

# Matthew 15:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

## Analysis

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Jesus' counter-question employs rabbinic debate technique, answering a question with a question. More significantly, He reverses the accusation: they transgress God's commandment through their tradition. The Reformed principle of 'sola Scriptura' finds strong support here—Scripture alone judges tradition, not tradition Scripture. Jesus establishes the supremacy of divine revelation over human interpretation, a cornerstone of biblical Christianity. This verse powerfully refutes any claim that church tradition equals biblical authority.

## Historical Context

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Jesus challenges the Pharisaic oral law (later codified as the Mishnah around AD 200). While claiming to 'build a fence around the Torah,' these traditions often contradicted Scripture's intent. Jesus' response shows His authority as divine interpreter, not merely another rabbi offering opinions.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

## Study Questions

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1. How do you ensure Scripture remains your final authority?
2. What church traditions might actually contradict biblical teaching?
3. How does Jesus' example guide your response to religious criticism?

## Interlinear Text

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|-------------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|
| ὁ                 | δὲ          | ἀποκριθεὶς             | εἶπεν           | αὐτοῖς           | Διατί      | καὶ         | ὕμεῖς        |
| G3588             | <b>But</b>  | <b>he answered</b>     | <b>and said</b> | <b>unto them</b> | <b>Why</b> | <b>also</b> | <b>do ye</b> |
|                   | G1161       | G611                   | G2036           | G846             | G1302      | G2532       | G5210        |
| παραβαίνετε       | τὴν         | ἐντολὴν                | τοῦ             | θεοῦ             | Διὰ        | τὴν         |              |
| <b>transgress</b> | G3588       | <b>the commandment</b> | G3588           | <b>of God</b>    | <b>by</b>  | G3588       |              |
| G3845             |             | G1785                  |                 | G2316            | G1223      |             |              |
| παράδοσιν         | ὕμῶν        |                        |                 |                  |            |             |              |
| <b>tradition</b>  | <b>your</b> |                        |                 |                  |            |             |              |
| G3862             | G5216       |                        |                 |                  |            |             |              |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Colossians 2:23** (Parallel theme): Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

**Colossians 2:8** (Parallel theme): Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

**Mark 7:13** (Word): Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

**Titus 1:14** (Word): Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.