

## The Wrath of the Alpha Lamb

### Revelation Lesson 3

The Book of Revelation includes over twenty-eight references to The Lamb (Rev. 5:6,8,12; 6:1,16; 7:9,14,17; 12:11; 13:8; 14:1,4,10; 15:3; 17:14;19:7,9; 21:9,14,27; 22:1,3)

The title “Lion of the Tribe of Judah” Greek - Λέων ὁ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς Ἰούδα is only used here in scripture. The Hebrew word for lion is *לֵאָוִן* in Greek, *אַרְיֵה*, *Ariel* in Hebrew. It was used by Jacob to describe his son Judah’s youthful strength saying, “Judah is a lion’s whelp (cub)” (Genesis 49:9). Jacob went on to describe the future Messiah, a descendant from Judah, as “*Shiloh*,” meaning “to Him the gathering will be.” *Shiloh* possesses a scepter and has authority as a law giver. Jesus was from the tribe of Judah, David’s offspring, “a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch” (Isaiah 11:1). This title shows His origin as Jewish, and His royal lineage as Davidic (Luke 1:32,33). Jesus’s incarnation took place in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), David’s hometown (Matthew 1:1; 17; Luke 2:4). The title “Lion of the Tribe of Judah” shows His dominant authority to rule over all. The worshipping host of Heaven identifies this Lion of Judah as the Lamb who was slain but is alive who will eternally sit on the throne. This is a complete reversal of roles, describing the two comings of the Messiah. After becoming the sacrificial lamb of God (Isaiah 53:6,7), He arose from the grave as a conquering Lion. Not only does He hold the keys to Satan’s domain, death, hell, and the grave (Rev. 1:18), only The Lamb was able to do what no mortal “man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth” was worthy to do nor could do, “He prevailed to open” and to unlock the book with seven seals. (Rev. 5:3).

The 24 elders with harps and golden vials of the prayers of the saints fell down and worshiped the Lamb and sang a new song to the Lamb (5:8). The song emphasizes His worthiness, and authority to redeem and to reign with the redeemed.

“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 hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. Kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” (5:9,10)

Innumerable angels and worshipers (estimated at over one billion Daniel 7:10; Rev. 5:11) join the 24 elders in worship, saying;

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.” (5:12-14)

Just before the judgments of the Tribulation are poured out, the saints in Heaven around the throne view the Lamb who had been slain. The authority and dominance of this lionlike “alpha” Lamb are represented by His seven horns, and seven eyes, which symbolize the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth (5:6). This Lamb is the same one referred to by Daniel as the Son of man positioned “near before Him” – “the Ancient of Days.” The contrast to the beast with 7 horns of Daniel 7:8,20.

“I saw in the night visions, and behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and

glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13,14).

Dr. James White notes, “Returning to the scene of Rev. 5:6, we should note also the position of the Lamb here described. He is “between the throne and the elders.” The Greek could be translated “in the midst of the throne and the elders.” Here “the Lamb is intimately associated with God, for it stands close to his throne.” Remember that none were found worthy in Heaven or Earth to occupy this privileged place. It will soon become evident how closely linked in the mind of the Revelator the Lamb and God truly are. John sees the Lamb “as if slain.” The tense of the verb is the perfect tense, which indicates the lasting effects. The lamb has been offered, yet it stands erect and alive in the sight of Heaven. “The Greek perfect tense here signifies that the Lamb was not only slain at a point in time, but that the efficacy of His death is still present in all its power.” Describing the perpetual potency of the death of Jesus the writer of Hebrews employs “one-of” use adjective in the N.T, πρόσφατον, *phrosphaton* meaning recent or fresh in the phrase “by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way... through... His flesh” (Heb. 10:20). This is an eternally efficacious recent/fresh and current condition of being newly slain yet still alive.” We can come to God through Him as the thief on the cross did, pleading for salvation while Jesus is still alive but already slain. Yet now in Revelation 5, He who was slain and is risen and seated as our High Priest, is shown as the standing, worthy, omnipotent Lamb taking and loosing the sealed book.

White continues, “This view fits in consistently with John’s desire to point out the pre-eminence of Christ; in His power, and in His sacrifice. In just a short while, the elders will sing a song of praise to the Lamb for having purchased for God men with His own blood. (c.f. Acts 20:28) It is the completely efficacious sacrifice of Christ that undergirds all the actions of the Revelation. God’s anger and wrath are fully justified in that He has offered full and free salvation through Jesus Christ, the Lamb, and mankind has rejected that offer. Only wrath, God’s terrible wrath, can be the result of such an action. Everything John sees, he sees in the light of the Cross, and the shed blood of Calvary.”

“The Levitical system knew of lambs which were slain in sacrifice. But the idea that the Lord of life himself should be the sacrifice, that the Lion of the tribe of Judah should himself be the Lamb that was slain, was almost beyond the imagination of man, ... but it was not beyond the outreach of the love of God.”<sup>i</sup> Then the Lamb took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne (5:7).

“And I saw when **the Lamb opened one of the seals** And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and **hide us** from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from **the WRATH OF THE LAMB: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?**”

The judgments that fall upon the Earth commencing the Tribulation period are initiated when the Lamb on the Throne in wrath opens a seal on the book. The inhabitants of Earth cry out in fear at the pouring out of death, war, famine, genocide, and darkness.

Presumably due to the preaching of the two heavenly witnesses for three and a half years, the 144, 000 Jewish evangelists are sealed, and their innumerable converts later stand before the Lamb in white robes and cry aloud, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." (7:9-11) They are identified as ones that were saved in the great Tribulation and "have their robes washed white in the Blood of the Lamb." "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

After the 7 seal judgments and the 7 trumpet judgments, we see the Lamb again.

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, *being* the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb." (14:1-4)

Chapter 15 opens with the vial or bowl judgments filled with the wrath of God. Those who have gotten victory over the beast holding harps of God, sing "the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb... praising the LORD God Almighty...King of saints" (Ex. 15:1-21; Deut. 32:1-44). Here the songs of Moses and of the Lamb crescendo in eschatological harmony. It is Jacob's time of trouble.

"O that they were wise, *that* they understood this, *that* they would consider their latter end!" (Deut. 32:29). "for the day of their calamity *is* at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. Yet The Lamb will have mercy on them." "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matt. 24:22). "For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that *their* power is gone, and *there is* none shut up, or left."

But for the enemies of God and Israel, there is the full wrath of the Alpha Lamb.

"If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; *and that* with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, *and* to his people. (Deut. 32:35,36,41-43)."

Following the worship song, a "great voice out of the Temple" tells the seven angels to pour out "the wrath of God" on the earth (Rev. 16).

In chapter 17, the kings of the revived Roman Empire make "war with the Lamb." And the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of Lords, and King of Kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Every knee will not bow and every tongue will not confess Jesus ins LORD until He exercises wrath and defeats and conquers them.

The next mention of the Lamb is found in Revelation 19

“Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.”

Here we see the zenith of the contrasting Lamb titles. He is a Lamb Lion in chapters 5 & 6, then a Lamb who becomes the Shepherd in (7:17), and finally a Lamb who becomes a Groom (19:7) of His “little flock” bride (Luke 12:32). The Jewish Apostles were the elders of the bride Church. The marriage of the bride takes place in Heaven after the Rapture of the Church and likely after the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10) while the seals of wrath are opened on the inhabitants of the earth.

“And I, John, saw these things and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then said he unto me, “See that thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the sayings of this book. Worship God!”

First, he was the Lamb of Lambs slain before the foundation of the world, and now He is being revealed as the Lion of Lions. In Heaven, innumerable angels and saints worship him as the LORD OF LORDS. The last time His wicked enemies see Jesus, He will be descending onto the Battlefield of Armageddon wearing a new title on his vesture for the first time: “KING OF KINGS.” The birds of the air are summoned to a feast “fit for a King,” but the only kings present will be the ones on the menu. Israeli lamb chops have been stricken from their wicked menu.

“Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread.” Psalm 53:4

“And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great” (Rev. 19:17,18).

The handing of the scroll to the risen Lamb signifies a change in the role of the Lamb. At Calvary, the Lamb submitted to the will of the Father to be slain, but now He is entrusted with the judgment of mankind. This is the last time we see the messianic title “Lamb” in Revelation.

## **The Role of the Lamb in Revelation: Key Appearances and Themes**

### **The Lamb in Revelation 5: Worthy to Open the Scroll**

*The Lamb* first appears in Revelation 5, in a dramatic and pivotal scene. In this vision, John sees a scroll sealed with seven seals, which no one in heaven or on earth is worthy to open. Then, the Lamb is revealed, described as “standing as though it had been slain.”

- **Symbolism of the Scroll:** The scroll represents God’s ultimate plan for history and redemption. Only the Lamb, through its sacrifice, is worthy to open it, highlighting the inseparable link between redemption and divine authority.
- **Paradox of the Slain Yet Victorious Lamb:** The Lamb’s description as “slain yet standing” captures the essence of Christ’s victory—achieved through sacrifice rather than force.

## The Lamb's Role in the Judgment and Victory

Throughout Revelation, the Lamb is not only a figure of redemption but also a key player in executing divine justice.

1. **Opening the Seven Seals:** As the Lamb opens the seals, it initiates the unfolding of God's plan, including the apocalyptic judgments that follow (*Revelation 6*).
2. **Victory Over Evil:** In *Revelation 17:14*, the Lamb defeats the forces of evil, emphasizing that ultimate victory belongs to God and those who follow Him.
3. **The New Jerusalem:** The Lamb is central in the final vision of the New Jerusalem, where saints eternally bask in the light of the Lamb in that eternal city (*Revelation 21:23*). Jesus said I AM the Light of the World plus the Light of the world to come.

## The Lamb as the Object of Worship

In *Revelation 5:8-14*, the heavenly hosts and all creation join in worshiping the Lamb, singing, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!" This scene underscores several theological themes:

- **The Lamb's Divinity:** Sharing worship with God the Father affirms the Lamb's divine nature.
- **Universal Redemption:** The song of worship praises the Lamb for redeeming people from "every tribe and language and people and nation," highlighting the global scope of Christ's work.

## Symbolism of the Lamb in Revelation

### The Paradox of Power and Sacrifice

The Lamb embodies a striking paradox: it is both vulnerable (slain) and powerful (victorious). This imagery challenges traditional notions of strength and authority, emphasizing that true power lies in self-giving love and obedience to God's will.

- **The Slain Lamb as Victor:** The Lamb's victory over evil comes not through brute force but through its sacrificial death, reflecting the values of God's kingdom.
- **Contrast with the Beast:** While the Beast in Revelation wields oppressive power, the Lamb triumphs through humility and righteousness, offering a profound critique of worldly systems of domination.

### The Lamb as a Symbol of Redemption

The Lamb's repeated association with blood in Revelation highlights its role as the ultimate sacrificial offering.

- **The Blood of the Lamb:** In *Revelation 7:14*, the multitude in white robes is described as having "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." This paradoxical imagery symbolizes the cleansing and transformative power of Christ's sacrifice.
- **The Redeemed Community:** The Lamb's work is inclusive, extending redemption to people from every background and culture.

## The Lamb and Divine Justice

In *Revelation* 6:16-17, those who oppose God cry out to the mountains to hide them “from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.” This phrase, “wrath of the Lamb,” juxtaposes mercy and judgment, revealing that the Lamb embodies both aspects of divine action.

John 5:22-23 For the Father judgeth no man, but **hath committed all judgment unto the Son**: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.

John 5:27 And hath **given him authority to execute judgment** also, because he is the Son of man.

## Theological Implications of the Lamb’s Centrality

### Christological Significance

The Lamb is a Christological symbol that encapsulates key aspects of Jesus’s identity and mission:

- **The Perfect Sacrifice:** The Lamb fulfills Old Testament sacrificial imagery, offering atonement for sins.
- **The Risen Lord:** The Lamb’s standing position signifies the resurrection, affirming that Christ’s sacrifice leads to new life and victory.

### Eschatological Themes

The Lamb’s role in Revelation underscores its importance in eschatology—the study of the end times:

- **The Fulfillment of Redemption:** Revelation depicts the Lamb as the culmination of God’s redemptive work, bringing history to its divinely ordained conclusion.
- **Hope for Believers:** The Lamb’s victory assures believers that evil will not prevail and that God’s kingdom will ultimately be established.<sup>ii</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> Buttrick, *The Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 12, p. 407

<sup>ii</sup> <https://jeremypaytonbooks.com/2024/12/11/why-is-the-lamb-central-in-revelation/>

**Other Sources by Dr. James White** <https://www.aomin.org/aoblog/general-apologetics/jesus-christ-the-lamb-of-revelation-an-examination-of-the-relationship-between-god-and-the-lamb-in-the-book-of-revelation/>