

Truth or Tradition? Pt. 2 Col. 2:8; Mt. 15:9

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC, Sunday, Oct. 8th

The Scriptures are full of examples of how Satan has sought to frustrate God's Plan through: Conflict (Acts 8:1); Carelessness (Pr. 24:10-12); and Contamination. (Gal. 5:7-9) By Jesus' time God's laws had been so "contaminated" by traditions that they crucified God's Son. (Mt. 15:6-9) Last Week we learned that every one of the 89 references to Baptism use the word "baptizo" (clearly meaning to immerse) yet most "churches" continue to sprinkle, even unconverted babies.

Last week we examined how the "traditions of men" infiltrated the early church and eventually became "doctrine" to many churches. This developed to such a point that eventually the Roman Catholic Magisterium declaring that: "*sacred scripture and sacred tradition make up the sacred deposit of the Word of God entrusted to the church.*" Most people were ignorant of the differences between scripture and tradition because the "church" refused to allow "laymen" direct access to God's Word! Those churches (and believers) who refused to embrace the changing "sacred traditions" did so at the risk of being labeled "heretical" and persecuted severely. Millions paid the ultimate price for their faith. In the 14th Century, God moved to expose more people to the light of his Truth. (2 Cor. 4:4-6)

1. "Papal" and political pressures.

A. Papal decisions and decrees:

- 1) 1302: Boniface VIII issued Papal bull "Unam sanctam" stating that Membership in (and obedience to) the Catholic Church was "necessary for salvation".
 - a) This bull also asserted that the Pope (as Christ's vicar) was *infallible!*
 - 2) 1309: Pope Clement V moved to Avignon (France) where the next 7 "French Popes" ruled.
 - 3) 1346–1353: Black Plague killed millions in Europe.
 - 4) 1378 to 1417: After 70 years of "French" Popes, there were at least five rival claimants to the title of pope. (Known as the "Western Schism" of the church)
 - 5) The sale of "Indulgences" were often used to raise money for the church.
 - a) Since the Pope declared himself "infallible" and claimed he held the "keys" to the Kingdom, and access to the "Treasury of Merit" people paid to reduce time in Purgatory.
- Note: "Purgatory" became official doctrine at the Council of Lyon in 1245.*

B. Political Pressures

- 1) European Wars broke out between "Catholic" Kings.
 - a) The "pope" would often favor one King (particularly France) over another.
 - b) Church "taxes" were levied to support wars.
- 2) Infiltration of Muslims (Turks) into Europe led to excessive taxes, crusades and fear.

2. "People" pressures God began to turn the lights on in some priests.

A. John Wycliffe 1320-1384

- 1) 1346-1372: Studies Scriptures at Oxford. Challenged some "sacred traditions" of the church.
 - 2) 1382: Wycliffe began to distribute English Scriptures using his followers. (Lollards!)
 - a) People began to recognize the difference between "scripture" and the church's "traditions".
- "To believe in the power of man in the work of regeneration is the great heresy of Rome, and from that error has come the ruin of the Church. Conversion proceeds from the grace of God alone"*

3) England protected Wycliffe.

- a) The French Pope “taxed” English churches to support the French King.
- b) Wycliffe opposed this, angering the “French” Pope and Bishops, but endearing the English.
- c) English Protection allowed him to write, teach and preach until his death. (1384)

4) The “Church” reacts.

- a) **1377: Pope Gregory XI issued five “Papal bulls” condemning the work of John Wycliffe.**

"By this translation, the Scriptures have become vulgar, and they are more available to lay, and even to women who can read, than they were to learned scholars (priests) who have a high intelligence. So the pearl of the gospel is scattered and trodden underfoot by swine."

- b) **1415 Council of Constance declared Wycliffe a heretic; banning & burning his writings and ordered His remains removed from consecrated ground and they too were to be burned!**

These scriptures started a “fire” in the hearts of others. (Ps. 119:130)

B. Jon Huss (1369-1415) emphasized “sacred scriptures” over tradition.

- 1) In 1409, Pope Alexander V “excommunicated” Huss for his preaching.
- 2) The People in Prague loved and supported Him anyway.
- 3) His Successor, John XXIII authorized “indulgences” to raise money for him to fight his “Papal opponents” and Huss preached against this practice.
- 4) King Wenceslaus supported Huss until the Pope put an interdict on Prague (1413).
Huss left Prague to protect the people.
- 5) Nov. 1414 Huss was given the promise of Safe Passage to the Council of Constance.

He was arrested, and eventually burned at the stake On July 6, 1415. His dying prayer:

"Lord Jesus, it is for thee that I patiently endure this cruel death. I pray thee to have mercy on my enemies."

Conclusion: History repeats itself! In Jesus’ day, Satan successfully “infiltrated” Judaism with “sacred (?) tradition” such that they rejected and crucified the Christ. (John 1:12) The Resurrected Christ empowered his followers to be “witnesses” of God’s Truth.

The Jewish priests tried to stop them, but the church obeyed God and endured.

Many “churches” became corrupted by “sacred traditions” and persecuted those who tried to follow “sacred scripture.” In the 15th Century God raised up these two “witnesses” (Wycliffe and Huss) who confronted the “corrupted traditions” that had infiltrated the Roman Church. They:

- 1) Paid dearly for their desire to “purify the church” of man-made traditions.
- 2) Lit a fire of “revival of God’s Word” that would spread across Europe and influence many!
Luther (1517) Germany; Zwingli (1519) Zurich, Switzerland; Tyndale (1521) England
Calvin (1536) Geneva, Switzerland; John Knox (1546) Scotland, and others!

Just as Satan used the “priests and rabbis” (and their selfish motives) to “crucify” the Christ, And corrupt popes and priests (and their selfish motives) to try to extinguish the light of truth; He will continue to oppose any genuine interest in or focus on God’s Truths because:

Ps 119:130 *"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."*

What price are you willing to pay in order to:

- Elevate Sacred Scripture above “sacred traditions”?
- Confront the “corruption” of God’s Truths?
- Be a “witness” of God’s truth, grace, and love to confused people? Mt. 5:13-15; 2 Cor. 4:4-6