

Lesson 10 2 October, 2011

Jesus Is Rejected

Lesson Scope: *Mark 11 and 12*

Lesson Focus

"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" was the cry of the crowd as Jesus descended from Bethphage and entered Jerusalem. Because it was Passover season, thousands of Jews from many nations were at Jerusalem. Jesus had clearly demonstrated divine authority both by His teaching and by His mighty works. Now the crowd proclaimed Him to be the long-expected King.

Jesus was entering the final week before His crucifixion. During this week, Jesus' cleansing of the temple further estranged the priests, scribes, and elders. His parable of the vineyard incited them to "lay hold on him," but they "feared the people." The Jewish leaders interrogated Him on taxes, the resurrection, and the greatest commandment. Their opposition was intense enough that the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians laid aside their differences to coordinate a plan to get rid of Him.

The subject of this lesson is the very core of our faith and practice. To accept Christ's authority is to be Christian, but to refuse it is to be heathen.

Accepting Christ's authority as divine makes the Bible the authoritative rule of our lives. We live in a time when society accepts fewer and fewer absolutes.

Accepting divine authority provides an anchor that imparts spiritual stability.

Accepting or rejecting Jesus' authority is a personal choice. Christ will, however, judge all men according to how they responded to His authority.

The Jewish leaders graphically illustrate the course of those who reject Christ: They refuse God's offer of reconciliation, they sacrifice others for their own benefit, and they finally seal their own doom.

Christ's authority is from God. Those who reject Christ and His Word will be judged by His Word in the last day.

Lesson Aim: To discern characteristics of those who reject divine authority.

Theme Verse: *John 12:48.* He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, has one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

Lesson Text

They Feared Him

Mark 11:15-18. And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; *16.* and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.*17.* And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves. *18.* And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

They Questioned Him

Mark 11:2-33. And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, *28.* And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? *29.* And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. *30.* The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me. *31.* And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? *32.* But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. *33.* And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

They Rejected Him

Mark 12:1-12 And he began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. *2.* And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. *3.* And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. *4.* And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. *5.* And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. *6.* Having yet therefore one son, his wellbeloved, he sent him also

last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. *7.* But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. *8.* And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. *9.* What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. *10.* And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: *11.* This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? *12.* And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

Questions for Study

They Feared Him

1. Explain Jesus' declaration "Ye have made it a den of thieves" (Mark 11: 17).
2. Why did the elders fear Jesus?
3. How might we trade spiritual values for personal interests?

They Questioned Him

4. Were the questions asked in verse 28 legitimate? Explain.
5. What are some indicators that a person is rejecting truth?

They Rejected Him

6. Identify the characters in the parable.
7. Why did the husbandman refuse to send fruit?
8. What does this parable reveal about the rebellious?
9. What is the end of those who reject divine authority?

Analyzing the Passage

Pilgrims came from many countries to observe the Passover, bringing their native currency to pay the required half-shekel temple tribute (Exodus 30:13-15). The moneychangers exchanged foreign currency for the official coinage of the sanctuary. The Jewish leaders used these services of the temple to enrich themselves, unfairly treating the pilgrims, who were at their mercy.

"Who gave thee this authority?" The religious leaders had both the right and the responsibility to monitor those who taught in the temple. In this case, they were attempting to gather evidence to be used against Jesus (Mark 11:18).

The use of a vineyard as an illustration was familiar to the Jewish leaders (Isaiah 5:1-7). The husbandman withheld the fruit, rejected the servants,

and killed the Son in an attempt to claim the vineyard for themselves. The leaders clearly understood the message Jesus spoke (12:12), but rather than repent, they sought to eliminate Him.

Principles and Applications

They Feared Him

1. Those who reject divine authority are willing to desecrate sacred things for the sake of earthly gain (Mark 11:15). Esau sold his birthright to satisfy his physical appetite. In our time, the Lord's Day is becoming one of the most important days of the week for business. Are we able to resist the temptation to accept business-related phone calls on Sunday? Can we discipline our minds in worship services so that we are not distracted by thoughts about finances?

2. Those who take unfair advantage of others show a wrong attitude toward God (Mark 11:17). A business deal that seems shrewd to the one who made it might look quite otherwise to God. He who "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good" (Matthew 5:45) commands us to treat others as we would have them treat us (Matthew 7:12). He fully knows our every motive and intention.

3. The rebellious are willing to sacrifice truth to protect their own reputation (Mark 11:18). What is our response when we discover that we are wrong? Does the question "What will others think?" drive our decisions? Are we willing to do what is right, even if doing so makes us appear odd? Can we admit it when we were wrong and then promptly and meekly adjust our position?

They Questioned Him

4. When they reject divine authority, people begin to question obvious truth (Mark 11:28). Pilate asked, "What is truth?" To ignore known truth renders one unable to discern. We will find it easy to discredit the decisions of church leaders if we do not accept their authority. This will eventually progress to doubting the validity of foundational doctrines such as nonresistance, nonconformity, and the ordinances.

5. Those who reject God often hide behind a pretense of ignorance (Mark 11:31-33). Claiming ignorance may seem to allow escape from responsibility, but the accountability remains. At some point, every soul will stand before God and give account on the basis of what he actually knew or could have known.

6. People who reject divine authority fear men (Mark 11:32). Confidence comes only by trusting in Someone greater than we are. "In the fear of the

LORD is strong confidence" (Proverbs 14:26), but "the fear of man bringeth a snare" (Proverbs 29:25).

They Rejected Him

7. Those who reject divine authority withhold what rightfully belongs to God (Mark 12:2-8). By keeping the fruit for themselves, the husbandman challenged the ownership of the vineyard. Romans 12:1 calls us to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Our possessions also rightfully belong to God. Giving sacrificially in the church offering or donating equipment to help someone in an emergency expresses the attitude that we are merely stewards of what actually belongs to God.

8. Those who reject divine authority seal their own doom (Mark 12:9). "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). God patiently delays judgment, inviting all to repentance and mercy. To refuse that mercy is to choose the only alternative—divine justice. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

9. The rebellious refuse God's efforts to help them (Mark 12:12). How it must grieve the Lord to see people refuse His offer of mercy. Short of forcing them to do right, He has done everything possible for their salvation. Are we using His provisions for our help—the Word and the fellowship of the brotherhood?

Important Teachings

1. Those who reject divine authority are willing to desecrate sacred things for the sake of earthy gain (Mark 11:15).

2. Those who take unfair advantage of others show a wrong attitude toward God (Mark 11:17).

3. The rebellious are willing to sacrifice truth to protect their own reputation (Mark 11:18).

4. When they reject divine authority, people begin to question obvious truth (Mark 11:28).

5. Those who reject God often hide behind a pretense of ignorance (Mark 11:31-33).

6. People who reject divine authority fear men (Mark 11:32).

7. Those who reject divine authority withhold what rightfully belongs to God (Mark 12:2-8).

8. Those who reject divine authority seal their own doom (Mark 12:9).

9. The rebellious refuse God's efforts to help them (Mark 12:12).

Answers to Questions

1. Explain Jesus' declaration: "Ye have made it a den of thieves" (Mark 11:17).

The temple was to be a place where the people could come and worship, but some had made it a place of commerce and unfair dealings. They set the standard for the animals used for sacrifices; they set the exchange rate for foreign currency; and pilgrims were at their mercy.

2. Why did the elders fear Jesus?

They feared because of the people's favorable response to Jesus' teaching. They believed that Jesus' exposure of the wickedness in their hearts might turn the people against them. They feared to destroy Jesus, lest they cause an uproar among the people.

3. How might we trade spiritual values for personal interests? In church life we may feel envious of a brother's gift or spiritual accomplishments and become resentful and distant toward him. We might pass along damaging information about someone else in order to make self appear better. We might compromise safe lines of fellowship for the sake of keeping good relationships.

4. Were the questions asked in verse 28 legitimate? Explain.

The questions in themselves were legitimate. In this case, they were not posed in sincerity. This became evident in the exchange that followed. Aside from this, Jesus had clearly demonstrated who He was both by His teaching and by His works.

5. What are some indicators that a person is rejecting truth?

Sometimes truth rejecters respond with mocking and open opposition toward those who identify with the Bible. Others quietly ignore truth and pursue their own selfish course. Others love to challenge authority and to debate spiritual issues, but their mind is already set on its own way.

6. Identify the characters in the parable.

The man who owned the vineyard represents God; He carefully selected and prepared a people for Himself. The husbandmen were Israel's leaders—kings, judges, scribes, and Pharisees. The servants were prophets who reminded Israel of her obligation to bear fruit unto God. The son is none other than Jesus Christ.

7. Why did the husbandmen refuse to send fruit?

They refused to accept the fact that the vineyard did not belong to them. They were rebellious, scheming to secure ownership of the vineyard.

8. What does this parable reveal about the rebellious?

It shows us their view of themselves. They will knowingly preserve self-

interest and attempt to remove anyone in the way of that interest. It teaches that they will dare to keep for themselves what belongs to God. It shows that rebellion is a progressive disease that makes them ever more bold in wrongdoing.

9. What is the end of those who reject divine authority?

"He will come and destroy the husbandmen." By refusing God's attempts to help them, the rebellious seal their own doom.

Summarizing the Lesson

"And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matthew 21:44). All of us must face the choice of how we will respond to Jesus' authority. We have sufficient evidence from His teaching and His mighty works to know that His authority is divine. Rejecting Christ's authority will lead us on a path that ends in doom. Accepting His authority allows us to benefit from the spiritual blessings He provides.

Research Guide

In Nave's Topical Bible, read the passages listed under "Contingencies. In Divine Government of Man."