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Animals

Old Testament Kings compared to Lions

In the scriptures, the lion is often used to represent kings of great countries or nations.

In the Old Testament, there are several kings of great empires that are compared to lions:

1. Jer. 4:7 “The lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way; he is gone forth from his place to make thy land desolate; and thy cities shall be laid waste, without an inhabitant.” This passage of scripture refers to Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon as the lion who is come up from his thicket.

2. Jer. 50:17 “Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.” It is apparent that the lions referred to are the king of Assyria and Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

3. Jer. 50:44 “Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong: but I will make them suddenly run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me?” This is a reference to the king of the Medes and the Persians.

4. Ezek. 19:2 “And say, What is thy mother? A lioness: she lay down among lions, she nourished her whelps among young lions. 3 And she brought up one of her whelps: it became a young lion, and it learned to catch the prey; it devoured men. 4 The nations also heard of him; he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt. 5 Now when she saw that she had waited, and her hope was lost, then she took another of her whelps, and made him a young lion. 6 And he went up and down among the lions, he became a young lion, and learned to catch the prey, and devoured men.” This passage has reference to the kings of Judah during the days of the siege by the king of Babylon.

5. Ezek. 32:2 “Son of man, take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas: and thou camest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with

thy feet, and fouledst their rivers.” It is plain that the young lion refers to Pharaoh king of Egypt in this passage.

6. Dan. 7:4 “The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it.” Again, this has reference to Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon as the first lion.

7. Joel 1:6 “For a nation is come up upon my land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.” This too is a reference to the kingdom of Babylon.

8. 2 Sam. 1:23 “Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.” David in his eulogy of Saul and Jonathan as they had died defending Israel referred to them as being stronger than lions. The lion is pound for pound a very strong animal. As a king and a king's son, David viewed them as having more strength than lions.

9. 2 Tim. 4:17 “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.” The mouth of the lion that Paul was referring to in which he was delivered out of its mouth appears to be the rulers and leaders of Judah.