

Preparing Souls To Serve The Lord

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“The Traditions Of Men Versus The Teaching Of The Bible”

Motel Accommodations

For Lectureship

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It is important to understand the nature of tradition. Fundamentally tradition is something that is passed on. It may be true and it may also be misleading and a major hindrance to understanding and applying truth. *The American Heritage Dictionary* (CD ROM Computer Edition) has the following to offer: “N[oun]. 1. The passing down of elements of a culture from generation to generation, especially by oral communication. 2. a. A mode of thought or behavior followed by a people continuously from generation to generation; a custom or usage. b. A set of such customs and usages viewed as a coherent body of precedents influencing the present: *followed family tradition in dress and manners*. See synonyms at **heritage**. 3. A body of unwritten religious precepts. 4. A time-honored practice or set of such practices.”

The value of information received or passed on to others must be evaluated by an objective standard. Because an idea or action is passed on to us does not make it true. Likewise, when we receive something that has been handed on to us does not make it wrong or evil. Simply put, if it is true then it is good and to be followed; if it is false then we must reject it. In religion and morals the Bible is the objective standard. The Bible has much to say about tradition. If we would be informed, we will desire to consider what it teaches on this subject. The following quotations from the Bible will indicate how specific the Bible is on the subject before us. We offer the quotations without comment in hopes that

the force of their truth might be more impressive.

Tradition That Is Good Is To Be Received And Maintained

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the **tradition** which he received of us” (II Thess. 3:6).

“Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the **traditions** which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle” (II Thess. 2:15).

“Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the **ordinances** (translating the same root word (παρέδωκα) as traditions in the passages cited above, JMS), as I delivered them to you” (I Cor. 11:2).

Tradition That is Evil Is To Be Rejected

“Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why

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do thy disciples transgress the **tradition** of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your **tradition**? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is a gift*, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your **tradition**" (Matt. 15:1-6).

Mark offers the following: "Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the **tradition** of the elders. And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brassen vessels, and of tables. Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the **tradition** of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the

commandment of God, ye hold the **tradition** of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own **tradition**. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban*, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your **tradition**, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye" (Mark 7:1-13).

Paul warns all of the dangers of man made traditions. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the **tradition** of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

Tradition And The Sermon On The Mount

Jesus demands that we be different from those that were dominated by man made traditions. He teaches that it is wrong to be like the scribes and Pharisees of His day. "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20). Jesus further states that such people are motivated by an excessive desire to please men rather than to please God. "But all their works they do for to be seen of men . . ." (Matt. 23:5). In the

Sermon on the Mount Jesus shows that their worship was more concerned with performing for man than it was in pleasing God. Consider carefully the criticism He gave of their practices in Matthew 6:1-18. He begins with these words: "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 6:1, ASV). He evaluates their manner of contributing (6:2-4), their prayers (6:5-15), their fasting (6:16-18) and shows them to be improperly directed and motivated. The traditions, customs, and habits of men, are not always in harmony with the will of God. This must never be forgotten.

A given idea, action or practice may begin in disrespect, but given time the same idea or action may find acceptance among men. Today, if one makes the same claims that the Pope makes for himself he would be considered a cult leader. Why is a pope accepted and a new person rejected? Is it not because given time a practice takes on acceptability due to its familiarity so that its strangeness or differences are ignored?

[From the Introduction to the 1996 Lectureship Book.]

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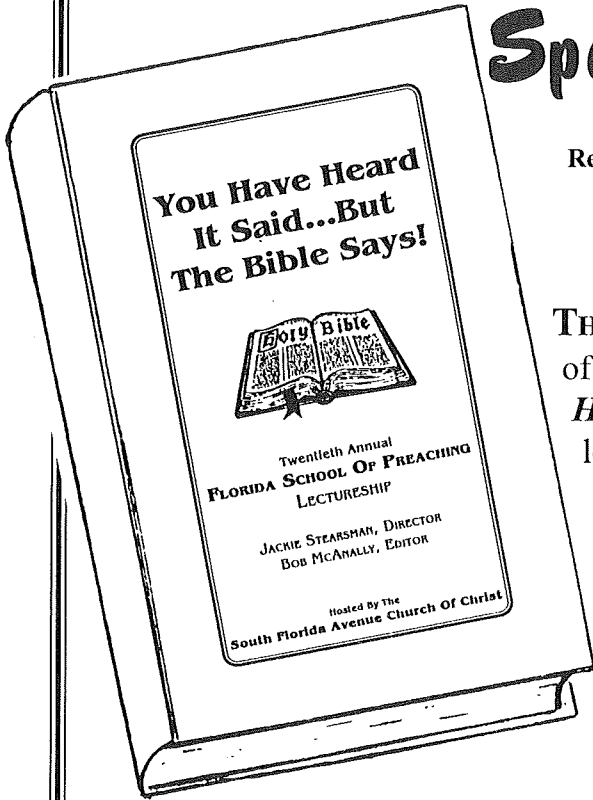
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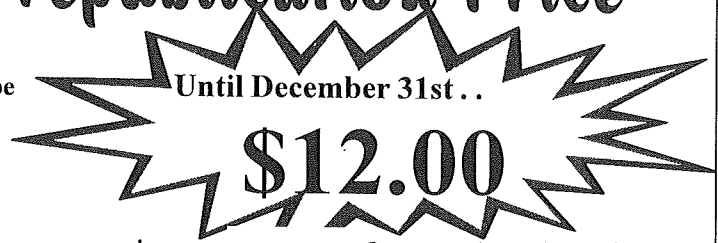
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