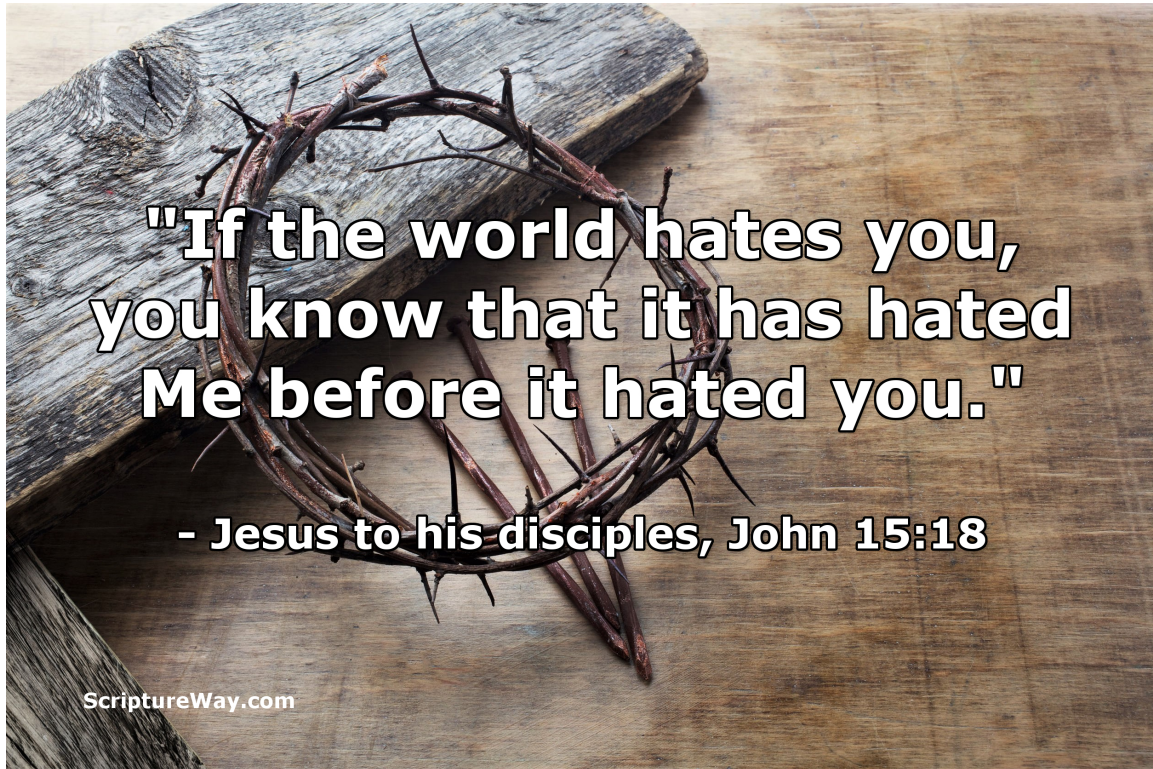


“The World Hates Jesus and His Disciples”

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Jesus-Crown-Thorns_John 15:18_123RF Photo - Used Under License

"The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it, that its deeds are evil." (John 7:7)

"If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you." (John 15:18-19)

This lesson is the third in the series on "Christians and the World" ([Ref. 1](#), [Ref. 2](#)). This lesson explains why the world hates Jesus and his disciples. This lesson also explains the scriptural basis for joy when Jesus' disciples (that is, we who believe in him) encounter the world's hatred.

Consider. Have you experienced the world's hatred because you are Christ's disciple? Do you see the world's opposition to yourself or to Christians in general as a cause for joy?

Definitions. Let's revisit the definition of "the world" from the first lesson in this series, "Biblical Definition of the World" (Ref. 1). The Greek word for "the world" in the New Testament is *kosmos*. In the New Testament, and particularly in the Gospel of John, *kosmos* is used in five ways:

- The world which God created - John 1:10
- All the people of the world - John 3:16
- People who do not know Christ - John 1:10, John 14:16-17
- People who are hostile to Christ and to Christ's followers - John 7:7, John 15:18-19, John 17:14
- The affairs of the world which seduce us from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ - 1 John 2:15-16

The main scriptures for today's lesson, John 7:7 and John 15:18-19, refer to the fourth definition above for "the world." In these verses in the Gospel of John, "the world" refers to "people who are hostile to Christ and to Christ's followers." Pulpit Commentary provides a more formal sense of "the world" in John's gospel, "unregenerate humanity, humanity without grace, apart from God" (Ref. 3).

Next, let's look at the definition of the Greek word for *hate*. The Greek word for *hate* used in John 7:7 and John 15:18-19 is *miseó* (pronounced mis-eh'-o) (Ref. 4). *Miseó* means "to detest (on a comparative basis); hence, denounce; hence, to love someone or something less than someone (something) else, i.e. to renounce one choice in favor of another" (HELPS Word-studies - Ref. 4). Note that according to this definition, hate involves making a choice. We see the same Greek word used for *hate* throughout the New Testament, for example, Matthew 5:43-44, Mark 13:13, Luke 16:13, John 3:19-20, Romans 7:15, 1 John 2:11, and Revelation 2:6.

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Yes, the world hates Jesus. When Jesus spoke to his brothers he said, "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify [*bear witness, give evidence*] of it, that its deeds [*works*] are evil" (John 7:3-5, John 7:7, Ref. 5, Ref. 6, brackets added). Examples of evil deeds that Jesus pointed out to his adversaries include unbelief (John 8:23-24) and hypocrisy (Matthew 23:13-15, 23). Jesus also told his adversaries that their father was the devil (John 8:44). That is why his opposers hated Jesus. American theologian Albert Barnes wrote, "This was the main cause of the opposition which was made to him. He proclaimed that men were depraved, and the result was that they hated him" (Ref. 7, Ref. 8).

When Jesus spoke to his brothers in John 7:5 they did not believe in him. They were of the world. The world does not hate its own. However, there is good news. Redemption is possible through Christ (John 3:16). James, one of Jesus' brothers, later became a believer in Jesus and a pillar of the early church (Galatians 2:9, Acts 15:13). (Jesus' brothers actually were his half-brothers since Mary was their mother - refer to Matthew 13:55.)

Yes, the world hates Jesus' disciples. During the evening before his death, Jesus spoke many comforting words to his disciples (John chapters 14, 15, and 16). Jesus was preparing them for his departure and for the hatred and persecution they would face. Jesus said, "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you" (John 15:18-19).

In John 15:19, Jesus gave two reasons why the world hates his disciples:

- *The world hates Jesus' disciples because they (and we who believe in and follow Christ) are not of the world.* Jesus' disciples had listened to and learned from Jesus. Their lives had been changed by Jesus. They were no longer deriving their life, maxims, and pleasures from the world (Ref. 9). Their chief source of information was from God's Son and his word, not the world. Their father was God the Father, not the devil (John 8:42-44).

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- *The world hates Jesus' disciples because Jesus chose them out of the world.* Note that Jesus called each of the twelve Apostles (Luke 6:12-13). Jesus designated them to his work and service (Ref. 10). When we believe in Jesus and are fully committed to him, we no longer belong to the world. Jesus also appoints us to his work and service, and sends us into the world for the purpose of serving him (John 17:18, Mark 16:15-16, Matthew 28:19-20).

Jesus gives his disciples (including we who believe in him and follow him) joy despite the world's hatred.

- Jesus is with us always (Matthew 28:20)
- Jesus has given us his words that our joy may be full (John 15:11, John 17:13-14)
- Jesus has sent us the Holy Spirit (the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth) to be with us and guide us (John 14:16-17, John 16:13, Ref. 11). Note, the world cannot receive the Holy Spirit (John 14:17).
- Jesus gives us his peace, peace that the world cannot give, so we will be courageous and not be afraid in the midst of the world's hatred and tribulation (John 14:27, John 16:33, Philippians 4:6-7)

Apply. Pray for yourself and those Christians in the world who are facing the world's hatred, opposition, and persecution. Pray for yourself and those Christians to remain joyful and to have God's peace in the face of the world's hatred. "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (Jesus, John 16:33).

References

1. <http://www.ScriptureWay.com/home/biblical-definition-of-the-world>
2. Ref. 2 begins on the next line
<http://www.ScriptureWay.com/home/the-most-important-offer-you-will-ever-receive>
3. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/pulpit/john/7.htm>
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