

## **Bible and the Headlines: The Real Lion King**

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Despite its pre-Christmas release, “Mufasa: The Lion King” is still making headlines. From box office numbers, to reviews, to comparisons with its predecessors, Disney’s prequel has kept the lions of Pride Rock in the news. Recently however, a schoolboy in Zimbabwe showed who is the real king of the lions.

On January 3rd the British tabloid Metro featured, “Young Boy Survives Five Days Alone in Lion-Filled Reserve by Digging Wells.” The boy, Tinotenda Pundu, had wandered away from his village and became lost. In the course of five days he walked for more than 30 miles. To survive, “Tinotenda used sticks to dig into a river bank for water . . . and ate a wild fruit known as tsvanzva.” He was weak and dehydrated when found.

ABC News carried on January 3rd, “Young Boy Survives 5 Days in 'Lion-Infested' Game Park In Zimbabwe: Officials.” The ‘officials’ were from the Zimbabwe Parks and Wildlife Management Authority. The Matusadona National Park where the search for the boy occurred, had at one time, “. . . supported the highest density of lion in Africa, and was an incredible stronghold for elephant and black rhino.” In addition to park rangers, local police and ordinary members of Tinotenda’s village participated in the hunt for him.

Digital radio station LBC News announced, “A True Miracle': Boy, 7, Found After Wandering 'Lion-Infested' Wilderness in Zimbabwean Park for Five Days.” The article notes that from the time the boy’s absence was discovered, members of his village continuously beat ceremonial drums, hoping he would hear them and walk towards the sound. What Tinotenda did hear was a ranger’s car driving past, but the boy was too late when he reached the road. However, the tracks Tinotenda left by the road allowed searchers to locate him a few days later. After his rescue, a member of the Zimbabwean parliament announced, "Above all, we thank God for watching over Tinotenda and leading him back home safely. This is a testament to the power of unity, hope, prayer and never giving up.”

Deliverance from a ‘lion-infested’ environment is also found in the Bible. The youth involved, Daniel, was older than Tinotenda, and he had not wandered from village but had been taken captive to Babylon after the conquest of Jerusalem (Dan 1:3-6). In Babylon, Daniel was indicted for his faith and refusing to worship Babylonian gods (Dan 6:13). His punishment was to be thrown into a den of lions (Dan 6:16). After ordering Daniel’s punishment, the Babylonian king yelled into the lion’s den, "May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!" (Dan 6:16). Daniel spent the night amongst the lions. In the morning the king called out at the mouth of the cave, ""Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God been able to rescue you from the lions?" (Dan 6:20). Daniel replied, “My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me” (Dan 6:22). After Daniel was lifted out of this ‘lion-infested’ environment, the officials who had had Daniel arrested were thrown into the den (Dan 6:23-24). The lions attacked them immediately and the officials perished (Dan 6:24).

Daniel’s deliverance from the lion’s den is quoted in the New Testament as sign of what God can do for those who remain faithful to Him (Heb 11:33). The Bible makes it clear that God is the real king of the lions. And everyone else.