



St. Irenaeus said of those who depart from Tradition to follow their own interpretations of the Bible:

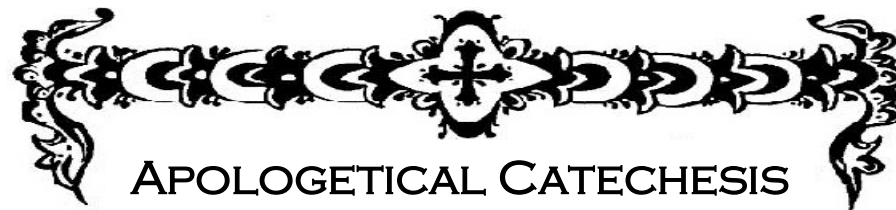
"... They need to get off the beaten path and to seek by walking along ever new paths. This is why the elements of his doctrine do not agree and are scattered without any order.



On the other hand, the journey of those who are in the Church goes around the whole world and has the certain tradition that comes from the apostles: in it we can see that ***all have one and the same faith***, that all admit one and the same God the Father, all believe in the same economy of the incarnation of the Son of God. all have the same consciousness that the Holy Spirit has been given to them, all practice the same commandments and keep ecclesiastical ordinations in the same way, all look for the same coming of the Lord and expect the same salvation of the whole man, that is, of soul and body."

"Because the Church's preaching is true and firm, and in it a single and identical way of salvation is proposed to the whole world. To her, in fact, the light of God was entrusted, and for this reason the wisdom of God with which she saves all men is proclaimed on the roads, she acts freely in the streets, she preaches from the heights of the walls, and she does not cease to speak at the gates of the city. For everywhere the Church preaches the truth. This is the seven-branched lamp, which bears the light of Christ."

"They are always inquiring, but they never find the truth. That is why we must avoid their opinions, and we must be careful not to do us any harm."



APOLOGETICAL CATECHESIS

IS THE TRADITION OF THE CHURCH ACCEPTABLE?



Some non-Orthodox Christian groups claim that *"traditions are not necessary... for the true Christian faith is fully established and explained in the Bible."*

Let us see how the New Testament indicates the use of Tradition.

In Luke 1:1-4, the Evangelist says that his writings are based on apostolic teachings (Tradition) and not on written documents. It tells us that he accepted the traditions, compared them, and wrote them down. Paul converted Luke, who was a physician and artist, to Christianity. Luke made a portrait of the Virgin Mary that is preserved in Mark's house (which is a monastery).

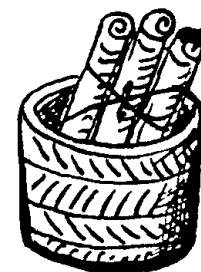
In 2 Thessalonians 2:14-15, *"To this end he has called you through our gospel, that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."* What does the Apostle mean if our gospels had not yet been written?

"Therefore, brethren, stand firm and preserve the traditions which you have learned from us, either by word of mouth or by letter."

The New Testament did not yet exist!

In 2 Timothy 1:13, the Apostle tells his disciple, *"Hold as your rule the sound words which you have heard from me in the faith and love of Christ Jesus."* And in 2 Timothy 2:2, *"... and what thou hast heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust it to faithful men, who in their turn are able to instruct others."*

Where are these instructions of the Apostle written?



ORTHODOX ANSWERS 8





In Matthew 28:20 we read about Christ's words to the Apostles and that according to the Gospel of John *"If they were written one by one, I think that not everyone would be sufficient to contain the books that were written"*:

"... teaching them (the baptized) to observe all that I have commanded you."

And what does the Lord say to us about those who do not accept the Tradition of the Apostles: *"Whoever listens to you listens to me; and he who rejects you rejects me; and whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me"* (Luke 10:16).

The Sacred Scriptures command us to listen to the Apostles and their successors in the Church. Where do those who do not listen to apostolic teaching stand because it is not written in the Bible?

In Acts 20:20, the Apostle Paul says, *"... when I could be of any use to you; I preached and taught you in public and in the houses."* That is, he taught according to Tradition and orally.

We read in Acts that the first Christians were faithful to the Tradition of the Apostles: to the words preached and taught orally, transmitted to the saints once and for all in the bosom of Christ's Church: *"They attended assiduously to the teaching of the apostles, to communion, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers."*



If we believe the words of historians and encyclopaedias because we know them to be true, we should not doubt the words and deeds of eminent disciples of the first and second centuries such as Polycarp and Ignatius of Antioch.

They learned directly from the Apostle John, and wrote Epistles that are part of Tradition. Shouldn't we respect them? Shouldn't we obey them? ***Christians must study his words in order to understand what the Church did and taught in the early centuries.***

It is childish to argue that these teachings and practices are irrelevant, while asserting that the teachings of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century



preachers are acceptable. Modern communities, groups, and sects of non-Orthodox Christians do just that.



They reject Tradition and the teachings of the early centuries to put in their place the traditions and teachings of their own leaders and founders.

The Church has its own history. It begins in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, but it does not end there. The history of the Church continues in the Holy Fathers, and we must accept that history as well.

The Bible is part of Holy Tradition (2 Thessalonians 2:15) ***and we should not listen to those who demand a written text for all the teachings of the Church.*** Theology is based on, but not limited to, the Bible. The Bible and the Traditions of the Church form Tradition. They are the basis of theology (Galatians 1:8, Colossians 4:16, Hebrews 2:1). ***The Bible teaches, and the Church interprets.*** And the interpretation made by the Church from the first century to the present day is the living voice of Tradition.

In most cases, ***the Bible, interpreted without Tradition; it leads to heresy and error.***

The Christian West has done two things: either it has placed Tradition above Scripture, or it has discarded Tradition in order to "freely" interpret the Bible. In both cases, he has strayed from the true Faith of the Apostles, and has fallen into schism or heresy.

The Orthodox Church preserves the Holy Tradition received from the Apostles without changing anything in it.

Holy Tradition can only be found in the undivided Church, in the Orthodox Church.

Denial of these realities and dependence on Scripture alone can be a big mistake. Truth can only be experienced and known within the Church. And Christ has only one Church, responsible for the apostolic ministry and tradition of the Christian Mysteries.

