

The Lion of Judah

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References: **Revelation 5**, Ezekiel 1:10; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 5:5; Revelation 10:3; Judges 14:5-6; 1 Samuel 17:34-37; Proverbs 28:1; Philippians 4:13; Daniel 6:22; 2 Timothy 4:17; Genesis 49:9-10; Hebrews 4:12

Introduction: A Series on Animals

We're there, I think. As I said, it's great to be here, and we've been doing a series on animals. And every Sunday I've been speaking in a different assembly on animals and enjoying working with animals. And so here it could be the same thing. Now, recently I was here, and in other places I spoke on sheep, and we had a great time. Sheep are not changing.

(Technical sidebar: I don't know why it's not changing, brother. Why don't I go and change one thing? I don't know. It seems to be okay here. Here he comes up to give us a hand. It's not changing. I'm going to shut this right down and see if that's the problem. And how long is it not working? Thank you. Genius. I told him before the meeting that I, after God, he's my favorite person here. Technology. Isn't that wonderful?)

But I've been enjoying speaking on the sheep, for instance. I was at Norma's assembly there where she used to go, and I spoke on sheep, and then we spoke on horses. And the last time I was here, if you remember—remember?—there were ants everywhere. But we got rid of them all, and so then I spoke on eagles. Now, when Mother's Day came along, I said, "Lord, give me a message—it's Mother's Day—but a message that will bring in animals." And I thought of mama bear. And the Bible talks about mama bear. And then, of course, I talked about donkeys and so on.

Meeting the Lion of Judah

Now, I was up in Anvil Island last week—Friday, Saturday. We came home last night. And do you know that something happened seven decades ago? I met a lion at Anvil Island. You can see a lion. I mean, there were sheep all over the place when I was young. Now, there's deer all over the place. But in 1955, I met a lion at Anvil Island Bible Camp. And you're going to say, "Ron, you're exaggerating." Look at that brother. No, he's nuts. No, I met the **Lion of Judah**. I met Jesus. And that's what I'm going to talk about today. I'm going to talk about

Jesus. Jesus was referred to as the Lion of Judah. And it's been 70 years since I've known Jesus, and He's been roaring and helping me and encouraging me and building me up. And we're going to look at the lion. What is the significance of lions in the Bible? And we're going to apply it to our own hearts.

Now, if you've got your phone, take it out and text your friends because the next message we're going to talk about is snakes. And the title of my next sermon is Look and Live. So if you've got anybody out there and around here and they don't know what to do at 11 o'clock, get your phones out and just say, "Come to 16th." We're going to talk about snakes. I don't think they'll come, but anyway, we're going to talk about lions.

The Significance of Lions in the Scripture

You know, lions. It's so interesting. Revelation talks about lions. All through the Bible, many, many, many different references about lions. In Isaiah, it talks about lions. And the Bible is full of referring to lions. For instance, in Ezekiel 1:10, it says:

[Ezekiel 1:10 NKJV] - As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle.

So lions is quite, quite a bit. Judges talked about lions. Kings talked about lions. And, you know, you look at all these verses and say, "Well, God, what do lions have to do with my Christian life? What do lions have to do with me growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? I mean, is there really a biblical concept that will help me live better for Christ by learning about lions?" Amen, there is.

Boldness and Strength

Samson killed a lion with his bare hands by God's power. Now, there's the **crux** of the matter. It wasn't that Samson killed a lion, but he did it with his bare hands—that's not the thing—but with God's power. Well, Samson had the power in God. You, each one of you here that has partaken of the Lord's Supper, taken of the bread and the wine, and you're a Christian, you're born again, you have the same power. You have the same power as Samson.

In 1 Samuel, David recalls protecting sheep from lions and bears.

[1 Samuel 17:34-37 NKJV] - ³⁴ But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, ³⁵ I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. ³⁶ Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." ³⁷ Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

See, David protected them. But really it wasn't David. It was God in David. It was Christ in us that can. Now, I don't want to come up before a lion. But if I came up before a lion, I would say in the name of Jesus, "Get out of here!" And I'd run the other way. Well, I run. But God does protect us. And God protected David. He protected Samson. And you go down this list. It talks about lions. It talks about the righteous boldness of lions.

[Proverbs 28:1 NKJV]

The wicked flee when no one pursues,
But the righteous are bold as a lion.

See, lions are noted for their boldness. Now, we have the same boldness. "I can't witness for Jesus. I can't tell anybody because they're going to reject me." I remember one 1st of July. I mean, it was with Harold and a bunch of us went down giving out tracts. And people spat in my face. People took the Bible and tore it up, and they said, "You're going to go to hell." And you know what I said to them? "I'm not going to hell. I'm going to heaven because Jesus saved me."

See, we have that boldness, even though we're sort of shy about it. I mean, I don't want to be rejected. I stand on the corner of SkyTrains and give out Gideon New Testaments: "God loves you. God loves you. God loves you." In Quebec, I gave out 250,000 Gideon New Testaments to schools. Do you have boldness? Do you have boldness? Do you have boldness? But we have that boldness. But we're like wishy-washy vegetables, aren't we? Don't be scared. Don't be scared to be like a lion. That's what the Bible tells us to do. And God will protect them.

So when we talk about lions, it says that we are to be bold. It says here, like 1 Peter 5:8:

[1 Peter 5:8 NKJV] - Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

But God is stronger than Satan. God gives us Jesus. The devil is compared to a roaring lion seeking someone to devour. In Revelation 5:5, Jesus is called the Lion of Judah. In Revelation 10:3, it says:

[Revelation 10:3 NKJV] - and cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roars. When he cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices.

The mighty angel's voice is like a roaring lion. Lion is all through the Bible and you can be a part—if you're a part of the family of God, you can be a lion for Jesus. I even have a lion on my—on my tie. And if you have lions on your tie, I have it on my tie. Look at them. Oh, I like lions, but I like them far away. When I was working with Franklin Graham and Samaritan's Purse in Africa, I saw lots of lions on safaris and so on, but I was always far away.

But you know, the Bible is so—so explicit about lions. There are many prominent lion references with their key themes, such as courage. We can have the courage of a lion. We can have the protection that God gives us if we use the courage that God gives us. It's so important. Well, you know, lions—talked about strength, the strength of a lion. And we have that strength, brothers and sisters, but please, we have that strength. We have that—that beauty of showing people. I was up at Anvil Island and I talked to people from Turkey, I talked to people from Iran, I talked to people from China, I talked to people—but—and they all were lions. You're all children of God that love Jesus. Thank you.

God is preparing His lions all over the world. And He's got lions here in Vancouver. And I encourage you to listen to this message. Take your phone out. Take a few pictures of these so when you go home you can check it out. But, you know, it talks about the fearlessness of a lion. I mean, I wouldn't do that if this was full of children because they would all be crying now. But we have that fearlessness. We can do things.

[Philippians 4:13 NKJV] - I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

The lion has been called, as I said earlier, the king of the beasts. The lion is called the king of the jungle. And wouldn't it be wonderful if we said the Lion of Judah, the Lion of Judah, Jesus, was the king of 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel? Oh, wow. What a title that would be, eh?

And in the Bible, Jesus is called the Lion of Judah. Also, and it says in one verse:

[Revelation 5:5 NKJV] - But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals."

Weep no more. Jesus is on your side. He's on my side. The lion takes care of its cubs. The lion protects its cubs. And when the cubs hear that little lion—"Little lion, little lion, he's here"—and there's a big animal there that just wants to eat the lion, the lion comes. He gets between his child and the enemy. Jesus is the same. How many times I've sensed problems, and I just sighed, sensed the Lion of Judah in front of me. He is so real and so well.

I've only got a few points. We're going to do it quickly because there's cake. You said it. People ask me why Gloria came today. You know why? Because of the cake. Oh, I'm going to get in trouble for that one. No, no, not really. We didn't know. But anyway, powerful. God's strength.

Experiencing the Power of the Lion

When you think of a lion, you think of God's strength. Jesus is that lion. He is powerful and victorious. And we're part of that. I don't know why, but, you know, up at Anvil Island Bible Camp, when I found the Lion of Judah, I was 10 years old, and I was sitting around a fire, a campfire at Anvil Island Bible Camp, 1955. Okay. That means I'm 81, just in case you were trying to make the calculation. I saw some of you on your phone there trying to find out how old the preacher is. But anyway, I was 10 at the time, and I accepted the Lion, but I didn't know half of what He was like. But over 70 years, I found out that He is so true. He is powerful. He's powerful, and He'll be with you. I mean, there's examples.

As I mentioned, Samson and the lion:

[Judges 14:5-6 NKJV] - ⁵ So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah. Now to his surprise, a young lion came roaring against him. ⁶ And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him,

and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though he had nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

Well, that's kind of dramatic. I might get in trouble preaching like that today because that sounds pretty not politically correct, but it's biblically correct. That's what the Bible says. And why could Samson tear the lion apart with his bare hands? Because he had the power of the Lion of Judah in front of him. Samson, a beautiful example. If you haven't read it, read it. I was sort of practicing my sermon yesterday up at Anvil Island on some people, and there's many people there that have never heard about Samson. Maybe you haven't, but check it out in the Bible. Go to Google and put "Samson," and it'll come up, and you can read all about Samson.

The spiritual truth here: God gives supernatural strength to overcome impossible enemies. I've had so many enemies. I have gone to 79 different countries. Can you imagine traveling on planes, 79 different countries? Can you imagine the jungle taxis I've had to travel with because the plane was broken down? Or you're going down a runway—growls—then you have to get off the plane and get on a jungle taxi and travel 200 miles away. But God was always there. He was always there. And I sensed it.

In the New Testament, this example: Jesus, the Lion of Judah. It says Jesus is revealed as the conquering lion who alone is worthy to open the scroll. His power. He has power over sin. I have the power to say to Satan, "afuera." Afuera—get out of here. I can't do it by myself. I don't do it. Sometimes I goof. Sometimes I make a mistake. Sometimes I don't say, "Get out of here, Satan," because sin sometimes—you know what I mean, what it's like. But God gives us that power. And we've got to use that power. God gives it.

God gives us conquest over death. How many times I should have died. I mean, after open-heart surgery, two new hips, a new knee, pneumonia the other month, and I could go on and on. But God is there. He says, "Ron, I've still got a job for you to do. You have to speak at 16th, so you can't give up on me yet. I'm with you." See, God conquers these things, and conquers over hell. See, I'm not going to hell. When those people tell me to go to hell, you know, I tell them—I told you—I'm not going there. Because I'm a good person? No. Because I'm a preacher? No. Because I can give blood to the Red Cross 35 times? 35 times. I got a certificate to show you. No. I'm not going to hell because of what Jesus did for me on the cross. And the day I said to Jesus, "Come into my house, come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Come in today. Come in today. Come into my heart." He came.

Now, I'm speaking to the choir, I know, but I want to get across to you that you have this power as Christians. I'm not going to preach this in the second sermon because there's going to be people there maybe that don't even know what sin is. But Satan—what a spiritual application here is: believers do not fight spiritual battles in their own strength. Through Christ, we have power. That's it. Through Christ, we have power. I can't do nothing by myself. Rien—that's nothing. Nada—that's nothing in my own power. But I can do all things through Christ. I could give you story after story. And He overcomes temptations. We can say no. We don't always do it, but we have the power in us to say no. We have power to overcome fear. We have power to overcome the attacks of Satan.

God is so real. I know that's why we're here. That's why we worshiped Him together. But we've got to put this to practice. We've got to practice the power. The power that enables Samson. Believers through Christ. I know that's dramatic, that picture, but I'm a photographer, so I love pictures. And my English is not perfect. My French is not good. My Spanish is not good. My Portuguese—none of the languages are good. But this power, doesn't that stand to see the power? But he did that in the name of Jesus.

Protection: God Defends His Own

Protection. That's the Old Testament and the New Testament. How about protection? God defends His own. I told you a little story here about the baby lion. God compares Himself to a lion who defends His people. Armies are conquered in the Bible—armies with just a few. Over 50 years, I've been part of an organization called the Gideons. And you know the story of the Gideons: 300 men conquered an army. They didn't conquer nothing. It was God in them that conquered the armies. Peter was kept by God's power in the lion's den. That wasn't Peter. That was Daniel in the lion's den. The lion's den, throwing and protecting the lion. God is always watching us. Run. Don't go there.

Isn't it wonderful that we have the Holy Spirit? Sometimes I don't like the Holy Spirit because he gives me a kick in the pants. Whoops. I don't know if that's politically correct. I'm looking at—no, no, no, she's not. It's not politically correct. But you know what I mean. The Holy Spirit is real. And He warns us. He protects us. And God is watching us. God is looking for us. God is protecting us. Just like a lion does. Just like a lion does.

Old Testament example, of course, is found in Daniel in the lion's den. Daniel was surrounded by lions because of his faithfulness to God. Though danger prowls around us, God shut the mouth of the lions. Oh, I love that story. I heard that when I was in Sunday school, seven years old at Cascades Gospel Chapel, in the furnace room. Mr. Stewart. Ha!

[Daniel 6:22 NKJV] - My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

Spiritual truth: the enemy constantly searches for opportunity to destroy faithful Christians. And that's why we have 16th. That's why we have our brothers and sisters. Do you know, I love the telephone. I can remember when Harold got his telephone, he didn't know what to do with it, right? But what a tool that God can use. You can use it for bad too, be careful. But isn't it wonderful? George, I didn't see in the meeting, we missed you. We honestly missed you. God bless you. And he opens up and a bing! That's going to encourage him. We can work together as a community. If we're in a hospital, we're all sick, we're all sinners, but we're saved by grace, aren't we? We are saved by grace, and we are to be doctors and nurses and caregivers to people out there that need a helping hand.

Vigilance Against the Roaring Lion

How about a New Testament? Satan as a roaring lion. First Peter 5. Peter warns the church, and the devil prowls like a roaring lion seeking everyone he desires. Oh, it is so true. God wants to help us. Christians must remain spiritually alert.

Prayer—we can talk to God in prayer. I didn't have a father—well, I had two fathers and four mothers. We won't go there. Don't you feel sorry for me? No. But I didn't really have a father, but I had an assembly like 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel. I had an assembly of men—the Stewarts, the Kirkpatricks, the McConnells—and they all prayed for me. They prayed for me. And that was a skinny little runt. You'd say, "Well, where's Ronnie?" "Oh, he's up there. Look at there, he's up there. See, he's swinging on that lion." But they took care of me. They loved me. They cared for me. And that's what lions do to lion cubs when they're young. We pray for them. We share scripture with them. We be obedient. Keep believers watching against temptation and deceit.

Deception. We've got to keep our eyes open. And he's rusé—what's that in English? I don't know. But anyway, he's very clever. The devil's clever. Clever. He's no stupid person. And he knows about God. He knows about Jesus. But we have to be very careful. A careless believer becomes an easy prey for the devil. We've got to be careful. We've got to be on the alert. We've got to be vigilant. Thank you. We've got to stand firm against Satan. But we can do it together.

What do we do when a brother isn't here on Sunday morning? Do we phone him up and say, "You weren't there. You should have been here"? No. What do we do when somebody falls in sin? Squash them? No. "Brother, sister, can I help you? Let's go to Starbucks." Well, okay, not Starbucks—Tim Hortons, it's cheaper. "Let's go to Tim Hortons and I'll buy you a coffee." And share. That's what Christianity is about. I know it's not our culture here in North America. In Argentina, that's the culture. I've been invited so many times when I've gone through different problems in Argentina because when you're going 24/7 and you're getting older, it gets harder. But God is everything. Time to be vigilant. Time to be vigilant.

There are so many good things out there and so many bad things. My sermons—I read a lot of sermons. I listen to them. All of these words aren't my words, I have to be honest. I don't have good English like some of these words. And my wife goes over my message before I give it. And it would be ten times worse than it is now if she hadn't gone over it. But we have to be vigilant. We have to be careful. We have to be prudent. The computer is such a beautiful thing—I think I heard Roy say, "Amen." The computer is such a beautiful thing, but a very dangerous thing. Purposeful. Purposeful. See, I can't even speak English right, but anyway, God knows.

Before David fought Goliath, he testified that God helped him defeat both lions and bears while protecting his father's sheep. Can you imagine little David? I think I would have turned and run. But he won over Satan. God uses private battles to prepare His people for public victories. Victory in Jesus—I won't sing it because—still, I think I have one minute. But there's a song, victory... No, I won't. You can try it, but I wish I could. But we have victory in Jesus, I know it. And we might not have victory in Jesus if we don't go to Him when we should be going to Him. That's why we have prayer. That's why we have the Word of God. He speaks to us through the Word of God.

New Testament example is Paul. Paul declared that the Lord stood with him and delivered him out of the mouth of a lion. That's in the New Testament.

[2 Timothy 4:17 NKJV] - But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

In the Old Testament, the lion is over and over. And we're part of the family of the tribe of Judah. Lions. God sustains believers in seasons of danger, in seasons of opposition, in seasons of loneliness. And we're part of that. That brother or sister that would love... I know

a lot of you up there. Hi there! Oh, they're not there. But, you know, those people in Zoom land, they would like to be here, a lot of them. I pray for them. I don't know them all. I don't pray for all of them because I don't know them, but I pray for them because they're lonely. They're out there in Zoom land and would love to be here. What better place to be than in the house of God with the brothers and sisters, fellow lions? Spiritual warfare. The believer is never abandoned in battle. The Lord stands near His people. The Lord is with us, dear brothers and sisters.

Prevailing and Winning with the Lion of Judah

I mean, last point: prevailing. The Old Testament example again is Jacob prophesied over Judah, declaring him as a lion and declaring that the scepter would not depart. I mean, there's so many examples. There's so many examples in the Bible about lions.

[Genesis 49:9-10 NKJV]

⁹ Judah is a lion's whelp;
From the prey, my son, you have gone up.
He bows down, he lies down as a lion;
And as a lion, who shall rouse him?
¹⁰ The scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor a lawgiver from between his feet,
Until Shiloh comes;
And to Him shall be the obedience of the people.

Believe Christ has already prevailed. Believe, believe, believers can live with confidence, with hope, with courage. We can live with those. We don't have to be defeated. We're on the winning side. I remember I was speaking in Jamaica, man, and I remember the Jamaican singer singing... but anyway, it was so good. He says, "I'm a winner man. I'm a winner man." Oh, it was so good. It was so good. Oh, I just love it, because we are winner men and women. It's a song. In difficult times, God is there. The Lion of Judah has always won the victory, and His people share in His victory.

Closing Prayer

Let's just pray.

Father God, we are so excited about the Lion of Judah. We are so excited. The Bible is real. It's true. It's for us today, Heavenly Father. It doesn't matter what our language, culture, background is. The Word of God is powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.

[Hebrews 4:12 NKJV] - For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

I pray, Heavenly Father, that all of us—all of us here, out there in Zoom land too, and us here, Heavenly Father—will get into the Word of God and saturate ourselves with it. Impregnate our minds with the Word of God and realize that we—we know Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. We are part of the—of the lion family, and we thank You, Heavenly Father, that we are part of the Lion of Judah. And ask that You might bless, guide, and direct. Bless those that would love to be here but can't be here because of infirmities, because of problems. Bless them. Help us as lion cubs or lions to go out to them and witness to them. Be with us, guide us and direct us, and use us today in Your service. We ask these things, giving You thanks, in the precious, wonderful name of Jesus, the Lion of Judah. Amen.