

### Study 5: Rejoicing in Jesus' Return

In the book of Daniel chapter 7, Daniel has a dream about four beasts and ten horns. Each beast represents a different kingdom, and each horn is another king. Each one is coming and going in power over time. Each one more terrible than the last, and yet never lasting.

All of these kingdoms and kings are an image of human history, capturing our past, present and future in some way.

Romans and human history note that each new attempt by humanity to improve upon our predicament does not work. Each attempt is from the garden of Eden until now, and onwards until that final kingdom of Man, is a downward spiral into greater evils.

One day, Daniels' vision foretells, we reach the bottom of that spiral.

Daniel 7:13-14

<sup>13</sup> "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. <sup>14</sup> He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

There is a day when Jesus, a man and a new head of humanity, will appear with the clouds of heaven. Unique to all that have come before him, he has been given authority, glory and sovereign power. And With it, he judges the world, overthrows the kingdoms of darkness and their kings, and replaces them with his own. A kingdom filled with all nations and peoples of every language worshipping him. This wonderful King. Who reigns in truth, humility, and justice, with a love for righteousness and a hatred of wickedness. Anointed with joy and grace. And His kingdom, His dominion, will not end and will never be overthrown.

#### **1. This Same Jesus**

A time of liberty and rest.

Jubilee was a year of liberty and rest for the people and the land they occupied. A time when all debts were cancelled, enslaved people set free, and property returned to its original owners. The land also rested, as there was to be no sowing or reaping that year.

The year of Jubilee was a foretaste of the liberty and rest that the people of God would one day have at the coming of the eternal King Jesus.

The year of Jubilee was begun when the high priest would make an atonement for the people before the Lord. As the people saw him step out of the holy of holies, the trumpets would sound so that everyone would know peace and rest had come to the land. The atonement marked the beginning of that time of rest.

When Jesus ascended, he went as our high priest to stand and offer his own blood and life as our atoning sacrifice before the very face of God in heaven. And there he dwells even now, making intercession for each one of us to be included in his sacrifice. The day he exits heaven, returning to earth, having been given by God authority, glory and sovereign power, the trumpets will sound,

marking the beginning of an era of liberty and rest for the children of God and his creation that will know no end.

It will not be a joyous occasion for everyone. Jesus is the judge of all the earth. Even believers become uncomfortable or even fearful thinking about this day. The Jesus we know, merciful and loving to sinners, turns into an executioner, drenched in blood in the eyes of many. It makes us question his character and whether or not it has changed.

But Jesus is truly one of us, a man, our forerunner, our head, the bridegroom who prepares a place for the bride, his church. Then, as Reeves says, his return as the judge is not “simply a doomsday”. But as Martin Luther called it, “the most happy Last Day.”

Rev 19:7 - <sup>7</sup> Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come.

## **2. The Lamb is its Lamp**

On that great day, we will be united with him with no sin in the way, no distracted or unhelpful thoughts, no holding back from previous pains of the past, no fear, no insecurity, or uncertainty. We will be face to face with the great love of our lives. Jesus.

The great promise of God for his people has always been this: “I will live with them.”

Lev 26:12 - <sup>12</sup> I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.

Ezek 37:27 - <sup>27</sup> My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Rev 21:3 - <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.

This is what we are waiting for.

Tit 2:13 - <sup>13</sup> we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

When he is the focus of our rejoicing, we will delight in the blessings he gives us as they were meant to be delighted in.

## **3. The Winter of Our Discontent Made Glorious Summer**

Matt 19:28 says that when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, it will mark the renewal of all things.

All of creation has been waiting for this judge to come. Upon his return, he does away with all that is evil and cruel in the world. All the enemies of God will be removed, all things renewed, and his children will inherit that new earth.

In Genesis, Adam had dominion over all creation; it was in order. An order that, after the fall, was allowed to unravel at the hands of men. We live in a time of disorder, chaos, evil, decay, and the unmaking of creation.

But when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne... all things will be made new. As we saw in David's vision, a Man will have dominion again, as in the days of Adam. Jesus will have a dominion that will last forever; all the evil, all the decay, and disorder will be made new.

Reeves called it “the winter of our discontent made glorious summer.”

The judgment of all the earth is not the undoing of all creation but its liberation from bondage to decay, a rest from its moaning and waiting for the glorification of the sons of God. And a restoration to God's order. To Jesus.

Psalm 98 - <sup>4</sup> Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music; <sup>5</sup> make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing, <sup>6</sup> with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn— shout for joy before the LORD, the King. <sup>7</sup> Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. <sup>8</sup> Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy; <sup>9</sup> let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.

#### **4. The Lion Who Is a Lamb**

What is the nature of his power to judge?

Rev 5:9 - because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation.

The nature of his power is self-giving.

In contrast, the Book of Revelation speaks of a dragon in Chapter 12. In comparison to the lamb of God, it is a beast that conquers, not by giving its own life, but by taking the life of others for itself.

Reeves writes, “The fact that Christ is the judge of all the earth is not evidence of a vicious and unpleasant side to his character, finally showing itself at the end. It is no cause to make us waver in our love for him. Quite the opposite. The earth-shaking power of the lamb does not mean that the humble friend of sinners has changed in his character; it is rather that his cause, his character, his light is victorious. His truth will drive out lies; his beauty, ugliness; his goodness, evil. The Lamb wins.

Jesus' truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and word are simultaneously a pillow of comfort to his people and a deadly weapon against his enemies. In this way, he changes not one bit, whether he is the lamb or the lion.

#### **5. The Family of the Firstborn**

So upon Christ's return, we receive renewed bodies.

Reeves “Body and soul we belong to our faithful saviour, and that gives us wonderful comfort. But what polluted, inadequate temples we are! Weak, decaying, confused and sinful. We are no longer slaves to sin, to be sure, but it still lingers: chafing, cramping, leeching our joy and freedom. Sin steals, death bereaves, our bodies hurt, evil oppresses. That is how it is today. Yet, on that day, we will be freed at last from the very presence of sin, death and evil. The Spirit's work now of perfecting and beautifying us – of making us like Christ– will then be fulfilled. Having been elected, called, justified, and sanctified in Christ, we will finally and fully share his own glorification.”

When our bodies have caught up with our souls in redemption, we will fully share in his life, reign and victory over death.

Creation also will be set free from its bondage to decay. Its slow unravelling back into darkness will be halted and reversed. Jesus will undo in his judgment all the chaos caused by the hand of Adam, and as Ephesians 1:10 says, "when the times reach their fulfilment—[God will] bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ."

We will have our great hope of eternity, the thing that will outshine the sun forever, and even the miracle of a new body and restored creation will not compare to it. For we will be with Christ. The one for whom, and through, by whose power all things were created and sustained. And he will be our God, and we will be his people.

Matt 25:31-34

<sup>31</sup> "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

<sup>34</sup> "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come...

"Jesus has satisfied the mind and heart of the infinite God for eternity... If the Father can be infinitely and eternally satisfied in him, then he must be overwhelmingly all-sufficient for us."