

## Jesus is both the Lion and the Lamb

Written by Josh Winslett

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The Bible often uses visual word pictures to display certain characteristics, or attributes of Jesus Christ. Two word pictures used are Lamb and Lion. Jesus is called Lamb that takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). He is said to be "brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb" (Isaiah 53:7, Acts 8:32). This word picture denotes a harmlessness, and willingness of Christ to die on the cross. John Gill writes of Isaiah 53:7, "Christ went as willingly to be sacrificed as a lamb goes to the slaughter house, and was as silent under his sufferings as a sheep while under the hands of its shearers; he was willing to be stripped of all he had, as a shorn sheep, and to be slaughtered and sacrificed as a lamb, for the sins of his people."

Likewise, Jesus is called the Lion. This image is juxtaposed with that of a Lamb by magnifying the great prestige and honor of Christ. It also further shows the great power of God and fearful reverence his presence should solicit from those approaching him.

How does this work out in God's interaction with humanity? First, God is approachable to contrite sinners. Individuals sensible of their sins can find rest from their burdens in the presence of the Lamb (Matthew 11:28). During Christ's earthly ministry we see the forsaken poor finding safety in his presence. Likewise, every repenting believer, regardless of their past, can find relief and comfort at the foot of the cross of the Lamb.

However, we must never forget that Jesus Christ is also the Lion. The Lamb that was slain is also the Lion of the tribe of Juda (Revelation 6:5-6). This is why Revelation 6:16 uses the ironic expression of "the wrath of the Lamb." Jesus chased out the wicked money changers from the temple (John 2:15). Matthew 23 records Jesus calling the wicked, impenitent unbelieving Pharisees both hypocrites and vipers. Jesus is not simply some "grandfatherly" figure that spoils everyone, and is just waiting for someone to pay him a visit on Sunday afternoons. Jesus is the conquering Lion. Jesus will one day be the means through which God the Father judges the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31). Ignoring God's justice and wrath, while only discussing his grace and mercy, will often paint an imbalanced view of God that will lead to faulty theology.

Simply stated, our understanding of Jesus Christ as Lion will give us greater appreciation of his role as Lamb. In contrast, ignoring God's wrath will give us a lower view of saving grace. We deserve God's wrath. We deserve a devil's Hell. Yet, we have been delivered from both by the blood of the Lamb. There is rest and safety in his presence for those mourning their sins.

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"Wonderful the matchless grace of Jesus,  
Deeper than the mighty rolling sea;  
Higher than the mountain, sparkling like a fountain,  
All-sufficient grace for even me!  
Broader than the scope of my transgressions,  
Greater far than all my sin and shame;  
Oh, magnify the precious Name of Jesus,  
Praise His Name!"  
-Wonderful grace of Jesus by Haldor Lillenas

"The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." Matthew 11:5

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:3-12

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