

Luke 10:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

Analysis

Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. This stark imagery employs the Greek *arnas en mesō lykōn* (ἀρνας ἐν μέσῳ λύκων, "lambs in the midst of wolves"). The term *arnas* (ἀρνας) specifically means young lambs—defenseless, vulnerable prey. Wolves (*lykoi*, λύκοι) were the shepherd's chief enemy in Palestine, known for savage attacks on flocks (John 10:12).

This metaphor reveals the **fundamental vulnerability of Christian witness**. Jesus doesn't promise safety or success, but rather guarantees opposition. The lamb-wolf contrast appears elsewhere with variations: Matthew 10:16 adds "be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." The imagery evokes Isaiah 53:7's description of Messiah as a lamb led to slaughter—disciples share their Master's path of suffering servanthood. Paul later warned Ephesian elders of "grievous wolves" entering the flock (Acts 20:29). The church advances not through power and coercion but through sacrificial witness.

Historical Context

Palestine's shepherding economy made this metaphor immediately comprehensible. Wolves were constant threats to flocks, and lambs were completely defenseless without the shepherd's protection. Jesus' disciples would face hostile Pharisees, suspicious Romans, and violent mobs. Early Christian history validated this prediction: Stephen was stoned (Acts 7), James killed by Herod (Acts 12:2), and tradition records that most apostles died as martyrs.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the 'lambs among wolves' metaphor challenge prosperity gospel teachings that promise believers safety and success?
2. What does Jesus' sending of vulnerable lambs into danger reveal about God's missionary strategy and the nature of kingdom advancement?
3. How should Christians balance Jesus' command to be 'harmless as doves' with the reality of being sent among 'wolves'?

Interlinear Text

ὑπάγετε· ιδού, ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω ὑμᾶς ὡς ἄρνας ἐν
Go your ways behold I forth you as lambs among
G5217 G2400 G1473 G649 G5209 G5613 G704 G1722

μέσω λύκων

G3319 wolves
G3074

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 10:16 (Parallel theme): Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Acts 20:29 (Parallel theme): For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

John 16:2 (Parallel theme): They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

Matthew 7:15 (Parallel theme): Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Matthew 10:22 (Parallel theme): And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

John 15:20 (Parallel theme): Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also.

Zephaniah 3:3 (Parallel theme): Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are evening wolves; they gnaw not the bones till the morrow.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org