

KINGDOM COME

– 13 –

Persecuted & Called

All Bible verses are from the ESV unless otherwise indicated

He is preparing his disciples for what a global mission will entail.

Matthew 10:16 “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.”

We’ve seen so far:

1. False prophets who are wolves in sheep’s clothing.
2. People who are sheep without shepherd.
3. Lost sheep of Israel.

- Sheep amongst wolves is about the danger they will be facing.
- Serpents – wise, intelligent, patient. Discernment.
- Doves – pure, peace. Integrity.

Matthew 10:17-18 17 Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, 18 and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles.

- “Beware of men” - not everyone has your best interest at heart.
- Persecution from government and religious groups (including “Christian” groups).
- These are the places where the wolves attack from.
- “Bear witness” – don’t back down.
- Not a victim.

Matthew 10:19-20 19 When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. 20 For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

- The Holy Spirit will speak through you!
- Do not be anxious.
- Have an answer for the hope you have in Christ.
- Acts 4 – Peter & John.
- Acts 7 – Stephen.

- Acts 26 – Paul before Agrippa.
- Polycarp 86 y/o, 155AD, bishop of Smyrna. Renounce Christ and swear by Caesar.
- “Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who saved me?” Calm, prayed with peace, steady.
- Perpetua 22 y/o, 203 AD, new mother. Pagan father pleaded to renounce Christ. Mauled by beasts in the arena. Calm, didn’t scream, comforted others in prison.
- “I cannot be called anything other than what I am — a Christian.”

Matthew 10:21-22 21 Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, 22 and you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

- Keep professing your faith.
- This is why the early church operated the way it did. They had no one else in a lot of ways.
- At baptisms, family would curse, revile and stone you, disinherit you.

- “He who endures to the end” –Feel the pain and keep pressing into Christ.
- Suffer and trust in the Lord.

Matthew 10:23 When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next, for truly, I say to you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

- Doesn't tell them to stay and be martyred

This verse has four major interpretations among scholars:

1. Refers to post-resurrection gospel expansion
2. Refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70
3. Refers to the final Second Coming of Jesus
4. Refers to multiple prophetic layers

What virtually all agree on:

- This makes their preaching urgent.

Matthew 10:24-25 24 “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

- “If they treat me like this, they will do it to you.”

1. The Kingdom advances through conflict.
2. Discipleship includes danger.
3. Faithfulness includes suffering.
4. The Spirit empowers the persecuted.