



July 16, 2017

## The Word of God ... or the Word of Man?

*Matthew 15:1-9*

Who do we listen to? Who do we follow? God? Or man?

In Jesus' time, the interpretation of the Scriptures by the scribes and the Pharisees and the rabbis had become more important than the Scriptures themselves ... here called the "tradition of the elders."

But Jesus' approach was very similar to one of the cries of the Reformation, "SOLA SCRIPTURA" or the Scripture only, as the final authority for faith and conduct.

Putting man's word above God's Word always results in perverted religion (vs. 9), because here the battle line has always been drawn (Genesis 3). "Yea, has God said?"

Let's look at this passage as Jesus defends the preeminence and veracity and sufficiency of the Old Testament scriptures.

### 1) The word of man, vs. 1-2.

- Jerusalem scribes and Pharisees come to Capernaum to confront Jesus ... washing hands was a serious offense, because we are not talking about mere hygiene.
- Men love manmade religion! Ritual and external performance – it is much HARDER to cultivate the heart!
- So how is our relationship with God? Our passion to love and serve Christ? Our love for the Word of God and the things of God?

### 2) The Word of God, vs. 3-4.

- Here Jesus throws their accusations "right back at them", and rightfully so! (See Col. 3:16)
- Why do you transgress God's command for the sake of your tradition?
- Why break the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12), and entertain a death sentence (Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9) for your tradition?
- There are CONSEQUENCES to blatant misinterpretations! To disregarding God, the Word of God and the Word of God given through Moses!

### 3) The word of man and the Word of God contrasted, vs. 5-6.

- The scribes, Pharisees and rabbis had come up with this interpretation called "Korban" (Mark 7:11).
- It was a vow to give all you had to God, or the service of God.

- Everything still remained in your possession, but if it ever was given away, it must be given to “the work of God”.
- This way, an evil and greedy man could keep all that he had, not help anybody in need, and still appear righteous “according to the tradition of the elders”.
- The Greek reads “He must not honor his father or mother” ... according to God’s Word, worthy of death, according to Korban, perfectly righteous!
- Judaism had become a completely external religion.

4) The results of the word of man, vs. 7-9.

- Here Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13.
  - A. The word of man results in blatant hypocrisy.
  - B. The word of man results in lips that honor God, and a heart that does not. Do we worship God “in spirit and truth”? (John 4:23)
  - C. The word of man results in vain and empty and worthless worship, vs. 9.

Worship is not a vain, hypocritical show put on for others. It is the attributing of worth and honor and glory to the One True God, through His Son, Jesus Christ, in the power of God’s Spirit!

The fourth commandment ...could it be that I claim to belong to Christ, then I live my Christian life in a vain manner? Could that be the true meaning, and violation of that command?

### **Suggested Devotional Reading**

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- Monday:** The sufficient Word – Psalms 119:1-32
- Tuesday:** The preeminent Word – Psalms 119:33-64
- Wednesday:** The inspired Word – Psalms 119:65-96
- Thursday:** The infallible Word – Psalms 119:97-136
- Friday:** The complete Word – Psalms 119:137-176
- Saturday:** Memorize Colossians 3:16

### **TABLE TALK**

As you read through Psalms 119, underline in your Bible all the different words that refer to God’s Word. Are there any verses that do not directly refer to the Word of God? Which ones?