

Into Thy Word Ministries Bible Study www.intothyword.org

General Idea: The world will hate all those who know and follow the true Truth of God because it hates the One, True, real God. The world wants its own god, and thus hates God's Son and hates His true followers. We must know this to be prepared so we can handle and grow through these tough times. The world will only love its own—those who seek worldliness and evil; but, we are chosen and called to a higher purpose—to Christ and His Truth, to know Him and righteousness so we can come out of the world and be in Christ. *A servant is not greater than the master.* They persecuted Christ; why would we think we will not be hurt? Why would we think we are somehow better and will not be persecuted? Why would we assume the world will listen to us when they did not listen to Christ? They do not know God and they hate those who do know Him. They are guilty of sin; they know better and have no excuse for sin, wrong choices, or evil. They hate Christ and the Father as well as those who know Him. God did all that could be done to make Himself known, but the world freely chose to reject Him and remain in evil and sin. In addition, they hate without a just cause. However, we can take great comfort in that the Holy Spirit, God's Helper and Truth, will come into us, fill, mold, and shape us, use and place us, and provide us with all we need to help us tell others about Christ.

Contexts and Background

This passage continues the theme of *abiding in His love*, but now switches our attention to the consequences and results of abiding in Christ, both good and bad, so we are prepared for real life after salvation. We have the acceptance of the God of the universe and the loving community of the Church in which we can delight so we do not need to partake of the world since we have so much more. This passage is also a description of how Christ the Vine nourishes us so He can use us to nurture others' faith and life, to be His examples even in harsh hostility. Thus, we have a call as the leaders and elders for God's people to also care and love the people under our care, regardless of our opponents and opposition (Psalm 19:8; John 14:27; Gal. 5:19-22).

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings

- *World.* Those not in a right relationship with God, outside of God's will, or who are apostate and refuse to know Him, those who seek evil, living for themselves, and forsaking God. This also means the carnal reasoning and system of mankind that combats God's purpose. For Jews, this referred to ones who were not Jews; now, it refers to those who are not His elect or who have not accepted Him as Lord. Yet, God extends Himself to all peoples, not just Jews. God seeks those who will live for Him rather than for themselves or who will not go outside of His will (Rom. 1: 18-32; 3:23; 6:23; Eph. 1:3-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).
- *Hates.* The more we are like Christ and exhibit His righteousness, the more those in sin will hate and oppose us. We are hated by what we do right, not by what we do wrong! Thus, we should not be surprised at this or think we are immune from persecution. The Jews believed that it was because they were chosen and the world (the Gentiles) was jealous (Gen. 4:8; John 14:17; Heb. 11:4; 1 Pet. 4:8; 1 John 3:12).
- *Belonged to the world.* Referring to people who prefer to do what is wrong; it is fun, exciting, and alluring. The basis for the rejection of God's way is because we all prefer sin; we are naturally predetermined to gravitate to evil and only glimpse at good. Being in darkness means we have a worthless life; there is no meaning in life; no purpose, no contentment, no good motivation, and no real, effectual joy (Rom. 1:18-32; John 1:5-11; 1 John 1:6-7).
- *Out of the world.* Referring that we belong to God because our new life comes from Him. Jewish thought in the Talmud says that *with great power comes great responsibility* (not Spiderman) and *with great knowledge comes great responsibility*; when we know God, we will act in His way and not in the world's (Rom. 12:1-3; Col. 1:13).

- *No servant is greater than his master.* We are children, bought and redeemed by Christ. Do not take yourself so seriously; instead, take Him seriously. Being His slave / servant means being a mature and devoted follower of God, one whose life is all about pursuing and glorifying God rather than self or culture. Thus, the cares of the world will not matter or even bother us (John 13:1-17; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 6:9; Phil. 2:7-8; Col. 3:11; 4:1). See the John 13:1-17 Study.
- *Servants / bondservant.* Meaning a slave, a mark of extreme, poured out devotion and submission. In the Greek, a *doulos* is a slave, the lowest form of a slave, totally at the master's disposal and even expendable. For us, this means we are bonded to Christ and pertains to how will we now abide and live in and for Him. He/she (*doulos*) was bonded to another person and had no rights, land, or money. Such people with that designation rowed the boats of war with a whip at their backs. So, why is this word used for a prime follower of Christ? Because, as the word and context denote, we are "to bind" ourselves, to abide with Christ as our LORD Master. Thus, this term also refers to godly, mature followers of Christ as an awareness and practiced attitude of surrendered devotion because we are bonded to Jesus Christ as our Sovereign Lord and Savior to whom we owe an un-payable debt. Our relationship with Christ is not just that He is our Savior, but He is also our Lord and we are His servants; in this relationship, He calls us His friends! We were bound by sin and helplessness; now we are bonded to a loving, caring Shepherd who desires to carefully carry us to His prime pasture lands and let us graze on His precepts, feed on His Word, and produce His call, the fleece to give Him glory and build His Kingdom. Being His slave is a great comfort; this is good; there is no better, safer, more pleasing to God, and better life for me than a life here as His slave (Psalm 15; 101; Matt. 15:15; 16:18; 18:21; 25:21; Mark 1:16-18, 26-37; 5:37; 8:29; 9:2-6; 14:33; Luke 12:41; John 6:68; 21:15-19; Acts 10:18; 15:14; Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 1:12; 7:22; 15:7; 2 Cor. 5:15-20; Gal. 1:19; Eph. 6: 5-9; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:7; 2 Thess. 1:12; 2 Tim. 2:24; Titus 1:1; 2:13; James 1:1-4; 1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1).
- *Persecuted me.* An athletic term meaning to fight hard to win in a race; but, in this context, it carries with it a hostile intent to not just overtake one's opponent, but, in so doing, to harass and assault him.
- *Obeyed.* The worldly way is to refuse to obey, rather embracing pride and chaos. For the Christian, this means being excited about who we are in Christ as an essential aspect of attracting people and motivating them for service to and leadership for Christ. We can see the call and the example in the Bible. Thus, I can commit to trust and obey Him and follow His precepts even against opposition (John 13:34; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).
- *Because of my name.* Meaning to confess Christ as Lord and follow His precepts with trust and obedience. For by His grace and love, we can know our Lord—who He is and who we are in Him. Then, we can take hold of His empowerment and nourishment and trust—the things we have from our Lord now; what we learn and grow through will remain with us, past our leaving of this life and echoing into the next. What we have in Christ is now and eternal. Christ gives Himself totally to us. He shed His Blood and gave His life so we can have life—new life. This is also about how God's will and His glory will be carried out, and His second coming will come about in His perfect timing (Ex. 25:8; 29:45; Lev. 26:11-12; Ezek. 37:27-28; 43:9; Psalm 96:10; Isa. 42:9; 48:6; 51:15-16; 65:17-25; 66:22; John 2:21; 6:54-56; 8:31; 14:1-23; 15:1-8; Rom. 8:24-25; 1 Cor. 2:9; 4:5; 15:35-57; Gal. 2:20-21; Eph. 1:3-14; Col. 1:23; 3:18-4-1; Heb. 2:7; 3:6-19; 1 John 2:19-24; Rev. 7:9; 21:1-8; 22:3-5, 12).
- *Guilty of sin.* Here referring to rejecting Jesus, meaning those who suppress God's truth and His character; that is what makes wickedness. We all have the propensity for sin and any sin is dammed by God, yet not everyone sins all the time or violates and/or escalates sin. Yet, all have fallen short of God's standards (John 5:31-47; Rom. 3:23)!
- *No excuse / without cause / cloak.* Meaning having a valid explanation or justification, as God's instructions are written now in all hearts and in creation, so all know better; we have no excuse. This also means that sin and evil are irrational; people fight for their sin to cover their hurts by hurting others. If one claims the law over Christ, that very claim condemns him/her, because the law points to Christ (Psalm 19:1; Isa. 44:9-20; 5; Luke 12:41-46; John 10:34; 1 Cor. 15:42-49; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph.

4:24; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:10)!

- *Hated me without reason.* Jesus quotes from the Psalms of Lament, of a righteous sufferer who loves and follows God and is despised by others (Psalm 35:19; 69:4; Isa. 6:9-10; John 2:17; 8:17; 10:34).
- *Counselor / helper.* See John 14:15-31 Study (John 14:16, 26; 16:7).
- *Spirit of truth.* A name for the Holy Spirit. We are to depend on the power and influence of the Holy Spirit, not in our pride or faulty, worldly systems to be a mature, faithful Christian. We are to be faithful and wise in Christ. See John 14:15-31 Study.
- *Out from the Father.* The Holy Spirit has a prime role in our redemption. At this time, He was a permanent Power whereas before, He only came and went by God's command. Now, He comes from the Father to point to Christ and gives us the ability to know and accept Christ (John 7:39; Acts 2:1-33).
- *Testify about me.* A witness to God's Truth, where we get the word "forensic," to show the evidence as a witness. The Holy Spirit always points to Christ and not to Himself. When a ministry or minister puts the emphases on the power of the Holy Spirit without the supremacy of Christ, they are being cultic and worldly and miss the main point of it all (Col. 1:19-23).
- *Testify.* Our role and responsibility are to know and make known who and what Christ is and to speak on His behalf by words and lifestyle. We are enabled to do this by the Holy Spirit. He models obedience for us to do the Christian life rightly with faith, character, and in His True truth because we have been regenerated and now have His interests in mind and in our will. We cannot have a good relationship with God and not with one another, or vice versa (Psalm 37:23; Isa. 42:1; 43:10-12; 44:3-8; Luke 24: 24:48; John 16:2; Acts 10:39-41; 2 Cor. 5:17-20; Eph. 2:10; 1 Thess. 5:18; 2 John 1-4; 3 John 1-4).
- *Been with me from the beginning.* Referring to those who were there—Jesus' Apostles, the first eyewitnesses and the authority and foundation of the Church. Now, it applies to us as his loyal representatives as we stand on the Apostles' work. For us, true service is doing what we may not like to do for others. Love is also disciplined, constant, and spontaneous. Thus, God will bring us to people and situations we may not like so we can learn true love (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:21-22; 2 Cor. 12:15; Eph. 2:20).

Devotional Thoughts and Applications

Abiding in Christ means total, surrendered devotion to the Lordship of Christ; we behave toward Him as LORD, Redeemer, and Savior, not just a casual friend we can occasionally call "dada." To grow in our Christian formation, our will must be sacrificed to God's will so that we are totally at the disposal of our Lord. Our daily lives, our ministry, our plans and purposes, and our thinking and actions all must filter through the sieve of who He is and who we are in Him. So the refuse of our lives, our thinking and misguided tendencies, is removed and the purity of His percepts are mixed into us. We must come to a point where we are surrendered and totally devoted to Christ. And, if this is a problem (and I am sure it is; it has been for me), remember that it isn't easy; do not give up, but give in to Him. It takes time. We must be in prayer, be immersed in His Word, and be disciplined so He can "hit home" in our ways and thinking (Acts 6:1-6; Rom. 1:1; 9:3; 12:7; 1 Cor. 15:3-8; Gal. 1:15; 2:20; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 2:8-3:13; 4:6)!

The Good news of the Gospel is not just a tool for evangelism; it must be the prime staple of our lives as well. In fact, it does nothing good for evangelism, to which this passage attests, unless real love has hit us deeply. Love must make an impact on us so we can make a response back to God. God's love is what changes our lives to be models for the lives of others. Our complete change from the inside out comes about because His real, true Truth is what the Gospel is supposed to be about in our lives. And, this message of the Person and Work of our Lord Jesus Christ must be in us before it can go out to the entire world! If not, we become the noise, the problem, the barrier...The Gospel message makes sense and is accelerated when we show our love to God and also to His people. Then we will see more of a

desire by the lost to be reached. All because of His work and our ability to be used when we obey His commands and call.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. Have you ever really hated someone? Why? How did it make you feel and influence your character?
2. How do you feel when Christians are persecuted? Have you ever faced persecution? Since people both then and now persecuted Christ, why would we think we will not be hurt? Why would we think we are somehow better and will not be persecuted?
3. How and why do you see Jesus dealing with the contrast of love and hate? Why is this important?
4. We are hated by what we do right—not by what we do wrong. How have you seen this so?
5. Why do you think the world hates all those who know and follow Jesus? Why would they hate the One, True, real God and instead desire their own god and / or ways?
6. How does this passage help you be prepared to handle and grow through these tough times? Why would we assume the world will listen to us when they did not listen to Christ?
7. How do you feel about the truth that humanity has no excuse for sin, wrong choices, or evil? How do you feel that God did all that could be done to make Himself known, but people freely chose to reject Him and remain in evil and sin?
8. How can you better take great comfort that the Holy Spirit will come into us, fill, mold, and shape us, use and place us, and provide us with all we need to help us tell others about Christ?
9. Why is it that being Jesus' slave is a great comfort? What do you need to do to fully realize this is good, that there is no better, safer, more pleasing to God, better for me life than a life here as His slave? How could you model and teach this to other Christians who are prideful?
10. Can you realize that you are dependent upon and grateful to Christ as LORD? What must take place for Jesus to be your one and only true Truth, and rule for both the here and now as well as into all of eternity?
11. The Good news of the Gospel is not just a tool for evangelism; it must be the prime staple in our lives as well! So, what do you need to do to more freely put this into practice?
12. What do you need to do to take hold of His empowerment and nourishment and trust—the things we have from our Lord now?