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**THE SURE WORD** by Jonnie Hutchison

### **HUMAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS**

The New Testament speaks of two different kinds of religious traditions. Jesus addressed human religious traditions in Mark 7:8 saying to the Pharisees, "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the **tradition of men** — the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." The "traditions of men," which Jesus contrasted with the "commandment of God," did not originate with God nor were they commanded by God. Yet, the Jews in the days of Jesus had originated their own religious traditions and bound them on others as if they were the commands of God. Jesus pointed out that embracing such human religious traditions was actually "laying aside the commandment of God."

Since the days of Jesus religious traditions originated by men have continued to flourish. The holiday known as "Easter" is filled with traditions unknown in scripture. Where does the Bible command us to observe "Palm Sunday, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday or Good Friday? Where does the Bible command us to put ashes on our foreheads the Wednesday before Easter? Did you know that the term "Easter" is not actually found in the Bible text? It is found in the King James translation of the Bible in Acts 12:4, however, the Greek word is *pascha* which is properly translated as "Passover." Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit penned this warning found in Colossians 2:8-9, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to **the tradition of men**, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." Some may consider following human religious traditions of little significance, but the Bible teaches otherwise.

The other form of tradition of which the New Testament speaks is what God has commanded and passed down through the teaching of inspired men and written in the Word of God. 2 Thessalonians 2:15 addresses these traditions in the words, "Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the **traditions which you were taught**, whether by **word** or our **epistle**." What Paul and other inspired men taught and wrote were not originated by them but were given to them by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This is affirmed in the words of Galatians 1:11-12, "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." [Greenplainchurchofchrist.org](http://Greenplainchurchofchrist.org)