**“A JOURNEY THROUGH THE GOSPEL OF JOHN” SERIES**

**#29: “The Hatred of the World”**

**SCRIPTURE:** John 15:18-16:4

**INTRO:**

The chapter divisions in Scripture aren’t always in the right places. This section is one of those places. Chapter 15 should continue through verse 4 of chapter 16.

However, in our Scripture section for today Jesus continues to prepare his disciples for His death, resurrection, and return to the Father in heaven.

First of all, we are called to remember how…

***…THE WORLD” HATED JESUS.***

Jesus says in verse 18: ***“If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.”***

First, we need to define what is meant by ***“the world.”*** Not everybody hated Jesus. Only ***“the world”*** hated Jesus. So, who is ***“the world”***?

The Greek for “world” here is KOSMOS, which literally means “order, arrangement, ornament or adornment” (Vine) with the context determining its meaning. In some contexts it means “the earth,” in some “the universe,” in some “the human race” or “mankind,” in some “Gentiles as distinguished from Jews,” and in others “non-believers as distinguished from believers,” which is the meaning here.

Many of those who didn’t believe Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God just avoided or ignored Him, but there were those who hated Jesus and actively sought to silence Him.

The religious leaders among the Jews were jealous of His knowledge and teaching and of His following. They felt threatened, fearing that they would lose their power and authority over the masses. His teaching and wisdom revealed their ignorance and sinful ambitions.

Ironically, God used the world’s hatred to fulfill His redemptive purposes. It was the hatred of the Jews that resulted in the crucifixion, by which Jesus paid the price of our forgiveness.

Then Jesus tells His disciples:

***“THE WORLD” HATES YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT ‘OF THE WORLD.’”***

We’ve defined ***“the world,”*** so, what does it mean to be ***“not of the world.”*** Stated simply, it means that we are not among those who reject God and Jesus as the Son of God. The New Testament uses the word ***“sanctified”*** to describe our relationship to the world. It means “set apart from the world for service to God.”

Why does ***“the world”*** hate us? I can think of several reasons:

1. We are different. The world has always had difficulty accepting anyone who is different, whether it be size, shape, color, or whatever.
2. Our world view is different; we believe God created the world and ultimately controls its fate.
3. Our philosophy of life is different; we believe we’re here to glorify God; we have different values.
4. Our strongest loyalty is to Christ; the world doesn’t understand this.
5. All of the above flies into the face of what the world represents, and “the world” doesn’t like to be opposed. “The world” knows that if we are right, then it is wrong, and it doesn’t handle being wrong very well.

While the U. S. Constitution guarantees freedom OF religion, there is a “Freedom From Religion” organization whose sole purpose is to eliminate religion (Christianity, in particular) from American society. This organization has legal teams that stand ready to sue schools or other entities that violate, in their opinion, what they call “the separation of church and state.” To me, this is one form of “hatred.” Maybe you can come up with others.

Jesus said that the reason for the hatred is that…

***“…THE WORLD” DOES NOT KNOW GOD.”***

One of the testimonies on the “Freedom From Religion” website states:

*[“If you describe yourself as 'Atheist,' some people will say, 'Don't you mean "Agnostic?' I have to reply that I really](https://ffrf.org/news/day)*[do](https://ffrf.org/news/day)*[mean Atheist. I really do not believe that there is a god — in fact I am convinced that there is not a god (a subtle difference). I see not a shred of evidence to suggest that there is one. It's easier to say that I am a radical Atheist, just to signal that I really mean it, have thought about it a great deal, and that it's an opinion I hold seriously."](https://ffrf.org/news/day)*

In its “Legal” section, the website reports:

*“FFRF’s* (Freedom from Religion Foundation) *lawsuits have ended a wide range of egregious First Amendment violations. From our very first lawsuit halting religious postal cancellations, to winning the first federal case challenging “faith-based” funding of a pervasively sectarian agency, FFRF court cases protect the wall of separation. FFRF lawsuits have removed Ten Commandments and Jesus paintings from public schools, stopped city/school board prayer; halted school subsidy of child evangelism, removed nativity scenes and Christian crosses from public property, and stopped censorship of freethought displays, literature distribution, license plates and invocations.”*

Operating under the guise of “freethought,” they deny such to Christians.

In countries other than the United States, the hatred is often even *more* restrictive, like in China and North Korea, where Christians and devotees to other faiths are imprisoned and enslaved because of their faith. Muslims who convert to Christianity are often killed by members of their own families. In Matthew 10:36 Jesus said, ***“…a person’s enemies will be those of his own household.”***

A Christian must be ready to “stand alone” apart from family and friends.

Jesus says,

***“’THE WORLD’ IS GUILTY OF SIN BECAUSE THEY HEARD AND SAW YET DIDN’T BELIEVE.”***

Of course, He’s referring primarily to those countless numbers of Jews who saw firsthand His miracles and heard God’s truth from Jesus Himself. The hardness of their hearts was unbelievable. How could they have witnessed the life and teachings of Jesus and still refuse to believe?

The writer of Hebrews says in chapter 11, verses 1-3:

***“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation. By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”***

He goes on in that chapter…

***“By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain. . . By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death. . . And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists. . . By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. . . By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was able to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. . . These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar. . . By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, his only son. . . By faith Isaac invoked future blessings on Jacob and Esau. By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph. . . By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, made mention of the exodus of the Israelites. . . By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents. . . By faith Moses when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God. . . By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land. . . By faith the walls of Jericho fell down. . . By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient. . . And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets – who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight…”***

***“The world”*** doesn’t have such faith. ***“The world”*** is guilty of the worst of sins: that of rejecting God and His Son!

Jesus says that…

***…THE HOLY SPIRIT IN US BEARS WITNESS ABOUT GOD AND CHRIST.***

In verse 26 Jesus says, ***“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.”***

Of course, He’s talking about the Holy Spirit, the third person of the godhead, who arrived to minister on earth on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30, as we count time. He empowered the twelve disciples in such a way that it was said that they were ***“baptized in the Holy Spirit.”*** Those twelve received something that you and I don’t receive. We receive what we call the *indwelling* of the Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit lives in us in order to produce in us ***“the fruit of the Spirit”*** (Galatians 5:22-24).

More directly, how does the Spirit “help” us? Someone has compiled a list of things the Spirit does:

1. He teaches and reminds (John 14:26).
2. He convicts of sinfulness (John 16:7-8).
3. He lives in us, getting us to produce fruit (1stCorinthians 3:16; Galatians 5:22-24).
4. He is a source of wisdom and power (1st 2:10-11; Ephesians 1:17-20).
5. He guides us to truth (John 16:13-15).
6. He gives gifts to us with which to serve the Lord (1st Corinthians 12:7-11; Romans 12:4-8).
7. He is our “seal,” our “mark” of adoption as Children of God (Ephesians 1:13).
8. He intercedes for us (Romans 8:26-27).
9. He will give life to our mortal bodies when Jesus comes (Romans 8:10-11).

Finally, Jesus tells us in this passage:

***“…YOU ALSO WILL BEAR WITNESS…”***

What does ***“bear witness”*** mean?

To the disciples it meant that they would tell everyone they could of what they had seen and heard regarding Jesus. They would tell what He taught, and they would relate what they saw Him do. They would give “eyewitness accounts” of Jesus. They would testify that He was the Son of God. They would work miracles as He did.

But what about us? We were not with Him. We can’t give eyewitness accounts. We can only relate what we read in the Scriptures. We can tell of our experiences and those of others, but we can’t prove that Jesus brought about those experiences. We have second-hand information.

So, how do we ***“bear witness”***?

We can bear witness apologetically, that is, we can offer evidence for the divine inspiration and truth of God’s word. “Apologetics” is the study of evidence for the existence of God and for the belief that the Bible is the word of God.

The best way, however, that we can ***“bear witness”*** to the truth that Jesus is the Son of God is to live for Him before the world. So, let me ask you, “Is your Christian living a plus or a minus in this world?” Or let me put it this way: If being a Christian was a crime, could enough evidence be found to convict you?

**IN CLOSING…**

We may not have the Holy Spirit in the same way as the apostles did, but we have the Spirit living within us to empower us to face and endure the hatred of the world and bear witness that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God.