

John 15:18-27

Who/what is “the world” that hated Jesus (v. 18)? The world in John’s Gospel is the system of organized society that is hostile to God and is under Satan’s power (John 14:30).¹ Jesus wanted to prepare His disciples for the opposition that they would face after His departure which is the same opposition he had faced.

The inexperienced Christian may think that the hatred of the world against him is a critical rebuke. He thinks that he is to blame for it. He imagines that if only he were kinder, gentler, more humble, more Christ-like, the hatred of unbelievers would be overcome. This is a great mistake. The truth is, the more Christ-like we are, the more we will be antagonized and shunned. The most conclusive proof of this is found in the treatment which Jesus received when He was in the world.”²

Why can we expect the world to hate us (v. 19)? Because we are different. We are not one of them. We belong to Jesus.....we are his children because He chose us out of the world. They hate us because they hated Jesus and we chose to identify with Him. As we live our lives in front of them, we expose their sin and they are convicted. We are becoming more like Him and less like them. We have different loyalties and goals.

The world does not hate believers because they are superior, but because they are servants of the Lord whom it has rejected (cf. 1 Peter 1:1).

What principle did Jesus remind the disciples of (v. 20)? The principle that He had mentioned (“*No servant is greater than his master*”) when He had washed their feet (13:16). At that time He used this principle to encourage them to serve one another. Now He used it to explain why they would experience persecution.

People normally treat a person's servants as they would treat the servants' master. Since unbelievers persecuted Jesus, His disciples should expect persecution too. On the positive side, if some people followed Jesus' teachings, some would also follow His disciples' teachings.³

Why would the world persecute the disciples (v. 21)? Because of their identification with Jesus. They persecuted the disciples because they were ignorant of God, the One who sent Him, because they were spiritually blind (cf. Romans 1:28). Consequently they could not rightly evaluate the Messenger whom God had sent.

Why were the worldly sinners guilty of sin (v. 22-23)? Jesus’ coming removed all excuses for sin (cf. Acts 17:30). They cannot plead ignorance. “*If I had not come.... If I had not done....*” The words and deeds of Jesus reveal who He is and that He came from the Father.

His point was that by coming into the world and by preaching and working miracles, He had confronted people with their rebellion against God (cf. Matthew 11:20-24). Jesus' words and works were the Father's who had sent Him. Therefore the world's rejection of Jesus' words and works constituted rejection of God the Father. To hate Jesus amounted to hating God. People cannot treat the Father in one way and the Son in another.⁴

What was the message for the unbelievers (v. 24)? They were not only responsible for having heard the teaching of Christ; they also saw His miracles. This added to their condemnation. They saw works which no one else had ever performed. To reject Christ in face of this evidence was inexcusable.⁵

The Jewish nation should have joined with Nicodemus in honestly confessing, “*No one could perform the miraculous signs You are doing if God were not with Him*” (3:2). But the nation as a whole rejected both Jesus and the Father because in their sins they loved darkness rather than light (3:19). The nation thought it was serving God in rejecting Jesus (16:2–3) but in reality it was serving Satan (8:44). Sin is basically irrational.⁶

What reason did Jesus give for the world's hatred of Him (v. 25)? The Lord realized that man's attitude toward Him was in exact fulfillment of prophecy. It was predicted in Psalm 69:4 that Christ would be hated ... without a cause. Now that it had happened, the Lord commented that the Old Testament, which these men prized, had predicted their senseless hatred of Him. The fact that it was prophesied did not mean that these men *had to* hate Christ. They hated Him by *their own deliberate choice*, but God foresaw that it would happen, and He caused David to write it down in Psalm 69.⁷

What will be the role of the Holy Spirit when He comes (vv. 26-27?) In spite of man's rejection and Christ leaving the scene, there will be a continued testimony to Christ. It will be carried on by the Holy Spirit directly through the Apostles. They had been with the Lord from the beginning of His public ministry and were especially qualified to tell of His Person and work.⁸

These verses explain how the conflict between Jesus and the world would continue after He departed to heaven. The crux of the conflict would continue to be the question of who Jesus was.

¹ Edwin A. Blum, "John," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 326.

² Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on John, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 414.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 415.

⁵ MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1552.

⁶ Edwin A. Blum, "John," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 327.

⁷ MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1552.

⁸ Ibid.