

# Gospel of John IX

## Judgments, Misjudgments, Love of God

(John 5)

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The book of John is full of many, many different topics and we need to take some in-depth studies as we go along. In John 5 we could go through a tremendous in-depth study concerning judgment and resurrection, but will save that for the Last Great Day as a supplemental sermon for the book of John. We'll have quite a few supplemental sermons as we go along.

When we come to John 8 then we will probably do some sermons on where Jesus said, 'You are of your father the devil.' We will cover the whole area of the Jewish question, the Jewish problem, the Jewish ecstasy. Likewise, when we come to John 7:24 where Jesus made the statement, 'Judge not according to appearance, but judge *righteous judgment*,' we will take time and go through a whole sub-series that will cover judgment, justice and things like this, aside from the judgment and resurrection. (note sermon series: *Judge Righteous Judgment*)

In each one of these there is such a wealth of information that is contained in the Bible, and when we put it all together, it could be likened to a sphere or a ball of yarn. If you take a ball of yarn and it's wound up all over the place. To get it round it comes from many different angles to keep it round to wind it up. There is just so much in it; you don't realize that in a ball of yarn how much yarn is contained in there until you undo it and try to straighten it out.

It's the same way with God's Word; it's like a sphere. The more that you learn, the more that you can learn. The more that you understand, the more that you can understand. It all just keeps coming together more and more. Obviously, since it's inspired by God, the depth of the Bible is an eternal thing. You cannot fathom or plum the depths of the Bible. As it says, 'Who has known the mind of God?' *Only God knows the mind of God!*

We can learn with what we have. There are many things that we need to understand, so let's cover just one aspect of some judging, and *wrongly* judging in certain cases. Let's just review what Jesus said concerning judgment, concerning that He Himself was going to be the One Who would judge.

Jesus said in John 5:27: "And has also given Him authority to execute judgment because He is *the* Son of man." This becomes very important for us, because Jesus Christ experienced everything that there was to experience as far as human temptation,

human weakness and everything like that, so that He can be a merciful High Priest for us; that we have a 'High Priest who was tempted in every way like we are' so that we 'can come *boldly* to the throne of grace in time of need.' (Heb. 4)

Verse 28: "Do not wonder at this, for *the* hour is coming in which all who are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth: those who have practiced good unto a resurrection of life, and those who have practiced evil unto a resurrection of judgment. I have no power to do anything of Myself..." (vs 28-30). This is quite a powerful statement in the Greek: *I am not able to do anything of Myself!* In the Greek you have a double negative. In the English you cannot have a double negative: *I have got not nothing*. In the Greek you can have that kind of thing. Greek word meanings:

- 'ou'—not
- 'dunamai'—able, power, capacity
- 'dunamos'—from which we get the word *dynamite*; if you have dynamite, you have power

So, Jesus is saying that *He, of Himself, is not able to do anything*. That's quite something! Even our Savior Jesus Christ Who created the heavens and the earth, when He came to this earth as a human being said, 'I can of My own self—Greek: 'ego'—do anything.' He didn't have the power to do anything. Surely as a human being you have power to do certain things, but when you come down to it, Who gave you that power? Who made it so you could walk? Talk? Think? Work? ***God made it!***

So, in effect, this should be the same thing we should be saying and doing ourselves. We can't do anything of ourselves; only God has given the ability.

- He's given life!
- He's given breath!
- He's given the creation!
- He's given us the world!

It's amazing how people can stand up and say that they don't believe in creation, when they're standing on it. They're using the creation of themselves to say, 'I don't believe in creation.' That's kind of a double negative—isn't it? The impossible thing.

Let's see what we need to have in the way of

our attitude, and also here's a little bit of a lesson in judging: James 4:11: "Brethren, do not talk against one another. The one who talks against a brother, and judges his brother, is speaking against *the Law*, and is judging the Law...." We're going to cover a few things about *not judging* and what that literally means and what we should do.

When you get to the point that you make judgments about what you think a person is thinking—which may or may not be true; may not even be what is on their mind at all—then you're not only judging your brother, but you're speaking evil of the law. In other words, you're making an evil use of the Law.

Can the Law—which is good and Holy—be put to an evil use? *Yes! If you put it to an evil use to judge someone! Sure it can!*

"...But if you judge *the Law*, you are not a doer of *the Law*; rather, *you are a judge*. *But* there is *only one Lawgiver*..." (vs 11-12)—which implies there is one judge; Who is that One Judge? *Jesus Christ is!* He said, 'All judgment is given to Me.'

"...Who has power to save and to destroy. Who are you that you presume to judge another? Now listen, those of you who say, 'Today and tomorrow we will go into such a city, and we will spend a year, and we will conduct business and make a profit'" (vs 12-13). This is doing something of yourself!

Notice that James is backing up what Jesus said, v 14: "You do not even know what *will happen* tomorrow! For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor..." That is true. What happened to all those people at Nagasaki and Hiroshima? *They were vaporized! Vanished!*

"...It is even a vapor that appears for a little while, and then disappears. Instead, you *ought* to say, '**If the Lord wills**...'" (vs 14-15). Isn't that what Jesus said? *Not My will be done, but Your will be done.*

When Jesus said that 'of His own self He was not able to do anything' that is literally true. He understood it. Didn't He have to depend on God the Father for everything? *Yes, He did! Everything that He did!* So, it shows us that we ought to have more dependence on God, and more reliance on God; less reliance on ourselves, and especially reliance on our judgment.

"...*'If the Lord wills we will live, and we will do this or that.'*" (v 15). That's the same attitude that Jesus had.

John 5:30: "I have no power to do anything of Myself; but as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is

just because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father, Who sent Me." There is also another fantastic statement: *seeking the will of God the Father Who is **the Highest!*** You can't go any higher than the universe. God the Father is called *the Highest!*

If you're seeking the will of God the Father, then you don't have your own 'axe to grind.' Everybody has an 'axe to grind.' It would be awfully hard to say that as human beings we can give perfect and righteous judgment. We all have some kind of 'axe to grind' or a 'pet peeve' or something. When we make certain statements, we make the statements *based upon what we believe.*

Jesus didn't! He based His statements on what God the Father wanted Him to do and to say. Therefore, it was correct. Do "...the will of the Father Who sent Me."

Let's see where it calls God *the Judge*. That's one of the offices or duties of Jesus Christ.

Psalm 50:1: "The mighty God, God, the LORD, has spoken and called the earth from the rising of the sun to its going down." All of God's creation: marvelous, wonderful, fantastic!

Verse 2: "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined forth." That's going to be something! I'm sure that's referring to the return of Jesus Christ and the power and glory of Christ and God the Father.

Verse 3: "Our God shall come, and He shall not keep silent..." When Jesus Christ returns it's going to be an awesome event! God *holds his anger back* and is merciful and kind and longsuffering. But when it is time to execute vengeance, judgment and anger, look out, it's going to come! God doesn't enjoy it, but when it comes, *it comes!*

"...a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous all around Him. He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, **so that He may judge His people**" (vs 3-4). We know that judgment is now upon the house of God. God is judging us. We can be thankful that God is going to judge us in mercy, and that we can always have grace before judgment. The judgment, love and mercy that we need.

Verse 5: "'Gather My saints unto Me... [think about what we cover on Pentecost about gathering all the saints together to God] ...those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.'" We've made a covenant with God by sacrifice. Not an animal sacrifice, but the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. A covenant is an unbreakable relationship and bond.

- Can a person break a covenant? *Yes!*

*People can!*

- What happens when you break a covenant with God? *You break the bond with God!*

As far as the New Testament is concerned, that's it! ***It is an unbreakable promise by God to you, and by you to God!***

If we look at from the true perspective, ***if God is willing to give us an unbreakable promise***—and we know that God cannot lie, and we know that He's not going to change it—***that He is going to give us eternal life, that should be very inspiring for us to keep our promises then! Keep our covenant with God!***

That does not mean that if we go along and we understand about sin and human nature, that if you are sinning, but not turning your back on God, that you have broken the covenant. To break the covenant means to *end the relationship entirely!* When you're going along and trying to overcome human nature and things like this, when you sin you're not trying to end the relationship. What ends up, as the result of that, is trying to get closer and closer to God so that you can end the sin. He's going to gather the saints unto Him. "...those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." That's the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Verse 6: "And the heavens shall declare His righteousness, **for God Himself is judge.** Selah." That's one of the names and titles of God.

Psalms 82:8: "Arise, **O God, judge the earth...** [we're going to see where that takes place; there is a judgment coming on the earth] ...for You shall inherit all nations." That's referring to the time when the Kingdom of God is ruling on the earth.

Psalms 7:8: "**The LORD shall judge the people...** [no one is going to escape the judgment of God] ...**judge me,** O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to my integrity within me."

- How should we view that in the New Testament?
- What righteousness do we have given to us?

*We have the righteousness of Jesus Christ that is given to us!* If we are judged according to the righteousness of Christ that is given to us:

- What is the judgment going to be?

This is the whole beauty and inspiration of what Christ has done for us. The judgment is going to be *perfect!* That seems, from a human point of view, very, very strange that God would do this for us. But *He does* do it for us! That's quite a wonderful thing, and He does it—not for us to go out and sin and do

anything we want to—for us as an inspiration, as an act of love that we can draw closer to God and be thankful and grateful for what God has done for us.

Verse 9: "O let the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish the righteous, for **the righteous God tries the hearts and reins.**" Quite an interesting phraseology—*reins!* We know what the reins of a bridle are for a horse. You hold them in your hands and you make the horse go wherever you want it to go.

Let's view it somewhat this way: That God has, with His Holy Spirit, a means of trying our reins. In other words, how easily led or directed are we of God's Spirit to do the right thing, to do God's will. That's what it's talking about.

There's a man that I know who gave up on God because reins' sounded kind of ridiculous. He found out that part of the root word for *reins* was 'kidneys.' The Hebrew word for *kidney* comes from a very similar word, which is *reins*, and he thought that that was stupid; what do you mean that God tries our kidneys? He just up and gave up on God. *Obviously, he wasn't seeking any understanding!*

Verse 10: "My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. **God is a righteous judge,** and a God Who has indignation every day" (vs 10-11). I don't think God is up there in heaven pacing back and forth angry. Not like us human beings. Sometimes we may get some of those mental pictures in mind, but that's not what God is doing. Let's hope not with us. He's going to save the wicked for *their* day.

Psalms 96:13: "Before the LORD; for He comes, for **He comes to judge the earth; He shall judge the world with righteousness and the people with His Truth.**"

There are many basic Scriptures that a lot of these things tie back into.

John 17:17: "**Sanctify them in Your Truth; Your Word is the Truth.**" Let's remember both halves of this verse. Sanctify means *to make Holy, to set aside, to enter into that special relationship.* Who did Jesus say He was? *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life!* If we are sanctified by God's Word—which is another name and title of Christ: *In the beginning was the Word*—and we're sanctified by Christ, Who is the Word; if we're sanctified through the Truth—which is God's Word—and we're sanctified through Christ: Do you see how closely these come together? The double meaning of what we're saying?

How is God going to judge us? *With His Truth!* It all fits together. Just like that ball of yarn that I mentioned in the beginning, that you keep

rolling up.

Let's see this judgment that comes; let's see how this judgment is going to come upon the world. He's going to judge us with righteousness, and if that righteousness is the righteousness of Christ, then we are presented before God *blameless, harmless, irreprehensible*. In other words, no one can say anything against us!

In Rev. 16 we find something concerning the judgment of God. We find what they are called.

Let's go through the first of the seven last plagues. We won't go through all seven of them, but here in Revelation 16:1: "Then I heard a loud voice from the temple say to the seven angels, 'Go and pour out the vials of the wrath of God onto the earth.'" Remember, it says that God is coming to **judge the world**.

Verse 2: "And the first *angel* went and poured out his vial onto the earth; and an evil and grievous sore fell upon the men who had the mark of the beast, and upon those who were worshiping his image. And the second angel *went and* poured out his vial into the sea; and it became blood, like *that* of a dead *man*; and every living soul in the sea died" (vs 2-3). You talk about a stench for a while on this earth! Can you imagine how that is going to smell after everything in the ocean dies. All of a sudden it's all turned blood red, and every living thing dies; all the fish die and float to the surface. What a stench!

Verse 4: "And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers, and into the fountains of waters; and they became blood. Then I heard the angel of the waters say, 'You are righteous, O Lord, Who are, and Who was, even the Holy One, in that **You have executed this judgment**'" (vs 4-5).

From a human point of view, those are not righteous, but from God's point of view *they are!* God knows exactly what He's doing!

Verse 6: "'For they have poured out *the* blood of saints and of prophets, and You have given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.' And I heard another *voice* from the altar say, 'Yes, Lord God Almighty, **true and righteous are Your judgments**'" (vs 6-7).

So, you don't want the judgment of God without Christ being there in your stead. God's final judgment on the earth is terrible!

How is it that God can judge righteously, and yet, do those things? The answer is that this judgment is coming as the result of all the history of human beings. This end-time is going to be so perverse that that is a fit and proper judgment. There

are going to be a lot of people die, but God will give them back life; He'll resurrect them. I tell you one thing, that is something! That is awesome!

Men look at it this way, Romans 3:1: "What then *is* the advantage of the Jew, or what *is* the profit of circumcision? Much in every way. Primarily, in that they were entrusted with the oracles of God" (vs 1-2). If they follow God and follow His way, then it's fine. If they don't, then it's just like anybody else.

Verse 3: "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief nullify the faithfulness of God? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** Rather, let God be true but every man a liar, exactly as it is written: 'That You might be justified in Your words, and might overcome when You are being judged *by men*.' But if our unrighteousness brings to reality God's righteousness, what shall we say? **Is God unrighteous to inflict His wrath?** (I am speaking according to man's view.)" (vs 3-5).

Is God unrighteous to take vengeance? *Of course not!* We have to have, first of all, the understanding of God's plan before we can understand that these judgments are righteous. God alone can handle that.

Verse 6: "**MAY IT NEVER BE! Otherwise, how shall God judge the world?**" Quite a statement! If there is a way that is right—and there is, if there's a way that is true—which there is, then there has to be a blessing for doing what is right and doing what it is true.

What if you did everything you could, you were right with God and then you have someone over here who is a devil-worshiper? He ends up not changing or doing anything, and God accepts him? There wouldn't be any validity for Truth! Everything would disappear; there would be nothing of substance to right and wrong. You had the epitome of right vs the epitome of wrong and you end up with God giving you both exactly the same thing. It isn't so! That's why there's going to be the Lake of Fire and 'the weeping and gnashing of teeth,' because there's going to come that ultimate time that will have to be to put the wicked away.

### **Misjudgments:**

Let's cover one other aspect of judgment that we need to realize, and this has to do with misjudgments. We're going to talk about misjudgments. Whenever there are misjudgments it always hurts somebody; whenever you jump to a conclusion.

Here was a misjudgment; several of them, as a matter of fact. This is the parable of the Pharisee

and the publican (Luke 18).

Another example of misjudgment: What if you saw someone run a red light—and people’s visual observations may not necessarily perceive things correctly—and you had it built in your mind that a certain person of a certain type is the kind of person who would do something like that?

Example: I’ve heard of this in San Francisco. Chinese women are the worst drivers in the world. You look over there and sure enough you think that was a Chinese woman, and think, ‘Yep! Worst drivers in the world! Ran that red light; knew it!’ What is the automatic assumption? *All Chinese women drivers run red lights and are no-good drivers!*

But what if, upon a thorough examination of this, you found that this was a long-haired Indian man, instead of a Chinese woman? And that the brakes had failed, instead of the driver deliberately going through the red light, or the stop sign? Now the circumstances change completely—don’t they? This is why we are to not make judgments on people.

Try this the next time you see some situation you don’t like: Observe what is going on, but don’t make a condemnation of the person’s heart, because this is what the Pharisees did:

Luke 18:9: “And to some who trusted in themselves...” There are a lot of people who trust in themselves; they have confidence in themselves, and they think they’re better than other people.

“...that they were righteous, and despised others...” (v 9). When you despise someone, you have an ‘axe to grind.’ That’s why Jesus said of His own self He didn’t do anything; He did the judgment according to God’s will. He sought the *will of God*.

“...He also spoke this parable: ‘Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself in this manner...’” (vs 9-11).

We see several things wrong here. In the first place, he’s really not praying to God; he’s praying with himself. There are a lot of self-prayers if they’re in an attitude like this. They don’t any higher than the ceiling or any further than your lips.

“...“God, I thank You that I am not like other men...”” (v 11). What did Paul prove? *All are under sin—Jews and Gentiles* (Rom. 3)!

“—extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers—or even as this tax collector...” (v 11). Look at him, this tax collector. You probably feel the same way about the IRS if they come banging on the door.

They may be what they are, but what he’s doing is comparing himself, his inner self, and how much better he is than anyone else. But he can’t possibly be, because he has ‘the law of sin and death’ in him just like anybody else has ‘the law of sin and death.’

The fact that he’s not an extortioner or being unjust nor is an adulterer, that doesn’t make him any better than any other person. God requires that we keep His commandments. So, if you keep His commandments, fine, but it doesn’t make us better.

Verse 12: “‘I fast twice in the week, *and* I give a tithing of everything that I gain.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat himself on *the* chest, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner’” (vs 12-13).

Was there a misjudgment made on that person’s heart? *Sure there was!* When people get to thinking how great they are, or how they trust in themselves, *they always do that!*

Jesus said, v 14: “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled; and the one who humbles himself shall be exalted.” There’s an example of *wrong judgment!*

Remember, if you use the wrong judgment and you make yourself *a* judge, you’re judging the Law. Then what happens? *You become absolutely critical of everything!* There are total critics; professional critics.

Matthew 7:1: “Do not condemn *others*, so that you yourself will not be condemned; **for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete out, it shall be measured again to you**” (vs 1-2). We need to think about that and let that be humbling in every way.

Just know for sure, if you point one finger, there are at least three back to you, maybe four. I found this out, too, that whenever you say something about your husband or wife to their face in a judging way, a short time later you do something just the same or worse! That is true! Always true! Neither one is better than the other. “...**for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you mete out, it shall be measured again to you**”

There are such things as persecution, such things as unjust judgment. But we’re talking about in the final analysis of everything. Also, this judging has the connotation and meaning of *judging to condemnation*.

It’s one thing to stand up in a court of law—and let’s go back to the example of running the red

light—and say, ‘Yes, I saw this person run a red light. That is a fact. You saw the person run the red light. But if you say, ‘I know that she ran the red light because she’s a Chinese woman and the worst driver in the world.’ That has nothing to do with it.

That’s a judgment of heart rather than a judgment of fact. The judgment of fact was, yes, the car went through the red light. The judgment of heart was your own bias. This is what Jesus is talking about here. You have those kinds of biases against people; you make harsh judgments on them; don’t worry, *it’s going to come back on you some day, one way or the other!*

Verse 3: “Now, why do you look at the sliver that *is* in your brother’s eye, but you do not perceive the beam in your *own* eye?” Too many times the ones that run out and do all the correction and things, they’re just exactly in that same position. They’re ‘plank-eyes’ and go around looking for splinters. They can’t find them because the ‘planks’ have blinded them. That’s what Jesus is saying.

Verse 4: “Or how will you say to your brother, ‘Allow *me* to remove the sliver from your eye’; and behold, the beam *is* in your *own* eye? *You* hypocrite, first cast out the beam from your *own* eye, and then you shall see clearly to remove the sliver from your brother’s eye” (vs 4-5).

In other words, always give the other person the benefit of doubt. Measure what you do in such a way that you ask what you want back on you. Do you want it back on you? *If you say no, well then, don’t dish it out, because it’s going to come!* We don’t want to have that kind of *wrong judging!*

Let’s see what the *wrong kind of judging* did to the Pharisees. What happens when you get into a spirit and attitude of judging? We saw one of the things they wanted to do in judging Jesus was to kill Him! Why? *Because they judged that He had ‘broken’ the Sabbath because He healed a man and told him to carry his bed!* Completely wrong judgment!

Let’s see what happens, with the wrong judgment, to your own heart and mind. We can see this evolve in every ‘religious’ group.

Example: Let’s take The People’s Temple in San Francisco. When The People’s Temple started with James Jones (Jim Jones) he had a good thing going. He was feeding the poor and taking care of them, much like this Cecil Williams is now. Then they began to set themselves up as more righteous than others. Then they began to despise others. They ended up moving to Guyana and they ended up killing everyone! One thing leads to another, which

leads to another.

Let’s see what happened and what this ultimately leads to with the wrong kind of judgment: John 5:31: “If I bear witness of Myself, My testimony is not true”

(go to the next track)

Verse 32: “There is another who bears witness of Me and I know that the testimony that he witnesses concerning Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the Truth” (vs 32-33).

You can read that in Matt. 3 and Luke 3 about what happened when the Pharisees came to John. He was not too kind. He said, ‘You generation of vipers! You offspring of snakes!’

Verse 34: “Now, I do not receive witness from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved.” Notice that everything that Jesus said is to turn to salvation, whether it is something said in condemnation... Why would Jesus say something in condemnation? *In hopes of there would be repentance!*

Verse 35: “He was a burning and shining light, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.” But they didn’t remain there, because when they went down there was a burning and shining light. Why do men not like the light? *Because their deeds are evil!*

Verse 36: “But I have a greater witness than John’s; for the works that the Father gave Me to complete, the *very* works that I am doing, themselves bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.” Of course, we saw that the main purpose of Jesus’ coming was to *reveal the Father!*

Verse 37: “And the Father Himself, Who sent Me, has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice nor seen His form at any time.”

- no one has gone to heaven
- no one is in heaven
- no one has gone there
- no one has heard the voice of God the Father at any time, nor seen His shape

### **Love of God:**

Verse 38: “And **you do not have His Word dwelling in you...**” They didn’t have the Word of God the Father abiding in them.

“...for you do not believe Him Whom He has sent. You **search the Scriptures**, for in them you think that you have eternal life; and they are the ones that testify of Me” (vs 38-39). These are pretty heavy statements that Jesus is saying! “...search the

Scriptures...” Apparently they weren’t doing that!

Are there ministers today who have completely left the Word of God? *Absolutely! Sure there are!* Let’s see where this leads to.

Verse 40: “But you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life.” They wanted to do it their own way. And the Jews, to this day, still want to do it *their own way!* ***You can’t do it any other way but God’s way, and you have to come to Christ!***

Verse 41: “I do not receive glory from men; **but I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.**” That’s a very, very profound statement. See what happens, when all of this judging comes along then you leave the love of God! You leave the mercy of God! Jesus says, “...**I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.**”

Verse 43: “I have come in My Father’s name, and you do not receive Me; *but* if another comes in his own name, you will receive him.” That’s sure true of people, how they like to follow a person, especially one who will get up and tell them how great they are! How good they are!

Verse 44: “How are you able to believe, you who receive glory from one another...” I always feel that way of some scholars. All these that study the Word of God, they are the ones who end up being atheists. It’s really going to be quite an evident judgment of God that those who spend all their lifelong trying to find the Bible wrong end up believing nothing, and destroy the faith of other people!

Many of these scholars don’t believe anything about God. They go to delve into the Bible and find out what it is, and they end up with more disbelief of God.

- What was it that they ended up with when they left the love of God?
- What was it that they had, that they clung to?

Verse 44: “How are you able to believe, you who receive glory from one another...” All of these great scholars honor one another. The great this, the great that, and so forth.

“...and do not seek the glory that *comes* from the only God?” (v 44). What is that honor that comes from God only? *That’s eventually going to be eternal life!* That’s what He’s talking about. You think you have eternal life and search the Scriptures. The honor should come from God!

Verse 45: “Do not think that I will accuse

you to the Father.... [even Jesus isn’t going to do the accusing] There is *one* who accuses you, *even* Moses... [talk about making them gnash their teeth] ...in whom you have hope. But **if you believed Moses, you would have believed Me; for he wrote about Me.** And **if you do not believe his writings, how shall you believe My words?**” (vs 45-47). Very key thing!

You cannot believe in the true Jesus Christ unless you believe all of the Bible. That which is called the Old Testament—or the Hebrew Bible; that which is called the New Testament—which has been preserved for us in Greek. If you don’t believe Moses, you can’t believe in Jesus Christ.

There are a lot of people who are supposed to be Christians that don’t believe Moses; they don’t believe the words of Moses, the Law of Moses.

It’s really very ironic, because what did Jesus say? *Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life!* ***You have eternal life through Jesus Christ!*** The Scriptures reveal the way, but here were the ones who ‘handled the Word of God’: the Pharisees, the scribes. They didn’t believe the Word of God! What was it that they believed in more than the Word of God? This is where people become so absolutely fixed on their own authority:

- sitting in the seat of God
- making proclamations as though they are God
- making laws and rules as though they are God

Notice the judgment, Mark 7:1: “Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes from Jerusalem came together to Him.” You will notice through the New Testament that when anything came from Jerusalem it was that which supposedly bore authority. Remember the problems that the Church had when certain came from Jerusalem. Even the Church had a problem with that.

Verse 2: “And when they saw some of His disciples eating with defiled hands (that is, unwashed *hands*), they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews, holding fast to the tradition of the elders, do not eat unless they wash their hands thoroughly” (vs 2-3)—diligently; rubbing and scrubbing clear up to the elbow. “...holding fast to the tradition of the elders...” This is substituting the Word of God for something else.

Here they had the Word of God in one hand, which they should have been following; and then they had the tradition in the other hand. We know what they did.

Verse 4: “Even *when coming* from the

market, they do not eat unless they *first* wash themselves. And there are many other things that they have received to observe... [to hold a practice] ...*such as the* washing of cups and pots and brass utensils and tables.” There are certain things that God wanted them to have clean. That’s fine; they needed to be clean, but they took it to a total extreme.

Verse 5: “For this reason, the Pharisees and the scribes questioned Him, *saying*, ‘**Why don’t Your disciples walk according to the tradition of the elders**, but eat bread with unwashed hands?’ And He answered *and* said to them, ‘Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you hypocrites...’” (vs 5-6). We read about hypocritical judgments (Matt. 7).

“...as it is written, “This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me”” (v 6). God is interested in where *your heart is!* He’s not interested in *a tradition!* He is not interested in something that’s going to keep you from coming to God! God doesn’t want anything to stop your heart-relationship with God the Father.

Remember, He said, ‘I am the One Who tries the heart and the reins.’ So, when you get so focused in on these physical things to do, on these dos and don’ts... That’s why it says that ‘the letter of the Law kills.’ *It does!* Especially when it becomes a tradition! “**This people honors Me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from Me.**”

Verse 7: “But in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* doctrine the commandments of men.” This is the whole enigma of Judaism. They have the Word of God. They could understand about Christ. Many of them did! But a person can be so close to it that they want to make it *their own*, so they add to it! Pretty soon they left God by adding so many things!

Just exactly the same thing that took place with The People’s Temple and Jim Jones. They used to feed the poor and take care of the hungry and the homeless. Then they ran off to Guyana—the other extreme—and committed suicide! All in the name of God!

So, right here, these people had the Word of God, they had Christ standing right there in their presence, and rather than accepting Him, they wanted to kill Him! *They were worshiping God in vain!* They were following the doctrines of men.

Verse 8: “For leaving the commandment of God, you hold fast **the tradition of men**, *such as* the washing of pots and cups; and you practice many other things like *this*.’ Then He said to them, ‘Full well do you reject the commandment of God, **so that you may observe your own tradition**’ (vs 8-9). It gets right down to the heart and core of any

‘religion.’ We could say that to the Catholics; to the Jews. Let’s put it this way:

- the Word of God says that to the Catholics
  - the Word of God says that to the Jews
  - the word of God says that to the Buddhists
- ✓ Do they not have traditions? *Sure they do!*

How long did it take the western world to bring Japan into what is called the modern 20<sup>th</sup> century culture? *It took them pretty close to 70 years!* The last part of it was accomplished in 1945, when Emperor Hirohito had to admit publicly that *he was not* the Son of God. They worshiped him as the Son of God. They had their traditions.

✓ Do the Arabs have their traditions? *Oh sure!*

If you want a justification for something, what do you say? *It is tradition!* There is the song in the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, **Tradition!** You listen to that carefully if you have it. It says to the Jew, it tells him who he is, what he is and where he’s going and it’s *tradition!* Everything is *tradition!* What does it do? “...Full well do you reject the commandment of God, **so that you may observe your own tradition.**”

Verse 10: “For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and ‘The one who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.’” Remember what Jesus told them in John 5: *You have one that will condemn you—Moses!*

Verse 10: “For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and ‘The one who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But you say, ‘If a man shall say to *his* father or mother, “Whatever benefit you might receive from me *is* corban” (that is, *set aside as* a gift to God), he is not obligated to help his parents.’ And you excuse him from doing anything for his father or his mother” (vs 10-12).

What they did is say, ‘Okay, you do not have to take care of your father and mother, but you can give it to the temple. If you give to us—the religious leaders—then it’s okay before God if your mother and father suffer.’ That’s what they were saying.

- That isn’t what the Bible says.
- That’s not what God wants.

Verse 12: “And you excuse him from doing anything for his father or his mother, nullifying the authority of the Word of God **by your tradition**, which you have passed down; and you practice many *traditions* such as this” (vs 12-13).

Then Jesus went on to explain the whole situation here.

Verse 14: “And after calling all the multitude to *Him*, He said to them, ‘Hear Me, all of you, and understand. There is nothing that enters into a man from outside, which is able to defile him...’” (vs 14-15). We’re not talking about clean or unclean meats; we’re talking about washing or not washing hands. Anything that is on your hand that comes from outside to in is not going to defile him before God. It’s not talking about to eat pork or not to eat pork.

“...but **the things that come out from within him, those are the things which defile a man**” (v 15).

Matthew 12:33: “Either make the tree good and the fruit good, or make the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt; for a tree is known by its fruit. Offspring of vipers... [there Jesus calls them vipers] ...how are you able to speak good things, being evil? **For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks**” (vs 33-34). We’re going to see this is exactly what Jesus is talking about in Mark 7.

Verse 35: “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings out good things; and the wicked man out of the wicked treasure brings out wicked things. But I say to you, for **every idle word that men may speak, they shall be held accountable in the day of judgment**. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.” (vs 35-37).

Jesus makes it very clear in Mark 7. What difference does it make if you wash or not wash your hands? Is that going to make you good or evil? *No!* All of us have been in the Church where, at one time or another, a minister said, ‘If your skirt is one inch above the top of the knee you shall not come in here, you’re defiling the house of God.’ What does that have to do with the heart? ***God is interested in the heart!***

Mark 7:16: “‘If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.’ Now, when He went into a house away from the multitude, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. And He said to them, ‘Are you likewise without understanding? Don’t you perceive that anything that enters into a man from outside is not able to defile him? For it does not enter into his heart, but into the belly, and *then* passes out into the sewer, purging all food’” (vs 16-19).

I’ll just explain, this does not mean making all meats that were unclean in the Old Testament clean for us to eat today. But here it means purging all foods. In other words, if you eat a carrot; it’s awfully hard to eat a carrot without having some little teeny speck of something on it. You can wash it as absolutely clean as you want to, but it came out

of the ground. So what if you eat a little bit of dirt? Are you going to die? *No!* What if you eat something and you didn’t wash your hands? Does that change or vile your mind somehow? *No!* This is what it’s talking about.

Verse 20: “And He said, ‘That which springs forth from *within* a man, that defiles the man. For **from within**, out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils go forth from within, and *these* defile a man.’” (vs 20-23).

That’s why ***conversion is a process to change the heart! To change the mind!*** Not a set of rules and regulations that you learn by rote. Could they have the Word of God? *Sure! They had the Word of God!* Did they live by it? *No, they didn’t live by it!* Jesus said that ‘man shall live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God!’

What happens when people become all wrapped up in *their own* ‘religion’? In other words, they can even take the Word of God and twist it to *their own* perverted use, because they are not worshipping God. What happens when you reach that point?

Jesus said, John 5:42: “But I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves.” Quite a whole different situation— isn’t it? What is the love of God? *John gives us the answer in 1-John!* There is nothing more that hurts and destroys people than not having the love of God.

1-John 5:2: “By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God...” Obviously, the Pharisees would have had a much different attitude had they loved God. Obviously, they would have been able to recognize and accept Christ if they were loving God.

“...and keep His commandments” (v 2). What was it that the Pharisees did? *They rejected the commandments of God! They made the commandments of God of no effect, through their traditions!*

Verse 3: “For **this is the love of God: that we keep...** [practice and live by] ...**His commandments**; and His commandments are not burdensome.” That’s the clearest definition of the love of God that we could get anywhere in the Bible.

1-John 4:9—we have another section that tells us the same thing; how we know and understand the love of God: “In this *way* the love of God was manifested toward us: that **God sent His only begotten Son into the world**, so that we might live through Him.” Tie that in with that ‘God so

loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.' Here it's repeated for us, "...that we might live through Him."

Verse 10: "In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us..." God loved us; He called us first. We didn't have any inkling of the love of God until He called us.

"...and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins" (v 10). A continual atoning mercy seat for our sins.

Verse 11: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another." That's something! That's something we want to keep, to retain, to have right in the forefront of our mind! If there's anything that is absolutely imperative that we hold onto, here it is!

Verse 12: "No one has seen God at any time..." See how that follows right along in the same context that Jesus was saying?

"...*Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us" (v 13). John made that pretty clear.

John 3:15: "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer..." That ties in with misjudgment; the Pharisees who despised. When you despise that means *you hate!*

"...and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him. By this *very act* we have known the love *of God* because He laid down His life for us: and we ourselves are to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his feelings of compassion from him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him?" (vs 15-17).

That's why Jesus said that they didn't have the love of God. They were seeking to kill Him; they were seeking to do Him in!

1-John 2:5: "On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, **truly in this one the love of God is being perfected.** By this *means* we know that we are in Him." We can have that love of God perfected in us. It all begins and ends with Christ. Let's always keep that proper attitude; let's keep that in perspective.

I think that has helped us in the things that we have gone through and suffered. It gives us a perspective where we can look back and learn and not make the same mistakes again, and *to really understand that love of God in the proper way!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) John 5:27-30
- 2) James 4:11-15
- 3) John 5:30
- 4) Psalm 50:1-6
- 5) Psalm 82:8
- 6) Psalm 7:8-11
- 7) Psalm 96:13
- 8) John 17:17
- 9) Revelation 16:1-7
- 10) Romans 3:1-6
- 11) Luke 18:9-14
- 12) Matthew 7:1-5
- 13) John 5:31-47
- 14) Mark 7:1-15
- 15) Matthew 12:33-37
- 16) Mark 7:16-23
- 17) John 5:42
- 18) 1 John 5:2-3
- 19) 1 John 4:9-13
- 20) 1 John 3:15-17
- 21) 1 John 2:5

#### Scriptures referenced, not quoted

- John 8; 7:24
- Hebrews 4
- Matthew 3
- Luke 3

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