

ANCESTRAL TRADITIONS

In today's lesson Paul was testifying about his former manner of life in Judaism. In his testimony, Paul mentioned our subject, Ancestral Traditions.

We will study five aspects of these Ancestral Traditions.

NOTE: They consisted of 613 mitzvot (minutia details of Torah) as evidenced in (Matt.23:23) (4th Woe).

1. The Greek word for Ancestral Traditions is (ton patrikos paradosis).

It refers to the passing down of a system of ideas, customs, stories, and beliefs from generation to generation.

The Hebrew word for Ancestral Traditions was **Halakah** (path one walks).

- “The Jewish religion in which Paul was pushing his way forward was that in which God’s holy law was being buried under a load of human traditions of the fathers. The entire **Halakah** was a body of Jewish oral law that supplemented the written law.” (Galatians by Wm.Hendriksen, pg.57)
- “This material began to emerge during the Babylonian Captivity that was brought upon the Jewish people. The Captivity was explained as divine punishment for the neglect of the law, and many during this period earnestly turned to the law. During the Captivity or Exile, detailed commentaries on the law appeared in the form of innumerable and highly specific restrictions that were designed to ‘build a hedge’ around the written Torah and thus guard against any possible violation of the Torah by ignorance or accident.” (Tradition of Pharisees)
- “In the last decades of the 1st century B.C., there sprang up two rival schools of interpretation among the Pharisees. The one, led by **Shammai**, was very stringent and unbendingly conservative; the other led by **Hillel**, was very liberal and willing to ‘reconcile’ the laws with the situations of everyday life. In the N.T, it seems that when the Pharisees brought difficult questions to Jesus they were relating to the disputes between these two schools of interpretation (e.g., divorce, Matt.19:3).” (Tradition of Pharisees)

Paul was a star student of Gamaliel, grandson of Hillel (Acts 22:3; Phil.3:5). **Paul described himself as an unbeliever** “being more extremely zealous for my Ancestral Traditions.” (**Gal.1:14**)

2. The Pharisees regarded the Ancestral Traditions (Tradition of Elders) as binding as the Canon of Scriptures.

Equating the Ancestral Traditions with Canon of Scriptures led to serious conflicts with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the early church (Matt.15:1-20; 23:1-39; Mark 7:1-23) (John 9:16-23; 12:42; 16:2; Acts 5:33-42; 8:1-2).

- **Jesus:** “**Neglecting** the commandments of God, you hold to the tradition of men.” (Mark 7:8)
- **Jesus:** “You **invalidate the word of God** by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.” (Mark 7:13)
- **Saul of Tarsus:** “For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.” (Gal.1:13; Phil.3:5-6; Acts 22:4-5; 26:4-5)

3. **A sect of the Pharisees called the Judaizers were believers within the Jerusalem church. They held the Ancestral Tradition on equal par with the Canon of Scriptures.**

(Acts 15:5) “But some of the **sect of the Pharisees** who had believed stood up, saying, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.’”

(Acts 15:1) “**Unless you are circumcised** according to the custom of Moses, **you cannot be saved.**”

This group was hostile towards Paul’s grace gospel and grace ministry (Acts 21:17-21, 23:12-22).

4. **At the Jerusalem Church conference, The Apostles of Jesus Christ declared the Ancestral Traditions were an unnecessary burden to believers and hindrance to Gentiles seeking God (Acts 15:6-19).**

“Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?” (Acts 15:10/ Peter; Matt.23:4/ Jesus)

“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and **do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.**” (Gal.5:1; 2:4-5)

5. **Ancestral Traditions like all legalistic belief systems attack the grace of God by substituting human merit. Legalism work system celebrates self-achievement, self-promotion, self-importance (Phil.3:3-7; Isa.64:6; Rom.3:20-30; 4:4-5; 11:6).**

This attracted Saul of Tarsus to become a Pharisees.

(Gal.1:14) “And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.”

Note “count his references”:

(Phil.3:7-9) “But whatever things were **gain to me**, those things I have **counted as loss for the sake of Christ**. More than that, I **count all things to be loss in view of surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord**, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and **count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ., and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law**, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.”

Study Luke 5:17-26 – Note four things that were seen that were important to this story.

[\(Luke 5:17-20\)](#)

[\(Luke 5:21\)](#)

[\(Luke 5:22-25\)](#)

[\(Luke 5:26\)](#)
