



# IMAGERY IN REVELATION

## PURGING THE CHRISTIAN IMAGINATION



### Introduction

- The way that we view God is of tremendous significance. Consider the terrorist attack that occurred this past week in Nice, France in which two distinct understandings of God can be observed.
- As believers, it is important that we see the Lord Jesus for who He truly is. This allows us to view ourselves and our circumstances properly and also to view others, especially those who may be our enemies, in light of the mercy that He has shown as well as the judgment that He will execute.

**Key Point:** In the book of Revelation, the Lord Jesus is revealed in fullness as the great \_\_\_\_\_ who offers to sinners the mercy of God but who will ultimately carry out the wrath of God upon the ungodly.

### The Vision of the Son of Man—Revelation 1:10-18

1. The vision demonstrates the power of \_\_\_\_\_ when it accompanies instruction.

Rev. 1:10-11—<sup>10</sup>I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet <sup>11</sup>saying, “Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea.”

⇒ This short preface to the vision itself emphasizes the importance of both *hearing* and *seeing* in order that John and his readers might truly understand.

2. The vision presents the Son of Man as God Almighty who possesses all \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Rev. 1:12-16—<sup>12</sup>Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup>and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. <sup>14</sup>The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup>his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. <sup>16</sup>In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

⇒ The Son of Man is characterized by imagery that is *priestly* (v. 12-13), *kingly* (v. 14-15a), and *prophetic* (v. 15b-16).

3. The Son of Man's actions towards John present Him as one who is \_\_\_\_\_ towards those who respond properly to Him.

Rev. 1:17-18—<sup>17</sup>When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, “Fear not, I am the first and the last, <sup>18</sup>and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

⇒ The Son of Man is the *eternal* Son of God (v. 17b-18a) who became *incarnate* for the salvation of mankind (v. 18b).

⇒ Through His *resurrection*, the Son of Man now possesses authority over Death and can rescue others from its power.

**Key Point:** The Son of Man has authority over death and can therefore visit it upon the ungodly in accordance with divine judgement or can \_\_\_\_\_ those who humble themselves before Him.

### Imagery of Judgement & Deliverance: The Lion & the Lamb—Revelation 5:1-6

**Wider Context:** In Ch. 4, John has seen a vision of the Lord God Almighty and all those who surround His throne. These heavenly beings worship the Lord as the Creator-Owner of everyone and everything.

Rev. 5:1-4—<sup>1</sup>Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. <sup>2</sup>And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” <sup>3</sup>And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, <sup>4</sup>and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it.

#### The Scroll

- This imagery recalls passages from the *Torah* that address ownership of land in Israel that was forfeited because of debt and was sold into the possession of another until it could be restored by a kinsman-redeemer (Lev. 25:23-25). A sealed scroll would serve as the land's title deed.
- It also recalls passages from the *Prophets* (Isa. 29:11; Dan. 12:4,9) that refer to a scroll being sealed to prevent the premature disclosure of future events which concern God's judgment upon both Israel and her enemies as well as their subsequent blessing by Him.

**Interpretation:** *The scroll is the title deed to the earth which mankind forfeited, and which must therefore be reclaimed by a Kinsman-Redeemer. Upon being opened, the judgments by which God will purge the earth of those who oppose both Him and His people will unfold.*

**The Problem:** No one is found \_\_\_\_\_! ἄξιος (*axios*) — One who has merited anything; one who is entitled.

Rev. 5:5-6—<sup>5</sup> And one of the elders said to me, “Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.” <sup>6</sup> And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

### Lion Imagery

- Lion imagery is used to represent strength and ferocity. It is used frequently in the OT to refer to the enemies of God's people (Psa. 22:13,21, 35:17; Isa. 5:29; Jer. 2:15). Used alongside a reference to David, however, this is imagery that refers to Messianic kingship.

Gen. 49:9-11—<sup>9</sup> Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him?

<sup>10</sup> The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

<sup>11</sup> Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he has washed his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes.

Isa. 11:1, 10—<sup>1</sup> There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit...<sup>10</sup> In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

Interpretation: 1. *Although mankind forfeited the title deed to the earth through their sin and rebellion, God has raised up for them a Kinsman-Redeemer, the Davidic King (Messiah)!*

2. *Although the enemies of God have claimed the earth for themselves and seek to devour His people, He has raised up His own Lion who will execute His judgments and purge the earth of their evil presence.*

**Key Point:** John hears the good news that God has raised up Jesus as the conquering \_\_\_\_\_ who is worthy to reclaim the title deed of the earth and to unfold God's judgments on the enemies of His people.

### Lamb Imagery

- Lambs are referenced throughout the OT and almost always in relation to sacrifice. Lamb imagery therefore carries the ideas of both substitution (Gen. 22:8) and redemption (Exod. 13:11-16).

Exod. 12:5-7—<sup>5</sup> Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, <sup>6</sup> and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. <sup>7</sup> “Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it.

Isa. 53:6—He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

σφαζω (*sphazō*) — To butcher (especially an animal for food or in sacrifice) or (generally) to slaughter.

Interpretation: *The one who has conquered is worthy to take the scroll because He has paid the redemption price through the shedding of His blood and He is alive now forevermore.*

### Additional Imagery

⇒ The Lamb is described as having seven horns, which represent the fullness of His power and strength (Deut. 33:17), and seven eyes, which represent the fullness of the Spirit which rests upon Him (Isa. 11:2).

**Key Point:** John sees that the Lion who is worthy to take the scroll and judge the enemies of God and His people is surprisingly the Lamb who died in the place of sinners in order that they might be \_\_\_\_\_.

### Applying the Imagery

1. Seeing the Lord Jesus as the Lion of Judah should assuage our \_\_\_\_\_ and give us confidence.

⇒ *We should not lose heart when it seems like evil is triumphing in the world because the King of Kings will ultimately bring judgment upon the wicked.*

Rev. 19:15-16—<sup>15</sup> From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. <sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.

2. Seeing the Lord Jesus as the Lamb that was slain should \_\_\_\_\_ us and give us a heart of compassion towards those who make themselves our enemies.

⇒ *We ourselves are deserving of the wrath of God, and yet Jesus has died in our place in order to rescue and redeem us.*

Rev. 5:9-10—<sup>9</sup> And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, <sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth.”