

# THE RULER OF KINGS ON EARTH

Revelation 1:5

## Greeting to the Seven Churches (1:4-5)

**Revelation 1:4–8 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, <sup>5</sup> and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth.

In his invocation, John calls upon all three members of the Trinity to let grace and peace rest on the seven congregations to whom Revelation was written.

The One *who is and who was and who is to come* is God the Father.

The *seven spirits who are before his throne* is the Holy Spirit.

Jesus Christ is *the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth*. It was in His first coming that Jesus served as *the faithful witness* and, through His resurrection, became *the firstborn of the dead*.<sup>1</sup> Did Jesus become *the ruler of kings on earth* in His first coming? Has Jesus been reigning over the kings of the earth for the past 2000 years? Is Jesus presently reigning and ruling in righteousness over President Putin of Russia, President Rouhani of Iran, President Bashar Al-Assad of Syria, President Obama of the U.S.?

**Is Jesus, at this time, ruling the kings of earth?**

## Jesus, the Ruler of Kings on Earth

Some of us are not sure how to answer this question. We're unsure because we hear sermons declaring Jesus is king. We're unsure because we sing songs declaring Jesus is king.

Just this morning we sang:

*Crown him with many crowns, the Lamb upon his throne,  
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.  
Awake, my soul, and sing of him who died for thee,  
and hail him as thy matchless King through all eternity.*

So we're not quite sure how to answer this question, "Is Jesus, at this time, ruling the kings of the earth?"

Let's be clear: the question is not, "Is Jesus King?". The question is "Over whom is Jesus presently reigning as King?"

Presently, Jesus is reigning and ruling over the Church, over all born-again believers throughout the world. We are under His authority; He is the Head over all things for the Church. Jesus is our King; we are subject to His authority and to His will. We are part of His kingdom now because we are part of His Church.

But Jesus, at this time, is not ruling the kings of the earth nor has He ruled the kings of the earth in the previous 2000 years. To suggest that Jesus has been reigning in righteousness over the kings of the earth, even in some figurative sense, is ludicrous.

But the Bible clearly and repeatedly reveals that Messiah (Jesus is the Messiah) will reign and rule as king over a literal, physical, political kingdom on earth. And it does so, not beginning with the book of Revelation, but with the Old Testament prophets.

Beginning in 586B.C., the world entered into a period marked on God's prophetic calendar as *the times of the Gentiles*. If we are to understand Revelation, we must understand *the times of the Gentiles*.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.gccramona.com/sermon-archives/grace-and-peace-to-you/>

*The times of the Gentiles*

## The Times of the Gentiles

Prophesying Jerusalem's destruction (fulfilled in 70A.D.) Jesus spoke of a specific period of history called *the times of the Gentiles*.

**Luke 21:20–24 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> “But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation has come near. <sup>21</sup> Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let those who are inside the city depart, and let not those who are out in the country enter it, <sup>22</sup> for these are days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. <sup>23</sup> Alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! For there will be great distress upon the earth and wrath against this people. <sup>24</sup> They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

What is *the times of the Gentiles*?

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum defines *the times of the Gentiles* as...

*...that long period of time from the Babylonian empire to the Second Coming of the Messiah during which time the Gentiles have dominance over the City of Jerusalem. This does not rule out temporary Jewish control of the city, but all such Jewish control will be temporary until the Second Coming.<sup>2</sup>*

The course of *the times of the Gentiles* is laid out in four passages. Turn first to Daniel 2:31-45.

[Read Daniel 2:31-45]

Daniel 2 lays out the course of *the times of the Gentiles*. For now, I want you to see the big picture – we'll get into the details later. Here is the course of *the times of the Gentiles* as revealed in Daniel 2:

1. The Babylonian Empire
2. The Medo-Persian Empire
3. The Hellenistic Empire
4. The Fourth Empire
5. The Messianic Kingdom

Some years later, God revealed the course of *the times of the Gentiles* to Daniel himself. These visions are recorded in Daniel 7.

[Read Daniel 7]

The course of *the times of the Gentiles* as revealed in Daniel 7 is this:

1. The Babylonian Empire
2. The Medo-Persian Empire
3. The Hellenistic Empire
4. The Fourth Empire
5. The Messianic Kingdom

Revelation 13:1-10 and 17:7-14 also deal with *the times of the Gentiles*, but we will leave those for a later time.

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<sup>2</sup> Fruchtenbaum, Arnold G. *The Footsteps of the Messiah : a Study of the Sequence of Prophetic Events*. Rev. ed. Tustin, CA: Ariel Ministries, 2003, p.21.

The point is this: though each of the four human empires were represented symbolically, they refer to four literal, real human empires that existed in human history. Therefore, it is hermeneutically consistent and reasonable to conclude that the fifth kingdom, symbolized by the stone, is a fifth empire that will be a literal, real kingdom that will be established on the earth in the future. This is the Messianic Kingdom. At His second coming, Jesus will establish His kingdom on earth; it is then that He will be *ruler of the kings on earth*.

**Zechariah 14:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> And the LORD will be king over all the earth. On that day the LORD will be one and his name one.