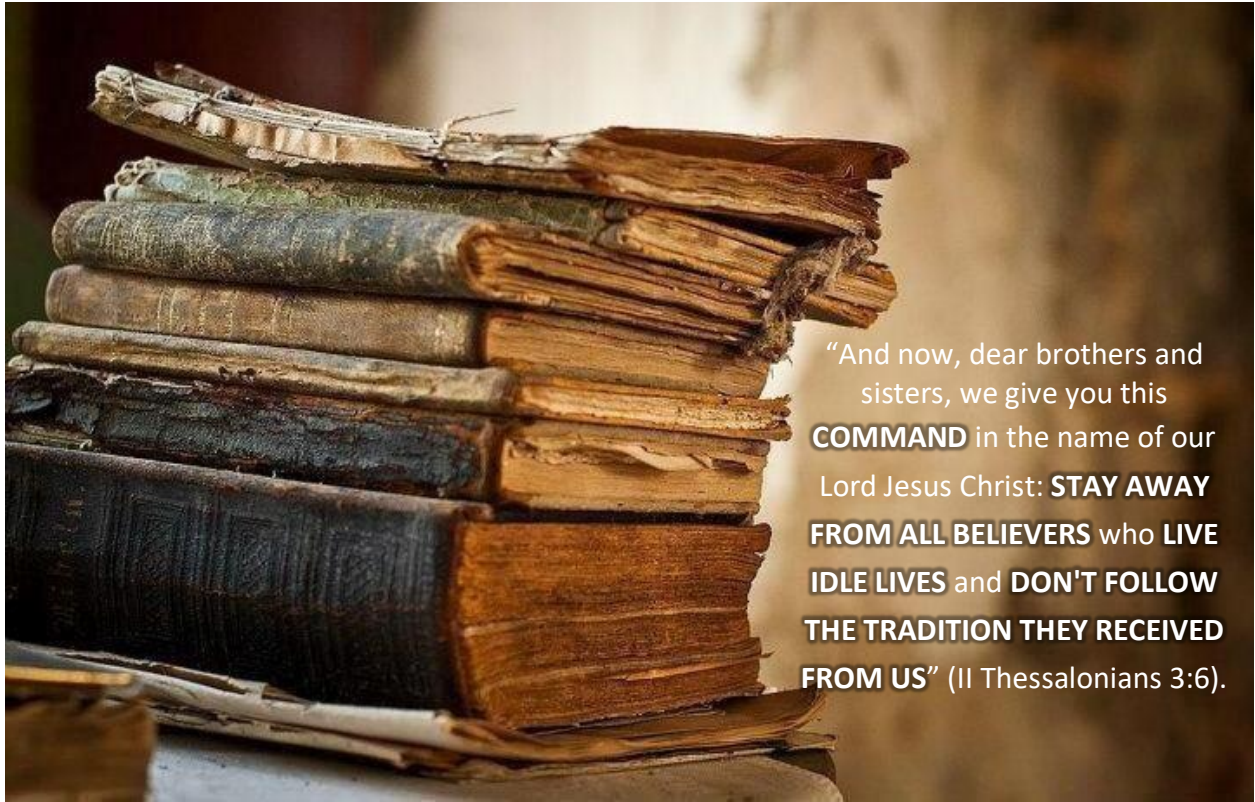


TRADITION



“And now, dear brothers and sisters, we give you this **COMMAND** in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: **STAY AWAY FROM ALL BELIEVERS** who **LIVE IDLE LIVES** and **DON'T FOLLOW THE TRADITION THEY RECEIVED FROM US**” (II Thessalonians 3:6).

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Paul **commands** believers to stay away from **all believers** who **don't follow the tradition** they received from the **Apostles**. *WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?*

Mankind tends to follow like sheep, without checking into what they are following. Today's 21st century believers have at their fingertips access to more Biblical, historical, archeological research and resources than any other time in history. Truly, they are without excuse. Yet, many still embrace ancient traditions that have morphed into the flavour of the century, keeping believers trapped in tradition. These believers love their traditions for many reasons. Some enjoy the status of outward appearance, others are seeking answers on the road to destruction, many are caught up into the merriment of the celebration and the eye-catching lights and glitter wrapped in warm fuzzy feelings. Surely, the Creator God understands the effort of these believers to worship Him regardless of whether the traditions are Biblical.

WHAT DOES GOD SAY?

“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**” (Colossians 2:8).

“They worship Me in vain; they teach as doctrine the precepts of men. For you ignore God's law and substitute your own tradition” (Mark 7:8).

Some believers are worshiping God in vain because they accept as doctrine the rules and ideals of men over the law of God. They embrace the traditions of men. *WHAT COULD BE THESE TRADITIONS?*

- **Salvation through any means other than accepting the blood of Christ:** "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your **vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers**; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19).

21st century populace has all sorts of ideas for the origin of man. Evolution is a common belief that is morphing into Transhumanism. Avatar technology is on the horizon and with the help of alien technology, science will save mankind. This ancient tradition is alive and well as it adapts to the goals of modern man.

- **The Jewish oral law - washing hands before eating bread:** *“Why 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 curses 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 might 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. Ye hypocrites**, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, ‘These people draw nigh unto me with their mouth, and honours me with their lips; but **their heart is far from me**. But in vain they do worship me, **teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”**’ (Matthew 15:2-9).

The Jews believed that there was both a written and oral law from Moses. The oral law was the tradition of the elders, which they believed was handed down to them through the sons of Aaron. These oral laws included hundreds of mini-rules and mini-regulations that culminated into what they believed to be keeping the law perfectly. The washing of hands before eating bread was one of them. Most 21st century Christians would consider washing your hands before eating to be a hygienic practice, considering we understand the health issues associated with microscopic germs. However, this oral hand washing law was not from the perspective of hygiene but ritual to showcase themselves. Over time, the rigid observation of the oral laws acquired the status of laws from God. These authorities accused Jesus of breaking the traditions of the elders. **Jesus did not recognize these traditions to have come from God** and responded to them saying that **they were breaking the commandment of God to keep their OWN traditions.**

Bible.org explains further, “The Pharisees were rigid in observing the laws of cleanness as well as the Sabbath observances and the tithes. In the process they were so concerned with the **outward observance** of these defilements and contacts with things unclean that they failed to realize that **the real defilement was sin**. The diseases, discharges, and defilements that made a person unclean were things in life that were the result of the presence of sin and death. **To observe the outward rituals and miss the connection with sin was a waste of time. The real source of uncleanness was the human heart. To harbor sin (such as hatred and murder for Jesus) and wash hands with ritual washing was hypocritical.**” <https://bible.org/seriespage/22-jesus-and-traditions-elders-matthew-151-20>

To take the matter to a deeper level, Jesus gave the example of how the Jews were using “Korban” as a method to get around God’s law of taking care of their parents. They had become a people who on the outside appeared to be staunch believers of God, but their actions were far from God. They had become crafty manipulators and inventors of religiosity.

Bible.org concludes, “In short: the human heart produced sin, and sin brought the curse, and the curse brought disease, defilement and death. God legislated rituals to deal with the defilements and the death as a way of reminding Israel of the fact that they were defiled by sin. And Jesus often healed people as a way of showing that He could deal with the cause of the sickness, sin, as well as the results.” <https://bible.org/seriespage/22-jesus-and-traditions-elders-matthew-151-20>

- **From the time the kingdom of Israel split, the house of Israel adopted the traditions of the pagan nations around them. “I will stop all of her celebrations, her New Moons, her Sabbath days—all her appointed feasts” (Hosea 2:10-11).**

Christianity was birthed out of the beliefs and traditions of Hebraism. “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” (Acts 11:26). Since the death of the Apostles, Christianity has been infiltrated with pagan traditions.

- **Sunday worship** “Around A.D. 364, the Catholic Church outlawed Sabbath keeping in the Council of Laodicea when they decreed 59 Canon laws. The following is the relevant Canon law: Canon XXIX: “Christians must not Judaize by resting on the Sabbath, but must work on that day, rather honouring the Lord’s Day; and, if they can, resting then as Christians. But if any shall be found to be Judaizers, let them be anathema from Christ.” http://www.the-ten-commandments.org/did_constantine_change_sabbath.html
- **Christmas** “In ancient pagan times, the last day of winter in the Northern Hemisphere was celebrated as the night that the Great Mother Goddess gives birth to the baby Sun God. It is also called Yule, the day a huge log is added to a bonfire, around which everyone would dance and sing to awaken the sun from its long winter sleep.

In Roman times, it became the celebrations honouring Saturnus (the harvest god) and Mithras (the ancient god of light), a form of sun worship that had come to Rome from Syria a century before with the cult of Sol Invictus. It announced that winter is not forever, that life continues, and an invitation to stay in good spirit. The last day of winter in the Northern Hemisphere occurs between the 20th and 22 December. The Romans celebrated Saturnalia between 17 and 24 December.

The early Christians to avoid persecution during the Roman pagan festival, early Christians decked their homes with Saturnalia holly. As Christian numbers increased and their customs prevailed, the celebrations took on a Christian observance. The early church actually did not celebrate the birth of Christ in December until Telesphorus, who was the second Bishop of Rome from 125 to 136AD, declared that Church services should be held during this time to celebrate "The Nativity of our Lord and Saviour." However, since no-one was quite sure in which month Christ was born, Nativity was often held in September, which was during the Jewish Feast of Trumpets (modern-day Rosh Hashanah). In fact, for more than 300 years, people observed the birth of Jesus on various dates.

In 325AD, Constantine the Great, the first Christian Roman emperor, introduced Christmas as an immovable feast on 25 December. He also introduced Sunday as a holy day in a new 7-day week, and introduced movable feasts (Easter). In 354AD, Bishop Liberius of Rome officially ordered his members to celebrate the birth of Jesus on 25 December.

However, even though Constantine officiated 25 December as the birthday of Christ, Christians, recognizing the date as a pagan festival, did not share in the emperor's good meaning. Christmas failed to gain universal recognition among Christians until quite recently. In England, Oliver Cromwell banned Christmas festivities between 1649 and 1660 through the so-called Blue Laws, believing that Christmas should be a solemn day." <http://www.justdawah.org/essays-articles/festivals/80-a-brief-history-of-christmas>

- **Easter** "The history of Easter reveals rich associations between the Christian faith and the seemingly unrelated practices of the early pagan religions. Easter history and traditions that we practice today evolved from pagan symbols, from the ancient goddess Ishtar to Easter eggs and the Easter bunny. Easter, perhaps the most important of the Christian holidays, celebrates the Christ's resurrection from the dead following his death on Good Friday. . . a rebirth that is commemorated around the vernal equinox, historically a time of pagan celebration that coincides with the arrival of spring and symbolizes the arrival of light and the awakening of life around us.

Easter is named for a Saxon goddess who was known by the names of Oestre or Eastre, and in Germany by the name of Ostara. She is a goddess of the dawn and the spring, and her name derives from words for dawn, the shining light arising from the

east. Our words for the "female hormone" estrogen derives from her name. Ostara was, of course, a fertility goddess. Bringing in the end of winter, with the days brighter and growing longer after the vernal equinox, Ostara had a passion for new life. Her presence was felt in the flowering of plants and the birth of babies, both animal and human. The rabbit (well known for its propensity for rapid reproduction) was her sacred animal." http://www.goddessgift.com/pandora%27s_box/easter-history.html

Sunday worship, Christmas and Easter are only a few of the "21st century Christian traditions" **not taught by the Apostles**. Paul urged, "So then, brothers, stand firm and **hold to the traditions** that you were **taught by us**, either by our spoken word or by our letter" (II Thessalonians 2:15) and "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (I Corinthians 11:1). Moses said, "You shall be careful therefore to do as the LORD your God has commanded you. You shall **not turn aside to the right hand or to the left**" (Deuteronomy 5:32) and "So be careful to obey all the commands I give you. **You must not add anything to them or subtract anything from them**" (Deuteronomy 12:32).

All of the Apostles kept the holy days that are described in Leviticus 23. The Apostle John reminded the Christians many times that if you love God, then keep His commandments (John 14:15, 23). Christ kept the Sabbath, the holy days, and the commandments: "Don't ever think that I came to set aside Moses' teachings or the Prophets. I didn't come to set them aside but to make them come true (Matthew 5:17). Christ did not come to nullify the law, but rather, expound on it and amplify it, so that our understanding includes the spiritual intent of the law, which is the core to living righteously. Isaiah said, "The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will **MAGNIFY** the law, and make it honourable" (Isaiah 42:21).

The poison that keeps mankind sick and in a constant state of stupor lies deep within themselves; they refuse to love the truth. "The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because **THEY REFUSE TO LOVE THE TRUTH** and so be saved (II Thessalonians 2:9- 10).

It will take a time of trouble before there is sincere repentance, but prophesy reveals the good news. The nations of all the world will come and acknowledge the futility of their traditions, "O LORD, my strength, and my fortress, and my refuge **in the day of affliction, the nations shall come unto you from the ends of the earth**, and shall say, surely **OUR FATHERS HAVE INHERITED LIES, VANITY, AND THINGS IN WHICH THERE IS NO PROFIT**" (Jeremiah 16:19).

Compiled by Janette Andrejowich.