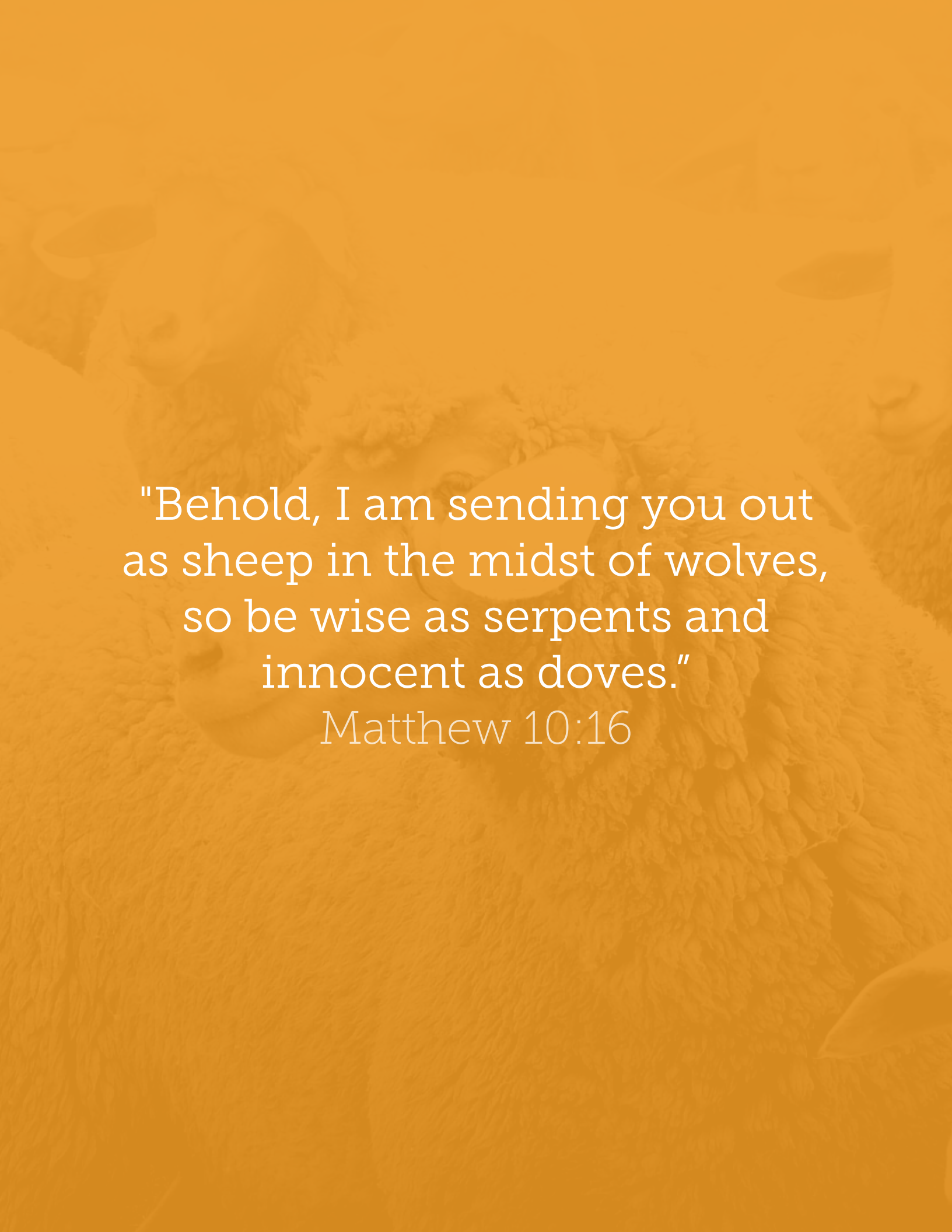




OUR ADVERSARY

Introduction



"Behold, I am sending you out
as sheep in the midst of wolves,
so be wise as serpents and
innocent as doves."

Matthew 10:16

Soli Deo Gloria



Our Enemy Is Real

Who is he?

Satan. Lucifer. The devil. By whatever name we refer to him, we can be sure of this: he exalted himself against God and was cast out of heaven. Scripture attests – throughout its books, chapters and verses – that he is obsessed with corrupting God’s creation, specifically you and I.

Genesis 3:4-5 - The serpent tempted Eve with his very own rebellion – “you will be like God.”

Luke 10:18-20 - The pre-incarnate, eternal Son of God saw Satan fall from heaven. He also makes it clear that the authority He gives to us provides us with jurisdiction over our enemy.

Revelation 12:7-9 - “And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Genesis 3:4-5



What is his purpose?

Ultimately, Satan's purpose is to steal glory from God by exalting himself before the creation. We've seen this in our study of the temptation of Adam and Eve, and the temptation of Christ Himself – and we've also seen this in our own lives, as we struggle against our own pride.

John 10:10a - "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy."

1 Peter 5:8b - "...the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."

Matthew 4:1-11 - "Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.'"

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

Matthew 4:1-3



How does he operate?

The corruption of Satan has truly corrupted all people, places and things. He has infected God's creation with sin and our flesh has become an all-too-willing participant in his many schemes.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 - "...Satan disguises himself as an angel of light."

John 8:42-47 - "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies"

John 10:1-5 - "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber."

And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15





The Enemy and the State

Little gods

Narcissism may have only been formally defined by psychology in the late 19th century, but its roots go all the way back to the beginning of our struggle.

Exodus 1:8-14 - Pharaoh stood in defiance of God's command to set the people of Israel free.

Daniel 3:1-5 - Nebuchadnezzar commanded the worship of his people.

Whether it's the Caesars of the Roman Empire or the vicious rulers of more modern times, we see the same exact thing, over and over again. They all have believed the serpents lie that they "will be like God."

And the herald proclaimed aloud, "You are commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up.

Daniel 3:4-5



Power and control

Of all the leaders in the history of man, Jesus Christ was the only one who has truly been worthy of exaltation, and yet He humbled Himself. The leader who seeks glory and honor for themselves stands in stark contrast to our Lord.

1. They make the people dependent upon them.
2. They use charisma to turn public opinion in their favor, and when that doesn't work, they use brute force.
3. They demand undying loyalty from their advisors.



Persecution of those they oppose

Loyalty to God and His purpose in this world has always been a threat to those who are in power – party affiliation doesn't really matter. If you challenge the authorities in the name of Christ, you will always meet with resistance, sometimes more violent than not.

Daniel 3:13-15 - "But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"

Acts 16:16-24 - "The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods."

The practice of oppressing people of faith has continued through the ages and still occurs all over the world today.

Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, bagpipe, and every kind of music, to fall down and worship the image that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?"

Daniel 3:15



The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of a lion's head, showing its thick, golden-brown mane and facial features. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent, uniform golden-yellow overlay. Centered on this background is the text "The Enemy and the Church" in a white, serif font.

The Enemy and the Church

Who sits on the throne in my heart?

From that very first bite of the forbidden fruit, temptation has never wavered. It may take on many different forms, but at every turn and with every choice we face the same demons, and they're all saying the same thing – “You will be like God.”

Job 11:13-15 - “Surrender your heart to God...”

James 4:5-7 - “Resist the devil, and he will flee...”

1 Peter 5:6-10 - “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you...”

Throughout Scripture we see, over and over, the call to be humble and resist the temptation of the enemy. The instruction is given so that we will avoid the trap of “self-exaltation” that has been laid for us.

Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

James 4:5-7



Lust, fear and deceit

Our enemy has a very small bag of tricks, but they've worked well for his purposes for a very long time. Lust, fear and deceit aren't the only tools he uses against us, but they were all present there in the Garden the day of the first sin, and they remain ever-present today.

Proverbs 7:6-27 - "With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth talk she compels him..."

Romans 8:14-15 - "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear..."

Jeremiah 17:9 - "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?"

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Romans 8:14-15



The desire for something better

Like Lazarus, dead in the tomb, we all were bound by Satan's scheme, leaving us helpless on our own and in desperate need of rescue. If you have heard your Savior call your name, to "come out", be certain of His power to fully deliver you from the death that has held you.

Psalm 35:10 - "O Lord, who is like you, delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him..."

Romans 7:21-24 - "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

2 Corinthians 12:9-10 - "Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

Romans 7:21-24





The Promise of Our Lord

An abundant life

In contrast to the purpose of our enemy – to steal, kill and bring destruction to our lives – our Lord promises something very different to those who belong to Him.

John 10:10 - "...I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

But what exactly is the meaning of "abundant?" Didn't Jesus also speak very clearly about the suffering of the saints?

Matthew 16:24-25 - "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me..."

Matthew 10:16-28 – "...and you will be hated by all for my name's sake."

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

John 10:10



An ultimate victory

Satan attempts to persuade the saint by turning his or her attention toward the abundance of pain in this life, then questioning the veracity of God's promise. But God didn't do all He did to rescue us, only to take us half-way to freedom then leave us stranded behind enemy lines. He is our Deliverer!

Romans 8:1-10 - "...the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death."

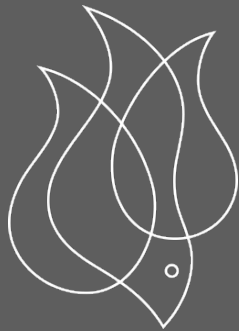
Romans 8:28-30 - "...all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

Matthew 6:19-21 - Let us not fix our gaze upon the things of this world and thus make ourselves vulnerable to the cunning of our enemy, but rather, let us lay up our treasure in heaven as Christ exhorted us to do, that we might find our joy in Him.

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Romans 8:28-30





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