

Innocent as Doves and Shrewd as Serpents

1. Paul Reveals the Hypocrisy of the High Priest (1-5).

2. Paul Divides the Sanhedrin (6-10).

3. The Lord Stands by Paul and Encourages Him (11).

CONCLUSION: Jesus told them this would happen. He promised that they would be dragged before courts to bear witness on His behalf. He also commanded them to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. That is what we see in this passage with Paul. Here is a servant of the King bearing witness to Christ with a clear conscience and shrewd insight. He divides his enemies while revealing their atrocious hypocrisy so that he is able to continue proclaiming Jesus as the King who has come to rescue us from the same sort of injustice. Let us trust Christ so that we might likewise proclaim Him wherever He sends us!

Matthew 10:16-22

“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so *be wise as serpents and innocent as doves*. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. 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. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. Brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death, and you will be hated by all for my name’s sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Joshua 1:6-9

Be strong and courageous, for you shall cause this people to inherit the land that I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous, being careful to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for *the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.*”

Genesis 17:1-2

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am God Almighty; *walk before me, and be blameless*, that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly.”

Taking Gathered Worship Home

God has called us to live before Him blamelessly. That call to walk with God according to His commands continues today. Yes, it has been fulfilled in Christ's perfect obedience. Those who trust Christ's sacrifice for us will now endeavor to walk faithfully as part of our testimony for Christ. Our submission to our King is what frees us to be wise in our dealing with those who hate us and our Savior.

Please use the devotional material below each day this week to praise Christ. Ask Jesus to teach us His ways that we may walk in them to accomplish His purposes.

Sunday Morning

READ **Acts 23:1-11; Matthew 10:16-22; Philippians 3:5-6; Genesis 17:1-14; Joshua 1:6-9.** DISCUSS How did Christ's prophecy for His disciples come true? What does that have to do with us? PRAY "Lord Christ, teach us to submit to You and trust You with all of our lives. Holy Spirit, embolden us to speak Your truth wisely."

Sunday Evening

Come join the *Young Adults' Fellowship* tonight at 6pm. Pray for them!

Monday

READ **Acts 23:1-11; Matthew 10:16-22; Mark 13:9-13.** DISCUSS How could Jesus be so cruel as to send us before wolves? How has He prepared us? Why is He trustworthy? MEDITATE on **Matthew 10:16.** PRAY, "Lord Jesus, thank You for Your faithfulness. Thank You for the certainty of Your return. Spirit; help us to rest in Your faithfulness as You make us faithful too."

Tuesday

READ **Acts 23:1-11; Philippians 3:5-6.** DISCUSS What does it mean to be blameless with regard to the law? How can we be blameless? How is that different from perfect? How can we be perfect? MEDITATE on **Matthew 10:16.** PRAY, "Lord, thank You for Your faithful and perfect obedience. Teach us to walk in the Holy Spirit. "

Wednesday

READ **Acts 23:1-11; Genesis 17:1-14**. DISCUSS, How was Abraham to express faith in His covenant-keeping God? How are we? How is it the same/different? MEDITATE on **Matthew 10:16**. PRAY, “Lord, thank You for keeping Your covenant with us. Call us back to covenant faithfulness. Enable us to walk in truth.”

Thursday

READ **Acts 23:1-11; Joshua 1:6-9. Matthew 28:20b**; DISCUSS, Why did Joshua need courage? To do what? Why do we? How can we be courageous? MEDITATE on **Matthew 10:16**. PRAY, Lord You alone are Wise. Teach us to trust Your wisdom and rejoice in what You have planned for us.”

Friday

READ **Acts 23:1-11; Matthew 10:16-22; Philippians 3:5-6; Genesis 17:1-14; Joshua 1:6-9**. DISCUSS, How has God been teaching you from these passages this week? REJOICE if Christ has given you the honor to be identified among His people! MEDITATE on **Matthew 10:16**. PRAY for renewal and revival across our land.

Saturday

PREPARE today for the worship service tomorrow. *There will be both the in-person and live-stream services available.* READ **Acts 23:1-35**. Invite others to join you for either *the in-person or live-stream service* tomorrow. Ask Jesus to make us bold in our testimony to Him.

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.*”