

**Prayer:**

**Slide # 1**

**Theme:** *Christ the King*

**Outline:**

Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)

Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King’s baptism.

Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)

Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)

Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)

Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.

Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.

**Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.**

Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.

Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.

Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.

Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.

Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

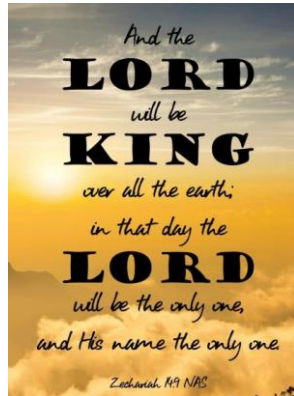
As noted Matthew’s theme is “**Christ the King**”. But He is no ordinary king. **Messiah** is the Hebrew equivalent to the Greek word **Christ**. The Messiah figure promised to Israel in the OT would be not only a Deliverer but also a supreme Ruler. And this promised Messiah while being fully man would also be fully God. The Messiah is the God-Man.

And that truth right there is what Israel largely did not accept. The great truth presented in the greater part of Christ’s ministry was principally that of Him being Messiah-God. The truth of Christ being Savior is predicated on Him being Lord-God. Before going to the cross as Savior, the foremost great emphasis presented to Israel was that Jesus was their Messiah-God.

Matthew interweaves this theme of Jesus being Messiah-God throughout His letter.

The OT Scriptures over and over show that the prophesied coming Messiah would be both King and LORD Who is to be worshipped!

### Slide # 2



Who will be King? YHWH – the LORD Himself! When the wise men showed up in Matthew 2 to see the newborn King of Israel what did they come to do? Well, according to Matthew 2:2 they came **“to worship Him.”**

Every Jew knew that only God is to be worshipped. Yet this newborn King of the Jews was to be worshipped because indeed He was Messiah-God. So in Matthew 14 when Jesus walked on water and then stilled the storm appropriately it says the disciples then, *“came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God.’”* (Mt. 14:33).

While the disciples more and more came to see the truth of Christ’s divinity, the religious leaders more and more came to oppose the truth of Christ.

Matthew presents this pattern of growing opposition, withdrawal, and yet more miracles. Thus, growing opposition to Christ was in the face of ever more mounting evidence that Jesus was indeed Messiah-God which made their rejection all the more inexcusable.

Matthew 14 closes with Jesus in the area of Gennesaret up north in Galilee where He healed ALL the sick who were brought to Him.

And that transitions us to Matthew 15.

### **Matthew 15:1–9 (NKJV)**

**1 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,**

The word **“then”** (Gk. tote) is a transitional word.

Matthew does not always write with a strict chronological sequence in view but often with a thematic flow in mind. And that may be the case here as he is writing to show the growing conflict that is developing between Christ and the religious leaders in Israel.

Note that in general Christ was way up north in Galilee and these scribes and Pharisees came all the way from Jerusalem to see Jesus.

### Slide # 3



Jerusalem was the religious headquarters for the Jews where the religious leaders resided in close proximity to the temple. The people of the Judah/Jerusalem area generally looked down on those up north in Galilee as not being as educated or as spiritual. But this is where the majority of Christ's ministry took place – way up north in Galilee.

So here this delegation of scribes and Pharisees all the way from Jerusalem came, and it seems right from the get-go that they were not coming on friendly terms. They were here as critics who had come with the express purpose of challenging and discrediting Christ's ministry.

The scribes and the Pharisees are often linked together in the gospels. The scribes were the recognized "ordained" **theologians**. They were the "**rabbis**" who were specialized "**teachers of the law**". They were looked on as experts in the Jewish faith. The intellectual defenders of the faith.

The word Pharisees means "**separated ones**". They were the strictest and most conservative sect of the Jews. They were devoted to keeping the law of Moses at all costs. What the scribes knew intellectually the Pharisees tried to live out.

So the scribes were the trained theological experts and the Pharisees were the legalists who took it seriously. They came to Jesus saying,

**2 “Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread.”**

Here they come challenging Jesus like a bunch of religionists full of ego – thinking they know what they are talking about? After all they were the “elite” experts from the prestigious capital of Jerusalem.

The **Jerusalem** religious leaders had “theological” problems with Jesus. He had the audacity to intrude upon their turf of the temple driving the money changers out of it at the start of His ministry and that really got things off to a bad start (cf. Jn. 2:13-16). He ignored their Sabbath rules claiming that He Himself was Lord of the Sabbath (cf. Mt. 12:1-8). He claimed to be the Son of God making Himself equal with God which they considered to be blasphemy (cf. Jn. 5:18). He claimed to do what only God can do and that is forgive sins (cf. Mk. 2:1-12). Therefore, the religious leaders had written Jesus off and claimed that the obvious miracles He was doing were done by the power of Satan (cf. Mt. 12:22-37).

So there was already a lot of background tension between Jesus and the religious leaders from Jerusalem and the tensions were mounting. In this context these scribes and Pharisees ask why Christ’s disciples transgress the tradition of the elders in not washing their hands before they eat bread.

This had nothing to do with hygiene and everything to do with ceremonial cleanliness as prescribed by the tradition of the elders – which is to say the ongoing traditions of the esteemed rabbis of history.

In Jewish thinking the “**tradition of the elders**” went back to Moses and was under the heading of what was called “**the oral law**”. Moses supposedly not only received the written law (what we commonly call the “**Law of Moses**” but also law that was only orally received by him and then passed along orally.

Ezra (c. 450 B.C.) is considered to be the first scribe (cf. Ezra 7:6). After the Babylonian Captivity he collected and organized the OT books. After the time of the Babylonian Captivity rabbis and scholars began to expound on the law and collect various traditions of thought which took place until what is called the Great Council of Elders was completed in 291 B.C.

Many of these scribes and scholars meant well. In developing commentary and traditions, they saw their work of extra teachings as providing “**a safety fence around the Law**” to protect people from breaking the Law. In addition to the “**oral law**” was a whole body of “**oral discourse**” that went with it which was called the Halakah.

During the time of Christ, the “**oral law**” and all the commentary on it was not yet codified in written form. That took place from A.D. 35-200 and eventually became known as the **Mishnah**. There is a whole section in the Mishnah called **Yadaim** that is given over to the subject of washing hands.

#### Slide # 4

**Talmud** = Repository of Jewish Tradition

**Written Law (& supposed Oral law)** given to Moses and handed down...

**Halakah** = Oral discourse and ordinances which further qualify how to walk in regard to the law.

**Ezra** = First Scribe begins compilation of Scriptures which put in motion lots of commentary... (Ezra 7:6).

**Time of Christ:** The Law of Moses, the oral law, and a huge body of uncoded commentary were all in play.

**A.D. 35-200:** The discourse on the oral law codified and written down in what is called the Mishnah.

**Gemara** = Written commentary on the Mishnah

So the Jews of Christ’s time in practical reality not only considered the Law of Moses and the OT Scriptures as binding but also the “**oral law**” and a host of governing regulations that had also developed. In the days of Christ there were two leading rabbis on the scene. One was named Rabbi **Shammai** who was more conservative, and one named Rabbi **Hillel** who was more liberal. However, these rival teachers had agreed upon a fixed ordinance about the necessity of ceremonial washing of hands. They disagreed on almost everything else, but they agreed on this.

According to the Law of Moses people could be defiled by touching a dead body or eating something unclean, etc. And then they were considered ritually unclean and unfit to approach God in worship until a ceremonial cleansing took place.

The priests in the OT were required to wash before eating of a holy offering, but there was nothing in the Law (proper) about people generally having to wash their hands ceremonially before eating (cf. Ex. 30:17-21; Lev. 15:11; 22:1-16). This was all according to tradition which had come to be seen as mandatory on the same level as the written Law of Moses itself.

So important was this washing of the hands that one rabbi wrote:  
*“whosoever has his abode in the land of Israel and eats his common food with rinsed hands may rest assured that he shall obtain eternal life.”*

And there were all kinds of manmade regulations for proper washing before eating. The minimum amount of water to be used had to be enough to fill one and a half eggshells. The water was to be simultaneously poured out on both hands with the fingers pointed upwards to allow the water to drop off at the wrist because the water was itself now also unclean in the process of touching unclean hands. If it ran back down through the fingers again the person would still be rendered unclean.

The process was then repeated but this time the fingers were held downward allowing the water to drip on the ground. Finally, each hand was then cleansed by rubbing each fist with the other hand. A strict Jew would then repeat this before every course of the meal and then again after the meal. There was a whole lot of washing going on here. You do know that *cleanliness is next to godliness* – right?

In the minds of these religious leaders, it was an established fact that this was the right thing to do in the eyes of God. But note they do qualify it as being according to “***the tradition of the elders***” (cf. Mk. 7:8,9,13; Col. 2:8).

### **3 He answered and said to them, “Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?”**

Jesus responded to their question with a challenging question of His own. Jesus brought the perspective back to where it needs to be, namely on the commandment of God. They were legalistically stuck on the traditions of men, when the real issue before God was His commandments.

This was undoubtedly shocking and offensive because these religious leaders never considered the fact that their honored traditions might not be authoritative - and actually might be contrary to God’s commandment. This was a new concept for them.

Note Jesus called it “***your tradition***” indicating this didn’t really go back to what was ordained by God through Moses. This was not God’s command!

Here in verses 2 and 3 we have highlighted the difference between legalism and biblical obedience. Many times people are quick to call biblical obedience “legalism” when in fact being properly obedient to God is right and God-honoring. There are two polar opposite errors that one can fall into. One is called legalism and the other is called antinomianism. Both are biblically wrong. You can fall off either side of the horse!

### **Slide # 5**

## Legalism

- Legalism is a strict adherence to a code of **MANMADE** “dos and don’ts” as a means of trying to earn the approval of God.

### **Slide # 6**

## Antinomianism

- Antinomianism (lit “no-law”) holds that GRACE provides a license that frees one from any and all semblance of law. However, sound doctrine shows that while believers are free from sin, they are under the LAW of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2).

The Bible is clear that as believers we are under the law of Christ which is the law of God's love. Obedience to the law of Christ is not legalism but is a mark of true faith. Gal. 5:6 speaks of "***faith working through love***".

### **Slide # 7**

#### **1 John 2:3–4 (NKJV)**

**3** Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

**4** He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

So as believers in Christ we are not to be governed by legalism (man made rules) or antinomianism (a license to sin), but rather by obedience to the law of Christ which is the law of His love.

**4 For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'**

In quoting, "*Honor your father and your mother*" Jesus quotes the 5<sup>th</sup> of the 10 commandments as found in Exodus 20:12 and Deut. 5:16. He didn't just quote a supposed "minor" commandment but one of the BIG ten. Paul in Eph. 6:2 called this "the first commandment with promise: *that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.*"

The word "***honor***" (Gk. *timao*) meant to place value upon, to esteem highly, to appreciate. Parents are to be properly valued and appreciated.

And He followed that up by quoting from Exodus 21:17 and Lev. 20:9 which says that whoever curses father or mother is to be put to death. That brings some real seriousness to the conversation.

***To curse*** (Gk. *kakologeo*) means "*to insult*", "*to speak evil of*", or "*to revile*" (cf. Mk. 7:10; 9:39; Acts 19:9). It is the polar opposite of honoring someone as it shows total disrespect.

When it comes to the issue of proper honor for parents there are two great sins brought out in the Scriptures. One relates to younger children still in the home who refuse to show proper respect and honor for their parents' authority. Kids who are not taught proper honor for their parents are a disaster! Our whole society is reaping the consequences of throwing the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment out the window.



The home is the major shaping forum for a child. And if they don't learn proper respect for parental authority in that realm, they probably won't have any regard for God's authority or governmental authority either. The home is the major incubator for teaching a child the great issue of authority and to respect it as ordained by God.

A major sign of last days madness is that children will run wild and have no regard for parental authority and that then carries over into the whole of life. It is a disaster – kind of like what is on display in society today.

### **Slide # 8**

#### **2 Timothy 3:1–2 (NKJV)**

**1** But know this, that in the **last days perilous times** will come:

**2** For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, **disobedient to parents**, unthankful, unholy,

But the commandment to honor your parents changes in nuance as a person comes to adulthood. As children come of age and parents grow old the nuance of honoring them takes on the sense of caring for their needs. And that is the principal thing Christ is dealing with here.

### **Slide # 9**

#### **Proverbs 23:22 (NKJV)**

**22** Listen to your father who begot you, And **do not despise your mother when she is old.**

You never outgrow the need to honor your parents. They are to be honored properly throughout the whole of life. We are now seeing more and more adult children who claim to be Christian but when they come of age they no longer want anything to do with their parents. They should do a real check on whether or not they are truly in the faith.

To show the seriousness of this Christ referenced the OT call for the death penalty when children showed total cursing disregard for parents. He then applied this principle to grown children who show blatant disregard for the needs of aging parents.

This shows that not honoring an aging parent is a most serious sin in the eyes of God. And then Christ goes on to show exactly what He was calling them out on as seen in verses 5 and 6.

**5 But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God”—  
6 then he need not honor his father or mother.’ Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.**

The rabbis had come up with a rule that seemed to trump the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment in the Mosaic Law. It sounded so spiritual, but it was so evil!

Their reasoning went like this: If I vow to give all my assets to God by invoking the word “**Corban**” (which means gift), then I am obligated to keep my vow to God and I can’t help my parents out with it (cf. Num. 30:2). After all vows are holy, and after all God is a higher priority than parents – right? It seemed like an airtight theologically sound argument!

### **Slide # 10**

#### **Mark 7:11–12 (NKJV)**

**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,

But note this problem: Christ goes on to call them **HYPOCRITES** in the next verse. This type of treatment of parents was not made out of a sincere love for God, but rather because of selfish and hypocritical motives that were in reality self-oriented.

This amounted to a “**loophole**” that the rabbis affirmed and thus it was part of what was called “**the tradition of the elders**”. To show you how hypocritical it was, the person was allowed to still use it for himself if it was deemed necessary, but he just couldn’t help out his parents with it.

Many years ago a comedian and movie actor by the name of W. C. Fields led an unrestrained life of alcohol and mistresses. He was not known as a religious man in any sense, but as his death approached, he began to read the Bible. One day a friend asked him what he was doing in studying the Bible and Fields said, “*I am looking for loopholes.*”

That’s really what these religious leaders were doing. But that never works with God. He calls this “gamesmanship” for what it is – HYPOCRISY! He looks on the heart and He knows our motives perfectly. The moral law of God does not change. The principle of honoring parents has not changed.

**Slide # 11****1 Timothy 5:3–4 (NKJV)****3 Honor** widows who are really widows.**4** But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.**1 Timothy 5:8 (NKJV)****8** But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he **has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**

God intends for CHILDREN to be the **social security program** for their parents. Now in each situation people will have to work out their salvation with fear and trembling in terms of the application of this principle. People have to honestly weigh what they can do monetarily, physically, and so forth. No one can do everything. And in balance sometimes people have false guilt beating themselves up for what in all honesty they can't do.

But the issue in context here is properly honoring aging parents in keeping with **what one can legitimately do**. Like I say, any professing Christian who refuses to properly honor their parents should examine themselves and make sure they are in the faith. Such action is tantamount to denying the faith – and if one is denying the faith, they probably don't have it.

Jesus said such traditions that seemingly get around the obligations of the Word of God end up making the commandment of God of no effect. These traditions not only supplement the Word they actually supplant and undermine it. Such traditions actually cancel out the truth of the Word of God!

Note Jesus brings the issue back to the canon of Scripture – the actual Word of God. This is always the true authority for the true people of God.

The oldest trick in the devil's book is to get people to question God or manipulate His Word. In Genesis 3:1 the devil said to Eve, "***Has God indeed said...***". This is the oldest line of the devil and one of the most effective. We must go strictly by the Word and the Word of God alone!

Those looking for loopholes only end up hanging themselves with it. This is a matter of “**you say**” (v. 5 – man’s traditions) versus the plain and straightforward “**commandment of God**” (v. 6).

This line: “*Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition*” has a lot of application in the world of Christendom today.

Roman Catholic theology adds the Apocrypha to the Word, it adds papal infallibility to Scripture, it adds the rulings of the Magisterium saying, “*Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God.*” All such traditions in reality undermine and supplant the Word of God.

This week a Catholic priest in Phoenix Arizona resigned after the Church determined that he has used one wrong word in his baptismal formula in baptizing people for the last 20 years thus making their baptisms invalid. And that is a really big deal to them because as the Diocese of Phoenix said, “**Baptism is a requirement for salvation**”. If you really believe that then all those people who have died with an invalid baptism are lost.

Of course, their whole doctrine of salvation is wrong and is in truth another gospel. But the point is so much of the Roman Catholic system is based on mere tradition (by their own admission) and not solely on the Word of God rendering the Word of “no effect”. Their tradition flat out contradicts the Word.

In effect all the cults hold to traditions and sources of extra-biblical authority that contradict and nullify the straightforward teaching of the Bible.

No matter what the tradition, no matter the segment of Christendom, to follow tradition that flies in the face of Scripture is deadly. There truly are deadly traditions. The tradition that makes speaking in tongues necessary for salvation is deadly. The tradition of baptismal regeneration as practiced by mainline churches and groups such as the Church of Christ is deadly. The tradition of putting church polity over the Bible is deadly and on and on.

In so called “**Evangelical**” Churches there is a lot of tradition that has as its source some charismatic teacher. We have health and wealth teachers. We have prosperity gospel teachers. We have self-esteem teachers. We have a lot of man-oriented teaching that caters to itching ears.

**Slide # 12**



There is a lot of “tradition” where professing Christians are just going through the motions. In my estimation the most crying need we have in professing Christendom today is the need for consistent solid Bible teaching – the consistent teaching of sound doctrine that rightly divides the Word of truth. We are long on “tradition” and short on the authority of the Word. We need the uncompromised Word above all else.

**We once had a retired pastor** with a lot of legalist baggage who began to attend our church. He said he wanted to help a young guy like me. When I visited him he had a long list of legalistic criticisms. He saw some man in the church cross his legs. He said it was sin for us to have a business meeting on Sunday, and on and on. And the thing about legalists is that they are very sure they are right – especially OLD legalists. In this case when I graciously tried to correct the elderly gentleman, he came to basically treat me as a heretic since I didn’t agree with his legalism.

They say the seven last words of the Church are: “***We’ve never done it this way before!***” Entrenched traditions die hard and when they contradict the Word of God they are deadly!

Now not all “traditions” are bad. But when they become legalistic, they are bad! When tradition is held to as authoritative over the Bible that is bad.

Whatever we are doing we better have a verse to back it up and the verse better be properly understood in context. In the end the Word of our God shall stand forever. Traditions that are in conflict with the Word are not only not helpful, they are destructive. They end up replacing the Word! How great a sin is this! To make the Word of God of no effect is most serious!

The great issue in view is this: **What is the authority that governs our practice?** Is it the Word of God or is it tradition? For true worshipers the authority is singularly the Word of God!

**7 Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:**

Few things are worse than religious hypocrisy!

Satan has no greater allies than hypocrites who go under the guise of God's people. And hypocrites have no greater ally than tradition, because tradition can be followed mechanically and thoughtlessly, without conviction, sincerity, or purity of heart. – **John MacArthur**

The word **hypocrite** (*hupkrite*) comes from the stage of Greek drama. It refers to one who wears a mask or plays a part such as an actor would do. As such it became a metaphor for one who is a pretender. Religious hypocrites are actors – they are pretenders who claim to be all spiritual but it's all an elaborate act. Hypocrites act all religious but in reality they are all about SELF! It's all a sham and God sees right through it.

Jesus defined these “hypocrites” by applying Isaiah 29:13 to them.

**8 ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.**

Religious hypocrites are game players. They play church. They come off like they are so sincere. And they say a lot of good things. They pray flowery prayers and seem so spiritual with their mouth. **“Praise the Lord”** is on their lips. They honor God with their lips. But its all by rote and not by heart (so to speak).

But note they have a HEART problem! They give outward lip service but in truth their heart is far from God. And this is the whole issue before God.

### **Slide # 13**

**Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)**

**23** Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

The essence of our life before God is what is lived out in the heart. The heart in Scripture refers to the core of a person's inner being – to their character – to their true self in regard to commitments, the will, beliefs, and convictions. The Bible speaks of the **“thoughts and intents of the heart”** (Heb. 4:12). The heart is the place of one's thinking, affections and motives. It's the core of what a person is really all about.

The problem with these religious leaders was that their true heart allegiance was self-oriented which manifested itself in self-righteous religious legalism. In truth religious legalism is self-oriented which caters to self-righteousness and pride.

At core the religious legalist has a HEART problem. His whole heart orientation is wrong. It never ceases to amaze me the description of last days apostasy in 2 Tim 3 which lists a whole host of self-oriented sinful characteristics that will define professing believers and yet they still have “**a form of godliness**”. They continue to play the part of OUTWARDLY being “Christian” even though they live lives of total hypocrisy.

**Slide # 14**

**2 Timothy 3:1–5 (NKJV)**

- 1 But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:
- 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,
- 3 unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,
- 4 traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,
- 5 **having a form of godliness** but denying its power. And from such people turn away!

They have an outward profession but their practice denies the life changing power of true conversion. If your faith doesn't change your life – its just merely a profession and you are not saved. You are a **hypocrite** just playing the part. It is merely form religion and not the real thing.

Such hypocrisy is nothing new. It was a reality in Isaiah's day, it was a reality in Christ's day, and it is a reality in our day. It is a major component of last days madness! Hypocrisy defines last days apostasy.

God wants us to give Him our hearts, and not just our lip service. We believe in the heart (Rom. 10:9-10), love from the heart (Matt. 22:37), sing from the heart (Col. 3:16), obey from the heart (Rom. 6:17; Eph. 6:6), and give from the heart (2 Cor. 9:7). – **Warren Wiersbe**

The difference between hypocritical religion and true saving faith is found in the heart! In Luke 8:15 Jesus illustrated that the genuine are those upon “*hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.*”

The difference is made in the HEART! 1 Sam. 16:7 says, “*the LORD looks at the heart.*” Jeremiah 17:10 says the LORD searches the heart.

The burden of the Scripture Jesus quotes is that the Pharisees and teachers of the law had displaced the true religion of the heart (v. 8), of the entire personality and will, with a religion of form.

– **D.A. Carson**

Sometimes when a person gets serious about God people out in the world will say, “So and so got a little religion”. But lots of people have tons of religion and not one ounce of salvation. It’s not about how much outward religion you have, but rather all about a life changing relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ. And that is a HEART issue! And so, Jesus finishing out the quote from Isaiah 29:13 said...

**9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”**

Vain worship is empty and useless worship. It just goes through the motions but is meaningless. Vain means “*to accomplish nothing*” or “*to have no result*”. The core problem here is that their teaching conformed to the commandments of men instead of to the commandments of God.

Mankind was created to worship! It is the ultimate issue! To be a true believer is to be a true worshiper. The first act of true worship is saving faith (cf. Heb. 11:6). In an evangelistic context Jesus said this to a Samaritan woman...

**Slide # 15**

**John 4:23–24 (NKJV)**

**23** But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

**24** God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Paul in Phil. 3:3 says the mark of the true covenant people of God is that we “**worship God in the Spirit**”. This was the problem with these religious hypocrites – they were not true worshipers. They were hypocrites just going through the motions – following the commandments of men. Worship must be on God’s terms – and His terms start with saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

True belief and true worship go together, and both are predicated on the command of God to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Slide # 16**

**1 John 3:23 (NKJV)**

**23** And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.



Here John summarizes the core essence of what defines genuine Christianity. These are the core commandments related to the New Covenant relationship believers now have with God. The foundation of everything is our faith and then true belief brings forth the fruit of love.

**Slide # 17**

**2 John 9 (NKJV)**

**9** Whoever transgresses and does not abide in **the doctrine of Christ** does not have God. He who abides in **the doctrine of Christ** has both the Father and the Son.

The Word of God has as its centerpiece the truth of Christ. True worship is centered in this truth. And when we have true faith that aligns with the truth of Christ that then demonstrates itself in how we live. Knowing God is reflected in how we treat people – starting with our family – starting with our parents.

It should be noted that the whole surrounding context is ultimately dealing with the issue of authority and worship.

**Slide # 18**

**Matthew 14:33 (NKJV)**

**33** Then those who were in the boat came and **worshiped** Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.”

**Matthew 15:9 (NKJV)**

**9** And in vain they **worship** Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”

**Matthew 15:25 (NKJV)**

**25** Then she came and **worshiped** Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”

In view in our study this morning is the contrast between the authority of God’s Word versus the traditions of men; the contrast between the authority of God and that of mere men; and correspondingly the contrast between true worship and that of mere religion.

Aligning with the authority of God’s Word leads to true worship which aligns with the truth of God as it is found in Jesus.

**Slide # 19**

**Colossians 2:8–10 (NKJV)**

**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.

**9** For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

**10** and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

The focal point is Jesus who is to be worshiped for Who He is as God. And this requires that we hold to the Word of God as our sole authority. True worshipers worship in spirit (out of a right heart) and in truth (in accordance with God's truth) which is centered in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures.

Religion dominated by tradition is a very hard thing to break out of. This has been a MAJOR problem for the Jews since before the time of Christ.

Zvi Kalisher (1928–2014) was a Holocaust survivor who was known for his unswerving faithfulness to the Lord and his bold witness in Jerusalem. Over and over again his emphasis to the Jews was to not put their trust in all their traditions and commentaries but only in the Word of God. Here is one of his stories as told in the magazine *Israel my Glory*.

### **Apples of Gold Jan/Feb 2020**

Recently in Israel, a group of men from the ultra-Orthodox community were busy going from house to house carrying their many commentaries. When they saw me coming with my little pocket Bible, one asked me, "How can you come to speak about the faith with nothing?"

"You see this little book?" I asked them. "It is the Holy Bible. This is enough. It is all I need to go to the ends of the earth to bring His salvation. But you need a train to carry the stack of books you bring."

Their teacher came with great confidence that he would show me his wisdom and stump me in only a few minutes.

After three hours of conversing, I asked them, "Why do you boycott the words of the Lord that are written in the Bible?" "We have never boycotted even one letter from the Bible," one said. "*Not just one letter. You boycott a whole chapter!*" I replied. They were surprised. "Do you know what you are saying?" one asked. "Yes, I know," I said. "The fact is you boycott Isaiah 53. Why are you so afraid of that chapter?" I asked.

