

The Traditions of My Fathers

THE GOSPEL REVEALED · BIBLE STUDY

Galatians 1:11-14 | Arvin Assembly of God | Pastor Brian Overturf | September 30, 2026

The Big Question (from Sunday's sermon)

The Question: *When tradition and God's Word disagree, which one wins?*

The Answer: The Word. Every time. The Pharisees lost it by adding. The Sadducees lost it by cutting. Saul's tradition put a sword in his hand. Nothing added. Nothing taken away.

Sunday's four points: The Source · The Fence · The Scissors · The Sword

Learning Objectives

By the end of this study, you will be able to...

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Define tradition: what is handed down versus what God handed over. |
| 2 | Explain where Paul's gospel came from, and why "received" is a tradition word. |
| 3 | Show how the Pharisees' fence around the law became the law. |
| 4 | Trace Jesus' three steps in Mark 7: lay aside, reject, make of no effect. |
| 5 | Explain how the Sadducees lost the Word by cutting it. |
| 6 | Demonstrate how Jesus answered both the Pharisees and the Sadducees the same way: He appealed to the Scripture. |
| 7 | Show how tradition trained Saul's conscience and put a sword in his hand. |

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

The Text

Galatians 1:11-14 (NKJV)

¹¹ But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. ¹³ For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴ And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

What Is Tradition?

Everybody has traditions. Some of you have tamales every Christmas Eve, and if somebody tried to change that there'd be a riot in the kitchen. Some of you sit in the same seat every Sunday. Some traditions are good. Some are harmless. Some are precious.

But something happens when a tradition stops being something you enjoy and becomes something with authority. Something that tells you what God requires. Something that sits right next to the Bible with equal authority, and nobody is allowed to question or change it. That's the world Paul grew up in.

So before we go any further, here's the definition we're working with for this whole series. **Tradition is what's handed down. Scripture is what God handed over.** Tradition is whatever one generation of believers passes to the next... what we believe and how we practice it. The apostles' tradition is the gospel God handed over once for all, and it's written in Scripture.

Jude 3 (NKJV)

³ Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

Once for all delivered. Not handed down a little at a time and added to by every generation. Handed over, one time, to the saints. Every other tradition is the church handing things down. Sometimes wise. Sometimes just habit. Never equal to the authority of Scripture... and only as trustworthy as it agrees with it.

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

Three Layers

LAYER	WHAT IT IS	ITS PLACE
1. Apostolic tradition	The gospel God handed over once, through the apostles, now written in Scripture.	Full authority. 1 Cor 15:3; 2 Thess 2:15; Jude 3
2. Interpretive tradition	The church's understanding of Scripture over time: creeds, confessions, our own Fundamental Truths.	Valuable, but under the Bible and open to testing.
3. Customary tradition	The way a church or family has always done things.	Harmless or even precious, as long as it stays a custom.

The danger comes when layer 2 or 3 is treated like layer 1. That's Galatians 1:14, "zealous for the traditions of my fathers."

The scholars: what the word means

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Oxford Dictionary <i>of the Christian Church, "Tradition"</i>	"It does not mean something 'handed down' but something 'handed over'."
Osborne <i>The Hermeneutical Spiral</i>	"In essence, tradition refers to that set of beliefs and practices that has developed throughout the history of a movement and that directs and shapes the current form of the group."
Oxford Dictionary <i>on later uses of the word</i>	"Sometimes, again, it means simply customs and ideas which have grown up imperceptibly and been accepted more or less uncritically."

1. The Source (Where the message came from.)**Galatians 1:11 (NKJV)**

¹¹ *But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.*

Galatians 1:12 (NKJV)

¹² *For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Not according to man

We spent a whole Sunday on this back in verse 1, By Whose Authority. There Paul was talking about where he came from, who sent him. Here he's talking about the

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

message itself. What kind of gospel it is. And he says it doesn't look like anything a man would make.

Galatians 1:1 (NKJV)

¹ *Paul, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead),*

You know what kind of gospel we'd have if men made it up? Look around. Every religion man has ever come up with runs the same way. Do more. Try harder. Climb the ladder. Earn your spot. If man invents a system, it's always works. Grace doesn't come out of the human heart. Left to ourselves, we'll build a ladder every time.

The scholars: no human invention

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Stott <i>BST, on vv. 11-12</i>	"I preached it,' Paul could say, 'but I did not invent it. Nor did I receive it from a man, as if it were already an accepted tradition handed down from a previous generation. Nor was I taught it, so that I had to learn it from human teachers.'"
Stott <i>BST, on v. 12</i>	"As in verse 1 he asserted the divine origin of his apostolic commission, so now he asserts the divine origin of his apostolic gospel."

Word Study: "received" παραλαμβάνω (paralambanō)

That word received is tradition language. We stopped on it two weeks ago in verse 9. It's the word for receiving something handed over, one set of hands to the next. And when that happens generation after generation... father to son, teacher to student... it gets handed down. And here's what makes it interesting. Paul uses that exact language for his own preaching.

1 Corinthians 15:3 (NKJV)

³ *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,*

Delivered. Received. There's a right kind of handing down, the right kind of tradition. The apostles received the gospel from Christ and handed it to the church. Intact. Nothing added. Nothing lost. There's a tradition that comes from God... and there's a tradition that comes from men. The whole question is which one you're trusting in.

The scholars: the vocabulary of handing on

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Keener <i>Galatians, on v. 14</i>	"The term translated as traditions normally refers to what is passed on and received (to be passed on again)."
Bruce <i>NIGTC, on v. 12</i>	Paul was indebted for his gospel to no human being—not even to those who were 'in Christ' before him."

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

Keener*Galatians, on vv. 12, 14*

“Once Paul had followed human traditions—the sort of traditions now probably followed by his rivals... Now, however, he no longer proclaims traditions received from mortals, but rather the gospel he received directly from Christ.”

Nor was I taught it

That’s the classroom. And nobody in that world had more classroom than this man. Listen to how he describes his own education.

Acts 22:3 (NKJV)

³ *“I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law, and was zealous toward God as you all are today.”*

At the feet of Gamaliel, the most respected teacher of the law in Jerusalem. That’s the best seat in the house. Taught according to the strictness of our fathers’ law. There it is again. The fathers. Paul had everything his world could hand down to a young man. The best school. The best teacher. The best tradition. And he looks back at all of it and says... none of that gave me the gospel.

The scholars: the best school in Jerusalem

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
LABC <i>Barton, on v. 12</i>	“As a young man, Paul had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, learning by rote and repetition the Hebrew Law and Scriptures. But that was not the gospel, nor could it give salvation.”
LABC <i>Barton, on v. 14</i>	“Rabbi Gamaliel was the son of Simon and grandson of Rabbi Hillel, founder of the more liberal of the two main schools of Phariseism.”

Word Study: “revelation” ἀποκάλυψις (apokalypsis)

Revelation means an unveiling. Pulling back the curtain. Nobody handed this to Paul. Nobody lectured it into him. Jesus Christ showed it to him. What happened to Paul was unique to his calling as an apostle. God isn’t handing out new gospels today. The same Christ who revealed it to Paul speaks to us now through His Word.

And look at the shape of this passage. Verse 12... the revelation of Jesus Christ. Verse 14... the traditions of my fathers. Verse 16... to reveal His Son in me. **Revelation.**

Tradition. Revelation. The traditions Paul had, the ones that didn’t line up with Scripture, are sitting right in the middle. When Christ is revealed and our eyes are opened to the wonderful truths in His Word, all the traditions of man contrary to His Word fall away. That’s Paul’s whole life story in three verses.

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

Galatians 1:12 (NKJV)

¹² For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 1:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Galatians 1:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood,

The scholars: what “revelation” carries

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Moo <i>BECNT, quoting Dunn, on v. 12</i>	“To describe this event as an ‘apocalypse’ not only underlined its heavenly authority but also implied that it had eschatological significance, that is, as the key which unlocked the mystery of God’s purpose for his creation, the keystone of the whole arch of human history”
Osborne <i>Galatians, on v. 12</i>	“It is unlikely that Paul was thinking here of the second coming and the end of this age. Rather, he appears to be saying that the giving of the gospel is part of the inauguration of the age to come, the age that began with Christ’s incarnation.”

So let me ask you. Is what you believe something you inherited? Or something you’ve received from God through His Word?

2. The Fence (What the Pharisees added.)**Galatians 1:14 (NKJV)**

¹⁴ And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

Which camp did Paul come from?

I advanced. The idea is making progress, moving up, getting ahead of the other students. Paul wasn’t just in the class. He was at the top of it. And what was he advancing in? Zealous for the traditions of my fathers. He doesn’t say zealous for the Scriptures. He says zealous for the traditions. The word traditions here shouldn’t be understood as the Old Testament Scriptures. These were something else. And Paul knew exactly which camp he came from.

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

Acts 23:6 (NKJV)

⁶ *But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"*

Philippians 3:5-6 (NKJV)

⁵ *circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;* ⁶ *concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.*

Two parties in one room. I'm a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee. Born into it. Raised in it. His dad was one. The traditions of my fathers... literally.

Word Study: "traditions" παράδοσις (paradosis)**The scholars: not the Scriptures**

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Schreiner <i>ZECNT, on v. 14</i>	"The word "traditions" should not be equated with the OT Scriptures. It denotes the way of life promulgated by the Pharisees, which Paul, once he became a Christian, no longer equated with the teachings of the OT Scriptures"
deSilva <i>NICNT, on v. 14</i>	"Paul probably indicates hereby the oral traditions that were accepted by the Pharisaic school as an authoritative complement to the written Torah, referred to in the Synoptic Gospels as "the tradition handed down by the elders" (Matt 15:2 // Mark 7:3-5)."
Keener <i>Galatians, on v. 14</i>	"Pharisees were known for their meticulous faithfulness to ancestral traditions."

What did Josephus see?

There's a Jewish historian who lived in Paul's day, a man named Josephus. He even tried out the Pharisees himself as a young man. And he explains the split between the two parties in one sentence.

PRIMARY SOURCE	IN HIS OWN WORDS
Josephus <i>Antiquities 13.297</i> (Whiston)	"What I would now explain is this, that the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the laws of Moses; and for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them..."

Did you catch it? From their fathers. Not written in the laws of Moses. That's Galatians 1:14. That's the traditions of my fathers.

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

How did a fence become the law?

The Pharisees didn't start out as the bad guys. They loved the law. They meant well. They didn't want anybody to even get close to breaking it. So they built rules around the rules. Their own writings from that tradition say it out loud. Their purpose, their priority, was to **"make a fence round the Torah" (Pirkei Avot 1:1).**

How many of you have ever fished at the aqueduct? Along certain sections there's a fence for a reason. Nobody's mad at that fence. It keeps kids out of the water. But imagine somebody starts teaching that touching the fence is the same thing as falling in the canal. Then they build a second fence around the first fence. Then a third. And then they tell you your standing with God depends on the fences. That's what happened. **The fence became the law.**

The scholars: the fence that became the law

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
MacArthur <i>Sermon, on v. 14</i>	"And the halaka is the body of Jewish oral law which grew up around the Torah like a big picket fence. This was just a gob of all kinds of little practical and impractical ethical and technical laws."
Dunn <i>BNTC, on v. 14</i>	"...the traditional explanations and rulings (the oral Halakhah), which drawn from the Torah, had already gained, in Pharisaic eyes at least, the same status as the Torah itself."
Keener <i>Galatians, on v. 14</i>	"...some successors of Pharisaic teachers suggested that the oral traditions even equaled ... or outranked ... the written law."

Same status. Equal with the Word of God. And some who came later said the traditions outranked it. In other words... the fence was now bigger than the aqueduct!

How does tradition take over?

Jesus walked right into this world. The Pharisees and scribes watched His disciples eat with unwashed hands. This wasn't about germs. Mark tells you a couple of verses earlier about cups, pitchers, copper vessels, even the couches. A whole system of washings. Moses never commanded any of it. It was a tradition the fathers had added.

Mark 7:5 (NKJV)

⁵ *Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"*

And notice the question. Not, why are your disciples disobeying God? But, why aren't they walking according to the tradition? Here's how you know when tradition goes wrong. When the question stops being what has God said in His Word... and becomes what does our tradition say.

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

Mark 7:7 (NKJV)

⁷ And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

Mark 7:8-9 (NKJV)

*⁸ For laying aside the **commandment of God**, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.”⁹ He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.*

Mark 7:13 (NKJV)

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

There are three steps in this chapter. Watch how tradition moves.

STEP	WHAT HAPPENS
1. Lay it aside <i>Mark 7:8</i>	You set the commandment of God down. You don't reject it. You just put it on the shelf.
2. Reject it <i>Mark 7:9</i>	Now it isn't on the shelf anymore. It's in the way.
3. Make it of no effect <i>Mark 7:13</i>	The tradition wins, and the Word of God is cancelled out. That's how a fence becomes a throne.

Corban: a religious way out**Mark 7:10-12 (NKJV)**

¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'¹¹ But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"—' (that is, a gift to God), ¹² then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother,

God said, honor your father and your mother. But the tradition said a man could declare his money Corban, a gift to God, and then he didn't have to use it to take care of his aging parents. A religious rule became the way to get out of the fifth commandment. Some of you have parents in their eighties. Imagine telling your mother, Mom, I'd help with the rent... but I gave it to the church. And the religious leaders would pat you on the back.

There's the answer to our question, straight from the mouth of Jesus. When tradition gets equal standing with the Word, it doesn't stay equal. It wins. And the minute it wins, the Word of God is of no effect. God saw this coming a long time ago.

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

Deuteronomy 4:2 (NKJV)

² *You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.*

You shall not add to the word. **The Pharisees added.**

3. The Scissors (What the Sadducees took away.)

Now some of you are thinking, alright Pastor, then the answer is easy. Throw out all the traditions. Just keep what's written. That's exactly what the other party said. Remember Josephus? He finishes that same sentence.

PRIMARY SOURCE	IN HIS OWN WORDS
Josephus <i>Antiquities 13.297</i> (Whiston)	"...the Sadducees reject them, and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the tradition of our forefathers."
Josephus <i>Antiquities 18.16</i> (Whiston)	"But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this: That souls die with the bodies; nor do they regard the observation of any thing besides what the law enjoins them"

Sounds good, doesn't it? Sounds like us. But watch what they did with it. Because Moses didn't stop halfway through that verse: "nor take from it."

Acts 23:8 (NKJV)

⁸ *For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both.*

No resurrection. No angel. No spirit. The Sadducees didn't add to the Word. They cut. Whatever didn't fit the way they thought... whatever was too supernatural... they took the scissors to it.

Who were these men?

They were the high-priestly families. The men who ran the temple. Educated. Respectable. Powerful. And completely comfortable with a Bible that had no miracles left in it.

The scholars: the party of the high priests

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
McCarthy <i>The Gospel According to Rome</i>	"The aristocratic high-priestly families and their associates were of the sect of the Sadducees (Acts 5:17). Others were of the party of the Pharisees."

And here's something that ought to sound familiar after The Approval Trap. Josephus says that when the Sadducees got into office, they went along with the Pharisees anyway, "because the multitude would not otherwise bear them"

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

(Antiquities 18.17). They threw out the traditions... and then bowed to them the minute the crowd demanded it.

Right doctrine, still lost

On the resurrection, the Pharisees were right. On the angels, the Pharisees were right. They had a lot of the doctrine right... and they still made the Word of no effect with their traditions. And the Sadducees threw out the traditions... and they still missed God. Being on the right side of the argument didn't save either one of them. Only submitting to the authoritative Word of God does.

How did Jesus answer them?

Jesus had some encounters with the Sadducees too. They came to Him with a trick question: a woman marries seven brothers, one after another, and each one dies. So in the resurrection... whose wife is she? They thought they'd made the resurrection look ridiculous. They'd probably been using that one for years.

Matthew 22:23 (NKJV)

²³ The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him,

Matthew 22:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God.

Matthew 22:31-32 (NKJV)

³¹ But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ³² 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."

You are mistaken. Not knowing the Scriptures. These men had the scrolls. They could quote Moses. They ran the temple. Two things they didn't know. They didn't know the Scriptures, and they didn't know the power of God. Have you not read? That's a jab. These men read it for a living. At the burning bush God called Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob long after all three had died. Not, I was their God. **I am.** Out of the very books they claimed to hold, He proves the resurrection.

Goes deeper: a Sadducee Bible

Throwing out man's traditions isn't the same thing as submitting to God's Word. You can lose the Word by adding to it, and you can lose it by taking scissors to it. Thomas Jefferson did it literally. He took a razor to the Gospels and cut out everything he didn't believe. The miracles went. The resurrection went. His Bible ends with Jesus in the tomb. That's a Sadducee Bible.

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

There are churches today that still have a Bible on the pulpit, but they've cut out the parts our culture won't put up with. The resurrection becomes a nice idea. The miracles become stories. Sin becomes a word we don't say anymore. And the power of the Holy Spirit becomes something that only happened back then. As a Pentecostal people we need to hear Jesus on this one: you don't know the Scriptures nor the power of God. You don't get to keep one and cut the other. **The Pharisees added. The Sadducees took away.** And Jesus answered both of them the same way. With the Bible.

4. The Sword (What tradition did to Paul.)**Galatians 1:13 (NKJV)**

¹³ *For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.*

You have heard. They already knew the story. Everybody knew it. The man who planted their church used to hunt people like them.

Word Study: “beyond measure” and “tried to destroy” καθ’ ὑπερβολήν (kath’ hyperbolēn) • ἐπόρθουν (eporthoun)

Beyond measure. And tried to destroy it. The way Paul writes it, he kept at it. Over and over. Trying and trying. He wasn't trying to correct the church. He was trying to wipe it out.

The scholars: a persecutor who kept at it

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Moo <i>BECNT, on v. 13</i>	“Both verbs are in the imperfect tense, the former because it is a durative idea—“I was persecuting”—and the second because it is conative—“I tried to destroy””
deSilva <i>NICNT, on v. 13</i>	“Paul was not merely trying to destroy the church; he was on his way to succeeding but was simply stopped in his tracks and thus prevented from completing the action.”
Stott <i>BST, on v. 13</i>	“The phrase seems to indicate the violence, even the savagery, with which he set about this grim work.”

Word Study: “zealous” ζηλωτής (zēlōtēs)

Zealous for the traditions of my fathers. The traditions gave Saul zeal. They gave him a résumé. They gave him a reputation. They gave him standing. And they put a sword in his hand.

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

The scholars: what zeal meant in Paul's world

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Moo <i>BECNT, on v. 14</i>	"Paul's claim to be a "zealot" (ζηλωτής) does not mean that he belonged to the actual Zealot party, or sect ... but that he had a deep passion for his Jewish faith"
Moo <i>BECNT, on v. 14</i>	"The great OT example of such zeal was Phinehas: when confronted with a blatant violation of God's law, he killed the Israelite sinner and his pagan lover (Num. 25:6-15)."
Keener <i>Galatians, on v. 13</i>	"At the time, Paul undoubtedly saw himself as following the model of the Maccabees, who pursued or persecuted (diōkō) those who broke ... or militarily opposed ... God's law."

A conscience trained by tradition

Listen to how he tells it years later.

Acts 26:9 (NKJV)

⁹ *"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.*

Acts 26:10-11 (NKJV)

¹⁰ *This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. ¹¹ And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them even to foreign cities.*

I thought I must. In other words... I believed it was my duty. He wasn't rebelling against his conscience. He was obeying it. He locked up the saints. He cast his vote against them when they were put to death. He chased them all the way to foreign cities. His tradition had trained his conscience, and his conscience told him that dragging Christians out of their homes was serving God.

That's what happens when tradition overrules the Bible. It doesn't just add rules. **It gives you a clear conscience about the wrong things.**

The scholars: sincere and wrong

SCHOLAR	KEY CONTRIBUTION
Wilson <i>Preaching the Word, on v. 13</i>	"But his Pharisaic beliefs made him, secondly, a persecutor of the Christian faith—not just opposed to the faith, but aggressively opposed, to the point of violence."
Dunn <i>BNTC, on v. 13</i>	"...he now regards his ardent defence of Judaism as excessive"

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel RevealedArvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

Zeal without knowledge

That was Paul. He wasn't lazy. He wasn't lukewarm. He was proud of it. Paul would later say it about his own people.

Romans 10:2 (NKJV)

² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

Sincere doesn't mean right. You can be sincerely wrong... with your whole heart. What we need is knowledge that comes from God's Word, so we can have the right kind of zeal.

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

Pastoral Takeaways

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 1 | Tradition is what's handed down. Scripture is what God handed over. Some traditions are wise and some are just habit. None of them are equal to the authority of Scripture, and each one is only as trustworthy as it agrees with it. |
| 2 | The gospel didn't come from man. Every man-made religion runs on works. Grace came by revelation, and the apostles handed it to the church intact. Nothing added. Nothing lost. |
| 3 | Fences become thrones. A rule built to protect the Word can end up replacing it. Watch for the moment the question changes from "What has God said?" to "What have we always done?" |
| 4 | You can lose the Word by cutting it. Throwing out man's traditions isn't the same as submitting to God's Word. We don't get to keep the Scriptures and cut the power of God. |
| 5 | Sincere doesn't mean right. Saul obeyed his conscience all the way to Damascus. A conscience trained by tradition can feel clear about the wrong things. Let the Word train yours. |
| 6 | When tradition and God's Word disagree, the Word wins. Every time. Nothing added to it. Nothing taken away. |

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

Discussion Questions for Home or Group

1	Observation: Read Galatians 1:11-16 and circle the word “revelation” (v. 12) and “reveal” (v. 16). Then underline “the traditions of my fathers” (v. 14). What sits between the two revelations? (See “revelation,” pg. 5.)
2	Observation: Underline “received” and “taught” in verse 12. Why would Paul use tradition words to deny where his gospel came from? Compare 1 Corinthians 15:3. (See “received,” pg. 4.)
3	Interpretation: In your own words, what is the difference between what is handed down and what God handed over? Give one example of each from your own life or church.
4	Observation: Read Mark 7:5-13 and mark the three steps: “laying aside” (v. 8), “reject” (v. 9), “of no effect” (v. 13). Which step is the easiest to miss? (See How does tradition take over?, pg. 8.)
5	Interpretation: The Pharisees built a fence around the law. When is a fence wise, and when does it become the law? (See How did a fence become the law?, pg. 8.)
6	Interpretation: The Sadducees rejected the traditions and still missed God. What did Jesus say they didn’t know (Matthew 22:29)? Why do we need both?
7	Application: Where have you seen a church cut out the parts of the Bible our culture won’t put up with? Where are we tempted to do the same? (See Goes deeper: a Sadducee Bible, pg. 11.)
8	Application: Saul thought he was serving God. Is there anything you feel guilty about that God never forbade, or safe about because of something God never promised?
9	Application: Read Acts 17:11. What would it look like this week to check what you believe the way the Bereans did?

The Traditions of My Fathers • The Gospel Revealed

Arvin Assembly of God | New King James Version | September 2026

Quick Review

This isn't a test. It's a chance to see how much of Sunday's truth is already yours. The answers are at the bottom. Take it as encouragement.

1	Tradition is what's handed down. Scripture is what God _____.
2	In verse 12 Paul says he neither received his gospel from man nor was he taught it. It came through: (a) the apostles in Jerusalem (b) the revelation of Jesus Christ (c) the teaching of Gamaliel
3	True or False: In Galatians 1:14, "the traditions of my fathers" means the Old Testament Scriptures.
4	The Pharisees' own writings said their goal was to make a _____ round the Torah.
5	Jesus names three steps in Mark 7. Lay it aside, reject it, and make it of no _____.
6	The tradition that let a man dedicate his money to God instead of caring for his parents was called: (a) Corban (b) Sabbath (c) Mishnah
7	Which party said there is no resurrection, no angel, and no spirit (Acts 23:8)? (a) the Pharisees (b) the Sadducees (c) the scribes
8	Jesus told the Sadducees they were mistaken because they didn't know the Scriptures nor the _____ of God.
9	True or False: Saul persecuted the church against his own conscience.
10	Romans 10:2 says Paul's people had a zeal for God, but not according to _____.

Answer Key: 1) handed over • 2) b • 3) False. They were the Pharisees' traditions, not the Scriptures • 4) fence • 5) effect • 6) a • 7) b • 8) power • 9) False. He thought he must; his tradition had trained his conscience • 10) knowledge