

*When Mankind Meets Its Maker*

## Study 6

### The crucified Lamb reigns

Jesus Christ was never in any doubt that his death would change everything. He says that when he is lifted up, he will draw people from all nations to himself (John 12:32). And before he ascends into heaven, he says, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.' (Matthew 28:18-20).

How we need a leader who knows what he is doing and can put things right! That's exactly what Jesus Christ claims he will be. And this is what he's doing.

We need to know how he does this. It's not evident from looking around us that he is in charge. And getting killed on a cross is an unlikely way to gain authority over the nations. But it is God's way of establishing his own rule—or kingdom. So, Paul is not ashamed to announce Jesus as the world's Saviour (Romans 1:16).

Here's three things that are really clear about Jesus Christ's supervising all that happens in the world and among his people. They're all scenes from the Book of Revelation. This book is a revelation of him exercising his authority and making everything new.

We won't understand everything we read here but that doesn't stop us from benefitting from what we can understand. It would be good to read the chapters I refer to below and let them speak to you directly. As on television, I should warn you that 'some may find some scenes disturbing'.

First, there's no doubt that 'the Lamb' is in control of everything (chapter five). He's given a book or scroll that's sealed up. Only when *he* breaks the seals can what is recorded happen. But he's worthy to be in charge. Why him? Because he died to save whoever will come to him.

We need to be really clear about this. The one who is ruling our world hasn't been changed by having authority. He *is* the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. His love is still comprehensive and persuasive. But he can't be ignored without consequences!

Here's how it works out (chapter 6). A conqueror rides out to take over other countries. Peace dies. Poverty sets in—particularly for the disadvantaged. People die in huge numbers from numerous causes. All this sounds familiar!

Christians are caught up in all this. They die too and find themselves in heaven. Even there, they cry to God for justice but are told to wait until other Christians die.

The whole earth seems to be unravelling and people cry out. Notice—they cry out to be preserved from the wrath of the Lamb! They know they've rejected Christ. They know it's him that's angry!

As I said, these scenes may be disturbing. But the things they describe are happening anyway! What we know is that the Lamb is in charge. The events couldn't happen unless

they were absolutely necessary—for some reason that we don't understand. Many believers have received great comfort from knowing that their circumstances, however painful, are under the sovereignty of this Lamb.

Second, Satan is thrown out of heaven (chapter 12). Something has changed in his ability to accuse Christians before God. Jesus notices the beginnings of this (Luke 10:18). Then, he pronounces that it will happen (John 12:31). And it is secured by him being the Lamb who takes away our sins.

Here's how it is described. 'Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ. For the accuser of our brothers, who accused them before our God day and night, has been hurled down' (12:10).

Notice, the authority of Christ is being exercised in us having no accuser. A person without guilt before God is free—free to live, to love, and even to die. In particular, a person whose sins are forgiven is free to trust.

If we only have what our eyes can see, Jesus Christ is nowhere to be found! But then, he has freed us from our sins. This is what enables us to believe he has everything else under control as well.

In fact, Christ's authority is reflected in how these Christians deal with Satan. *They* overcome him. How? *They* trust in the blood of Christ for the forgiveness of their sins. *They* listen to and tell others the word of Christ they have received. And *they* think this is more important than merely staying alive!

Without this Lamb of God, we get caught up in our sins and selfishness and can't manage our own future—let alone the future of the world. There's only one way. The Lamb must be in charge. This is what Christians know and what makes them different from everyone else.

Third, God announces that he is making everything new (chapter 21). Everything evil will be destroyed and God will live with his people. We, the church, will be his Son's Bride—married to the Lamb (v. 9)!

How do you prepare for a wedding like that? Imagine a future as wife to the one who's loved us, freed us and brought us to himself. Imagine being deeply attractive to him (Eph. 5:25-27).

We are introduced to this Bride earlier (19:6-9). The finery she wears is her righteous deeds! It turns out we're getting ready for the wedding right now.

It matters what we do while we are here. We are not just 'being nice' as Christians. We are preparing for a life shared as wife of the Lamb. All that will matter then is love—his love for us, and our love for him—pure, eager, delightful and forever. So, if that's what matters then, that's what matters now.

We tend to think of authority as power, and easily link it with injustice. But we are being taught to understand authority as love. Jesus Christ—the Lamb of God—has nothing less in mind. And it is nothing less than he is achieving right now.

We can't see these things with our eyes, but he reveals them to us so that we actually know them. And the future is going to be an eye-opener!

Well may we boast of our Saviour who dies on a cross. And well may we entrust ourselves to him who loved us, and who does all things well!

In these articles on Christ's cross, we've looked at the things he accomplished there. The world has been judged. God has got things right—us in particular. Peace with our Creator is now being announced. His love has been persuasively displayed. True human freedom has been established. And now, we see that Christ has decisively established the future of the world as a work of love.