

- Press, 1980).
- 13 See Starhawk, *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982).
 - 14 James W. Fowler *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984); James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981); Sharon Parks, *The Critical Years: The Young Adult Search for a Faith to Live By*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986).
 - 15 Pacwa, *Catholics and the New Age* p. 63.
 - 16 See also Pope St. Leo the Great: 'For every believer regenerated in Christ . . . is reckoned to be of the stock, not of his earthly father, but of Christ, who became Son of Man precisely that men could become sons of God . . .' (*Sermon 6 in Nativitae Domini* 2-3, 5. PL 54, 213-16).
 - 17 Diane Duane, *The Wounded Sky*. (Boston: Gregg Press, 1983, p. 87.)

This is the Lamb of God

Anne Inman

'This is the Lamb of God'. These are the words used at the Eucharist to describe Jesus Christ present in the consecrated bread. Jesus, sacramentally present, is identified with the passover lamb, the sacrifice without blemish, and the dumb sheep of Isaiah 53, representing passivity and acceptance of suffering as in some way redemptive. However, for a fuller picture of what it means for Jesus to be 'Lamb', it is necessary to turn as well to the Book of Revelation. Here we find that, apart from brief references in Chapter 1 to other Christological ideas involving a figure which seems to combine the Ancient of Days, Jesus Christ and an Angel figure, Christ is always referred to as 'Lamb'. The Lamb for the author of *Revelation* is the symbol of power.

The Lamb of *Revelation* is seen in heaven. The action that takes place in heaven is the judgement that takes place upon the world. This is an effective judgement which produces the dramatic events that will take the world through the End time to the End, the last Day of Judgement and the Renewal of the Cosmos, that is through the culminating events of world history in the broadest sense. The action is effected through Christ, represented by the image of the Lamb of God, a slain yet living Lamb.

This image holds together the heavenly court scenes and world history at two consecutive levels. The Lamb represents one who, now enthroned in heaven, has acted decisively in world history, one who has conquered (5.5). It also represents one whose continuing action now in heaven, opening the scroll with its seven seals (6. 1ff), brings to fullness the judgement and the salvation he initiated while on earth. The one circumstance follows the other in that it is because the Lamb has conquered that he is 'worthy' and therefore able to open the scroll and its seven seals (5.5.)

The Lamb has conquered

The Lamb has conquered through being slain and by his blood has 'ransomed men for God' (5. 9). The Lamb here is identified with the Passover lamb. This same identification is made by the Fourth Evangelist, who also sees the Lamb of God (Jn.1.29) in terms of the passover lamb (Jn. 19. 14, 31–36). However direct dependence of one text upon the other is unlikely since the Gospel uses *amnos* (Jn. 1. 29) while *Revelation* uses *arnion* throughout for lamb. *Revelation* contains much *Exodus* typology with regard to both the judgements and the deliverance which follows them. According to G. R. Beasley-Murray, the parallel to the *Exodus* narrative in the Old Testament is not accidental but conscious and deliberate, and in the case of the four trumpet judgements it is spelled out in detail.¹ In this context Christ is therefore represented as the passover-lamb of *Exodus* 12. Christ is the sacrifice without blemish. There are also overtones in the Lamb of *Revelation* of the dumbness, passivity and acceptance of the image of the sheep of *Isaiah* 53. The Lamb is victim. This passivity and acceptance of the suffering which comes as part of being God's people, is seen as in some way redemptive, leading to prosperity and exaltation.

However in spite of this passive acceptance, although the Lamb's worth is celebrated precisely because it has been slain (5.9,12), the Lamb's role is by no means a entirely passive one. The Lamb who has conquered is also the Lion of the tribe of Judah, a messianic, kingly title (*Gen* 49. 9–10), and the Root of David, again a royal title with messianic connotations (cf. *Isa* II 1, 10). In *Exodus* typology, blood, which figures prominently in *Revelation* (e.g. 5. 9; 12. 11; 7. 14), is a powerful symbol, standing for goodness and life, able to ward off the destroyer sent by God. As will be seen, there is also, in the description of the Lamb, a great deal of other power-related symbolism, taken from pseudepigraphal as well as Old Testament literature. The power of the Lamb lies in acceptance. It is the death of the Lamb that demonstrates messianic kingly power. The slain Lamb 'stands' (6. 1). The Lamb that has conquered is the risen

Lamb. The victory that he has won means salvation for his followers. Those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb (7. 14), are already to be found in heaven (7. 9)

The eschatological perspective

In the setting of the heavenly court scenes, the earthly part of Christ's saving work has been completed and he now continues to act in heaven. Through death the Lamb is found worthy to take the scroll, the book of destiny in which the events of endtime are recorded, and open it, thus causing the events to occur. Christ, the Lamb, has conquered within the context of world history, and because of this he is now able to move the world on from the historical to the eschatological or judgement situation. The events of the heavenly court and world events are now seen in parallel. Operating in the eschatological rather than the strictly historical sphere, though dealing with world historical events, the parallelism of *Revelation* is not a chronological parallelism. The question that troubles the author of *Revelation*, as Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza indicates, is not that of the meaning of history but rather that of the meaning and termination of the Christian community's suffering. The question is solved by referring to the future. As God now rules in heaven, so will God rule on earth.³ Everything from Chapter 4 to Chapter 21 is strictly eschatological, so that John presents what E. Lohmeyer describes as an essentially atemporal or *zeitlos* concept of salvation, in which past, present and future are in certain senses interchangeable.⁴

Margaret Barker sees a continuing relevance in the vision of the heavenly throne of judgement: 'The business of judgement is part of the reality of things, the heavenly parallel which lies behind and beyond; and enables us to see the structure of what happens around us'.² The main concern of *Revelation* therefore is not (salvation) history but eschatology, the breaking in of God's kingdom and the destruction of the hostile godless powers. The image of the lamb therefore now holds together the heavenly court scenes and world history in that it represents the power for good in heaven parallel to the powers of evil on earth, and the breaking in on earth of the heavenly power. As the key symbol in *Revelation*, part of the language code that structures the book, the Lamb provides a parallel in heaven with the figures of the beasts on earth.

Parallelism: the Lamb and Antichrist

The idea of the power holding sway in heaven, being paralleled by the evil powers that for the time being hold sway on earth, can be traced back to Daniel's apocalyptic vision of the beasts of Daniel 7 and 8. Before that the Antichrist idea can be traced to Ezekiel's account of Gog and Magog

(Ezekiel 38, 39), and before that probably to pagan Creation myths. In Daniel a horn, representing the earthly powers 'made war with the saints and prevailed over them until the Ancient of Days came' (*Daniel* 7. 21f) Thus in Daniel 8 the image of the horned ram which represents the worldly power of the Kings of Media and Persia, prefigures the Antichrist image. In this type of parallel thinking, the horn represents not just hostile power but also power for good. The horn (*keras*) can be used as a metaphor of salvation. Luke 1. 69 refers to the birth of Jesus as God raising up a horn of salvation (*keras soterias*), alternatively translated as 'mighty saviour'. Psalm 18. 2, refers to the Lord as 'the horn of my salvation'. Similarly the ram can be taken as a symbol of power and strength generally. Thus the Lamb of *Revelation*, with seven—the complete number—of horns, represents one in whom is found the fullness of strength (5. 6). The seven eyes represent the fullness of wisdom and knowledge (5. 6). The language here used, as Beasley-Murray's commentary tells us⁵, is drawn from Zechariah 4. 10, where we read of 'seven . . . eyes of the Lord, which range through the whole earth'. The passage not only ascribes to the Lamb that which belongs to God, but it identifies the seven eyes with the seven spirits of God. In 4.5 the seven spirits are seen before the throne of God. John here would seem to say that the energies of the sevenfold spirit are loosed into the world through the slain and risen Lamb. (Beasley-Murray quotes Caird).

Beasley-Murray's sees in the twin beasts of Ch. 13, echoing the mythic motif of Leviathan (the sea monster) and Behemoth (the land Monster), a thorough-going presentation of the beast as the Antichrist of the Christ of Satan, the Serpent of 12.9.⁶ The beast is repeatedly described in terms similar to those used for the Lamb (5.6). Most significantly the beast has a wound to death but lives (13. 3, 12, 14) in imitation of Christ who died and rose from the dead. The beast that rises from the land 'had two horns like a lamb (*arnion*) and it spoke like a dragon' (13. 11). This is clearly an imitation of the Lamb of God, but whereas the Lamb of God is and speaks the Word of God (19:13, and chs. 2–3), the beast from the land is the 'lamb' of Satan, and it is and speaks the word of Satan. The beast that rises out of the sea is a duplicate of the Serpent and shares its nature. The sea stands for the abyss, the abode of evil.

The remark in v. 7 that the beast was given authority over every tribe, people, tongue, and nation indicates that, historically, the beast from the sea signifies the Roman Empire. The fact that one of the heads (emperors) has a mortal wound yet lives was probably inspired by the legend that Nero, who committed suicide, would return to regain power over Rome. While the beast represents imperial power, it signifies a system of truth and world meaning which is in direct opposition to the truth symbolised

by the Lamb of God. As the imperial officials are sent out from Rome to set up the imperial cult in Asia, the seven Churches to whom John addresses his revelation are faced with a choice between the Lamb and the beast, between God's purposes and the Roman imperial power with its plans and purposes.

In direct contrast to the vision of the beast(s) of Chapter 13 is the vision of the Lamb on Mount Zion of Chapter 14. In verse 6 an angel takes messages from the Lamb to all peoples and all nations calling upon them to worship God. Already when the Lamb in the heavenly court took the scroll, the prostration by the living creatures and the elders (5. 8) and the acclamations of countless numbers of beings (5. 11–14) recall the honours given to the Roman emperor. The offering of these honours to God and the Lamb rather than the emperor reflects the conflict between the rule of God and the rule of Caesar. The two images of Chapters 13 and 14, the beast and the Lamb side by side, represent alternative sources of power in which to trust, and the decision to be taken now that the imperial cult is being set up and judgement is taking place. However the choice is not between two balanced alternatives. The events of endtime, experienced as imperial oppression, have been initiated through the power of the Lamb, the messianic leader who represents God's ultimate control over the course of worldly events.

The Lamb as Messianic Leader

The use of a horned sheep or ram as an apocalyptic and messianic symbol is found in the Book of Enoch. In the Dream Visions (1 *Enoch* 83–90), which 'foretell' in a vision the history of Israel from the Flood to the time of the Maccabees and endtime, a great horned sheep represents a rising Jewish leader, (1 *Enoch* 90. 9) and a white bull with great horns, the Messiah. (1 *Enoch* 90. 37) Dealing with the period of Civil War and foreign invasions of the Maccabean period, 1 *Enoch* shows the faithful Israelites represented by the sheep unable to deal with their situation. Their eyes became 'exceedingly dim-sighted' (90. 7), they were smashed and eaten by ravens (90. 8) until a sheep grew a great horn, opened the eyes of the other sheep and gave them vision (90. 9). The horned ram, portrayed in *Revelation* as a horned Lamb, is therefore a symbol, in the now Christian setting, of great power coming from God, a leader to rally the sheep and establish a new kingdom. The Lamb in the midst of the throne is portrayed as one who will be 'shepherd' and 'guide' (7. 17). In the vision of the Lamb on Mount Zion, the Lamb is portrayed as leader as if of an army (14. 1). Those who are not defiled 'follow the Lamb wherever he goes'. (14. 4)

World History and the Lamb in Apocalyptic Writings

I Enoch, like revelation, deals with eschatology. To arrive at the endtime the Dream Visions run through the entire history of the world from the Deluge to the Maccabean revolt (of the recent past in terms of date of composition) and the establishment of the messianic kingdom. Enoch, who lived before the Flood, when he is taken up into heaven sees the whole of world history in advance, a story of corruption, of Israel oppressed by heathens. However, the vision shows the power of God to be greater than corrupt worldly power. God has foreknowledge of world history, and world history is under God's control. The symbol of this greater power, this exercise of control, is the horned ram. Thus in *Revelation*, although the chronological history of the world is not explicitly spelled out, the horned Lamb in the Christian setting holds together world history and the heavenly sphere, in that the symbol of the lamb represents the idea that world history, even before it occurs, is part of the divine plan and controlled by divine power. The Lamb has control of the book of life, and those who were to be saved had their names written in the book before the foundation of the world (13.8). Thus while the activities of heaven and the world are seen parallel, it is a parallelism where the ultimate control, the ultimate power, despite the apparent victory of earthly corruption, always lies in heaven. The culminating event in world history, therefore, is the triumph of the Lamb.

Schüssler-Fiorenza describes the three steps by which, according to Revelation, the triumph of the Lamb takes effect, so that his reign is established over the whole cosmos. First, with his enthronement Christ has taken over the power in heaven (chap. 5) and the dragon is thrown down to earth (12. 5). This is followed by the Parousia, when Satan is banished from the earth and those who refused to bow to his rule now reign with Christ on the earth (20. 4–6). Finally Satan is destroyed, (20. 9) together with the power of death and Hades. (20. 13) The new creation becomes a reality, since the whole cosmos again belongs to God, and over the new creation the Lamb reigns.⁷ The relationship between the new Jerusalem and Christ is expressed in terms of the Bride and the Lamb (21, 2, 10).

Conclusion

The image of the Lamb therefore represents a parallel image in heaven to the forces of hostile godless power on earth, and so holds together in *Revelation* the heavenly court scenes and world history. In this parallel the image of the Lamb is seen always to represent God's ultimate control of world events. The Lamb is the symbol of true, effective power which is able to save, in contrast to worldly power which is ultimately ineffective.

The decisive event in the history of the world, is the victory of the Lamb, the death and resurrection of Jesus, which moves world history on to endtime, judgement and salvation, the death of Satan and the renewal of the cosmos. Because the victory has already been won, the Lamb is able to take and open the scroll, thus setting these events in motion. God's kingdom already breaks through on earth. The faithful are already seen in heaven. The the Lamb is seen to be in heaven, yet world events show that the hostile powers on earth are already giving way to the rule of the Lamb.

- 1 G. R. Beasley-Murray, *The Book of Revelation*, (Marshall, Morgan Scott, 1974), p.155.
- 2 Margaret Barker, *The Lost Prophet*, (SPCK, 1988), p. 72.
- 3 Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment*, (Fortress Press, Philadelphia) p.46–48.
- 4 E. Lohmeyer, *Di Offenbarung des Johannes* (Tubingen 1926; 1953).
- 5 Beasley-Murray, *ibid*, p. 124.
- 6 Beasley-Murray, *ibid*, p.208ff.
- 7 Schüssler Fiorenza *ibid*, p 56.

Saint Thomas Aquinas and Theological Exegesis of Sacred Scripture

Terence McGuckin

St. Thomas Aquinas is primarily a theologian. He writes of Sacred Scripture not only as a theologian, but because he is a theologian. As a master of theology his essential textbook was the Bible. From earlier theologians St. Thomas received an understanding of theology, which he shared with his contemporaries and which he in turn was to deepen and strengthen: Sacred Scripture provides the *auctoritas* of theology. It gives rise to theology, enables and governs it. M-D Chenu has emphasized and demonstrated St. Thomas' fundamental reliance on the Bible as the foundation of his theological work.¹

St. Thomas says that 'the truth of faith is contained in Sacred Scripture.' He understood that a cursory reading of the text would not reveal this truth very clearly, because it is in Scripture, but 'diffusely, in