

# Cool facts about LIONS

I'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THOSE LIONS KIRK SAW IN AFRICA.



## LIONS in the Bible

**God made lions.**

Genesis 1:24 tells us that God said,

*“Let the earth bring forth every kind of animal — livestock, small animals, and wildlife” (NLT).*

Lions used to live in the Middle East, so people in the Bible were very familiar with them. Jacob compared his son Judah to a lion (Genesis 49:8,9). Judah became the most prominent tribe in Israel. Samson and David were attacked by lions, but God helped them to win (Judges 14:5,6; 1 Samuel 17:34-36).

As symbols of God's power, lions were used in the decoration of the furnishings in Solomon's temple (1 Kings 7:19). Solomon also had sculptures of lions standing on the steps to his throne (1 Kings 10:18-20).

Lions get mentioned a lot in the Book of Psalms. They are usually compared to strong enemies who try to destroy God's people. The psalms ask God for help when facing these enemies. You can trust God, too, when other people want to harm you or make you afraid. In the New Testament, Satan is compared to a lion because he wants to harm God's people (1 Peter 5:8). Again, you can trust God to help you when Satan tries to tempt you to sin.

The best-known example of God's rescuing someone from lions is that of Daniel. You can read that story in Daniel 6. Imagine how he felt, spending an entire night with lions.

All of the best characteristics of lions remind us of Jesus — His power and majesty and victory over evil. No wonder He is called the “Lion of the tribe of Judah” (Revelation 5:5).

— Scott Harrup

Think of a lion and you might think of the cowardly one in the *Wizard of Oz* or one of those noisy ones that roars and raises a paw on command at the circus. Lions are not cowardly. The ones at the circus are tricked into believing that the trainer is invincible. Sometimes the trick doesn't work, and a trainer gets hurt.

In the wild, lions are almost invincible. Their power comes from their size and from the fact they are the only big cats that live in large groups. Sure, a leopard or tiger is deadly. But if you're out on the African savannah being stalked by a pride (or group) of a dozen or more lions, what are your chances of survival?

Male lions, the ones that get that big mane of hair around their heads, often grow to more than 400 pounds. Females weigh about 300 pounds. In a pride of lions, there is usually just one male. The females do most of the hunting and provide food for their cubs. Cubs begin learning to hunt at 11 months. Those are some deadly toddlers!

Lions are fast. They can run up to 35 miles an hour for a short distance. They can leap more than 30 feet. They have to be fast to bring down the wildebeests and gazelles and zebras and other animals they hunt on the open plains of Africa.

Are lions only in Africa? No. There are a few in Asia, but they are endangered. Today, most wild lions live across the south Sahara region and in eastern and southern Africa.

Maybe you've seen a lion roar at the zoo. Did you know that lions are the loudest cats in the world? That roar can be heard for about five miles. ■



Photos.com