

# The Lion and The Lamb

INTRO: Let me welcome everyone for the Easter service this year. We are grateful you are here. I trust that today will be a great day of worship for you and your family.

This morning we will be in a rather strange passage for an Easter message, Revelation 5. Revelation is the last book of the Bible, so you can grab a pew Bible, or if you brought your Bible and open the back cover until you reach Revelation chapter 5.

TRAN: But before we dig into Revelation, I want to talk to you about a phrase from the Gospel of John, the first chapter where John refers to Jesus as being full of grace and truth.

- I. Full of grace and truth
  - A. I have long been fascinated by that phrase - full of grace and truth
    1. If you think about it, they appear to be polar opposites
    2. But the reality is that you cannot really have one without the other
  - B. If you are full only of truth, you come off a certain way
    1. Cold, hard, doesn't hold back on what they think
    2. The kind of person we say will tell you the truth no matter what
      - a) Often with little regard for tact
      - b) Sort of like this guy you will probably recognize - Geico Commercial  
- Drill Sargent
  - C. Now, on the other hand, if you are only full of grace, you come off another way
    1. Often you wind up getting hurt because people can take advantage of you
    2. You have a tendency to excuse real issues, thinking it is better to cover them with grace than confront a genuine problem
    3. It can make you into more of a marshmallow than a balanced person
  - D. Yet Jesus is described by John as full of both grace and truth
    1. A balance of being a truth teller, along with the grace
    2. A person that loves to give grace when grace is called for, but will still hold someone's feet to the fire when needed
    3. It is two sides of the same coin which Christ is able to hold in perfect balance
  - E. These character qualities of Jesus come into play in another word picture we will look at today that John gives us in the book of Revelation
    1. You will see the characteristics as we talk, but what to me is interesting is that John describes Jesus in another set of seemingly opposite words
    2. Jesus is both the Lion and the Lamb (READ Revelation 5)

# The Lion and The Lamb

## II. Background and setting the stage

- A. Before we jump into this chapter, I want to explain a couple of things about the book of Revelation and how I will handle the chapter
- B. To start with, the book of Revelation is a highly symbolic book
  - 1. That has led to multiple interpretations, depending on what background you come from, and how literal your interpretation of Scripture as a whole is
  - 2. Because the book is so symbolic, I will probably frustrate you a little today because I will not explain all of the details of the chapter
    - a) Today's sermon is not designed to be a detailed exposition of Rev. 5
    - b) It is designed to illustrate truths about Christ
    - c) So when we go flying past the 24 elders, and your mind is racing, wondering, "Who are these guys? Is the number 24 significant? Why isn't Pastor Keith explaining any of this?"
    - d) Please understand, for the sake of time, I will explain what needs to be explained for understanding the premise and focus of the sermon, Jesus Christ - the other things that are not necessary for explaining Jesus we will pass over
- C. So quick background for where we begin in Revelation, because we are jumping in to a highly symbolic book, in the middle of John's vision of the throne room of heaven
  - 1. In chapter 4, all praise has been going to the "One who sits on the throne" for being the creator and sustainer of all
  - 2. The One who sits on the throne should be rather obvious, it is God the Father
  - 3. As we move into chapter 5, the attention moves away from the One who sits on the throne, and to another figure

## III. Revelation 5:1-9

- A. In verse 1, the One who sits on the throne is holding a scroll in His right hand
  - 1. Now get the symbolism of all of this
    - a) First, He is on the throne - so there is a right to rule
    - b) Second, as we mentioned HE was being praised in chapter 4 by the elders and the 4 creatures - a representation of all of creation
    - c) Third, He is holding the scroll in His right hand - the right hand is always the symbol of power and authority
    - d) Fourth, this scroll holds the decrees of God concerning the future, and the judgements to come
    - e) Fifth, the scroll is written on both sides, symbolizing the fact that it is complete - there will be no eventuality that God has not covered

# The Lion and The Lamb

2. These symbols should teach us just how majestic and sovereign our God is
  - a) He is the ruler of all things and things will play out just as He intends them to
  - b) We should be worshipping the One who sits on the throne because of what we see here
- B. In verses 2-4 heaven looks for One that is worthy to open the scroll, and none are found
  1. Which when I read this in preparation for the sermon (I have read it many times before) a question came to mind, “Why doesn’t the One who sits on the throne open the scroll”
    - a) Obviously He is worthy
    - b) Obviously He qualifies
  2. And here comes the spoiler alert regarding Christ: God needed a mediator
    - a) If a holy, and perfect God opened a scroll of judgment, think of the terror that would bring
      - (1) God would be giving humanity what it deserves for violating and impugning His holy name
      - (2) God would be perfectly justified in punishing sin
      - (3) If God Himself opened the scroll, humanity would receive what they deserve and not salvation
    - b) Someone must be found that is worthy to take the scroll and open it, and be the go-between
      - (1) So Christ is that mediator
      - (2) 1 Timothy 2:5 “For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus”
      - (3) Christ stands between a holy God, and absorbs the wrath for sin on behalf of humanity
      - (4) Which we will see in a minute, makes Christ worthy
  3. So we see that God IS a loving God, because He will not open the scroll Himself, but allows Christ to take that position of mediation
  4. We also see that as the call goes out to the universe, no angel, no man, no anything is worthy except Christ Himself
  5. We also see John weeping that no one can be found
    - a) He was told in 4:1 that he would be shown what must come here after
    - b) Now that is in danger all because no one is worthy
- C. No one but the Lion of Judah - v.5-9

# The Lion and The Lamb

1. One of the elders tells John not to weep because the Lion of Judah is worthy because He triumphed
2. Now the name Lion of Judah comes from an interesting little passage in Genesis where Jacob refers to his son, Judah as a lion's cub, and tells him that the scepter (the rule) will never depart from his family line (a reference to David, and to Christ)
3. But how did the Lion of Judah triumph?
  - a) We will answer that in a minute
4. When John looked for the lion, he saw a Lamb, looking like it had been slain
  - a) The Lamb takes the scroll from the right hand of the One who sits on the throne
    - (1) This is very important and figures in to the point about Christ as both the Lion and the Lamb
    - (2) At this point lets just point out that Christ is worthy to approach the throne and take the scroll
  - b) Then, after He has the scroll, praise and worship breaks out, and we find out what the triumphing means
    - (1) In verse 5 the reason He can open the scroll is He triumphed
    - (2) In verse 9 the reason He can open the scroll is He was slain and by His blood redeems people from every tribe and language on earth
      - (a) In other words the self-sacrifice of Christ
      - (b) The laying down of His life
      - (c) The sacrifice of His perfect life so that people could be redeemed by His blood - the great exchange
        - i) If you are around here much you will here me talk about the great exchange
        - ii) Where Christ took all of our sin on Himself, and then gave us all of His righteousness so that when God looks at us, He does not see our sinfulness, but the Lion/Lamb's righteousness
  - c) One other thing I need to point out about verse 9
    - (1) When the elders begin to praise the Lamb, they begin with the phrase "You are worthy"
    - (2) Look back to 4:9-11 and tell me church, who is worthy in those verses? Him who sits on the throne
    - (3) So in those two verses we have a statement of Christ's deity
      - (a) He is equal with God

# The Lion and The Lamb

- (b) He Himself has all the same nature, abilities, qualities, and character as God the Father

## IV. Jesus Christ as the Lion

### A. Let's consider a few things about lions

1. They are one of the most feared creatures on the earth - and with good reason
  - a) They are the apex predator - when they look at an opponent they do not fear, they think, "Yumm! Lunch!"
2. They are one of the most majestic creatures on earth
3. Matt Chandler once gave the illustration of how we approach God
  - a) He mentioned the fainting goats - and how people approach them
  - b) Then he switched and asked if we would approach a lion the same way
    - (1) The reason we do not is because there is a reverence and a fear there
    - (2) There is an awe of the lion, his power and his will
  - c) Something to think about when approaching God

### B. Lions are known by another title as well - the King of the Jungle

1. They are the kings of the jungle precisely because of their awesome power
2. They have only one real competitor that can pose a threat to a lion - the Nile Crocodile
  - a) And the battle between the two species is about 50/50
3. Otherwise, they are the top, the King, no one challenges them for dominance, because they cannot

### C. Now, think about Christ as well, the Lion of Judah

1. He is also called in Scripture, the King of kings - in fact that is over my right shoulder
2. Did you ever break down that phrase - we sing songs about Jesus and the king of kings and lord of lords, but slow down and examine what you are saying
  - a) While there are kings and rulers of this world, Jesus is the king of them
  - b) That's what King of kings means - He is THE KING over any and all kings
3. This speaks loudly to Jesus being powerful, and being sovereign
4. Within our scene we see Jesus assigned this authority as well
  - a) He is worthy to take the scroll from the One who sits on the throne
  - b) The hosts of heaven sing the same words for Jesus as they do for the One who sits on the throne "You are worthy..."

# The Lion and The Lamb

5. It is obvious that Christ has the same power and authority as God the Father
- D. But then we get to an unpopular topic in churches today - the wrath of God
  1. Jesus as the Lion of Judah is a picture of
    - a) His majesty
    - b) His power
    - c) And the fact that we should always live with that sense of awe
  2. But because the Lion/Lamb took the scroll from the One who sits on the throne, that is a picture of God's wrath
  3. As the rest of the book of Revelation unfolds, we see God's final wrath against the sin of mankind
    - a) The scroll contains the judgements being given out on the earth for sin
    - b) It ushers in an age that Jesus Himself, when He was with us on earth said "For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again." - Matthew 24:21
  4. The scroll that the Lion/Lamb takes is a scroll of wrath against sin in the final days
  5. But one of the reasons I wanted to preach this sermon for Easter is because the fact remains that humanity without Christ must face God's wrath alone
    - a) God has given us all choices
      - (1) We can choose to follow Him
      - (2) We can choose to walk away from Him in whatever manner we choose (denying He even exists, not caring that He is there, being angry with God for whatever reason)
    - b) When we choose to do life without God, we have to face the consequences for that
      - (1) God is the most glorious, perfect Being
      - (2) When we turn our backs on Him there will be consequences
        - (a) The Bible calls the final consequence hell, or separation from God
        - (b) And the scene we have looked at in Revelation is the beginning of the final judgment of sin
- E. But there is good news in this passage - there are two sides to the Lion
  1. There is the side of the Lion that is in power, in control, and has the authority to judge sin
  2. But there is the side we have not talked about yet, the side of the Lamb
- V. Jesus as the Lamb of God

# The Lion and The Lamb

- A. The song of the host of heaven again shows us why this Lion/Lamb is worthy to take the position to judge sin - because He was slain for us to bring people to God
- B. God prescribed in the OT a very bloody sacrificial system
  - 1. In doing so, He was making a point - that sin is an ugly and serious thing
  - 2. In fact, once a year the high priest would make a sacrifice for the sins of the people in the “holy of holies” - the place God’s presence resided here on earth
  - 3. But even the high priest could not approach God without blood to cover over the sin
  - 4. All of this was pointing forward to Jesus sacrifice on the cross
- C. It’s a little like this
  - 1. Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, the Lion of Judah knew that humanity did not have it in themselves to be able to live a life fully devoted and sinless before God - all of them would sin at some point
  - 2. So the Lion, the One with authority and the right to judge sin, stepped out of His role as Lion, and took on the role as a Lamb
  - 3. In His role as Lamb, Jesus came to earth to do what we could never do - lead a sinless life
    - a) In the OT the sacrifices had to be without “blemish or spot” - they had to be perfect, clean and pure - subpar, wounded, diseased animals would not do
    - b) So Jesus had to come to be the perfect sacrifice in a way that no animal could ever do - He had to lead that sinless life
  - 4. Then, Jesus did what you and I would never want to have to do, and in fact He didn’t really want to do either - Jesus took the full wrath of God for sin on our behalf
    - a) He died a death in this world that was hideous and horrible
      - (1) If you have seen it depicted, you have a taste of what that was like
    - b) But worst of all, He had all of God’s wrath for sin on Him
      - (1) For all of humanity’s foolishness, all of our turning our backs on God, all of our pride, all of our belittling of God’s holiness
      - (2) Jesus took the wrath of God on Himself to give us the great exchange
    - c) Not only did Jesus die for your sins - that is awesome in itself
    - d) But let’s complete the process
      - (1) If that’s all Jesus did, we would surely sin again
      - (2) No, Jesus gave us His righteousness
        - a) 2 Cor. 5:21 “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

# The Lion and The Lamb

- (b) Jesus takes the sin, we get His righteousness
- e) And all of this is a gift that not one of us deserves
  - (1) What we deserved was the One who sits on the throne executing judgement
  - (2) We are not so amazing that God must love us, or reach to save us in anyway
    - (a) He is so far above us that we have a hard time getting the order of things right
    - (b) He owes us nothing because He is complete and perfect without us in a way that we find hard to understand
- 5. And that is what makes all of this such great news
  - a) You have the Lion that can execute judgement on a world of sinners, and that would be the just thing to do
  - b) But instead, He steps out of heaven, takes on the role as the Lamb, willingly, lovingly, to purchase men from every nation on earth
  - c) And for the rest of eternity, He maintains that dual role of Lion and Lamb, kind of like a Lion like Lamb, and a Lamb like Lion
- VI. So the final question to pose to each of us here is who would you like to meet?
  - A. The Bible is clear that all of us one day will stand before Jesus to be accountable for our sin
    - 1. Would you like to meet the Lion
      - a) The One set to judge the sin of the world
      - b) The One that you have to enter His presence in fear and trembling because you are not really sure if you did enough good to get you in heaven, not really sure if you helped enough people, not really sure how He will react to your life, because somehow you have lived your life under the influence that it is your good deeds that get you into heaven
        - (1) Let me be clear - YOU CAN'T DO ENOUGH TO EARN GOD'S GRACE!
          - (a) In fact, grace can't be earned - it is undeserved
          - (2) Ephesians 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast."
          - (3) You can't earn your way to heaven because it is not about you
            - (a) It is about Him
    - 2. Would you like to meet the Lion, or would you rather meet the Lamb?
      - a) The One that sacrificed His life for you
      - b) The One that gave you His righteousness, in exchange for your sin

# The Lion and The Lamb

- c) The One that didn't want to have to judge you or sentence you, so He did what He had to do to make a way for you to escape the wrath and judgement that would have been yours
- B. My hope is that every one of us in this room, our souls all scream a resounding, "I WANT THE LAMB"
  - 1. Here is how simple it is:
  - 2. You can pray right in your seat today
  - 3. "God, I realize that I am a sinner and probably am not very aware of all the ways that I have turned my back on you. Please forgive me, and teach me the ways in which I need to repent. I desire Your grace and forgiveness, and thank You that You made a way for us to have this relationship. Please help me as I start doing life together with You. Amen"
    - a) Please understand there is nothing magical about those words
    - b) It is about the sincerity of your heart, and a basic understanding of what Jesus did for you
      - (1) He died to absorb God's wrath for sin
      - (2) When you trust Him that He did that for You, and ask Him to help you live life in accordance with that - that is what you need to understand
  - 4. My prayer is that all of us seek the Lamb
    - a) That all of us live for the Lamb
    - b) And that we all praise the Lamb today for what He did for us
      - (1) In fact, we are going to end our service differently today
      - (2) We are going to end with a little longer time of praise to the Lamb!