**"CHALLENGES CONFRONTING THE CHURCH" - Traditionalism**

**INTRODUCTION**

Another challenge that has a long history is **traditionalism**... Jesus often conflicted with traditions in His day. Traditions have often been a major factor in causing division among churches.

**I. THE MEANING OF TRADITION**

**A. TRADITION...** The Greek word is **paradosis**, which means "giving over" or "handing down". It refers to teaching that is handed down either by word (orally) or in writing

**B. AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE JEWS...**

1. It applied to the oral teachings of the elders (distinguished elders from Moses on down)

2. These traditions were often divided into three classes...

*a. Oral laws supposedly given by Moses in addition to the written laws*

*b. Decisions of various judges which became precedents in judicial matters*

*c. Interpretations of highly respected rabbis held in reverence along with the OT scriptures* ***–***

***Article on "Tradition", ISBE)***

3. Prior to his conversion, Paul was a staunch supporter of Jewish tradition - [**Ga 1:13-14**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ga%201.13-14)

**(Galatians 1:13-14),** *“For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. 14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.”*

**C. AS UNDERSTOOD BY CATHOLICS...**

1. Their views appear to parallel that of the Jews

2. What they consider "Tradition" is what they believe to be the teachings:

*a. Of Jesus or His apostles, persevered orally rather than through writing*

*b. Of various church councils which have left various decrees*

*c. Of various church leaders (such as pope) considered to be inspired with later revelations from God).*

3. One is expected to take their word for it that these "traditions" were truly from God and have been faithfully

transmitted

**D. AS FOUND IN THE SCRIPTURES... (Note: positive and negative connotations)**

1. It is found thirteen (13) times in the N.T., never in the OT.

*a. Three times referring to "apostolic teaching" -* [***1Co 11:2***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Co%2011.2)***;*** [***2Th 2:15***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Th%202.15)***;*** [***3:6***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/2Th%203.6)***;***

**(1 Corinthians 11:2*),*** *“Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.”*

**(2 Thessalonians 2:15),** *“Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.”*

**(2 Thessalonians 3:6),** *“But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.”*

*b. Ten times referring to "the tradition of the elders" or "the traditions of men" in a dangerous way -* [***Mk 7:3-13***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.3-13)***;*** [***Mt 15:2-6***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mt%2015.2-6)***;*** [***Col 2:8***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Col%202.8)***;*** [***1Pe 1:18***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Pe%201.18)***;*** [***Ga 1:14***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ga%201.14)***)***

***(Mark 7:5-8),*** *“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?" 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. 7 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. ' 8 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."*

**(Matthew 15:3) [same occasion],** *“He answered and said to them, ‘Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?’”*

**(Colossians 2:8),** *“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”*

**(1 Peter 1:18),** *“knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers”*

**(Galatians 1:14),** *“And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.”*

2. Jesus did not feel bound to abide by "the traditions of the elders."

*a. Some traditions He had no problem with keeping,* [***Jn 2:1-2***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jn%202.1-2)***,*** [***Jn 10:22-23***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Jn%2010.22-23)

**(John 2:1-2),** *“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. 2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.”*

**(John 10:22-23),** *“Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. 23 And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch.”*

*b.* *He just as easily had no problem with violating other traditions,* [***Mk 2:23-28***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%202.23-28)***;*** [***Mk 7:1-5***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.1-5)***0.***

**(Mark 2:23-28),****READ (Plucking grain on the Sabbath – traditionally considered work)**

**(Mark 7:5),** *“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?"*

3. Jesus evidently did not subscribe to the view of "traditions" handed down orally

*a. He never appealed to the traditions of the elders*

*b. He either appealed to the authority of the written Word [the Law of Moses], or to His own authority*

*as the Son of God).*

4. **Note well:** Not all "traditions" are wrong, but some are, and they can be dangerous and destructive.

**II. THE DANGER OF TRADITIONS OF MEN**

**A. THEY CAN LEAD TO HYPOCRITICAL WORSHIP...** (Traditions of men tend toward ritual [without the heart/hypocritical] worship! - [**Mk 7:6**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.6)**)**

**(Mark 7:6),** *“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.”*

**B. THEY CAN LEAD TO VAIN WORSHIP...** (When traditions of men have same level as the commands of God, it leads to vain worship - [**Mk 7:7**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.7)**)**

**(Mark 7:7),** *“And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”*

**C. THEY CAN MAKE THE WORD OF GOD VOID... (**[**Mk 7:10-12**](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.10-12), rendering the God’s command of no effect)

**(Mark 7:10-13),** *“For Moses said, "Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death. ' 11 But you say, "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, 13 making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."*

**III. TRADITIONALISM: A SUMMARY**

**A. TRADITIONS...**

1. **Traditions of God**, handed down by Christ and His apostles through the Written Word, are necessary for our salvation!

2. **Traditions of men**, handed down by uninspired men, are dangerous and sinful, when they*:*

*a. Lead to hypocritical worship*

*b. Lead to vain worship;*

*c. Make the Word of God void).*

3. Traditions of men can be harmless, but they become sinful if they:

*a. Are taught as doctrines [i.e., equivalent to the Word of God] -* [***Mk 7:7***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.7) ***(See above)***

*b. Make the commandments of God of no effect [by their observance] -* [***Mk 7:9***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.9)***,***[***13***](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.13)***). (See 13 above)***

**B. TRADITIONALISM...**

1. Defined: the systematic emphasis on the value of tradition - **Wikipedia**

2. Can also be manifested in churches of Christ

*a. Doing things a certain way, just because that is how it has always been done*

*b. Binding practices without scriptural basis, because we’ve always done it that way).*

**CONCLUSION**

Ask, is it from God or men? **(Mt 21:25).**

**(Matthew 21:25),** *“The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?"*