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"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

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**Sunday – January 25, 2026**

## **To Know Christ...**

Not everyone loved Jesus, nor did everyone like Jesus. It is rather hard to imagine that a good person would not want to have (at least) a friendly relationship with Jesus. (John 15:14) Yet many hated Him. What could be so repelling about Jesus? The truth that Jesus was sharing unveiled the actions of those who had swerved from the ways of God's commands. The Light of Jesus was exposing those living in the darkness. They were being put to open shame, men who had a reputation for being "religious" or even having "wisdom". They hated Jesus!

Others saw Jesus as a threat to their own [perceived] "power" or "authority". Self-Centered leaders seek to eliminate anyone who might appear to be capturing the hearts and minds of "their" subjects. Rather than transforming into better leaders, they sought to destroy the opponent. Jesus walked among those who did not esteem Him. (Isaiah 53:3 "**He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.**") Can you imagine the life of perfect righteousness and power leading to HATRED by the souls of His own creatures?

At least by the age of 30 (Luke 3:23), Jesus told those in the temple that He would be raised from the dead in three days, but He spoke it in a way that was hidden from the disciples at the time. (John 2:19-22) Jesus was aware that His death would come by being "lifted up" by means of a crucifixion as well. (John 3:13-15) The first plot for Jesus' death came when he was under the age of two, at the unjust plan of Herod. (Matthew 2:16) Can you imagine growing up to have your parents disclose the storyline of the local king seeking your death? Then learning of all the two-year-olds in Bethlehem that were slaughtered, but the Lord delivered you! Nine times, wicked men of the darkness plotted, schemed, and twisted together plans to kill Jesus and were thwarted. (Isa. 8:10) The tenth time would be the killer at Calvary; God's plan was completed. (1 Peter 1:18-21)

How did Jesus endure the daily walk through the midst of all the hatred and evil focused on exterminating the perfectly righteous Son of God by self-seeking and power-hungry sinners? Listen to Jesus ... **“Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”** (Matthew 5:10) Jesus earnestly desired to be eternally blessed with the favor of His Father in the kingdom of heaven! Does your heart and soul desire the same diligent perseverance, no matter what the persecutors might hurl at us? Not everyone loved Jesus; not everyone will love us, but Jesus always loved His Father by keeping His commandments of Love, especially loving His enemies. (Matt. 5:44-48) How about you?

- Carey Terry