

The Terror and Tenderness of Jesus

Transcript:

Hello, this is Pastor Don Willeman of Christ Redeemer Church. Welcome to a special-edition series of The Kingdom Perspective.

How should we respond to the coronavirus threat?

We should take great comfort in the terror and tenderness of Jesus.

Now, I realize this may seem a strange way of speaking of Jesus, and perhaps a bit counter-intuitive, to say that he is both terrifying and tender. Nonetheless, when John details his appearance in the book of the Revelation, he is described as having “a voice like the roar of many waters” (1:15); and eyes “like a flame of fire” (1:14); and “from his mouth [comes] a sharp two-edged sword, and his face [is] like the sun shining in full strength” (1:16).

Is it any wonder then that when John saw Jesus, he fell at his feet as “a dead man” (1:17)?

Just a few chapters later, Jesus is described as the conquering Lion from the Tribe of Judah. What could be fiercer and more frightening than coming face to face with a lion?

However, when John looks up to see this terrifying lion, he does not see a lion at all. Rather, he sees a tender lamb. And not just any lamb, but a slain lamb—yet alive! Standing—having conquered sin and death!

What does this imagery tell us? It tells us that the King of creation is also the Christ of the cross. That the judge of heaven and earth was judged for you. That in the roar of the Lion we find our rest in the Lamb.

You see, in the gospel, Jesus’s terror does not overpower his tenderness, but rather is poured through it. His power becomes our protection.

Something to think about from The Kingdom Perspective.

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. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?” And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. 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.”

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. And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 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,

and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God,
and they shall reign on the earth.”

~ Revelation 5:1-10 (ESV)