

# Honoring With the Lips

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Pharisees and scribes once came to Jesus, chastising Him for not honoring the traditions of their forefathers (Mat. 15:1–2). He responded by accusing them of violating God’s commandments by their human traditions, and cited one of their traditions as proof (vv. 3–6). He then excoriated them as follows:

Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honor-eth me with their lips; But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men (vv. 7–9).

Upon reading His scathing rebuke of such hypocrisy among His contemporaries, it is only natural to inquire if such hypocrisy exists today. If so, Jesus’ rebuke of its modern versions is no less powerful and appropriate. Notably, those against whom Jesus originally railed were religious leaders.

They professed **orally** to be servants of God, but their behavior proved that their hearts were far removed from their lips. They were “talking the talk,” but not at all “walking the walk” of true religion. Things have changed little from then to now.

Modern **religious leaders** routinely “honor with the lips” the God and Savior Whose authority they despise by flouting His revealed will. For example, **religious leaders** say:

- “One church is as good as another” (implying that all of them have Jesus’ approval), but **Jesus said** He would build only **one** church, of which He is head and Savior (Mat. 16:18; Eph. 1:22–23; 5:23).
- All the conflicting doctrines and practices of denominationalism are God’s will, but **the New Testament demands** uniformity of doctrine and practice (John 17:20–21; 1 Cor. 1:10; Gal. 1:8–9; Eph. 4:3; et al.).
- Sinners may be saved by saying “the sinner’s prayer,” but **the New Testament tells** every believing sinner to repent and be baptized in order to be saved (Acts 2:37–47).
- Baptism consists of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, but **the New Testament teaches** that baptism is a burial in water (Acts 8:38–39; 10:47–48; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12).
- Baptism is optional after salvation, but **Jesus said**, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: (Mark 16:16; cf. John 3:5; Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:4; Gal. 3:27; Tit. 3:5).
- When Jesus comes He will reign in a millennial kingdom on earth, but **Jesus said**, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36; cf. Mark 9:1; Col. 1:13; Heb. 12:23, 28).

Likewise, **political leaders** often honor God only “with the lips.” They may be shameless fornicators, drunks, thieves, and blasphemers, but around voting time they can glibly say, “God bless you,” or “I’m praying for you”—a terrible mockery.

God will uproot all such blind guides (Mat. 15:13–14).

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