



## WORD

<sup>18</sup>"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup>If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

<sup>20</sup>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 also keep yours." **JOHN 15:18-20**

Jesus knew from personal experience that the world hated Him and persecuted Him. In fact, though He was completely sinless, He was put to death on the cross. Therefore, He gave His disciples a promise—that everyone who follows Jesus will also be hated by the world and persecuted. However, this persecution didn't cause the disciples to shrink back. In fact, the book of Acts shows that persecution caused the gospel to spread with more boldness and fervency. As followers of Jesus, we should know and accept that persecution is part of our calling. It will happen. In this lesson, we will look at why we will be persecuted.

## 1 We are not of this world.

*"They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."* **JOHN 17:16**

Because we belong to God and are becoming more like Him every day, it's important for us to understand that earth is not our home. We don't belong in this world because we belong to God. We don't think or act the way the world does. Instead, we become more like Christ every day. For us, life on earth is not the purpose or end of all life. Where is our citizenship (Philippians 3:20)?

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## 2 We live godly lives.

*Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.* **2 TIMOTHY 3:12**

Because we are not of this world, we ought to live differently than the world does. We ought to live godly lives. And if we do this, the Bible promises that we will be persecuted. Recall a time when you were persecuted or ridiculed because of your faith. What happened?

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## 3 We preach the gospel.

<sup>10</sup>"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. <sup>11</sup>"Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

<sup>12</sup>Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." **MATTHEW 5:10-12**

Because we are followers of Jesus, and we tell others about what He has done for us on the cross, we will be persecuted. But Jesus said that those who will be persecuted are blessed and will receive their eternal reward. How did the early church respond to persecution for the sake of the gospel (Acts 4:29,30)?

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