

# The DAILY JESUS NEWS #250

## Passion Week: Monday... Day of Authority in Action

### The Crowd's Response, and Jesus' Warning JN 12.34-36 (Parallel Text: MK 11.19)

34 The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Messiah remains forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?"

35 Then Jesus told them, *"You are going to have the light only a little while longer. I command you to keep on walking while you have the light, before darkness overcomes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. 36 I command you to believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light."*

When <sup>M</sup>evening came <sup>J</sup>and he had finished speaking, Jesus <sup>M</sup>and his disciples left the city, <sup>J</sup>and he hid himself from the Pharisees.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	The Temple Courts in Jerusalem
Timeline	Early April (Month 39)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage VIII: Passion Week
	B. Monday: Day of Authority in Action
Title	5. The Crowd's Response, and Jesus' Warning

#### COMMENT:

Monday of Passion Week ended with a final expression of Jesus' authority. He gave two commands that brought together two of the primary themes of his preaching ministry: light and faith.

Light was the preeminent symbol for Jesus in the gospel of John, the most symbol-intensive book in the Bible. The gospel opened with this symbol in JN 1.4 ... *"in him was eternal life, and the life was the light of men"*, and Jesus closed out his public preaching on Tuesday of Passion Week with the theme of light as well (JN 12.44-50). This symbol illustrated Jesus' role as the Revealer of the otherwise unknowable truths about God. As the ultimate, supreme revelation of God, he has absolute authority.

Jesus also gave the command to believe in him again in this warning. "Believe" is the key-word of John's gospel. Roughly half of the uses of this verb in the entire New Testament reside in this one book. Light is wonderful, but it must be received by faith or a person will remain in darkness. To believe is to commit one's entire self to a love-relationship with Jesus, on the basis of what he said and did to make that possible. It is to take him at his Word.

Only a person who is absolutely good and righteous can claim to be "the light of the world." Likewise, only a person with absolute authority can command everyone in the world to believe in him as the light. Both of these themes point to Jesus' unique nature as the God-man.

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The issue of Jesus' authority was the necessary emphasis of Day Two of Passion Week. It could be no other way. Jesus is the Creator-God. This means he has absolute authority over all his creation. His reign is intrinsic to his nature, as being hard is intrinsic to the nature of a rock.

In claiming to be the Messiah, and receiving praise and acclaim as such on Day One, Jesus was revealing the truth of his absolute authority. On Day Two he demonstrated that authority in word and deed. The Father joined in to affirm it. This final warning to believe in him, or be overcome with darkness capped it off perfectly.

Remember that Jesus defined greatness as unconditional love expressed in humble service. He was the ultimate example of this greatness. He was omnipotent in power, yet he never used it to for his own benefit. Jesus only served others in love. His command to believe in him was another expression of that love. Love gives the best, and protects from all harm--exactly what Jesus was doing in issuing this command.

### APPLICATION:

We live in a relativistic age, that makes the "truth" that there is no absolute truth the only binding value that everyone is compelled to agree with. This makes the absolute commands and claims of Jesus seem overbearing and divisive. We Christians must follow Jesus in affirming his absolute authority as God, while emulating the greatness of his loving humility. This is the practical lesson of Day Two of Passion Week.

Do you tend to "water-down" Jesus' claims in witnessing because they seem too absolute?

Be careful of this approach. Truth is truth. Everyone we witness to will stand before the absolute authority of Jesus in the final judgement. They will have no problem accepting the truth of his reign when they meet him face to face in all of his glory. Like Jesus, the most loving thing we can do for people now is to communicate the whole truth to them with unconditional, non-judgmental love. This is the only way they can be prepared to meet him then.

*Balancing love and truth in witnessing is not easy to do. Who do you know that does this well? How can you learn from them?*

*Most people tend to emphasize "truth" or "love" more in witnessing. What is your own tendency? What do you need to do to maintain better balance?*