



Is Tradition An Adequate Standard For Religious Practices? (3)

(Editor's note: This article is continued from two weeks ago. This is the final article in the series answering the question in the title.)

One of the arguments that is used to defend church tradition as a source of religious authority is that the Bible speaks regarding traditions that the apostles held. It is pointed out that in 2 Thessalonians 3:6 Paul demands that Christians walk in submission to the traditions that they received from the apostles. Moreover, others point out that the language used in 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 and 1 Corinthians 11:23 (particularly in the words "received" and "delivered") that Paul was passing along traditions that ought to be respected. Those who argue for such then state something to the effect that if there were apostolic traditions recorded in the New Testament that must be observed, then there were also apostolic traditions handed down orally that must also be observed as well. Does the Bible teach that there are some good traditions and that we must observe such in our lives?

First, there is no doubt that the apostles expected first century (and beyond) believers to accept their words as gospel truth. Acts 2:42 states, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellow-

ship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." We have an obligation today to continue in the apostles' doctrine as well. But notice this: the obligation is to continue in the APOSTLES' doctrine, not what someone else SAYS to be the apostles' doctrine. The only way to KNOW what the apostles' doctrine was, is to go back to the things that the apostles themselves said and wrote. This entails acknowledging the source documents as authorita-



tive, but not necessarily secondary sources.

Second, we must remember that during the first century, men and women were directly inspired by the Holy Spirit to speak the gospel message. Jesus said to the apostles in John 16:13 "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." Much of the inspired teaching that occurred in New Testament times was oral in nature.

Jesus taught the apostles orally. The apostles, in turn, taught the first Christians orally. It wasn't very long, however, before the inspired began to write down their Holy Spirit given messages to be preserved for all Christians everywhere. However, the quality of being inspired isn't the same as receiving and delivering tradition. Inspiration can't be wrong; one's uninspired reception and delivery of tradition CAN be wrong. Herein lies the difference. Yes, individuals were expected to obey apostles and any other individuals who could PROVE they were inspired of God. But once inspiration ceased, the obligation to accept tradition as authoritative ceased as well.

Third, there is no evidence to suggest that the apostles wanted men to believe a succession of church leaders over the inspired words that they spake and wrote. In fact, Paul made it clear that he expected no one to believe anything less than what he himself directly received from the Lord. In Galatians 1:11,12 he wrote, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." We can understand Paul to say here that the message he taught

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Is Tradition an Adequate Standard...(cont.)?



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was given to him directly by God and that he held no expectation for anyone to believe anything less than that. His teaching and preaching wasn't "after man" nor did he "receive it of man" nor was he "taught it" by man. The meaning is clear; Christians have no obligation to respect such teaching when it does not contain authority that is directly from God Himself.

“Christians have no obligation to respect teachings that do not contain authority that is directly from God himself”

Finally, we can be confident that in these documents they recorded everything that they taught orally. Paul told Timothy that everything that he needed to know to be a faithful man of God was found in the scriptures (2 Timothy 3:15,16). Peter said that everything that the Christian needed for life and godliness they had through the knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:3). We know that Jesus promised that His words would never pass away (Matthew 24:35). When we couple these facts with the truth that

God always keep his promises (Hebrews 6:17,18), we have irrefutable evidence that the scriptures are all that we need in order to live the kind of lives that God wants us to live today.

Yes there was authoritative tradition in the first century, but the authority in that "tradition" ended with the apostles and inspired teachers of the first century. That authority was not handed down to uninspired successors who then were able to preach and teach their own traditions and etc. until the present day. The only obligation we have as Christians is to obey what the apostles and inspired teachers preached and taught and that obligation comes not from the fact that they were apostles and teachers, but from the fact that it was the Holy Spirit Himself who was giving them the teaching! Let us acknowledge the Holy Spirit's authority to teach and deny it to all man made traditions whether they come from the past

or present or whether they will be invented within the future. Catholic tradition holds no inherent authority in and of itself. Only the scriptures can supply us with everything for life and godliness.

Kevin Cauley

No Choice Is A Choice We May Not Like

Jesus and Satan were arguing over a group of people one day to see who belonged to whom. Jesus said, "Everyone who belongs to me step to the front of the fence." Satan said, "Ok, everyone that belongs to me step behind the fence." The two groups went their way except for one man who refused to choose sides and stubbornly sat on the fence. A few moments later, Satan returned and said, "Oh, there you are; come with me." "But," protested the man, "I didn't choose a side. I sat on the fence." "That's OK," said Satan, "I own the fence."

Bible Studies for the week of May 29th, 2005



- AM Sermon..... Things That Unite—One God and Father
- Scripture Reading..... Ephesians 4:1-6
- PM Sermon..... Motives for Personal Evangelism
- Scripture Reading..... Mark 5:15-20
- Sunday Class The Book of Hebrews
- Wednesday Class..... The Book of Job

Kevin's Korner—Comfort for Aching Hearts

Over the past several months I've been keeping up with a friend who recently had a child born with a hole in his heart. They have been in my prayers often. During the course of the care of this child, this young man, who is a part time preacher, lost his job. And this past Friday morning, his infant son lost his battle with his physical health and passed to the next life. I'm not sure why this particular case has so affected me. Perhaps it is because I have an infant son myself and couldn't bear to think what would happen if anything went wrong with his health. Perhaps it is simply because I am a parent and know the worry and concern that a parent goes through when caring for a sick child. Or perhaps it is simply because I am human and sympathize with those who lose loved one's in an untimely fashion.

It is always sad to hear

of children suffering and finally dying when such children are innocent of anything that would merit death. There is, however, great hope for these babies because we know that they are innocent, pure, and spotless. Their spirits haven't been marred by the sorrows of sin and upon their death, we can rejoice that God will eternally love them in heaven.

And such is the comfort for all hearts that are aching at the loss of loved ones who have gone to their eternal reward. A few weeks ago brother Curtis Hull passed from this life to the next. There was a spirit that was mighty in the word of God and who stood unabashedly for the truth of the gospel. I have no problem in stating my belief that brother Curtis is at home with the Lord awaiting the resurrection in paradise with all of the faithful who have gone before. I can say this because I know that God is

a God of love and mercy and doesn't desire the death of even the wicked, much less of those who have served him faithfully for many years.

And there will yet be more who will be passing into eternity in just a few short years. These too will bring aches to our hearts for our own personal loss, but should they endure to the end and be found faithful to God, the comfort that we will know through understanding that they are TRULY in a place of comfort, will motivate us to be faithful to God as well so that we can be reunited with them one day.

God truly comforts the aching heart. He is a sun and shield to them that walk uprightly (Psalm 84:11).

Please say a prayer for the Lukenbill family and the Hull family and for all who are grieving over lost loved ones and waiting for their reunions.



“And there will yet be more who will be passing into eternity in just a few short years.”

Records for the week of May 22nd, 2005

Sunday Bible Class	68
Sunday AM Worship.....	95
Sunday PM Worship.....	57
Wednesday Night Study.....	62
Contribution.....	\$1755.34
Budget.....	\$1662.00



Praises, Prayers, and Proclamations

Announcements

- We are thankful to God for this new Lord's Day. It is the day we honor His Son and the Love that He has shown us through Him. Let us worship in spirit and in truth!
- Please remember the following in your prayers: Kayla Guess, Hughetta Hand, Raymond Kimes, Geneva Smith, John Stuckey.
- Don't forget our shut-ins: Opal Hull and Edith Mischler.
- Our regular elders and deacons meeting is tonight after evening services.
- Today is our quarterly singing at the nursing home. We will begin at 2:00 this afternoon. Let's all go and demonstrate our love for our seniors.
- Let's not forget that tomorrow at the Windle's house at noon there will be a going away party for the Stevens. Let's all attend and wish them well in their transition. Please bring chips, drinks, desserts, etc.
- The marriage of Megan Williams and Matt Bassing is scheduled for June 4th at the Berryville Community Center at 2:00. There are no reports of cold feet yet! All are invited.
- Our weekly Bible study at the nursing home will continue this Thursday at 2:00 PM with Mark 6.
- Our pantry item is: Laundry Detergent.



Welcome!

Visit our web site: <http://www.the-churchofchrist.com>

Family Times for Worship and Study

Sunday Morning Bible Class:	9:30 AM
Sunday Morning Worship:	10:30 AM
Sunday Evening Worship:	6:00 PM
Ladies Bible Class:	10:30 AM
Wed. Evening Bible Class:	7:00 PM

Serving Each Other

	May 29th, 2005	June 5th, 2005
Sunday Morning		
Songs:	Bruce Foster	Bill Fort
Preaching:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Bob Phillips	Ken Smith
Scripture Reading:	Ray Duncan	John Gass
Lord's Table	Brent Stevens	Barrett Brown
	Dan Hand	Rusty Windle
(assist)	Jack Gentry	Jack Gentry
	Brandon Foster	George Eddings
Closing Prayer	Bruce Foster	Michael Morrell
Sunday Evening		
Songs:	Glenn Williams	Clay Bozarth
Preaching:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Bruce Foster	Glenn Williams
Scripture Reading:	Brandon Foster	Bruce Foster
Lord's Table	Dale Pinkley	Brandon Foster
	Michael Morrell	Dale Pinkley
Closing Prayer	George Eddings	Bob Phillips
Wednesday		
Songs:	Rusty Windle	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	John Gass	Glenn Williams
Invitation:	Kevin Cauley	Ken Smith
Closing Prayer:	Dale Pinkley	Leon Duncan

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