

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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The World Will Hate You

by Dan Trygg

“If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. ¹⁹ 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, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me... ²³ He who hates Me hates My Father also.”
John 15:18-21,23

This section addresses the issue of persecution. Jesus tells them that they can *expect it* to follow them.

“*If the world hates you...*” (vs. 18) -- **The world will not necessarily always hate us. Sometimes they recognize and admire the actions and qualities of Christians.** Cf. Acts 5:12,13. “...*you know that it hated Me before it hated you.*” -- Being hated by the world is not necessarily an indictment of one’s character, or an indication that one is not following Jesus. In fact, quite the opposite. **It is often because we are following Jesus that the world turns on us.**

“*If you were of the world...*” (vs. 19) -- They were no longer *of* the world, though they lived *in* it. “...*the world would love its own.*” -- The Greek is “...the world ever was loving/enjoying (*phileō*) its own”. **It is a characteristic of the world system that it approves of what conforms to it, but hates what does not.** “...*but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*” -- No longer is the world their source or origin (the meaning of the Greek word for “of”, and “out of” here). **Because the world is no longer their source, or their orientation, “...on account of this, the world hates you”.** In vs. 16, Jesus had just reminded the disciples that they had not chosen *Him*, rather *He* had chosen *them* and had appointed them to bear much fruit. He had chosen the twelve to be more specifically trained to live as He did, and to represent Him to the world by preaching and miraculous ministry (Luke 6:12-17; Mark 3:13-15). **Jesus’ choice of them not only changed their orientation from the world to God, it also set them in active confrontation with the world system, ...questioning peoples’ values and focus, and calling people to change their minds (repent) concerning what is important.** Jesus’ choice here does not necessarily mean a “choice unto salvation” as those who believe in predestination might emphasize. It could simply refer to the fact that **His selection of them to be about a certain task or calling put them in the spotlight, and consequently brought the disdain and hostility of the world upon them.** The same principle applies to us today. **As we understand that Christ has selected us to represent Him to our little corner of the world, and we begin to do so, we will also begin to run into opposition and resistance.** The apostle Paul said, “*all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted*” (II Tim. 3:12). “*Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’*” (vs. 20) -- **As they treated Jesus, they will treat His disciples, either with persecution or obedience.**

“...*all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake...*” (vs. 21) -- The Greek says, “on account of My name”, i.e., *in reaction to Jesus’ name and person*, not *for the benefit of His name*. “...*because they do not know the One who sent Me*” -- The word for “know” here is knowledge-by-observation. They have not seen or recognized the presence of God in Jesus.

“*If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin...*” (vs. 22) -- **Jesus’ ministry among them had confronted them with a truth-test that they had never faced before, and they had rejected Him.** “...*but now they have no excuse for their sin.*” -- **They cannot pretend to have “not known”.** All pretense had been removed.

“*He who hates Me hates My Father also.*” (vs. 23) -- **Our reaction to Jesus reveals our attitude toward the Father.** Remember, **the word “hate” can mean “disregard”, or “esteem lightly”** in Eastern cultures, not just a strong negative emotion of hostility. **The one who disregards Jesus thinks lightly of the Father as well.** How can this be true? If anyone really loved and valued the Father, he would come to value what the Father did. He would investigate carefully Jesus’ truth claims, not dismiss them out of hand.

“*If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.*” (vs. 24) -- **The miraculous signs which Jesus had performed served to make them more accountable.** Nicodemus had said, “*Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him*” (3:2; cf. 5:36; 7:31; 10:32,37,38; 12:37). **The fact that they had repeatedly seen these powerful evidences of God’s presence with Him and still disregarded, or even despised, Him made them more clearly responsible.** They could not claim ignorance, when the evidence was so obvious. **Their rejection of Jesus was also a rejection of the Father, who was the One who enabled Him to do these works** (14:10). “*But ... in order that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their Law, ‘They hated Me*

without a cause” (vs. 25) -- **Twice this very phenomenon had been prophesied and recorded in the Psalms (35:19; 69:4).** It had happened to David, who was a prophetic type of the Messiah who was to come. **The Pharisees and Sadducees were so proud of being ‘people of the Book’,** people who studied and valued the Torah, **yet here they were living out the part of the unjust enemy who “hated without cause”.**

“When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father...” (vs. 26,27) -- The Helper is the Paraclete, the “one called alongside to help”, the one Jesus had referred to as “another (like Me) Helper” in 14:16,17. **Believe it or not, the question of who sends the Holy Spirit, and whether He “proceeds” from the Father only, ...or from both the Father and the Son..., has been a point of debate and actual division in church history.** The Eastern Orthodox churches held that the Spirit “proceeds from the Father”, while the Western Church (both Roman Catholics and Protestants) have confessed that He “proceeds from Father and the Son”, even though this is not plainly stated in the NT. **This issue, along with the question of the authority of the pope, which the Eastern Churches refused to acknowledge, led to the Great Schism of 1054,** when the Eastern Churches separated from the Western, Roman Catholic Church. The language in the NT *can be* somewhat confusing. In Jn. 14:16, Jesus says *He* will “ask the Father and He (the Father) will give you another Helper”. Again, in vs. 26, it is depicted as “the Holy Spirit, whom *the Father will send* in My name”. In *this* verse, 15:26, Jesus is the one who will “send” the Holy Spirit “from the Father”, but He is further described *in the same verse* as “the Spirit of truth, who *proceeds from the Father*”. In 16:7, again, Jesus says, “*I will send Him* to you”. Jesus was described by God to John the Baptist as “the one who *baptizes* [people] in the Holy Spirit” (Jn. 1:33). After His resurrection, Jesus told His disciples, “And behold, *I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high*” (Lk. 24:49). This took place at Pentecost, and Peter explains that **Jesus, “...having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He (Jesus) has poured forth this which you both see and hear” (Acts 2:33).**

I think that it is best to live with the tension of a little bit of unexplained mystery, especially when realizing that we are attempting to understand the infinite God, than to split over doctrinal speculation. It may be *more work* to be faithful to present the actual language of Scripture, but our attempts to “summarize” or “synthesize” what the Scriptures teach, often create more problems than it solves. The apostle Paul said that **as servants of Christ we have been entrusted as “stewards of the mysteries of God” (I Cor. 4:1).** As such, it is expected of stewards to be trustworthy. **What does *that* mean? That we need to teach and preserve the revelations of God accurately and without distortion.** Paul knew that **pride, arrogance and division come when we “go beyond what is written” (I Cor. 4:6).** One of the things I appreciate about the Covenant fellowship is that they chose to *not* develop a creed, but to hold to a watchword, “Where is it written.” This enables them to hold to the Scripture as their foundation, without distortion.

“*He will bear witness of Me, and you will bear witness also...*” -- **There will be a joint ministry of testimony between the Spirit and the apostles. Both parties are essential for effective ministry to take place.** The Spirit not only *opens the hearts and minds* of people to the message of truth, and *convinces them, He also bears witness with powerful signs and answers to prayer* that authenticate the teaching and testimony of the apostles (II Cor. 4:4; Jn. 16:7-11; Acts 1:8; 2:1-47; 3:1-26; 4:29-31; 5:1-16; 6:8-10; 8:4-24; 10:44-48; 14:3; 15:12; 19:11-20). “...*because you have been with Me from the beginning.*” (vs. 27) -- **Their credibility as witnesses came from the fact that they had been intimately associated with Jesus for so long. They had been in a place to observe and know about Him. Cf. Acts 1:21,22**

Chapter 16, vs. 1 – “*These things I have spoken to you, that you may be kept from stumbling.*” -- Cf. 13:19; 14:29. **Being forewarned is to be forearmed. By preparing them for the difficulties they would face, ...not only in this night, but also in years to come..., Jesus was strengthening them to be able to endure.**

“*They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.*” (vs. 2) -- **Jesus is warning them that they will not be readily accepted by men. Quite the contrary, they will be hunted down and killed for their testimony.** Being outcast from the synagogue was to be completely cut off socially. It was to be shunned by all devout Jews. For a businessman, this often meant financial ruin. **For the disciples, who were devout Jews seeking to serve the God of their fathers, it was also to have to endure being misunderstood and reviled, ...for being faithful to God..., by the very people who should have been most eager to embrace their message. It was to be scorned by people that they had valued and respected all of their lives.**

“...*these things they will do, because they have not known the Father, or Me.*” (vs. 3) -- **Their lack of real spiritual understanding of God, or Jesus, is behind their rejection and violent persecution.**

“...*these things I have spoken to you...*” (vs. 4) -- **On the one hand, He tells them now to prepare them; on the other hand, He did not tell them these things before, because He was there to protect them and to be their strength. Now, however, He is leaving, and they will need the soundness of mind that His words will give.**