

# The Greatest Life Ever Lived

A Study in the Incarnate Life of Jesus Christ and An Exposition of the Four Gospels

LESSON XXIV: JESUS' FIRST PASSOVER - JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

Matthew	Mark	Luke	John 2:12-22	related passages
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“This new section runs to the end of the fourth chapter, and gives an account of the first great series of public manifestations on the part of Christ (1) in Jerusalem, (2) in Judea, (3) in Samaria, (4) in Galilee.” [Dods, *Gk NT*]

**v12 After this He went down to Capernaum, He, and His mother, and His brethren, and His disciples: and they continued there not many days. :** The preceding events probably took place in Feb - Mar AD 27, now John says “after this ...”, meaning after the first miracle in Cana. After Cana Jesus traveled to Capernaum for a short time (v12) then attended the Passover service in Jerusalem (v13) around April. Nazareth is on higher ground so Jesus went *down* to the lower levels of the lake-side until they reached Capernaum (probably modern day Khan Minyeh, where the road to Damascus leaves the lake side and turns north). “Here two of the disciples lived: John and James, the sons of Zebedee and Salome. It is not strange, therefore, that the Lord made a brief visit here before journeying to Jerusalem. From what we read in the final clause of verse 12, and He stayed there for a few days, it hardly seems to follow that the family *moved* to Capernaum at this time. [Hendriksen, *John*]

Note those who went with Jesus to Capernaum: His disciples, His mother and His *brothers* (James, Joses, Jude and Simon, Mk 6:3). Some say “His brothers” are a reference to His followers, since all believers are “brothers and sisters” in the family of God. Here both His disciples and His brothers are mentioned, making a difference. Some differing beliefs concerning the Lord’s brothers: (1) they were Joseph’s sons by his first wife, (2) they were cousins of the Lord, (3) they were children of Joseph and Mary. “From the manner in which His brothers are here mentioned along with His mother the natural inference is that they were of the same father and probably of the same mother.” [Dods, *Gk NT*] “The arguments for their being our Lord’s uterine brothers are numerous, and *taken collectively*, to an unprejudiced mind almost irresistible, although singly they are open to objection.... He thus utters in the Scriptures an eternal protest against all Mariolatry.” [Van Doren, *John*] “How could our Lord have been, through Joseph, the heir of David’s throne (according to the genealogies), if Joseph had elder sons? And again, What became of the six young motherless children when Joseph and the Virgin went first to Bethlehem, and then into Egypt, and why are the elder sons not mentioned on the occasion of the visit to the Temple?” [Edersheim, *Life of Messiah*] We believe Mary and Joseph had normal marital relations after the virgin birth of Christ and Jesus had half-brothers and half-sisters (the same mother but a different Father). This is a proof-text against the perpetual virginity of Mary.

**v13 And the Jews’ Passover was at hand, :** “Every male Jew, from the age of twelve and up, was expected to attend *the Passover* at Jerusalem, a feast celebrated to commemorate the deliverance of the people of Israel from Egyptian bondage. On the tenth of the month Abib or Nisan (which generally corresponds to our March, though its closing days sometimes extend into our April) a male lamb, of the first year, without blemish, was taken, and on the fourteenth day, between three and six o’clock in the afternoon, it was killed. The elaborate evening celebration of the feast in the days of our Lord’s sojourn included the following elements:

- A prayer of thanksgiving by the head of the house; drinking the first cup of wine. Other cups were emptied as the feast proceeded.
- The eating of bitter herbs, as a reminder of the bitter slavery in Egypt.
- The *son’s* enquiry, ‘Why is this night distinguished from all other nights?’ and the *father’s* appropriate reply, either narrated or read.
- The singing of the first part of the Hallel (Pss. 113, 114) and the washing of hands.
- The carving and eating of the lamb, together with unleavened bread. The lamb was eaten in commemoration of what the fathers had been commanded to do in the night when the Lord smote all the first-born of Egypt and delivered His people. (See Ex. 12 and 13.) The unleavened bread was a memorial of the first days of the journey during which this *bread of haste* had been eaten by the ancestors. It was also an emblem of purity.
- The continuation of the meal, each one eating as much as he liked, but always last of the lamb.
- The singing of the last part of the Hallel (Pss. 115-118).

The day on which the lamb was killed was followed by the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread, celebrated from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of Nisan. So very close was the connection between the Passover-meal proper and the immediately following Feast of Unleavened Bread that the term *Passover* is frequently used to cover both. Thus, in Luke 22:1 — a very significant passage — we read: ‘Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, *which is called the Passover.*’ Also in Acts 12:3,4 the term *Passover* clearly covers the entire seven-day festival. The Old Testament, too, calls the Passover *a feast of seven days* (Ezek 45:21).”

[Hendriksen, *John*]

“This was the first Passover after Christ’s baptism. The second is mentioned, Luke 6:1. The third, John 6:4. And the fourth, which was that at which He was crucified, John 11:55. From which it appears, 1. That our blessed Lord continued His public ministry about three years and a half, according to the prophecy of Daniel, Daniel 9:27. And, 2. That, having been baptized about the beginning of His thirtieth year, He was crucified precisely in the middle of His thirty-third.” [Clarke, *Commentary*] “Only John mentions this earliest Passover of Christ’s ministry. The Synoptists relate no incident of His ministry in Judaea, and but for the narrative of John, it could not be positively asserted that Jesus went up to Jerusalem during His public life until the time of His arrest and crucifixion.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

**and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.** : that Jesus went *up* is true in the literal sense since Capernaum is 680' below sea level (around the Sea of Galilee) to Jerusalem which is 2500' above sea level, but it is often said people go *up* to Jerusalem in a spiritual or religious sense as well.

**v14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:** : “Temple: The most celebrated building the world has ever seen. First erected by Solomon, King Hiram, of Tyre, builder, in 7½ years. Stood on Mount Moriah on the spot selected by God Himself. An enlarged pattern of the Tabernacle: exactly double its dimensions. Description of this famous structure given in 1 Kings 6; 2 Chron 3. Plundered by Shishak, King of Egypt, 30 years after its erection (1 Kings 14:25). Destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar 588 BC, having stood 424 years. Lay in ruins 52 years. Rebuilt by Zerubbabel, under Cyrus. The people wept, remembering the glory of the first temple.... Zerubbabel’s temple rebuilt, enlarged, elevated, and beautified by Herod.” [Van Doren, *John*]

This is a similar fact to that mentioned Matthew 21:12; Mark 11:15; Luke 19:45. Some take the two cleansings to be the same incident. I find it easier to accept this incident was early in Christ’s ministry then repeated during His last visit to the Temple during the Passion Week. Note that when the Passover is near, He goes up to Jerusalem (2:13) and casts the traders out of the temple (2:15,16). At the Passover He works many miracles (2:23). While He is in Jerusalem, He does not leave till Nicodemus comes to him by night (3:1,2). John 3:2 contains a reference to John 2:23. After these things Jesus departs from Jerusalem, dwells and baptizes in Judea (3:22). All these incidents take place before John was cast into prison (3:24). When asked by what authority He did these things, He here mentions His resurrection (destroy this temple, v19) but at the cleansing during the Passion Week when the Jewish leaders asked the same question, Jesus answers by asking them where John the Baptist received His authority. The second cleansing of the temple happens most clearly during the last week of our Lord’s life, after the death of the Baptist, and at a time when it would be absurd to say that afterwards Jesus dwelt and baptized in Judea. “The vindication of God’s house from profanation was the first and the last care of our Lord; and it is probable He began and finished His public ministry by this significant act....It certainly appears that John directly asserts an early cleansing of the temple, by the series of his history; as the other three evangelists assert a later cleansing of it. And though the act mentioned here seems to be nearly the same with that mentioned by the other evangelists, yet there are some differences. St. John alone mentions the scourge of rushes, and the casting out of the sheep and oxen. Besides, there is a considerable difference in our Lord’s manner of doing it: in the cleansing mentioned by the three evangelists, He assumes a vast deal of authority, and speaks more pointedly concerning Himself, than He appears to do in this cleansing mentioned by St. John: the reason which has been given is, In the first cleansing He was just entering upon His public ministry, and therefore avoided (as much as was consistent with the accomplishment of His work) the giving any offense to the Jewish rulers; but, in the last cleansing, He was just concluding his ministry, being about to offer up His life for the salvation of the world, in consequence of which He speaks fully and without reserve.” [Clarke, *Commentary*] “Many scholars consider this the same incident as that in the Synoptic Gospels and placed by them in Passion Week probably on Monday. It is urged that Jesus would not have repeated such an act and hence one must follow either the order of John or of the Synoptics. But there is no inherent difficulty in the repetition of such an act when one reflects on the natural indignation of Jesus at the desecration of the temple on His visit during His ministry and considers that Jesus may have wished to make one last protest at the close of His ministry. Certainty, of course, is not possible in such an argument one way or the other.” [Robertson, *Harmony*]

Many animals would be sacrificed during the Passover, and for those traveling long distances, the bringing of their sacrifice would be very difficult or even impossible at times. The selling of the animals to these travelers therefore possibly was begun out of necessity and had grown into a profiteering racket. “It was of course a great convenience to the worshipers to be able to procure on the spot all requisites for sacrifice. Some of them might not know what sacrifice was required for their particular offense, and though the priest at their own home might inform them, still the officiating examiner in the Temple might reject the animal they brought as unfit; and probably would, if it was his own interest to have the worshipers buying on the spot.... This Temple tyranny and monopoly and these exorbitant charges naturally tended to make the Temple worship hateful to the people; and besides, the old charm of sacrifice, the free offering by a penitent of what he knew and cherished, the animal that he valued because he had watched it from its birth, and had tested its value in the farm work — all this was abolished by this ‘convenient’ abuse.” [Dods, *Gk NT*] “Now at this occasion Jesus, entering Jerusalem’s temple, notices that the court of the Gentiles had been changed into what must have resembled a stockyard. There was the stench and the filth, the bleating and the lowing of animals, destined for sacrifice.... And then there were the money-changers, sitting cross-legged behind their little coin-covered tables. They gave the worshiper lawful, Jewish coin in exchange for foreign currency. It must be borne in mind that only Jewish coins were allowed to be offered in the temple, and every worshiper — women, slaves, and minors excepted — had to pay the annual temple tribute of half a shekel (cp Ex 30:13).” [Hendriksen, *John*]

“The whole of this traffic — money-changing, selling of doves, and market for sheep and oxen — was in itself, and from its

attendant circumstances, a terrible desecration; it was also liable to gross abuses. But ... what became of the profits of the money-changers, and who were the real owners of the Temple-market? ... There can be little doubt, that this market was what in Rabbinic writing is styled 'the Bazaars of the sons of Annas', the sons of that High-Priest Annas, who is so infamous in New Testament history.... Of the avarice and corruption of this infamous High-Priestly family, alike Josephus and the Rabbis give a most terrible picture. Josephus describes Annas (or Ananus), the son of the Annas of the New Testament, as 'a great hoarder up of money,' very rich, and as despoiling by open violence the common priests of their official revenues. The Talmud also records a curse ... pronounced upon the High-Priestly families (including that of Annas), who were 'themselves High-Priests, their sons treasurers, their sons-in-law assistant-treasurers, while their servants beat the people with sticks.' " [Edersheim, *Life of Messiah*]

Practical: Compare this with the time of Samuel when Eli's sons made people abhor the tabernacle service and God's name was mocked. "The sin of the young men [Eli's sons] was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord. (1 Sam 2:17) People despised the offering of worship because Eli's sons had perverted the tabernacle service. Compare similar events happening today: swindlers on religious TV and radio, fleecing people of money in the name of Christ. It is little wonder Christianity has no power or is mocked; if I was lost, I would mock it too! But if that is your state, note that while man has perverted the true worship:

- it is not acceptable to God and He will take vengeance in His own time
- sinful man twisting the Lord's work does not mean the Lord has changed and that He is not holy

Perhaps you say, "But they're wrong, it's not the way things should be!" — you're right. *But look past that for your own spiritual welfare.* One that rejected the OT sacrificial system turned their backs on God ... and although they had their reasons to do so, they still ended up the loser. If you turn your back on Christ today because of how some have perverted His church today, *YOU* are ultimately the loser in the decision. God will judge those men, but God will judge you for not turning to Christ. Their mishandling of God's word will not serve as a viable excuse for you. Turn to the Truth despite them. **Don't let men's perversions prevent you from coming to the Cross!**

"Those that sold: the article defines them as a well-known class." [Vincent, *Word Studies*] Wuest: *And He found seated in the outer courts of the temple those who were in the habit of selling oxen and sheep and doves, and those who for a fee exchanged one type of money for another.*

Changers of money. Only here in the New Testament.... Hence *changers of money* means, strictly, *dealers in small change*.... The money-changers opened their stalls in the country towns a month before the feast. By the time of the first arrivals of Passover-pilgrims at Jerusalem, the country stalls were closed, and the money-changers sat in the temple (see on Matthew 17:24; 21:12; Mark 11:15)." [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

**v15, 16 And when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not My Father's house an house of merchandise. :** Jesus made a whip out of small pieces of rope, which wouldn't be difficult to find with so many animals around. With this whip, Jesus drove all the racketeers and animals out of the temple. Jesus then turned over the money-changers tables, scattering coins everywhere. He commanded those who sold the pigeons to take the crates in which they were kept out of the temple. Humanly speaking, quite a feat for a single man. "Obviously one man with such a small armament could not prevail physically over a crowd of traders. There can be little doubt that He had an ally in the consciences of the traders. They knew deep down that whatever the legalities, they should not have been there. Had they combined to resist Jesus, it is not easy to see on the human level how He could have overcome them. But His selfless anger and their uneasy fears combined. They fled before His onslaught." [Morris, *John*]

Jesus made a whip not of rushes, but of ropes made of rushes. In the account of Paul's shipwreck, the same word is used for the ropes used to hold the lifeboat to the ship in the storm (Acts 27:32). "The cord may have been used in binding or driving cattle. Not the *instrument* so much as the *emblem* of His Divine displeasure.... He bore the symbol, but did not use it; the rod is ever in His hands, and love ever in His heart. Sinners prepare the scourge with which they are driven by *conscience*. The time to scourge the wicked had not yet arrived.... The glory that was full of *grace*, was also full of *truth*." [Van Doren, *John*] "Having made a scourge of rushes (which were strewed on the ground,) He drove all out of the temple, (that is, the court of it,) both the sheep and the oxen. Though it does not appear that He struck even them; and much less, any of the men. But a terror from God, it is evident, fell upon them." [Wesley, *Commentary*]

"If there be those found in the sacred name of religion who sell *indulgences* and place *a market price on all ordinances of God's house*, then do we see in our age a Church of God changed into a 'den of thieves'." [Van Doren, *John*]

"He publically calls God His Father, which, to those wicked Jews, was a compound blasphemy, in that He claimed to be both the Messiah and the Son of God!" [Van Doren, *John*]

Drove out = literally *cast out*.

Make not = *stop making*, present continued tense.

**v17 And His disciples remembered that it was written, :** quoting from Ps 69:9. It was written = literally, *it stands written*.

**The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up. :** jealousy for the honor of God's house. "Zeal to promote Thy glory, and to keep Thy

worship pure.” “It was a scene of violence: the traders trying to protect their property, cattle rushing hither and thither, men shouting and cursing, the money changers trying to hold their tables as Jesus went from one to another upsetting them. It was indeed so violent a scene that the disciples felt somewhat scandalized until they remembered, then and there, not afterwards, that it was written: *the zeal of Thine house hath eaten Me up*, words which are found in the sixty-ninth Psalm... The disciples saw in their Master’s act a consuming zeal for God’s house. It was this zeal which always governed Christ. He could not stand by and wash His hands of other men’s sins. It was this which brought Him to this world and to the cross. He had to interfere.” [Dods, *Gk NT*]

The sense of being consumed is that it will be what will eventually lead to His death. “The evangelist also states that the disciples came to associate what Jesus was doing with the prophetic words of Psalm 69:9, ‘Zeal for thy house will consume me’, thereby bringing the cleansing of the temple into close connection with the necessity for Jesus’ death.... John records that, when the disciples reflected on the drastic action of their Master, they became more and more convinced that His zeal for purity of worship was one of the necessary reasons for His death. His zeal for God’s house was bound to lead to His own destruction.” [Tasker, *John*] “The action of Jesus as against the rulers must develop into a life-opposition; their first step against Him must lead on to the least in His condemnation to the Cross.” [Edersheim, *Life of Messiah*]

**v18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? :** “At ver. 18 the cleft begins to open between faith and unbelief. In the act in which the disciples had seen the fulfillment of a Messianic Psalm, the Jews see only an unauthorized interference and assumption of authority. Characteristically they ask for a sign.... The fact that Jesus by one blow accomplished a much needed reform of an abuse over which devout men must often have sighed and which perhaps ingenuous Levites had striven to keep within limits, the fact that this unknown youth had done what none of the constituted authorities had been able to do, was surly itself the greatest sign.... But this blindness is characteristic. They never see that Jesus Himself is the great sign, but are always craving for some extraneous testimony” [Dods, *Gk NT*] “A sign? Were not the selfish crew driven out by an humble Nazarene? A sign? Were not the Jews paralyzed before the power of the terrible One? A sign? Had not their fleeing, like a flock of timorous sheep, proved a sign? A sign? Could they not hear His word thundering in their consciences? Alas! They stifled their convictions, although quaking under His power. They demanded, like the reckless scoffer, *miracle to be proved by miracle.*” [Van Doren, *John*] “Then answered the Jews: Either some of those whom He had just driven out, or their friends. What sign showest thou?: So they require a miracle, to confirm a miracle!” [Wesley, *Commentary*]

**v19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. :** destroy = literally, *loosen*. Wycliffe: *undo*. “The Jews would bring about His death, and on the third day He would rise. Ironically they would themselves be the means of bringing about the sign they were demanding. Another irony is that when the sign in fact came, they did not recognize it, because they refused to recognize the resurrection.” [Morris, *John*]

It is important to note that two words are used in the passage for “temple”. The word in v14,15 the word is hierōn, used to describe the outer court of the Temple, the court of the Gentiles, the whole of the temple precincts. The word used here and in vss 20,21 the word is naon meaning the inner shrine or sanctuary, the area where God dwelt. Wuest: (v14) *And He found seated in the outer courts of the temple those who were in the habit of selling oxen and sheep and doves...* (v19) *Answered Jesus and said to them, You destroy this inner sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.*

Some take Jesus to have made some indication of what He was talking by perhaps pointing to His body when He spake, “destroy this temple,” : “*This temple*: doubtless pointing, while He spoke, to His body, the temple and habitation of the Godhead.” [Wesley, *Commentary*] “*Destroy this temple*: this very temple; perhaps pointing to His body at the same time.” [Clarke, *Commentary*] This is possible but not probable since none there understood the saying, and it was not until after the resurrection that the disciples understood (v22). “The saying was meant to be enigmatical. Jesus spoke in parables when He wished to be understood by the spiritual and to baffle the hostile. Those who cross-questioned Him and treat His as a subject to be investigated find no satisfaction.... For Himself they meant: ‘Destroy this body of mine in which dwells the Father and I will raise it in three days.’ He said this, knowing they would not now understand Him, but that this would be the great sign of His authority.” [Dods, *Gk NT*]

Jesus’ remarks were heard and misunderstood, but they were remembered. Three years later at His trial, there came forth those that took these words and twisted them, either intentionally or just because they were misunderstood as it was given, and as time went on, this and that was added to the saying as different people remembered it differently. In fact, the testimonies conflicted with each other (Mk 14:58; Mt 26:61). Even on the cross this was used to mock Jesus (Mt 27:40). *But it was remembered!*

“He now *purges* what they had *defiled*; He will *raise* what they had *destroyed*.” [Van Doren, *John*]

**v20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? :** “Thou: the position of the Greek pronoun makes it emphatic.” [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

“The Temple was begun to be rebuilt in the eighteenth year of Herod’s reign that is the autumn of 734-735. In Jewish reckoning the beginning of a year was reckoned one years. Thus forty-six years might bring us to the autumn of 779 and the Passover of 780, i.e., 27 AD would be regarded as forty-six years from the rebuilding.” [Dods, *Gk NT*] “Forty and six years: just so many years before the time of this conversation, Herod the Great had begun his most magnificent preparation of the temple, (one part after another,) which he continued all his life, and which was now going on, and was continued thirty-six years longer, till within six or seven years of the destruction of the state, city, and temple by the Romans.” [Wesley, *Commentary*] “The temple of which the Jews spake was begun to be rebuilt by Herod the Great, in the 18th year of his reign. But though he finished the main work in nine years and a half, yet some additional buildings or repairs were constantly carried on for many years afterwards. Herod began the



work sixteen years before the birth of our Lord: the transactions which are here related took place in the thirtieth year of our Lord, which make the term exactly forty-six years. Josephus has told us that the whole of the buildings belonging to the temple were not finished till Nero's reign, when Albinus, the governor of Judea, was succeeded by Gessius Florus, which was eighty years after the eighteenth year of Herod's reign." [Clarke, *Commentary*]

**v21 But He spake of the temple of His body. :** "He: emphatic, and marking the contrast between the deeper meaning of Jesus and the literalism of the Jews and of His disciples.... For other illustrations of John's pointing out the meaning of words of Jesus which were not at first understood, see 7:39; 12:33; 21:19." [Vincent, *Word Studies*]

**v22 When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. :** the word = the saying just uttered concerning the destruction of the temple. "They believed the scripture: The scripture which the evangelist immediately refers to may have been Psalm 16:10. Compare this with Acts 2:31, 32, and with Acts 13:35-37. See also Psalm 2:7, and compare it with Hebrews 1:5, and Hebrews 5:5, and with Acts 13:33. They understood these scriptures in a sense in which they never before understood them..... It is the property of many prophecies never to be understood except by their accomplishment; but these are so marked that, when their fulfillment takes place, they cannot be misunderstood, or applied to any other event." [Clarke, *Commentary*]



**The thrust of this passage in relation with the resurrection is one of authority, the right to command and do.** "The Jews, it seems, did not question His right to perform such an act, provided He was a true prophet. They only demanded some sign of His authority." [Davis, *Harmony*] "The Jews recognized the Messianic significance of what Jesus had done. Interestingly, they did not question the deed itself, but Jesus' right to do it.... So they asked Jesus for a sign that would accredit Him. If He was going to act like the Messiah, let Him produce a sign that would show Him to be the Messiah." [Morris, *John*]

This is how I would like to end this lesson: "By what right do you do these things?" — the answer is the resurrection. "By what right do we teach what we teach?" — our Teacher, the One Whose teachings we follow, proved His authority by the resurrection.

We live in a culture where everyone has their rights and nothing is questioned except for those who claim to know what is right and wrong. To show how Satan has blinded the minds of many in our country: as long as anything goes and there is no definitive right and wrong, one is accepted. When one begins to say something's wrong, that there is a black-and-white, right-and-wrong, then that person is wrong!

- "How can one say homosexuality is wrong?" — because the One that teaches it is wrong rose from the dead.
- "How can one say pre-marital sex is wrong?" — because the One that teaches it is wrong rose from the dead.
- "How can one say abortion, murder, stealing, lying, gossiping is wrong?" — because the One that teaches it is wrong rose from the dead.

The same question may be asked of those who accept these things: "how can one say there's nothing wrong with homosexuality?" — because our culture has accepted it so, or because science says there's no damage from such a relationship.

This is a matter of authority: *to whom are we going to listen? Who are we going to obey?* The world with all its "new ideas" and "modern thinking, open minded-ness, liberal attitude that anything goes"? On what authority are they standing?

- "How can one say sex outside of the marital bonds is OK?" — because our culture accepts these things.
- "How can one say drinking, cheating on income tax, "white lies" are OK?" — because our culture accepts these things.
- "How can one say church attendance makes no difference?" — because our culture accepts these things.

Each of these responses is really saying, "*It matters not what Jesus taught. It matters not what the bible teaches. I know more than the Lord, and our culture has out-grown those old fashioned ideas.*" What that person is saying is "*I don't have to listen to Christ. I can run my own life.*" **And that is the essence of sin!**

Everything Jesus taught hinged upon Him rising from the dead. Anyone can stand and teach anything (which is certainly being done today). But if asked by what right does that person teach those things, who would dare answer: "I'll show you where I get my authority: kill me and I will rise again." Isn't the Person that does that worth listening to? Isn't that an expression of Deity, saying "I have control over all events. I control even My own death, and even it has no claim on Me."

**That is the question for each of us today: to whom are we going to listen to and obey?** There are three types of persons here:

- No one is perfect, no one is 100%. None can say "I follow Jesus' teachings all of the time without fail." But there is within the heart of many here the attitude of "I want to follow Jesus teachings, and it grieves me to see the failures in my life."
- There may be others here who say they belong to Jesus but it is a matter of words only. **The claim of knowing Jesus**

**has no common ground with a disobedient lifestyle.** The conscience is soothed by an empty profession while they worship a god of their own making rather than the God of scriptures. Any teaching which places Jesus as Lord over the believer's life is rejected. Lives are lived by their own guidelines rather than the Lord's teachings. Those who try to follow the Lord are mocked, pointing to the believer's inconsistencies and saying there is no difference. They decry any commands from the Lord as false legalistic rules put in place by men only, and have no binding authority on their life. To those, Jesus said "woe unto you, thou hypocrite." Scripture after scripture are directed to these type of people:

*As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.* (1 Pet 1:14-16)

*They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.* (Titus 1:16)

*Jesus said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words.* (Jn 14:23)

*Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven.* (Matt 7:21)

*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? ... Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.* (James 2:14,19)

*They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not of us.* (1 John 2:19)

*Give diligence to make your calling and election sure.* (2 Pet 1:10)

- There may be others here who reject the teachings of Jesus entirely and make no bones about it. That unfortunately is representative of our society when the bible is rejected for the modern thinking of "political correctness". The question I ask you is, by what authority do you accept the things you have been taught?

*"Everyone accepts that ... "*

*"The colleges are teaching ... "*

*"No one believes that way any more ... "*

*"Modern psychologists are saying ... "*

Then what you are doing are placing man's teachings up against the teachings of God, and rejecting what the Lord says for what man says. ***Jesus proved His authority by dying then rising. That's more proof than anyone else is capable of giving!***

If one would say, "I don't want that control over my life. No one tells me what to do or how to think." ***That attitude is the very reason Jesus came to die. That attitude of rejection of authority over your life is sin. That attitude is the reason that you will shake your fist in the face of God all the way into a Christ-less eternity in hell.***

Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and rose again from the dead as the scriptures said that He would. He died for you as a sinner because you turned your back on God and said "No one runs my life! No one tells me what to do!" And while you walked away from God, Jesus took your sins upon Him and says, "The price is paid... now come back!" ***But you have to let go of the attitude, "no one tells me what to do" — Jesus does! Jesus has that right! You either submit to that or you accept the punishment of hell forever.*** Turn from your sins and trust the one that died for you.