

THE NATURAL STATE OF SINNERS BEFORE GOD



Jesus said...

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.” -John 15:18-25

In this article our topic will be, *“The Natural State Of Sinners Toward God”*. The Bible teaches that fallen humanity exists in a state of latent hostility, opposition, and hatred toward God. The Scriptures define this universal condition as ‘sin’ and the individuals therein as ‘sinners’. The abject depravity of this sinful condition is described in *Romans 8...*

“...the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” -Romans 8:7-8

Incidentally, the definition of the *Greek* word translated into the *English* word ‘enmity’ is essentially a synonym for *hatred*.

Enmity: (*Greek*) ἔχθρα—Hostility, or hatred (*it is even translated ‘hatred’ in Galatians 5:20 describing the works of the flesh*).

Thus, simply stated, since all sinners possess a *carnal mind—all sinners hate God*.

There is nothing more fundamental to Christianity as the doctrinal truths that sinners are utterly sinful and God is altogether holy. However, I have found there is perhaps nothing more offensive to the ignorant, the unconverted, and the religious hypocrite. Recently, I've also noticed a surprising resistance among professing Christians when this truth is expressed. This reveals an alarming tendency toward self-deception, a state where we blindly say 'Amen' to the Bible in theory, but reject it in practice (Jam 1:22).

In this article, we will methodically go through our text and establish by God's Word, the truth that, until converted, all sinners hate God. Here in John 15, Jesus, speaking to His disciples, answers a question posed by Judas in John 14...

"...Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" -John 14:22

Jesus' response established several absolutes...

THE WORLD HATES GOD

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. " -John 15:18

Here, Jesus clearly establishes that the "world" hates Him. This is an all-inclusive and absolute statement. There are no exceptions inferred from His declaration. Jesus also addresses this elsewhere...

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd." -John 3:20

"The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." -John 7:7

The *world*, all the *world*, everyone and anyone that constitutes the *world*, hates the Lord Jesus: could there be any other explanation? Moreover, the Bible describes the *world's* response to Christ in...

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." -Isaiah 53:3

"...and no man receiveth his testimony." -John 3:32

'Yes', some may ask, 'But, does hatred for Jesus constitute hatred for God?' Considering that all Christians believe that Jesus is deity such a question seems unnecessary, however, Jesus Himself declared...

"He that hateth me hateth my Father also." -John 15:23

So, we establish Biblical fact #1: the world hates God, no exceptions. This leads us to our next question...

WHO THEN, IS THE WORLD?

"...therefore the world hateth you." -John 15:19b

Obviously, the "world" throughout the N.T. always represents the unconverted.

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." -James 4:4

Again, notice the definition of the word 'enemy' in James 4:4...

Enemy: (Greek) ἐχθρός—To hate, hateful, active hostile, usually as a noun, an adversary, enemy, foe.

There are only two classes of people: sinners or saints, believers or unbelievers, the world or the kingdom of God.

"What about those who have not heard?" some may ask.

Jesus, addressing the world in general, declares they have no excuse.

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin." -John 15:22

"If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." -John 15:24

The Scriptures teach that God will reveal Himself to anyone, past, present, or future, who sincerely seeks Him.

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” -Luke 11:9

Moreover, all men have been endowed with a conscience (literally meaning ‘with knowledge’) and the law of God has been engraved on every heart.

“Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another...” -Romans 2:15

There is a creation, therefore, all must conclude there must be a Creator. Intrinsically, because of the inward testimony of conscience, all are universally cognizant of God’s moral law. Thus, God commands men to believe because it is reasonable to do so.

“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse...” -Romans 1:20

Thus, no man has an excuse. All men, at bare minimum, have the testimonies of ‘nature’ and ‘conscience’. If men will properly respond to these testimonies, God can and will reach them. However, as the Bible teaches, the testimony of nature alone is sufficient to condemn sinners. There is the false notion that somehow men cannot be condemned without a chance. Men must have the gospel to be saved, but they don't have to have the gospel to be justly damned. Our condition is not God's fault, but our own. There is no unrighteousness with God, He is not obligated to save, but indeed, has shown Himself merciful and kind by sending Jesus.

What about sincere seekers?

“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” -John 6:44

Now, we must realize, the sinner's heart is not growing from hatred to dislike and then warming to fondness toward God. Conviction is not akin to dating God. It is God, in His mercy, who is drawing sinful man by conviction. Furthermore, when does the sin nature and the carnal mind give way to the new creature? Only at the moment of conversion. And there can be no split allegiances...

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other...” -Matthew 6:24

Middle ground is never tolerated...

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” -Rev. 3:15-16

We either love God or hate God...

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.” -John 14:23-24

IF OBEDIENCE IS *LOVE*, DISOBEDIENCE THEREFORE, MUST LOGICALLY BE *HATRED*

“The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him...” -Psalm 81:15

We cannot reject Christ and at the same time remain neutral toward God. Rejection is hatred.

“He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.” -Luke 11:23

God commands all men everywhere to repent. If they refuse, they are rebels, and rebellion constitutes hatred. Moreover, all men are responsible for the crucifixion of Christ; can we crucify him and not hate Him? True, some may hate God more than others. However, the sinful condition alone amounts to hatred toward God, though sinners are seldom conscious of this fact apart from divine illumination. As I've mentioned, the pure, simple truth of the Bible tends to shock the carnal sensibilities.

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears...” -2 Tim. 4:3

“For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my law.” -Proverbs 4:2

Remember, when Jesus declared to Nicodemus, *‘ye must be born-again’*, He didn't mean it as a compliment to the Pharisee's spirituality. He was pointing out, not only for

Nicodemus but for all men, the absolute necessity of a radical change in our nature if we are truly to know and fellowship with God. Hence, there are many divine purposes for our conversion, but one secondary reason is a need for a moral/spiritual change in our constitution so as to render us capable of truly loving God.

THE WORLD HATES CHRIST'S DISCIPLES

“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” -John 15:19

All sinners, no matter how open or sincere, are by nature opposed to God, His Word, His purposes, and His people. Sin is a willful choice and sinners, by virtue of their own rebellion, have corrupted themselves and become slaves to sin (Jn 8:34; Rom 6:16). Christians are not of this world, therefore, they are hated. Thus, it is utter folly for born-again believers to fully trust their unsaved neighbors, friends and relatives. Blood may be thicker than water but it's not stronger than nature. Consider the crucifixion of Christ: the Gospels reveal that political rivals set aside differences to rally their hatred against the blessed Son of God.

“And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.” -Luke 23:12

WHAT THEN IS MEANT BY HATRED?

“...therefore the world hateth you.” -John 15:19b

Again, so we clearly understand, look at the definition of the word, ‘hateth’ in *Strong's*...

Hateth: (Greek) μισέω—To detest, especially to persecute.

This is a Biblical rule, Christlikeness will garner rejection by those of and influenced by the world.

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” -2 Tim. 3:12

Hatred means just what it implies, latent, dormant hostility that can only be aroused by

a manifestation of the person of Jesus. Hence, this hatred is not a different, special kind of hatred, but in fact, the most heinous form of hatred known to man.

THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF THE SINNER

“But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.” -John 15:21

We've sanitized the words 'sin' and 'sinner' in this hour. We've reduced the meaning of the term sinner to such a degree that men are seen as victims rather than culprits.

“There is a danger in these days of toning down the meaning of the word sin until it means something less altogether than what the Bible teaches, and what God means by sin. Some regard it as a sort of pardonable naughtiness for which men are to be pitied rather than blamed, the result of weakness rather than wickedness, but the Bible teaching is very different. Sin is lawlessness. It is setting up our will against God's will. Sin defies law because it is law; resist restraint because it is restraint; contest authority with God because He is God.” -Thomas Cook

Culpability is the foundation of the sinner's condemned condition. Sinners sin because they love their sin. However, the sinner has no excuse for his sin because God has provided both the remedy and the deliverance for His condition, which is Jesus Christ and His gospel.

Moreover, by nature, the sinner is intrinsically opposed to God...

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” -Ephes. 2:1-3

Listen to the Biblical treatise on the universal condition of the sinner.

“...we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.” -Romans 3:9-18

Amazingly, the same folk who plead for sin and oppose holiness are the same people offended if you really call them ‘sinners’.

FINALLY, SOME PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR GOSPEL PREACHING

“Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.” -Jn 16:1-2b

If we preach the gospel with these things in mind we will face the wrath of the world and religion.

“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.” -Matthew 13:20-21

Offended: (Greek) σκανδαλίζω—To trip up, to stumble, or entice to sin, to apostasy.

If we fail to communicate the gospel truth that sinners are utterly opposed to God we fail to represent God.

“No sermon is of any value or likely to be useful that has not the three R's in it: Ruin by the Fall, Redemption by Christ, Regeneration by the Holy Ghost.” -Wise Old Preacher

First, we must truly be converted and no man can truly be regenerated without a divine revelation of his sinful state before a Holy God. If we are void of this revelation we will fall into one of two errors:

1. We will fail to communicate to those we preach that they are indeed sinners (*and all the implications of being so*).
2. Or we will charge men with being ‘sinners’ but our charge will be leavened and defiled with the hypocrisy of refusing to believe it for ourselves.

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” -1 Cor. 13:1

May God’s Spirit grant us illumination that we may believe His Word and His testimony against sin and sinners.

–B.W.

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