

Revelation 5:1-3

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals.

² *And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?"*

³ *But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it."*

⁴ *I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.*

⁵ *Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."*

⁶ *Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.*

⁷ *He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.*

Did you catch that?

*See, the **Lion** of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. ...*

*Then I saw a **Lamb**...*

This is one of the most stunning portraits of Christ in the entire Bible.

John hears "**Lion**" and sees "**Lamb**."

The one and only being worthy to break the seals and unfold God's cosmic plan to defeat evil and restore his broken world is Jesus,

- the **Lion** who wages war on evil with terrible ferocity,
- but who wins the war by self-sacrifice— by being slain himself.

But don't think for a moment that the fact that the **Lamb** was killed means he's weak.

- The Lamb has 7 horns (a symbol of perfect power)
- and he has 7 eyes (a symbol of perfect knowledge).
- This **Lion/Lamb** is invincible.
- He cannot be killed by any means but *self-sacrifice*.

And in his self-sacrifice he wields the most dominating and unstoppable power the universe has ever seen.

Suddenly we understand more clearly why the elders have *fallen down* before him; Why they cast off their crowns before him and worshiped

- He is staggering.
- He is worthy of our praise and songs.
- Celebrate him.
- Celebrate the **Lion and Lamb**
who is our once-and-forever rescuer and redeemer.

But we cannot just celebrate him from afar, like fans of a favorite artist or athlete.

We must **follow after** him in his likeness.

Theologian N.T. Wright sums it up well:

*There have been, down the years, plenty of **lion**-Christians.*

Yes, they think, Jesus died for us;

*but now God's will is to be done in the **lion**-like fashion, through brute force and violence to make the world come into line, to enforce God's will.*

*No, replies John; think of the **lion**,*

*yes, but gaze at the **lamb**.*

*And there have been plenty of **lamb**-Christians.*

*Yes, they think, Jesus may have been 'the **lion** of Judah,'*

but that's a political idea which we should reject because salvation consists in having our sins wiped away so that we can get out of this compromised world and go off to heaven instead.

*No, replies John; gaze at the **lamb**,*

*but remember that it is the **lion's** victory that he has won.*

So, church, may we lay down our lives like **lambs**, in sacrifice and love, commending salvation through Christ to friends, family, and co-workers.

And may we fight for justice, truth and goodness like **lions**, declaring the end of the reign of evil.

May we follow closely behind our great Architect/General—

the **Lion**-like **Lamb**

and **Lamb**-like **Lion**.

What is it about Jesus

that makes him worthy of our adoration and praise?

What is it about Jesus

that makes him irresistibly attractive?

Why is he alone worthy

of our whole-hearted allegiance and love?

Jesus is both **Lion** and **Lamb**.

And it is in this glorious juxtaposition of what appear to be two contrasting images that we find the answer to our question.

Think about this for a moment:

- The **Lion** in whom we find authority
is also the **Lamb** who embodies humility & meekness in the highest degree.
- The **Lion** who wields power and strength that none can resist
is also the **Lamb** who walked this earth in weakness and suffering, resisting none.
- The **Lion** who rules the world and governs its every move
is also the **Lamb** who was meekly led to slaughter by his enemies.
- The **Lion** who is known for his uncompromising commitment to righteousness
is also the **Lamb** who overflows in love to sinners like you and me.

- The **Lion** whose majestic beauty captivates the human heart
is also the **Lamb** who took upon himself the likeness of a man and was, in appearance,
quite ordinary and unimpressive.
- The **Lion** who commands total obedience from everyone
is also the **Lamb** who in his earthly life submitted himself in obedience to the law of God.
- The **Lion** who is holy and pure beyond our wildest imagination
is also the **Lamb** who is gracious and kind and tender-hearted to all
- The **Lion** who could silence a raging storm with a single word
is also the **Lamb** who refused to speak or berate those who nailed him to a cross.
- The **Lion** who is life itself
is also the **Lamb** who willingly dies for his enemies.
- The **Lion** who is exalted high above the heavens, immeasurably beyond all of creation and myriads
of angels, before whom the greatest and most powerful kings and commanders on earth are but a
speck of dust on the balance,
is also the **Lamb** who stooped low, who become one of us and suffered the trials and
challenges put upon him by weak and sinful men.
- The **Lion** who is in himself infinite holiness and righteousness and purity and power
is also the **Lamb** who welcomes broken sinners into his presence and makes intimate friends
of his enemies.
- The **Lion** who in himself needs nothing, being altogether self-sufficient,
is also the **Lamb** who gives and gives and then gives yet again so generously and abundantly.
- The **Lion** who is in himself of such blinding glory and brilliance that adoring angels cover their faces
is also the **Lamb** who humbled himself and identified with his creatures so that they might
behold him and enjoy him forever.
- The **Lion** who, as Paul says in Philippians 2, exists from all eternity in perfect equality with the Father
and the Spirit, equal in all respects as to his divinity,
is also the **Lamb** who in time and history humbled himself and took on the likeness of sinful men
and women.
- The **Lion** who is known for his majesty
is also the **Lamb** who is known for his meekness.
- The **Lion** who commands absolute obedience from his creatures
is also the **Lamb** who in obedience honored every command of his Father.
- The **Lion** who rightly burns with wrath against the rebellious and unbelieving
is also the **Lamb** who in the place of the rebellious and unbelieving endured in his own body and
soul that very wrath.

John Piper write:

- The **Lion** of Judah conquered
because he was willing to act the part of a **Lamb**.
- He came into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday like a King on the way to a throne,
- and he went out of Jerusalem on Good Friday like a **Lamb** on the way to the slaughter.
- He drove out the robbers from the Temple like a **Lion** devouring its prey.

- And then at the end of the week he gave his majestic neck to the knife, and they slaughtered the **Lion** of Judah like a **Lamb**.
- So he conquered sin and death and Satan
not just because he was a **Lion**,
but because he was a **Lamb-like Lion**.
- The **Lion** gets the victory through the tactics of the **Lamb**.