

The World Hates Me **(John 7:1-13)**

Expository Lessons from the Gospel of John

I. Jesus Goes to the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem (Read John 7:1-13)

- a. **Question:** Why was Jesus hated, to the point that people in Jerusalem wanted to kill him?
- b. First, let's review things Jesus had done thus far to demonstrate having divine power. He openly performed several miracles:
 - i. He changed water into wine. **(John 2)**
 - ii. He told the Samaritan woman at the well about her life and husbands; she then told everyone else in the city. **(John 4)**
 - iii. He performed miraculous healings: nobleman's son in Capernaum. **(John 4)**
 - iv. Then He healed a paralytic man in Jerusalem **(John 5)**
 - v. He also had fed a crowd of thousands, including 5,000 men in Galilee. **(John 6)**
- c. Yet Jesus had collected enemies even at this point in His ministry. Perhaps these were among the reasons He was hated:
 - i. He cleared out the temple of moneychangers (cutting into revenue of people who were using religion as a means of making money).
 - ii. Then said to those who questioned his authority to do that. "Destroy this temple and I will rebuild it in three days." (claims of special power and authority) **(John 2)**
 - iii. In Jerusalem, after healing a crippled man at the pool of Bethesda, He was criticized for "working on the Sabbath", which normally would be seen as violating the Law of Moses. **(John 5)**
 - iv. Followed up with claims very upsetting to the religious Jews: making God his own Father (making himself equal with God); saying He would call all the dead from their graves and judge everyone; claiming He was the one Moses wrote about, "the Prophet" from **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**. **(John 5)**
 - v. Claimed (in Galilee) that He was the bread of life; that those who "ate his flesh and drank His blood" would live forever. **(John 6)**

II. Approaching the Feast of Tabernacles

- a. From details of the story in **John 7:1-13** we see the following:
 - i. Since Jews in Jerusalem (in Judea, the south) wanted to kill Jesus, He first stayed in Galilee (the north).
 - ii. His brothers urge Him to go to the Feast in Jerusalem. He said, "I am not yet going."
 - iii. Then after his brothers leave, he proceeds to go in secret to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles.
- b. What is the Feast of Tabernacles, and why would Jesus go to Jerusalem then?
 - i. Read **Leviticus 23:33-43**
 1. On 15th day of seventh month (five days after the Day of Atonement). The Feast of Tabernacles is also called the Feast of the Ingathering.
 2. The entire festival was eight days long, with a holy convocation on first and last day.
 3. A "thank-God-for-the-harvest-that-just-came-in" type festival, similar that regard to the Thanksgiving holidays we celebrate in the US and Canada.
 4. The people live in booths (temporary structures or tabernacles, made with branches) for seven days. This is a reminder of how the Israelites lived in booths (or tents) when the Lord brought them out of Egypt. (I think of it like camping out for a week, which may have been particularly enjoyable for the children!)
 - ii. In **Deuteronomy 16:13-17** it says:
 1. Feast of Tabernacles was one of three times each year when all males were to appear before the Lord, "in the place the Lord chooses". After the temple was built, that place obviously was in Jerusalem.
 2. The other two festivals where all males were required to gather: Passover (Unleavened Bread), and Festival of Weeks (Pentecost).

III. Jesus Speaks About His Being Hated by the World

- a. Jesus expressed his initial reluctance to go to Jerusalem: the people there hated him.

- i. "The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil." (**John 7:7**, NKJV)
- ii. This statement reminds me of what Jesus had said in **John 3**:
 1. "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed." (**John 3:19-20**, NKJV)
- b. The picture of Jesus many have in their minds: a gentle, good shepherd holding a lamb. However, Jesus said he came as light, *to expose sin*. For that reason, *he would be hated*.
 - i. It is important that we see Jesus fully and accurately, as He revealed Himself. That involves recognizing *all aspects* of Jesus' character.
 - ii. Jesus was the King ruling over the kingdom of God; the Good Shepherd overseeing God's flock; and the Great High Priest who offered the perfect sacrifice of Himself.
 - iii. However, let us *also* see Him as the greatest prophet, the One who calls all people to repent.
 1. The message from the very beginning of His ministry was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (**Matthew 4:17**, NKJV)
 2. "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance." (**Matthew 9:13**, NKJV)
 3. "Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, *because they did not repent*: 'Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.'" (**Matthew 11:20-21**, NKJV)
 - a. **Question**: Why did Jesus do miracles?
 - b. **Answer**: In part, *so that people would repent!*
 4. In **Matthew 12:40-42**, Jesus provides a self-portrait by comparing himself to two famous men from the Old Testament: King Solomon and the prophet Jonah. Jesus' point:

- a. He is *even wiser* than Solomon, the wisest man (**1 Kings 3:9-11; 1 Kings 5:5-10**) and
 - b. He is an *even greater preacher of repentance* than Jonah (who single-handedly brought the entire pagan city of Nineveh to repentance, in **Jonah 3**).
 - i. “The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.” (**Matthew 12:41**, NKJV)
5. “There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.’” (**Luke 13:1-5**, NKJV)
- iv. Paul also saw his mission as calling people throughout the world to repent.
 - 1. “Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.” (**Acts 26:19-20**, NKJV)
 - v. The world has always hated the prophets who were faithful to God.
 - 1. “...Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.” (**Hebrews 11:35-38**, NKJV)
- c. Jesus forewarns the apostles and his disciples that *we will be hated as well*.
 - i. When Jesus sends out the twelve to preach:

1. "So they went out and preached that people should repent." (Mark 6:12, NKJV)
2. In **Matthew 10** he warned them that they were being sent out as "sheep in the midst of wolves". (Matthew 10:16, NKJV) He then tells them...
3. "And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved." (Matthew 10:22, NKJV)
4. "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!" (Matthew 10:24-25, NKJV)
 - a. If we are the disciples of Jesus, we should expect to be treated exactly how he was treated!
 - ii. In **Matthew 24**, Jesus warns his disciples of what is yet to come. The gospel of the kingdom is to be preached to all nations; false Christs will come; many will be deceived; those who endure to the end will be saved; and:
 - iii. "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake." (Matthew 24:9, NKJV)
 - iv. "If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant 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." (John 15:18-20, NKJV)
 - v. Note that this is a constant theme of Jesus: The world hates me, and if you follow me *you will be hated as well!* This is what we should expect. However, this certainly is *not* the message that most churches teach today (that if you become a Christian, you should expect to be hated).
- d. Instead, many churches in the US today strive to be "seeker friendly". To do that, they focus on "making the gospel attractive" by meeting felt needs within the community. They want the world to love them, and to think well of them. So they will add programs and facilities to support that objective:
 - i. Soup kitchens, sports leagues, exercise classes, day care, basketball...

1. It is good to help those in need, and to foster genuine Christian fellowship. However, this should never be done to impress the world.
- ii. Publicized community service projects, working closely with local government officials, inviting business leaders to ground-breaking ceremonies, etc.
- iii. Help with troubled marriages, family counseling, etc.
 1. Again, it is good to help those who struggle, providing Biblical direction. However, the church is not supposed to be just a humanistic social services agency.
- iv. The goal of this “seeker friendly” approach is to make the gospel attractive to others, to win as many as possible and thereby evangelize our communities.
- e. Evangelizing our communities and reaching more people with the gospel is a noble objective. HOWEVER, there are at least two problems we should be aware of with these “seeker friendly” approaches.
 - i. First problem: Jesus came as light to expose sin. If we follow Jesus’ example of addressing sin and calling people to repent, we will be hated (by most people, and by society at large). It strikes me that there is no way to finesse this and avoid that outcome.
 1. Addressing things involving sex and money (which we see the prophets and Jesus do) seem to be especially good ways to get yourself hated. Just a few examples:
 - a. John the Baptist was jailed and ultimately lost his head because of addressing an adulterous remarriage involving Herod and Herodias. (**Mark 6:14-29**)
 - b. The backdrop for the story Jesus tells about the rich man and Lazarus: “Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said to them, ‘You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.’” (**Luke 16:14-15, NKJV**)
 - c. Jesus told this story to show the money-loving Pharisees where they were headed, if they did not repent of their greed and selfishness: to the place of torment.

2. Obviously we need to be dealing with sin in our own lives. We cannot be hypocrites, calling others to repent while not first dealing with the “plank in our own eye”. (**Matthew 7:3-5**)
 3. The point here is that as we address sin the way Jesus did (which we must as his disciples), we will be hated just like he was. This will not be attractive to most of the world!
- f. Second problem: What happens to a popular church when it tries to teach on unpopular teachings of Jesus and the apostles *that go against the prevailing culture*? Tragically, seeking to maintain their popularity, these churches are tempted to waters down (or ignore) these unpopular teaching, to avoid offending the surrounding society and driving away potential members.
- i. An embarrassing example: Churches of Christ in the US, in the 1950’s and 1960’s, regarding racial segregation.
 1. I was introduced to Churches of Christ in my late twenties. This was the mid 1980’s; through a large, growing urban church that was very multi-racial and multi-cultural.
 2. My own upbringing from childhood was as a Roman Catholic, in New Jersey. For the most part, my Catholic friends did not know the Bible very well. Also, the Catholic churches I grew up in were mostly made up of people from European descent (whites).
 - a. Many were of Irish and Italian descent; but there were a few African-American (black) members, and occasionally even black priests.
 - b. Growing up in the Catholic church in New Jersey, it seemed obvious that all Christians regardless of race should be in the same church. While there weren’t many blacks in the Catholic churches I attended, it was not because of racial discrimination (most blacks were Protestant rather than Catholics). Nevertheless, the idea of having a separate, segregated white Catholic church and black Catholic church in the same town would not have occurred to me.
 3. The Churches of Christ were well known for a very strong focus on studying and following the Bible. In 1800’s and early 1900’s, leaders in those churches maintained strong Biblical convictions in areas that were unpopular with the world, including the general Christian world, at the time. Great examples included preachers like James A. Harding and David Lipscomb who understood the principles of the two kingdoms

and taught about things like: Christian unity, non-resistance, anti-sectarianism and against racial discrimination.

4. However, with a large base in the southeastern US, over time (after men like Harding and Lipscomb died) they started absorbing elements of the general Southern US culture (including: becoming very pro-military and supportive of wars, and pro-segregation).
5. In fact, Churches of Christ ended up becoming one of the most segregated religious groups in the South, with separate all-black churches and all-white churches in the same city. How could they do that when Bible teaches so clearly against this sort of thing? Consider what Paul said:
 - a. "Is Christ divided?" (**1 Corinthians 1:13**) and
 - b. There is "one body" (**1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4:4**, etc.)
 - c. Christ's one body *cannot be segregated* and divided into separate all-white and all-black bodies!
6. **Question:** How could a group so devoted to studying the Bible *blatantly violate such a clear directive of Scripture?*
 - a. **Answer they gave:** People will leave our churches if we integrate.
 - i. Church leaders were afraid of losing members, losing money, losing outside financial support, and being defamed by leading brothers in affiliated congregations. Also, they did not want to become unpopular in their communities and drive away potential converts by integrating their churches.
 - ii. They did not want to go against the prevailing culture, and end up being hated, for taking a stand for what the Word of God taught.
7. **Consider:** If I had been in the church at that time in the South, *would I have taken a courageous, counter-cultural stand for the Word of God?*
 - a. Many people knew it was wrong to segregate churches, but they didn't say anything because they were afraid of being hated by their brothers and by the world. So, they

just blended in to the larger society. Many Christians, then and now, have a problem with cowardice.

- b. This is tragic. The leaders *should have listened to the Scriptures and their consciences and rejected segregation. They should have said, "This is what the Bible says. If you have a problem with it, go find another church." And if people and money left, then so be it. Move forward, build the church on the Scriptures and follow in the footsteps of Jesus (even being hated for it).*
- ii. Another example: recall that Germany was predominantly a "Christian" country in the 1930's, while Hitler and the Nazis were gaining power and carrying out their atrocities.
 1. **Question:** How is it possible that so many Christians turned a blind eye to the obvious violations of Scripture?
 2. **Answer:** Some Germans were unaware of what was happening. However, many of the German Christians were caving in to the culture, afraid to take a stand based on the Word of God. They (understandably) feared facing dire consequences and alienating the larger society around them.
- iii. Another, more recent example: A group of churches among the Churches of Christ where virtually all of the Bible teachers had come back to non-resistant convictions held by the early church and the early Restoration Movement, Anabaptists, etc.
 1. They grasped that Christians are to love their enemies, not kill them. That there are two kingdoms, and the Christians are not to get involved in the world's militaries and wars.
 2. However, these teachers were not permitted to teach on this, because church leaders were concerned that one of the churches in a city with a large military base would depart from their fellowship. Leaders were also concerned about losing members in their own churches, members who were involved in the military.
- iv. Before we look down on Christians from the past, let's take a look at the forces *in our own culture* that tempt Christians to compromise. What are things in the Bible and the historic faith that most *clash with our culture today*, in America?
 1. Things that come to mind: Materialism/greed, sexual immorality, homosexuality, divorce/remarriage, role of women in the church and family, worldly entertainment, war/violence.

2. These are things where the values of the current culture go against the values and teachings of Jesus. If Christians take a stand on these today, they will be hated by many.
- v. My daughter forwarded me an article by a prominent teacher in the International Churches of Christ (ICoC) who, after studying the Bible for years, had somehow come to the conviction that the world around us was right regarding role of women in the church. He maneuvered around every single gender-specific passage in the Bible, explaining it as bound to the local ancient culture.
1. The writer of the article didn't stop with dismissing Paul's teaching on head covering/uncovering (**1 Corinthians 11**), which was understood and taught by the church for eighteen hundred years.
 2. He also included women speaking in church, addressing the assembly (**1 Corinthians 14**), women teaching men (**1 Timothy 2**) and even a man being head of his wife in the family (**Ephesians 5, 1 Peter 3, Colossians 3:18-19**).
 3. These teachings are unpopular today, especially in a place like Boston. If you hold to them, you risk being unpopular as well.
 4. The writer claimed that just as slavery was addressed in the New Testament but has been abolished now, the next step in the upward march of the human race is to cast off gender role distinctions.
 - a. (The writer appeared to be unaware that slavery still exists. There are, depending on the published estimate you rely on, an estimated 20-70 million slaves in the world today.)
 5. The conclusions of the writer were, in other words: women can teach men in the church; women can lead men in the church; and wives don't need to submit to husbands any more than husbands need to submit to their wives. The husband is no longer head of the wife. (Those things *all* were temporary and culture-based, according to that writer, and no longer to be followed today by Christians in our new, 'more enlightened' age!)
 6. The writer said he no longer considers himself to be head of his household. Consequently, with no one leader in the marriage, if he and his wife disagree on a major decision they bring in a third party to help them decide!

7. I hope that this late-in-life experiment in leaderless marriage goes well for the brother involved. Plenty of non-Christians follow that kind of model, and sometimes it seems to work out for them.
8. However, I advise building *on a more solid foundation*. Let us go back to the Word of God. Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us: “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” (**Ephesians 5:22–24**, NKJV)
 - a. Let us remember that Jesus told the apostles that after he departed, he would send the Holy Spirit. “However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.” (**John 16:13**, NKJV)
 - b. **Question:** Whether you like what Paul says or not, is it not clear what it says and what Paul means here?
 - c. **Question:** Does this strike you as something Paul considered to be a temporary arrangement, that we could change 20 centuries later?
 - d. **Question:** If the apostles were guided into “all truth” by the Holy Spirit, is there more truth that would be revealed later?
 - e. **Question:** Paul said, “the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is head of the church”. If the husband is no longer the head of the wife, *what does that say about Christ and the church???*
 - i. We know the answer: then Christ is no longer head of the church!
 - f. Any person who thinks they can improve on God’s roles of husbands and wives but cutting out Scriptures that address these roles is tampering with the foundation of the family, and the relationship of Christ and the church.
9. Perhaps the most disturbing thing about this is that my daughter told me that there were many posts by older and younger women disciples praising this paper.

- a. **Question:** Why would women who otherwise respect the Bible applaud something that so clearly contradicts what Scripture says?
 - b. **Answer:** Because it removes the clash between the culture and the church. It will be easier to bring their friends to church. The church can now be more palatable to the feminist culture around us today, just like the church caving in on segregation was more palatable to Southern culture in the '50's and '60's.
- vi. There is nothing new here; it is an old problem we were warned about. We should not be surprised when we see this kind of teaching arising in Christian circles.
1. Paul told Timothy, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry." (2 Timothy 4:1-5, NKJV)
 - a. We are to preach the Word of God in season *and out of season* (when it is popular *as well as when it is not*). We don't change the message based on the culture of the day. Preach the Word of God!
 2. Jeremiah described the condition of God's people in his own day with the following words: "An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?" (Jeremiah 5:30-31, NKJV)
 3. Peter told us this old pattern would be repeated in the future. So be prepared, and we should not be surprised. "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction." (2 Peter 2:1, NKJV)

IV. Conclusion

- a. Jesus was hated by the world, because He addressed its sin (the same can be said of John the Baptist and many of the other prophets).
- b. Jesus clearly warns us that those who follow in his steps will be hated by the world, as well.
 - i. Remember, just because you are hated, does not mean you are being like Jesus. Many times Christians are hated or disliked because they are acting unrighteously, including by being religious hypocrites. Be careful not to do that!
- c. *We won't avoid being hated by being extra nice.* If we are courageous enough to address the sins of our age we will be hated, just as He was.
- d. We must resist the temptation to blend in with the culture of this world. This may be easy to see when looking back at the past (segregation in the US South in the '50's and '60's, for example), but harder to see in our own day. This takes tremendous courage, the courage that Jesus had, the prophets had, and many men and women throughout history had. A few individuals took a stand for the gospel, and often paid a great price.
- e. Don't be surprised when you see Christians rejoicing when they find a way to become more popular with the world, and praising those who come up with the justifications. However, a desire to bring others into the faith (or to keep them in the church) can never cause us to reject the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.
- f. We will be hated by the world. Expect it; and deal with it.