

Mt.10.16-23 - Clear & Present Danger
Matthew Series: 'THE KING IS COMING' #147
October 31, 2021

I. The ANALOGY v.16a
II. THE ATTITUDE v.16b

In much ancient lore, **serpents** symbolize wisdom.

Servants of the Lord are to be cunning in dealing with the unbelieving world.

It is not wise or spiritual to needlessly incite anger or cause trouble.

Doves represent being pure, or **innocent**.

Being true to God's Word and should never include, being abrasive, inconsiderate, or belligerent. Wisdom and innocence, cunning and gentleness, go hand and glove with discretion.

Innocence involves more than simply avoiding negative attitudes and approaches.

It also involves the positive attribute of purity.

Godly wisdom is always the ally of **truth** and righteousness.

Integrity and honesty are practical manifestations of truthfulness.

We are to be like our Lord Himself, our great *"high priest, holy, innocent, unstained"* (He.7.26).

We are to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us (Lk.6.27).

In following our Lord's example, *"when reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat"* (I Co.4.12-13).

III. THE PERSECUTION vv. 17-18

Jesus identifies the "wolves" and the areas in which they persecute believers in:

- ❖ religion,
- ❖ government,
- ❖ family, &
- ❖ society in general.

Being gentle is one thing; to minimize his sin and his lostness apart from Christ is another.

To love our enemies is one thing; to deny they are enemies is quite another.

Jesus' purpose in warning about persecution was not to frighten the apostles.

Their very mission was to convert the unsaved and win them to Christ's kingdom.

Satan will enlist the support of every unbeliever possible in his fight against God.

Jesus' purpose in this text was to caution the apostles, and all of His people not to be surprised.

1. PERSECUTION BY RELIGION v.17b

Every Jewish village and town, and Jewish settlement had a synagogue - a gathering place.

Virtually all persecution of Christians was by Jews.

Many other religious groups, some bearing the name of Christ, will have oppressed, imprisoned, tortured, exiled, and killed countless millions of true believers.

Paul was opposed in Ephesus - the spread of the Gospel cut income for silversmiths (Ac.19.24-29).

Religious persecution of believers has frequently been from w/i Christendom itself.

The final great persecution of God's people will be by the worldwide religious system (Re. 17.5-6).

All false religious systems had their beginnings at Babel.

Man's religions have always opposed and sought to destroy God's truth.

One day they will culminate in an incredibly powerful ecumenical world religion that will relentlessly oppose the Gospel of Christ and persecute His people.

2. PESECUTION BY GOVERNMENT v.18

It is not because of the sheep themselves but because of their Shepherd.

The world attacks us only when it sees Christ in us.

Because the Church is Christ's Body, it is faithful believers in the Church who, like Paul, fill up "*Christ's afflictions*" (Co.1.24).

Saul had not seen Jesus during His earthly ministry, and yet Saul was persecuting Jesus.

Although government is established by God to preserve social order, it has also become an instrument of Satan.

Government is ordained by God but manipulated by Satan.

CONCLUSION:

When its citizens turn away from the Lord and His standards, even the freest and most democratic of governments, will eventually inhibit the free

- ❖ expression and
- ❖ practice of the Christian faith in hostility to Christ and His Word.