

The *CONTRASTS* and *SYMBOLS* in Revelation 4 and 5 present a mosaic of ideas from the Old Testament which graphically portray salvation and judgement through Jesus Christ.

THE CONTRASTS

In Revelation chapters 4 and 5 Jesus Christ is represented by both a Lion and a Lamb. The Lion is triumphant whereas the Lamb looks as if it has been slain. (Revelation 5:5,6.) The combination of these contrasting symbols provides a description of Christ that fits the Old Testament specifications of the kinsman. The role of the kinsman is illustrated in the story of Ruth and Boaz. (Ruth 2:20; 3:9-13.) There were several important responsibilities that rested on a near kinsman. If a relative experienced difficulties such as the loss of property, slavery or death then the kinsman had to respond:

1. He had to buy back property that his relative had sold to meet the demands of creditors. (Leviticus 25:25.)
2. He must redeem, or buy back, the relative who had been sold into slavery. (Leviticus 25:48,49.)
3. He could marry the childless widow of the near relative and become the trustee of the property of the offspring of this union.
4. He had to avenge the blood of a relative slain by an enemy. (Numbers 35:19.)

As the Lamb Jesus Christ is the kinsman - *REDEEMER*. He has purchased back that which we have lost through sin. (1 Corinthians 6:19,20.) He has paid the price to set us free from sin. He has restored our relationship with God. (Ephesians 5:25-27.) As the Lion Jesus Christ is the kinsman - *AVENGER*. As well as being our Redeemer Jesus Christ is our King and Judge. (See Proverbs 20:8 and Isaiah 33:22.) The Hebrew word for the kinsman-redeemer is "goel." It is used to express the activities of God. (See Isaiah 43:1,14; 44:22; 49:7 and 54:5.) Jesus is our "goel."

THE SYMBOLS

We have already made reference to the Hebrew origins of the symbols of Revelation. This Hebrew symbolism is applied to the new nation of Israel, the Christian church.

I The SANCTUARY

As soon as sin entered the human race God responded with the promise of a Saviour. (Genesis 3:15.) In providing garments to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve, God symbolised the way in which ultimately the sins of individuals would be covered. (Genesis 3:21.) The sacrifice of an animal was to teach two important lessons:

1. Sin brings death. (Romans 6:23.)
2. Salvation from sin requires the death of the perfect Saviour. (Hebrews 9:14,22,27,28.)

After the Israelites left Egypt, where they had been captives, God asked them to build a sanctuary where He would dwell and where sacrifices would be offered. (See Exodus 25:8.)

Note these details concerning the *SANCTUARY* on earth and the camp of Israel:

1. The ark in the most holy place was the *THRONE OF GOD*. (Leviticus 16:2.)
2. The twelve tribes of Israel camped in *FOUR* groups of three tribes around the *THRONE* . . . To the east were the tribes of Judah, Issachar and Zebulun under the standard of the lion; to the west were the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and Benjamin under the standard of the ox; to the south were the tribes of Reuben, Simeon and Gad under the standard of the man's face; and, to the north were the tribes of Dan, Asher and Naphtali under the standard of the eagle. The priests, the

Levites, with Moses and Aaron lived to the east and in front of the sanctuary in the wilderness.

3. When the temple was built in Jerusalem there were 24 orders or divisions of priests ministering before and around the *THRONE*. (1 Chronicles 24.) There were also 24 groups of singers to praise God. (1 Chronicles 25.)

In Revelation chapters 4 and 5 John sees the symbolism of the *SANCTUARY* applied to the Christian church which is God's new nation. John sees the true *THRONE*. Those around the throne are praising the *CREATOR* and *REDEEMER*. This is the reality portrayed in the Old Testament symbols.

2 The *SLAIN LAMB*

The daily sacrifice of lambs was associated with the morning and evening sacrifices in the sanctuary. (Exodus 29:38-41.) They were used as sin offerings. (Leviticus 4:32-35.) They were also offered during the Passover, the time of the First-fruits and the Feast of Weeks. (Leviticus 23.) The symbol of the lamb pointed to Jesus Christ. (John 1:29; Isaiah 53:7.)

3 The *OPEN DOOR*

In Old Testament times only one person was allowed to go through the veil or "door" into the most holy place of the *SANCTUARY*. The high priest was allowed to enter the throne-room of God on only one day each year, the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 16.) When Jesus Christ died the veil of the temple was torn open. (Matthew 27:50,51.) The symbolism had met with reality and Jesus Christ had opened the "door" to the most holy presence of the Father and His throne. (Hebrews 10:19-22.)

4 The *THRONE*

The Psalmist, (Psalm 97:1-4) Isaiah, (Isaiah 6:1-3) Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1 and 10) and Daniel (Daniel 7) were given visions of the throne of God. The parallels with what John saw should be considered. Note the parallels between the judgement scene of Daniel 7 and the revelation given to John:

DANIEL 7

Vs. 9 Daniel looked...
 thrones were set in place...
 the Ancient of Days took his seat...
 Vs. 10 His clothing was white, the throne was all ablaze with fire...
 Thousands before Him attending Him...
 the court (judgement) was seated, and the books were opened.
 Vs. 13,14 The Son of Man comes to the throne of the Ancient of Days...
 He is given authority, glory and power. All worship Him - the King!

REVELATION 4

Vs. 1 John looked and saw a door open in heaven...
 Vs. 2, 4 a throne in heaven... and ... 24 thrones...
 Vs. 2, 3 One on the throne.
 Vs. 3 A glorious red appearance with a green rainbow about the throne...

REVELATION 5

Vs. 11 Thousands of angels with the four living creatures and 24 elders around the throne.
 Vs. 1,2 The One on the throne has a scroll (book)... who can open it?
 Vs. 5-7 The Lion of Judah (the son of David) and the Lamb (who has been slain) come and takes the sealed book.
 Vs. 12 He is given honour, glory and praise.
 Vs. 8-14 All worship Him - Creator, Redeemer, Judge and King!

Jesus Christ is worthy to open the books of heaven for He has "triumphed" (Revelation 5:5) and He has "been slain" (Revelation 5:6) to pay for our sin. He is our Saviour, High Priest, Judge and King.