

## 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:13 Spiritual Jealousy Part 2

**David and Saul**—We see how jealousy and disobedience destroyed the life of Saul most clearly in his relationship with David. 1Sam 18:8-9 **8 Then Saul became very angry, for this lyric displeased him; and he said, “They have given David credit for ten thousands, but to me they have given credit for only thousands! Now what more can he have but the kingdom?” 9 And Saul eyed David with suspicion from that day on.** Saul was afraid that David would take the kingdom away from him, but he also saw David as the embodiment of the fact that he had chosen his own sinful way instead of God’s, and that David had chosen to follow God—so God was with David. Saul had turned against God, and was jealous of David, who hadn’t. The lesson is that we must obey God fully, and that means loving our brothers and sisters in Christ, not being jealous of their relationship with God, their gifts or their ministries. Don’t allow a root of bitterness springing up to defile yourself, or others!

**Haman and Mordecai**—It’s interesting that it was Saul’s disobedience in not killing all the Amalekites, and everything that belonged to them, as instructed by God (see 1 Sam 15:9) that almost destroyed the Jewish people years later. We just got through celebrating Purim, the victory by God using Mordecai and Queen Esther over the plot by Haman to destroy the Jewish people using plotting in the court of King Ahasuerus, as related in the Book of Esther. Esther 3:1 indicates that Haman (the prime minister of the Persian king Ahasuerus) was a descendant of Agag. Esther 3:1 **After these events King Ahasuerus honored Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, and promoted him** which means that either a wife or concubine of Agag must have escaped the sword. Now asking Haman not to dislike or even hate the Jewish people whom he must have blamed for the destruction of much of his own people, the Amalekites is a stretch. We cannot expect a whole lot of grace and forgiveness from sinners, folks. There are going to be times that by obeying God, we’re going to have to take stands that are unpopular, and make us look like the bad guys in the eyes of our society. But it’s God’s opinion of what is Good that counts. Even good people, trying to do good things can find themselves working against God if they are operating based on their own view of what is right. **There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end thereof is destruction. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes** is an accusation and condemnation in the Bible, not an accolade or praise!

Saul Paulus

For example, Saul’s namesake, the Saul the Pharisee was very religious who knew the Bible and sincerely believed that the Christian movement was dangerous to Judaism. So he hated Christians and felt justified in persecuting them without mercy. He felt justified in doing Christians harm until one day, on his way from Jerusalem to Damascus, Acts 22:4-8 **I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death and went to bring those people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished. About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute Me? Who are You, Lord? I asked. I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,** He replied. This persecution by outwardly good people who think that they are doing good was also predicted by Jesus in John 16:2 **“the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing God a service”**. Look at the hatred in the name of good, in the name of reducing hate and preventing intolerance that is being practiced against Christians today. As Christians is that we must stand for what is clearly taught in scripture. And sometimes we will be attacked for following the Will of God. But we must always remember that Eph 6:12 **For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.** Our enemies are not the people, but the power that energizes and inspires people to evil, even if that evil is wearing the disguise of “good deeds”. We hate the sin, but love the sinner. We will often be persecuted for telling the truth, for doing the right thing. But don’t let the natural anger at being persecuted turn into hate for sinners. We should not expect logic or reason in the attacks of the enemy. The nature of evil is that it preaches

tolerance of evil until it gains power, and then it tries immediately to destroy good without any regard for tolerance or restraint.

### **Acts 17:5-7 Paul and Silas**

After being presented the Gospel, a choice was demanded. Some chose to follow Jesus, but the ones who did not were not just neutral toward the Christians, they hated them with a spiritual jealousy, formed a mob of wicked men against them, and attacked the house where Paul and Silas were staying in Thessalonica. The lesson for Christians is to trust only in Jesus, and count as brothers and sisters only those who are In Christ, part of the body of Christ, not just religious.

### **That the World Hates You**

What was startling his readers was the hatred they were experiencing from “the world,” their neighbors and fellow countrymen. Taking a stand for Jesus was affecting their careers, their social standing, and their acceptance by their family and friends, and John is trying to make sure that they are not surprised, and are ready for this. How many people have felt in their lives, a feeling of dying to self, of leaving the old life, and the feeling that following Jesus is costing them? Feeling a little like a social outcast, experiencing a pattern of prejudicial treatment and resentment is part of the Christian life. We should never be surprised by negative reactions from the unbelieving world regardless of our good intentions and actions, but if we are not careful, we are. How do we safeguard against this?

### **Count the Cost**

In Luke 14:28-30 Jesus said to Count the Cost. **28 For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who are watching it will begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, ‘This person began to build, and was not able to finish!’** Jesus is saying that following Him as His disciple is going to come with a lot of costs, such as being hated by the world, not being accepted, persecution, prejudicial treatment. Jesus does not want us to be surprised by this, and if we’re not willing to pay these costs, then we cannot be His disciple. There is a “continuous hatred” toward believers by the world, and by the enemy, and it produces pressure, hurt, and destruction. It is the consistent normal response of nonbelieving societies and cultures, as our culture is becoming more and more by the day.

### **Take up your cross, and follow Jesus**

Once you have made this calculation, and know that there will be a cost, in societal standing, in personal autonomy, in having to get off of the throne in your life, then make the decision to follow Jesus in spite of the cost, and you’ll find out with Paul that it is well worth any cost. We never know when we will be called to demonstrate our love for Jesus by suffering, and we must be willing. So, take up the cross that you have been given in your life to bear while you follow the Lord. He will make your burden light, if you let Him. The road will not be easy, but He is going ahead of you, and will be your rear-guard behind you. The Holy Spirit is there to help you along the way, and He has provided brothers and sisters in Christ, also, to walk with you in the Journey. Trust Him. Follow Him, despite the cost.