

## Studies on Hell – Part 1 – The Strength of Tradition

Hi everyone and welcome to “Grain of Wheat Publishing” and “Studies in Scripture.” My name is Jack Marshall and thank you for joining me today.

Before I get started, let me remind you that you are welcome to leave your comments and questions on any video presentation you find at “Grain of Wheat Publishing.” You are also welcome to contact me through my website at [www.grainofwheatpublishing.org](http://www.grainofwheatpublishing.org). I would love to hear from you anytime!

Our topic today is “Studies on Hell – Part 1 – The Strength of Tradition,” based on my studies, “Hell, No! An Alternative View of Hell,” and “Dead Men’s Bones – A Case Against Eternal Torment.” Both of these studies are available at Smashwords.com as well as other retailers like Barnes and Noble and Kobo. And as always, they are free.

Now, if I may, let me start this study with a challenge.

If you will, forget everything you’ve ever heard about “hell.” Why? Because starting with this video, I am going to challenge this traditional teaching which has plagued us for centuries. Consider what Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees in His day in Mark, Chapter 7, verses 6 through 9, God’s Word Version:

**6 Jesus told them, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites in Scripture: ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 7 Their worship of me is pointless, because their teachings are rules made by humans.’ 8 “You abandon the commandments of God to follow human traditions.” 9 He added, “You have no trouble rejecting the commandments of God in order to keep your own traditions!”**

Consider what Jesus went on to say in Mark 7, verse 13, in the New King James Version.

**13 ... making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”**

Note the phrase, “Through your tradition which you have handed down.” In keeping with this phrase, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary online defines “tradition” as, “An inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior (such as a religious practice or social custom),” and, “The handing down of information, beliefs, and customs by word of mouth or by example from one generation to another without written instruction.”

So, if I’ve got this right, Jesus was telling the religious leaders of His time that what had been handed down from previous generations was considered far more important than what He had to say. And so strong were these traditions that Jesus said they abandoned the commandments of God in order to follow them and had no trouble “rejecting the commandments of God” in order to keep them.

So, my next question would be, “Do you think it’s possible that we have done the same thing?” Is it at all possible that much of what we believe in our current Christian structure are merely traditions which were established long before you and I were even born? Could many of our beliefs be traditions and not the truth of what Jesus and the apostles taught? I, for one, believe this is very much the case. Let me give you a couple of examples.

My first example is one of the strongest traditions on this planet... “Christmas.”

Now, I won’t take up a lot of time about this particular “tradition,” but I would encourage you to “google” the “origin of Christmas.” I will also state very clearly that Jesus WAS NOT born on December 25<sup>th</sup>. Furthermore,

the early church never celebrated Christmas and the Word of God has nothing whatsoever to say about it. Finally, the “Christmas Story” is a lie, based on errors in perception. This being the case then we must ask ourselves, does it matter? I believe it does, especially in light of the following passages from Revelation. In Revelation 21:27 we read:

**<sup>27</sup> But there shall by no means enter it (i.e. the city of God) anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.**

In Revelation 22:14 and 15, we read:

**<sup>14</sup> Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. <sup>15</sup> But outside *are* dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.**

What did John write? “Blessed are those who do His commandments.” And what did Jesus tell the scribes and Pharisees? “You abandon the commandments of God to follow human traditions,” and, “You have no trouble rejecting the commandments of God in order to keep your own traditions!”

So who do we find “outside the city”? “Whoever loves and practices a lie,” no doubt any lie, and Christmas, beloved, is no exception. In regard to ungodly and unrighteous men, Paul wrote in Romans 1:25, “Because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature,” i.e. ourselves, “rather than the Creator.” John went on to say that “no lie is of the truth” in 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:21.

“You abandon” and “you have no trouble rejecting the commandments of God,” Jesus said, and today, that is true in so many ways. Believe me when I say that I’ve heard every argument in the book about why people celebrate Christmas, but the bottom line is, because we want to, regardless of the fact that it is based in a lie. For more about this, I would encourage you to read J. Preston Eby’s article, “Why the Sons of God Should Not Celebrate Christmas.” You’ll find the link posted below.

Now, you might think that Christmas is the strongest tradition there is, however, there is another one that is just as strong and just as much in error. What is it? It’s the concept of “Lucifer.” And since this is a video series about “hell,” we would do well to consider it. We’ll begin with Isaiah, Chapter 14, verses 12 through 17.

**<sup>12</sup> “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! <sup>13</sup> For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; <sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ <sup>15</sup> Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. <sup>16</sup> “Those who see you will gaze at you, and consider you, *saying*: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, <sup>17</sup> who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?’**

These are some of the passages used by many to prove that Satan is a fallen angel. However, it doesn’t take much consideration to see otherwise. Note that verse 16 and 17 clearly state, “Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners?” And to whom is this referring? Isaiah 14, verses 3 and 4 tell us.

**<sup>3</sup> It shall come to pass in the day the Lord gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, <sup>4</sup> that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: “How the oppressor has ceased, the golden city ceased!**

As we see, our passages in Isaiah 14 are a “proverb against the king of Babylon,” not about the devil or Satan. So is it also speaking symbolically of someone other than the king of Babylon? I believe it is. Remember how Isaiah put it... “is this the MAN”? Let’s look at Romans 5, verses 12 and 14, for understanding.

**12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned-- ... 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.**

Now, look at Luke, Chapter 3, where we find the lineage of Joseph, Mary’s husband, who of course gave birth to Christ. Here’s how Joseph’s lineage ends:

**38 ... the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.**

Now, according to Romans, how did sin enter the world? Not through the devil, but “through one man,” clearly Adam, whom Luke called a “son of God” in Luke 3:38. And how did death enter the world? Not through the devil, but “through sin.” How then did “death spread to all men”? “Because all sinned.” How could this be if not by the fact that Adam represents something that is true about all of us? “Is this the *man*”? Isaiah said. Consider the following from First Corinthians 2:14.

**14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

It should be clear to us that our phrase, “the natural man,” does not speak of an individual, rather, it is speaking “collectively” and represents all of us in our “natural” state when we first come into this world. And when we are in this “natural” state, Paul states that we cannot “receive the things of the Spirit of God,” that we see them as “foolishness” and we cannot “know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” Now, if this is true, would this explain why we see Adam and Eve’s “fall” in the Genesis parable? Would this align with Isaiah 14:12 where we read, “How you are fallen from heaven?”

Now, look once more at Isaiah 14:12.

**12 "How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!**

Our word “Lucifer” in this passage is the only place it is found in the King James Bible. In other versions, it has been replaced by the phrases, “Day Star,” “Morning Star,” “light-bringer,” and “star of the morning,” the word “Lucifer” removed. One website I visited tells me it is a Latin word which was placed there by Jerome in his Latin Vulgate, and Jerome himself confesses that the Hebrew phrase in which this word is contained should be rendered as, “*Howl*, H-O-W-L, son of the morning!” The Latin word “Lucifer” should not even be in this passage.

At this point, I am inclined to go with “definition by context” and let the context point us in the right direction. If we remove the word “Lucifer” from the text, we have, “How you are fallen from heaven, son of the morning!” And again, we must keep in mind that it is speaking of the “king of Babylon” and refers to the “man” who “who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms, who made the world as a wilderness and destroyed its cities, who did not open the house of his prisoners.”

As we can see by these phrases, the impact of this “king of Babylon” goes far beyond the reach of the Middle East, incorporating the “earth,” “kingdoms,” the “world” and its “cities.” When considered in parabolic form, I cannot help but believe it is pointing to “Adam,” and is indicative of the essence of the “natural man” which is found in everyone.

This “king” is called a “son of the morning,” a “son of the dawn,” and isn’t the story of Adam in Genesis the “dawn” of humankind? Paul confirms this in First Corinthians, Chapter 15, verses 42 through 49.

**<sup>42</sup> So also is the resurrection of the dead. It, (i.e. the resurrection of the dead) is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: <sup>43</sup> It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: <sup>44</sup> It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. <sup>45</sup> And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. <sup>46</sup> Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. <sup>47</sup> The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. <sup>48</sup> As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. <sup>49</sup> And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.**

Beloved, Adam was “the first man,” so in Paul’s mind, no one preceded him. Yet, the common mistake that most of us make is to think of Adam as just an individual. HE WAS, but he is ALSO representative of the first generation of humankind. Think about it! Just as one policeman represents the entire police force of any city, so too Adam represents the entire human race from its beginning. When we realize this, it does away with the confusion that Adam and Eve were the “parents” of every human being and how their son, Cain, found a wife and built his city in Genesis 4:17. God is not illogical. This mistaken perception lies in us alone.

Adam is the “one” indicative of the “many,” so too Christ Jesus. Paul confirms this in Romans, Chapter 5, verses 12 through 21, referring to him as the “one man” who sinned and brought death into our existence, while Christ was the “one man” who brought “grace,” “righteousness” and “life” into our existence. Paul stays in keeping with this understanding in First Corinthians, Chapter 15, stating that the process of the resurrection of the dead begins with the “natural body,” which incorporates “corruption,” “dishonor,” and “weakness.” And if I am correct in my thinking, First Corinthians 15:45 is telling us that the “natural body” or “natural man” refers to our “soul.”

To further clarify our position, Paul uses the phrase “old man” in Romans 6:6, Ephesians 4:22, and Colossians 3:9, all of which again refer to “the first man Adam,” individually and collectively speaking.

Other writers often speak of this inward essence as the “Adamic” nature, that Adam represents that sinful nature in all of us that is opposed to the principles of the kingdom of God.

Finally, Paul also uses the phrase “outward man” in contrast with the “inward man” in Second Corinthians 4:16, and my understanding of this remains the same. The “outward man” speaks of the soul, the “natural man,” the “natural body,” what Paul calls the “earthy” and “image of the earthy” while the “inward man” speaks to the deepest part of our being which is spirit.

So what is the point in all of this? To show that tradition has long led us to believe that the passages from Isaiah, Chapter 14, are a reference to “Lucifer,” a fallen angel. Yet, as we have seen, it is not speaking of a fallen angel at all, but to the natural and carnal essence that arises within us when we are too young to know or understand it. But due in part to our own misunderstanding and to the world’s acceptance of it, we have managed to fabricate a “tradition” which has only managed to grow stronger since its inception around 400 A.D. Ask just about anyone today who “Lucifer” is and they will tell you it’s the devil, a fallen angel.

Now, let me sum this up. Remember that Luke 3:38 refers to Adam as a “son of God,” and of course, Christ Jesus is called “the only begotten” Son of God. In reference to Christ Jesus, consider the following passages from Hebrews, Chapter 1, verses 5 through 14.

**Hebrews 1:5-14 (NKJV)**

**<sup>5</sup> For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You"? And again: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son"?**

**<sup>6</sup> But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him."**

**<sup>7</sup> And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire."**

**<sup>8</sup> But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. <sup>9</sup> You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions." <sup>10</sup> And: "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. <sup>11</sup> They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; <sup>12</sup> Like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail."**

**<sup>13</sup> But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool"?**

**<sup>14</sup> Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?**

I can't help but believe that verses 5 and 13 are rhetorical questions which really need no answer, but the writer of Hebrews goes on to give them anyway. "For to which of the angels did He," our heavenly Father, "ever say, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you?'" And again, "But to which of the angels has He," our heavenly Father, "ever said, 'Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool?'" The answer of course is, NEVER. And what does the writer of Hebrews follow with regarding angels? "Are they NOT ALL ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" Did the writer of Hebrews say "all"? If so, would this not include the devil or Satan? If he is an angel, IT CERTAINLY WOULD! Furthermore he writes, "Let ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM." Has this ever changed? I for one don't believe so and for this reason, I don't believe in "fallen angels." Why? Because I have not found anything in scripture which actually supports this theory in any solid fashion. Friend, the idea of Satan as a fallen angel and the idea of fallen angels itself, IS TRADITION, handed down by those before us, and just like Christmas, it has been a lie from the beginning.

In conclusion, we should realize that the ideas of "Christmas" and "Lucifer" both show just how strong tradition (and our belief in them) can be when we simply accept them as truth. When we do so, we set the foundation for even more errors in understanding. As I continue this series, we will delve further into the concept of "hell" and the idea of "eternal torment," and show that, like Christmas and Lucifer, we have been misled in our thinking to embrace doctrines which are contrary to the kingdom of God.

That's it for today's video and I sincerely hope that it has helped you. Feel free to leave your comments and questions below and visit my Facebook page at Grain of Wheat Publishing or my website at [www.grainofwheatpublishing.org](http://www.grainofwheatpublishing.org). Thank you so much for joining me today and may God bless you in your walk with Christ.