

The Lion of the Tribe of Judah



Titles of Jesus (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we draw near to the close of another week. I'll be continuing today with our theme for the week, "Titles of Jesus." I've chosen this theme at the Christmas season for a special practical purpose, to help you focus your heart and mind on the one without whom Christmas has no real meaning, Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, so many people today leave Christ out of Christmas and so miss its real and permanent significant. I hope none of you will make this tragic mistake.

So far this week we've studied four titles of Jesus: Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace, the Word of God, the Lamb of God. Today I've deliberately chosen a title that is in the strongest possible contrast with yesterday's title. Yesterday's title was the Lamb of God. Our title for today is the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

What two creatures could be in greater contrast to each other than the lamb and the lion? Yet, Jesus combines both within himself. This illustrates a principle that I've already stated this week. Each title of Jesus reveals some important aspect of his wonderful, many sided nature.

This title, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, is found in the book of Revelation, chapter 5. In this chapter John the revelator describes a scene which he was permitted in vision to witness in heaven. It's a scene of majesty and grandeur. It portrays the very soul of God and this is what John saw there in the place where God's throne stands. Verse 1 and following:

> "Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll? But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it."

This scroll was the revelation of that which lay ahead in human history and destiny up to the close of the present age. And, of course, John longed to know what God was seeking

to reveal. But the lesson here is that strength does not prevail to open the scroll. Though it was a mighty angel who proclaimed in a loud voice, no one responded, no one was worthy. So John was deeply grieved and he says:

> "I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. Then one of the elders said to me, Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

The Lion of the tribe of Judah, that's Jesus. He's also the root of David, the one out of whom David received his kingly authority. Now, John looks toward the throne expecting to see this lion but he sees something very different.

> "Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth."

You see the deliberate paradox? Jesus is proclaimed as the Lion but when John looks he sees a slain Lamb. John continues now about he Lamb and the Lion:

> "He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."

You remember that when we spoke yesterday about the Lamb of God we pointed out that it was through one Lamb's blood that redemption was provided. The Passover lamb provided temporary redemption but Jesus, the eternal Son of God, the Lamb of God, provides eternal redemption through His blood.

So you see again the deliberate paradox. The Lamb has become the Lion. Also, in connection with that title, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, notice that this is an eternal picture and an eternal title of Jesus. It's no longer Jesus in his merely humanity but it's a Jesus exalted forever at God's right hand.

But, he's still called the Lion of the tribe of Judah. That's very significant. Many people don't realize it but Judah is the name from which the word Jew is taken.

Jesus did not identify himself with humanity temporarily in the incarnation. He became man forever without losing his identity as God. Furthermore, his identity with the Jewish people was not temporary. He is forever the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He has a special connection with that people, the Jewish people.

Now let's look at some scriptural associations of the lion that are found in the book of Proverbs. First of all, the lion inspires fear. Proverbs 19:12:

> "A king's rage is like the roar of a lion, but his favor is like dew on the grass."

So, Jesus is the Lion whose roar inspires fear. But thank God his favor is like the dew on the grass. And then the Lion is pictured as fearless.

> "The wicked man flees though no one pursues, but the righteous are as bold as a lion."

So, boldness is a part of that nature. And then the lion is pictured as irresistible. In Proverbs 30:29–31 four particularly stated or impressive creatures are pictures. The first, the most impressive, is the lion. Here are the words:

> "There are three things that are stately in their stride, four that move with stately bearing: a lion, mighty among beasts, who retreats before nothing; a strutting rooster, a he goat, and a king with his army around him."

Notice the "lion, mighty among beasts, who retreats before nothing." Jesus is the irresistible, all-conquering lion of the tribe of Judah. So the lion contains great strength, he's fearful, he's awe-inspiring, we could be frightened of him. But there's a beautiful lesson. If we receive the lamb we don't need to fear the lion.

In this composite picture of Jesus as the Lamb and the Lion there's an eternal principle represented. The principle is this: That in God's economy meekness is the appointed way to true strength. That's very different from human viewpoint. God says if you want to become strong you've got to become weak. If you want to be exalted you've got to become lowly.

Listen to what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:20–25, speaking about the kind of people whom God receives as His own.

> "Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified; a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Now notice the application.

> "For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength."

That's all represented in the Lamb. It's foolishness to the natural mind but in that Lamb is contained the ultimate revelation of God's wisdom and of God's strength. And then listen to what Paul says about his own experiences in 2 Corinthians 12:7–10:

> "To keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

That's the lesson, the Lamb and the Lion. If you want to be strong with God's strength you've got to be weak in your own strength. You want to be exalted, you have to be humbled. The way to become a lion is to start as a lamb. That's the wisdom of God, it's foolishness with men. That's the strength of God, it's weakness in man's eyes. But thank God Jesus proved once and for all that he foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength. It's all summed up in the Lamb who became the Lion.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time. Next week I'll continue with my special Christmas theme, "Titles of Jesus." At this special season I want to wish every one of you God's richest blessing for Christmas and the New Year and to thank all of you who've been sharing with me the financial burden of this radio ministry. May I also ask you, frankly, to remember the ministry once more with a generous gift before the year closes. This will be a great source of encouragement to me personally and will strengthen me to continue and expand this ministry in the new year that lies ahead. To each one who responds I'll send a copy of my book Appointment in Jerusalem. This is the dramatic true life story of my first wife Lydia. Countless people have written to tell me that it's the most moving and exciting story they've ever read. Also, this week's complete series of messages on the "Titles of Jesus" is available in a single, carefully-edited 60-minute cassette. Stay tuned for details.

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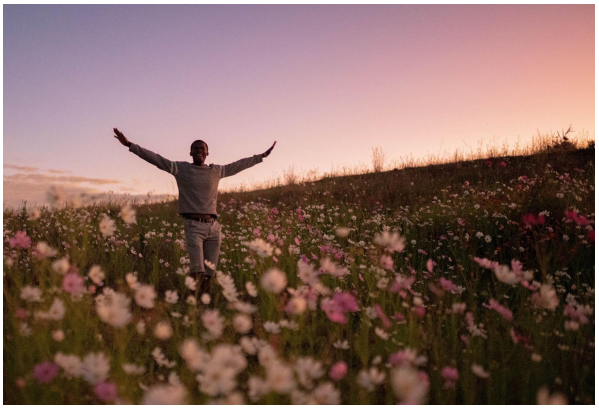
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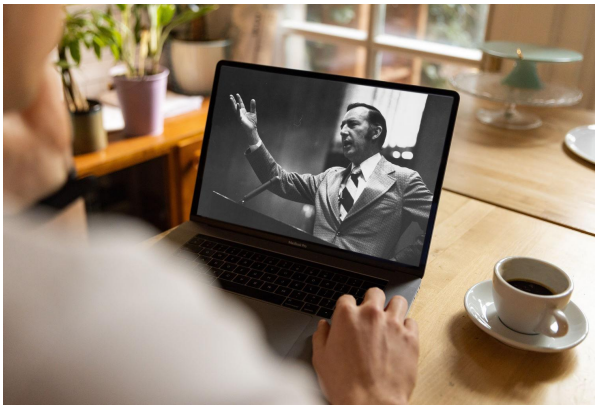
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