

David Livingstone

Only One Life!



David Livingstone is world famous as an explorer, geographer, and champion of slaves.

He traveled 29,000 miles in Africa, much of it on foot, adding a million square miles to the known portion of the world. He discovered five great lakes, many rivers and the magnificent Victoria Falls.

When Florence Nightingale learned of his death, she said, "God has taken away the greatest man of his generation."

Much of the time he was threatened by hostile tribes and slave traders. He was viciously attacked by lions, one leaving him with one arm stiff and painful. He was almost constantly threatened by African fever, often lying near death.

He was without civilized company, or any communication for months on end. For most of the time, he was separated from his wife and family. Much of the time they were in England, never knowing if he was alive or dead. Early a little son died in Africa, and much later his beloved wife, as a result of the fever.

He went days on end without food, sometimes without water too. Once, seeing wife and children near starvation forced him, unwillingly, to send them back to England.

"The Great White Doctor," after years of silence, was finally located, thin and frail, by Henry Stanley. It was not Livingstone the explorer or Livingstone the geographer, or even Livingstone the champion of slaves, that he found. It was Livingstone the Christian missionary. It was Livingstone the evangelist, the saint, and "prayer."

"I am a missionary, heart and soul, he once wrote. "God had an only Son, and He was a missionary and a physician. In this service I hope to live; in it I wish to die."

His favorite scripture was the great commission found in Matt. 28:18-20, "Go and teach all nations." He said, "Go! . . . as a trailblazer, a pathfinder, a pioneer! Evangelize! . . . Do the work of a missionary! And lo, I am with you! . . . Hence you will never be alone and you will have nothing to fear!"

Around village fires he would listen to their tales. Then he would tell of Jesus coming from heaven to die on the cross for them. The first hymn he translated into a native language was, "There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood."

He wrote of longing that natives would give their hearts to Christ. One chief asked him why his grandfathers had allowed theirs to pass into deepest darkness without hearing of Jesus the Savior. At the end, his natives found him on his knees where he'd died praying.

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