

## 414 A Lamb Slain

Constitutionally the United Kingdom remains committed, by solemn oath before God, to being a Christian Protestant nation, from our monarch downwards. But in practice that oath is being widely ignored, and in the many and various “corridors of power” Almighty God might just as well not even exist.

We see in God’s Word that such attempts at airbrushing out our Creator are the height of human folly which will always end badly; for, quite apart from His abundant love and grace, God is also “a jealous God” – that is, He does not and will not share His glory with other, false, rivals – and He does not take kindly to being mocked (egs., Exodus 20.1-7 / Galatians 6.7a).

Little wonder that Galatians 6.7b follows on – “for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”, a divine truth that surely applies as much to nations as to individuals. Unfortunately but predictably, our nation is in great need of repentance for its conduct, not least over mass abortions; are we now not reaping what has been wilfully sown over the past sixty years? Without such repentance God’s judgments will only gather pace from the present stark warning the Lord is giving to us and to the world through this Covid-19 pandemic.

To retain a true scriptural perspective, last week we turned to the scenes of extraordinary glory in heaven described in Revelation Chapter 4. There, Almighty God our heavenly Father is seated on a throne surrounded by elders and symbolic beasts who “fall down before him ... and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy O Lord” (from 4.10-11). What a contrast between “up there” and “down here”!

Now we come on to the second central Figure in that heavenly scene. We read that John “saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals” (5.1, KJV). There was “a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” (v.2).

The answer was that no man was found anywhere who was worthy to open the book and read its contents (vv.3-4). In his distress over this, John was comforted by one of the elders who drew his attention to Someone rather special! – “Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, (phrases which deliberately identify the Lamb as the

Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself), who “hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof”. John then saw “in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb as it had been slain ...” whose “seven horns and seven eyes” depict His omnipotence and His omniscience (from vv.5-6).

The Lamb then “took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne”, which prompted the beasts and elders to fall down before Him with their harps and incense, (“the prayers of the saints”), and to sing “a new song” of worship – “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (from vv.7-10; and eg., Romans 10.11-13 / Ephesians 2.8-22 / I Peter 2.4-10).

That short “new song” beautifully summarises the ministry of “the Lamb that was slain”. What a ministry it has been, and what glories have been bestowed upon all those who have been redeemed by His blood, shed on our behalf and in our place (eg., John 1.29,34).

But the worship of the Lamb had hardly got going! - for millions of angels, with every creature in every conceivable place, and the four beasts and the twenty-four elders - quite a gathering! - then spoke “with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb ... Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, [be] unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (vv.11-14)!

Wow!! Here are the heavenly realities, right now, and one day they will achieve their ultimate fullness when truly every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that “Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (from Philippians 2.9-11).

Until then, quoting two verses from Bishop Walsham How’s great hymn, “For all the saints” – “O may thy soldiers, faithful, true and bold, Fight as the saints who nobly fought of old, And win with them the victor’s crown of gold, Alleluia! Alleluia!”; and then, on that great day - “From earth’s wide bounds, from ocean’s farthest coast, Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host, Singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Alleluia! Alleluia!”.

What a scene! Yea, “Worthy is the Lord, and worthy is the Lamb!”.

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(Another topical Hugh Fitzgerald article, concerning Israel and her neighbours, can be found on the This Week page of our website)