

Introduction:

1. The scene is dramatic. A throne is pictured in heaven. The throne and the One who sits upon it are glorious beyond our comprehension. Thunder and lightning proceed from the throne.
 - a. Those around the throne praise the One seated there, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty.”
 - b. The One on the throne has a scroll in His right hand, but no one can open it.
2. It is at that point that we pick up the reading in Revelation 5:1-5. Thus we find the introduction to a key theme in the book of Revelation: The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed.
 - a. The scroll contains the destiny of the people of God—who were being intensely persecuted.
 - b. The Lion not only prevails to open the scroll, but also prevails over the enemies of His people.
 - c. If you are unfamiliar with the Revelation, you need to know it is a book filled with signs and symbols. It is a book about conflict between Christ and Satan. It is about the victory of Christ.
3. The Lion is Jesus. Why is He called that? This lesson is part of our series on names of our Lord.

The Lesson:

I. The Old Testament background on the Lion.

- A. We go from the last book of the Bible to the first book, Genesis 49:8-12.
 1. The Patriarch Jacob, coming to the end of his life, prophesied concerning his sons.
 2. Judah, though not the eldest, would have the place of honor. His name means “praised.”
 3. Judah is portrayed as victorious over his enemies, and is honored by the other tribes.
 4. The tribe is compared to a lion. Why? Because it would be strong. The lion grows from a cub (whelp), then to full maturity. Mature, it is king of its domain. So Judah would be.
 5. Kingship is further indicated in verse 10. The elements in this verse point beyond the tribe unto one who would be a royal lawgiver, the Messiah, whom the people would obey!
 6. Verses 11-12 contain symbols of prosperity. Judah was indeed a prosperous tribe.
- B. While most of these things can be linked to the tribe of Judah, ultimate fulfillment is in Christ.
 1. Genesis 49:8-12 is prophetic of Christ who would be the Lion of the tribe of Judah!
 2. As in the text, He is to be praised, He would be victorious over all enemies, would have authority and power, the royal scepter of kingship; He is the “Shiloh,” the one sent. Young’s Literal Translation treats this as “the seed.” It can only refer to the Messiah.
 3. About 1,800 years before Jesus was born, His ancestor Jacob prophesied His coming! This is but one of many remarkable prophecies of the first coming of Christ.

II. The New Testament update on the Lion.

- A. For centuries, those who were familiar with Jacob's prophecy might have wondered about the Shiloh, the seed, the Lion who was to come and be a lawgiver. But, with the coming of Jesus, no one needed to wonder anymore! Jesus is the one! See Revelation 5:1-14.
1. Jesus, of course, came out of the tribe of Judah, Hebrews 7:14.
 2. As with the tribe itself, the Lion of Judah is to be praised, Revelation 5:9-10.
 3. The message of this chapter is that He has victory over His enemies, Revelation 5:5. As a result, all creation bows in worship before the Lion King—Jesus, Revelation 5:11-14.
 4. He has the royal scepter of kingship, Hebrews 1:8. He is the lawgiver.
 5. As Shiloh, Jesus is the one who was sent, the one who was to come, John 6:38-40; 6:14.
 6. He is the one that all of mankind must obey, Hebrews 5:9.
 7. All elements of the Genesis prophecy are found in Jesus. He is the ultimate expression of all these things related to the tribe of Judah in the prophecy of Jacob.
- B. The Lion in Revelation.
1. Animals are often used in the Bible as figures. They communicate characteristics.
 - a. When Jesus called Herod a "fox" (Luke 13:32), it is because he is sly and cunning.
 - b. When the devil is compared to a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8) it is because he devours.
 - c. But, when Jesus is called a Lion it is because He is greatest of all, with majesty and kingly authority. As the lion rules the forest, so Jesus rules over all!
 - d. Yet, at the same time, Jesus is called a "Lamb" (Revelation 5:6) because He is harmless, innocent, and is likened unto the lamb that is sacrificed for others.
 2. In Revelation, as the Lamb, Jesus is Savior and Redeemer. As The Lion, He is bold and powerful, with kingly authority; He is the Conquering King! It is fitting that one with such supremacy and regal dignity be entrusted with opening the seals, Revelation 5:5.
 - a. The Greek word for "prevailed" means to subdue, conquer, overcome, get the victory (Strong's). Revelation is about the triumph of Christ. The Lion is Conquering King! The outcome is so certain, that He is pictured as having already gained the victory.
 - b. Any Jew who knew Genesis 49 would immediately grasp what was meant by "Lion of the tribe of Judah." This language is strange to us, but not to the trained Jewish ear.
- C. What does all this mean to us? What is our take-home?
1. Remember who you serve. Under the figures of the book, Jesus is portrayed as the great Conquering King, Revelation 19:11-16.
 2. Remember who you are. You are of the chosen people of Christ, Revelation 17:14.
 3. Remember your reward. A destiny has been set before you, Revelation 22:14.

Conclusion:

1. Early Christians suffered for Christ; we too, may suffer. John wept over God's hurting people, Revelation 5:4. The scroll revealed the future of God's suffering people. How would it all turn out? No need to weep, Revelation 5:5. The Jacob prophecy could be trusted! Now, trust this.

2. No matter what we face or what enemies may do to us, we stay on the Lord's side! Whether governmental enemies, moral enemies or religious enemies, the Lion prevails. We stay with Him. Though things may look bad along the way, don't judge the end by the present. See the final outcome. That is the message of Revelation—the message of our King, the Lion of the tribe of Judah!