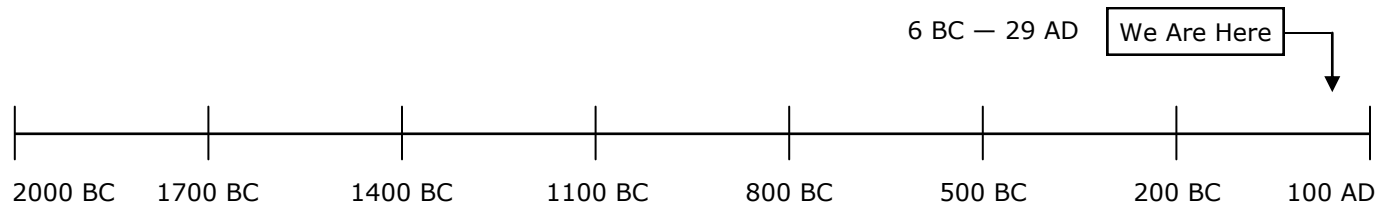


Despised and Rejected

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Week 41: October 8-14 — *The Gospels*

78% Complete — 78 Days to Go



Helpful Resources

Map of Palestine in the Time of Christ (p.119)

Making Sense of It All

- The Big Picture

We are in our third week in the New Testament. Jesus toured through Judea and Samaria, but He focused on Galilee and the surrounding area. He became so popular that He could hardly go anywhere without a crowd watching His every move. The masses were certainly interested, not only because of His healing and profound teaching, but because many caught on that Jesus was the Messiah. However, though Jesus experienced success in His ministry, He also had His naysayers, those who were always skeptical of Him. While many believed that He was the Messiah, more did not; and though He proved it time and time again, their hearts were hard and their minds were closed. Every crowd He encountered was peppered with doubters; every comment was challenged or skewed. Here are a few examples.

1. **The Unpardonable Sin** (*Matt. 9:32-34; 12:22-24, 31, 32*): After the Pharisees watched Jesus exorcise demons, they claimed that He did so by the power of Satan. Once Jesus explained the absurdity of that claim, He went on to express the severity of it, because in crediting the work of the Holy Spirit to the devil, they had committed the unpardonable sin. "Many people reject Christ out of ignorance and will be forgiven by Him, but those who witnessed His miracles first-hand and still blasphemed the Holy Spirit would not be forgiven, for they had rejected the fullest possible revelation" (John MacArthur).
2. **Rejected at Home** (*Matt. 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6*): During His teaching tour, Jesus stopped in His hometown of Nazareth, only to be rejected. Once His friends and family saw the miracles and heard His teaching, they refused to believe that He was anyone special. How could He claim to be God's Son when they had watched Him grow up? Jesus could do no mighty work there. He marveled at their unbelief.
3. **Abandoned by Disciples** (*John 6:6-68*): After Jesus had taught concerning the manna of old and related it to Himself as the "Bread of Life," many of His followers checked out. Not only did the majority of them not get it, if they did get it, they chose not to believe it. Thus, at this point, only a small group of disciples remained with Jesus until the end.
4. **Is He Really the Son of God?** (*John 7:25-36*): The Pharisees and Sadducees tried to convince themselves and the crowds that Jesus was not divine and that His claim to be the Son of God was blasphemy. They did not know Christ because they did not know God.

5. **No Prophet Ever Came from Galilee** (*John 7:52*): While religious leaders claimed the people were ignorant, it was the Pharisees who were ignorant. They never took the time to search out for themselves the fact that the Messiah came from Galilee. In truth, they didn't want to know that it was true; they would rather deceive themselves.
 6. **People of Samaria Refused Him** (*Luke 9:51-56*): The Samaritans were descendants of mixed marriages from the captivity. They were rivals of the Jews and had devised their own worship, a hybrid of Judaism and paganism, with a temple of their own. When Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for worship, it implied that He rejected their temple. Thus, the Samaritans rejected Christ and would not allow Him to minister there.
- Prophetic Passages
 1. **Jesus' Death** (*Matt. 16:21; 17:22, 23; Mark 8:31, 32; 9:30, 32; Luke 9:21, 22*): Though, at this stage in His ministry, no one understood His prediction, Jesus prophesied His crucifixion and resurrection.
 2. **One of You Is a Devil** (*John 6:63-65, 70*): Jesus knew which of His disciples would not believe in Him; He revealed later that it was Judas who would betray Him.
 3. **Transfiguration** (*Matt. 17:1-13*): Jesus gave Peter, James, and John a glimpse into the future, as He was transformed into the state of His final appearance. The presence of the Shekinah Glory of God was revealed through the veil of His flesh. However, it is the presence of Moses and Elijah that provide the prophetic scene, as they represent both the books of the law and the prophets, who foretold of Jesus' redemptive sacrifice.
 - Personal Application
 1. **The Harvest Is Great** (*Matt. 9:36-38*): While we all live in our little corners of the world, while we have personal lives, while we all have families and friends, and while we all work in a specialized field in a certain location, it is our purpose to impact our sphere of influence with the good news. We are called to be workers in the fields. There are to be no spectators. If you're on God's team, then you're in the game. Are you?
 2. **Plenty of Persecution** (*Matt. 10:16-22, 32, 33*): We are told that the world will despise us, because they first despised Christ. When we are faithful to speak out for God, we can be certain that there will be more who stand against us, for the world is full of wicked men; but, we must not back down, for we will be blessed if we are not ashamed.
 3. **Off With Their Heads!** (*Mark 6:14-29*): The martyrdom of John the Baptist is a prime example of how the world responds to those who speak the truth about God. Whether it's in the media or just in your neighborhood, the lost world does not like Christians. They are offended by us because we remind them that there is a God to whom they are accountable, and there is a Christ whom they must accept or reject.

The Bottom Line

Because the world *hated* Christ, it will also *despise* and *reject* His followers.

Questions to Consider

1. What persecution have you experienced? What does not experiencing any tell you?
2. Are you doing your part to gather in the harvest? If not, why not?