

## REJECTING JESUS

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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 Bibles, torch church buildings, or murder a Gospel preacher to reject Jesus; if one disregards His Word, he has rejected the Author of that Word. Regardless of loud claims to the contrary, one only professes to believe in Jesus if he consciously rejects the teaching of His Word at any given point. The only way to truly believe in and follow Jesus is steadfastly to obey what He teaches us to do and/or not do. Just as we will keep His commandments if we love Him (**John 14:15**), we will also keep His commandments if we believe in Him. Men reject Jesus when they disobey His authoritative teachings in the following three ways:

### ***By Doing What He Forbids***

Such actions are commonly called "SINS OF COMMISSION," that is, they are sins one overtly commits by doing what Deity proscribes. God said to Adam and Eve, "DO NOT EAT," but they ate and committed sin (**Genesis 2:17 - 3:8**). Jesus said, "JUDGE NOT," and when we become hypocritical and hypercritical judges, we reject His Word and Him (**Matthew 7:1-5**). The Lord, through Paul, forbids us to lie, to let anger control us, to steal, and to speak corruptly (**Ephesians 4:25-29**). Jesus' inspired Word forbids us to "FORSAKE" the assemblies of His church (**Hebrews 10:25**). 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.

### ***By Not Doing What He Commands***

"SINS OF OMISSION" require little or no action. These sins occur when men neglect or omit doing what the Lord requires. When the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God through John by 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. Such behavior and teaching equals blatant rejection of the Son of God.

God's own people often fail to obey the Lord's explicit commands for us to put His cause first in all of our interests (**Matthew 6:33**), 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 Corinthians 16:2**), and many other requirements.

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The Lord orders us to be alert for false teachers (**7:15-16**) and, when we discover them, to withhold our fellowship, encouragement, and endorsement from them (**Romans 16:17-18; Ephesians 5:7, 11; 2 John 9-11**). In recent years, a large number of brethren, at one time sound in the faith, have consciously rejected the foregoing fellowship restrictions of Holy Writ. They have done so very selectively in respect to one false teacher, brother Dave Miller. Instead of loving this brother enough to reprove him and seek his repentance, they have added sin to sin by whitewashing his errors and by continuing to associate amicably with him and praise him. By thus failing to obey His Word, those who thus behave have rejected the Lord Himself, as surely as the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees did in the first century.

James described this means of rejecting Jesus: "TO HIM THEREFORE THAT KNOWETH TO DO GOOD, AND DOETH IT NOT, TO HIM IT IS SIN" (**4:17**). To fail to do what the Lord commands us to do is to reject the Lord Himself.

### By Usurping His Authority

A usurper is one who expropriates, seizes, or takes possession of that which does not belong to him. One way in which men usurp the Lord's authority is by substituting human preferences for Divine requirements. Another way is by adding commands or practices God has not authorized, Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees for such usurpation: "BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS THEIR DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN" (**Matthew 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 the Holy Spirit summarily dealt with this attempted usurpation of Divine authority (**vv. 22-29**). Rebellious brethren in the nineteenth century added instrumental music to Christian worship. Currently, liberals in the church are racing to outdo each other in the innovations they are foisting upon the church. To thus usurp Divine authority is to reject Jesus.

The Lord allows men to reject Him by rejecting His Word. However, those who reject him find that they were sadly (and eternally) mistaken as the Lord will nonetheless judge them by the very Word they rejected: "THE WORD THAT I SPAKE, THE SAME SHALL JUDGE HIM IN THE LAST DAY" (**John 12:48:b**).