kingdom, the overthrow of his enemies, and the reign of the seed of David would come through a new and second exodus, initiated by the blood of the Lamb. God through Christ would once again “bear them on eagles’ wings” and bring “liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners”. For those who would receive this good news it would be “the favorable year of the Lord”. For those who would reject the gospel and their promised eschatological exodus, it would be “the day of vengeance of our God”.

In conclusion; the phrase “the Ruler of the kings of the earth” in the context of the “Revelation of Jesus Christ”, carried the idea that at Christ’s appearing the faithful of the New Covenant Church who had been redeemed from the bondage of sin and death through the true and final exodus would become the royal house of David and inherit his eternal kingdom. And, that those who had returned to Egypt in their hearts, thus aborting the true-exodus journey out of the Old Covenant world, would be judged and condemned as “enemies of God” and “cast out” of the Kingdom-house of David.