

Lesson 13

August 30, 2026

Learning From Lions:

God grants victory over Satan's lion-like attacks.

THE LESSON OVERVIEW

God uses lions to showcase His power and deliverance. David credited God with saving him from a lion's paw. In like manner, Paul figuratively spoke of God rescuing him from the 'mouth of the lion' (2 Timothy 4:17). Benaiah, one of David's mighty warriors, overcame lionlike foes and defeated a lion in a snowy pit. In Psalm 22, David likened his oppressors to ravenous lions but trusted God and prayed for deliverance. Ultimately, as the prophet illustrated (Isaiah 11:6-10; 65:24-25), Scripture envisions a future of universal peace when lions will live harmoniously with calves, symbolizing the end of violence and bloodshed.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the Bible, lions symbolize strength, courage, and authority, often representing God's might and protection. In verses like Proverbs 28:1, the righteous are compared to a bold lion. On the flip side, lions can also signify danger, oppression, or judgment. For example, in 1 Peter 5:8, the devil is described as a prowling lion seeking someone to devour. One of the most famous lion references is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Revelation 5:5), a title for Jesus that reveals His kingship and divine power. These diverse uses of lions make them a vivid and versatile symbol reminding readers of both God's strength and the need for vigilance in faith.

THE LESSON OUTLINE

1. DEFEATING LIONS: 1 Samuel 17:33-37; 2 Samuel 23:20-22.

- A. God Delivers From Lions, (1 Samuel 17:33-37)
- B. In a Pit with a Lion, (2 Samuel 23:20-22)

2. DELIVERANCE FROM LIONS: Psalm 22:13-21; 2 Timothy 4:16-18.

- A. Men Like Lions on the Hunt, (Psalm 22:13-21)
- B. The Lion Denied a Meal, (2 Timothy 4:16-18)

3. RESTING WITH LIONS: Isaiah 11:6-10; 65:24-25.

- A. The Picture of Peace, (11:6-10)
- B. Enmity Ended, (65:24-25)

DISCUSSING THE LESSON

1. DEFEATING LIONS: 1 Samuel 17:33-37; 2 Samuel 23:20-22.

A. God Delivers From Lions, 1 Samuel 17:33-37.

In this passage, we witness David's unwavering faith in God's deliverance as he prepared to face Goliath. Recalling his experiences as a shepherd, David testified about how God delivered him "out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear" (v. 37), instilling in him a profound confidence that the same God would deliver him from the Philistine giant, Goliath. David's testimony was so persuasive that even King Saul began to believe that David could do what Israel's army would not do. Saul said, "Go, and the Lord be with thee" (v. 37). This passage demonstrates the power of trusting in God's faithfulness and provision, even in the face of seemingly insurmountable challenges. David's unwavering reliance on God's strength rather than his own abilities serves as a compelling reminder that victory comes not from human might, but through divine intervention.

By remembering God's past faithfulness and trusting in God's strength rather than his own, David could step up when others stepped back. This account is a powerful encouragement for believers today. Just as David trusted in God's past deliverances to face his present trial, we, too, can draw strength from remembering how God has worked in our lives. Challenges may come in physical, emotional, or spiritual forms, but God's power remains unchanging. By placing our trust in Him, we can confront our "lions" and "giants" with courage, knowing God is faithful to deliver. David's story reminds us that when we step out in faith, we can experience God's deliverance repeatedly because God's strength will always prove sufficient to overcome the obstacles that challenge us.

B. In a Pit With a Lion, 2 Samuel 23:20-22.

Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, is depicted as a figure of remarkable bravery and unwavering loyalty. His deeds are recorded with awe, emphasizing his valor and skill in battle. Among his notable exploits, he "slew two lionlike men [ferocious warriors] of Moab" (v. 20), a feat that demonstrated not only his physical strength but also his tactical skills. Furthermore, his encounter with a lion in a snowy pit reveals a rare combination of courage and resourcefulness. The imagery of a man willingly descending into such treacherous conditions to face a ferocious opponent speaks volumes about his invincible spirit. These acts elevated Benaiah beyond the ordinary ranks of soldiers, earning him recognition as one of David's mighty men.

What set Benaiah apart was not merely his remarkable strength, but the depth of character and unwavering faith that likely inspired his actions. His victories were not pursued for personal recognition or glory, but were carried out in service to King David and, by extension, in devotion to the God of Israel. This selfless dedication and sense of higher purpose earned him the trust of his king and eventually elevated him to the esteemed position of commander of David's royal guard. Benaiah's life is a powerful reminder that true greatness often emerges not from a desire for fame, but from a commitment to principles and a willingness to face extraordinary challenges with courage and integrity. His story challenges us to reflect on how courage, when aligned with purpose and guided by faith, can create a legacy that endures long after the moments of triumph have passed.

Courage shines brightest in the midst of challenges. In those overwhelming moments when we feel backed into a corner, we can experience what's possible with God by our side. When life's difficulties roar like a lion, remember that Jesus, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, has never been, and will never be, defeated. Reflect on the times He has carried you through seemingly impossible trials. Let those memories strengthen your faith. When the next challenge comes, share your testimony – tell your friends and your family and even remind yourself of God's faithfulness. The Lamb, who is also the Lion, has already prevailed and redeemed us (see Revelation 5). With Him, you can trust that deliverance is always near.

2. DELIVERANCE FROM LIONS: Psalm 22:13-21; 2 Timothy 4:16-18.

A. Men Like Lions on the Hunt, Psalm 22:13-21.

This passage vividly portrays the anguish and vulnerability of the psalmist David, surrounded by enemies likened to “a ravening and roaring lion” (v. 13). The imagery of a lion with a gaping mouth emphasizes the ferocity and merciless nature of these adversaries, symbolizing overwhelming forces of persecution and hostility. This passage captures the raw intensity of human suffering, in which the psalmist felt utterly exposed, as if his life were being torn apart. Yet, amid this vivid depiction of peril, there remained a desperate reliance on God. The cries for deliverance reflected his profound faith, even in the face of imminent destruction. This contrast of fear and trust shows the psalmist's unwavering belief that God alone could rescue him from the jaws of these metaphorical lions.

In a broader sense, the idea of our opponents as ravenous lions serves to remind us of the spiritual battles we face. For example, Peter said our “adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Psalm 22 reminds us that while life may often feel like a battle with relentless and powerful adversaries, faith offers an anchor in the storm. David's plea for divine intervention is not just a cry for physical rescue, but an acknowledgment of God's sovereignty over all circumstances. This psalm invites us to consider our own struggles, encouraging us to turn to God in moments of despair. Ultimately, this passage transforms the imagery of lions from one of terror to testimony of divine deliverance, revealing that even in the darkest valleys, God's strength and presence remain our refuge and salvation.

B. The Lion Denied a Meal, 1 Timothy 4:16-18.

Here, the Apostle Paul reflects on his experiences of abandonment and divine deliverances. He recalls that during his first defense against unfounded accusations, no one stood by him; rather, everyone deserted him. Yet, Paul does not dwell on resentment; instead, he prays that it may not be held against them. This response reveals the depth of his Christlike character, rooted in forgiveness and grace. Paul's reliance is not on human support but on the unwavering presence of the Lord. He confidently declares that God stood by him, strengthening him so his proclamation of the Gospel might be effective. Even in moments of isolation and trial, Paul's focus remained on the mission entrusted to him, showing his steadfast faith and trust in God's sovereign plan.

Paul's words about being "delivered out of the mouth of the lion" (v. 17) highlight God's incredible power to rescue His people from even the most dangerous situations. While Paul did not shy away from the reality of suffering, he confidently declared God's ultimate deliverance from earthly troubles and into His heavenly kingdom. This passage is a comforting reminder of God's unwavering faithfulness, even when human support falls short. It encourages us to trust in God's constant presence and to face challenges with the assurance of His eternal salvation. Paul's testimony shines as a message of hope, inspiring us to stay faithful to our purpose. It reassures us that God is not only our source of strength in the here and now, but also our eternal deliverer. It also was a lesson for Timothy to trust God in every situation.

Being in the jaw of a lion seems like an impossible situation to escape, yet both David and Paul trusted God to deliver them from such dire circumstances. Their unwavering confidence reminds us that nothing is too difficult for God. Whether in the paw or the jaw of the lion, God's power remains the same. Daniel's story in the lion's den shows us that God – not earthly kings or kings of the jungle – is in control. God can shut the lion's mouth to protect us or open it to lead us out unharmed and transformed. The key is never to lose faith or stop praying, no matter how overwhelming the situation may feel. Trust that God is with you, working in ways you may not see, and He will carry you through, whole and renewed.

3. RESTING WITH LIONS: Isaiah 11:6-10; 65:24-25.

A. The Picture of Peace, Isaiah 11:6-10.

This passage paints a vivid image of harmony, in which natural adversaries coexist in peace. The wolf living with the lamb, the leopard resting with the goat, the young lion and fat calf together (v. 6), and a young child leading them (v. 8) all symbolize a world transformed by divine intervention. This prophetic vision rises above human understanding of nature's order, offering a glimpse of a restored creation under God's perfect reign. It reflects not only peace in nature, but also the reconciliation of humanity with God and one another. The imagery promises the end of fear, hostility, and division, replaced by trust and unity – a foretaste of God's ultimate plan for redemption.

This passage also points to the messianic hope embodied in Jesus Christ, the "root of Jesse" (v. 10), who will usher in this era of peace. His reign will be marked by justice, wisdom, and righteousness, uniting all nations under His banner. The animal kingdom exemplifies the diverse and often conflicting elements of humanity, reconciled through Christ's transformative power. Isaiah's vision challenges us to strive for peace in our relationships and communities, embodying the values of God's kingdom even now. It serves as a reminder that true peace is not merely the absence of conflict but the presence of divine harmony that restores creation to its intended purpose.

B. Enmity Ended, Isaiah 65:24-25.

The promise that "before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (v. 24) reveals a God who is intimately attuned to the needs of His people. This anticipates a

time when the barriers between humanity and the divine are entirely removed, and communion with God becomes seamless and immediate. Such a promise signifies not only the end of spiritual alienation but also the assurance of God's proactive care and responsiveness. It is a vision of a reconciled relationship where trust and harmony replace fear and estrangement.

The image of the wolf and lamb feeding together and the lion eating straw like the ox symbolizes the end of enmity in all creation (v. 25). This prophetic vision extends beyond human relationships to include the natural world, where violence and bloodshed are abolished. It is a foretaste of a new order where peace reigns, and the destructive forces of sin no longer hold sway. This passage calls us to reflect on God's plan of redemption, which seeks to restore not just humanity but all creation to its intended state of harmony. It is a reminder that the ultimate hope lies in the power of God's peace, which surpasses all understanding and heals every division.

A lion often symbolizes power and violence, but the image of lions resting peacefully with lambs or calves represents harmony and tranquility. It's a beautiful picture of a world restored to its original, perfect state – before sin entered and disrupted everything, from humanity to nature. The sin of Adam and Eve brought brokenness to the earth, leaving all creation groaning for restoration, as described in Romans 8:22. Yet, this isn't the end of the story. A day is coming when heartache, sorrow, and tears will be no more. The world will be renewed, and peace will reign. As one song joyfully proclaims, "What a day that will be!" It's a hopeful reminder of brighter days ahead for humanity and creation alike.

CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

We know that as we follow Christ, our adversary, the devil, will try to intimidate us, but we can testify with confidence that God is greater than all the lions that open their mouths to destroy us.

MINISTRY IN ACTION

We need to be aware of those around us who may be going through intense trials and be willing to go into the pit with them to fight the good fight of faith.

God's Will for Animals on Earth

It is clear from reading the Bible that God does not will to have humans live on the earth without the presence of animals. This is revealed in the Bible's account of the Creation, and in the Bible's account of the Flood.

As told in the first chapter of Genesis, all the animals that live in the water, fly in the air, and live on the land were created by God on the fifth and sixth days of creation (Genesis 1:20-25), before humans were created (vv. 26-27).

A major part of God's preparation of the earth for human habitation was that animals were here before humans were here. This makes it certain that it is not God's will for humans to live on the earth without the presence of animals.

When God sent a flood to destroy unrepentant sinners, He commanded Noah to build a large boat in which his family and a remnant of all the birds and animals that breathe air would be saved (Genesis 6:13-22). The animals living in the water would, of course, survive the Flood.

Once again with the Flood, as it had been with the Creation, God made clear His will that humans are to live on the earth accompanied by animals.

As passing time has proven, animals have been, and still are, extremely beneficial to humans. For companionship and protection, many people own animals as pets, and others own animals for the beneficial work they do.

Farmers and ranchers own animals to produce food for humans: eggs, milk, poultry, pork, and beef. Commercial fishermen harvest huge quantities of marine creatures from oceans, lakes, rivers, and commercial farms. Regarding humans eating animals as food, read Genesis 9:1-4 and 1 Timothy 4:1-5.

It is God's will that we treat animal humanely and with gratitude to God for their existence. "A righteous man regards [respects, holds sacred] the life of his animal, But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel" (Proverbs 12:10).

WORKSHEET

Symbolic and Literal Lions

In the Bible, lions are often used as symbols of power.

- In Psalm 57:4-5, who did David refer to as “lions,” and why?
- What did Psalm 22:13 prophesy about the Messiah?
- In 1 Peter 5:8, who is the “lion” that all believers face, and how can we overcome him (v. 9)?

The Scriptures also discuss literal lions.

- According to Hebrews 11:32-34, what did some Christians do, and how?
- In 2 Timothy 4:17, what did the Apostle Paul recall?
- What does Isaiah 35:8-10 say about Heaven?