

# In Vain They Do Worship

by Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

**Matthew 15:8-9**, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

We are told in scripture that the Lord does not change. One verse to consider is **Hebrews 13:8** which says, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." That is clear and easy to understand for anyone. Jesus doesn't change his mind and his desire to please God. He, God, means what he says, and says exactly what he means. Man, on the other hand, changes from time to time as conditions and his priorities change. While man can, and does, change his thinking and actions sometimes, he makes a bad mistake when he thinks that he can change what God has said.

That is what Jesus was telling the Pharisees as he told them of their changing God's commands. It was not just about taking care of elderly parents that they had erred in, but all of the other areas that they had changed as well. There is nothing, and I mean nothing, that man has the right to change from what God has said. No group, council, or

anyone else can change the word of God and escape the judgment of the Lord.

Now we may agree that the Pharisees and other groups of Jews had no right to change any commands, but what about others down through the ages that have done it as well? There are so many scriptures that we can read in the Bible and have someone tell us that it doesn't mean what it says. As a young Christian many years ago that was a surprise to me when I heard ministers and others say, "That doesn't mean that." I believe that the Lord knows what he meant and that those who think that they know more about the word of God than the Lord, are fooling themselves.

**Hebrews 10:25 & 26** are clear on what they tell us, but there are those who will tell you that they don't mean what they say. Other scriptures speak of the church coming together to worship, but some will say that you can serve God just fine and not go to church. The Lord is our example, according to **1 Peter 2:21**. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. (**Luke 4:16**). Are we good enough, strong enough, smart enough, and spiritual enough that we don't need to worship and feed on the word of God with other believers? No, we are not, and even if we were, we would need to be there to

help those who were not so well off spiritually.

Man, in general, has an independent streak in him that makes him want to go his own way. That is why he will seek to change that which he is not satisfied with. In man's relationship with God that won't work, as Jonah found out the hard way. Of course as man wants to alter parts of God's word, Satan will urge him to do it and that it will be alright and will work to his benefit. If you remember he told Eve the same thing back in the Garden of Eden. Do you remember how that worked out? The things that people have changed and disregarded will come back to face them in the judgment.

For instance the word of God tells us in many different places, and even with the example that Jesus gave us, that we are to be baptized as part of the plan of salvation. Yet, some men in their ignorance, decided that being baptized is not necessary. Those who do this are changing God's word into what they want instead of obeying the Lord.

There are many things that man has changed from what God has commanded. All we have to do is read the scriptures to see the truth. When you do, beware of the one who whispers, "You don't have to do it like that, God didn't really mean it!" The Lord does mean what he said and will judge man by his word, not man's ideas.

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