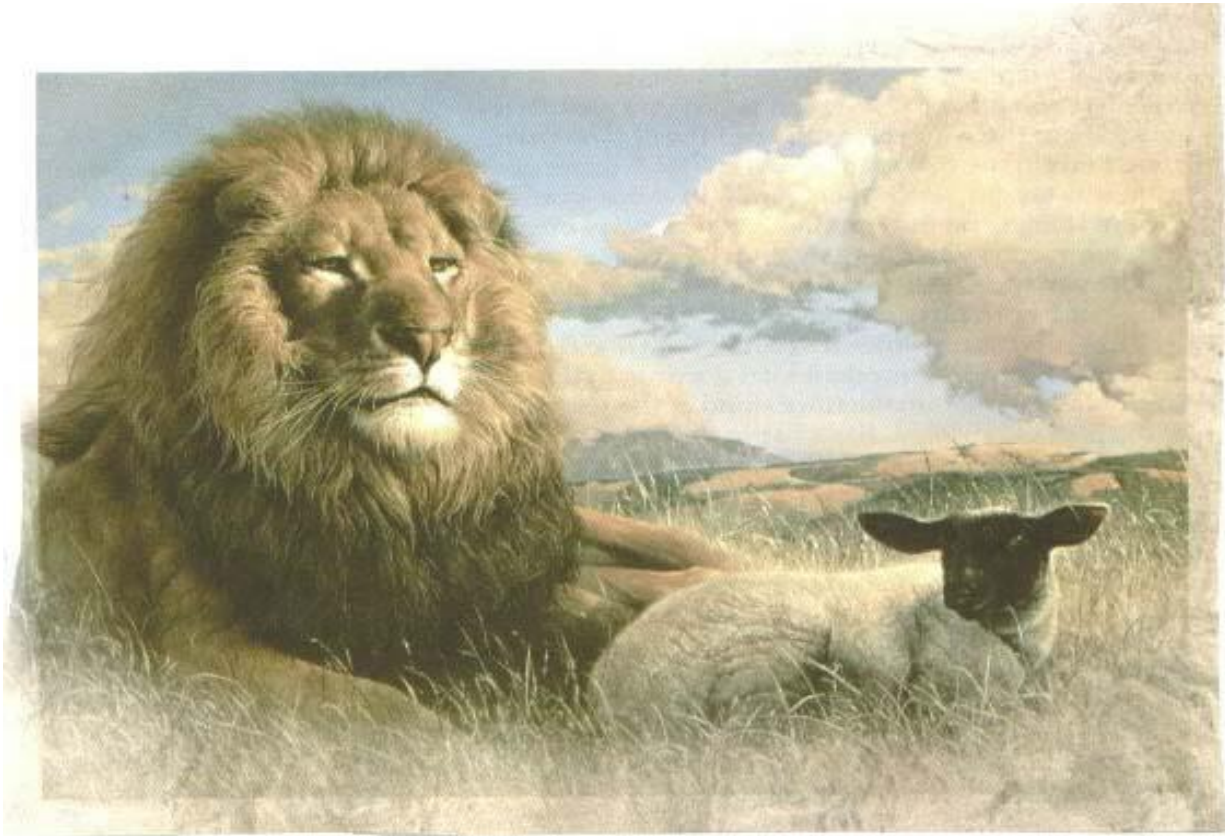


LION SHALL LIE DOWN WITH THE LAMB. REALLY?

Gerrie Malan



It was not so long ago that a precious friend asked us - in view of our rejection of many end-times doctrines - what then about the lion and lamb that shall lie down together?

Our research produced an unexpected twist - it made us realise just how easily our understanding is influenced by wrong concepts in popular songs, for example. I (Gerrie) have personally sung the song Peace in the Valley more times than I can remember - and in church for that matter! So, I just wanted to make sure I had the right Bible verse to start off from in my answer to her.

Then the shock! The Bible does not teach that the lion will lie down with the lamb! Isaiah 11:6 teaches that The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. This is prophetic utterance and we need to understand that the wolf and lamb that shall dwell together referred to an oppressor and weak nation that would live in peace. The rest should be understood in that same sense, for example, the lion that would eat straw, was prophecy that powerful nations would be satisfied with what they had. The images are based on poetic expression of Aramaic idioms, the language in which they were written or developed from.

I can only guess that someone originally created a picture of the two characteristics of Christ: the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, and the Lamb of God. And then sometime, somewhere, interpretation of the picture went haywire - or something of the sort - and it spread and became general “biblical knowledge”! But it was certainly an eye-opener, and since then we have been re-evaluating many popular songs on our cd’s - beautiful in melody, but sadly, wrong in the doctrine they convey. So, the next time you are tempted to sing something like ‘All consuming fire, you are my desire,’ find all the verses in the Bible that characterise God as a consuming fire, and study them closely. You might just want to switch to another song! I can assure you that you will find similar problems in many other spiritual songs. There is a huge difference between the consuming fire (destructive) and the refiner’s fire (purifying).

It is also interesting to note how easily inaccurate words can become ingrained in the mind. Take the words in the song *Peace In The Valley*, for example. It states that the lion shall lay down with the lamb and clearly reflects the image provided by the many paintings such as the one I used as illustration for this post. In my experience this has become the word that is regularly used. The King James Version of the Bible, however, reads that the wolf shall *dwelt* with the lamb. Other versions read as follows:

And the wolf also shall sojourn with the lamb (...) – The Exegeses Ready Research Bible.

And shall stay the wolf with the lamb (...) – Green’s Interlinear Bible.

A wolf will reside with a lamb (...) – NET Bible.

The wolf shall live with the lamb (...) – The Complete Jewish Bible.

I read several more Bible versions, but have not found one yet that used the expression “*the wolf shall lie (lay) down with the lamb.*”

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Picture: courtesy of www.freecodesource.com

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