

## Chapter 1

### THE LIONLIKE LAMB

IN THE Scriptures more than two hundred names, emblems, and symbols are used to describe the character and mission of Jesus. This gives meaning to the statement of the prophet Isaiah that the Messiah's "name shall be called Wonderful." One of the most prominent and important of these symbolic names is the Lamb. From the gates of the Garden of Eden to Calvary, the fallen sons and daughters of Adam demonstrated their faith in the plan of redemption by offering the typical lamb, through which they beheld "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

More than sixty years after the crucifixion and ascension of Jesus, John declared the Saviour to be "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" and the book containing the names of the redeemed of all ages is called "the book of life of the Lamb." Twenty-nine times in the book of the Revelation, Jesus is spoken of as the Lamb. In chapter 5 the Eternal is pictured on His throne with a book in His right hand sealed with seven seals. The challenge of the mighty angel to the inhabitants of the universe is met with profound silence because no creature is able to take the book, break its seals, and reveal its contents.

This failure caused the prophet to weep until he was assured that "the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David" had prevailed or conquered and was therefore able "to open the book, and to lose the seven seals thereof." The apostle was told to behold the Lion, but when He looked He saw a Lamb which appeared as if it "had been slain." It was "a Lamb standing as if killed," which "seemed to have been sacrificed," or "He looked as if He had been offered in sacrifice," according to other translations. In the heavenly sanctuary Jesus is both the Priest and the Victim, or Sacrifice; the Lamb whose spilled blood is offered as a propitiation for sin.

Here Jesus is pictured as both a Lion and a Lamb. This constitutes one of the many strange paradoxes of the Bible; for what could be more opposite in nature, appearance, and characteristics? Both of these symbols are necessary to gain a proper vision of the Christ. A paradox is a statement which appears to be contradictory and seemingly says two different things which may even sound absurd, but which is nevertheless true and often sublime.

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No creature could possibly better represent meekness, humility, and innocence than does a lamb. Lambs are never forward and aggressive, nor do they fight for their rights. They do not retaliate or seek revenge. In prophetic vision the prophet said of the Christ: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. 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." Isaiah 53:6, 7. Speaking of the events which fulfilled this prophecy, the apostle Peter said: "Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." 1 Peter 2:23.

Speaking of the unjust trial of Jesus before the Hebrew tribunal, Giovanni Rosadi, the Italian advocate, said: "The condemnation had already been decided upon before the trial... . Jesus knew it, and disdained to reply to what was advanced in the first place because it was false; what was advanced in the second place He of His own accord and freely admitted, because in its material basis it was true. When a false and unjust charge was brought against Him, He held His peace, and He answered when no proof, not even a false one, constrained Him to speak. Novel and sublime behavior this, indeed, on the part of a prisoner at the bar!" - *The Trial of Jesus*, page 180.

On the other hand, no creature better symbolizes courage, boldness, and fearlessness than does a lion, and these, too, were characteristic of Jesus. He was the bravest of the brave, and was afraid of neither wicked men nor devils. He unflinchingly rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy, and called them "fools," "hypocrites," and "blind guides." He likened them to "serpents" and "whited sepulchers" and "a generation of vipers." Witness Him cleansing the temple of its unholy traffic, overturning the tables of the greedy money-changers, and driving out all who were making His Father's house a "house of merchandise" and "a den of thieves." In the light of His words and conduct on this and other occasions, how could any person accuse Him of being a coward, a politician, or a policy man?

Genuine meekness is in no wise related to timidity. It is not another name for fear, anxiety, weakness, or cowardice. The truly meek are the truly brave and strong. They alone can be calm and composed in the time of stress and strain. It was because Jesus possessed both meekness

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and courage to such an unusual degree that He is symbolized by both a lamb and a Hon.

One writer has described this combination of humility and holy boldness in these words: "No man can be divinely meek unless within himself he knows that every act harmonizes with God's law. He can thus meet every obstacle.... The weakling becomes very much incensed over little things.... A man of that kind never can be meek, because he is so easily stirred up. He has not the character to be meek. One who knows he is one with God does not permit such trivialities to bother him.... One who is living at perfect peace with himself, who has the mastery of his own emotions and control of his affairs and circumstances, can afford to be meek.... The tongue of slander will not hurt him, because he knows that in the end all falsities must return to nothingness from whence they came; that they have no reality, therefore they cannot hurt him.... After all, God needs no defense." - God's Business, February, 1935.

This was true of Jesus. He was too great to be affected by insults and offenses, and too busy to be turned from His high and noble purpose by things of little consequence. He was the meekest of the meek, the greatest of the great, the strongest of the strong, and the bravest of the brave. Here is a beautiful tribute to the Lamb who was also the Lion: "A man is weak who is only passive, and weak when he is only militant;... he is strong only as he is passively militant and militantly passive, and Christ was both. I love the Christ of the blazing eye and the blessing hand, tender, terrible Prophet pronouncing woes over the city and then weeping over it. I love the Christ that let the storm of His redeeming fury loose upon a nation and then let the returning storm beat upon Himself on a cross to complete the redemption. I drink of the life of the Christ that loved enough to hate the evil that destroys those whom He loves - I drink of it and am strong." - E. Stanley Jones, Christ at the Round Table, page 228.

The purpose of the gospel is to make us like Him who is "altogether lovely" and "the chiefest among ten thousand." The object of His mediatorial ministry in "the sanctuary of strength" is to make us strong. But "strength is made perfect in weakness," declared the apostle Paul, "for when I am weak, then am I strong." The recognition of weakness is the source of humility and therefore the secret of true strength in character development. Therefore the blending of the characteristics of the lamb and the Hon is the secret of spiritual growth

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which reaches “mature manhood and the stature of full-grown men in Christ.” Ephesians 4:13, Weymouth.