

Exegetical Notes, John 15:18-16:6
“The World’s Opinion”

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John 15:18-16:6

Verses 15:18-19

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. ¹⁹ If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.

- Jesus is concerned that his disciples understand the position that they will have in the world’s opinion. Because the world hates Jesus, the world will also hate his followers.
- If the disciples hated the secular world view of those who were not Jesus’ disciples, there would be no conflict between Jesus’ followers and the people of the world. But because the disciples stand in contradiction to the world view of those who do not know Jesus, Jesus’ disciples should not expect to be held high in the opinion of worldly people.
- Because Jesus has picked his disciples to live according to his teaching the world will hate them and persecute them.

Verses 20-21

Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. ²¹ They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me.

- Since the world persecuted Jesus by killing him, and the servant is not greater than his Master, those who belong to Jesus should expect nothing more than persecution from the world.
- Since the world did not listen to Jesus, the world will not listen to his disciples.
- Since the disciples belong to Jesus and are called by his name, those who reject Jesus will reject those who follow him.

Verses 22-25

If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. ²³ *Whoever hates me hates my Father as well.*

²⁴ *If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father.* ²⁵ *But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.*

- If Jesus had not come, the people of the world could have continued in their ignorance to displease the Father. But in his love for them, “God sent his only Son, that whosoever believes in him” should be saved from their error. But the people of the world loved their error more than they loved God. So they rejected the Son and in their rejection of him declared themselves to be in opposition to the will of the Father. Therefore, those who hate Jesus and his teachings, hate the Father.
- All the Father wants to do is save his children. That is why he sent the Son. There is no hateful desire in the action of God. Those who hate Jesus, hate him without reason. They hate him for trying to save them from error.

Verses 26-27

²⁶ *“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me.* ²⁷ *And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.*

- Jesus promises that the Holy Spirit will come (Acts 1:7-8, 2:1-12). The Holy Spirit will affirm all the teachings of Jesus to his disciples, and they will then testify about his love to the people of the world even in face of persecution.

Verse 16:1-4a

“All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. ² *They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God.* ³ *They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me.* ⁴ *I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them.*

- Jesus explains that he is telling all this to his disciples before it happens so that when it does happen they will not forsake their faith in him. The true followers of Jesus will be persecuted for their faith. When that certain persecution comes some will give up and turn back returning to the world and sharing its perspective on Jesus. But the true followers of Jesus will remain in him regardless of what happens to them.

Verses 4b-6

I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, ⁵ but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’

⁶ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things.

- Jesus told his disciples that he did not tell them this before because he was personally with them. But now they needed to know what was ahead of them. He was going back to the Father and the world would turn against them because they were his followers.
- Jesus is amazed that his disciples are unable to focus on the great glory which awaits them because he is going to the Father to prepare a place for them in the presence of God (John 14:1-3). Instead their eyes are focused only on their personal loss; Jesus is going away from them, and the threat of persecution by the world.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *The World's Opinion*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship* & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)