

THE LION AND THE LAMB

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Revelation 5:5 refers to Jesus Christ as “*the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David*” while the very next verse describes him as “*a Lamb as it had been slain.*” It would be difficult to conceive of two creatures as different as a lion and a lamb, yet our Lord is *both*. Therefore, the question is, How is Christ both a lion and a lamb?

The Lion of the tribe of Judah

The description of Jesus Christ in the aforementioned scripture as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” is joined with the phrase “the Root of David.” On earth, Jesus was physically descended from David, as detailed in the lineage given in Matthew 1:1-17. In Matthew 22:42-45, Jesus himself emphasized the point of his physical descent from David along with his position as Deity and Creator that preceded his earthly existence. There, he asked the Pharisees, “*What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?*” Romans 1:3-5 also says, “*Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name.*” Furthermore, today Jesus is sitting on the throne of David at the right hand of God, reigning over his eternal kingdom, the church. In Luke 1:31-33, God’s angel Gabriel told Mary, Christ’s mother-to-be: “Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: *and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*” Jesus identified that eternal kingdom as his church, which the gates of Hades will not prevail against (Matt 16:18-19). His kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36-37). As King of his Kingdom, Jesus is Head of his Church (Acts 2:29-36; Eph 1:22-23; 5:23; Col 1:13,18). We also need to keep in mind the fact that Jesus will return again in flaming fire to take vengeance on all those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel (2 Thes 1:7-

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(continued)

10). Jesus has been appointed to judge the world after he comes again (Acts 17:31).

The Lamb of God

But Jesus is not only called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. As Revelation 5:6 tells us, Jesus is also known as “the Lamb which was slain.” Before God delivered the children of Israel from Egypt, the people sacrificed a lamb and put its blood over the doors of their houses (Exodus 12). The Lord then “passed over” their houses and the blood of the lamb led to their redemption from the bondage of Egypt. This was a shadow of what Christ would do for all mankind. Jesus was the Passover lamb whose blood was shed to redeem man from the bondage of his sins and to give him eternal life. Isaiah 53:7 prophesied of him, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch from this very passage (Acts 8:30-35). When John the Baptist saw Jesus, he told the people to “behold the Lamb of God” (John 1:29,36). First Corinthians 5:7 says, “*For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.*” “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God” (1 Pet 1:18-21). This had been God’s plan “before the foundation of the world,” which is why Jesus is called “*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*” (Rev 13:8). Jesus as both Lion and Lamb reminds us of Romans 9:22: “*Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*” Jesus came to earth the first time as the Lamb to save the world (John 3:16-17; 12:46-47). The second time, Jesus will come as the Lion to take vengeance on all those who have rejected him (2 Thes 1:7-9; Heb 12:25-26).