

CHRISTIAN HEROES: THEN & NOW

# DAVID LIVINGSTONE



Africa's Trailblazer

JANET & GEOFF BENGE

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YWAM Publishing is the publishing ministry of Youth With A Mission (YWAM), an international missionary organization of Christians from many denominations dedicated to presenting Jesus Christ to this generation. To this end, YWAM has focused its efforts in three main areas: (1) training and equipping believers for their part in fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19), (2) personal evangelism, and (3) mercy ministry (medical and relief work).

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## Still Alive

Something moved in the undergrowth. David Livingstone stopped in his tracks. Suddenly he saw the flick of a tail, a tan-colored tail with a tuft at the end. As he looked closer he could make out the shape of a lion hidden among the bushes. Not a small lion, but one that must have weighed at least four hundred pounds, and now it was no more than ten feet away.

Without taking his eyes off the huge animal for one second, David reached over his shoulder for his rifle. He put the stock of the gun to his shoulder and lined up the sights with the lion's eyes. Smoothly he squeezed the trigger. Boom! The mouth of the rifle exploded in a flash of burning gunpowder. The lead bullet found its mark, slamming into the lion's neck.

But instead of falling over dead, the lion stood roaring in agony. David watched in amazement as it crouched back on its haunches and then leapt forward.

The rifle flew from David Livingstone's hand. Pain raced through David's body as the lion's jaws clamped down hard on his left arm, each of the lion's razor-sharp teeth cutting into his flesh. Before David knew what was happening, the beast had lifted him into the air and was shaking him like a cat shaking a mouse. Then it dropped him and pounced again, tightening its vicelike grip on his arm. David felt the lion's hot breath against his body and its saliva seeping through his torn jacket. The animal rested its paw on David's head, and David could feel the point of each claw poised to rip his skull open. Through the searing pain in his body, David could feel his heart thumping wildly in his chest. He was dimly aware of shouting in the background, but his world had narrowed to just him and the lion, and the lion was winning. Again the lion raised David effortlessly into the air and shook him. This time, David felt his skin ripping and bones breaking.

Boom! Another gunshot rang out, and the lion dropped David Livingstone like a sack of corn. David lay on the ground stunned and in numbing pain for a second and then rolled over. "God help us," he cried when he saw the lion crouching yet again. Would nothing kill it? The lion lunged at David's helper, Mebalwe. The African fell to the

ground as the lion locked its huge mouth around Mebalwe's thigh.

The men from the village, who had been standing stunned and motionless as the attack took place around them, suddenly sprang into action. Five, ten, fifteen spears were hurled at the lion. The lion made a final leap at yet another man, but the combined effect of the gunshots and the spears finally took their toll, and the lion fell over dead. That was the last thing David Livingstone remembered before he slipped into unconsciousness.

When David came around fifteen minutes later, he found himself lying on the veranda of the mission house at Mabotsa. Fellow missionary Roger Edwards was anxiously bending over him, dabbing his wound gingerly with a damp cloth.

Dazed, David tried to sit up. Searing pain shot up his left arm and through his body. He remembered the cracking of bone and the lion's teeth buried deep in his arm. Then all the other details of the attack came flooding back to him. Shocked, he realized he'd survived. But what about Mebalwe? Had he survived? David grasped Roger Edwards's arm with his right hand and asked about his helper.

"Yes, he's alive," Edwards assured him. "He has deep wounds on his leg from the teeth, but I don't think anything is broken."

Relieved, David slumped back down onto his back. At least no one had died trying to save him. And although most people attacked by lions in the wild were killed, somehow he had survived. It was

all such a long way from Scotland, where the wildest animals he had encountered were the sheep that grazed on the hillside around the town of Blantyre where he had grown up. If the people back there could see him now....

Sample



## Different from Everyone Else

Twelve-year-old David Livingstone held his breath as he waited for his father to answer.

"So, you want to go out into the hills?" asked Mr. Livingstone, stroking his beard. "Let me see now. What was your memory verse from Sunday school this morning, David?"

"Matthew chapter four, verse four. 'It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,'" replied David confidently.

"Very good, son," said his father, patting David's light brown hair. Then turning to Grandpa Livingstone, who was propped in a straight-backed, wooden chair in the corner of the dimly lit room, he added, "Of course, that's an easy verse for David.

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## David Livingstone

(1813-1873)

***The lion's jaws gripped David Livingstone's arm. Razor-sharp teeth pierced his flesh as the lion savagely shook David in the air like a rag doll. A gunshot rang out. "God help us," David moaned, as the lion dropped him and turned to charge David's friend Mebalwe.***

**With** the heart of an explorer and the passion of an evangelist, David Livingstone mapped vast, unexplored areas of Africa, sharing the gospel with whomever he encountered. His stamina, perseverance, and dogged determination created the legacy of a trailblazing explorer with an undying hunger to make Christ known wherever his steps led him.

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