

Word of God vs Traditions of Men #3

Stand for Truth, not the doctrines and traditions of men

Fred R. Coulter—December 24, 2016

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to Sabbath services. We've been covering in a short series of sermons about Messianic Judaism and Judaism, and how that is beginning to affect many different fellowship groups and churches.

This is why I have said, you need this book by Philip Neal, *Judaism: A Revelation of Moses or a Religion of Men?* The confrontation in the New Testament has nothing to do with the Protestant/Catholic confrontation that we have had for over 500 years. It has to do with the confrontation between the Truth of God, the laws of God, the truth of the Gospel, the spiritual aspect of what God is doing with His Spirit vs Judaism.

Judaism created all the traditional laws as a fence around the Law so that no one would be able to break the laws of God if they kept these laws.

The thing very few people really understand is that in Hebrew the Law is called the Torah. Torah means *law*. When the Jews talk about Torah, they don't mean the first five books of the Bible. Most Protestants assume that's what they mean. Too many people in the Churches of God assume that if the Jew says Torah, he's talking about the laws of God. He is not necessarily talking about the laws of God. He is talking about the *code* of Jewish Law.

- Do you know anything about the *code* of Jewish law?
- Do you know anything about traditional law-keeping of the Jews?
- Do you know their mindset without the Spirit of God as they look at the Scriptures?
- Do you realize that just as it says the Jews have a zeal for God, but 'not according to knowledge' (Rom. 9)?

Not even the knowledge of the Old Testament, and certainly most limited knowledge of the New Testament.

Example: In the New Testament we are taught the spiritual application of the Law. When the Messianic Jews, who don't have the Spirit of God—there may be some that might—you need to understand that very few have ever forsaken the traditional laws of Judaism.

We have a lot of other things to cover when we get to the book of Romans. Let's see what God says. Because the problem with man—Jews, Protestants, Catholics, all religions in the world,

Islam, Buddhism, whatever it may be—is that they think can get in touch with God their ways. All of the things they do are *works of law* or *works of tradition*, which then is a *work of law*.

Let's understand something very important. The Jews claim that Moses gave to the elder's secret knowledge, verbally, tradition. That is not so! God had Moses write everything down. Men like to think they can change what the Almighty God has done. It says in Isa. 40:

- Who has been the instructor of God?
- Who has been His counselor?
- Who told Him how to create the earth?
- All nations are a drop in the bucket and less than vanity.

What do you think that means concerning traditional teachings of men? *They have no standing with God!*

Deuteronomy 12:29: "When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations before you, where you go to possess them, and you take their place and dwell in their land."

Israel was a nation with geographical territory. God gave to all nations, right after the Flood, the administration of death. That is the political and civil power to have laws in a community and to carry those laws out.

As I've covered in sermons concerning Islam, Islam is a political national movement. That's why they want to bring Sharia Law. In Christianity, since God says it goes into all the world, God has taken away the administration of death. God has upgraded His laws to the spiritual meaning of the law, not eliminating them.

When you upgrade it to a spiritual meaning, let's just look at the laws of sacrifice. Those were performed by the priesthood and the Levites at the temple or the tabernacle. When Christ came, and His sacrifice superseded all of the laws of the priesthood and sacrifices, those were replaced by God with the sacrifice of Christ and the spiritual keeping of the Law.

The whole purpose of sacrifice, and high priest, and mediator for the people, now is done in heaven above. God did that because He knew He was going to destroy the temple and Jerusalem. Didn't Jesus tell His disciples that (Matt. 24)? *Yes!* We're talking about:

- our relationship with God
- commandment keeping
- loving God
- loving our neighbor
- loving each other
- loving our enemies

That's why God gave us laws.

If you haven't studied much in the laws of God, read them and ask: Is this a good law or not? You read the laws of Exo. 20, which is the Ten Commandments. Then Exo. 21-23. Are those good laws? *Yes, indeed!*

Let's see that God warned in many places, many times. Deuteronomy 12:28:

"Be careful to observe and obey all these words, which I command you, so that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever when you do *that which is* good and right in the sight of the LORD your God."

Is that right? Is that good? *But of course!* Therefore, the Law is not a curse, as most Protestants believe. The breaking of the Law *brings* a curse, a penalty. God wanted it to go good and right with them in the sight of the Lord.

Verse 29: "When the LORD your God shall cut off the nations before you, where you go to possess them, and take their place and dwell in their land, take heed to yourselves..." (vs 29-30).

The thing of human nature is that 'there is a way that seems right to men and women, but the ends thereof are the ways of death.' So, you have to take heed that you have to follow the laws and commandments of God, now spiritually amplified in the New Testament. Not do away with law.

Even if they removed every Bible in the world, *the laws of God would still be in effect, because they are spiritual!* Think on that for a minute.

Verse 30: "Take heed to yourself that you do not become ensnared by following them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not ask about their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods that I may also do likewise?'"

Remember the sin of Solomon? Remember the sin of the children of Israel? *Baalim, and Ashtoreth!*

Verse 31: "You shall not do so to the LORD your God..."

What does this involve? This involves adding things to the laws of God, taking away things from the Law of God, to justify that kind of behavior.

Verse 31: "You shall not do so to the LORD your God, for every abomination to the LORD, which He hates, they have done to their gods; even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods. Whatsoever thing that I command you, be careful to do it. **You shall not add to it, nor take away from it**" (vs 31-32).

Why does God allow false prophets? *Because there is free moral agency!* God wants to know:

- What are we going to choose?
- How are we going to choose it?
- What are we going to do with it?
- **Are we going to think our ways are greater than God's ways?**
- Are we going to think the way other nations worship their gods we should do so?

Let's see what God says, Deuteronomy 13:1:

"If a prophet rises among you, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder."

There's even a minister in one of the Churches of God, one of its leaders who said, 'I had a dream.' He preaches some mighty false doctrine. But people are like lemmings and fall in line. ***We are to fall in line with God!*** The false prophets come along so God is going to test us: What will you do?

Just like if Messianic Jews come into a fellowship group or a congregation and start telling you that you have to have phylacteries, have your hair just right, a prayer shawl, and *you have to use sacred names*. *That's* Judaism! I challenge anyone, anywhere to find sacred names in the New Testament, except the names Jesus Christ the Son of God, and God the Father. Those are the only sacred names in the New Testament.

One little caveat: Once in Romans and once in Galatians Paul uses the word *Abba*, which is Aramaic. Then he puts Father after it. *Abba* means in a complete trusting childlike way that you're trusting your father or daddy.

Verse 2: "And the sign or the wonder, which he foretold to you comes to pass, saying, 'Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them,' you shall not hearken to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God *is* testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, **and keep His commandments, and obey His voice**, and you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him" (vs 2-4).

The next verse says, because they had the administration of death, they were to take that prophet out and execute him. Look at all the damage that is done with false teachings.

Let's examine just one thing. Catholics make it very clear—and we have it *Rome's Challenge to the Protestants* in Appendix N in the *Faithful Version Bible*—that Sunday is a day they devised themselves and flaunt it before the Protestants. Cardinal Gibbon, who wrote that in 1893, makes it clear that if 'you Protestants really believe solo scriptura,' then why do you keep Sunday, which is a Catholic institution; you need to keep the Sabbath Day.'

Have you ever read that in Appendix N? That's why we have the Bible and that's why we have the appendices. Have you studied the appendices? Have you even looked at them? That's why they're

in the Bible. That's why they're not in a separate book. Everything in the commentaries and the appendices is geared to explain to this generation God's way vs all of the false doctrine that the Catholics, Protestants, and Jews have. So, it's necessary to study it, necessary to go through it.

As a matter of fact, Appendix A is how to study the Bible: *Fourteen Rules of Bible Study*. What we do here, we go verse-by-verse, and so forth.

But look at this: "...keep His commandments." What's the fourth commandment? You know that one very well, the Sabbath. What did Jesus say about the Sabbath?

Mark 2:27: "And He said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, *and* not man for the Sabbath; therefore, the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (vs 27-28).

This tells us if you want to keep the true Lord's Day; it is not Sunday, it is Sabbath, and Jesus is Lord of it. Any minister, anywhere that says, 'We keep Sunday and that's what God honors,' is a liar. You know what Jesus said is going to happen to them? *Unless they repent, they're going into the Lake of Fire!*

'Yeah, but the whole world does it.' Really? What does John write about the whole world? *Satan has deceived it (Rev. 12:9) and the whole world lies in the power of the wicked one!* That's why!

You could take whatever other ones you want to. I'm going to read to you some of the *Code of Jewish Law*. We've covered it. Just to remind you:

- What happens when people have traditions in place of the Word of God?
- What happens when they try and serve God with that?
- Does God accept it?
- Does He look down here and say, 'Oh, they're well intentioned, they're so fine, good and nice, they're wonderful'? *No!*

This had to do with the washing of hands. Furthermore, the Protestants and Catholics twist this to say that all meats are clean to eat. God never said so.

Mark 7:5: "For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, 'Why don't Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders...

[these learned, wonderful men]

...but eat bread with unwashed hands?'"

Those filthy disciples of Yours, Jesus.

Notice how Jesus answered. Isn't it interesting that when challenged Jesus always answered with Scripture. Remember when He was tempted by Satan the devil? *The devil said, 'If You're the Son*

of God, command that these stones become bread! What did Jesus say? *'It is written, man...'*—since He was God manifested in the flesh, He's talking about Himself—*'...shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God!'*

What did we just read in Deut. 13? *To keep His commandments and obey His voice!* The Bible is the Word of God in print. It's so imperative that there are more Bibles than ever before. Jesus prophesied it would be *preached* and *published*.

Verse 6: "And He answered *and* said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me.'""

- How is your heart?
- How close are you to God?

God hasn't called us to *play* religion. God hasn't called us to play church. ***God has called us to receive eternal life, the greatest gift ever!*** I want you to think on that. I want you to mull that over: *called to eternal life*, and all that it means.

Here's what happens with traditions. Any tradition of any religion does this,

v 7: "But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men."

What happens when you replace the commandments of God with the commandments of men? Here's what you do:

Verse 8: "For leaving the commandments of God..."

The tradition becomes more important. Think about this in a Messianic congregation. Everybody comes in, they check their beard and their phylacteries, rather than loving them as brethren and loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being. That's why there are false prophets.

The Jews keep the Passover on the wrong day—the 15th instead of the 14th. You need *The Christian Passover* book. I'm going to tell about this one again and again as we go toward the Christian Passover. You need this because this is the most important book you can read. That is the most attacked and vilified practice that men have done absolute violence to: the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, communion, Passover on the wrong day. We'll get into that, but you need to know.

I got an e-mail a couple weeks ago where a man said, 'I need some help. Is the Passover on the 14th or the 15th? When did Jesus observe it?' I said, 'That's quite a serious question.' He said, 'We've been studying in our study group and I'm going to cover this on Wednesday.'

I said, 'Why don't you e-mail me back your address and we'll send you as many of *The Christian Passover* books as you need so that everyone can study it together.' He never answered back.

There are so many things that Satan has done to the true Passover, because he knows that if you miss the mark on the Passover, it's very likely over a period of time you could slip out of covenant with God, because you're not keeping His commandments, and you're not obeying His voice, and you're not doing as Jesus said. This becomes really important.

Verse 8: "**For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men, such as** the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*.' Then He said to them, 'Full well do you reject the commandment of God, so that you may observe **your own tradition**'" (vs 8-9)

—*whatever that may be!*

I'm going to read to you from the *Judaism* book very interesting things. I'm going to read about hand-washing. Remember what the dispute was with the disciples and the Pharisees. Here's what they say about hand-washing in the morning:

Judaism: Revelation of Moses, or Religion of Men? by Philip Neal (pg 160)

1. Since every man upon rising from his sleep in the morning is like a new-born creature, insofar as the worship of the Creator is concerned, he should prepare himself for worship by washing his hands out of a vessel, just as the priests used to wash their hands daily out of the wash-basin before performing their service in the Temple....

- Are they priests?
- Is there a temple?
- *No!*

In rejecting Jesus, now they think they can make themselves Holy by bringing in things that look like they make you righteous. These are *works of law*, along with all the sacrifices that they had at the temple.

This hand-washing is based on the Biblical verse (Psalms 26:6-7):

"I will wash my hands in innocence, so I will go about Your alter, that I may cry out with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of Your wonderful works." (vs 6-7)

There is another reason given by the Kabbalists...

Who are the Kabbalists? *They are the same as those in the different religions that delve into demonism!*

...for this morning hand-washing: when a man is asleep, the holy soul departs from his body, and an unclean spirit descends upon him. When rising from sleep, the

unclean spirit departs from his entire body, except from his fingers, and does not depart until one spills water upon them three times alternately. One is not allowed to walk four cubits (six feet) without having one's hands washed, except in cases of extreme necessity.

Then it talks about the first garment that must be put on, which is the 'tallit katan,' the four-cornered one.

...for one is **not allowed to walk even as much as four cubits without having a fringed garment on.** But as his hands are still unwashed, he may not say the benediction on putting it on.

All of these were to make them righteous. Let's look at another one.

On Dressing and Deportment (pg. 161-2):

1. It is written (Micah 6:8)...

They go the Scripture and then they bring a *tradition* and a *false doctrine*. That becomes more important than the Scripture. Notice this:

"And to walk humbly with thy God."....

notice how they interpret it

...Therefore it is the duty of every man to be modest in all his ways. **When putting on or removing his shirt or any other undergarment, he should be careful not to expose his body unduly. He should put it on or remove it while still lying covered in bed.** He should never say to himself: "Lo, I am all alone in my inner chamber and in the dark, who can see me?" For the glory of the Holy One, blessed be He, fills the universe, and darkness and light are alike to Him, blessed be His name; and modesty and a **sense of shame** indicate humility before Him, blessed be His name.

Rules of Decency:

4. **While in the lavatory, it is forbidden to think of sacred matters...** On the Sabbath, when it is forbidden to think of business, one should think of some interesting things that one has either seen or heard, or something similar to that.

How about reading the Word of God?

Chapter 8: What May not be Done from Dawn Until Praying Time (pg 163):

As soon as the day dawns, that is, when the first light of the sun is seen in the East—since this is the time when prayers may begin (if one had by chance prayed at that early hour, one had complied with his duty) we are not permitted to begin any kind of work, or transact business, or start a journey until one has prayed, as it is said (Psalms 85:13): "Righteousness shall go before him; and he shall make its footsteps a way to walk in." "Righteousness" means prayer, where in we declare the righteousness of our Creator, and only afterward are we to direct our footsteps on the road of our material desires.

2. **One is not allowed to eat or drink before praying...**

How about that? There are many, many others. There are thousands of them. We only put a few select in the book so you could read and understand what they were.

Chapter 40: Washing the Hands Before Meals (pg. 164)

Chapter 46: Forbidden Foods (pg. 167):

1. The blood found in eggs is forbidden. Occasionally, it is forbidden to eat the entire egg on account of blood-spots....

That may be a good health thing.

...Therefore, the egg should be examined before using it in the preparation of food.

2. The use of the blood of fish is permitted, but if it is collected into a vessel, its use is forbidden for the sake of appearance, because people might think that it is forbidden blood....

You have to wash your hands after eating as well

Chapter 44: Laws Concerning the Washing of Hands and the Saying of Grace After Meals (pg. 166):

2. **We must not pour this water on the ground where people walk, because an evil spirit rests upon it....**

Makes you wonder, doesn't it?

Chapter 46: Forbidden Foods (pg. 168):

18. If we happen to forward, through a non-Jew, a slaughtered beast or fowl or anything else without a seal, then we must **consult a rabbi** about it.

Chapter 72: The Holiness of the Sabbath (pg. 170):

12. On Friday, one must wash the face, hands, and feet in warm water, and if possible, one should bathe the whole body in warm water and then **immerse in a ritual pool**.

Chapter 73: Work Done by a Non-Jew on the Sabbath (pg. 171):

Yes, you could have them work. What does the Bible say? *No, you don't!*

Chapter 80: Some Labors Forbidden on the Sabbath (pg. 174):

The principal works we are forbidden to perform on the Sabbath are already known to most of the children of Israel. The list given herein comprises works that are not generally known to be forbidden; they are common things performed in the course of our daily lives.

1. It is forbidden to work that requires concentration before a lamp. The Rabbis have forbidden this, lest one forgets and tilts the lamp in order to bring the oil closer to the wick, and then one will be guilty of "igniting."

Think of that!

3. Pouring boiling gravy on pieces of bread or *matzah* is forbidden. One should first pour the gravy into a dish, let it cool off until it is fit to eat, and then put the bread or the *matzah* in it

Can't pour it over, but you can put it in it.

...but as long as the gravy is hot, even if it is already in the dish, it is forbidden to put either bread or *matzah* in it... It is likewise forbidden to put salt or spices into the gravy, even if it is already in the dish...

*Think of that! All of these laws have to do with **making themselves** righteous.*

Numbers 15:37: "And the LORD spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel and command them that they make fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribbon of blue. And it shall be to you for a fringe that you may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and so that you do not seek after your own heart and your own eyes which you yourself wantonly go after, that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be Holy to your God'" (vs 37-40).

This is where they get the garments. Where does God want the commandments with us today? On a blue ribbon? **Or** in our hearts and minds? Here's what they say concerning this.

Therefore, every Jew must take care to wear a *tallit katan*, a small fringed garment, all day. This must be made of white lambs-wool measuring about three-fourths of a cubit in length and half a cubit in width (13-1/2 inches by 9). Other authorities hold that the measure ought to be 18 x 18 inches, but those who sew together the sides of the *tallit katan* should take care to leave the greater part of both sides open. It is not permissible to join the open parts by means of hooks. Every man must provide himself with a large fringe *tallit* with which to enfold himself when praying. He should take care that the *tallit* is handsome.

For every religious deed must be performed in the grandest manner as it is written, "This is my God. I will glorify Him." As explained to me, show yourself glorious before Him when performing His commandments. One must also be careful to buy the fringes from a trustworthy person and be certain that they are spun entwined for the specific purpose in accordance with the provisions of the law and that they are to be of the prescribed length.

Hundreds, thousands of laws. *Thousands!* These are *works of law*. They think that in doing this, they are righteous before God, or that is they are justified before God. God wants a conversion, a change of heart and mind with His Spirit, not the physical things like this.

Even though God originally commanded it, look where they have taken it. Look what they have done with all of these things. You need this book, *Judaism: A Revelation of Moses or a Religion of Men?* You need to read it. That's why we have it. We have these books to help us understand the Truth of God and the Word of God. That's the important thing.

Let's see how it was with the confrontation with the Jews and Judaism that was the main problem within the New Testament church. Too many people have put that into the context of Protestant vs Catholic. There may be some similarities, but that's not the problem that we find in the New Testament.

After they had healed the man at the Gate Beautiful and they were arrested, brought before the Sanhedrin, the priests and the Sanhedrin said, '*You're not to speak in that name anymore.*'

We are going to see the same thing applied in the New Testament that God told the children of Israel in the Old Testament, to the writings of the Word of God and the writings of the New Testament itself.

Here they were, Peter and John standing before the Sanhedrin; Acts 4:19:

"But Peter and John answered *and* said to them, 'Whether it is right before God to listen to you rather than to God, you judge.'

That's quite a statement and we need to keep that in mind when we get to Galatians.

Verse 20: "'For we cannot but speak what we have seen and heard.' And after further threatening them, they let them go..." (vs 20-21).

They were hauled in again, brought before the Sanhedrin, Acts 5:27:

"And they brought them in *and* set *them* before the Sanhedrin. And the high priest asked them."

The high priest was the final authority among the Jewish community. He was probably of the lineage of Aaron or Levi. Everyone was to obey what the high priest said. This tells us that the high priesthood on earth has no authority today. It is our High Priest in heaven above: Jesus Christ. We are not to follow the teachings of men, but the teachings of God and the teachings of the apostles, especially for us today, since we have the whole Bible.

Verse 28: "Saying, 'Did we not order you by a *direct* command not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, with *the* purpose of bringing this man's blood upon us.'"

Notice what Peter and the apostles said. This becomes very important as we'll see in just a little bit.

Verse 29: "But Peter and the apostles answered *and* said, 'We are obligated to obey God rather than men'"

—and *their* traditions.

How are we to worship God today? *In Spirit and in Truth*, with the laws of God written in our hearts and in our minds. That takes place through prayer, study, living and so forth.

Peter continues,

v 30: "'The God of our fathers raised up Jesus Whom you killed *by* hanging *Him* on a tree. Him has God exalted by His right hand *to be* a Prince and Savior, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. And we are His witnesses of these things, as is also the Holy Spirit, which God had given to those who obey Him'" (vs 30-32).

Notice their response and this has been the response carried down to this day. It is also the same response today of Islam:

Verse 33: "Now when they heard *this*, they were cut *to the heart* and took counsel to put them to death."

Then Gamaliel stood up and saved them from that, so they beat them again and let them go.

Peter had a dream, all unclean animals and everything were let down in a sheet three times. Then God told Peter to go with the three men that He sent from Cornelius. Cornelius was a Roman centurion, uncircumcised—very important. We'll talk about circumcision here in just a minute and see what Paul said about that.

This is not to cleanse unclean meats. This is to show Peter that he was not to call any man common or unclean. Cornelius had a large home, a lot of servants, a lot of people, soldiers.

Acts 10:25: "And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him *and* fell at *his* feet, worshiping *him*....

[he didn't say, 'oh, mighty pope, welcome']

...But Peter raised him up, saying, 'Stand up, for I myself am also a man.' And as he was talking with him, he went in and found many gathered together. And he said to them, 'You know that it is unlawful for a man who is a Jew to associate with or come near to anyone of another race....' (vs 25-28).

That was a law of Judaism, not a Law of God. What did God say concerning the stranger? *Same law, same treatment as the children of Israel!* This was one of those separation laws that Judaism invented to try and keep Jews from apostatizing into the pagan religions again.

Notice his answer to them:

"...But God has shown me *that* no man should be called common or unclean. For this reason, I also came without objection when I was sent for. I ask, therefore, for what purpose did you send for me?" (vs 28-29).

They wanted to know about Jesus. They wanted to know about God. So, Peter preached to them. Peter tells why he came.

Cornelius said, v 33: "Therefore, I sent for you at once; and you did well to come. So then, we are all present before God to hear all things that have been commanded you by God.' Then Peter opened *his* mouth *and* said, 'Of a truth I perceive that God is not a respecter of persons'" (vs 33-34).

Didn't we read that in Rom. 2:13? 'God is no respecter of persons.'

Verse 35: "But in every nation the one who fears Him and works righteousness is acceptable to Him. The word that He sent to the children of Israel, preaching the Gospel of peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all), you have knowledge of; which declaration came throughout the whole of Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism that John proclaimed *concerning* Jesus, Who *was* from Nazareth: how God anointed Him with *the* Holy Spirit and with power, *and* He went about doing good and healing all who were

oppressed by the devil, because God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all *the things...*" (vs 35-39).

We don't know the complete sermon or message that Peter gave. But he convicted them, talked about the resurrection, commanded to preach. To him all the prophets agreed.

Verse 44 was special. God did this to show that the Gentiles would receive the Holy Spirit the same way that the apostles did through repentance, baptism and laying on of hands. This was important because the Jews look upon—and in many cases today—all other people as inferior to them. That's an important thing to grasp.

Notice what happened, because Peter would never have done this, baptized them for the Holy Spirit unless God did this first. This is not to say that today people don't need to be baptized. No, that was not the lesson. The lesson here was very clear, for Peter, that God gave His Holy Spirit to them though they were Gentiles and though they were uncircumcised.

All Gentile proselytes coming to the synagogue had to be circumcised. Then they were allowed to come in the section of the synagogue where the proselytes sat, and that was a common. That's a common man. Unclean is uncircumcised. Common is circumcised and a proselyte. They also had common and unclean foods of things that were not clean or unclean in designation concerning meats. But that's another story.

Verse 44: "While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came upon all those who were listening to the message. And the believers from the circumcision were astonished, as many as had come with Peter..."

There had to be witnesses.

They were astonished that God would do this, because they had been previously, through Judaism commanded to not even keep company with Gentiles. So, now God was changing everything that the Jews had taught through Judaism. It was no longer acceptable. This becomes very important.

Verse 45: "And the believers from the circumcision were astonished, as many as had come with Peter, that upon the Gentiles also the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out; for they heard them speak in *other* languages and magnify God...." (vs 45-46).

Probably spoke in Aramaic, Greek. These were Italian soldiers from Italy.

"...Then Peter responded *by saying*...

[What could he do? Here the hand of God was performing this]:

...'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have also received the Holy Spirit as we *did*?' And he [Peter] commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they besought him to remain *for* a number of days" (vs 46-48).

Not only did Peter go there, not only did God show that He was going to call the Gentiles by giving the Holy Spirit to them, but Peter stayed there for a number of days, meaning he ate there, slept there, he was in constant companionship with them for all those number of days.

Those who were with Peter went on back to Jerusalem and they told the elders of the church. It was hard for them to believe.

Acts 11:1: "Now, the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God; and when Peter went up to Jerusalem, those of *the* circumcision disputed with him, saying, 'You went in to men who were uncircumcised and did eat with them.' But Peter related *the event* from the beginning and expounded *everything* in order to them, saying, 'I was in *the* city of Joppa praying...'" (vs 4-5).

The men came, and so forth. He didn't eat anything common or unclean (v 8). The voice from heaven said, 'What God has cleansed, you are not to call common' (v 9).

They came,

v 12: "And the Spirit said to me, 'Go with them, doubting nothing.' And these six brethren also went with me; and we entered into the house of the man, and he related to us how he had seen the angel..." (vs 12-13).

Verse 15: "And when I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came upon them, even as *it* also *came* upon us in *the* beginning. Then I remembered the word of *the* Lord, how He had said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with *the* Holy Spirit.' Therefore, if God also gave them the same gift that *was given* to us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I *to dissent*? Do I have the power to forbid God?'" (vs 15-17).

Remember that.

Sidebar: Remember the power of the popes to preach things contrary to the Word of God and it replaces the Word of God. Their supposed first pope Peter did not do that. You go online to **churchathome.org** and go through the series, *Was Peter Ever in Rome*. You will be astonished he was never there.

Verse 18: "And after hearing these things, they were silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then to the Gentiles also has God indeed granted repentance unto life.'"

Let's shift this ahead a few years and let's come to the book of Galatians. Galatians, in some parts, has some very difficult things to understand. We have a series on Galatians that you can write for: *Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*.

The Galatians were confronted with a paganized Judaism and even those from Jerusalem, when they were at Antioch. Let's see what Paul wrote and how important the book of Galatians is. It was so important that it was included here to ensure that in the Churches of God they would not be Judaized. That's why.

Let's come to Rom. 2 first because we need to talk about circumcision/uncircumcision. Here's what Paul also made very clear. This becomes very important for us to grasp.

Paul is talking to the Jews because in Rome there were Jews and there were Gentiles, both. So, Paul is writing to the Jews:

Romans 2:17: "Behold, you are called a Jew, and you yourself rest in the law, and boast in God."

Yes, they had the law of God and they had their traditional laws as well.

Verse 18: "And know *His* will, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and are persuaded *that* you yourself are a guide of *the* blind, a light for those in darkness, an instructor of *the* foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of the knowledge and of the Truth *contained* in the Law" (vs 18-20).

The form of it, but not all of it, the outline of it. Today we're to worship God in Spirit and in Truth. Today we are to have His laws written in our heart and our mind. Today we are to have the circumcision of the heart, not the circumcision of the flesh.

Verse 21: "You, then, who are teaching another, **do you not teach yourself also?**..."

Very important principle! We can never at any time say that we know everything that there is in the Bible, because it is layered and it is spiritual and there is so much involved in it. We learn, and learn, and learn, and we grow in grace and knowledge. We're to teach ourselves. We're to constantly be learning.

"...You who preach, 'Do not steal,' are you stealing? You who say, 'Do not commit adultery,' are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege? You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the Law?" (vs 21-23).

What was the biggest transgression of the law that they were doing? *The traditions, the works of law!*

Verse 24: "For through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, exactly as it is written. For on the one hand, circumcision profits if you are observing *the* Law...

[listen]

...on the other hand, if you are a transgressor of *the* Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision....

[what strong words to the Jews]

...Therefore, if the uncircumcised...

[Gentiles]

...is keeping the requirements of the Law...

[that's a good thing, the law of God]

...shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision? And shall not the uncircumcised, who by nature is fulfilling the Law, judge you, who, with *the* letter and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of *the* Law? (vs 24-27).

Those are powerful words. The things that are from the Old Covenant and from Judaism that have to do with those things, God has raised to a higher standard. Circumcision now is of the heart and of the mind. Our attitude, our love toward God. Law-keeping is putting it in our heart and our mind and we live by it, as Jesus said, 'Live by every word of God.'

Verse 28 is an absolutely stunning verse. It's like taking a Jew and hitting them over the head with a mallet. But it is true.

Verse 28: "For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, neither *is* that circumcision which *is* external in *the* flesh; rather, he *is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly, and circumcision *is* of *the* heart, in *the* spirit *and* not in *the* letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God" (vs 28-29).

That's important to remember. Jesus did not say that man shall live by 50% of the laws of God and 50% of the traditions of men, whether it be Judaism, Catholicism, Protestantism or anything else.

Let's see what Paul wrote. He was a high mucky-muck among the Pharisees. He had direct authorization from the high priest to arrest and to bring back to Jerusalem all of those who believed in Christ. You can read that in Acts 9. Then come over to Acts 13 where he goes out with Barnabas and they go out and teach the Gentiles.

Galatians 1:1: "Paul, *an* apostle, not *sent* from men nor *made* by man, but by Jesus Christ and God *the* Father, Who raised Him from *the* dead; and all the brethren who are with me,

to the churches of Galatia: Grace and peace *be* to you from God *the* Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, in order that He might deliver us from the present evil world..." (vs 1-4).

That's why, brethren, we need to ask:

- Do I have one foot in the world and one foot in the Church?
- How am I spiritually?

We have to choose by obeying and loving God!

"...that He might deliver us from the present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father; to Whom *be* the glory into the ages of eternity. Amen" (vs 4-5).

Notice what Paul says in v 6. This is absolutely true in every generation coming down through time—that once people get away from really loving and serving God, and get wrapped up:

- in traditions
- in other things
- change the activities
- water down the Truth
- have short little sermons
- have nice little sayings

Then when trouble comes, just ask: Remember the trouble we've gone through for 20 years. Where are all of those who were once with us? *Some went right straight back into Protestantism!* Same thing here. We are going to see that there were those Jews who were coming and even the Apostle Peter himself got caught up into the practices of Judaism again. He knew better.

Verse 6: "I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ, to a different gospel."

'Let's change this here; let's change this over here. Oh, the Jews have preference, even though God accepts the Gentiles.' A lot of different things going on.

Verse 7: "Which *in reality* is not another *Gospel*; but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ."

Is Sunday-keeping and holiday-keeping a perversion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? *Yes, it is!* Later the Gentiles came doing that. So, it's not just to the Jews alone, but it's those opponents who are religious, who think that they know more than God, to come in and have the audacity to change the Word of God, the understanding of the Scriptures, bring in false doctrines. Remember what happened? *Yes, indeed!*

Notice this warning,

v 8: "But if we...

[Paul and all the brethren, or the apostles]

...or even an angel from heaven...

[where was Lucifer before he rebelled? Cast down to the earth in heaven]

...should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!"

The strongest sense of the word.

Would you say Satan the devil and the demons are accursed? *Yes, indeed!* Same way with the religions of this world. They think they're sweet and nice and lovely and fine, but they are accursed. The curse means you're cut off from God.

Verse 9: "As we have said before, I also now say again. If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!"

Remember where we started—Deut. 12 and 13. God still allowed false prophets to come, to test and see:

- Do we know the Truth?
- Do we believe the Truth?
- Do we love the Truth?
- Do we love God the Father and Jesus Christ?
- Do we love the brethren?
- Are we going to stay in the works of Christ or are we going to do our own?
- What is it that we are going to do?

I call your attention to the message that I gave during the Feast of Tabernacles, *The Lessons of Solomon*. How did Solomon go wrong? He got his mind on himself and diminished the role of God in his life. That's how apostasy takes place.

Verse 10: "Now then, am I striving to please men, or God? Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be a servant of Christ."

Think about that! Every one of us who are elders and ministers and teachers, think about that! That's why Paul told Timothy to *preach the Word*—the Word of God, in season and out of season.

Verse 11: "But I certify to you, brethren, that the Gospel that was preached by me is not according to man; because neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught *it by man*; rather, *it was by the* revelation of Jesus Christ. For you heard of my former conduct when I was in Judaism..." (vs 11-13).

Paul knew Judaism forward and backward, sideways to sideways, and upside down. He knew it and he was coming hard against Christ. Remember when Christ knocked Paul to the ground. Paul said, 'Who is this?' Christ said, 'Jesus, Whom you are persecuting,' because he was persecuting the brethren. If anyone goes against the brethren, you are persecuting Christ. Think of that!

"...how I was excessively persecuting the Church of God and was destroying it; and I was advancing in Judaism *far* beyond many *of my* contemporaries in my *own* nation, being more abundantly zealous for *the* traditions of my fathers" (vs 13-14).

Then he talks about how God called him. Gal. 2 becomes very important. Here he comes back with Barnabas and Titus, came back to meet Peter, James and John at that particular time. They brought Titus, who was a Greek, and was not compelled to be circumcised.

Galatians 2:4: "Now this *meeting* was *private* because of false brethren brought in secretly..."

False brethren, not only false apostles coming, sideling in with different doctrines, practices, suggestions and ideas. This was even more vicious.

"...who came in by stealth to spy out our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus, in order that they might bring us into bondage" (v 4)

—into the laws of Judaism, whatever the practice was. Paul let it be known to Peter, James and John, too.

Verse 5: "To whom we did not yield in subjection, *not* even for one hour, so that the Truth of the Gospel might continue with you. But *the Gospel that I preach did not come* from those reputed to be something. (Whatever they were does not make any difference to me; God does not accept *the* person of a man.) For those who are of repute conferred nothing upon me" (vs 5-6).

Here's the truth of this. ***The Truth of God stands always!*** If we stand for the Truth of God, we are not going to give in to the doctrines and teachings of men.

What do you believe when you are all alone and no one is there to see you or hear you?

- Do you love God?
- Do you desire to keep His commandments?

- Are you growing?
- Are you overcoming?
- What is your life?

Each one of us is going to be judged individually. We're not going to do like Adam and Eve. Eve said the serpent. Adam said the woman. God said, 'All three of you are wrong.' Peter, James and John didn't confer anything on Paul.

Verse 7: "But on the contrary, after seeing that I had been entrusted with the Gospel of the uncircumcision, exactly as Peter *had been entrusted with the Gospel* of the circumcision."

That's why Peter never went to Rome. You go to **churchathome.org** and go through that series that we have here. When you read where he was in 1-Peter, he says, 'The church in Babylon salute you.' Where was Peter? *In Babylon, not in Rome!*

Verse 8: "(For He Who wrought in Peter for *the* apostleship of the circumcision wrought in me also toward the Gentiles)"

That means work actively with the Spirit within to serve.

Verse 9: "And after recognizing the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John..."

[that is James, Peter and John]

...those reputed to be pillars—gave to me and Barnabas *the* right hands of fellowship, *affirming* that we *should go* to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcision. *Their only request was* that we remember the poor, which very thing I was also diligent to do" (vs 9-10).

Here comes the confrontation. Here comes a reasonably difficult section of Scriptures to understand. Remember how we covered that only the sacrifice and shed blood of Jesus Christ can justify us—that is forgive our sins, and put us in right standing with God. Remember what we read.

Verse 11: "But when Peter came to Antioch, I withstood him to *his* face because he was to be condemned..."

[this was public]

...for, before certain *ones* came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles. However, when they came, he drew back and separated himself *from the Gentiles*, being afraid of those of *the* circumcision party" (vs 11-12).

Peter always had a political streak in him. He didn't want to offend James, the brother of Jesus. When they came, which also tells us that back in Jerusalem they were still holding to the circumcision doctrine, much more than they should have been. Here's what they did. He was eating with the Gentiles, just like he did with Cornelius. Peter knew better.

"...However, when they came, he drew back and separated himself *from the Gentiles*, being afraid of those of *the* circumcision party" (v 12).

That's what Paul called it.

Verse 13: "And the rest of *the* Jews joined him in *this* hypocritical act, insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy."

That was quite a thing they were doing. 'Oh, here are these important people from James. We can't let him know that we were eating with these Gentiles.'

So, you see the problems in the New Testament do not have to do with the laws of God, *but with the laws of traditional Judaism*. That's what's important to understand.

We'll go through 'works of law' vs justification by faith in part four.

I hope this is helpful! You go back over these things and learn them and study them for yourself.

Scriptural References:

- Deuteronomy 12:29, 28-32
- Deuteronomy 13:1-4
- Mark 2:27-28
- Mark 7:5-9
- Numbers 15:37-40
- Acts 4:19-21
- Acts 5:27-33
- Acts 10:25-29, 33-39, 44-48
- Acts 11:1-5, 12-13, 15-18
- Romans 2:17-29
- Galatians 1:1-14
- Galatians 2:4-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 9
- Isaiah 40
- Matthew 24
- Exodus 20-23
- Revelation 12:9
- Acts 11:8-9

- Romans 2:13
- Acts 9, 13

Also
Books:

referenced:

- *Judaism: A Revelation of Moses or a Religion of Men?* by Philip Neal
- *The Code of Jewish Law* by Ganzfried and Goldin
- *The Christian Passover* by Fred R. Coulter

From *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*:

- Appendix N: Rome's Challenge to the Protestants
- Appendix A: Fourteen Rules of Bible Study

Sermon Series:

- *Was Peter Ever in Rome?* (churchathome.org)
- *Epistle of Paul to the Galatians*

Sermon: *The Lessons of Solomon*

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