

## Customs & Traditions Pt 1 Old Testament customs and traditions

This is a new topic: customs and traditions. In this study we will cover three points: (I) There were customs according to the law in Israel, (ii) Israel were commanded to keep the ordinances (customs) that God gave them, and (iii) there were customs outside of the law that were not evil. There are 26 occurrences of the word custom, and 13 occurrences of the word tradition- all in the NT.

A little more detail on our three points-

### 1. There were customs according to the law in Israel:

“For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us” (Acts 6:14)

Jesus was brought in to the temple to do for him after the custom of the law

“And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law” (Lk.2: 27).

### 2. Israel were commanded to keep the ordinances that God gave

“Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not [any one] of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein...” (Lev.18: 30).

### 3. There were customs outside of the law that were not evil:

The Jews had a custom on the passover - that they release one malefactor

“But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?” (Jn 18:39).

#### Illustration

“The Talmud (Hebrew for “study”) is one of the central works of the Jewish people. It is the record of rabbinic teachings that spans a period of about six hundred years, beginning in the first century C.E. and continuing through the sixth and seventh centuries C.E. The rabbinic teachings of the Talmud explain in great detail how the commandments of the Torah are to be carried out... The Talmud is made up of two separate works: the Mishnah, primarily a compilation of Jewish laws, written in Hebrew and edited sometimes around 200 C.E. in Israel; and the Gemara, the rabbinic commentaries and discussions on the Mishnah, written in Hebrew and Aramaic, which emanated from Israel and Babylonia over the next three hundred years.?”

#### Question

What did the prophets of God do when the children of Israel exhibited customs and traditions that were contrary to the scriptures?

#### Answer from the scriptures

- i) Jeremiah warned Israel that their customs were vain - cutting down a tree and decking it with gold
- [3] For the customs of the people are vain: for one]cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe.
- [4] They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not. (Jer.10:3, 4).

Jesus challenged the Pharisees: why do you transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

- [1] Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,
- [2] Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.
- [3] But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? (Matt.15: 1 & 3)

They make the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition- Matt.15:6- “And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition...” Mk7: 3-13- they made “the word of God of none effect through their tradition”.

Given our countries fascination with “culture” let us not make the word of God of none effect by our culture, our traditions handed down, nor our customs, Amen!