

REJECTING JESUS

How do men reject Jesus? What attitudes or activities constitute such rejection? Jesus answers: “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him” (John 12:48a). One need not burn a Bible or murder a Gospel preacher to reject Jesus; if he disregards His Word, he has done it. Regardless of loud claims to the contrary, one does not really believe in Jesus if he consciously rejects any point of teaching of His Word. The only way to truly believe in and follow Jesus is to steadfastly obey His doctrine. There are three common ways in which men disobey the authoritative teaching of Christ:

Doing What He Forbids

These are commonly called “sins of commission.” God said to Adam and Eve, “Do not eat,” but they ate and committed sin (Gen. 2:17–3:8). Jesus said, “Judge not,” and when we become hypocritical and hypercritical judges, we reject His Word and Him (Mat. 7:1–5). The Lord forbids us to lie, to let anger control us, to steal, and to speak corruptly (Eph. 4:25–29). To do such things in spite of His forbidding them is to reject the Lord Himself. Perhaps this is the most obvious way by which men reject Jesus.

Not Doing What He Commands

These constitute “sins of omission.” When the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God through John in refusing to be baptized, they rejected God Himself (Luke 7:30). Like them, many today consider certain commands of God, with which they disagree, to be unreasonable, unnecessary, and foolish, and they treat them with contempt. Jesus said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16). However, men, bound by prejudice and human tradition, reject baptism as a condition of salvation, saying that faith **minus** baptism saves. God’s own people often fail to obey

the Lord's plain commands for us to put His cause absolutely first in all of our interests (Mat. 6:33), to be alert for false teachers (7:15–16), to attempt to make disciples for Him as we go about our daily activities (28:19), to give of our money according to our prosperity (1 Cor. 16:2), and such like. It is not man's place to question God's Word, but to obey it. To reject the commands of the Lord's Word is to reject the Lord Himself.

Usurping His Authority

One way in which men usurp the Lord's authority is by substituting human preferences for Divine requirements. Another way is to add commands or practices God has not authorized. Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for this behavior: "But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (Mat. 15:1–9). The Judaizing teachers in the Jerusalem church insisted on adding circumcision to the Lord's perfect plan of salvation (Acts 15:1), and this attempted usurpation of Divine authority was summarily dealt with (vv. 22–29). Rebellious brethren in the nineteenth century added instrumental music to Christian worship. Currently, liberals in the church are trying to outdo each other in their innovations. To thus usurp Divine authority is to reject Jesus.

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Denton, TX