

DELIVERANCE FROM THE LION'S MOUTH

During the month of August, we are studying a new series entitled, "The Lion's Mouth." These lessons will teach us how to win over adversities in CWL (Christian way of life) that challenge the believer's faith.

In our first lesson, taken from 1 Sam.17:34-37, we studied David as a teenager winning over adult type adversities (lion, bear, and Goliath). David learned how to make the Battle the Lord's in every circumstance of life by means of the faith cycle. At a very young age, David learned that the fight of faith was his but the battle to win was the Lord's (1 Tim.6:12).

In today's lesson, we will study a spiritual mature and seasoned believer in the angelic conflict facing his final assignment in phrase II from the Lord.

We will begin by examining Paul's attitude towards facing the martyr's death for Christ by the following four homiletical points taken from 2 Tim.4:6-8).

Premonition of departure: "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering and the time has come for my departure." (2 Tim.4:6; 1 Pet.4:7-8; 2 Pet.1:14)

Prepared for departure: Paul summed up his entire 30 years of ministry in the following 3 sentences: "I have fought the good fight." - "I have finished the race." - "I have kept the faith." (2 Tim.4:7)

Prize associated with the departure: "Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day." (2 Tim.4:8a)

Promise of prize to others departure: "And not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing." (2 Tim.4:8b)

This state of mind allowed Paul, a Roman Christian, to face the reality of a martyr's death by Nero without fear.

"Where, O death is your victory?" (1 Cor.15:55) "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (15:57)

This is the same person who some 30 years earlier as a Jewish Roman unbeliever was persecuting the Church of Jesus Christ and the cause of other believer's suffering the martyr's death (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 22:19-20; 26:9-11).

We will study our lesson text by the following six homiletical points.

- **Deadline and directory** of 7 members of Paul's mission team (2 Tim.4:9-13)
- **Denouncer** of gospel message – Alexander 2 Tim. (4:14-15/ temple of Diana)
- **Desertion** of follow believers (2 Tim.4:16) – they wouldn't testify on his behalf
- **Defended** by Lord (2 Tim.4:17a) – Lord stood at my side and strengthened me.
- **Deliverance** from the lion's mouth (2 Tim.4:17b) – Cosmos diabolicus thinking regarding the final phase II assignment.
- **Destiny** is certain (2 Tim.4:18) – "The Lord will rescue me from every attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen."

"Paul knew that his work was done and his life was nearly at an end (2 Tim.4:6-8)."
(NIV, Introduction to 2 Timothy)

1. Paul was confident that the Lord would always deliver the spiritually advancing believer from the lion's mouth.

Notice that Paul used *rhuomai* in both the aorist (past) and the future tenses.

- “I was delivered (*rhuomai* / a.p.ind) out of (ek+abl.of separation) the **lion's (leon) mouth (stoma)**” (2 Tim.4:17b).
- “The Lord will deliver (*rhuomai* / f.m.ind) me from (apo+abl.of separation) every **evil (poneros)** deed (ergon), and will bring me safely (*sozo* / f.a.ind) to His heavenly kingdom.” (2 Tim.4:18)

The word for evil is *poneros*. This same term is used as a descriptive term for Satan (evil one) (1 John 2:13-14; 3:12; 5:18-19) – “And that we may be delivered from perverse and evil men; for not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.” (2 Thess.3:2-3)

2. Being delivered from the lion's mouth is used figurative by Paul. Paul wasn't delivered from the martyr's death. He was beheaded.

It refers to being delivered from the cosmos diabolicus evil thinking used by Satan to attack spiritual advancing believers engaged in advancing God's plan in the world – “He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.” (2 Thess.3:3; 1Pet.5:8-10; James 4:7; 1 John 4:4; Matt.16:21-23; 2 Cor.10:3-5; Col.3:1-2)

The lion's mouth was taken from a messianic OT passage that sustained Christ on the cross (Ps.22:12-21) – “But Thou, O Lord, be not far off; O Thou my help, hasten to my assistance. Deliver my soul from the sword, my only life from the power of the dogs. Save me from the lion's mouth; and from the horns of the wild oxen Thou dost answer me.” (Ps 22:19-21)

3. As a spiritual advancing believer, Paul will not die before his time and neither will you – “A time to give birth, and a time to die.” (Eccl.3:1; Heb.9:27) [divine appointment]

The spiritually advancing believer will die in the perfect timing of God - “And you will know that your tent is secure, for you will visit your abode and fear no loss.” (Job 5:24; Heb.2:14-15; 5:7)

Paul had a near death experience at Lystra and nearly drowned in Mediterranean Sea and was often in danger of death as an ambassador for Christ (Acts 14:19-20; 2 Cor.12:1-10; 2 Cor.11:23-28; Heb.11:37-40).

Because of God's perfect timing, the Lord delivers either from death or through death (2Tim.4:6-8, 18). Paul's fight wasn't for life so as not to die. Paul has been here before and was ready to live or die for the Lord – “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Phil.1:21; 1:20-26)

4. Lord stood with Paul when others could not or would not be with him in his hour of need.

As always, the Lord strengthened Paul for his final fight – “But the Lord stood by me and He gave me strength, in order that through me the preaching might be finished and that all Gentiles might hear. So I was delivered out of the lion's mouth.” (2 Tim.4:17)

- He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one (2 Thess.3:3).
- Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might (Eph.6:10/ AC).
- I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you (Heb.13:5; Deut.31:6, 8).
- Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me (Ps.23:4).
- The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom (2 Tim.4:18).