

The True Ruler of the World

Revelation 1:4b-9

The world is at war with God. It has been for a long time. The battle over who's in charge is as old as creation itself. It began in heaven when Lucifer, then the son of the morning, the angel of light determined in his heart to overthrow God. In that day he said in his heart,

“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:
¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.”
– Isaiah 14:13-14

“And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth” Rev. 12:4

His war against God spread to the earth when he deceived the woman.

Genesis 3:4-5 – “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: ⁵ For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and **ye shall be as gods**, knowing good and evil.”

“And **Adam** was not deceived” (1 Tim. 2:14a) but chose to disobey. His disobedience revealed man's sinful bent and the depravity of the human nature. Thus, “sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

And the world fell into darkness.

And “the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of God who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its

bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” Romans 8:20-21.

This present world is still on a darkened path away from God.

Psalm 2:1-7 - sums up the battle

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? ² The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, ³ Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. ⁴ He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. ⁵ Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. ⁶ Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. ⁷ I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

This pagan darkness espousing a godless utopia has lifted its head in a variety of forms though-out the ages.

During the anti-diluvian period (*before the Noahic flood*) we find (Gen. 6:5)

“GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”

Then later in Genesis 11:1, 4, 6 where we find

“The whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. . . . *and the leaders of world said*, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. . . . ⁶ And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they

begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.”

Then later in the days of the Israeli kings we find

Ahab and Jezebel introducing the nation of Israel again to this pagan enlightenment. Their departure from God ended with them killing the prophets, defiling the temple and seducing the people.

And finally, in our day . . .

We see the revival of paganism in the form of a worldwide non-religious chiliastic movement announcing global renewal and world purificationism with the abandonment of God’s standard.

- In a recent lecture given by Andrew Cohen, a global leader in this transformationalist movement he declared,

“all problems stem from the ignorance arising from twoness (*that is those who believe in a Creator and creation*).

The discovery that there is **only one not two** (*that is, the discovery that Matter is eternal and there is no Creator God*) is the solution to our problems. This is the fundamental nature of reality. This is the absolute profound mystical shift. This has to come first.”

This **oneness future** will evolve if only the enemy, **the cause of all problems, twoism**, can be restrained and eventually eradicated. This means eliminating the gospel and silencing Christian discourse – to save human well-being and the planet.

This growing threat is just not seen by a small group Christians holding a premillennial worldview but is widely held among leading Christians and seen

by nearly all theologically conservative Christians regardless their eschatological view.

Let me just cite one leader who falls within the broadest spectrum of Christianity who has been blowing a horn on the dangers this encroaching pagan utopianism spreading throughout the Western World.

- In 2012, at the US conference of Catholic bishops, Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop of Chicago and former president of the United Conference said, *because of todays rising of pagan utopian ideology*

“I expect to die in bed, my successor will die in prison and his assessor will die a martyr in the public square.”

Things have not changed much throughout the ages. Pagan utopianism has been held at bay, it has always been lurking in the background waiting for its chance to resurface.

Such was the problem in 1st Century.

- **The Roman historian** Tacitus describes Christians as “a class hated for their abominations.”
- **Politically**, Rome viewed Christians as disloyal because they refused to acknowledge Caesar as the supreme authority.
- **Religiously**, Christians were denounced as atheists because they rejected the Romans gods and worshiped and invisible God instead of idols.
- **Socially**, Christians were often despised, since many came from the lower classes of society.

- **To the affluent Romans**, Christians were seen as threat that undermined the cultural structure because they taught all people were equal which would initiate concerns of a slave revolt.

Therefore, Christianity was soon recognized as an illegal religion. Tertullian a Christian apologist later summarized how these items impacted the Roman thought when he wrote,

“If the Tiber reaches the walls,
If the Nile does not rise to the fields
If the sky doesn’t move or the earth does
If there is famine
If there is plague
The cry is at once, “Christians to the lions!”

The first Christian persecution began after July 19, AD 64 when Nero blamed the Christians for burning Rome. This resulted in many Christians being executed. As a result of this persecution soon spread empire wide.

Thirty years later, Domitian instigated an official persecution of Christians, which extended to the province of Asia (Asia Minor) where the seven churches mentioned in Revelation resided. Domitian and his family had a long history of Anti-Semitic and Anti-Christian sentiments. Domitian’s father, Vespasian and his brother Titus despised the Christians and Jews.

His Father, Vespasian

- led the Roman army against Judah in AD 66. Before he finished taking Jerusalem, He was made Emperor leaving his son Titus (Domitian’s brother) to finish the job of dismembering Israel in AD 70.

- Vespasian built the great Roman Coliseum in Rome and his son Domitian was the first Emperor to bring the Christians to the Coliseum to face the lions.

Domitian's brother Titus

- tore down the walls of Jerusalem and destroyed the temple.

Domitian

- Saw himself as the new Augustus, and enlightened depot destined to guide the Roman Empire into a new era to brilliants.
- During his 15-year reign (*among the longest of any Roman Emperor*) was the first to demand that he be addressed as *dominus et deus* "master and god." He was ruthless and was hated by the Roman senate. He was finally assassinated in AD 96.
- It was Domitian who sentenced the Apostle John at 90 years of age to be exiled on Patmos.

Revelation 1:9 speaks of this.

"I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, **was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.**"

Note the three things regarding suffering in this passage.

1. He was a fellow sufferer for Christ (a companion in tribulation)
2. He was companion in the kingdom (not the pagan utopian kingdom, but the real kingdom to come.)

3. He was a companion in the patience of Christ. Patience means, “to remain under” or “to patiently endure difficulties without giving up.”

In John’s case he was exiled as a common criminal to an island 10-miles off the coast of modern-day Turkey. According to the Roman historian Tacitus, this type of exile involved harsh exhausting labor under the watchful eye of a Roman guard. John no doubt had insufficient food and clothing and had to sleep on the bare ground. This must have been extremely difficult for 90-year-old man.

The reason for his imprisoned exile was two-fold (Rev. 1:9d) –

1. “For (*because of*) the Word of God and
2. “For (*because of*) the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Why would someone want to go through such a difficult situation?

1. Revelation 1:9 – “He as a companion in the kingdom of God.” He was patiently waiting the Lord’s rule to come.

Jesus is the rightful heir to the throne of the world.

2. In Revelation 1:5 - Jesus is the prince of the kings of the earth.
3. In Revelation 1:4 – Jesus is the One “which was, and which is to come.”
4. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.
 - a. Rev. 1:8
 - b. Rev. 1:11
 - c. Rev. 1:17b, 18

So, it is wonderful to see the true ruler sitting on the throne. Jesus, who is the Prince of the kings of earth.

John then is overcome with joy as he gives praise to Jesus.

1. Rev. 1:5b-6 –

*“... Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,
6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be
glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

- a. He loved us
- b. He washed us from our sins in His own blood
- c. He has made us kings and priests

He then reminds us of His return in Revelation 1:7

“Behold, he cometh with clouds”

1. Despite the scoffers who deny the Second Coming, the Bible repeatedly affirms that Jesus will return. This truth appears in more than 500 verses throughout the Bible.
2. It has been estimated that one out of every 25 verses in the New Testament refers to the Second Coming.
 - a. Jesus repeatedly spoke of His return
 - b. He warned believers to be ready for it
 - c. The return of Jesus Christ is a central theme of the New Testament.

3. John refers to two Old Testament passages in this verse. Daniel 7 and Zechariah 12.

“Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him”

- a. In the first verse - Daniel 7:13-14 Daniel says,

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. ¹⁴ And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.”

- b. The second Old Testament verse referred to is Zechariah 12:10

“... and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.” – Rev. 1:7b

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.” – Zech 12:10

In this Zechariah passage we find the nation of Israel mourning in genuine repentance. This is referring to an event. Many will be saved in that day.

4. John divides those who will see the Second Coming into two groups.

“and every eye shall see him” – v. 1:7a

- a. Those who pieced Him – the Jewish people

“they also which pierced him” v. 1:7b

b. The Gentiles

“And all kindreds (*tribe or nation*) of the earth shall wail because of him” – Rev. 1:7

This is a reference to the unbelieving Gentile nations. Many will mourn over Christ. Some related to their repentance and others for their failure to turn to him.

Revelation 7:9-10, 14 speaks of this

*“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, **of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;** ¹⁰ And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.. . ¹⁴ And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”*

c. But the general mourning at the time of Christ’s return will not be a result of repentance but of despair, terror and grief. They will be mourning over their doom because they had rejected Christ.

Because Revelation 9:21 tells us that many people

“Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.”