



## ***It's All About the Lamb***

*<sup>4</sup>Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; <sup>5</sup>and one of the elders said to me, **"Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals."** <sup>6</sup>And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. <sup>7</sup>And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. (Revelation 5:4-7)*

In our haste to get to the "important" stuff in Revelation, especially to draw an End Times chart most often beginning with the Seals, we are apt to rush past the significance of what is taking place in this prelude to what Jesus and the New Testament authors most often refer to as "the end of the age". While John's attention is focused elsewhere, he hears the announcement introducing a new figure entering the presence of God's throne by the qualifier, "behold" in a major declaration of something extremely important and auspicious. It is further qualified by an introductory declaration using two of the most important references to the Messiah, "*the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah*" and "*the Root of David*". Turning to fix his gaze upon what he *expects* to see, probably something resembling a Lion, what the Apostle John instead beholds is "*a Lamb standing, as if slain*". This is not what one might expect, based on the announcement. Apparently the image, title and role of Christ which best represents Him, and in which all others are together fulfilled in, is Christ the Lamb of God. Going forward this is the description which is repeatedly used of Christ throughout the whole of Revelation more than any other. Then why is it that when it comes to Revelation, the primary picture of Christ most often selected is that of the Conqueror on His white horse returning with His armies at the final battle at the end of the age? Why do charts, articles and books centered on Revelation so often overlook the repeated usage of "the Lamb"?

In fact, in the twenty-eight books of the New Testament canon, Jesus is only referred to as a "Lamb" four times (Jn. 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32; 1 Pe. 1:19); in Revelation alone this preferred description is found *twenty-nine* times! (Rev. 5:6, 8,12-13; 6:1, 7, 9, 16; 7:9-10,

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14, 17; 8:1; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1, 4, 10; 15:3; 17:14; 19:7-9; 21:9, 14, 22-23; 22:1-3) Why is the title and image of Christ the Lamb of God used far more in the portions of the New Testament dealing with His Second Coming than in those dedicated to His First Coming when He actually carried out the work of the cross as the ultimate sacrificial Lamb?

There is something very revealing about how Jesus in His First Coming is so often described as the “Suffering Servant” whose main mission was in effect to be the Lamb sacrificed to complete the crucial work of salvation, but in His Second Coming is depicted as the “Conquering King” who will come to usher in God’s justice and the Millennial Kingdom, and yet the primary title and image of Him in Revelation’s depiction of the Second Coming is the most notable symbol we associated with the First Coming. He is only presented on the white horse with His armies a single time as this age is brought to a dramatic close and the next age ushered in, but prior to that act, and even many times *after* in eternity to come, He is instead repeatedly shown and referred to as the Lamb. In our own minds we formulate a very different image for the Suffering Servant from the Conquering King, and respectively for each Coming, but scripturally there is but one picture of Christ which fulfills *both*: “a Lamb standing, as if slain”. Do we fully comprehend that God’s plan *before* the foundation of the world was the Lamb, the plan *during* the course of this world’s existence was the Lamb, and that the plan *continuing into eternity itself* is the Lamb?

One of the earliest events in Scripture establishes the need for the Lamb in Abraham’s offering of Isaac:

*<sup>7</sup>Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, “My father!” And he said, “Here I am, my son.” And he said, “Behold, the fire and the wood, but **where is the lamb** for the burnt offering?”  
<sup>8</sup>Abraham said, “**God will provide for Himself the lamb** for the burnt offering, my son.” So the two of them walked on together. (Genesis 22:7–8)*

Before the giving of the whole Torah, while still in the process of the Exodus, God revealed through Moses that what they are going to need is the Passover lamb, what we will later clearly come to understand as a representation of Christ the Lamb:

*<sup>21</sup>Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and **slay the Passover lamb**.” (Exodus 12:21)*

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It will be a lamb which is used in the course of revealing the Old Testament Law to represent a substitutionary sacrifice to redeem the firstborn:

*<sup>13</sup>“But every first offspring of a donkey **you shall redeem with a lamb**, but if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck; and every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. (Exodus 13:13)*

And a sacrificial lamb will be featured over and over again in the Old Testament system of sacrifices, but particularly when it comes to the issue of sin:

*<sup>32</sup>“But if he **brings a lamb as his offering for a sin offering**, he shall bring it, a female without defect. (Leviticus 4:32)*

One of the key attributes of the promised Messiah to come through the Prophets will be a connection to the imagery of a lamb:

*<sup>7</sup>He was oppressed and He was afflicted,  
Yet He did not open His mouth;  
**Like a lamb that is led to slaughter**,  
And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers,  
So He did not open His mouth. (Isaiah 53:7)*

*<sup>19</sup>But **I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter**;  
And I did not know that they had devised plots against me,  
saying,  
“Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,  
And let us cut him off from the land of the living,  
That his name be remembered no more.” (Jeremiah 11:19)*

And, of course, this is the primary identification of the Messiah’s arrival which John the Baptist makes to inaugurate the First Coming and brings to the forefront that the usages of “lamb” throughout Scripture have been both a pattern and metaphor for the Messiah...

*<sup>29</sup>The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “**Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**” (John 1:29)*

...and to identify to the future Apostles the appearance of Christ in terms they plainly understood:

*<sup>36</sup>and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, “**Behold, the Lamb of God!**” (John 1:36)*

This will continue in the Early Church even after Christ’s Ascension as seen in the Eunuch’s need for Philip to explain the meaning of the Lamb:

<sup>32</sup>Now the passage of Scripture which he was reading was this:

**"HE WAS LED AS A SHEEP TO SLAUGHTER;**  
**AND AS A LAMB BEFORE ITS SHEARER IS SILENT,**  
**SO HE DOES NOT OPEN HIS MOUTH. (Acts 8:32)**

And Peter expresses the work of the Lamb as not just for this present life, but extending both ways into eternity before and after:

<sup>17</sup>If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear **during the time of your stay on earth;** <sup>18</sup>knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup>but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. <sup>20</sup>For He was **foreknown before the foundation of the world,** but has **appeared in these last times** for the sake of you <sup>21</sup>who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and **gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.** (1 Pe. 1:17-21)

To the thinking of many minds, however, the work of the Lamb is viewed as being completed on the cross, and what remains is the anticipation of Christ's Return as the Conquering King on the white horse in Revelation 19:11-16. They view the Lamb as completed and obsolete where the Second Coming is concerned. However, not only is this not the way He is presented in the prelude in Revelation 4-5 of the apocalyptic countdown of events, but the image and title of the "Lamb of God" is what is most used both before and after that one time appearance with His armies.

Among the references before the final battle of the end of the age:

- It is the Lamb who breaks each of the Seals which unleashes all the final events of the Second Coming. (Rev. 6:1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 12; 8:1)
- It is "*the wrath of the Lamb*" (Rev. 6:16) which together with crediting God the Father is identified by mankind as the arrival of "*the great day of their wrath has come*" (Rev. 6:17). It is not the image of Christ on His white horse accompanied by His armies which they attempt to flee in fear, but the Lamb.
- When the removal of the Church takes place in Revelation 7:9-16, we are not only "*standing before the throne and before the Lamb*", but giving credit "*...to our God...and to the Lamb*". One of the twenty-four elders explains to John that

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this was all made possible because *“they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb”*. (Rev. 7:14) Those left behind after the 6<sup>th</sup> Seal experience wrath and fear from the same figure whom those taken find the working of their salvation. Whereas the Lamb brings judgment upon those left behind, in Revelation 7:17, for the saved, *“...the Lamb...will be their shepherd, and will guide them to springs of the water of life...”*

- When Satan and his angels are finally cast down to earth (Rev. 12:7-12), what is attributed to believers overcoming them is *“because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even when faced with death”*. (Rev. 7:11) It is not just the image of Christ the Lamb which is featured in overcoming the world, but of Satan himself.
- *“All who dwell on the earth will worship him [the Beast], everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.”* (Rev. 13:8) Notice that it both eternity past and eternity future combined into *“the book of life of the Lamb”*. The eternal nature of the book of life’s existence *“from the foundation of the world”* is affirmed yet again in Revelation 17:8.
- The imagery of the Lamb is so important in God’s economy, that when the second figure of the Antichrist in the Beast coming from the earth appears, he attempts to present himself as a counterfeit lamb: *“Then I saw another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb and he spoke as a dragon.”* (Rev. 13:11)
- In Revelation 14:1-4, a direct association is reported between the Lamb and the 144,000 sealed, *“having His name and the name of His Father written on their foreheads”*. They *“follow the Lamb wherever He goes”* and *“have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to His Lamb”*.
- But the contrast for the worshipers of the Beast provided in Revelation 14:9-12 is that they will not just *“be tormented with fire and brimstone”*, but that this torment will take place *“in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of*

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*the Lamb*". (Rev. 14:10) Their punishment will transpire in the shadow of the very image and embodiment of the salvation they rejected, which resulted in the eternal punishment they now experience going forward. This is also quite a contrast to the heavenly scene in Revelation 15:1-4 where "*those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name...sang the song of Moses...and the song of the Lamb...*"

- When the kingdoms of the earth described in Revelation 17 engage in open warfare with Christ, it is said, "*These will wage war against the Lamb and the Lamb will overcome them...*" (Rev. 17:14) What mankind continues to rebel against is not the Conqueror coming with His armies, but the one thing which could save them—the blood of the Lamb. It is rebellion against the work of the cross right up to the very end.
- The very last references to Christ before His final earthly appearance to conclude this age as a Conqueror with His armies (Rev. 19:11-19) is the ultimate reference for believers to participate in "*the marriage supper of the Lamb*". (Rev. 19:7-10)

In other words, in the course of all the End Times events leading up to the final Coming of Christ, where believers are concerned, whether it is the persecuted Church leading up to its removal, those so Raptured, or the 144,000 ethnic Jews sealed by God, their fates cannot be separated from Christ the Lamb of God; for all unbelievers, and even Satan and the Antichrist as well, their judgment and doom is experienced in the presence of Christ the Lamb of God. This is the way signs and wonders have *always* worked throughout history, that they do not change one's heart, but multiply the stance to which each heart is already committed. To believers, signs and wonders *affirm* the faith of Christ they are *already* practicing; for unbelievers it hardens their already disobedient and rebellious lifestyle. The same signs enhance faith on the one hand, but serve only to judge and condemn at the very same time for the other. This is the meaning of one of the closing statements of Revelation:

*<sup>10</sup>And he said to me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. <sup>11</sup>Let the one who does wrong, still do wrong; and the one who is filthy, still be filthy; and let the one who is righteous, still practice righteousness; and the one who is holy, still keep himself holy." (Revelation 22:10–11)*

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But the references to Christ the Lamb of God do not come to an end with the end of this present age giving way to the Millennial Kingdom by His appearance with His armies. Instead, the Lamb is the primary way to which Christ continues to be referred to going forward in eternity:

- *<sup>9</sup>Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and spoke with me, saying, “Come here, I will show you the bride, the wife of the **Lamb**.” (Revelation 21:9)*
- *<sup>14</sup>And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the **Lamb**. (Revelation 21:14)*
- *<sup>22</sup>I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the **Lamb** are its temple. <sup>23</sup>And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the **Lamb**. (Revelation 21:22–23)*
- *<sup>1</sup>Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the **Lamb**, <sup>2</sup>in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup>There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the **Lamb** will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; (Revelation 22:1–3)*

Revelation 4-5, which we are frequently in such a hurry to rush past in order to get to the actual milestone events of the eschaton, may be the most important doctrinal nexus in the whole of God’s Word, where the true plan of God not just for *this* life meets with the same for both eternity stretching infinitely before *and* after. Every characteristic, attribute and work of Christ not just in what we call His First and Second Comings, but in pre-eternity and eternity to come, is best summed up in the Lamb—the work of the cross. This is how God specifically views it.

If we fully appreciated the full import of what Scripture is attempting to teach us, the most important activity in this present life for believers would be to introduce everyone possible to the Lamb. If we understood how this is actually the most important facet of

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eschatology—the study of the End Times, we would not be consumed with charts and timelines anywhere near our obsession to preach and teach Christ the Lamb of God. If we grasped what is really taking place from God’s point of view, our worship and devotion of the Lamb would be authentically viewed as but beginning in the present, only to be extended forever into eternity.

And while it is true that in general, the First Coming is personified by the “Suffering Servant” and the Second Coming by the “Conquering King”, we are not actually supposed to visualize them as two *different* images of the Lamb replaced by Christ on His white horse—they are *both* inextricably summed up in Christ the Lamb of God. There was never any other plan otherwise, nor is there a replacement to come.

There are many individual aspects pertaining to the End Times for which we can become overzealous and wrongly fixated, but the one with which this is impossible is Christ the Lamb of God. And it is to our collective shame that this is not the primary emphasis of every discussion, article, book, teaching and personal witness when it comes to the End Times.

In Him,

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