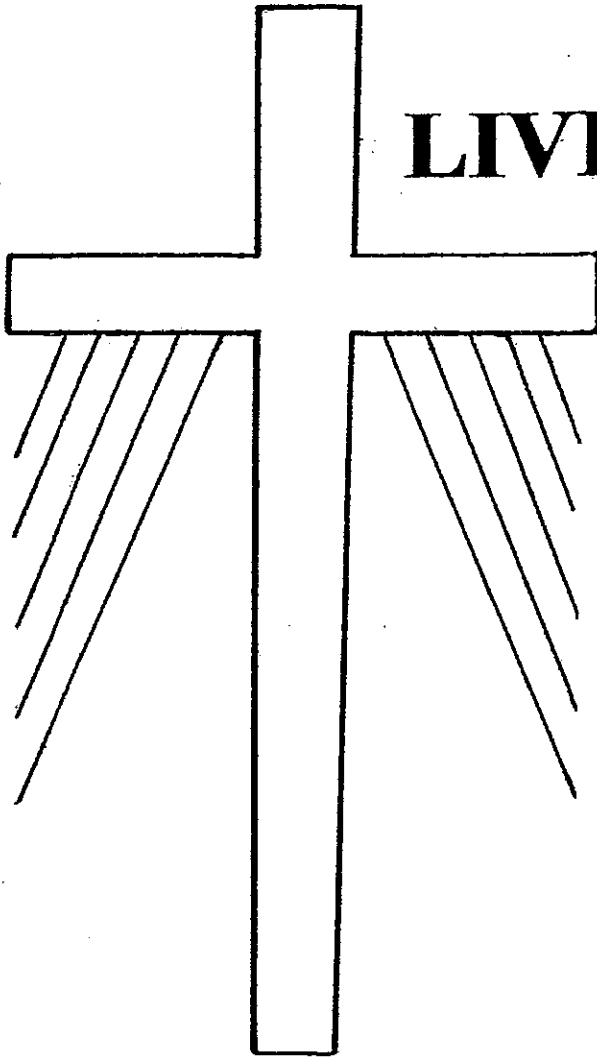


LIVING TRUTHS:



7 BASIC BIBLE DOCTRINES

BY: WILLIAM G. ARVAN

PREFACE

Living Truths - 7 Basic Bible Doctrines was conceived out of a need for practical “grass-roots” teaching of the Scriptures.

IT IS MEANT TO BE:

A “**tool**” for assisting pastors with limited background and/or formal theological training to improve in their understanding, teaching and preaching of Christian Doctrine.

A “**tool**” for pastors in “**discipling**” new believers, and the “**teaching – training - preparing**” of church workers in an understanding of Christian Doctrine.

A “**tool**” for those engaged in leading adult Bible studies.

A “**tool**” or **supplement** for students in theological training.

(**Note:** For those using this material as a “**teaching tool**” you can easily **divide** the Introduction and each Doctrine into lessons **to fit your specific needs**, i.e., the length of time you desire for **each lesson**, the amount of material **you want to cover in that space of time**, how long a **block of lessons will continue** – 6, 8, 12 weeks, etc.)

IT IS DESIGNED FOR SELF-STUDY:

By “**digging out**” the answers to the questions asked in the various doctrines.

By “**thoroughly**” reading and digesting the truths presented in the various doctrines.

By “**accepting**” the truths you discover, and “**applying**” them in your personal life.

(**Note:** In studying this material it is necessary to read **all Scripture references**.)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I want to express my deep appreciation to READ Ministries (Resources for Evangelism And Discipleship) of Cambridge, MN for their willingness to allow my son, Bill Arvan, a missionary with READ, to coordinate the distribution of my materials in Ukraine, Belarus and other Russian speaking countries.

Acknowledgements for quotations used in this book are noted on a page by page basis.

All Scripture quotations are from the New International Version of the Bible (NIV) unless otherwise indicated.

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LAYOUT and DESIGN

The following information will inform you of the **Page Setup** used for “7 BASIC BIBLE DOCTRINES”.

1. **Page layout** --- Portrait
2. **Paper** --- Width 8 ½ inches; Height 11 inches; Printed on 24 pound paper
3. **Margins** --- Top 0.4 and Bottom 0.4

For **Even numbered pages**
Left 0.9 and Right 0.6

For **Odd numbered pages**
Left 0.6 and Right 0.9

Gutter 0 inches --- Gutter position left

Headers and Footers --- Headers 0.4 inches and Footers 0.4 inches

4. **Printing** --- Pages are laid out for printing them “**back to back**” with black ink **but pages 11-12-13 in the section on Creation**, and the **back cover** (of the whole book) need **colored ink** as well.

Note: if your computer is not able to print pages “**back to back**”, then download this material onto a “flash drive” and have a printing company print it for you off of the “flash drive”.

5. **Binding** --- The **margins** are wide enough to handle any type of binding, i.e., **Combind** fasteners, etc. **Apply the binder** to the **left hand side** of the **odd numbered pages** --- which will be the **right hand side** of the **even numbered pages**.

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE?

Christian Doctrine can be **described** as:

- The **teachings** which comprise the Christian Faith.
- The **systematic examination** of the teachings God has revealed in His Word.
- A **Statement of Faith** or **beliefs** which express the basic teachings of Biblical Christianity.

WHY STUDY CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE?

The Bible predicts that there will be "*Terrible times in the last days*" (II Timothy 3:1). This **prediction** or **prophecy** clearly describes events that are taking place in today's world. Some of these events concern our Christian Faith or Doctrine. After reading **carefully**, **write down in the provided spaces**, those **predictions you discover** in the following scripture references.

I Timothy 4:1-2 _____

II Timothy 4:3-4 _____

II Peter 2:1-3 _____

II Peter 3:16 _____

Jude, 17-19 _____

NOTE: The **satanic attack** on Christian Faith and Doctrine, as described in the above scriptures, will **intensify** as the Second Coming of Jesus Christ draws near.

OUR PURPOSES IN STUDYING CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

How many **purposes** can you discover in the following scriptures **for studying** Christian Doctrine? Read the references **carefully** and **write your answers in the provided spaces**.

Luke 1:1-4 _____

II Timothy 2:2 _____

II Peter 3:17-18 _____

Jude, 3-4 _____

THE BASIS FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

The Traditions or Teachings of The Apostles

Tradition means, "To deliver; To pass down; To pass on."

The **foundation** of our Christian Faith is **based upon** the traditions or teachings of the Apostles.

Their Teachings

--- Originated with Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:11-12);



--- Who passed them down to His Apostles (I Corinthians 11:23);



--- Who in turn passed them on to others (I Corinthians 11:2) first verbally and then in written form (II Thessalonians 2:15).

This is "*The faith that was once for all entrusted (delivered) to the saints.*" Jude, 3

The Traditions or Teachings of Men

There are also traditions or teachings of men.

Their Teachings

--- Originated with their forefathers, not God (Galatians 1:14);



--- Then, were passed down to ordinary men, not Christ's Apostles (I Peter 1:18);



--- Who delivered them to others, both orally and written (Mark 7:13).

As revealed in "The Scriptures and Tradition" on pages 3-6, the traditions of men **deny** the authority of the Word of God. They **contradict** the teachings of the Holy Scriptures by setting aside the commands of God for their traditions (Mark 7:7-9, 13).

Question: When the traditions of men **oppose** the teachings of Christ and the Apostles as written and preserved in the Holy Scriptures, **which do you follow?**

Answer: As Bible Christians, we **do not hold** to non-biblical traditions. Our faith is **based on** the doctrine or teaching passed down to us by **the Apostles** of our Lord Jesus Christ. **What they preached, we believe** (I Corinthians 15:1-11).

THE SCRIPTURES AND TRADITION

William G. Arvan

DID JESUS CONDEMN ALL TRADITIONS? NO! ONLY THOSE TRADITIONS WHICH CONTRADICTED OR DENIED THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD.

THE TRADITION CHRIST CONDEMNS

1. **tradition**, un-capitalized and singular, is **characteristic** of the **process** and **content** of what was handed down by word of mouth.

- One of the Apostles whom Christ chose and spoke to was Paul. Paul states in I Corinthians 11:23, 15:3 and Galatians 1:12 that he first **received** the words of Christ **orally**. The word **receive** is *paralambano*, "to receive from another." This was the **tradition** received from Christ.
- In Mark 7:4, a group of men called Pharisees and Scribes (7:1), whom Christ **had not chosen** to be Apostles, also had received certain tradition by word of mouth. The word translated **received** is *paralambano*, "to receive from another." This tradition was received, **not from Christ**, but from **the elders** of the Jewish religion (7:3).

2. **traditions**, un-capitalized and plural is **characteristic** of the **distinctive teachings** (doctrines) of individuals, congregations, denominations, or wider associations.

- Paul declares that what he had received **orally** from Christ, he also passed on **by word of mouth** to others. Paul **delivered** (*paradidomi* - "to hand over") to the Corinthians (orally during his second missionary journey) that which he had **received** (*paralambano*) **from Christ** (I Corinthians 11:23 and 15:3). See also Luke 1:1-4.

Paul then admonishes in I Corinthians 11:2 and II Thessalonians 2:15 that what was **orally** received and delivered is to be held as **the distinctive traditions** (*paradosis*) of Christ.

In I Corinthians 11:2, the word **ordinances** is *paradosis* - "handed down traditions."

- In Mark 7:13, the Pharisees and Scribes also **handed down** (*paradidomi*) to others what they had **received** (*paralambano*) in 7:4. What they **orally** received and passed on were to be held as the **distinctive traditions** of the Jewish elders (7:3-5) or Jewish fathers as Paul and Peter called them in Galatians 1:14 and I Peter 1:18. They are **traditions** (plural) because of the many items; washing of hands, cups, pitchers and kettles (Mark 7:4).

3. **THE TRADITION**, capitalized, singular and preceded by the definite article is **characteristic** of that which is **held as The Faith**, and consequently **binding upon all**.

- According to Paul, **THE TRADITION** is the **written** Word of God. The Holy Scriptures were **first orally received** (*paralambano*). **Secondly**, they were **orally delivered** (*paradidomi*) - I Corinthians 11:23 and 15:3. **Thirdly**, they were **written**. II Thessalonians 2:15 refers to traditions (*paradosis* - "to hand down") as either **written** or **orally given**. II Thessalonians 3:6-7 speaks of **THE TRADITION** (*paradosis*) which had been received. These verses refer to First Thessalonians 2:13-14 and 4:1-2 which had previously been written to the Thessalonians. Therefore, according to the Apostle Paul, **THE TRADITION** is **the Holy Scriptures**. See also Luke 1:1-4 and Jude, 3.

- In Mark 7:1-13, and the parallel passage in Matthew 15:1-9, tradition is spoken of as THE TRADITION, your Tradition, or the Tradition of men. The word tradition **in all these verses** is *paradosis* - "to hand down, to hand on." What had been handed down became a system of teaching which was **held as a matter of Faith**. THE TRADITION of the Elders, as exposed by Christ in Matthew 15:1-9 and Mark 7:1-13, **held a higher place** with the Pharisees and Scribes than the **Old Testament Scriptures**. It is this TRADITION that Jesus **condemns**: The holding to THE TRADITION (S) (*paradosis* - "handed down") of men **which contradict** THE TRADITION (*paradosis* - "handed down") **as written in the Holy Scriptures**.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE TRADITION OF MEN Matthew 15:1-9 and Mark 7:1-13

THE PHARISEES Matthew 15:1; Mark 7:1

During the New Testament times, the Pharisees (separatists) were the strict **legal party** among the Jews. With the Scribes, they held **rigidly** to the Oral Law as well as to the written Law of Moses called the Torah. In their zeal for the Law of Moses, they almost **deified** it and consequently their attitude towards it became merely external, formal, and mechanical.

THE SCRIBES Matthew 15:1; Mark 7:1

The Scribes, meaning the **copyists, students, teachers, lawyers, and judges** of the Law were originally from among the Old Testament Priests and Levites. They **preserved** the Torah, the **written Law** of Moses, of which it is said there are **613 ordinances** - 248 commandments and 365 forbidden items. The word Torah, meaning "teaching", was applied to denote the first five books of the Bible which were always recognized by Israel as the work of Moses the Law-Giver. It was also **claimed** that there was the **Oral Law** given by Moses that was **equally binding** upon Israel. Through unbroken succession, these oral laws had been passed on until in Jesus' day they were in the care of the Scribes.

THE ORAL LAW Matthew 15:2-3; Mark 7:3-4

The Oral Law, called The Mishnah ("to search out; to investigate), was the **interpretation, amplification & expansion** of the Written Law and endeavored to cover **every phase** of Jewish life. The Oral Law was finally embodied in **the Talmud** and put into writing in about 200 A. D. The Scribes called the Oral Law THE TRADITION of the Elders (Matthew 15:2; Mark 7:3, 5). Jesus called it the **commandments** of men (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7), the **tradition** of men (Mark 7:8), **your own tradition** (Mark 7:9), and **your tradition** (Matthew 15:3, 6; Mark 7:13).

THE OCCASION Matthew 15:1-3; Mark 7:5-8

Jesus had been ministering a little more than two and one-half years. He and His twelve disciples were in Galilee near to Bethsaida when a delegation of Pharisees and Scribes from Jerusalem confronted Jesus with the **Oral Law**. This particular law had to do with the **washing of hands before eating** (Matthew 15:1-2; Mark 7:1-4). The confrontation question was "Why do your disciples eat bread with **unwashed** (defiled) **hands**, and thereby break or transgress THE TRADITION of the (Jewish) Elders" (Matthew 15:2; Mark 7:2-5)? Jesus used this occasion to rebuke the Pharisees and Scribes with a **weightier accusation**, namely, **transgressing** the Written Word of God through THE TRADITIONS of the Oral Law (Matthew 15:3; Mark 7:6-9). Later, Jesus illustrated that it is not what goes into a man's stomach which defiles him (eating with unwashed hands), but what comes out of the heart through the mouth (teaching **as authoritative** those traditions which **contradict** the inspired Word of God).

Matthew 15:10-20; Mark 7:14-23

THE ILLUSTRATION

THE WRITTEN WORD (The Torah)

Matthew 15:4

"For God said (in Exodus 20:12; and Deuteronomy 5:16), 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'"

Mark 7:10

"For Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother, and anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'"

THE ORAL LAW (The Talmud)

Matthew 15:5-6a

"But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' he is not to honor his father with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition."

Mark 7:11-13

"But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down."

THE EXPLANATION

Matthew 15:4; Mark 7:10

The Old Testament commandment in Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16 states that it is the duty of children to honor their parents. The word honor, *kabad* or *kabed* in Hebrew means "to abound with." In this context it means to abound with honor through financial support. In Greek the word is *timao* and means "to prize."

If a child curseth, (*oulal* in Hebrew and *kakologes* in Greek) that is "to trifle or bring this commandment into contempt" through their actions (not to curse with words) they were to be put to death (Exodus 21:17). Contempt means, "the feeling or actions of a person towards something he looks down upon, the condition of being despised."

The child under this Old Testament commandment was to provide for his parents in financial and material ways, especially in their old age. If he "cursed" this commandment by not fulfilling its obligation, he was worthy of death.

Matthew 15:5-6a; Mark 7:11-12

The Pharisees and Scribes taught from the Oral Law that instead of providing for parents the child could say to the parents, that the money by which they might have been helped by him had been declared a gift (*corban*). *Corban* was used to describe that which was dedicated under oath to the purposes of God

The corruptness of this practice is seen in two ways. First, dedication to God meant to give it to the Jewish temple. In this manner, the Scribes profited and therefore encouraged the practice. Second, a person could "corban" or dedicate his property or money to the temple, and yet by arrangement, keep the money or property until he died. In this way he could use the money or property for himself until he died and still say to his parents that that by which they could have been helped was already "corban."

THE CONDEMNATION

Jesus gives **six reasons** why He condemned this particular TRADITION of Men found in the Oral Law.

- It is a **transgression** of God's commandment (Matthew 15:3).
Transgression, *parabaino* in Greek, means "**to go beyond**" - what God has commanded.
- It **lays aside** the commandment of God (Mark 7:8).
Lays aside, *apaiemi* in Greek, means "**to leave; let go of; abandon.**"
- It **rejects** the commandment of God (Mark 7:9).
Reject, *atheteo* in Greek, means "**to set aside**" in the sense of doing away with what has been laid down - hence, a rejection of the commandment of God.
- It makes the commandment of God of **none effect** (Matthew 15:6; Mark 7:13).
None effect, *akuroo* in Greek, means "**to render void; deprive of authority.**"
- It teaches as **doctrine** the commandments of men (Matthew 15:9; Mark 7:7).
Doctrine, *didaskalia* in Greek, means "**that which is actively taught.**" Here in Matthew 15:9 and Mark 7:7 it refers to **actively teaching as authoritative** (binding or necessary) the commandments of men.
- The worship of God through the commandments (tradition) of men is a **vain thing** (Matthew 15:9 and Mark 7:7).
Vain, (Greek - *maten*), means "**to no purpose; void of result; folly.**" Endeavoring to worship God apart from His revealed truth in the Scriptures will have no results. It is simply foolishness.

SUMMARY

In summary, it is The TRADITION of Men as outlined above that Jesus **condemns**. He does so because **it contradicts**, through its inconsistency, discrepancy, and outward denial, **the inspired Word of God**.

Those who teach The TRADITION of Men, as the Pharisees and Scribes did are looked upon by Jesus as **hypocrites**. They honor Christ with **their lips** but **their heart** is far from Him (Matt. 15:7-8; Mark 7:6). Read Matthew 23:1-36 for a **detailed description** of how Jesus felt about the Scribes & Pharisees.

Those who follow The TRADITIONS of Men that, **in effect**, sets aside or rejects the commandments of God, will find that it leads to a worship that is **devoid** of the Holy Spirit and truth. Consequently, **such worship is rejected by God as worthless**.

APPLICATION / CHALLENGE

Jesus said, "*For many **other things** (traditions) there be.*" Mark 7:8, 13

Question: Are you bound, **under penalty of condemnation**, by "**other**" traditional non-scriptural "infallible" Dogmas, Moral Laws, or Teachings of any church or religious body?

If so, Peter and the other Apostles said, "***One must** (ought to) **obey God rather than men.***" Acts 5:29
You must take care lest you, basing **your eternal salvation** on The TRADITIONS of Men rather than on the **unfailing** Word of God, **also be condemned** by Christ.

Those who love God keep His commandments (John 14:15).
God is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

THE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH of AMERICA
STATEMENT of FAITH (Beliefs)

God

1. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

The Bible

2. We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

The Human Condition

3. We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

Jesus Christ

4. We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus - Israel's promised Messiah - was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

The Work of Christ

5. We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

The Holy Spirit

6. We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christlike living and service.

The Church

7. We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

Christian Living

8. We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

Christ's Return

9. We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

Response and Eternal Destiny

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

Note: Although this is the Statement of Faith (Beliefs) of The Evangelical Free Church of America, these statements are held by **Evangelicals** throughout the world **to be true**. The only statement that some debate, is #9, concerning the "premillennial return" of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You will find a discussion of this topic in the seventh doctrine, The Doctrine of Last Things, under the sub-title of **The Millennium**.