

Things You Need to Know About **TRADITION**

**Bob Faulkner, presenter, AFEC Conference, May 5, 2001
Westchester Bible Church**

I. TRADITION in the BIBLE (paradosis) Very Varied!

A. The tradition of the Jewish Elders:

1. The Law of Moses
2. By Jesus' Day, many add-on's. Mark 7:3-13 (see Matthew Henry commentary on this passage)
3. Alluded to by Paul, Galatians 1:14
4. And Peter I Peter 1:18

Essentially, a mixed bag that Jesus calls the tradition of men, and "your" tradition, as opposed to the truth of God. Much like Romanism today. True & False mixed.

B. Men's ideas (totally). Gentile philosophies and principles affecting the early church, and by extension, the church of all ages. Colossians 2:8

C. The oral and written teachings of Paul and the other apostles. I Corinthians 11:2, II Thessalonians 2:15, 3:6. The "apostles' teaching", all of which was eventually written and passed on. We have that tradition in the New Testament. Precepts passed down to us, from Christ. All the Bible is our "tradition" in that sense.

D. The word itself "tradition", "paradosis" is not a special holy word. It just means, things you pass on. "Transmission or precept handed down. An idea." Biblically, it can mean ANY of the THREE things above! Leave it to Rome to narrow the definition and thus spread confusion about it. Be sure you are settled on the Biblical definitions before you deal with Rome's, on this or any issue.

II. Tradition in Rome Defined

(Catechism, 1994, pp 24 ff. Part One Article Two.)

A. Now narrowed to *transmission of Divine revelation*. And divided:

1. Apostolic preaching, oral and written
2. Apostolic succession, a living transmission, distinct from Scripture. Eg: sayings of the holy fathers. God who spoke in the past, continues to converse with the Church, leading all believers to full truth. *Christians agree but assert that that conversing is through the Holy Ghost, and is merely an illumination of revelation already received.*

B. Though considered the fullness of the Revelation, combining Scripture and “sayings”, another way of dividing things is to see Scripture as APART from “tradition,” with both of these entities making up THE “Tradition.” This lesser meaning includes all non-Scriptural “revelation.”

C. Not to be confused with “traditions” such as the ever-changing discipline, liturgy, and devotions of the church. While TRADITION is declared to be static, traditions can vary regularly.

D. All Tradition, in order to be called such, must be verified and interpreted by the “Magisterium” or Teaching Authority, bishops and Pope, of the church.

III. Bible vs. Rome

A. The main difference: Rome says revelation has not stopped (as do the Mormons, the Muslims, the Witnesses, many charismatics). We believe it has stopped. Rev. 22:18-19 . The foundation was laid. Ephesians 2:20 . It does not need to be laid again. Only discovered.

B. A comparison

1. OT canon ends with Malachi. But religious Jews continued to add on their rules & regs to God’s revelation. By the time Jesus appeared, He had to rebuke them because of their ongoing revelation, and he called their add-ons “traditions of men.”
2. NT canon ends with Revelation. Rome gives lip service to this but keeps adding things on. The test of Rome’s add-ons is whether they line up with Scripture. If they do, they are not needed. If they don’t, they’re condemned.

C. The “later traditions” of Rome. Billy Graham’s comment, it is only the “later traditions” of Rome which we differ on.” Like saying , that wine you are drinking only differs from this grape juice in one respect. But that difference will kill you, if it is alcohol, or poison.

The cup which the woman holds is filled with a mixture of evils with which she drugs the world. This tradition is what makes Rome, Rome. Doesn’t matter how much truth. Tradition makes the Word of God of no effect.

D. Examples

1. Word: Jesus our Mediator. Rome, Mary. Negates Word.
2. Word: It is finished. Once for all. Rome: Jesus dies on our altars. Negates Word.
3. Word: Saved by grace through faith. Gift of God. Not of works. Rome: (Trent) Person who believes he is saved by faith alone is anathema.
4. Word: Water cannot take away the filth of the flesh. Rome: Even its babies must pass through the water.
5. Word: Holy Spirit represents Christ to us. Rome: Pope is the Vicar (representative)
6. Word: We can KNOW we have eternal life. Rome: Such presumption is sin!
7. Word: BURIED with Him in baptism (baptizo). Rome: any amount of water will do.
8. Word: Mary claimed God as her SAVIOUR. Rome: Mary was FREE from sin at conception.
9. Word: Mary had sons and daughters after Jesus. Rome: Mary is ever virgin.
10. Word: Jesus lives to make INTERCESSION for us! Rome: Mary is the intercessor .
11. Word: Mary was a young woman equal in status to all the other disciples. Rome: Mary is the queen of all heaven.
12. Word: Only God is omnipresent. Rome: Mary can hear and answer all prayers!
13. Word: It is appointed once to die, then the judgment. For believers, absent from body, present with Jesus. Rome: There’s a major stopping-off place.
14. Word condemns idolatry. Rome: it’s ok if the statues are Bible characters, especially Mary and Jesus.

15. Word: Confess faults one to another and to God. Rome: there's still a priesthood in between the people of God and God Himself.
16. Word: Jesus paid the price for our sin. Rome will sell you a permission slip.
17. Word: Marriage is honorable! Most of its main characters are married. Rome: Leaders of God's Church must refrain from marriage (and fill the world with fornication)
18. Word: All foods created by God are good! Rome: Some are not.

And what shall we more say. For the time would fail us to speak of angels and candles and saints and miracles. Of relics and bingo and collars and tonsures. Of scapulars and rosaries and rituals and masses.

Traditions for which men have instituted crusades, massacred people groups, fought for power, sold their souls.

Yet approved to this day in romanism, though in violation of everything we hold dear from the teachings of the apostles. I leave their words with you again:

Brothers, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle, and withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from US. Signed, Paul, and the apostles.