

Lesson: The Doctrines of Men (PHARISICIDICAL CHRISTIANITY)

How Yahshua Identified False Religious Traditions

Theme: Elohim has always required His people to obey **His commandments**, not the traditions of men. Yahshua's strongest rebukes were not directed at open sinners, but at religious leaders who substituted human doctrines for Elohim's Word.

Introduction

Many people believe Yahshua's greatest conflict with the Pharisees was over the Sabbath or the Law of Moses.

It was not.

Yahshua kept the Law (Matthew 5:17–19). His conflict was over **human traditions** that replaced or nullified Elohim's commandments.

Every generation of believers must ask:

- Are we following Elohim's commandments?
 - Or have we inherited traditions that Elohim never commanded?
-

I. The Greatest Warning Yahshua Gave

Mark 7:6–9 (KJV)

6 "He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

7 "**Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**"

8 "For laying aside the commandment of Elohim, ye hold the tradition of men..."

9 "...**Full well ye reject the commandment of Elohim, that ye may keep your own tradition.**"

Notice what Yahshua condemned:

- commandments of men
 - traditions of men
 - rejecting Elohim's commandments
 - vain worship
-

According to the Bible, **vain worship** is worship that is empty, worthless, and unacceptable to Elohim because it is not offered according to His truth and commandments. The Scriptures identify several causes.

Teaching the commandments of men instead of Elohim's commandments

This is the primary reason Yahshua gave.

Matthew 15:7-9 (KJV)

"Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,
This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

Yahshua was quoting Isaiah and applying it to the Pharisees because they elevated their traditions above Elohim's commandments.

The parallel account states:

Mark 7:6-9 (KJV)

"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

For laying aside the commandment of Elohim, ye hold the tradition of men...

...

Full well ye reject the commandment of Elohim, that ye may keep your own tradition."

Cause: Replacing Elohim's commandments with human traditions.

The heart is far from Elohim

External worship without inward obedience is vain.

Matthew 15:8 (KJV)

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but **their heart is far from me.**"

Elohim desires both outward obedience and an obedient heart.

Rejecting Elohim's commandments

Yahshua said the Pharisees actually rejected Elohim's commandments in order to preserve tradition.

Mark 7:9 (KJV)

"Full well ye reject the commandment of Elohim, that ye may keep your own tradition."

Whenever man's authority replaces Elohim's authority, worship becomes vain.

Honoring Elohim with words while living in disobedience

Elohim repeatedly rejected worship from people who continued in sin.

Isaiah 1:13-17 (KJV)

"Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me...

your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth...

Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

Learn to do well..."

Their sacrifices were commanded by Elohim, but because they lived in rebellion, their worship became unacceptable.

Continuing in willful sin

Elohim does not accept worship from those who refuse to repent.

Proverbs 28:9 (KJV)

"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."

Prayer itself can become an abomination when someone deliberately refuses Elohim's law.

Serving Elohim while practicing hypocrisy

Isaiah 29:13 (KJV)

"Wherefore the YAH said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, **but have removed their heart far from me**, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:"

Again, human religious instruction replacing Elohim's instruction produces vain worship.

Offering sacrifices while refusing obedience

Elohim has always preferred obedience over ritual.

1 Samuel 15:22-23 (KJV)

"And Samuel said, Hath the YAH as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the YAH? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice**, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry..."

King Saul continued religious acts while disobeying Elohim's command.

Claiming to know Elohim while denying Him by works

Titus 1:16 (KJV)

"They profess that they know Elohim; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

Profession without obedience is rejected.

Summary: Biblical Causes of Vain Worship

According to Scripture, worship becomes vain when people:

- Teach the commandments and traditions of men as doctrine (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7).
- Reject or lay aside Elohim's commandments to keep human traditions (Mark 7:8-9).
- Honor Elohim with their lips while their hearts are far from Him (Matthew 15:8).
- Continue in sin without repentance (Isaiah 1:13-17).
- Refuse to hear and obey Elohim's law (Proverbs 28:9).
- Practice hypocrisy (Isaiah 29:13).
- Offer religious acts instead of obedience (1 Samuel 15:22-23).
- Profess to know Elohim but deny Him by their works (Titus 1:16).

Taken together, the consistent biblical pattern is that **vain worship is not merely worship offered with wrong motives, but worship that substitutes human authority for Elohim's commandments and is accompanied by disobedience.** Yahshua's clearest definition is found in Matthew 15 and Mark 7: **"In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."**

II. The Final Result

Mark 7:13 (KJV)

"Making the word of Elohim of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered..."

This is perhaps the greatest warning in Scripture concerning religious tradition.

A tradition becomes dangerous when it makes Elohim's Word ineffective.

III. Isaiah Prophesied This

Isaiah 29:13 (KJV)

"Wherefore the YAH said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth... but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:"

Yahshua quoted Isaiah because nothing had changed.

IV. The Biblical Test for Every Doctrine

Every doctrine should be examined by these questions:

1. Is it actually taught in Scripture?

Acts 17:11 (KJV)

"...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and **sought the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.**"

2. Does it contradict or replace one of Elohim's commandments?

Matthew 15:3 (KJV)

"But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of Elohim by your tradition?"

3. Is it imposed as Elohim's requirement when Elohim never commanded it?

Colossians 2:22 (KJV)

"Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"

4. Does it make Elohim's Word ineffective?

Mark 7:13 (KJV)

"Making the word of Elohim of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."

V. Examples of Traditions That Should Be Tested

The following teachings have often been discussed by Christians because they are not stated as explicit biblical commands. Each should be tested by Scripture rather than accepted merely because of church tradition.

Holy Days

- Sunday replacing the seventh-day Sabbath.
 - Christmas as a commanded holy day.
 - Easter replacing the biblical Passover.
-

Religious Offices

- Universal papal supremacy.
 - Mandatory celibacy for ministers.
 - Religious titles that conflict with Christ's teaching in Matthew 23.
-

Religious Practices

- Praying to departed saints.
 - Purgatory.
 - Indulgences.
-

Every one of these should be examined according to Scripture, not according to tradition.

Teachings requiring more careful distinction

Some teachings are **not stated in a single verse**, but their proponents argue they are **derived by synthesizing multiple biblical passages**. Whether one accepts those conclusions is a matter of theological interpretation rather than simply identifying them as traditions.

Examples include:

- The doctrine of the Trinity.
- Eternal security ("once saved, always saved").

- Infant baptism.
- The timing of the rapture.

People disagree over these because they argue from collections of Scriptures rather than from a single explicit command.

VI. Yahshua Never Condemned Elohim's Law

Yahshua never said:

"The Law is the problem."

Instead He said:

Matthew 23:23 (KJV)

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

Notice:

He did not abolish the Law.

He condemned selective obedience.

VII. Why Yahshua Called Them Hypocrites

The word **hypocrite** originally referred to an actor wearing a mask.

Yahshua used it because the Pharisees appeared righteous while living differently.

Matthew 23:2-3 (KJV)

“Mt 23:2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

Mt 23:3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.”

Matthew 23:27–28 (KJV)

27 "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres..."

28 "...outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."

VIII. The Pharisaical Pattern

Whenever religious leaders:

- replace Elohim's commandments,
- elevate church tradition,
- teach commandments of men,
- bind consciences where Elohim has not spoken,
- or excuse disobedience through religious tradition,

they repeat the same pattern Yahshua condemned.

The issue is not the name of the religious group.

The issue is whether Elohim's Word has been replaced by human authority.

IX. Elohim's Standard Never Changes

Isaiah 8:20 (KJV)

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (KJV)

16 "All scripture is given by inspiration of Elohim, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

17 "That the man of Elohim may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Scripture—not tradition—is the standard for doctrine.

X. The Responsibility of Pastors

A pastor is commanded to guard the flock by teaching sound doctrine and exposing error.

Titus 1:9 (KJV)

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, **that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.**"

Acts 20:28–30 (KJV)

28 "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock... to feed the church of Elohim..."

29 "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock."

30 "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

The pastor's responsibility is not merely to comfort the flock, but to **protect it** by comparing every teaching with the Scriptures.

Conclusion

Yahshua did not condemn tradition simply because it was tradition. He condemned **traditions that replaced, contradicted, or nullified the commandments of Elohim**. The believer is therefore called to test every doctrine by the Word of Elohim.

The biblical standard is simple:

- **Is it taught in Scripture?**
- **Does it agree with Elohim's commandments?**

- Does it add requirements Elohim never gave?
- Does it make the Word of Elohim of none effect?

If a teaching fails these tests, Yahshua' warning in Mark 7 applies:

"In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark 7:7)

For those entrusted with shepherding Elohim's people, the calling is to "hold fast the faithful word" (Titus 1:9), teaching what Elohim has spoken and refusing to place human tradition above the authority of Scripture.

PHARISICIDICAL CHRISTIANITY (REQUIRING THINGS THAT ELOHIM DOES NOT REQUIRE)

Throughout history, many teachings have been accepted by various churches that are **not explicitly taught in the Bible**. Whether a particular doctrine is biblical often depends on how different traditions interpret Scripture. Below are examples of doctrines or practices that many churches teach but **are not stated explicitly in the Bible**, along with the relevant biblical considerations.

1. Sunday Replacing the Seventh-Day Sabbath

The Bible never says:

"The first day of the week is now the Sabbath."

Instead, the Fourth Commandment says:

Exodus 20:8–11 (KJV)

8 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

10 "But the seventh day is the sabbath of the YAH thy Elohim..."

2. Christmas as Christ's Birth Celebration

The Bible never commands believers to celebrate Yahshua' birth or gives a date for it.

3. Easter Replacing Passover

The New Testament never commands replacing the Passover with Easter.

Yahshua instituted the memorial during the Passover.

Luke 22:15 (KJV)

"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer."

4. The Immortality of the Soul

Many churches teach that every person has an inherently immortal soul.

Yet Scripture repeatedly says:

Ezekiel 18:4 (KJV)

"...the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

1 Timothy 6:16 (KJV)

"Who only hath immortality..."

5. Going Immediately to Heaven at Death

Many churches teach believers go directly to heaven when they die.

Yet Scripture consistently points to the resurrection.

John 5:28–29 (KJV)

"...all that are in the graves shall hear his voice."

1 Corinthians 15:51–52 (KJV)

"...the dead shall be raised incorruptible..."

6. The Secret Rapture

The phrase "secret rapture" never appears in Scripture.

The return of Christ is described as public.

Matthew 24:30 (KJV)

"...all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming..."

7. Purgatory

The Bible never mentions purgatory.

8. Indulgences

The sale or granting of indulgences is not taught in Scripture.

9. Praying to Saints

Scripture teaches prayer to Elohim.

Matthew 6:9 (KJV)

"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven..."

10. The Pope as Universal Head of the Church

The New Testament identifies Christ as the head.

Colossians 1:18 (KJV)

"And he is the head of the body, the church..."

11. Infant Baptism

The New Testament consistently associates baptism with faith and repentance.

Acts 2:38 (KJV)

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you..."

The Bible does not explicitly record an infant being baptized.

12. Once Saved, Always Saved

Many churches teach a believer can never fall away.

Yet Scripture contains warnings.

Hebrews 10:26–29 (KJV)

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth..."

Revelation 3:5 (KJV)

"...I will not blot out his name out of the book of life..."

13. Abolishing Elohim's Law

Many teach the Law has been abolished.

Paul wrote:

Romans 3:31 (KJV)

"Do we then make void the law through faith? **Elohim forbid: yea, we establish the law.**"

14. The Trinity (as a Formulated Creed)

The word "**Trinity**" does not appear in the Bible, nor does Scripture present a formal doctrinal definition such as those adopted by later church councils. Christians who affirm the Trinity argue that the doctrine summarizes biblical teaching, while others disagree with that conclusion.

15. Clergy–Laity Distinction

The New Testament teaches:

1 Peter 2:9 (KJV)

"But ye are a chosen generation, **a royal priesthood...**"

All believers are described as a priesthood.

16. Titles Such as "Reverend Father"

Yahshua taught:

Matthew 23:8–10 (KJV)

8 "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."

9 "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven."

10 "Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ."

17. Worship Through Tradition Instead of Scripture

Yahshua warned:

Mark 7:7–9 (KJV)

7 "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

8 "For laying aside the commandment of Elohim, ye hold the tradition of men..."

9 "...ye reject the commandment of Elohim, that ye may keep your own tradition."

The Biblical Standard

The Bible repeatedly instructs believers to test teachings by Elohim's Word.

Isaiah 8:20 (KJV)

"To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

Acts 17:11 (KJV)

"These were more noble... in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."

1 Thessalonians 5:21 (KJV)

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

A Careful Distinction

It's important to distinguish between:

- **A doctrine not explicitly stated in Scripture, and**
- **A doctrine that a church believes is derived from multiple passages of Scripture.**

Christians disagree on some doctrines because they interpret the biblical evidence differently. The consistent biblical principle is that every teaching should be examined against the Scriptures rather than accepted solely because it is ancient, popular, or part of a religious tradition.