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THE3 SURE WORD

By Jonnie Hutchison

DON'T ADD AN APPLE?

Religious beliefs are often passed from one generation to the next without consideration as to whether they are true. For example, there are many folks who have always believed that the Bible teaches that the “fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil” in the book of Genesis was an apple. The text of the Bible does not call it an apple nor is there any reason to believe that it was an apple. Yet, this traditional belief has been passed down to successive generations and many would argue loud and long that Adam and Eve ate an apple. However, there is no scriptural basis for such an argument. It is only human religious tradition.

One might argue that whether the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was an apple is a small matter. After all, it really doesn't change anything – or does it? Would not calling this fruit by something other than God calls it be adding to His Word? Would it not be calling the fruit something other than what God called it? Would such be a failure to respect the silence of God, that is, what God has not said? The fact is that God forbids either adding to His Word or taking from it., “You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.” (Deuteronomy 4:2). This warning is repeated in Revelation 22:18-19. No human being has the right to originate a human religious tradition. If it is not in the Bible, if God hasn't said it, it is not acceptable as religious belief or practice. Peter wrote, “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God....” (1 Peter 4:11). The implication in this statement is that one must not speak where God has not spoken.

In Jesus day, the Jews had added many of their own human religious traditions binding them upon others as if they were from God. Jesus addressed this in Matthew 15. The scribes and Pharisees questioned Jesus as to why His disciples transgressed the “tradition of the elders” in failing to wash their hands before they ate. This obviously was a human tradition for Jesus answered their question by asking them, “...Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?” He further said that they made God's commands of “no effect by your traditions” and such made their worship vain (Matt. 15:3-9).

Dear reader, are you holding to human religious traditions? Is what you believe and practice in your religion really found in the Bible? Are you respecting what God has said as well as what He has not said? Be as the noble Bereans who “searched the scriptures daily whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). Make sure you haven't added an “apple” to God's Word! <http://greenplainchurchofchrist.org>.