



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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John 15:18-27 Commentary **New Revised Standard Version**

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse [International Bible Study Commentary](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Study Forum](#).

(John 15:18) “If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you.

For good reasons, Jesus said “If,” rather than immediately scare His disciples by telling them that they would be hated by those of the world. Before telling them directly, He wanted to explain to them some of the reasons for the world's hatred of Him and them. Jesus had told them earlier that the world has a ruler or prince. Remember, in John 12:31, Jesus said, “Now is the judgment of this world; now *the ruler of this world will be driven out.*” Those of this world hate Jesus because Jesus promised that this world will be judged, and the ruler of this world will be driven out. Those of this world prefer living under the lordship of the devil rather than under the Lordship of the loving and true God (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). Paul described living according to the world and the devil in Ephesians 2:1-3, “You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following *the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient.* All of us once lived among them in the *passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses,* and we were by nature children of

wrath, like everyone else.” Those of the world hate Jesus and His true disciples because they want to remain separated from God and they want to follow the ruler of the power of the air for the temporal pleasures he offers them and helps them attain. Paul wrote that such people are “dead through the trespasses and sins in which [Jesus’ followers] once lived.” Those of the world see Jesus and His followers as a threat to their decadent lifestyle, which is an indication that they are spiritually dead.

Remember, in John 14:30-31, Jesus foretold His disciples, “I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. *He has no power over me*; but *I do as the Father has commanded me*, so that the world may know that *I love the Father*.” The devil never had and never will have any power over Jesus. Jesus gave up His life voluntarily in our behalf as a sacrifice for our sins; the devil never took His life from Him. Those of the world hated Jesus and would hate His true disciples because the ruler of this world has no power over Jesus and Jesus always did what the Father commanded. By grace through faith in Jesus Christ, the ruler of this world has no power to separate Jesus’ disciples from the love of God, as Paul described in Romans 8:38-39, “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Furthermore, Jesus’ true disciples have committed themselves to obeying Jesus because they love Jesus and the Father. They may be hated and persecuted as Jesus will tell them, but the devil has no ultimate power over them and neither do those of the world. The devil and those of this world hate the fact that Jesus and His disciples love the Father; so, just as they persecuted and crucified Jesus, they will kill and persecute Jesus’ true disciples—who will keep loving God to the very end and forever.

Those of this world and the devil hate Jesus and His followers because, as Jesus will tell His disciples in John 16:11, “*the ruler of this world has been condemned*.” The devil has been condemned, but those of this world do not need to be condemned, for in John 3:17-18, Jesus promised, “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not

condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” One reason Jesus’ disciples pray for those of this world as they share the good news of Jesus with them is because of their spiritual condition or spiritual deadness. In 2 Corinthians 4:4 and 6, Paul explained their situation: “In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. . . For it is the God who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

(John 15:19) If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you.

Jesus continued to explain to His disciples (and to all His true disciples since then) that His true followers do not belong to the world—Jesus’ true disciples belong to Jesus and Jesus belongs to them. Jesus’ true disciples love God and no longer want to live according to the sinful pleasures of this world, nor do they want to live with those of this world—with those who promote disobedience to God’s commands, with those who like to live like the devil. Those of this world will not love those who no longer want to live according to ways of this world. They will consider Jesus’ disciples as a threat to their plans, as a threat to their achieving the power, pleasure, or wealth that they seek no matter who they hurt, persecute, or kill.

Next, Jesus explained to His disciples why they (and His disciples since then) do not belong to the world, saying, “I have chosen you out of the world.” In Ephesians 2:8-10, Paul explained, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.” True disciples of Jesus do not boast, but they seek to do the good works that Jesus wants to be their way of life as His faithful disciples. As Jesus’ followers seek to do good works in a variety of loving and peaceful ways, they will naturally come in conflict with those who want to do bad works; that is, works contrary to the ways of God.

(John 15:20) Remember the word that I said to you, ‘Servants are not greater than their master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also.

Remember, in John 13:16-17, Jesus taught, “Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.” Jesus’ followers are blessed when they follow Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life rather than follow the ways of the devil and this world. Because Jesus’ followers are no better than Jesus (though they keep trying to live like Jesus as their perfect example), they will be persecuted by those of this world. Those committed to the ways of this world will not obey the words of Jesus, the command to turn from their sins and believe the good news as given by Jesus in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” However, as Jesus certainly implied, some kept (obeyed) His word when He preached (certainly His true disciples did), and some would keep (obey) the word of truth when His disciples preached.

(John 15:21) But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.

Jesus did not want His disciples (and His disciples since then) to think that there was something wrong with them, some inadequacy, or some lack of divine provision that prevented the world from listening to them and keeping His (and their) word that drove the world to hate them and want to kill them. No. The world would persecute Jesus’ disciples, because it did not want the “name” (the moral and spiritual principles and power) of Jesus ruling over it. What Jesus’ disciples consider “good news” sounds like “bad news” to the world. Jesus’ message threatens the world’s power and preferred ways of living. However, speaking of the world’s religious leaders of the time and those who followed their teachings, Jesus said, “they do not know him who sent me.” They did not know the Father. Even today, those who hate Jesus and His followers do not know the Father, and they will not call God “Father.” The world does not truly know the Father or the Son.

(John 15:22) If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Jesus did come and speak to the religious leaders of the world and to the crowds. He did show and tell who He is—the Son of the Father. When they rejected Him, they were guilty of sin and had no excuse for not believing and believing in Jesus as the Messiah and Savior of the world. When people truly hear the gospel of Jesus Christ and refuse to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, they have no excuse for their disbelief. When they eventually meet God and Jesus, they will have no excuse for rejecting them.

(John 15:23) Whoever hates me hates my Father also.

Jesus said simply that those who hate Him also hate the Father. Those who rejected Jesus also rejected the Father, and the same is true today. We repulse what we hate, and those of this world find the teaching about Jesus and the Father as the Bible and the Spirit reveal them repulsive. Hatred is the opposite of love. So those of this world walk away from God, especially as they learn more about the true God, while the true disciples of Jesus walk increasingly closer to God as they learn more about the true God. Therefore, as the disciples of Jesus learn to love their neighbors and even their enemies and try to tell others the truth as Jesus commanded, those of this world turn against them and against the Father and the Son with increasing hatred—which can lead to persecution from those of this world in a variety of ways according to the culture of various nations and religions.

(John 15:24) If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father.

Jesus not only taught the truth about God, but Jesus also showed by His works of love that what He said was true and revealed the love the God. Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry, healed the lame, restored sight to the blind, and raised the dead as acts of compassion. No one else before or after Jesus has been able to do all these things by only speaking words. God created the world by speaking, and Jesus, the Son of God, could create and

recreate the world and do mighty works by only speaking. Jesus showed that He possessed the power of the loving Word of God to do good. Jesus did all these loving good works, but those of the world still hated the Father and Him. Even though they knew all the facts about the Father and Jesus, those of the world did not want anyone turning from them and their power over the world and turn to loving and obeying the commands of Jesus and His Father; therefore, they were guilty of sin.

(John 15:25) It was to fulfill the word that is written in their law, ‘They hated me without a cause.’

Furthermore, those who rejected Jesus had no good reason to hate Him. Jesus never did anything bad, wrong, unloving, or unjust, but He refused to do what those of the world wanted Him to do. Jesus would only obey the commands of His Father, and His Father’s commands expressed their love for the world and the best way for people to live happily in the world. What the world did to Jesus was foretold in the Bible in Psalms 109:3, “They beset me with words of hate, and *attack me without cause.*” Consider how Psalms 109:2-5, actually describe and fulfill what Jesus suffered from those of the world: “For wicked and deceitful mouths are opened against me, speaking against me with lying tongues. They beset me with words of hate, and attack me without cause. In return for my love they accuse me, even while I make prayer for them. So they reward me evil for good, and hatred for my love.” Jesus’ disciples would (and will) also experience this type of hatred (consider the stoning of Stephen in the Book of Acts, Chapter 7).

(John 15:26) “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.

In John chapter 16, Jesus will continue to teach His disciples about what they should expect in the future—events that did occur as Jesus foretold. But as we conclude John chapter 15, Jesus gave His true disciples (as those since) a promise and a command. First, Jesus reminded them of what He promised them in John 14:15-17, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments [He will give them a command in John 15:27]. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you

forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.” [Notice: Jesus will send the Spirit, who will come from the Father—the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son to disciples of Jesus.] Those of the world do not know the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit (the Advocate, the Spirit of truth). They hate the Father and Jesus. However, Jesus’ disciples love the Father and Jesus, and they will love the Holy Spirit after they receive Him and after He abides with them and in them. The Holy Spirit will testify and speak on behalf of Jesus, and He will do so through Jesus’ true disciples. In Matthew 10:19-20, Jesus promised His disciples, “When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”

(John 15:27) You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.”

The Holy Spirit will testify through disciples of Jesus when they obey Jesus and testify about Him. Jesus told His first disciples that they were to testify (as eye and ear witnesses in a court of law), because they had been with Him “from the beginning” of His ministry on earth, from the time He chose them and called them to follow Him. We find the truths they testified to in the Bible, and no one can testify about Jesus with the absolute and infallible authority of those who testified about Jesus in the Bible. Those who have become disciples since the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus do so because of the work of the Holy Spirit as they learn truths from the Bible that they hear or read—passed on to them by the first faithful disciples of Jesus.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. The world hated Jesus before it hated His disciples. Does the world still hate Jesus and His disciples? Give one reason why you think as you do.
2. What must you do for the world to love you as its own?

3. In what ways are or can Christians be persecuted where you live today?
4. What reason or reasons did Jesus give for the persecution of Christians?
5. When someone hates Jesus who else do they hate? What word in the law did and do these haters fulfill?

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