

The Lion Will Eat Straw Like the Ox

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Following Christ's return to rule this planet, there will be a "new world order" built upon the law and commandments of Almighty God (Isa. 2:2-4). The positive effects of this change will be experienced progressively over a period of one thousand years, culminating in the second resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6).

Prior to the commencement of this one-thousand-year period, the main antagonist of mankind will be restrained (Rev. 20:1-3). However, at the end of the one thousand years, he will be released for a short while and then die (Rev. 20:7-9). Consequently, "who he was previously" will come to an end forever (Rev. 20:10). Finally, he will be resurrected along with every sinner and given a final opportunity to repent (Ac. 2:38). This is the second resurrection.

In this study, we will examine what will eventually happen to this antagonist according to figurative language that compares some characteristics and actions of a lion to those of Satan. Specifically, we will analyze a verse in the 11th chapter of Isaiah.

And the lion shall eat straw (SHD 8401; stalks of grain as chopped in threshing and used for fodder) like the ox (Isa. 11:7b; cf. Isa. 65:25; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise stated; Ed. note in parenthesis).

For a physical lion to eat straw as a source of food, its teeth would need to be changed as well as its digestive system. Some have argued that God will change the physiology of lions in order to fulfill this verse. However, as we shall see, the words "lions" and "teeth" are used figuratively in

scripture to describe characteristics associated with Satan and the angels who follow him.

Be sober, be vigilant; because **your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion**, seeking whom he may devour (1Pet. 5:8; emphasis added).

As Satan is a spirit being, he is not capable of actually eating a human being. However, he is able to influence them against God and His law, and if they don't resist they can make choices that lead to sin (2Cor. 4:3-4; Jas. 4:7). When this occurs, they are now "as good as dead" because their sin prevents them from inheriting everlasting life.

For the wages of sin is death (everlasting) (Rom. 6:23a; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Because Satan deceives the whole world, he has no problem influencing people who are in positions of religious authority (Rev. 12:9; 2Cor. 11:13-15). These same people are then able to mislead their "followers" into believing it is not necessary to obey God's law and commandments, just as their father the devil teaches (Jn. 8:44; cf. Gen. 3:1-4). These actions are compared to tearing God's people apart by separating them from Him, and leaving them "dead in their sins" (Col. 2:13a).

The conspiracy of her prophets in her midst is like **a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured souls**; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. ²⁶**Her priests have violated My law** and profaned My holy things; they have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and clean; and **they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths** (which include all God's appointed festivals/ Holy Days); **so that I am profaned**

among them (Eze. 22:25-26; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

There is a generation whose teeth are like swords, and whose fangs are like knives to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men (Prov. 30:14; emphasis added).

Satan's ability to use human beings against each other is compared to the destructive power of a lion's teeth.

My soul is among lions; I lie among **the sons of men** who are set on fire, **whose teeth are spears and arrows** (Ps. 57:4a; emphasis added).

And where there are teeth, there are also tongues that can cause pain and destruction.

....and their tongue a sharp sword (Ps. 57:4b).

Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. ⁵Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! ⁶And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell (Gr. *gehenna*; those whose actions have already condemned them to a burning garbage heap). ⁷For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. ⁸But **no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.** ⁹With it we bless our God and Father, and **with it we curse men**, who have been made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing... (Jas. 3:4-10a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Two of Satan's instruments are described by God as the king of Assyria and the king of Babylon who are compared to lions capable of devouring Israel.

Israel is like scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away. First the king of Assyria devoured him; now at last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has broken his bones (Jer. 50:17).

The religious practices associated with these two lions were absorbed by the nation of Israel and continue to negatively affect their peoples to this day (see study: *Placing God's Name on Pagan Practices*).

Anyone who exposes the lies of Satan and his minions, is compared to an individual who "breaks the fangs of the wicked".

I (Job) was eyes to the blind, and I was feet to the lame. ¹⁶I was a father to the poor, and I searched out the case that I did not know. ¹⁷**I broke the fangs of the wicked, and plucked the victim from his teeth** (Job 29:15-17; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The action of "gnashing one's teeth" is not a positive picture. Instead, it can be associated with harming another person. In a biblical sense, this would include causing harm both physically and spiritually.

With ungodly mockers at feasts, **they gnashed at me with their teeth.** ¹⁷Lord, how long will You look on? Rescue me from their destruction, **my precious life from the lions** (Ps. 35:16-17; emphasis added).

The wicked plots against the just, and **gnashes at him with his teeth.** ¹³The Lord laughs at him, for He sees that his day (of judgment) is coming. ¹⁴The wicked have drawn the sword (of their tongue; cf. Ps. 57:4b), and have bent their bow,

to cast down the poor and needy, to slay those who are of upright conduct (Ps. 37:12-14; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

It was no different during the time of Christ's ministry when he exposed the self-serving actions of the Jewish religious leaders that caused more harm than good.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For **you devour widow's houses**, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation (Mt. 23:14; emphasis added).

For Moses said, "Honor your father and your mother", and, "he who curses father or mother, let him be put to death." ¹¹But you say, if a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban" - that is, dedicated to the temple; ¹²and **you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother**, ¹³making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do (Mk. 7:10-13; emphasis added).

Even though human religious authorities may use and abuse their followers, Almighty God ultimately saves His true servants from the damage caused by the teeth and tongues of these false teachers.

Blessed be **the Lord, who has not given us as prey to their teeth**. ⁷Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped. ⁸Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth (Ps. 124:6-8; emphasis added).

But the Lord stood with me (Paul) and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. And **I was delivered out**

of the mouth of the lion. ¹⁸**And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work** and preserve me for his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen! (2Tim. 4:17-18; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

In battles that occur in association with God's future judgment, fallen angels are pictured as having teeth like lions. This figurative language is meant to connect these angels with the damage they have caused to others.

And the shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle; and on their heads were crowns of something like gold, and their faces were like the faces of men. ⁸They had hair like women's hair, and **their teeth were like lion's teeth** (Rev. 9:7-8; emphasis added).

Satan and his fallen angels persecute and falsely accuse God's true servants, and this action is compared to "tearing like a lion".

O Lord my God, in You I put my trust; save me from all those who persecute me; and deliver me, ²**Lest they tear me like a lion, rending me in pieces...** (Ps. 7:1-2a; emphasis added; emphasis added).

Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for **the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night**, has been cast down (Rev. 12:10b; emphasis added).

By understanding that God frequently uses figurative language, it is clear that fallen angels influenced the attitudes of those people responsible for plotting to kill Jesus Christ. At one point they are compared to lions because of the damage they are capable of causing.

They have opened their mouths at Me as a raging and roaring lion. ¹⁴I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. ¹⁵My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death (Ps. 22:13-15; emphasis added).

Ironically, Satan quoted a section of scripture from Psalm 91:11-12 when he was tempting Jesus Christ in Matthew 4:6, but he stopped short of the next verse which describes "Christ trampling Satan underfoot". However, this connection cannot be made unless the reader understands how God uses figurative language.

You (Christ) shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, **the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot** (Ps. 91:13; cf. Lk. 10:19; Rom. 16:20; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

By understanding figurative language, it is clear that God describes Satan as a ruler and a wicked individual who oppresses those who are under his power.

Like a roaring lion and a charging bear **is a wicked ruler over poor people** (Prov. 28:15; emphasis added).

Due to Satan's wickedness God regards him as "unclean", and in this condition he will not be allowed to influence mankind after Christ's return to rule this planet. This is the context of the following verses:

A highway shall be there, and a road, and it shall be called the Highway of Holiness. **The unclean shall not pass over it**, but it shall be for others. Whoever walks the road, although a fool (due to Satan's previous deceptions), shall not go astray. ⁹**No lion shall be there**, nor shall any ravenous

beast go up on it; it shall not be found there. But the redeemed shall walk there (Isa. 35:8-9; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Going back to the beginning of this subject, Isaiah foretold a time when the figurative lion representing Satan would no longer "tear with his teeth". Instead, he would coexist with other creatures and cause them no harm. In essence, the nature of this lion will be completely transformed, or more specifically "reformed", in the case of Satan. This transformation is pictured through an experience that Samson had, which then inspired him to create a riddle about it.

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.** ⁶And 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. ⁷Then he went down and talked with the woman, and she pleased Samson well. ⁸After some time, when he returned to get her, **he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey were in the carcass of the lion.** ⁹**He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating.** When he came to his father and mother, he gave some to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion. ¹⁰So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so. ¹¹And it was so, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him. ¹²Then Samson said to them, "Let me pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing. ¹³But if you cannot explain it to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty

changes of clothing.” And they said to him, “Pose your riddle, that we may hear it.” ¹⁴So he said to them: **“Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet”** ... (Jgs. 14:5-14a; emphasis added).

So the lion was in the process of being transformed into honey when Samson went back later to have a look. At this point, “honey” needs to be examined figuratively to see what it represents in this scenario:

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; **the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous** altogether. ¹⁰More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; **sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb** (Ps. 19:9-10; emphasis added).

How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! (Ps. 119:103; cf. Ps. 119:97-98; Mt. 4:4; emphasis added).

Therefore, following a period of judgment that will occur during the second resurrection, the “lion” that used to tear people apart will be led by God’s true and righteous judgments to see himself as he really is and repent of his sins (2Pet. 3:9). Once this occurs, he will be completely reformed from his evil way of life and no longer resemble who he was previously, just as the lion that Samson killed no longer appeared the same after his death. When this occurs the scriptures describing the “lion eating straw like an ox” will be fulfilled.

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