

# **THE BIBLE OR TRADITION**

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## THE BIBLE OR TRADITION LESSON #1 – THE EYES OF WISDOM

### Daniel 7:8

Review the sequence of powers in Daniel 7

- Lion with wings of an eagle (Babylon was filled with lion sphinxes that had wings)
- Bear higher on one side than the other (a dual kingdom with the higher one coming up last)
- Leopard (with four heads)

Three stages of the fourth beast:

- Dragon (iron monarchy of Rome)
- Ten Horns (Rome divided by the barbarian invasions)
- Little Horn (still Rome but a different kind of Rome). It has a mouth that speaks blasphemies, persecutes God's faithful people and rules for 1260 years.

### A Symbolic Portrayal

It is important to remember that Daniel 7 contains a symbolic portrayal of future events from Daniel's time till the second coming of Jesus. The sea, the winds, the four beasts, the four heads, the wings, the ten horns, the little horn, the mouth, the actions and the time period of the little horn are all symbolic.

The verse that we will focus on in this study is Daniel 7:8 where the little horn is described as having 'eyes like the eyes of a man':

*"I was considering the horns, and there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words."*

If everything in this chapter is presented in symbolic language then the eyes must be symbolic as well.

### Symbolic Eyes

The question is: What do eyes represent, symbolically speaking?

It is common knowledge that 'eyes' in Scripture are employed to represent 'wisdom' 'knowledge' or 'understanding.'

Many examples of this meaning are found in Scripture. With relation to God, eyes are employed to depict His perfect and all-encompassing knowledge and understanding, that is, His omniscient divine wisdom.

## **Symbolic Meaning of Eyes**

Revelation 5:6: Jesus has fullness of wisdom and power

*"And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth."*

Zechariah 4:10, NIV: The eyes of the Lord scan the whole earth

*"These seven are the eyes of the Lord, which range throughout the earth"*

Proverbs 15:3

*"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good."*

Ezekiel 10:12-13: The angels wisely administrate the universe under God's guidance:

*"And their whole body, with their back, their hands, their wings, and the wheels that the four had, were full of eyes all around."*

Hebrews 4:12, 13

*"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."*

## **Wisdom of Man**

With respect to man, eyes are also employed to represent discernment, knowing or understanding but in contrast to God man's understanding is finite.

Ephesians 1:15-19

*"Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."*

### Proverbs 3:19-21

*“The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens; 20 By His knowledge the depths were broken up, and clouds drop down the dew. 21 My son, let them [wisdom and understanding] not depart from your eyes—keep sound wisdom and discretion.”*

### Acts 26:17-18

*“I will deliver you from the Jewish people, as well as from the Gentiles, to whom I now send you, 18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.’*

Even today the owl is employed as a symbol of intelligence or understanding because of its large eyes! We use the expression: “wise as an owl”. Graduation cards use the owl frequently. The eyes of owls are fixed but they can turn their necks up to 270 degrees

Now, if ‘eyes’ represent ‘wisdom’ or ‘understanding’, then human eyes must represent human wisdom or knowledge. Remember that the little horn is a usurper who claims to be as wise as God but his wisdom is foolishness. This must mean that the little horn depends on human wisdom or understanding even though it claims to exercise the power and prerogatives of God! That is, the horn claims to occupy the position of God but its wisdom is mere human wisdom and knowledge.

## **Conniving Little Horn of Daniel 8**

Daniel 8:23, 25: Speaks about the same little horn as in Daniel 7. There the little horn is called a king with fierce countenance. The picture is of a leader who is a sly, slithery, cunning and crafty politician who uses his crafty human wisdom and intelligence to carry forward his cause and deceive.

### King James Version:

Verse 23: *“And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full a king of fierce countenance and understanding [discernment, insight, understanding] dark sentences shall stand up.”*

Verse 25: *“And through his policy [prudence, insight, understanding], also he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand . . .”*

### New King James Version:

Verse 23: *“And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors have reached their fullness, a king shall arise, having fierce features who understands sinister schemes”*

Verse 25: *“ . . . through his cunning he shall cause deceit to prosper under his rule”*

**New International Version:**

**Verse 23:** “. . . a stern-faced king, a **master of intrigue**”

**Verse 25:** “. . . He will cause **deceit** to prosper”

**New American Standard Bible:**

**Verse 23:** “. . . insolent and **skilled in intrigue**”

**Verse 25:** “. . . and through his **shrewdness** he will cause **deceit to succeed** by his influence”

**English Standard Version:**

**Verse 23:** “. . . A king of bold face, one who **understands riddles**”

**Verse 25:** “. . . by his **cunning** he shall make **deceit** prosper”

**New English Translation:**

**Verse 23:** “. . . a rash and **deceitful** king”

**Verse 25:** “. . . by his **treachery** he will succeed **through deceit**”

**God’s Word:**

**Verse 23:** “. . . stern-looking king who **understands** mysterious things”

**Verse 25:** “. . . He will **cleverly use** his power **to deceive** others successfully.”

**New Revised Standard Version:**

**Verse 23:** “. . . a king of bold countenance shall arise, **skilled in intrigue**”

**Verse 25:** “. . . by his **cunning** he shall make **deceit prosper** under his hand”

**Living Bible:**

**Verse 23:** “. . . an angry king shall rise to power with great **shrewdness and intelligence**”

**Verse 25:** “. . . he will be a **master of deception**”

**American Standard Version:**

**Verse 23:** “. . . king of fierce countenance, and **understanding dark sentences**”

**Verse 25:** “. . . and through his **policy** he shall cause **craft to prosper** in his hand”

## Amplified Version:

**Verse 23:** ". . . a king of fierce countenance and understanding dark trickery and craftiness shall stand up"

**Verse 25:** ". . . and through his policy he shall cause trickery to prosper in his hand"

## **Meaning of the Word**

The word that is translated in the **KJV** 'dark sentences' in **verse 23** is used in several places in the Old Testament and it always refers to using crafty intelligence to unlock riddles, mysteries or dark sayings. It is used eight times of Samson's riddles (Judges 14), of the Queen of Sheba who came to test Solomon's wisdom with her hard questions (I Kings 10:1)

### Proverbs 1:5-6

"A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel, 6 to understand a proverb and an enigma, the words of the wise and their riddles [dark sayings]."

In Daniel 8:23 we are not dealing with the sanctified use of wisdom and intelligence but rather a corruption of it similar to what happened to Lucifer:

**Ezekiel 28:2-5, 12, 17:** The great corruptor of wisdom was Lucifer:

"Because your heart is lifted up, and you say, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of gods, in the midst of the seas,' yet you are a man, and not a god, though you set your heart as the heart of a god 3 (Behold, you are wiser than Daniel! There is no secret that can be hidden from you! 4 With your wisdom and your understanding you have gained riches for yourself, and gathered gold and silver into your treasuries; 5 by your great wisdom in trade you have increased your riches, and your heart is lifted up because of your riches). . . 12 You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. . . 17 Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor."

## **The Beast has a Number of a Man**

**Revelation 13:18:** The beast is parallel to the little horn. It speaks blasphemies, persecutes the saints, tramples on the heavenly sanctuary, it has a mark of its authority, and rules for 42 months. It also has the number of a man

"Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man [better: 'a human number']: His number is 666" [we will come back to this number at the end of this series]

## The Man of Sin and Lawlessness

**2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4:** The **Man of Sin** who leads out in the **mystery of lawlessness**

*“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the **man of sin** is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the **temple of God**, showing himself that **he is God**. . . For the mystery of **lawlessness** is already at work; only He who now restrains will do so until He is taken out of the way.”*

The name ‘man of lawlessness’ indicates that this power will **meddle** somehow with **God’s law** and lead people to **transgress it**.

## The Harlot’s Wine

Another way of looking at this **corruption of wisdom** can be seen in **Revelation 17** where we find the symbol of a **harlot** who gives **fermented wine** to the nations:

**Revelation 17:4:**

*“The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a **golden cup** full of **abominations** and the **filthiness** of her fornication.”*

She **makes** the inhabitants of the earth and the kings **drunk** with the **wine from her cup**

**Revelation 17:2:**

*“. . .with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and the **inhabitants of the earth** were made **drunk with the wine** of her fornication.”*

The cup not only makes those who drink it drunk but it also causes the nations to become **mad or lose their sanity**:

**Jeremiah 51:7:**

*“Babylon was a **golden cup** in the Lord’s hand that made **all the earth drunk**. The nations drank **her wine**; therefore the nations are **deranged**.”*

The **first angel’s message** has God’s **unfermented and uncorrupted message based on the word of God**. Babylon’s wine is in **contrast** to the first angel’s message:

- Jesus was **sacrificed once for all**
- He is our **only** and **sufficient high priest**
- We **saved by his righteousness alone and not by our works**
- We should reflect **God’s character**
- We should care for our **body** and **mind**
- To keep **God’s law**
- We are in the hour of **God’s judgment**
- The **dead are dead** until the resurrection and that only God can give us life



- We should keep the **Sabbath** in honor of the Creator

**Revelation 14:8: *Babylon has fermented the pure doctrines of Scripture by the traditions of men:***

*"And another angel followed, saying: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, **because** she has **made all nations drink of the wine** of the **wrath** of her **fornication**."*

Another urgent call at the **end of human history**

**Revelation 18:2, 3:**

*"And he cried mightily with a loud voice, saying, : Babylon the great **is fallen, is fallen**, and has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 3 **For [because] all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication**, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury."*

**Why did Babylon fall?** If she had accepted the **first angel's message** she would never have fallen. She fell because she **became an alcoholic** and then **gave her wine** to the inhabitants of the world.

Can we be sure that **fermented** wine represents **false doctrine** based on **human traditions**? I **struggled** to find an answer for some time because in the Bible wine is spoken of in **literal terms**. But after long hours of reflection I believe we can prove from the Bible that the wine represents **false doctrine and practices**. How do we know this? Notice the following information:

- She has a cup full of **fermented wine**
- The cup is full of her **abominations**
- **Conclusion:** The wine is her **abominations**

*"Babylon has been fostering **poisonous doctrines**, the wine of error. This **wine of error** is made up of **false doctrines**, such as the natural **immortality** of the soul, the **eternal torment** of the wicked, the denial of the **pre-existence** of Christ prior to His birth in Bethlehem, and advocating and exalting the **first day of the week** above God's holy and sanctified day. These and kindred errors are presented to the world by the various churches, and thus the Scriptures are fulfilled that say, 'For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.' It is a wrath which is created by false doctrines, and when **kings and presidents** drink this wine of the wrath of her fornication, they are stirred with anger against those who will not come into harmony with the false and satanic heresies which exalt the false sabbath and lead men to trample underfoot God's memorial." **TM** 61, 62*

## Abominations

What is an abomination according to God's Word?

- Worshiping **idols**
- Attempting to communicate with **the dead**
- Turning away one's ear from **hearing the law**
- Believing that you can be **saved by your own works**
- **Spiritual fornication** or adultery of God's people **with the state**
- Shedding **innocent blood**
- Teaching that it is **alright to eat** what God has forbidden

## The Greatest Abomination

And what is the little horn's **most blasphemous** human tradition? What does it substitute instead of **divine wisdom**?

**Daniel 7:25:** The little horn's greatest abomination.

*"He shall speak pompous words against the Most High, shall persecute the saints of the Most High, and shall intend to **change times and law [mystery of lawlessness]**. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time."*

**Ezekiel 8** refers to the worst of all abominations as sun worship.

*"The Lord has a controversy with his professed people in these last days. In this controversy men in responsible positions will take a course directly opposite to that pursued by Nehemiah. They will not only ignore and despise the Sabbath themselves, but they will try to keep it from others by burying it beneath the **rubbish of custom and tradition**. In churches and in large gatherings in the open air, ministers will urge upon the people the necessity of keeping the first day of the week." *Review and Herald, March 18, 1884**

*"Sunday is a **child of the papacy**. It has been **nourished** and **cradled** by the Protestant world **as a genuine** requirement of Jehovah, but it has **no foundation** in the word of God. The Christian world is tested by their relation to this matter. God moves upon men to search the Scriptures for evidence to sustain Sunday. Those who search with **a desire for truth** will see that in the past they **have been relying on tradition**, and have accepted an institution of the papacy. Those who, with contrite hearts, search the **word of God** for truth will receive a blessing from God." *Review and Herald, July 13, 1897**

*"Satan has taken the world captive. He has introduced an **idol sabbath**, apparently giving to it great importance. He **has stolen** the homage of the Christian world away from the Sabbath of the Lord for this **idol sabbath**. The world bows to a **tradition**, a **man-made** commandment." *R & H, March 8, 1898**

## Numerical Value of Greek Letters

Now let's say something about the number 666. The letters of the Greek alphabet have a numerical value. In fact, the way numbers were written in New Testament times was with letters:

Alpha	α	1
Beta	β	2
Gamma	γ	3
Delta	δ	4
Epsilon	ε	5
Stigma	ς	6
Zeta	ζ	7
Eta	η	8
Theta	θ	9
Iota	ι	10
Kappa	κ	20
Lamda	λ	30
Mu	μ	40
Nu	ν	50
Xi	ξ	60
Omicron	ο	70
Pi	π	80
Ro	ρ	100
Sigma	σ ς	200
Tau	τ	300
Upsilon	υ	400
Phi	φ	500
Chi	χ	600
Psi	ψ	700
Omega	ω	800

## Examples of Numerical Values

### Jesus (Iesous)

Jesus: I (10) E (8) S (200) O (70) U (400) S (200) = 888

### Cross (stauros)

Cross: ST (6) A (1) U (400) R (100) O (70) S (200) = 777

### Tradition (*Paradosis*)

P (80) A (1) R (100) A (1) D (4) O (70) S (200) I (10) S (200) = 666

Priest at the voting table.



- The photographer and newspaper are **oblivious** to the meaning of the number.
- A **priest** comes to the table.
- His **sleeve covers** up one of the numbers.
- The **photographer** is at that particular table.
- At that **specific time and place**.

## THE BIBLE OR TRADITION

# LESSON #2: THE JEWISH VIEW OF TRADITION

### Introduction

Last time we studied one characteristic of the little horn that rarely is touched upon, the eyes like the eyes of man. We saw that in the Bible eyes represent wisdom so this system must base its teachings on human wisdom. The system is called the man of sin and has the number of a man to underline its reliance on man.

How can the Roman Catholic Church justify teaching doctrines and commanding observances that are not found in the Bible either explicitly or implicitly? Doctrines such as the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption of Mary, Mary as the mediator, the celibacy of the priesthood, the sacrifice of the Mass, Lent, infant baptism, baptism by sprinkling, the Confessional, indulgences, praying to and for the dead, reciting the Rosary, not eating meat on Fridays, bowing before idols, keeping Sunday instead of the Sabbath, etc.? The answer is: Because of its concept of tradition.

### The Jewish View of Tradition

In order to better comprehend how the Roman Catholic Church seeks to justify these human traditions that have no foundation whatever in the written word of God, we must go back to the times of Christ and examine the Jewish view of divine revelation as held particularly by the Scribes and Pharisees. We shall find in our study that the Roman Catholic Church has replicated the Jewish view!

The Jewish view of tradition in the days of Christ was composed of three interconnected elements:

- There was a deposit of Tradition composed of the writings of Moses and the unwritten oral traditions passed on by Moses
- There was a transmitting mechanism to pass on in a trustworthy manner from generation to generation the writings of Moses and the unwritten traditions
- A living teaching office in each generation that could, infallibly, explain, apply, amplify and bring forth from the deposit of Tradition the truths that were found in the writings of Moses and the unwritten traditions

- The key words are ‘tradition’, ‘receive’, ‘pass on’ ‘hold’

## **The Deposit of Revelation (written and oral) the word Tradition in singular**

The Scribes and Pharisees believed that when God spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai, He not only revealed what Moses actually wrote in the Pentateuch, but also many other oral traditions which Moses did not commit to writing.

Thus, in their view, there was an original Deposit of truth revealed by God which was composed of two sources: the [1] written revelation and the [2] unwritten traditions.

### **Equal Authority**

Though at first the written revelation was given a position of higher authority than the unwritten traditions, but in the course of time the unwritten traditions were placed on the same level as the written Scriptures and in the time of Christ, the unwritten traditions had assumed a position of even higher authority than what Moses actually wrote.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia expresses the Jewish concept of tradition this way:

*“It [tradition] means, in Jewish theology, the Oral teachings of the elders (distinguished ancestors from Moses on) which were revered by the late Jews equally with the written teachings of the Old Testament, and were regarded by them as equally authoritative on matters of belief and conduct.”*

### **A Trustworthy Transmitting Agent**

According to the view of the rabbis, the written Scriptures and the unwritten traditions in the deposit of Tradition needed to be preserved pure and passed on from generation to generation in a trustworthy manner.

It was an easier task to pass along the written Scriptures in a trustworthy manner. But how could the oral traditions that were passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation be kept pure?

After all, with the passing of time, things that are passed on orally become distorted and unreliable. The rabbis affirmed that an accurate and faithful transmitting agent was necessary to keep the traditions pure and unadulterated as they were passed along from generation to generation.

And so, the **Pharisees** believed and taught that the written Scriptures and the unwritten revelation were reliably **passed on from generation to generation** by an **unbroken succession** of **spiritual leaders** beginning with Moses and culminating with the **rabbis** in the days of Christ.

The **Interpreter's Bible Dictionary** captures well the Jewish concept of tradition:

*"The Talmud [a compilation of the oral laws] which was at first mainly oral, grew out of the conviction that **besides the written Torah** (Law)--the Bible--there had been from the first, from the divine communications to Moses at Sinai onward, an **oral Torah handed down from generation to generation**, which lawgiver and prophets sought to engrave on the hearts of the people. As teacher **succeeded** teacher in the synagogue and school, their teachings and often **conflicting** opinions, **all based on the Bible**, were treasured. Through long practice the power of memorizing had been greatly strengthened, but the accumulated mass of **oral traditions** and teachings became **so unwieldy** that the best memory could not be trusted [therefore they were written in the Talmud]." (The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, volume 4, p. 511)*

**Josephus**, who was himself **a Pharisee**, tells us that:

*' . . . the Pharisees had **passed on** to the people certain regulations **handed down** by former generations and **not recorded** in the law of Moses.'* (Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 13.10.6)

**Marcel Simon**, in his excellent book, **Jewish Sects**, expands upon this concept of Josephus. After stating that the **Pharisees went beyond the written text** of the Scriptures and **qualified** and **expanded** it, Simon remarks:

*"In their eyes, the tradition that they invoked in doing this, far from opposing the Torah [the five books of Moses], was the natural **prolongation** and **explication** of it. This tradition **went back to Moses himself, just as did** the Torah. An **oral law** was revealed to Moses along with the **written law**, and this oral law was **faithfully transmitted** from **generation to generation**."* (Marcel Simon, *Jewish Sects*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), p. 34-35)

## **Process of Transmission**

Simon then quotes the **famous words** in the **Talmud** found in **Aboth** ["the Fathers"] **chapter one** and **verses one and two**:

*"[1] **Moses** received the Law from Sinai and committed it to [2] **Joshua** and Joshua to the [3] **elders** and the elders to the [4] **Prophets**; and the Prophets committed it to the men of the [5] **Great Synagogue** [after the Captivity]."*

It is remarkable that according to Simon, after these words from the *Talmud* in chapter one and **verses 2-13**,

*" . . . comes the enumeration of **several pairs of teachers** ('Antigonus of Soko received the Law from Simeon the Just, etc.') whose historical existence is more or less certain. The list finally*

*ends with Hillel and Shammai, famous leaders of schools [in the days of Christ] (Beth Hillel and Beth Shammai)."* (Marcel Simon, Jewish Sects (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), p. 35

It is obvious that the *Talmud* is attempting to prove that oral tradition was **transmitted** in an **unbroken succession** of scholars from the time of **Moses** till the days of the **Scribes and Pharisees**.

## **A Living Teaching Office**

Furthermore, the Pharisees believed that a **living voice** or **teaching office** (the word 'rabbi' means 'teacher') was **needed in each generation** to [1] **identify** a genuine tradition, to [2] **authoritatively interpret** and **explain** it and to [3] **apply** it to contemporary life.

Thus it was not sufficient to have a [1] **deposit of written and oral tradition** and for this tradition to [2] have been passed on **authentically** from generation to generation. Also needed was a [3] **living interpreter** in **each generation** who could define what was a genuine tradition and what was not.

According to **Simon** this idea of the transmission of oral tradition

*"... made Pharisaism the **living element** of official Judaism. It was the **tradition** that allowed the Pharisees to justify all the **elaborations** that they introduced regarding the scriptural precepts, on the level of **observances** as well as on the level of **doctrine**."* (Marcel Simon, Jewish Sects, pp. 35-36)

**George Foot Moore**, in his monumental work, Judaism, concurs with Simon:

*'The **Book** of the Law of Moses might be a **final law**, but it was **not a finished law**. Many things which had . . . been generally observed and were regarded as necessary and binding were **not contained in it at all**. Some of these figure in later times as 'traditions of **Moses** from Sinai'; others as ordinances of **Ezra**, or of the **prophets** of his time, or the men of the **Great Synagogue**, or more indefinitely of the **Soferim**, or the Early Elders.'* (George Foot Moore, Judaism, volume 1 (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), p. 30

*"In tracing the **continuous tradition** of the Law from **Moses** to the days of **Shammai and Hillel**— [1] **Moses**, [2] **Joshua**, the [3] **elders**, [4] **the prophets**,--the Pirke Abot has, 'The prophets **transmitted** it to the men of the [5] **Great Synagogue**.' The last in the prophetic **succession** were **Haggai and Zechariah**, who had a leading part in the rebuilding of the temple, and **Malachi**, whom the Jews made a contemporary of the other two. These **were the link** between their predecessors in the prophetic tradition and the **Great Synagogue**. . . . 'Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi **received the tradition** from the prophets; the men of the Great Synagogue received it from Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.'" (George Foot Moore, Judaism, volume 1, p. 31)*



Thus the order of transmission was:

The question is: **how** did the men of the **Great Synagogue pass on** these traditions to the succeeding generations? Moore answers:

*“Ezra and the Men of the Great Synagogue were believed to have introduced these institutions and regulations by ordinances having the force of law, as their **successors**, the Soferim, and the Rabbis who **succeeded** them did.”* (George Foot Moore, Judaism, volume 1, p. 33)

Thus, in the minds of the compilers of the *Talmud*, the process of unbroken transmission was complete: [1] **Moses**, [2] **Joshua**, [3] **Elders**, [4] **earlier prophets**, [5] **Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi**, [6] **the men of the Great Synagogue** [of which Ezra was the originator, according to the Jewish interpretation of Ezra 7:11-12], [7] **Soferim or later elders** and finally the [8] **Rabbis** of Christ’s day.

**Moore** underlines the fact that ‘to be of any use such a **chain of tradition** must possess **unbroken continuity**.’ (George Foot Moore, Judaism, p. 35)

## **Oral Tradition More Reliable**

Moore also points out that these regulations of oral law came to be **venerated even more than the written** Revelation:

*“The **distinction** between the ordinances and decrees of the **Scribes** (Soferim) and the **biblical law** is constantly made in the juristic literature, but the authority of the Scribes or the Learned to make such regulations was not questioned nor was the transgression or neglect of their rules a venial offense. On the contrary, a **more serious matter** is made of the words of the Scribes than of the words of the (written) law.”* (George Foot Moore, Judaism, volume 1, pp. 33-34)

## **The Voice of God**

In the same vein, **Dr. Geike** in his excellent work, Life and Words of Jesus, states: *“From their pupils the rabbis demanded the most profound **reverence**. ‘The honor,’ says the Talmud, ‘due to a teacher **borders on that due to God [very similar to Roman Catholicism]**’ . . . . The common discourse of a rabbi was to be revered **as much as the law**. To dispute with one, or to murmur against him, was a crime **as great** as to do the same toward the **Almighty**. Their **WORDS** must be received as **WORDS OF THE LIVING GOD**.”* (Quoted in, E. J. Hibbard, The Two Laws: Object Function and Duration of Each (Mountain View, California, reprinted in 1989 by Leaves of Autumn), p. 46.

The teachings of the rabbis were also reckoned **practically infallible** as we can see from the following quotation also from Dr. Geike:

*“It was a principle universally accepted that ‘the sayings of the scribes were **weightier** than those of the law.’ The **transmission** of the as-yet-unwritten opinions of former rabbis-forming*

an ever-growing mass of tradition--was the special aim of the rabbis of each age. . . . Once uttered, a rabbi's words remained LAW FOREVER [unchangeable and infallible], though they might be explained away and virtually ignored while affected to be followed." (Quoted in, E. J. Hibbard, The Two Laws: Object, Function and Duration of Each (Mountain View, California, reprinted in 1989 by Leaves of Autumn), p. 46

The role of this teaching office, however, went far beyond just explaining and applying the oral and written revelation.

The rabbis frequently brought forth religious practices and beliefs which were not implicitly, much less explicitly, contained in the written revelation. When they did this, were they claiming to bring forth new truth not previously revealed by God? Not at all! They taught that these truths were part of the deposit of unwritten traditions which God had previously revealed to Moses. They believed that though these traditions had not previously been brought to light, they had been preserved in the deposit of truth which had been authentically handed down from generation to generation. In other words, the rabbis believed that they were merely bringing these truths to light or discovering them in the deposit of oral tradition.

## The Issue of Authority to Teach

This brings us to the issue of authority. The Pharisees believed that only an elite cadre of carefully trained theological experts guided by God could bring to light, explain, interpret and apply the written Scriptures as well as the unwritten traditions.

This was what Jesus was speaking to when He remarked in Matthew 23:2 that the Pharisees 'sit on Moses' kathedra.' Concerning the meaning of this expression, the Roman Catholic Jerome Bible Commentary states:

*"The phrase is most probably a metaphor for the authority of the scribes to teach. In rabbinical tradition the interpretation of the Law was carried on in a scribal tradition that theoretically went back through an unbroken chain of scribes to Moses. This view is, of course, entirely unhistorical." (The Jerome Bible Commentary, volume 2 (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 102)*

When the Pharisees and Scribes spoke ex-cathedra, that is, 'from (Moses') the throne,' their word was to be accepted as final. The general populace was required to accept these rabbinical views and interpretations and to obey them without question. Thus the genuine meaning of both the written Scriptures and the unwritten traditions could only be determined by the rabbis and the general populace had no say in the matter!

Concerning this, George Foot Moore remarks:

*"Learning is the privilege of leisure. Husbandmen and artisans are the support of the social structure, but, wholly occupied as they must be in their several callings and often highly expert in them, they have no time for the wide-ranging studies that make the scholar. They are*

therefore **not qualified** to be called to the council or to take the lead in the assembly; they cannot sit on the judge's bench, for they **do not understand the principles of the law**, and cannot bring out the rights of the case and a just judgment. Different is the case of the man who gives his whole mind to it, and concentrates his thought on the law of the Most High. He will seek out the **wisdom of all the ancients** and occupy himself with the study of the prophecies, and pay attention to **expositions of famous men**, and will penetrate into the elusive turns of parables. He will search out the hidden meaning of proverbs, and will be versed in the enigmas of parables." (George Foot Moore, Judaism, volume 1, pp. 40-41)

In this way the religious leaders had **absolute control** over **every person** and **sphere of public and private life**. Whoever **questioned the opinion or authority** of the rabbis was in danger of being **cast out of the synagogue**, as we can see from the story of the man who was **born blind** (John 9:22)

Jesus spoke to this problem in **Matthew 23:13** when He accused the Scribes and Pharisees of **closing the kingdom** of heaven to men as well as to themselves:

*"But woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you **shut up the kingdom** of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in."*

What Jesus meant by this is found in the parallel passage of **Luke 11:52** where He accused the doctors of the law of **taking away** the **key of knowledge** which would have opened the door to the kingdom of heaven both to them and to the people:

*"Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the **key of knowledge**. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."*

## **Stranglehold on the People**

**Jesus' rebuke** of the Scribes and Pharisees in **Matthew 23** had the intention of **breaking the stranglehold** which the Scribes and Pharisees had over the people. George Foot Moore speaks about the **influence** which the Scribes and Pharisees had **on the people**:

*"The **Scribes**, on the other hand, had the support of the **Pharisaean** party, to which many of them belonged. The Pharisees in turn had **the people behind them**, and with the growing importance of the synagogue, the **professionally educated class** gained increasing influence as the teachers of the people." (George Foot Moore, Judaism, volume 1, p. 43)*

**Flavius Josephus** adds this testimony:

*"The Pharisees have delivered to the **common people** by **tradition** from a **continuous succession of fathers** certain legal regulations which are **not written** in the Law of Moses, on which account the Sadducean sort rejects them, affirming that what is written is to be regarded as law, but what comes from the **tradition of the fathers** is not to be observed. On this point the Pharisees **have the mass of the people on their side**, and they have **so much influence that***

**anything they say, even against a king or a high priest, finds ready credence.**” (Flavius Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, xvii.2.4., paragraph 41)

**Ellen White** concurs with this in the following words:

*“The interest of the people in Christ and His work had steadily increased. They were charmed with His teaching, but they were also **greatly perplexed**. They had **respected** the priests and rabbis for their **intelligence** and **apparent piety**. In all religious matters they had ever **yielded implicit obedience to their authority**. Yet they now saw these men trying to cast discredit upon Jesus, a teacher whose virtue and knowledge shone forth the brighter from every assault. . . . Through their reverence for **tradition** and their **blind faith in a corrupt priesthood, the people were enslaved**.”* (Ellen G. White, The Desire of Ages, p. 611, 612)

## **Scholarship in Christ’s Day**

From the extant sources we know that **much of the scholarship** in Christ’s day **consisted in quoting** from what previous **rabbis and fathers** had said **about** Scripture and tradition rather than from the **Scripture itself**. Thus the **opinions of men** took the place of the **Word of God**. The theological works of the scribes were saturated with quotations from what previous scholars had said about the text. The more they **quoted the reputable scholars of the past**, the more authority they were considered to have.

Regarding the teaching method of the rabbis Ellen White makes this telling statement:

*“The teaching of the scribes and the Pharisees was a continuous repetition of **fables and childish traditions**. Their opinions and ceremonies rested on the authority of **ancient maxims and rabbinical sayings** which were frivolous and worthless. Christ did not dwell on weak and insipid saying and **theories of men**.”* (Ellen G. White, The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald, ‘The Word of God,’ August 22, 1907)

She states further:

*“The teaching of the scribes and elders was **cold and formal**, like a lesson learned by **rote**. They explained the law as a matter of **custom**, but no authority from God sanctified their utterances, no holy inspiration stirred their own hearts and those of their hearers.”* (Ellen G. White, The Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2, p. 176)

### **Matt 7:28-29, NIV:**

*“When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at **his teaching**, 29 because he taught as one who had **authority**, and not as their teachers of the law [theologians].”*

What **was the difference** between the teachings of Jesus and the teachings of the theologians of His day? What gave the teachings of Jesus authority in contrast to the teachings of the Scribes? We will answer this question in the **next two lectures**.

## THE BIBLE OR TRADITION

### LESSON #3: A CASE STUDY: MARK 7:1-13

#### Review

In our last study together I read a series of quotations from Flavius Josephus, Marcel Simon and George Foot Moore on the Jewish concept of tradition in the times of Jesus.

Let's review what we studied last time:

- The Jews believed that there was a Deposit of Tradition composed of the writings of Moses and the unwritten traditions
- They also believed that a transmitting mechanism was necessary to pass on in a trustworthy manner the writings of Moses and the unwritten traditions from generation to generation. This required an unbroken succession of religious scholars who seemingly kept the Tradition pure.
- In order to keep the tradition pure it was necessary to have an authoritative, authentic living teaching office in each generation composed of professional scholars who could, infallibly explain, apply, amplify and bring forth from the deposit of Tradition the truths that were found in the writings of Moses and the unwritten traditions
- The key words in this concept are: 'tradition', 'receive', 'pass on' 'hold'
- The Babylonian Talmud describes the process in Pirqa Aboth ["sayings of the Fathers"] 1:1-2:

*"MOSES received the Torah (the Law) at Sinai and passed it on to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, and the Prophets passed it on to the men of the Great Assembly."*

Verse 3 then states that the last scholar of the Great Assembly was Simon the Just. Then in verses 4-13 there follows a list of six pairs of scholars in unbroken succession from Simon the Just to Shammai and Hillel who were rabbis in the days of Christ.

Notably the word 'received' is used 7 times in the process of transmission and in verse 2 we find the expression 'passed it on' twice.

From the Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament:

*“The **absolute authority** of the tradition is guaranteed primarily by its **unbroken derivation** from Moses and even from God himself (°Abot 1.1)”*

Let’s take a look now at a **real life example** of how this process was understood in the **days of Jesus**. Turn with me to Mark 7:1-13.

### **Mark 7:1-13:**

*“Then the **Pharisees** and some of the **scribes** came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with **defiled**, that is, with **unwashed** hands, they found fault. <sup>3</sup> For the **Pharisees** and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, **holding** the **tradition of the elders**. <sup>4</sup> When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are **many other things** which they have **received** and **hold**, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. <sup>5</sup> Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, ‘Why do Your disciples not **walk** according to the **tradition of the elders**, but eat bread with unwashed hands?’ <sup>6</sup> He answered and said to them, ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me’. <sup>7</sup> And ‘in **vain** they **worship** teaching as **doctrines the commandments of men**.’ <sup>8</sup> **For** laying aside the **commandment of God**, you **hold** the **tradition of men** — the washing of pitchers and cups, and **many other such things** you do.” <sup>9</sup> He said to them, “All too well you reject the **commandment of God**, that you may keep **your tradition**. <sup>10</sup> **[now Jesus is going to give an example]** For **Moses said**, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ <sup>11</sup> But **you say** **[notice that Jesus is purposely contrasting what Moses said and what they say because they claimed that this tradition came from Moses]**, ‘If a man says to his father or mother: “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban”—(that is, a gift to God), <sup>12</sup> then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, <sup>13</sup> making the **word of God of no effect** through your **tradition** which you have **handed down**. And **many such things** you do.”*

## **A Group of Spies**

### **Verse 1:**

*“Then the **Pharisees** and some of the **scribes** came together **to Him**, having come from **Jerusalem**.”*

**Why** did these individuals come from Jerusalem?

**RH March 8, 1898:** *“This deputation was sent from Jerusalem for the express purpose of **watching Jesus**, that something might be found with which to **accuse** him.”*

## Identity of the Leaders

Who were these leaders and what motivated them?

- Jesus made it clear that these religious leaders relished the recognition their position accorded them. Their religion consisted mainly of externals—trying in this way, to impress the populace with their piety.
- According to Jesus they enjoyed being called ‘rabbi’ (Matthew 23:7) and ‘father.’ Regarding this, Jesus warned that the people should call no one on earth their ‘father.’ (Matthew 23:9).
- Jesus also accused them of greed, devouring the material possessions of the widows (Matthew 23:14).
- They loved to recite long repetitious prayers learned by rote (Matthew 6:5, 6; 23:14)
- He also rebuked them for showing off their piety and generosity in giving alms to the poor (Matthew 6:1-2).

## Issue over Ritual Cleansing

Verse 2:

*“Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault.”*

Verses 3, 4:

*“For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way [frequently], holding the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.”*

## The Issue in Mark 7

The accusation against Jesus had nothing to do with hygiene or physical cleanliness. It is obvious that people should wash their hands before they eat. Jesus was dealing rather with ritual or ceremonial cleansing.

But the conflict of Jesus with the theologians involved far more than ritual hand washing! Three times in the passage we are told that the issue is much broader than just ritual cleansing. It really involves ‘*many other such like things*’ (7:4, 8, 13). In other words, this specific conflict is only the tip of the iceberg.

We are immediately struck by the **technical terminology** we have already found in rabbinical sources:

- **'Holding to the Tradition of the elders'** (7:3)
- **'Which they have received to hold'** (7:4)
- **'Tradition of the elders'** (7: 5)
- **'hold the tradition of men'** (7:8)
- **'your tradition'** (7:9)
- **'tradition which you have handed down'** (7:13)

The word **'received'** indicates a process of **transmission** from **previous generations** as does the word **'tradition'**. In fact, the word 'tradition' is used **only in the singular** in this passage indicating that we are dealing here with a **single body or deposit** of tradition of which the ceremonial washing of hands is only **one element**.

The word **'hold'** also indicates the existence of a **deposit** which they preserved in their day from previous generations.

Regarding the meaning of the expression *'tradition of the elders'*, the Roman Catholic **Jerome Bible Commentary** says:

*"A rabbinical term for the body of **unwritten laws** that the Pharisees considered as **equally binding** as the **written** Torah." *The Jerome Bible Commentary, volume 1, 'The Gospel According Mark', 42:42, p. 36**

Ellen White describes this mass of tradition:

*"When Christ came to this world He found the Jewish people burdened with a heavy weight of **traditions** and ceremonies which the religious teachers had **handed down** from **generation to generation**. So great was the mass of **tradition** brought in that the commandments of God were made of none effect." *Manuscript Releases, volume 20, p. 338**

## **Rigorous Casuistry**

Not only from Mark 7 but also from passages such as **Matthew 23** we know that the rabbis had developed a system of **rigorous casuistry** which became so **burdensome and oppressive** that no one could obey it. Regarding this Ellen White remarks:

*'The requirements had become so **complicated** that it was **impossible** for them to be fulfilled.'*  
Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 617

*"Many of the Jewish traditions were of so **trifling** and **worthless** a character as to **cheapen** their whole religion, and these traditions were **handed down** from **generation to generation**, and were regarded by many **as the word of God**. Human inventions, which were constantly becoming more foolish and inconsistent, were placed **on an equality with the moral law**, until*



at the time of Christ's first advent, pure doctrine had given place to false ideas." Signs of the Times, January 3, 1900

## **Majoring in Minors**

**No dimension of life** escaped their prescriptions and proscriptions. Most often the rabbinical regulations majored in minors and minored in the 'weightier matters of the law.' (Matthew 5:20; 23:23; 23:16-22)

Jesus spoke of these burdens too heavy to bear in **Matthew 23:4**:

*"For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."*

**Marcel Simon** remarks about this oppressive casuistry:

*". . . the [written] code of the Torah, which regulated both the individual and the collective life of the Jews, did not make provision for every possible situation. This was the task of the doctors of the law and their students. In the light of sacred Scripture, they were to fix the conduct to be followed in each individual case. The Pharisees' casuistry balanced on the edge of formalism, and sometimes fell over into it. It seems to us to have been overly meticulous and hairsplitting in the extreme. When we read of discussion on minute points, of quibbles, and of distinctions bordering on the ludicrous, we sometimes feel that we are in the presence of a sterile form of mental gymnastics." Marcel Simon, Jewish Sects, p. 32*

**Ellen White** sounds very similar:

*"They occupied men's minds with trifling distinctions and turned their attention from essential truths . . . . Among other things the people were required to strain all the water used, lest it should contain the smallest insect, which might be classed with the unclean animals. Jesus, contrasting these trivial exactions with the magnitude of their actual sins, said to the Pharisees, 'Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.'" Ellen White, The Desire of Ages, p. 617*

*"As before, the ground of complaint was His disregard of the traditional precepts that encumbered the law of God. These were professedly designed to guard the observance of the law, but they were regarded as more sacred than the law itself. When they came in collision with the commandments given from Sinai, preference was given to the rabbinical precepts." DA 395*

### **Verse 5:**

*"Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"*

The fact that the Scribes and Pharisees expected Jesus to **compel His disciples** to obey the tradition of the elders indicates that this tradition had the **force of law**. The **rabbis** were expected to **compel their disciples** to obey this tradition by **precept and example**.

## **Rules concerning washing**

Taken from **Code of Jewish Law** by Rabbi Solomon Ganzfried, pp. 125-130

- The water must be poured out of a perfect vessel having neither a hole nor a crack. It must be even at the top without any indents or projecting parts.
- When using a vessel with a spout, the water cannot run through the spout.
- First wash the right hand and then the left.
- The water must cover the entire hand up to the wrist.
- No part of the hand can remain unwashed therefore the fingers must be slightly parted that the water might run down the entire length of the fingers.
- The water must cover the finger tips and the entire circumference of the fingers.
- Water should be poured twice on each hand.
- After washing each hand you should rub them together and recite **Psalms 134:2**.
- You must thoroughly dry your hands but it is forbidden to dry them on your shirt.
- If after pouring out water on one hand you touch it with the other hand or someone else touched it the water on the hand becomes contaminated by the contact. You must dry the hand and wash it again.
- Before washing the hands, we must examine them to make sure that there is no coating on them, as that would be an obstruction between the hands and the water.
- If we have big nails, we must clean them well, so that there would be no clay or dirt under them, as that, too, is considered an obstruction. We must also remove the rings from the fingers before the washing.
- If one touched during the meal a part of the body which is usually covered, or scratched the head or urinated, one must wash the hands again, but without saying the benediction.

## **Jesus Confronts the Leaders**

The way **Jesus faced** this conflict is significant. He quoted the **written Word** of God **three times**.

The **first quotation** comes from the first part of **Isaiah 29:13**.

### **Verse 6:**

*“He answered and said to them, ‘Well did **Isaiah prophesy** of you hypocrites, as **it is written**: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.’”*

The text in **Isaiah 29:13** continues saying:

**And:** *“their **fear** toward Me is taught by the commandment of men. . .”*

**Jesus interprets** this text in an interesting way. He links the idea of **fear with worship**.

In **Revelation 14:6, 7** the words ‘fear’ and ‘worship’ are linked together. The word ‘fear’ refers to a deep and reverent respect that leads us to worship God.

**Verse 7:**

*“**And** in **vain** they **worship** Me, teaching as doctrines the **commandments of men**.”*

**Three issues** in the passage are crystal clear.

- The battle is between the **written word of God** and the **unwritten tradition** of men.
- Even **more specifically** the conflict is between the **commandments of God** and the **traditions of men**.
- Finally, the conflict is over **true worship** and **vain worship**. To teach the commandments of men in place of the word of God constitutes **vain worship**. When you follow the commandments of men instead of the word of God your worship is useless.

Though Jesus did not quote **verse 14** it is loaded with meaning because it reveals that the **traditions of men** came from the **wise men** and the **prudent men** of Israel, in other words, the scholars:

*“Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work among this people, a marvelous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their **wise men** shall perish, and the understanding of their **prudent men** shall be hidden.”*

**Verse 8:**

*“**For** [the reason is] laying aside the **commandment of God**, you hold the **tradition of men**—the washing of pitchers and cups, and **many other such things** you do.”*

Notice the contrast is between the **commandment of God** and the **tradition of men** which **contradicts** the commandment of God

**Verse 9:**

*“He said to them, “All too well you **reject [invalidate, nullify]** **the commandment of God**, that you may keep **your tradition**.”*

## A Practical Example

Ellen White explained the law of **Corban** ('dedicated')

*"An undutiful child had only to pronounce the word "Corban" over his property, thus devoting it to God, and he could retain it for his own use **during his lifetime**, and after his death it was to be appropriated to the **temple service**. Thus he was at liberty, both in life and in death, to dishonor and defraud his parents, under cover of a **pretended devotion to God**." DA 396*

### Verse 10:

*"For **Moses [by whose authority they claimed to teach, sitting on the kathedra of Moses] said [written Scripture]**, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'"*

The **second quotation** that Jesus used comes from **Exodus 20:12**:

*"Honor your father and your mother. . ."*

Here Jesus actually quotes the **fifth commandment** of God's holy Ten Commandment Law. Thus their **tradition** contradicted **one of the Ten Commandments**.

The third quotation is from Exodus **21:17** where Moses said:

*"And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.*

The **purpose** of the second and third quotations is to prove that the commandments of men which come from the deposit of **unwritten Tradition** really **conflict** with the written **commandments of God** which come from the deposit of the **written** Word of God.

Jesus, in unmistakable language, shows that the tradition of **Corban** which is found in the **body of unwritten tradition**, not only **conflicts** with the **fifth commandment** of the **written law** of God but actually **invalidates it!!**

### Verses 11-12:

*"But **you say [notice the contrast]**, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"—' (that is, a gift to God), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother."*

## Closing Argument

**Verse 13:** *"making the **word of God** of **no effect [invalidating]** through **your tradition [not God's word]** which you have **handed down**. And **many such things** you do."*

*"They set aside the fifth commandment as of no consequence, but were very exact in carrying out the tradition of the elders. The sayings of supposed great men had been handed down from rabbi to rabbi, nullifying the plain requirements of God, "making the word of God of none effect," said Christ; "and many other such like things ye do." RH March 8, 1898*

## **Religious Leaders Infuriated**

The logic of Jesus was impeccable and could not be refuted. They hated Jesus because he came at them with the written word and with the Ten Commandments and showed them that their traditions contradicted the Law (will this happen at the end as well?):

**DA 397:** *"The deputies from Jerusalem were filled with rage. They could not accuse Christ as a violator of the law given from Sinai, for He spoke as its defender against their traditions. The great precepts of the law, which He had presented, appeared in striking contrast to the petty rules that men had devised."*

Because Jesus required proof from Scripture, the religious leaders turned the people against Him and eventually led them to seek His destruction. This will happen at the end of time as well.

*"The law of God unmixed with human tradition was presented by Christ as the great standard of obedience. This aroused the enmity of the rabbis. They had set human teaching above God's word, and had turned the people away from His precepts. They would not give up their man-made commandments in order to obey the requirements of the word of God. They would not, for the truth's sake, sacrifice the pride of reason and the praise of men. When Christ came, presenting to the nation the claims of God, the priests and elders denied His right to interpose between them and the people. They would not accept His rebukes and warnings, and they set themselves to turn the people against Him and to compass His destruction." COL 304, 305*



## THE BIBLE OR TRADITION

# LESSON #4 - JESUS AND THEOLOGICAL CONFLICT

### Introduction

The introductory music to each lecture in this series is what has come to be known as the **Battle Hymn** of the **protestant reformation**. Every time I sing this hymn (which is a **paraphrase of Psalm 46**) I can almost see Martin Luther standing before **Emperor Charles V** and the **luminaries** of the Roman Catholic Church at the **Diet of Worms** with a **face like flint** refusing to recant his teachings:

*"... my conscience is captive by the **Word of God**. Therefore I cannot and will not recant, since it is difficult, unprofitable and dangerous indeed to do anything against one's conscience. So help me God. Amen."*

### Protestantism and Catholicism

If there is **one word** that **epitomized** the protestant reformation it is the word: **SOLA**

- Sola **Gratia**
- Solo **Christo**
- Sola **Fide**
- Sola **Scriptura**
- **Soli Deo Gloria**

In **contrast** to the motto of the protestant reformers the Catholic Church **was and is** still characterized by the **three-letter** word **AND**:

- Grace **and** human effort
- Christ **and** Mary
- Faith **and** works
- Glory to God **and** to the holy ones who achieved sainthood by their good works
- Scripture **and** tradition

Ellen White has explained the meaning of Sola Scriptura:

**GC 595:** *“But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the Bible only, as the standard of all doctrines and the basis of all reforms. The opinions of learned men, the deductions of science, the creeds or decisions of ecclesiastical councils, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the majority--not one nor all of these should be regarded as evidence for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain “Thus saith the Lord” in its support.”*

Immediately after this statement we find the following:

**GC 595:** *“Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. Then, by controlling the minds of these leaders, he can influence the multitudes according to his will.”*

The truth of these statements is confirmed by our great exemplar, Jesus Christ.

How did Jesus face and settle theological controversies that he had with the ministers and theologians of His day? Did he ever appeal to tradition or quote the scholars?

## **The Authority of Jesus**

As far as we know, not even once did Jesus ever quote a rabbi or scholar. As is well known, Jesus did not attend the schools of the rabbis. He was home schooled. In this way He remained undefiled by the traditions of the scholars.

The Story of Jesus, p. 30: *“God Himself by His Holy Spirit instructed Mary how to bring up His Son. Mary taught Jesus from the Holy Scriptures and He learned to read and study them for Himself.”*

We are told by the Spirit of Prophecy that His mother, in order to prevent controversy, attempted to convince Jesus to follow the traditions of the elders:

*Signs of the Times*, August 6, 1896: *“When the priests and rulers came to Mary to persuade her to force Jesus to give allegiance to their ceremonies and traditions, she felt much troubled. But peace and confidence came to her troubled heart as her Son presented the clear statements of the Scriptures in upholding His practices.”*

Thus, whenever Jesus defended his teachings or his actions, He always appealed to the written words of the Old Testament. He never quoted or even referred to any supposed oral sayings of Moses or the fathers.

**CT 446, 447:** *“Jesus and John were represented by the educators of that day as ignorant because they had not learned in the schools of the rabbis; but the God of heaven was their Teacher and all who heard were astonished at their knowledge of the Scriptures.”* CT 446, 447



From the time of his **first visit** to the temple, Jesus appealed to the **written word** of God. Regarding this incident, Ellen White remarks:

**DA 85:** *"In every gentle and submissive way, Jesus tried to please those with whom He came in contact. Because He was so gentle and unobtrusive, the scribes and elders supposed that He would be **easily influenced** by their teaching. They urged Him to receive the **maxims and traditions** that had been **handed down** from the **ancient rabbis**, but He asked for their authority in **Holy writ**. He would hear every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; but He could not obey the **inventions of men**. Jesus seemed to **know the Scriptures** from beginning to end and He presented them in their true import. The rabbis were **ashamed** to be instructed by a child. They claimed that it was **their office to explain** the Scriptures and that it was His place to accept **their interpretation**. They were **indignant** that He should stand in opposition to **their word**."*

## The Temptation

Jesus **set the tone** at the **very beginning** of His ministry. When Jesus was **tempted** of the devil, **three times** His defense was, 'it is **written**'

**Matthew 4:3-10:** God had **just said** that Jesus was His beloved Son at the **baptism** and now **Satan comes with doubt** and Jesus **detected him** right away!

### **Temptation #1:**

*"Now when the tempter came to Him [**as an angel of light**], he said, "**If** You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." 4 But He answered and said, "**It is written**, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by **every word** that proceeds from the **mouth of God**.'"*

### **Temptation #2:**

*Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "**If** You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For **it is written**: 'He shall give His angels charge over you, [**he omitted the words: 'to keep Thee in all Thy ways'**. Satan quoted the promise without the condition upon which God could fulfill the promise] 'and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" 7 Jesus said to him, "**It is written again**, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God [**God had said that Jesus was His Son and to demand proof would show a lack of faith**]*

### **Temptation # 3:** Satan now reveals his **true identity**

*Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." 10 Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For **it is written**, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"*

## Beginning of His Ministry

When Jesus **began His public ministry** Jesus entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day, turned to the book of Isaiah, chapter 61:1, 2, read the passage and then said:

**Luke 4:21:**

*'This day is this **scripture** fulfilled in your ears'*

## The Writings of Moses

**John 5:45-47:** He **wrote** about me

*"Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you — Moses, in whom you trust. <sup>46</sup> For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he **wrote** about Me. <sup>47</sup> But if you do not believe his **writings**, how will you believe My words?"*

## Mark 7

In my last sermon we studied Mark 7 and found that Jesus quoted **three Scriptures** to contradict their tradition:

- **Isaiah 29:13:** *"These people honor me with their lips but their heart is far from me" and "In vain do they worship me teaching as precepts the commandments of men."*
- **Exodus 20:12** *"Honor your father and your mother"*
- **Exodus 21:** *"He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death."*

## The Big Commandment in the Law

A certain young **scholar** came to **test** Jesus by asking what he needed to do to **inherit eternal life**. Jesus answered:

**Luke 10:26:** *'What is **written** in the **law** [this would be the Torah]? How do you **read**?'*

The young men quoted **Deuteronomy 6:4** and **Leviticus 19:18** to which Jesus said:

*"You have answered correctly, do this and you will live."*

## Two Witnesses

The enemies of Jesus came to Him and said: "Your testimony is **not valid** because you are your **own witness** and the testimony of one witness cannot **confirm any word**."

**John 8:17, 18:** *"It is also **written** in your law that the testimony of **two men** is true. <sup>18</sup> **I am** One who bears witness of Myself, and the **Father** who sent Me bears witness of Me."*

## Sabbath Conflict

**Matthew 12:3-5:** The **showbread** episode

*"But He said to them, "Have you **not read** what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: <sup>4</sup> how he entered the house of God and ate the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, but only for the priests? <sup>5</sup> Or have you not **read in the law** that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?"*

## **Dispute over Marriage**

**Matthew 19:4-6:** Dispute over **marriage**

*"And He answered and said to them, "Have you **not read** that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' <sup>5</sup> and **said**, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? <sup>6</sup> So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."*

## **Triumphal Entry**

**Matthew 21:16:**

*"And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never **read**, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise'?"*

## **Cleansing the Temple**

His cleansing of the temple was justified by the **written** Word

**Matthew 21:13:**

*"And He said to them, "**It is written**, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"*

When any religious dispute was to be settled, Jesus quoted from the **written** Word.

## **The Vineyard Workers**

After telling the parable of the **vineyard workers**, Jesus **asked** the religious leaders:

*"What will the father do to those who threw the son out of the vineyard and killed him?"*

**They** answered:

*"He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons."*

Then Jesus **quoted Scripture** to prove that they were the vinedressers:

**Matthew 21:42:**

*'Did ye never **read** in the **Scriptures**, 'The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'*

## Dispute over the Resurrection

Jesus had a dispute with the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead.

There were seven brothers. One of them married a certain woman. He died and his brother married his wife. All seven of them died after having married the same woman. Whose wife would she be in the resurrection?

### Mark 12:24-27

*"Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God [the Scriptures teach the resurrection and God has the power to resurrect dead people]? <sup>25</sup> For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. <sup>26</sup> But concerning the dead, that they rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the burning bush passage, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? <sup>27</sup> He is not the God of the dead [because he will resurrect Abraham Isaac and Jacob], but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly mistaken."*

## The Son of David

While Jesus was in the temple for the last time he had several discussions with the religious leaders:

**Matt 22:41-45:** *"While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, <sup>42</sup> saying, "What do you think about the Christ [Messiah]? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." <sup>43</sup> He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying [quoting Psalm 110:1]: <sup>44</sup> 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"'? <sup>45</sup> If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?"*

If David calls his son Lord, then the son has to be greater than David and cannot merely be David's literal son.

## After the Resurrection

After His resurrection Jesus explained His mission to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus by quoting from the written Scriptures

### Luke 24:25-27: Disciples on the Road to Emmaus

*"Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" <sup>27</sup> And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."*

### Luke 24:44-47: The apostles in the Upper Room

"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." <sup>45</sup> And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. <sup>46</sup> Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

## People Wonder at Jesus' Teaching

The people were constantly wondering where Jesus had gotten His knowledge, not having studied under any of the great rabbis:

### Matthew 13:54:

"When He had come to His own country [Nazareth], He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works?"

### John 7:15:

"Now about the middle of the feast [of Tabernacles] Jesus went up into the temple and taught. <sup>15</sup> And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

### John 7:45, 46:

"Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" <sup>46</sup> The officers answered: "No man ever spoke like this Man!"

## Authority of Jesus Questioned

The right or authority of Jesus to act and speak was constantly questioned by the Scribes and Pharisees:

### Mark 11:27, 28:

'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, and say unto him: By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority to do these things?'

It is clear here that the religious leaders believed that the right to teach was an authority which belonged to them alone and which they alone could delegate.

After telling the Story of the man who built his house on the rock and the man who built his house on the sand we find the following words:

Matthew 7:28, 29: 'And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine; for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.'



## THE BIBLE OR TRADITION

# LESSON #5 – THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW OF TRADITION - PART #1

### Review

In our study of the rabbinical concept of divine revelation we have noticed that there were certain key concepts and terms:

- ‘Tradition’
- ‘handed down’
- ‘passed on’
- ‘received’
- ‘hold’
- ‘unbroken succession’
- Implicit obedience of the people
- Religious leaders sat on Moses’ Kathedra

In our study today we are going to see that there is a striking similarity between the rabbinical view of tradition in the apostate Jewish church in the days of Christ and the apostate Roman church of today.

### Unbiblical Doctrines and Practices

Have you ever wondered how the Roman Catholic Church can justify beliefs and practices which do not have even one iota of support in the written Scripture?

Where, for example, is the written Biblical evidence for infant baptism, baptism by sprinkling, prayers for the dead and to the dead, the canonization of saints, purgatory, limbo, the celibacy of the priesthood, the sale of indulgences, the worship of images, the rosary, the immaculate conception, Mary as meadiatrix, Mary as the mother of God, the assumption of Mary, the perpetual virginity of Mary, the observance of Sunday, Lent, auricular confession, among other things? The answer is found in the Roman Catholic view of tradition.

## Things not Written

The Roman Catholic view of Tradition is virtually identical with that of the Jews in the time of Christ. However, instead of God giving the information to Moses the Roman Catholic Church says that Christ gave the oral information to Peter who presided over the college of the apostles.

Roman Catholic scholars underline the fact there were many teachings and actions of Jesus which were never recorded in the Gospels. This much is true for we are explicitly told in John 21:25 and 20:30-31 that Jesus said and did many things which were not written in the Gospel of John.

But nowhere are we told in the New Testament that God intended to pass on orally from generation to generation the things that were not written. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that Peter and the apostles preserved these oral traditions absolutely pure and passed them on orally and infallibly to their successors.

These successors in turn preserved all of these oral traditions and transmitted them with 100% inerrancy to the next generation and the next to the next in unbroken succession to our very day.

The Roman Catholic Church employs Matthew 16:18, 19 to support this view. They say that Christ built His church upon Peter, the rock, and then gave him the keys of the kingdom to bind and loose.

What this means in Roman Catholic theology, is that Peter presiding over the college of the apostles, was given the authority to preserve, define and explain, not only the written Word of God but also the unwritten Tradition. And the Bishop of Rome, the successor of Peter, in union with the college of bishops has the same power today.

## Unbroken Chain of Successors

Notably, according to Roman Catholic theology, when the Pope in union with the college of bishops, speaks on faith and morals, he speaks ex-kathedra, that is, from Peter's throne and thus his teachings have infallible apostolic authority.

## How it Works

Let's put this in practical terms. The Roman Catholic Church believes that there is a [1] deposit of revelation which is contained in the written Scriptures of the New Testament and in the unwritten Tradition that was given orally to Peter. They also believe that there is a [2] transmitting element to pass on divine revelation from generation to generation in an authoritative and trustworthy way. This transmitting mechanism is known as apostolic succession where one generation of bishops places their hands in ordination upon the next generation of bishops in unbroken succession from the time of Peter till our day.



## **The Magisterium**

But according to Roman Catholic theology there must also be an authoritative [3] **living teaching voice** in the church in **every generation** to **define, explain, interpret** and **bring forth** Tradition both in its written and unwritten form. This is done by the **Magisterium** or **teaching office** of the church, an **elite cadre of scholars especially trained** for the task. In other words, it is left to theological specialists to provide the authentic interpretation and meaning of written Scripture and the unwritten traditions.

We can immediately see the **striking similarity** between this Roman Catholic view and the Jewish concept in Christ's day. They are **virtually identical**.

## **Implicit and Unquestioning Obedience**

According to Roman Catholic theology, when the Pope speaks **ex-cathedra**, that is, from **Peter's throne**, his pronouncements must be accepted as **final and infallible**. That is to say, the faithful must render **implicit obedience** to the will of the Pope and the **Magisterium** under pain of being **anathema or excommunicated!**

This is, as we have seen, precisely what was **expected of the populace** in the days of Christ. This is the way in which the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church **attempts to exert full and total control** over the masses and governs them according to its will.

You say: "*Where is the evidence that the Roman Catholic Church believes this?*"

The clear evidence is found in the official declaration of the Roman Catholic Church on divine revelation at **Vatican Council II** (*Dei Verbum*) and also in **The Catechism of the Catholic Church**. But first let's see what was taught at the **Council of Trent**.

## **The Council of Trent**

*"The sacred and holy, ecumenical, and general Synod of **Trent**,--lawfully assembled in the Holy Ghost,--seeing clearly that this truth and discipline [of the gospel] are contained in the **written** books, and the **unwritten** traditions which, **received** by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have **come down** even unto us, **transmitted as it were from hand to hand**; [the Synod] following the examples of the orthodox Fathers, **receives** and venerates with an **equal affection** of piety and reverence, all the books of the Old and New Testament--seeing that one God is the author of both--as also the said **traditions**, as well those appertaining to faith as to morals, as having been dictated, either by Christ's own word of mouth, or by the Holy Ghost, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a **continuous succession**." Council of Trent, Session IV (April 8, 1546) "Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures", translated by, Philip Schaff, **The Creeds of Christendom** (4<sup>th</sup> ed., revised, New York: Harper, 1919), volume 2, pp. 79, 80.*

The **Profession of Faith** of the Council of Trent states:

*“The apostolic and ecclesiastical **traditions** and all other observances and constitutions of that same Church I most firmly admit and embrace. I likewise accept Holy Scripture **according to that sense which our holy Mother Church has held and does hold**, whose [office] is to judge of the **true meaning and interpretation** of the Sacred Scriptures; **I shall never** accept nor interpret it otherwise than in accordance with the unanimous consent of the **Fathers**.”* Quoted in, Jaroslav Pelikan, The Riddle of Roman Catholicism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 82

## **Dei Verbum (“The Word of God”)**

Let’s take a look first of all at the declaration on the **Word of God** that was drafted at **Vatican Council II** and promulgated by **Pope Paul VI** on **November 18, 1965**. This is not the **personal opinion** of the pope but rather the declaration of an **ecumenical council** which gives it **apostolic authority**.

*“But in order to keep the gospel forever whole and alive within the Church, the apostles **left bishops** as their **successors**; **handing over** their own **teaching office** to them and so the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved by a **continuous succession** of preachers until the end of time. Therefore, the apostles **handing on** what they themselves had **received**, warn the faithful to **hold fast** to the **traditions** which they have learned either by **word of mouth** or by **letter** (cf. 2 Th. 2:15), and to fight in defense of the faith **handed on** once and for all (cf. Jude 3). Now what was **handed on** by the apostles includes everything which contributes to the holiness of life and the increase in faith of the People of God; and so the Church, in her teaching, life, and worship, perpetuates and **hands on** to all generations all that she herself is, all that she believes.*

*“This **tradition** which comes from the apostles **develops** in the Church with the help of the Holy Spirit. For there is a **growth in understanding** of the realities and the words which have been **handed down**. This happens through the contemplation and study made by believers, who treasure these things in their hearts (cf. Lk. 2:19, 51), through the intimate understanding of spiritual things they experience, and through the preaching of those who have **received** through **episcopal succession** the sure gift of truth. For as the centuries succeed one another, the Church constantly moves forward toward the **fullness of divine truth** until the words of God reach their **complete fulfillment** in her. . . .*

*“Hence there exist a close connection and communication between **sacred tradition** and **sacred Scripture**. For **both of them**, flowing from the **same divine wellspring**; in a certain way **merge into a unity** and tend toward the same end. For sacred Scripture is the word of God inasmuch as it is consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit. To the **successors of the apostles**, sacred tradition **hands on** in its **full purity** God’s word, which was entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. Thus, led by the light of the Spirit of truth, these **successors** can in their preaching **preserve** this word of God faithfully, explain it, and make it*

more widely known. Consequently, it is **not from sacred Scripture alone** that the Church draws her certainty about everything which has been revealed. Therefore both **sacred tradition** and **sacred Scripture** are to be accepted and venerated with the **same sense** of devotion and reverence.

“Sacred **tradition** and sacred Scripture form **one sacred deposit** of the word of God, which is committed to the Church. **Holding fast** to this **deposit**, the entire holy people **united with their shepherds** remain always steadfast in the teaching of the apostles, in the common life, in the breaking of the bread, and in prayers (cf. Acts 2:42, Greek text), so that in **holding to**, practicing, and professing the heritage of the faith, there results on the part of the bishops and faithful a remarkable common effort.

“This task of **authentically interpreting** the word of God whether written or **handed on**, has been entrusted **exclusively** to the **living teaching office** of the Church, whose authority is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ. This **teaching office** is not above the word of God, but serves it, teaching only what has been **handed down**, **listening** to it devoutly, **guarding** it scrupulously, and **explaining** it faithfully by divine commission and with the help of the Holy Spirit; it draws from this **one deposit of faith** everything which it presents for belief as divinely revealed.

“It is clear, therefore, that **sacred tradition**, **sacred Scripture**, and the **teaching authority** of the Church, in accord with God’s most wise design, are so linked and joined together that **one cannot stand without the others**, and that all together and each in its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls.” (Walter M. Abbott., general editor, The Documents of Vatican II, ‘Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation,’ (The America Press, 1966), pp. 115-118

## **Roman Catholic Catechism**

We will now turn to **article #2** of the **Catechism of the Catholic Church** which deals with ‘the transmission of divine revelation’:

“**76** In keeping with the Lord’s command, the Gospel was **handed on** in two ways:

--**orally** ‘by the apostles who **handed on**, by the spoken word of their preaching, by the example they gave, by the institutions they established, what they themselves **received**--whether from the lips of Christ, from his way of life and his works, or whether they had learned it at the prompting of the Holy Spirit,’

--**in writing** ‘by those apostles and other men associated with the apostles who, under the inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, committed the message of salvation to writing’.

. . . **continued in apostolic succession**

**77** In order that the full and living Gospel might always be **preserved** in the Church the apostles **left bishops** as their **successors**. They gave them ‘their own position of teaching authority.’

Indeed, 'the apostolic preaching, which is expressed in a special way in the inspired books, was to be preserved in a **continuous line of succession** until the end of time.'

**78** This living **transmission**, accomplished in the Holy Spirit, is called **Tradition** since it is distinct from Sacred Scripture, though closely connected to it. Through **Tradition**, 'the Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship perpetuates and **transmits** to **every generation** all that she herself is, all that she believes.' 'The sayings of the holy Fathers are a witness to the life-giving presence of this **Tradition**, showing how its riches are poured out in the practice and life of the Church, in her belief and her prayer.'

**One common source. . . .**

**80** 'Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound **closely together** and communicate one with the other. For both of them **flowing out from the same divine well-spring**, come together in some fashion to form **one thing** and move towards the same goal.' Each of them makes present and fruitful in the Church the mystery of Christ, who promised to remain with his own 'always, to the close of the age.'

**. . . . two distinct modes of transmission**

**81** 'Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in **writing** under the breath of the Holy Spirit.'

'And [Holy] Tradition **transmits** in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles of Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It **transmits** it to the **successors** of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may **faithfully preserve, expound, and spread it** abroad by their preaching.'

**82** As a result the Church, to whom the **transmission** and **interpretation** of Revelation is entrusted, '**does not derive her certainty** about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures **alone**. **Both** Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with **equal sentiments** of devotion and reverence.'

**Apostolic Tradition and ecclesial traditions**

**83** The **Tradition** here in question comes from the apostles and **hands on** what they **received** from Jesus teaching and example what they learned from the Holy Spirit. The first generation of Christians did not yet have a written New Testament, and the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of **living Tradition**

**The heritage of faith entrusted to the whole of the Church**

**84** The **apostles** entrusted the '**Sacred deposit**' of the faith (the depositum fidei), contained in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, to the whole of the Church. 'By adhering to [this heritage] the entire holy people, **united to its pastors**, remains always faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. So, in maintaining, practicing, and professing the faith that has been **handed on** there should be a remarkable harmony between the **bishops and the faithful**.'

## **The Magisterium of the Church**

**85** 'The task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living, teaching office of the Church alone. Its authority in this matter is exercised in the name of Jesus Christ.' This means that the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome.'

**86** 'Yet this **Magisterium** is not superior to the Word of God, but is its servant. It teaches only what has been handed on to it. At the divine command and with the help of the Holy Spirit, it listens to this devotedly, guards it with dedication, and expounds it faithfully. All that it proposes for belief as being divinely revealed is drawn from this single deposit of faith.'

## **Significant Words of Pope Pius XII**

Concerning this Magisterium, Pope Pius XII once stated:

"Together with these sacred sources of Scripture and tradition, God has given a living magisterium to His Church, to illumine and clarify what is contained in the deposits of faith obscurely and implicitly." Quoted in, Jaroslav Pelikan, The Riddle of Roman Catholicism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 83.

## **Additional Quotations**

"Like two sacred rivers flowing from Paradise, the Bible and divine Tradition contain the Word of God, the precious gems of revealed truths.

"Though these two divine streams are in themselves, on account of their divine origin, of equal sacredness, and are both full of revealed truths, still, of the two, Tradition is to us more clear and safe." Joseph Faa di Bruno, Catholic Belief, revised by Louis A. Lambert (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1884), p. 45

"Some of the truths which God has revealed and which have always been taught by the Catholic Church are not contained in the Bible. These truths have come down to us by what is called oral tradition; that is, they have been handed down by word of mouth. By Catholic Tradition, therefore, we understand all those truths which the Church received from Jesus Christ and the Apostles, but which are not found in the Bible. These truths we firmly believe, because they were revealed by God and are proposed to us by the Church.

"Some of the truths that have been handed down to us by Tradition and are not recorded in the Sacred Scripture, are the following: that there are just seven Sacraments; that there is a Purgatory; that, in the New Law, Sunday should be kept holy instead of the Sabbath; that infants should be baptized, and that there are precisely seventy-two books in the Bible.

"The truths of Catholic Tradition have been handed down in the Church by means of the writings of the 'Fathers of the Church,' as well as by the decrees of Councils, by approved Creeds

and by **the prayers and ceremonies** of the Church. These ancient writings and institutions show plainly what has been the faith of the Church from the earliest times.

“However, it is only the **infallible teaching office** of the Church that **secures us** against error as to the truth contained in Tradition as well as in the Holy Scripture. **The voice of the Church is the voice of God.**” Francis J. Butler, Holy Family Series of Catholic Catechisms (Boston: Thomas J. Flynn & Co., 1904), p. 63.

“From all of which it must be abundantly clear that **the Bible alone is not a safe and competent guide** because it is not now and has never been accessible to all, because it is **not clear and intelligible to all**, and because it does **not contain all the truths** of the Christian religion.

“The simple fact is that the Bible, like all **dead letters**, calls for a **living interpreter** [yes, the Holy Spirit]. . . . Just as the supreme court is the authorized **living interpreter** of the constitution, so the Catholic Church is the **living authoritative interpreter** of the Bible. She has been the **preserver and custodian** of the Bible through the centuries, and she **interprets it for us** in the name and with the authority of Jesus Christ.” (John O’Brien, The Faith of Millions (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1974), pp. 137, 138)

“By **TRADITION** we do not mean a mere report, a hearsay, wanting sufficient evidence to deserve belief; or a local tradition started by men, and therefore merely human, as were those traditions of the Pharisees condemned by our Lord; but we mean a Tradition first coming from God, continually taught, recorded, and in all desirable ways kept alive by a **body of trustworthy men successively chosen** in a divine, or divinely appointed manner, well instructed, and who are, **as a body**, protected by God **from teaching what is wrong**, or **handing down** unfaithfully to others the doctrine committed to them.” Joseph Faa di Bruno, Catholic Belief, revised by Louis A. Lambert (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1884), pp. 39, 40

“Since the truths contained in Scripture and those **handed down** by Tradition both come from God, Scripture and Tradition are of **equal value** as sources of faith. Both deserve the same reverence and respect. **Each alone** is sufficient to establish a truth of our holy faith. . . .

“Scripture and Tradition are called the **remote rule of faith**, because the Catholic **does not base his faith directly on these sources**. The **proximate rule of faith** is for him [the Catholic] the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, which **alone** has received from God the authority to **interpret infallibly** the doctrines He has revealed, whether these be contained in Scripture or in Tradition.” John Laux, A Course in Religion for Catholic High Schools and Academies, part 1 (New York: Benzinger Brothers, 1936), pp. 50, 51

“Because the origin of our faith is **not the Bible alone**, but the **Church** which gives us both the written and the unwritten word. . .

“So in the New Law, Catholics believe **some things not in the Scriptures**, although wholly **in accord with them**, because of the **infallible** witness of the Church as to their divine or apostolic origin. Why do Protestants accept the Scriptures as inspired? Why do they honor the first day of the week instead of the seventh? Why do they baptize children? Contrary to their principles,

they must **look outside the Bible** to the voice of tradition, which is not human, but **divine**, because guaranteed by the divine, **infallible** witness of the Catholic Church.” Bertrand L. Conway, The Question Box Answers (New York: The Columbus Press, 1910), pp. 75, 76.

Thus the Roman Catholic Church claims that the Bible is **subservient** to her rather than **she to the Bible**. Regarding this, **Keith Fournier** states:

*“I believe the Bible is the Book of the church, not that the church is the church of the book.”* (Keith Fournier, Evangelical Catholics, p. 17) In other words, the church is above the Bible.

Regarding this supremacy of the **church over the Bible**, John A. O’Brien—for many years a professor of theology at the University of **Notre Dame**, has stated:

*“She [the Church] is not the child of the Bible, as many non-Catholics imagine, but **its mother**. She derives neither her existence nor her teaching authority from the New Testament. She **had both before the New Testament was born**: she secured her being, her teachings, her authority directly from Jesus Christ.*

*“If all the books of the Bible and all the copies thereof were **blotted out**, she would still be in possession of all the truths of Christ and could **still continue to preach** them as she did before a single word of the New Testament was written; for those truths are **deep in her mind, heart and memory**, in her liturgical and sacramental life, in the traditions, written and unwritten, which go directly back to Christ.”* (John A. O’Brien, The Faith of Millions (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1974), p. 129.

## **Important Conclusions**

From the foregoing **quotations** and from the **empirical observation** of contemporary Roman Catholicism, we can reach the following conclusions:

Roman Catholicism has a virtually **identical view** of divine revelation as did **apostate Judaism** in the days of Christ. The three elements of a **[1] sacred deposit written and oral**, a **[2] transmitting mechanism** and an authoritative **[3] living interpreter** are all present in both systems. Strikingly, the **terminology is virtually identical** as well:

- ‘Tradition’
- ‘handed down’
- ‘passed on’
- ‘received’
- ‘hold’
- ‘unbroken succession’

In both systems the oral traditions supposedly go back to an **original source**. In the case of the Jews, that source was **God through Moses**; in the case of the Roman Catholic Church it was **Christ through Peter**.

Amazingly when the Pope speaks ex-cathedra his word is considered infallible and final. When the rabbis spoke from Moses' kathedra their word was considered infallible and final as well.

In both systems the oral tradition and the written word were in theory given equal authority but in actual practice oral tradition transcended the authority of the written word and contradicted it.

In Judaism, the people were expected to render implicit and unquestioning submission to the theological views of the scholars. Any divergence was swiftly punished with expulsion from the synagogue.

In Roman Catholicism the same is true. Any disagreement with the theological *cadre* is punished with threats of excommunication. In fact, even theologians who disagree with the *magisterium* are defrocked from their teaching positions, as can be seen, for example, in the case of Hans Kung.



## THE BIBLE OR TRADITION

# LESSON #6 – THE ROMAN CATHOLIC VIEW OF TRADITION - PART #2

### Review from previous lectures

From three sources, the Roman Catholic Catechism, Dei Verbum and numerous scholars, we have noticed that Roman Catholicism has a virtually identical view of divine revelation as did apostate Judaism in the days of Christ.

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## How to Control de Masses

In the times of Christ the people were captivated by the teachings of Jesus. In fact, multitudes followed Him. But through the influence and pressure of the leaders, the multitude eventually clamored for the blood of Jesus (Matthew 27:20)

## Trust in the Preachers

By controlling the teachings of the *Magisterium*, Satan can control de masses.

Notice this amazing statement by Ellen G. White:

*“Satan is constantly endeavoring to attract attention to man in the place of God. He leads the people to look to bishops, to pastors, to professors of theology, as their guides, instead of searching the Scriptures to learn their duty for themselves. Then, by controlling the minds of these leaders, he can influence the multitudes according to his will.”* (Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 595)

Interestingly, Ellen White then compares the plight of the populace in Christ’s day with the condition of the people who belong to the Roman Catholic system today. Regarding the control the Jewish leaders exerted over the populace in Christ’s day, she states:

*“When Christ came to speak the words of life, the common people heard Him gladly; and many, even of the priests and rulers, believed on Him. But the chief of the priesthood and the leading men of the nation were determined to condemn and repudiate His teachings. . . . These opponents of Jesus were men whom the people had been taught from infancy to reverence, to whose authority they had been accustomed implicitly to bow. ‘How is it,’ they asked, ‘that our rulers and learned scribes do not believe on Jesus? Would not these pious men receive Him if He were the Christ?’ It was the influence of such teachers that led the Jewish nation to reject their Redeemer.*

## Protestant Leaders

And regarding the control of the Roman Catholic and Protestant clergy over their masses, Ellen White says:

*“Christ foresaw that the undue assumption of authority indulged by the scribes and Pharisees would **not cease** with the dispersion of the Jews. . . . The Roman Church **reserves to the clergy** the right to interpret the Scriptures. On the ground that ecclesiastics **alone are competent to explain God’s word**, it is **withheld** from the common people. Though the Reformation gave the Scriptures to all, yet the **selfsame principle which was maintained by Rome** prevents multitudes in Protestant churches from searching the Bible for themselves. They are taught to accept its teaching **as interpreted by the church**; and there are thousands who dare receive nothing, however plainly revealed in Scripture, that is contrary to their creed or the established doctrine of **their church**.*

*“There are today thousands of professors of religion who can give no other reason for points of faith which they hold than that they were so **instructed by their religious leaders**. They pass by the Savior’s teachings almost unnoticed, and place **implicit confidence** in the words of the ministers. But are ministers infallible? How can we trust our souls to their guidance unless we **know from God’s word** that they are light bearers? A lack of moral courage to step aside from the beaten track of the world leads many to follow **in the steps of learned men**; and by their reluctance to **investigate for themselves**, they are becoming **hopelessly fastened in the chains of error**. They see that the truth for this time is plainly brought to view in the Bible; and they feel the power of the Holy Spirit attending its proclamation; yet they allow the **opposition of the clergy** to turn them from the light. Though reason and conscience are convinced, these deluded souls **dare not think differently from the minister**; and their individual judgment, their eternal interests, are sacrificed to the unbelief, the pride and prejudice, **of another**.” (Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, pp. 595-597)*

## Lipstick

Like in Judaism, Roman Catholicism is caught up in a system of **oppressive casuistry**. In fact, **Canon Law** is equivalent to the **Talmud** where the rules and regulations were codified. Notice the following two examples from canon law (there are **1752** canon laws):

*Question: “If the lips of a woman who is receiving Extreme Unction are coated with lip-stick, is there any danger that the anointing of the mouth will not be valid?”*

*“Answer: “If there is a thick coating of lip-stick on the lips, there would be grave danger that the anointing of the mouth performed on the lips would not be valid; and in that event the validity of the sacrament would be doubtful. . . .” (Quoted in, Jaroslav Pelikan, The Riddle of Roman Catholicism (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 87)*

Commenting on this **prescription of canon law**, Pelikan remarks on the same page:

*“The penitent can never be certain of whether he has been obedient to **every detailed prescription of the law**, and yet he must be certain in order to find salvation and peace.”*

This is the same problem which existed in the days of Christ. The Jews had developed so many **prescriptions and proscriptions** that not even the most pious believer could obey them all. Thus the Jewish laws contained in the **Talmud** are paralleled by the laws contained in Roman Catholic **canon law**. And there are **thousands** of casuistic regulations in Roman Catholic canon law!!

The **1983** Code of Canon Law contains **7 books** with **1752 canons**, or laws, most **subdivided into paragraphs**

## **Canon Law and Marriage**

Now let’s take a look at the second example from the sphere of **marriage**:

*“Divorce is forbidden. But this general principle is subject to all sorts of qualifications: separation ‘from bed and board’ is permitted under certain circumstances and may become permanent; a marriage may be declared null and void if upon investigation it is determined that it was not valid; a convert may, after baptism, avail himself of the ‘Pauline privilege’ of separation from his unbaptized spouse and may obtain permission to remarry.”* (Jaroslav Pelikan, **The Riddle of Roman Catholicism**, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1959), p. 89.

Does this sound like the problem of **Mark 7**? A **mockery is made of marriage** when **qualifications** and **exceptions** (traditions of men) are added to the commandment of God.

Many times the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church **contradict** the clear Word of God. For example, one of the declarations of the Council of Trent stated:

*“If anyone saith that the marriage state is to be placed above the state of virginity or of celibacy, and that it is **not better** and **more blessed** to remain in virginity or in celibacy than to be united in matrimony; let him be **anathema**.”* (Council of Trent, Session XXIV (November 11, 1563), Canons of the Sacrament of Matrimony, canon 10, in **Dogmatic Canons and Decrees** (New York: Devin Adair Company, 1912), p. 164.

All this is due to the fact that the Roman Catholic Church beginning primarily with **St. Augustine**, teaches that original sin was sexual sin. This is the **real reason for celibacy** of priests and nuns.

The fact is that this statement is a **blatant contradiction** of **Genesis 1:28** where God blessed marriage and commanded man to be fruitful and multiply. **Jesus sanctioned marriage** by performing His first miracle at a **wedding in Cana** of Galilee. It is also in flat contradiction to the fact that all the **bishops, elders, deacons and pastors of the early church were married**, even the **apostle Peter** who supposedly was the first Pope!!! This is a clear example of making of none effect the Word of God by tradition.

## Reading Scripture

The same could be said about **Bible study**. Even though the Roman Catholic Church in this **age of enlightenment** allows, and in some cases even encourages, reading the Bible, it was not always so.

**1229 Canon 14** of the **Council of Toulouse**, France, states:

*"We forbid **the laity** to have in their possession **any copy** of the books of the Old and New Testament, except the Psalter, and such portions of them as are contained in the Breviary, or the Hours of the Blessed Virgin; and we most **strictly forbid** even these works in the **vulgar tongue**."*

This is the reason why William Tyndale was burned at the stake for translating the New Testament into English.

*"In early times, the Bible was read freely by the lay people, and the **Fathers constantly encourage them to do so**, although they also insist on the **obscurity** of the sacred text. No prohibitions were issued against the popular reading of the Bible. **New dangers** came during the middle ages. When the heresy of the Albigenses arose there was a danger from corrupt translations, and also from the fact that the heretics tried to make the faithful judge the Church **by their own interpretation** of the Bible. To meet these evils, the Council of Toulouse (1229) and Tarragona (1234) **forbade the laity to read the vernacular translations of the Bible**. Pius IV required the bishops to refuse lay persons leave to read **even Catholic versions of the Scripture**, unless their confessors or parish priests judged that such readings was likely to prove beneficial." Shea John Gilmary Ed, *The Catholic Educator: A Library of Catholic Devotion and Instruction*, New York, Peter J. Ryan, p 61)*

The **Council of Trent** reaffirmed the same position:

**Rules on Prohibited Books**, approved by **Pope Pius IV, 1564**:

*"Since it is clear from experience that if the Sacred Books are permitted everywhere and without discrimination in the **vernacular**, there will by reason of the boldness of men arise therefrom **more harm than good**, the matter is in this respect left to the judgment of the bishop or inquisitor, who may with the advice of the pastor or confessor **permit** the reading of the Sacred Books translated into the vernacular **by Catholic authors** to those **who they know** will derive from such reading no harm but rather an increase of faith and piety, which **permission they must have in writing**. Those, however, who presume to read or possess them **without such permission** may not receive absolution from their sins till they have **handed them over to the ordinary**. Book dealers who sell or in any other way supply Bibles written in the vernacular to anyone who has not this permission, **shall lose the price of the books**, which is to be applied by the bishop to pious purposes, and in keeping with the nature of the crime they shall be subject to other penalties which are left to the judgment of the same bishop. Regulars who have not the permission of their superiors **may not read or purchase them**."*

How is it that the Roman Catholic system, in its church councils, can condemn the reading of the Bible, by the common lay person when Jesus said, ‘*search the Scriptures*’ and Paul said that they are able to make one ‘*wise unto salvation?*’ Once again, tradition has made of none effect the Word of God!

## Mariology

### St. Alphonsus di Liguori

- **St. Alphonsus di Liguori** lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century
- 22 volumes of his work have been published.
- He was canonized as a saint by Pope Gregory XIV in 1839 and was declared a doctor of the church by Pope Pius IX. He is one of the 32 doctors of the church whose writings are especially trustworthy and of authority
- The Glories of Mary is one of these
- Lest you think that this volume contains one man’s opinion, I would mention that it is actually a collection of the patristic wisdom of the Roman Catholic Church from the Early Church Fathers till his day. Thus the book does not present his view or interpretation but what has been taught by Roman Catholic theologians, doctors and saints throughout the course of the centuries.
- Liguori himself expresses the reason for preparing his book:

*“I endeavored to collect, from as many authors as I could lay my hands on, the choicest passages, extracted from Fathers and theologians, and those which seemed to me to be the most to the point, and have put them together in this book, in order that the devout may with little trouble and expense be able to inflame themselves with the love of Mary, and more particularly to furnish the priests with matter for their sermons, wherewith to excite others to devotion towards this divine Mother.” *The Glories of Mary*, p. 30.*

- The work consists of several chapters. In each, Liguori seeks to prove a certain point about Mary. At the end of each chapter, he gives an illustration of the point and ends with a prayer to Mary based on the content of the chapter.
- The edition I am using was published by the Redemptorist Fathers in 1931 and bears the imprimatur by Patrick (Cardinal) Hayes on April 16, 1931.
- The preponderance of Liguori’s quotations come from the church fathers, the apocryphal books of Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom of Solomon and the Old Testament books of Proverbs and Song of Solomon. Most of these quotations apply to wisdom personified (Jesus) or to Solomon’s bride (the church) and yet they are applied to Mary because the Church has said so.
- Texts are persistently torn out of their contexts. Texts from the Old Testament are used without any New Testament corroboration. They originally apply to Jesus and they are applied to Mary.

Liguori, p. 101: "If Mary is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

"Mary was prefigured by the dove which returned to Noah in the Ark with an olive branch in its beak, as a pledge of the peace which God granted to men." Liguori, p. 202

"Glorious things are said of you, O city of God" St. Gregory but Mary is this city of God?" p. 244

"Correctly, then, can we here say with St. Paul, Having this seal, the Lord knoweth who are His; that is to say, whoever carries with him the mark of devotion to Mary is recognized by God as his." Liguori, pp. 244, 245

- Sometime after Liguori had been buried, his **grave was opened** in **Nocera**. **Three fingers** were cut off and sent to Rome by wish of **Pope Pius VII** who said:

"Let those three fingers that have written so well for the honor of God, of the Blessed Virgin and of religion, be carefully preserved and sent to Rome." Cited in, The Glories of Mary, p. 20

"But God was pleased that Mary should in **all things resemble** Jesus; and as her Son died, it was becoming that the mother should also die." Liguori, p. 407.

This is the fundamental **leap of logic** that the Roman Catholic Church employs. They use expressions such as "**it was fitting**," "**it was necessary**," "**it was befitting**." Where to we find that in all things Mary was to resemble Jesus? She is actually a **rival of Jesus** and **overshadows** Jesus in Roman Catholic theology.

## Was Mary a Perpetual Virgin?

According to the Roman Catholic Church, Mary was **perpetually a virgin**. In other words, Mary **never had sexual relations** with Joseph after Jesus was born.

- **Luke 2:7**: Jesus was the first-born of Mary "And she brought forth her **firstborn Son**, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."
- **Matthew 1:18**: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, **before they came together**, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit."
- **Matthew 1:24-25**: "Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25 and **did not know her till** she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS."

- **Psalm 69:8:** Jesus only one of Mary's children. "Zeal for your house has eaten me up" (verse 9), "gall for food and vinegar to drink" (verse 21) "I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's children."

## What the Fathers said about Mary

Mary was conceived without original sin.

Mary was the mother of God.

Mary was taken bodily to heaven.

*"Still, Fundamentalists ask, where is the proof from Scripture? Strictly, there is none. It was the Catholic Church that was commissioned by Christ to teach all nations and to teach them **infallibly**. The **mere fact** that the Church teaches the doctrine of the Assumption as something definitely true is a **guarantee that it is true.**" Karl Keating, Catholicism and Fundamentalism: The Attack on 'Romanism' by 'Bible Christians', p. 275.*

- The world was created by God and Mary
- She was born immaculate and holy without a sinful nature
- She never sinned during her lifetime
- She is the incarnation of the Holy Spirit
- She is full of grace and can dispense it to human beings at will
- She is a priest
- She is our advocate or mediator

*"Taken up to heaven she did not lay aside this saving office but by her manifold intercession continues to bring us the gifts of eternal salvation. . . Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress, and Mediatrix." Lumen Gentium, section 62*

- Mary loved the world that she gave her only-begotten Son
- Mary is our ladder
- We are to pray to Mary to ask for favors
- We can only know God through Mary
- Mary helps us when we are tempted
- Mary is the way to the Father
- Mary is the door
- Mary is the rod out of the root of Jesse
- Mary is co-redemptrix

*"If the drive succeeds, Catholics would be obliged as a matter of faith to accept **three** extraordinary doctrines: that Mary participates in the redemption achieved by her son, that all*



graces that flow from the suffering and death of Jesus Christ are granted **only through Mary's intercession with her son**, and that all prayers and petitions from the faithful on earth **must likewise flow through Mary**, who then brings them to the attention of Jesus." Kenneth L. Woodward, *Newsweek*, "Hail Mary", August 25, 1997, p. 49

"In place of the Holy Trinity, it would appear, there would be a kind of **Holy Quartet**, with Mary playing the multiple roles of **daughter of the Father, mother of the Son and spouse of the Holy Spirit**." Kenneth L. Woodward, *Newsweek*, "Hail Mary", August 25, 1997, p. 49.

"The union between the Immaculata and the Holy Spirit is so inexpressible, yet so perfect, that the Holy Spirit acts only by the Most Blessed Virgin, **his Spouse**. This is why she is the **Mediatrix of all graces** given by the Holy Spirit." Mark Miravalle, p. 54.

- She is our **refuge**
- She is our **throne of grace**
- She is the **light of the sun**
- She is **our life**
- She **changes and transforms our lives**
- She **protects us from the power of Satan**
- She is **our propitiation**
- She has a name that is **above all names**
- **If we die we have assurance of life** in her
- **All power** is given to her in heaven and on earth
- She is **all-powerful**
- She is the **morning star**
- She is the **mercy seat**
- She **crushes the serpent's head**
- She is the **pillar of cloud and fire**
- We can **cast out devils in her name**
- She is the **water of life**
- She is the **peacemaker**
- She is the **tower of refuge**
- She **draws all men** to herself
- She **gives eternal life**
- She is **worthy of being praised**
- She is **our hope**
- We can be **saved by Mary's merits**
- She is the **rainbow of promise**
- She died, her body saw no corruption, she resurrected and **ascended on the third day**

The **final issue** will be: What is your source of authority for the decisions in your life? Is it the **church** or is it the **Bible**.

## THE BIBLE OR TRADITION

# LESSON #7 – SABBATH CONTROVERSIES AND TRADITION

### Introduction

The most revered institution in Judaism is the Seventh-day Sabbath.

For the rabbis, the Sabbath was equal in importance to all the other precepts of the Torah combined.

One rabbi stated: *“He who observes the Sabbath, is kept from sin.”*

Another wrote: *“If Israel were to keep two Sabbaths according to the laws thereof, they would be redeemed immediately.”*

Rabbi Levi once stated: *“If Israel kept the Sabbath properly even for one day, the son of David would come. Why? Because it is equivalent to all the commandments.”*

### The Rabbinical Sabbath

But, were the rabbis referring to the Sabbath as it is found in the written Scriptures? Robert Johnston answers:

*“One of the distinguishing features of Pharisaism had been its high regard for oral tradition. The Pharisees claimed to be heirs of Ezra the scribe and his court known as the Great Assembly, the beginning of the Sanhedrin. Indeed, Ezra and the Great Assembly were regarded as transmitters of oral laws that could be traced all the way back to Moses.” Robert Johnston, The Sabbath in Scripture and History, p. 70*

*“For a long time the oral law was indeed oral; there was an inhibition against writing it down for fear that it might be treated as Scripture. Instead, it was stored up in the heads of the rabbis and their disciples. However, as scholars continually added to the body of tradition, it grew so massive that memories were too severely taxed.” The Sabbath in Scripture and History, p. 70*

This is the reason why oral tradition was codified in the Babylonian and the Palestinian Talmuds. And in the Talmud there were multiple regulations concerning the Sabbath.

## Sabbath Prohibitions

The **Old Testament** has **few Sabbath prohibitions**: [1] Work, [2] kindling a fire, [3] trading and [4] cooking. But the rabbis **expanded** these prohibitions into an **entire system** of rules and regulations. On the basis of **Deuteronomy 25:3** [which in context has nothing to do with the Sabbath] **thirty nine major** activities were forbidden on the Sabbath but each of these was **subdivided** into an **almost endless** list of specific prohibitions. Let's notice how Deuteronomy 25:3 reads:

*"If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, <sup>2</sup> then it shall be, if the wicked man deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows. <sup>3</sup> **Forty blows he may give him and no more**, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these and your brother be humiliated in your sight."*

*"The main classes of work are **forty save one**: sowing, plowing, reaping, binding sheaves, threshing, winnowing, cleansing crops, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, washing or beating or dyeing it, spinning, weaving, making two loops, weaving two threads, separating two threads, tying, loosening, sewing two stitches, tearing in order to sew two stitches, hunting a gazelle, slaughtering or flaying or salting it or curing its skin, scraping it or cutting it up, writing two letters, erasing in order to write two letters, building, pulling down, putting out a fire, lighting a fire, striking with a hammer and taking anything from one domain to another. These are the main classes of work: forty save one."*

**Some of the rules** that the rabbis had **added** to the Sabbath to protect it from being broken were:

- You could not **eat a fruit** on the ground that you found **under a tree** because it might have fallen on the Sabbath.
- You could **not remove an egg** from a nest on the Sabbath but you could protect it until after the Sabbath when it could be eaten.
- **Instrumental music** was forbidden on the Sabbath.
- If your **house caught fire** on the Sabbath you could save **life** but you could not save any **property** in the house.
- All **sacred books** could be saved from the fire and **enough food** and drink for the remaining Sabbath meals.
- It was a cardinal offense to **tilt a lamp** in order to make more oil run toward the wick because this would make it burn brighter which was the sin of kindling.
- You could not **read by the light of a lamp** on the Sabbath.
- You could not **touch money** or any of the **tools** of your trade even if you did not intend to work with them.

- **Climbing** a tree, **swimming**, **clapping** the hands, **slapping** the thighs and **stamping** the feet were forbidden.
- **Burials** and **weddings** could not take place on the Sabbath.
- **Writing** was forbidden on the Sabbath.
- You could not **drag a chair** across the floor and make a furrow with it if you intended to do so but if you did not intend to do so it was allowed.
- You may not directly **carry a stone** but you were permitted to lift up the child even if he had a stone in his hand.
- Treatment of **non-mortal ailments** and handicaps could not be treated on the Sabbath but an **eye salve** could be placed on the eye **before sundown** of Friday or a plaster could be placed on the wound so that the healing continued on the Sabbath.
- If a **deer wandered** into your house on the Sabbath **one man** could not trap it but two could do so.
- You could **not tithe** on the Sabbath.
- No Jew was allowed to **travel more** than two thousand cubits beyond the city limits where he lived.
- To mitigate the 2000 cubit limit one need **only deposit enough food** for two meals at 2000 cubits distance and declare the place his **temporary abode** and then from there he could travel an additional 2000 cubits.

## Sabbath Controversies

Of all the theological controversies that Jesus faced, **none was greater** than those over the Sabbath. He was in **constant conflict** with the **denominations** of his day and they **despised him** because He did not keep **their** 'sabbath'.

Some **evangelical scholars** have said that Jesus actually broke the Sabbath. But, **did he** break the **Bible** Sabbath?

Most of these controversies dealt with the issue of **healing** people with **chronic illnesses**

- A man born **blind**
- A paralytic for **38 years**
- A woman who could not straighten out for **18 years**
- A man with a **withered hand**
- A case of the **flu**

Jesus said it was **lawful** to do these things on the Sabbath (for example, Matthew 12:12) while the scribes and Pharisees said it was **unlawful**.

The critical question to be answered is this: **On what basis** did Jesus say it was **lawful** and on what basis did the scribes and Pharisees say it was **unlawful**?

In other words, what **source of authority** did the scribes and Pharisees use to prove that it was unlawful and **which authority** did Jesus use to prove that it was lawful?

**Nowhere in the Old Testament** Scriptures do we find that it is wrong to **alleviate suffering** or to **heal the sick** on the Sabbath.

In fact, in **Isaiah 58** we are told that the Sabbath is the **special day to alleviate** the suffering of the oppressed.

**Where, then, did** the scribes and Pharisees get the idea that it was wrong to heal on the Sabbath? Not from the written Scriptures but rather from the **Deposit of unwritten Tradition!**

## **Plucking Grain on the Sabbath**

Let's take the case of the disciples **plucking grain** on the Sabbath to satisfy their hunger.

Nowhere are we told that it is **wrong** for a person to **pluck grain** to satisfy hunger on the Sabbath [**though it was wrong to harvest your crop for commercial purposes on the Sabbath**].

The late **Samuele Bacchiocchi** has shown that Jesus broke **four rabbinical rules** when He allowed His disciples to satisfy their hunger on the Sabbath. These rules were: **[1] reaping, [2] threshing, [3] winnowing and [4] preparing a meal** (see, Samuele Bacchiocchi, **From Sabbath to Sunday** (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University Press, 1977, p. 49).

In other words, Jesus was not breaking the Sabbath commandment as found in the **written Scriptures**. He was breaking the **rabbinical 'sabbath'** which had been **created** by **oral tradition**.

## **The Answer of Jesus**

The question is: How did Jesus **answer the rabbis** on this issue?

The answer is simple. On several occasions Jesus referred to **written Scripture** to **justify his behavior** on the Sabbath

- **Mark 2:25-27** [I Samuel 21:6; Genesis 2:1-3]
- **Luke 13:15** [Deuteronomy 5:14]
- **John 7:22-23** [Leviticus 12:3]

Jesus made it clear that by **not helping the needy**, the Pharisees were actually **breaking the Sabbath** while He was keeping it. In other words, their Tradition had made of **none effect the written Word of God**. Their rules which had the intention of **protecting the Sabbath** from being broken actually **led them to break it!**

Actually the Sabbath of the Scribes and Pharisees was:

- A **counterfeit sabbath**
- A **man made** sabbath
- A **Sabbath** based on **tradition**

- They had created this sabbath
- They were practicing false worship by rendering homage to their idol

## The Sabbath Issue in the End Time

As Seventh-day Adventists we believe that the great issue in the final controversy will involve the commandments of God versus the commandments of men and true worship to God versus false worship to the beast!

Will the final conflict involve a false Sabbath and a true Sabbath? Yes. The only difference between the times of Jesus and ours is that in those days the ones who claimed to be the people of God kept the Sabbath in the wrong way while in the end-time the Christian world will keep the wrong day.

But the principle is the same. In both cases it is a Sabbath of created by man based on tradition and not the Sabbath which God made at creation.

The conflict in Christ's day was actually over the Sabbath made by God versus the Sabbath made by human tradition, and to keep a Sabbath made by man is to practice false worship!!

## Intention to Kill

It must be underlined that the Pharisees not only broke God's Sabbath by abstaining from doing good on the Sabbath but they also broke the Sabbath by intending to kill Jesus on it (Mark 3:6; Matthew 12:14; John 5:14).

Irony of ironies, they condemned Jesus for healing on the Sabbath but they wanted to kill on it because he did not keep it as they thought He should!! Certainly their rules of Sabbath observance had made of none effect the commandment which says: 'Thou shalt not kill.'

Does this also ring a bell? Is there as time coming when the Christian world will want to kill those who do not keep their Sabbath, that is, a Sabbath of human invention? Revelation 13:15 says that this is just what will happen.

## Is Sabbath Keeping Legalism?

Sabbath keepers have been accused by the Christian world of being legalists. And according to Bible prophecy the Christian world will enact a global Sunday law that whoever does not keep Sunday will be sentenced to death. What worse legalism could exist than keeping Sunday for fear of death rather than out of love for God?

We also know that the Christian world will teach that the increasing natural disasters in the world are due to God's wrath because of the desecration of Sunday as the day of worship. They will say: '*Let us return to God, keep Sunday, and then God will bless America once again.*' This is legalism—earning God's favor or turning away His disfavor by keeping Sunday!

## Roman Catholics and the Sabbath

A challenge to Martin Luther and Protestants by John Eck:

*“The **Scripture teaches** ‘Remember that you sanctify the day of the Sabbath; six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God’, etc. But the **Church** has **changed** the Sabbath into the Lord’s [day] by **its own authority**, concerning which you have **no scripture**. . . The Sabbath is commanded many times by God; neither in the Gospels nor in Paul is it declared that the Sabbath has ceased; nevertheless the **Church** has instituted the Lord’s Day through the **tradition** of the apostles **without Scripture**.” (Johann Eck, *Enchiridion Locorum Communium . . . Adversus Lutheranos [Handbook of Common Places against the Lutherans]*. Venice: Ioan. Antonius & Fratres de Sabio, 1533, fols. 4v, 5r, 42v. Latin. Trans. by Frank H. Yost. Used by permission of Mrs. Frank Yost. [FRS No. 127]*

The following scholar mentions all of the texts that we use to defend the Sabbath observance but then says that we are supposed to keep Sunday. Why?

*“The first precept in the Bible is that of sanctifying the seventh day: ‘God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it’ (**Gen. 2:3**). This precept was confirmed by God in the Ten Commandments: ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God’ (**Exodus 20**). On the other hand, Christ declares that He is not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (**Matt. 5:17**). He Himself observed the Sabbath: ‘and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day’ (**Luke 4:16**). His disciples likewise observed it after His death: ‘They rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment’ (**Luke 23:56**). Yet with all this **weight of Scripture authority** for keeping the Sabbath, or seventh day, holy, **Protestants of all denominations** make this a profane day, and transfer the obligation of it to the first day of the week, or the Sunday. Now, **what authority have they for doing this?** None, whatever, except the **unwritten word**, or **tradition of the Catholic Church** which **declares** that the apostles made the change in honor of Christ’s resurrection, and the descent of the Holy Ghost on that day of the week.” John Milner, *End of Religious Controversy*, (New York: P. J. Kennedy, 1897), p. 89*

Notice this indictment of Protestants by a Roman Catholic Scholar:

*“**Protestants** often deride the authority of **Church tradition**, and claim to be directed by the **Bible only**; yet they, too, have been guided by the customs of the ancient Church, which find **no warrant in the Bible**, but rest on **Church tradition only!** A striking instance of this is the following: The first positive command in the Decalogue is to ‘Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy’, and this precept was enforced by the Jews for thousands of years. But the Sabbath day, the observance of which God commanded, was our Saturday. Yet who among either Catholics or Protestants, except a sect or two, like the ‘Seventh Day Baptists’, ever keep that commandment now? None. Why is this? **The Bible** which Protestants claim to obey exclusively, gives **no authorization** for the **substitution** of the first day of the week for the seventh. On what authority, therefore, have they done so? Plainly on the **authority of that very Catholic Church***



which they abandoned and whose **traditions** they condemn.” John L. Stoddard, Rebuilding a Lost Faith (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1922), p. 80

“Is it not strange that those who make the Bible their only teacher should inconsistently follow in this matter the **tradition of the Church?**” Bertrand L. Conway, The Question Box Answers, (New York: The Columbus Press, 1910), pp. 254, 255

Notice this **candid** and **unapologetic** admission:

“So in the New Law, Catholics believe some things **not in the Scriptures**, although wholly in accord with them, because of the infallible witness of **the Church** as to their divine or apostolic origin. Why do Protestants accept the Scriptures as inspired? Why do they honor the first day of the week instead of the seventh? Why do they baptize children? Contrary to their principles, they must look **outside the Bible to the voice of tradition**, which is not human, but divine, because guaranteed by the divine, **infallible witness of the Catholic Church.**” Bertrand Conway, The Question Box Answers (New York: The Columbus Press, 1910), pp. 75, 76

**James Cardinal Gibbons:**

“Now the **Scriptures alone do not contain** all the truths which a Christian is bound to believe, nor do they explicitly enjoin all the duties which he is obliged to practice. Not to mention other examples, is not every Christian obliged to sanctify Sunday and to abstain on that day from unnecessary servile work? Is not the observance of this law among the most prominent of our sacred duties? You may read the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, and you will **not find a single line** authorizing the sanctification of Sunday. The **Scriptures enforce** the religious observance of Saturday, a day which we [Catholics] never sanctify.” James Cardinal Gibbons, The Faith of Our Fathers (Baltimore: James Murphy Company, 110<sup>th</sup> edition revised and enlarged) p. 80

“**Nothing is said in the Bible** about the **change** of the Lord’s day from Saturday to Sunday. We know of the **change** only from the **tradition of the Church**—a fact **handed down** to us from the earliest times by the **living voice** of the **Church**. That is why we find so illogical the attitude of many non-Catholics, who say that they will believe nothing unless they can find it in the Bible and yet will continue to keep Sunday as the Lord’s day on the **say-so of the Catholic Church.**” Rev. Leo J. Trese and John J. Castletot, S. S., Salvation History and the Commandments (1963 edition), p. 294

“The **Catholic Church** for over one thousand years before the existence of a Protestant, by virtue of her divine mission, **changed** the day from Saturday to Sunday. We say by virtue of her divine mission, because he who called himself the ‘Lord of the Sabbath,’ endowed her with his own power to teach, ‘he that heareth you, heareth me;’ commanded all who believe in him to hear her under penalty of being placed with the ‘heathen and publican;’ and promised to be with her to the end of the world. She holds her charter as teacher from him—a charter as **infallible** as perpetual. The Protestant world at its birth [in the Reformation of the sixteenth century] found the Christian Sabbath too strongly entrenched to run counter to its existence; it was therefore placed under the necessity of acquiescing in the arrangement, thus implying the **church’s right**

**to change the day**, for over three hundred years. The Christian Sabbath is therefore to this day, the acknowledged **offspring [interesting in the light of Ellen White’s remark that the Sunday is the child of the papacy—Counsels to the Church, p. 317; GC 54] of the Catholic Church** as spouse of the Holy Ghost, without a word of remonstrance from the Protestant world.” The Catholic Mirror (Baltimore, September 23, 1893)

“Q. (a) The Bible says ‘The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord,’ and we read in your literature that it is the only Bible Sabbath there is. Will you please explain how the Sunday observance originated? (b) Do you think the Seventh Day Adventists keep the right day?

“A. If you follow the **Bible alone** there can be **no question** that you are obliged to keep Saturday holy, since that is the day especially prescribed by Almighty God to be kept holy to the Lord. In keeping Sunday, non-Catholics are simply following the practice of the **Catholic Church** for 1800 years, a **tradition**, and **not a Bible ordinance**. What we would like to know is: Since they deny the authority of the Church, on what grounds can they base their faith of keeping Sunday. Those who keep Saturday, like the Seventh Day Adventists, unquestionably have them by the hip in this practice. And they cannot give them any sufficient answer which would satisfy an unprejudiced mind. With the Catholics there is no difficulty about the matter. For, since we **deny that the Bible is the sole rule of faith**, we can fall back upon the constant practice and **tradition of the Church** which, long before the reign of Constantine, even in the very days of the apostles themselves, were accustomed to keep the first day of the week instead of the last.” F. G. Lentz, The Question Box (New York: Christian Press Association, 1900), pp. 98, 99

## The Historical Sequence

- **Lion** with eagles’ wings: Babylon
- **Bear** higher on one side: Medes and Persians
- **Leopard** with four heads: Greece
- **Dragon**: Roman Empire
- **Dragon** with Ten Horns: Rome Divided
- **Dragon** with a Little Horn: The papacy (rules for 1260 years and thinks to change times and law)

### Daniel 7:25

“He shall speak pompous words against the **Most High**, shall persecute the saints of the **Most High**, and shall intend to **change times and law**. Then the saints shall be given into his hand for a time and times and half a time.”

## Protestants and the Sabbath

“God made the world in six days and rested on the seventh, sanctifying this day, and setting it apart from all others as holy **to Himself**, to be observed by His people throughout their

generations. But the man of sin, exalting himself above God, sitting in the temple of God, and showing himself to be God, thought to change times and laws. This power, thinking to prove that it was not only equal to God, but above God, changed the rest day, placing the first day of the week where the seventh should be. And the **Protestant world** has taken this **child of the papacy** to be regarded as sacred. In the Word of God this is called her fornication [Revelation 14:8].” Last Day Events, p. 123

“The man of sin, who thought to change times and laws, has exalted himself above God by presenting this spurious sabbath to the world; the Christian world has accepted this **child** of the Papacy, and **cradled** and **nourished** it, thus defying God by removing His memorial and setting up a rival sabbath.” 3SM 406

“The Protestant world have set up an **idol sabbath** in the place where God's Sabbath should be, and they are treading in the footsteps of the Papacy.” Letter 90, 1897

## The Idol Sabbath

“The Sabbath question is one that will demand great care and wisdom in its presentation. Much of the grace and power of God will be needed to **cast down the idol** that has been erected in the **shape of a false sabbath**.” 9T 211

“Satan has taken the world captive. He has introduced an **idol sabbath**, apparently giving to it great importance. He has stolen the homage of the Christian world away from the Sabbath of the Lord for this **idol sabbath**. The world bows to a tradition, a **man-made commandment**.”

R&H, March 8, 1898

## The Final Issue

The final issue will be **one of authority**: Is it **God and the Bible** or the **papacy and tradition**. Is **homage paid to God** by worshiping him **on the day that he created** or is homage **paid to the papacy** by **worshiping on the day that it established**?

Thus **worship** to God and **keeping his commandments** will distinguish one group and **worship** to the beast and **keeping his commandments** will be on the other side.

“Among professed Christians there are **idolaters**, men and women who are not sealed by God. Many have subverted the Christian faith into **idolatry**, giving to a **man-made** institution the glory and honor that God requires for His Sabbath day, and compelling others to **worship this idol**. Such ones will surely be visited with God's retributive judgments, which are to be poured out without mixture of mercy upon the unrepentant despisers of God's law.” 19MR 244

The Bible, in terms **too clear to be misunderstood**, repeatedly tells us that the **SEVENTH** day is the Sabbath of the Lord! And yet the Roman Catholic Church and Protestants inform us that **Sunday is the Sabbath**. On what ground can it do this? Certainly not on Biblical grounds!

But the Roman Catholic Church has become **craftier**. **John Paul II**, in his pastoral letter, **Dies Domini** made a valiant effort to defend Sunday sacredness from a **Biblical perspective**. He

appealed to sophisticated **philosophical arguments** based on **human reason**. Yet none of his arguments are persuasive to those who take the **Bible as their only reliable standard** of truth. In our next lecture we shall take a closer look at the arguments that were used by the most admired pope in the history of the Roman Catholic Church.



## THE BIBLE OR TRADITION

# LESSON #8: SUNDAY'S SHAKY FOUNDATION

### Introduction

Practically every Christian church in the world celebrates its worship service on Sunday. The reason given by most of these churches is that Jesus resurrected on Sunday and therefore we should keep it in honor of the resurrection. But is this what the Bible teaches?

There are only eight texts in the New Testament that mention the *'first day of the week'*. If we are going to find evidence in the New Testament for Sunday observance it must come from these eight texts because there is nowhere else to look in Scripture.

Notably, the word 'Sunday' is never mentioned in the New Testament. In Bible times the days were not named but rather numbered.

We are going to study all eight references to the first day of the week and ask three questions of each text:

- Does the text affirm that the first day of the week is holy?
- Does the text affirm that we are supposed to go to church on the first day of the week?
- Does the text say that we are supposed to celebrate the first day of the week in honor of the resurrection of Jesus?

We will also consider Revelation 1:10 which is frequently used by advocates of Sunday as a 'proof text' in favor of Sunday observance.

### Eight New Testament Texts

#### Text #1 of 8

##### Matthew 28:1:

*"Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb."*

The text then goes on to explain that when the women arrived they found the tomb empty.

This text does not say that the first day of the week is holy or that we are supposed to go to church on it or that we are to keep it in honor of the resurrection. It simply makes a statement of fact: Jesus resurrected on the first day of the week.

This text is crystal clear that Sunday is not the Sabbath because the first day of the week is the day after the Sabbath. The Sabbath is the seventh day but Jesus resurrected on the first day (see Exodus 20:8-11).

The attempt of European calendars to make Monday the first day and Sunday the seventh is crafty but contrary to the Bible.

## **Text #2 of 8**

Mark 16:1, 2:

*“Now when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. <sup>2</sup> Very early in the morning, on the first day of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen.”*

Does this text say that the first day of the week is holy or that we should go to church on it? Does the text tell us that we should keep the first day of the week in honor of the resurrection of Jesus? Of course not! It simply states that Jesus had resurrected on the first day of the week.

In the same way as Matthew 28:1, this text underlines that Jesus resurrected when the Sabbath was past. Thus, a simple reading of the text clearly indicates that Sunday is not the Sabbath.

## **Text #3 of 8**

Mark 16:9: *“Now when He rose early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons.”*

Does this text affirm that the first day of the week is holy or that we should go to church on it? Does it say that we are supposed to celebrate it in honor of the resurrection? Absolutely not! It simply states that Jesus resurrected on the first day of the week.

## **Text #4 of 8**

John 20:1, 2:

*“Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. <sup>2</sup> Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and said to them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him.”*

This text does not say that the first day of the week is holy or that we should go to church on it. Neither does it say that we must celebrate Sunday in honor of the resurrection.

The apostle John wrote his gospel some 60 years after the resurrection and yet he did not call the first day of the week 'the Lord's Day' or attribute any holiness to it. 60 years after the resurrection there is no evidence of Sunday being a holy day or a day to attend church or a day to keep in honor of the resurrection! In fact, all the gospel writers wrote at least 30 years after the resurrection and not one of them attribute anything special to the first day of the week.

## **Text #5 of 8**

**Luke 24:1-2:** Let's read the previous verses for the sequence of days of the passion:

**Luke 23:53-56:** *"Then he [Joseph of Arimatea] took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. <sup>54</sup> [1] That day was the Preparation, and the [2] Sabbath drew near. <sup>55</sup> And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. <sup>56</sup> Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. **Luke 24:1** Now on the [3] first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. <sup>2</sup> But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb."*

This passage clearly indicates that Jesus died on Friday (Friday is most likely called the 'preparation' because of Exodus 16:22-24), rested in the tomb on the Sabbath and resurrected the first day of the week. Therefore, the first day of the week cannot be the Sabbath because it is the day after the Sabbath

Luke wrote at least 30 years after the resurrection and still says that the women rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. In other words, the Sabbath was binding even after the death of Christ.

This text does not state that the first day of the week is holy or that we are to go to church on the first day of the week; neither does it say that we are to keep Sunday in honor of the resurrection.

In Luke 1:1-3 Luke stated that many had written an orderly account of what Jesus did and said. Therefore, he stated: *'it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account.'*

If Sunday was the new day of worship, it is strange indeed that Luke, the careful historian, wrote nothing about it!

Actually, Jesus' death, burial and resurrection were predicted in the Jewish Feasts. Leviticus 23:4-11 mentions three feasts:

- Passover (23:5)
- Unleavened Bread (23:6-8)
- First-fruits (23:9-11)

**Jesus fulfilled** all three of these feasts **right on time**:

- **Passover** (1 Corinthians 5:7, 8)
- **Unleavened Bread**
- The Manna represented the **flesh of Jesus** (John 6:51)
- The Manna did not **breed worms or stink** on the Sabbath
- **The body of Jesus** did not experience corruption as He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath (Acts 2:25-31) because He was what the **Manna represented**.
- **First-fruits** (1 Corinthians 15:20)

## **Text #6 of 8**

**John 20:19**:

*“Then, the same day at evening, being the **first day** of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples **were assembled**, for **fear of the Jews**, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, “Peace be with you.”*

Many Christians use this text to **attempt to prove** that Sunday is Christ’s **new rest day**. The argument goes **something like this**: The disciples were **gathered together** on the **first day** of the week to **celebrate communion** in honor of the **resurrection** of Christ and Christ actually **joined them** in the celebration. Thus we are to **follow the example** of the disciples and gather together every Sunday to celebrate communion in honor of the resurrection.

This argument is **fallacious** on several counts:

A **simple reading** of the text clearly indicates **why** the disciples were gathered together; it was **‘for fear of the Jews’**. In other words, they were **scared to death** and were in hiding.

Jesus **could not have joined** them to celebrate communion because on the **day before His death** he assured them that He would not *“drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom”* (Matthew 26:29).

The Bible clearly explains **what Jesus ate** when He appeared to the disciples. He ate a piece of **fish and a honeycomb**. That was some **strange way** to celebrate communion! (Luke 24:36-43)

Holy Communion commemorates the **death of Jesus, not His resurrection** (see Matthew 26:28; 1 Corinthians 11:26). It is **baptism** that commemorates the resurrection of Christ, not Sunday (Romans 6:3-5).



But doesn't the expression '**breaking bread**' refer to communion? Yes, but it is also used to describe a **common meal**:

### **Acts 2:46-47**

*"So continuing **daily** with one accord in the temple, and **breaking bread from house to house**, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, <sup>47</sup> praising God and having favor with all the people."*

Jesus **instituted** Communion on the **Thursday evening** of Passion Week:

### **1 Corinthians 11:23**

*"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the **same night in which He was betrayed** took bread; <sup>24</sup> and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me." <sup>25</sup> In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."*

Why did He institute it on Thursday night if He wanted us to **celebrate it on Sunday**? He would have had a **golden opportunity** to celebrate it with His disciples on the Sunday night of the resurrection, but He did not!

Some people have used a **psychological argument** that goes something like this:

*"The Sabbath was a **sad day** for the followers of Jesus because Jesus was dead. But **Sunday was a joyful day** for them because Jesus had resurrected from the dead."*

At **first sight** this argument appears convincing. However, upon closer scrutiny it falls apart!

It was **not God's fault** that the Sabbath was a sad day. Jesus had repeatedly **warned the disciples** that He would die and resurrect on the third day (see for example Matthew 16:21). If the disciples **had paid attention** to what Jesus said, the Sabbath would have been a day of **joyous expectancy**!

The **greatest blow** to this entire argument is the fact that the disciples could not have gathered together to celebrate Communion in honor of the resurrection because they **did not even believe that Jesus had resurrected**

### **Luke 24:9-11:**

*"Then they [**the women who had come to the tomb**] returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. <sup>10</sup> It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. <sup>11</sup> And their words seemed to them like **idle tales**, and they **did not believe them**."*

### **Mark 16:10-13:**

*“She [**Mary Magdalene**] went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. <sup>11</sup> And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, **they did not believe.** <sup>12</sup> After that, He appeared in another form to two of them as they walked and went into the country. <sup>13</sup> And they went and told it to the rest, but **they did not believe them either.**”*

How could they be celebrating something they did not believe in?

## **Text #7 of 8**

We have studied six texts so far and have found **no smoking gun**. There is not the **slightest hint** that Sunday is **holy**, that we are supposed to **go to church** on that day or that we should keep it in **honor of the resurrection**.

### **1 Corinthians 16:1, 2:**

*“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: <sup>2</sup> On the **first day** of the week let each one of you lay **something aside**, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”*

The offering referred to here was for a **specific purpose**, to help the **needy saints** in Jerusalem (see Romans 15:25-28).

Does this text describe a **regular church gathering** on the first day of the week? Does it say that the first day of the week is **holy**? Does it say anything about honoring Christ on Sunday **because He resurrected** on that day? No to all three questions!!

This text is **not describing a regular** gathering of Christians at church on the first day of the week. **Most Bible versions** indicate that this offering was to be set aside **at home** on the first day of the week. Why would they be **setting it aside at home** if they were going to church on Sunday? Would they not have rather **taken it to church**? There is not a single Bible version that states that this was an offering picked up at church:

## **Bible Versions**

**NKJV:** *“On the first day of the week let each one of you **lay something aside**, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”*

**KJV:** *“Upon the first day of the week let every one of you **lay by him in store**, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”*

**NIV:** *“On the first day of every week, each one of you should **set aside** a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.”*

**NASB:** *“On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.”*

**ESV:** *“On the first day of every week, each of you is to **put something aside and store it up**, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.”*

**New International Reader’s Version:** *“On the first day of every week, each of you should put some money away. The amount should be in keeping with how much money you make. Save the money so that you won’t have to take up an offering when I come.”*

**NRSV:** *“On the first day of every week, each of you is to put aside and save whatever extra you earn, so that collections need not be taken when I come.”*

**Weymouth:** *“On the first day of every week let each of you put on one side and store up at his home whatever gain has been granted to him; so that whenever I come, there may then be no collections going on.”*

**Wuest:** *“On every first day of the week let each one of you have the habit of putting aside at home whatever he may be prospered in, accumulating and keeping it in reserve, in order that when I may come, then there may not be any collections.”*

**Literal Greek Text:** *“let each of you store up by himself”.*

It is **not honest** to the text of Scripture to use this text to prove that Sunday is Christ’s **new holy day**. The text is not referring to a **church gathering at all** but rather to a **private setting aside** of money at home to send to Jerusalem with Paul.

Contrary to all the evidence, the renowned Bible commentator **Adam Clarke** states **without a shred of evidence** from the text:

*“It appears from the whole that the first day of the week, which is the **Christian Sabbath**, was the day on which their principal **religious meetings** were held in Corinth and the churches of Galatia; and, consequently, in **all other places** where Christianity had prevailed. This is a **strong argument** for the **keeping of the Christian Sabbath**.”*

The noted commentator **Albert Barnes** is more honest to the text:

*“Let him lay up at home, treasuring up as he has been prospered. The Greek phrase, “by himself,” means, probably, the **same as at home**. Let him set it apart; let him designate a certain portion; let him do this by himself, **when he is at home**, when he can calmly look at the evidence of his prosperity. Let him do it not under the influence of **pathetic appeals**, or for the sake of display when he is with others; but let him do it as a matter of principle, and **when he is by himself**.”*

## Text #8 of 8

**Acts 20:7-11:** The meeting at **Troas**

*“Now on the **first day** of the week, when the disciples **came together** to **break bread**, Paul, **ready to depart** the next day, spoke to them and continued his message **until midnight**.<sup>8</sup> There were **many lamps** in the upper room where they were gathered together.<sup>9</sup> And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead.<sup>10</sup> But Paul went down, fell on him, and embracing him said, “Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him.”<sup>11</sup> Now when **he** had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even **till daybreak**, **he departed**.”*

This meeting was held on the evening of the **first day of the week**. The evening of the first day of the week is what we call a **Saturday night** so this was a Saturday night meeting. According to **Genesis 1** and **Mark 1:32** the dark portion of the day comes before the light portion.

This was an **out-of-the-ordinary** meeting in that it was a farewell for the apostle Paul

**Acts 20:7, 25, 36-38:**

*“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together **to break bread**, Paul, **ready to depart** the next day, spoke to them and continued his message **until midnight**. . .<sup>25</sup> “And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will **see my face no more**. . .<sup>36</sup> And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all.<sup>37</sup> Then they **all wept freely**, and fell on Paul's neck and **kissed him**,<sup>38</sup> **sorrowing** most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would **see his face no more**. And they accompanied him to the ship.”*

Paul had probably met with the church **all day Sabbath** and the members, knowing that he was to leave the next day and they would **never see him again**, asked him to have a **Saturday** night meeting.

I have had similar experiences! One particularly comes to mind, a visit to **Quibdo**, a city in the **tropical rain forest** on the **Pacific Coast** of Colombia. After speaking all day Sabbath to a totally **maxed out house**, the members, knowing that I was going to depart on Sunday morning, asked me to speak on **Saturday night**, a meeting that lasted until **three o'clock** in the morning!

If you want to use **Acts 20:7-9** as justification for Sunday observance then you must meet all night on Saturday night!

The passage provides **no justification** for a **regular** observance of the first day of the week in honor of the resurrection. The **book of Acts** repeatedly tells us that the apostles went to **church on the Sabbath**:

### **Acts 13:14, 42, 44:**

*“But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the **Sabbath day** and sat down. . . <sup>42</sup> So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the **next Sabbath**. <sup>43</sup> Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God. <sup>44</sup> On the **next Sabbath** almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.”*

### **Acts 16:13:**

*“And on the **Sabbath day** we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there.”*

### **Acts 17:2:**

*“Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for **three Sabbaths** reasoned with them from the Scriptures.”*

### **Acts 18:4:**

*“And he reasoned in the synagogue **every Sabbath**, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.”*

To ignore these **crystal clear texts** and try to make **Acts 20:7** teach something that the author did not intend **is dishonest**.

The apostle Paul walked **35 miles to Assos** on Sunday morning. If Sunday was being observed should not have Paul been **in church instead**? The simple fact is that this was not a Sunday meeting.

## **Revelation 1:10**

We have examined **every text** in the New Testament that mentions the first day of the week and **not one of them** even hints that Sunday is **holy**, or that we are required to **attend church** on it or that we should honor it **because Jesus resurrected** on Sunday.

But, you may ask, what about **Revelation 1:10**?

### **Revelation 1:10, 11:**

*“I was in the Spirit on the **Lord's Day**, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet, <sup>11</sup> saying: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.”*

The text does not say that the **Lord's Day is Sunday** as **some modern versions** have it. The text simply states that John was in the Spirit on the **Lord's Day**.

**How do you determine** which is the Lord's Day? Do you ask the **early church fathers** or would it be better to allow **Scripture to interpret Scripture**?

**23 times** the Bible affirms that the Lord's Day is the seventh-day Sabbath. Notice the following examples from the **Old and New Testaments**:

**Exodus 20:8, 9:**

*"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the **seventh day** is the **Sabbath of the Lord your God.**"*

**Isaiah 58:13-14:**

*"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on **My holy day**, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the Lord honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, <sup>14</sup> then you shall delight yourself in the Lord. . ."*

**Mark 2:27-28:** If Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath then the Sabbath must be the Lord's Day!

*"And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. <sup>28</sup> Therefore the Son of Man is also **Lord of the Sabbath.**"*

## **John Paul II**

In order to woo Protestants, the Roman Catholic Church has become **craftier**. **John Paul II**, in his pastoral letter, ***Dies Domini*** made a **valiant effort** attempting to prove that the New Testament already pointed forward to the change. He presented **philosophical arguments** based on **human reason**. Yet none of his arguments are persuasive to those who take the **Bible as their only reliable standard** of truth. Nowhere in the Bible are we told that Sunday is **holy**, that we are to keep it in **honor of Christ's resurrection**, or that we are required to **attend church** regularly on that day.

It is a telling fact that John Paul II quotes **212 scholars**, church **councils**, **creeds** and **church fathers** to bolster his **weak Biblical case**! Once again, tradition has made of **none effect** the clear Word of God!

In **paragraphs 20, 21** John Paul II presents a series of events that occurred on Sunday to 'prove' that Sunday is a sacred day:

- John Paul states that the same day Jesus talked with **two disciples** on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:36).
- He appeared to the **eleven apostles** (John 20:19).

- A **week later** he appeared to the apostles again (John 20:24-28).
- If you count (inclusive reckoning) **50 days after** the first-fruits you have **another first day** of the week. Thus the **church** was **established on the first day** of the week.
- The **Holy Spirit** was poured out on the first day of the week.
- The **first proclamation** of the gospel took place that same day.
- The **first baptisms** took place that same day.

John Paul II also refers to **I Corinthians 16:1, 2**, **Acts 20:7-9** and **Revelation 1:10** as proof that Sunday was observed in **apostolic times**. The reason why he quotes these verses is because he wants to give the appearance that Sunday was the day of worship **even in the New Testament**.

Notice the following **unbiblical statement** by John Paul:

**Paragraph #14:** *"In the first place, therefore, **Sunday** is the day of rest because it is the day **'blessed'** by God and **'made holy'** by him, **set apart** from the other days to be, among all of them, **'the Lord's Day**."*

**Where** in the Bible are we told that God **blessed** Sunday and made it **holy**? **Where** are we told that God **set it apart** from the other days? **Where** in the Bible is Sunday called the **Lord's Day**?

John Paul in several places **offers the true reason** behind the change and it was not Scripture:

**Paragraph #6:**

*"It seems more necessary than ever to recover the deep doctrinal foundations underlying **the Church's precept** . . . [In keeping it] "we follow in the footsteps of the **age-old tradition of the Church**."*

**Paragraph #18:**

*"**Christians** . . . made [not God] the first day after the Sabbath a festive day, for that was the day on which the Lord rose from the dead."*

**Paragraph #27:**

*"**Christian reflection**" and "**pastoral practice**" led the church to embrace Sunday observance.*

**Paragraph #63:**

*"**Christians**, called as they are to proclaim the liberation won by the blood of Christ, **felt that they had the authority to transfer** the meaning of the Sabbath to the day of the resurrection."*

**Paragraph #81:**

*"The spiritual and pastoral riches of Sunday, as it has been **handed on to us by tradition**, are truly great."*

The amazing thing is that the Roman Catholic Church says that the **Sabbath has been changed in the new dispensation** but they continue to practice most of the things of the **old dispensation**. They have **temples, altars, incense, vestments, chalices, candles**, etc.

The pope states in *Dies Domini* that the Sabbath was the day of the **old covenant** and calls it the **Jewish Sabbath**. The problem with this is that the Sabbath was established in Genesis **before sin, before an old covenant** and **before there was any Jew**.

## **Conclusion: Three Realities**

- Sunday and the Sabbath are opposites: They are at opposite ends of the week.
- The counterfeit comes after the genuine.
- Teaching the commandments of men is to worship the Lord in vain.

### **Mark 7:6-10**

*"He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me **with their lips**, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, **teaching as doctrines the commandments of men**.' For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the **tradition of men** — the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." He said to them, "All too well you **reject the commandment of God**, that you may keep **your tradition**."*



## THE BIBLE OR TRADITION LESSON #9: THE ACID TEST

### Visit to a European Country

In December of 2010 I ended a series of meetings in a certain city in Karlsruhe, Germany.

About ten years earlier I had held a series of meetings in the same city. Unbeknownst to me a non-Adventist gentleman who had attended the first series of meetings also attended the second.

He came up to me on a Wednesday evening, pointed at the handbill and said: “*When are you going to talk about what happens when people die?*”

The pastor of the church, without my knowledge, for publicity purposes had made a handbill with the general topics that he thought I was going to touch upon during my visit. I had no plans to deal with the state of the dead

I told this gentleman that I was not going to deal with that specific topic but that I would be glad to visit him and study the subject in the privacy of his home. Two days later the pastor and I paid him a visit in his home.

### Visit at His Home

As we got acquainted, he shared with us that His wife had been a Jehovah’s Witness for many years and though he had never become a member of that organization he had attended the Kingdom Hall with her on a regular basis.

At some point, he and his wife had a falling out with the church because of a disagreement with one of the elders of the church. Along with Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that the dead know nothing until the resurrection.

Five months before my second series of meetings he had lost his wife to a devastating bout with cancer. He had been married for 22 years and was disconsolate. He cried his eyes out while we sat at the table visiting with him.

## Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

As we sat at his kitchen table, this gentleman told us that after his devastating loss he had searched for literature that would help him deal with his deep grief. Through the recommendation of a friend he came across the works of the Swiss psychiatrist, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.

Kubler-Ross' extensive work with the terminally ill led her to write the famous book On Death and Dying in 1969. In this work she proposed the now famous Five Stages of Grief as a pattern of adjustment. These five stages of grief are [1] denial, [2] anger, [3] bargaining, [4] depression, and [5] acceptance. According to her research, individuals, in general, experience most of these stages, though in no defined sequence, after being faced with the reality of their impending death.

I remember Dr. Kubler-Ross well because I heard her speak at a nursing symposium at Andrews University in 1972.

In the late 1970s Kübler-Ross became interested in out-of-body experiences and spiritualism. She began experimenting with the idea of contacting the dead. She also came to believe that the doctrine of reincarnation was compatible with Christianity.

This 72 year old gentleman described how Kubler-Ross' works had helped him cope with his grief. He now believed that dead people go through a dark tunnel at death and come out on the other side into a glorious realm of light and an incomparable feeling of peace and love. He also said that his dead wife had appeared to his friend and according to his friend she had the same appearance, the same voice and told him to relay words of comfort to her husband.

## Our Response

We knew that we had our work cut out for us. I told him:

*"More than anything you would want to see your wife and know that she is happy, right?"*

He said, *"Of course!"*

Then we showed him in the Bible God's truth that man if man sinned he would die and Satan's lie was that he would not die.

Then we talked to him about the witch of Endor experience and how Satan can transform himself into an angel of light and can disguise himself as departed relatives and friends.

## A Hypothetical Case

Then I presented a hypothetical case: What if your wife appeared to you in that doorway. Talked with the same voice, looked the same, remembered your times together and told you that she was in a better place. Would you believe that it is your wife because you desperately miss her and would like to be with her?

I told him: “This would be a most trying experience. Your eyes, your heart, your mind, your feelings all tell you that this is your wife. Would you go by what the Bible says or would you follow what your heart, your eyes, your ears and your feelings tell you? The Bible says that the *‘living know that they will die but the dead know nothing.’* What would your choice be? His eyes opened wide and for what appeared to be an eternity he was speechless.

We then prayed with him and left. He never came back to the meetings.

## The Acid Test

The traditional acid test for determining if a precious metal is really gold consists of placing a small drop of a strong acid, such as nitric acid, onto the metal's surface. Most metals fizz or bubble, while precious metals are unaffected. The acid test is thus inexpensive, decisive, immediate and simple.

You see, you can't rely on people telling you the metal is gold simply because it looks like gold or tastes like gold. You cannot trust your hunches, feelings or senses. You must apply an external test that will give absolute certainty that it is gold. Or else you might just buy fool's gold!

## Satan's Final Plan

According to the Bible it is Satan's plan to deceive the world through signs and wonders:

### Matthew 24:23-25:

*"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. <sup>24</sup> For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect [notice Satan's target audience] <sup>25</sup> See, I have told you beforehand."*

### Revelation 16:13, 14:

*"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. <sup>14</sup> For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty."*

Matthew 7:21-23: Satan will even use Christians to deceive by these means:

*"Not everyone who says to Me: 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' [transgress the law]*

**How can we keep from being deceived? We need a great Detector of error outside ourselves. We need an external standard.**

## **Back to the Beginning**

Our only safeguard at the end will be the same safeguard that God gave Adam and Eve at the beginning: Obedience to His Word. So let's go back to the beginning for a moment.

**Genesis 2:15-17:** The test of right and wrong was outside of man:

*"Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. <sup>16</sup> And the **Lord God commanded the man**, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; <sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*

**Genesis 3:1-6:** Satan used five methods to lead our first parents into sin:

*"Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman [a counterfeit miracle because serpents don't speak], "Has **God indeed said [he misquotes God's word]**, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" <sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; <sup>3</sup> but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" <sup>4</sup> Then the serpent said to the woman, [**appeal to her reasoning powers**] "You will not surely die. <sup>5</sup> For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." <sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw [**appealed to the testimony of her senses**] that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband [**Satan uses people to tempt other people**] with her, and he ate."*

- A counterfeit miracle.
- A misuse of Scripture.
- A perversion of human reason.
- The testimony of the senses.
- The testimony of the senses another person's voice.

What was the only way in which Adam and Eve could protect themselves from being deceived by the enemy? Obey God's Word and set aside everything else!

At the end, Satan will employ all kinds of wiles. He will appeal to our reason, our senses, and our feelings. He will misquote Scripture and use other people to try and persuade us to accept error.

**The issue at the beginning was actually quite simple:** Believe and obey God's word or believe and obey the devil's word.

The same issue will take place at the end of time. Sabbath or Sunday is a matter of whose word we obey. It is not a matter of days but of authority.

## The Great Detector

The Bible is the **great detector of error**. It is **light** that shines in the darkness. **To defeat darkness** all you must do is **turn on the light**.

Yet **today** people accept **all kinds of authorities** in place of the Bible, things such as **science, philosophy, feelings, emotions, signs and wonders, tradition**, what **others write and say**, etc.

Some of our **own theologians** are saying that the Bible was fine for a **pre-scientific, simplistic society** but that today we have **far more light** and we are **far more educated** and **sophisticated** than they.

**Ellen White** wrote the following **sobering** statement:

*“But God will have a people upon the earth to maintain the Bible, and the **Bible only**, as the standard of all doctrines and the **basis** of all reforms. The **opinions** of learned men, the **deductions of science**, the **creeds** or decisions of **ecclesiastical councils**, as numerous and discordant as are the churches which they represent, the voice of the **majority—not one nor all** of these should be regarded as **evidence** for or against any point of religious faith. Before accepting any doctrine or precept, we should demand a plain **“Thus saith the Lord”** in its support.” GC 595*

Jesus faced Satan’s attacks with **‘it is written’**. Satan attempted to get Jesus to follow his **feelings, emotions, senses** and yet Jesus met him with the **written word** of God.

## The Only Faithful Standard

*“The last great delusion is soon to open before us. Antichrist is to perform his marvelous works in our sight. **So closely will the counterfeit resemble the true** that it will be impossible to distinguish between them except by the **Holy Scriptures**. By their testimony **every statement** and **every miracle** must be **tested**.” GC 593*

## Know the State of the Dead

The written Scriptures are the **great tester** of **doctrine** and **experience**. Isaiah stated it this way:

**Isaiah 8:19, 20**: *“To the **law and to the testimony!** If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”*

**Verse 20** is **commonly quoted** but have you noticed **verse 19**?

*“And when they say to you: “Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter,” Should not a people seek their God? Should they **seek the dead** on behalf of the living?”*

There are **two doctrines** that are **corollaries**: The [1] **immortality of the soul** and [2] **spiritualism**. It **used to be** that Christian churches **believed** in the immortality of the soul but **rejected** the idea that the dead could speak with the living. But those days have **changed**. It was only a **matter of time** until these same Christian churches went from **step ‘A’ to step ‘B’**. There

are **notable** Christian leaders today who used **OBE'S** (out of body experiences) and **NDE'S** (near death experiences) as proof that there is life during death. Some even teach that **angels** who appear to the living **are spirits** of the departed.

The **Bible is clear** on the state of the dead:

**Psalm 146:3-4:**

*“Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. <sup>4</sup> His **spirit departs**, he **returns** to his earth; in that very day his **plans [thoughts, KJV] perish.**”*

**Ecclesiastes 9:5:**

*“For the living know that they will die; but the **dead know nothing**, and they have no more reward, for the **memory of them** is forgotten.”*

**Ecclesiastes 9:10:**

*“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is **no work** or **device** or **knowledge** or **wisdom** in the grave where you are going.”*

I did an entire series on the misunderstood texts on the state of the dead. The **all-time favorites** are “**Absent from the Body** and Present with the Lord” and the **Rich Man and Lazarus** but a careful study of these passages reveals that people are misinterpreting them!

## **How to Detect the Counterfeit**

The only way to **detect a counterfeit** is to **know the genuine**. The only way to detect error is to **know the truth**.

Ellen White has wisely **warned**:

*“I saw that **the saints** must get a **thorough understanding** of present truth, which they will be obliged to **maintain from the Scriptures**. They must understand the **state of the dead**; for the spirits of devils will yet **appear to them**, professing to be beloved friends and relatives, who will declare to them that the **Sabbath has been changed**, also other unscriptural doctrines. They will do all in their power to **excite sympathy** and will **work miracles** before them **to confirm** what they declare. The people of God must be prepared to withstand these spirits with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything, and that they who appear to them are the spirits of devils. Our minds must not be taken up with things around us, but must be occupied with the **present truth** and a preparation to give a reason of our hope with meekness and fear. We must seek wisdom from on high that we may **stand in this day of error and delusion.**” EW 87, 88*

*“He has power to bring before men the appearance of their departed friends. The **counterfeit is perfect**; the familiar look, the words, the tone, are reproduced with **marvelous distinctness**. Many are comforted with the assurance that their loved ones are enjoying the bliss of heaven,*

and without suspicion of danger, they give ear "to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." GC 552

"It is Satan's most **successful and fascinating delusion**--one calculated to take hold of the **sympathies** of those who have laid their loved ones in the grave. Evil angels come in the **form of those loved ones** and relate incidents connected with their lives, and perform acts which they performed while living. In this way they lead persons to believe that their dead friends **are angels**, hovering over them and **communicating with them**. These evil angels, who assume to be the deceased friends, are regarded with a **certain idolatry**, and with many their word has **greater weight** than the Word of God." ST August 26, 1889.

Speaking of the **religious world** at the end of time, Ellen White wrote:

"They declared that they had the truth, that **miracles** were among them, that **angels from heaven talked with them and walked with them**, that **great power, and signs and wonders were performed** among them, and this was the Temporal Millennium, which they had been expecting so long. The whole world was converted and in harmony with the **Sunday law**, and this little feeble people stood out in defiance of the laws of the land and the laws of God, and claimed to be the **only ones right** on the earth." Maranatha, p. 209.

## **Satan's Capstone of Deception: The Impersonation of Christ**

The Bible teaches that Satan will counterfeit the second coming by appealing to our **feelings** (I have come to deliver you), our **senses** (he will appear as a glorious being and will perform miracles) and **twisted Biblical arguments** (such as the idea that Sunday is the proper day of worship). Our only protection will be to know **how** Jesus will come and what **He will teach**.

### **2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2, 9-12**: Satan will **counterfeit the second coming**

"Now, brethren, concerning the **coming [parousia]** of our Lord Jesus Christ and our **gathering together to Him [not him to us]**, we ask you, <sup>2</sup> not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the **day of Christ** had come [then Paul explains that the antichrist must come first]. . . <sup>9</sup> The coming [parousia] of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all **power, signs, and lying wonders**, <sup>10</sup> and with all unrighteous **deception** among those who perish, because they did not receive the **love of the truth**, that they might be saved. <sup>11</sup> And for this reason God will send them **strong delusion**, that they should believe **the lie**, <sup>12</sup> that they all may be condemned who did not **believe the truth** but had pleasure in **unrighteousness**."

### **Matthew 24:23-27**: Jesus warned that the second coming **would be counterfeited**:

"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' **do not believe it**. <sup>24</sup> For false christs and false prophets will rise and show **great signs and wonders** to deceive, if possible, even the elect. <sup>25</sup> See, I have told you beforehand. <sup>26</sup> "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is **in the desert!**' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the **inner rooms!**' do not believe it. <sup>27</sup> For **as the**

**lightning** comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

**Ellen White** well remarks:

“Because the children of men reject the plainest teachings **of his word**, and trample upon his law, God leaves them to **choose that which they desire**. They spurn **the truth**, and he **permits them** to believe a lie. They refuse to yield to the convictions of the Holy Spirit, and Satan, **transforming himself** into an angel of light, leads them captive at his will. If men were but **conversant with the word of God**, and **obedient to its teachings**, they could not be thus deceived; but they **neglect the great detector of fraud**, and the mind becomes **confused and corrupted** by the deceptive arts of men, and the secret power of the father of lies.” ST, May 18, 1882

## How Jesus will come

**1 Thessalonians 4:15-18**: Jesus will not come **all the way down** to the earth:

For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. <sup>16</sup> For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup> Then we who are alive and remain shall be **caught up** together with them **in the clouds** to meet the Lord **in the air**. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.”

### **Matthew 24:31**

“And He will **send** His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they **will gather** together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

**Two things** that the Bible makes absolutely clear:

- **How Jesus will come.**
- The **Sabbath is the day of rest.**

**Ellen White** described this almost overmastering delusion:

“As the **crowning act** in the great drama of deception, Satan himself will personate Christ. The church has long professed to look to the Savior's advent as the consummation of her hopes. Now the great deceiver will **make it appear** that Christ has come. In **different parts** of the earth, Satan will manifest himself among men as a majestic being of **dazzling brightness**, resembling the description of the Son of God given by John in the Revelation. Revelation 1:13-15. The glory that surrounds him is unsurpassed by anything that **mortal eyes** have yet beheld. The shout of triumph rings out upon the air: “Christ has come! Christ has come!” The people **prostrate themselves** in adoration before him, while he lifts up his hands and **pronounces a blessing** upon them, as Christ blessed His disciples when He was upon the earth. His **voice is soft and subdued**,



yet full of melody. In gentle, compassionate tones he presents some of the same gracious, heavenly truths which the Savior uttered; he heals the diseases of the people, and then, in his assumed character of Christ, he claims to have changed the Sabbath to Sunday, and commands all to hallow the day which he has blessed. He declares that those who persist in keeping holy the seventh day are blaspheming his name by refusing to listen to his angels sent to them with light and truth. This is the strong, almost overmastering delusion. But the people of God will not be misled. The teachings of this false christ are not in accordance with the Scriptures. His blessing is pronounced upon the worshipers of the beast and his image, the very class upon whom the Bible declares that God's unmingled wrath shall be poured out.” GC 625

## More Ellen White Quotes

“Everything in the religious world is to be tried by the Scriptures. ‘To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them’ (Isaiah 8:20). The claimed enlightenment of the Spirit within is to be tested and tried by the Word of God, which is the detector of the pure wheat. . . .” That I May Know Him, p. 195

“Parents, if you would educate your children to serve God and do good in the world, make the Bible your textbook. It exposes the wiles of Satan. It is the great elevator of the race, the reprover and corrector of moral evils, the detector which enables us to distinguish between the true and the false. Whatever else is taught in the home or at school, the Bible, as the great educator, should stand first.” Child Guidance, p. 510

“The Word of God is the great detector of error; to it we believe everything must be brought. The Bible must be our standard for every doctrine. We must study it reverentially. We are to receive no one’s opinion without comparing it with the Scriptures. Here is divine authority, which is supreme in matters of faith.” Christ Triumphant, p. 331

“It is the Word of the living God that is to decide all controversies.” Christ Triumphant, p. 331



## THE BIBLE OR TRADITION

# LESSON #10: LESSONS FROM TWO BUILDERS

## Introduction

One of the most memorable parables of Jesus is the one about the men who built their houses upon the rock and upon the sand. I vividly remember going through the primary division of Sabbath School and singing at the top of my lungs about the house of the foolish man which fell flat when the rain came tumbling down! But oddly enough, I don't remember ever hearing about what the parable means. Let's read the parable and then spend some time deciphering its meaning:

## The Parable

### Matthew 7:24-27:

*"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:<sup>25</sup> and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for [because] it was founded on the rock.<sup>26</sup> "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:<sup>27</sup> and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."*

## Symbols of the Parable

- Wise man
- Foolish man
- House
- Rock
- Sand
- Act of building
- Winds and Floods
- Great fall

## Textual Setting

The parable of the men who built their houses on the rock and on the sand marks the **conclusion** of the **Sermon on the Mount**. Regarding this, the book Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, page 147 states:

*“Jesus **ended** His teaching on the mount with an illustration that presented with startling vividness the importance of **putting in practice** the words He had spoken.”*

**Adam Clarke** (a Non-Seventh-day Adventist commentator) on this parable:

*“Many suppose that the law of Moses **is abolished**, merely because it is **too strict**, and **impossible** to be observed; and that the Gospel was brought in to **liberate us** from its obligations; but let all such know, that in the whole of the old covenant nothing can be found **so exceedingly strict** and **holy** as this sermon, which Christ lays down as the rule by which we are to walk.”*

## Geographical Setting

*“Among the crowds that thronged about the Savior were many who had spent their lives about the Sea of Galilee. As they sat upon the hillside, listening to the words of Christ, they **could see** valleys and ravines through which the mountain streams found their way to the sea. In **summer** these streams often wholly disappeared, leaving only a dry and dusty channel. But when the **wintry storms** burst upon the hills, the **rivers** became fierce, raging torrents, at times overspreading the valleys and bearing everything away on their resistless **flood**. Often, then, the hovels reared by the peasants on the grassy plain, apparently beyond the reach of danger, were swept away. But high upon the hills were **houses built upon the rock**. In some parts of the land were dwellings built **wholly of rock**, and many of them had withstood the tempests of a **thousand years**. These houses were reared with **toil and difficulty**. They were **not easy** of access, and their location appeared **less inviting** than the grassy plain. But they were **founded upon the rock**, and wind and flood and tempest beat upon them in vain.” MB 147, 148*

## What is represented by the Rock?

What is symbolized by the **rock**?

Deuteronomy 32:4: The rock represents **a person**, YHWH.

*“**He** is the Rock, **His** work is perfect; for all **His** ways are justice, a **God** of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is **He**.”*

2 Samuel 22:2, 3: In the **Old Testament** the rock was a symbol of the **Lord**.

*“The **Lord is my rock** and my fortress and my deliverer; <sup>3</sup> The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; my Savior, You save me from violence.”*

**1 Corinthians 10:1-4:** The Lord is none other than **Jesus Christ Himself.**

*“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, <sup>2</sup> all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, <sup>3</sup> all ate the same spiritual food, <sup>4</sup> and all drank the same spiritual drink for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that **Rock was Christ.**”*

**1 Corinthians 3:11**

*“For no other **foundation** can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is **Jesus Christ.**”*

## **What is the House?**

The house represents four interrelated realities:

**Reality #1:** First of all the “house” represents individual persons.

Matthew 12:43, 44: Clearly the words ‘man’ and ‘house’ are used in parallel fashion:

*“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. <sup>44</sup> Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order.”*

**Reality #2:** In a broader sense, the house represents the family unit:

**Psalms 127:1, 3:**

*“Unless the Lord **builds the house**, they labor in vain who build it. . . Behold, **children** are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.”*

**Reality #3:** In the Old Testament, the house represented **God’s Holy nation of Israel:**

Jeremiah 18:6:

*“O **house** of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?” says the Lord. “Look, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand, O **house** of Israel!”*

**Reality #4:** In the Old Testament the temple is repeatedly called ‘the house of God’. It was built upon solid foundations of stone and had a chief cornerstone (remember this detail). In the **New Testament** the house of God represents **the church** which is the pillar and foundation of truth:

**1 Timothy 3:14, 15:**

*“These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; <sup>15</sup> but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the **house of God**, which is **the church** of the living God, the **pillar and ground** of the truth.”*

Jesus guaranteed that **the church would not fall** because it was built upon **the Rock:**

**Matthew 16:18:** The Rock is Jesus Christ. Never in the Bible is a mere human being called the Rock. It would be absurd to believe that the church could withstand the attacks of Satan if it was built upon a man or succession of men:

*"And I also say to you that you are Peter [petros] and on this rock [Petra] I will build My church, and the gates of Hades [the grave] shall not prevail against it."*

**John 2:19:** Jesus referred to Himself when He said: 'destroy this temple'.

*"Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."*

## **How do we build upon the Rock?**

How can we build on the person of Christ if He is in heaven?

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock."

It is important to realize that the word for "sayings" in this verse is logos. This very word is used to describe Jesus in John 1:1-3, 14. Jesus is he Word of God in person but we build upon that person by studying and obeying His written word.

When we assimilate His Word we partake of His very life. This is what Jesus meant by eating His flesh and drinking His blood:

**John 6:63:**

*"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."*

**MB 148, 149:**

*"The great principles of the law, of the very nature of God, are embodied in the words of Christ on the mount. Whoever builds upon them is building upon Christ, the Rock of Ages. In receiving the word, we receive Christ. And only those who thus receive His words are building upon Him."*

How does the apostle Paul amplify what it means to build upon Christ?

**Ephesians 2:19, 20:**

*"Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."*

To build upon Christ means to build upon the teachings of Christ as found in the writings of the apostles and prophets.

"Christ, the true foundation, is a living stone; His life is imparted to all that are built upon Him. "Ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house." "Each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." 1 Peter 2:5, R.V.; Ephesians 2:21, R.V. The stones became one with the foundation; for a common life dwells in all. That building no

**tempest** can overthrow; for--"That which shares the life of God, with Him surviveth all." **MB**  
150

## **A Sure Foundation**

**How can we be sure** that we are building upon Christ?

**Luke 6:47, 48** adds some **valuable information** on how to build on the rock:

*"Whoever comes to Me and **hears** My sayings and **does** them, I will show you whom he is like:  
<sup>48</sup> He is like **a man** building a house, who **dug deep** and laid the **foundation** on the rock."*

**MB 146:**

*"When the doctrine we accept **kills sin** in the heart, **purifies the soul** from defilement, bears **fruit unto holiness**, we **may know** that it is the truth of God."*

**MB 149:**

*"We build on Christ by **obeying His word**. It is not he who merely **enjoys** righteousness, that is righteous, but he who **does** righteousness. Holiness is **not rapture**; it is the result of **surrendering all** to God; it is **doing the will** of our heavenly Father. . . Religion consists in **doing** the words of Christ; not doing to earn God's favor, but because, all undeserving, we have received the gift of His love. Christ places the salvation of man, not upon **profession** merely, but upon faith that is made manifest in **works of righteousness**. Doing, **not saying** merely, is expected of the followers of Christ. It is **through action** that character is built."*

## **Hearing and Doing**

**Romans 2:13:**

*". . .for not the **hearers** of the law are just in the sight of God, but the **doers** of **the law** will be justified."*

We have all heard the expression, "**words are cheap**". This is exactly what the apostle Paul is saying in Romans 2:13.

**1 John 3:18-19:**

*"My little children let us not love in word or in tongue but in **deed** and in **truth**."*

**John 17:17:** What is truth?

*"**Sanctify** them by Your truth. Your **word** is truth."*

**2 Thessalonians 2:9-14:**

*"The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,<sup>10</sup> and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did*

not receive the **love of the truth**, that they might be saved. <sup>11</sup> And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, <sup>12</sup> that they all may be condemned who did **not believe the truth** but had pleasure in unrighteousness. <sup>13</sup> But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and **belief in the truth**.

**Matthew 7:21-22**: Matthew 7:21-23 **comes immediately before** Matthew 7:24-27 and is linked with the parable because of the words **'say' and 'do'**. **Miracles cannot take the place** of obedience to God's word.

*"Not everyone who **says** to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who **does** the **will** of My Father in heaven."*

**1 Thessalonians 4:1-8**: Paul is speaking here about **believers**. The will of God connects with Matthew 7:21-23.

"Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought **to walk and to please God**; <sup>2</sup> for you know what **commandments** we gave you **through the Lord Jesus**. <sup>3</sup> For this is the **will of God** [Matthew 7:21-23], your **sanctification**: that you should **abstain from sexual immorality**; <sup>4</sup> that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in **sanctification** and honor, <sup>5</sup> not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; <sup>6</sup> that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. <sup>7</sup> For God did not call us to uncleanness, **but in holiness**. <sup>8</sup> Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, **but God**, who **has also given** us His Holy Spirit." "

**Matthew 7:22**: Even **miracles, signs and wonders** cannot take the place of obedience to the word of God:

*"Many will **say** to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'"*

These **counterfeit disciples** claimed the name of Jesus. They exercised what **appeared to be** the gifts of the Holy Spirit (see I Corinthians 12:7-11) and yet Jesus refused to recognize them as His because they did not do His Father's will.

Ellen White has warned:

*"Let none cherish the idea that special providences or **miraculous manifestations** are to be the proof of the genuineness of their work or of the ideas they advocate. When persons will speak **lightly of the word of God**, and set their **impressions, feelings, and exercises** above the divine standard, we may know that they have **no light in them**." MB 146*

**Matthew 7:23**:



*“And then I will declare to them, ‘I **never** knew you; depart from Me, you who practice **lawlessness!**’”*

The word “iniquity” here is the Greek **anomias**. It means “lawlessness” or “one who transgresses the law” (**1 John 3:4**). It is significant that many of those who **profess the name** of Christ will actually be opposed to God’s law. The same word is used in **2 Thessalonians 2:7, 8** to describe the antichrist.

## **Difficult Work**

**MB 147: Building is an action word. It takes work to build a house**

*“These houses were reared with **toil and difficulty**. They were not **easy of access**, and their location appeared less inviting than the grassy plain. But they were founded upon the rock, and wind and flood and tempest beat upon them in vain.”*

**CG 164:**

*“Character does not come by chance. It is not determined by **one outburst** of temper, **one step** in the wrong direction. It is the **repetition of the act** that causes it to become **habit**, and molds the character either for good or for evil. Right characters can be formed only by **persevering, untiring effort**, by improving every entrusted talent and capability to the glory of God. Instead of doing this, many allow themselves to drift wherever impulse or circumstances may carry them.”*

## **Building on the Sand**

**Matthew 7:26:** If building on the rock means to **hear** the words of Jesus and **do** them, then building upon the sand must be the **opposite**. Instead of building upon the word it means to build upon the **theories and ideas** of men and **reject** the words of Jesus:

*“But everyone who **hears** these sayings of Mine, and **does not do** them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.”*

## **What is meant by building on the sand?**

*“But every building erected on other foundation than **God’s word** will fall. He who, like the Jews in Christ’s day, builds on the foundation of **human ideas and opinions**, of **forms and ceremonies of man’s invention**, or on any works that he can do independently of the grace of Christ, is **erecting his structure** of character upon the shifting sand.”*

The contrast between the builders upon the rock and the builders upon the sand can be seen in the **concluding verse** of Matthew 7. Jesus taught with the **authority of God’s word**. In contrast, the scribes taught with **no authority** because they depended upon the **traditions of men**:

### **Matthew 7:28-29:**

*“And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,<sup>29</sup> for He taught them as **one having authority**, and not as the scribes.”*

## **Storm, Floods and Winds**

What is represented by **the winds**?

### **Revelation 7:1-2:**

*“After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, **holding the four winds** of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any tree.”*

When the winds of strife are released, the world will experience the **time of trouble** such as has never been seen in the history of planet earth. Then, only those who have built upon the solid foundation of **God’s word** will be able to stand (see the question in Rev. 6:17)

What insight does the **apostle Paul add** concerning the meaning of the word “winds”?

### **Ephesians 4:14-15:**

*“. . . that we should no longer be children, **tossed to and fro** and carried about with **every wind of doctrine**, by the **trickery of men**, in the **cunning craftiness** of deceitful plotting,<sup>15</sup> but, speaking **the truth** in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ. . .”*

### **James 1:7:**

*“But let him ask in faith, with **no doubting**, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea **driven and tossed by the wind**.”*

How does John describe the persecution of God’s people during the **middle ages**?

### **Revelation 12:15-16:**

*“So the serpent spewed water out of his mouth **like a flood** after the woman [**the church**] that he might cause her to be **carried away** by the **flood**.”*

What **particular stage** of human history is the storm of Matthew 7 describing?

*“You who are resting your hope **on self** are building on the sand. But it is not yet too late to escape the **impending ruin**. Before the **tempest breaks**, flee to the **sure foundation**.” (MB 152; see also Isaiah 4:1-6)*

What will be our **only protection** in the coming cataclysmic storm?

*“None but those who have **fortified** the mind with the **truths of the Bible** will stand through the last great conflict. To every soul will come the searching test: Shall I **obey God** rather than men? The decisive hour is even now at hand. Are our feet planted on the **rock of God’s immutable***

word? Are we prepared to **stand firm** in defense of the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus?" GC 593, 594

According to **Revelation**, what is meant by the **falling of the house**?

**Revelation 18:2**:

*"Babylon the great is fallen is fallen."*

The whole **worldwide system** (Babylon) which is based on **human greatness** and prowess will come crashing down. This will be similar to the experience at the **Tower of Babel**.

## **The Tower of Babel**

*"Here they decided to build a city, and in it a tower of such stupendous height as should render it the **wonder of the world**. These enterprises were designed to prevent the people from scattering abroad in colonies. God had directed men to disperse throughout the earth, to replenish and subdue it; but these Babel builders determined to keep their community **united in one body**, and to found a **monarchy** that should eventually embrace the **whole earth**. Thus their city would become the metropolis of a **universal empire**; its glory would command the admiration and homage of the world and render the founders illustrious. The magnificent tower, reaching to the heavens, was intended to stand as a monument of the **power and wisdom of its builders**, perpetuating their fame to the latest generations." PP 117, 118*

## **Application for today**

*"There are tower builders **in our time**. Infidels construct their **theories** from the supposed deductions of sciences, and **reject the revealed word of God**. They presume to **pass sentence** upon God's moral government; they despise His law and boast of the **sufficiency of human reason**. Then, "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Ecclesiastes 8:11.*

*"In the **professedly Christian world** many turn away from the **plain teachings of the Bible** and **build up a creed** from **human speculations** and **pleasing fables**, and they point to their tower as a way to climb up to heaven. Men hang with admiration upon the **lips of eloquence** while it teaches that the transgressor shall not die, that salvation may be secured **without obedience to the law of God**. If the professed followers of Christ would accept **God's standard**, it would bring them **into unity**; but so long as **human wisdom** is exalted above His **Holy Word**, there will be **divisions and dissension**. The existing confusion of conflicting creeds and sects is fitly represented by the term "Babylon," which prophecy (Revelation 14:8; 18:2) applies to the **world-loving churches** of the last days." PP 123, 124*

## **Glorious Promises to the Wise Builders**

What glorious promise does God give through David to those who will experience the time of trouble?

### **Psalm 27:5:**

*“For in the **time of trouble** He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high **upon a rock.**”*



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5949 E. Clinton Ave.

Fresno, CA 93727

559-264-2300 (USA & Int'l)

888-REV-1412 (USA Only)

888-738-1412 (USA Only)

Email: [info@secretsunsealed.org](mailto:info@secretsunsealed.org)

[www.secretsunsealed.org](http://www.secretsunsealed.org)