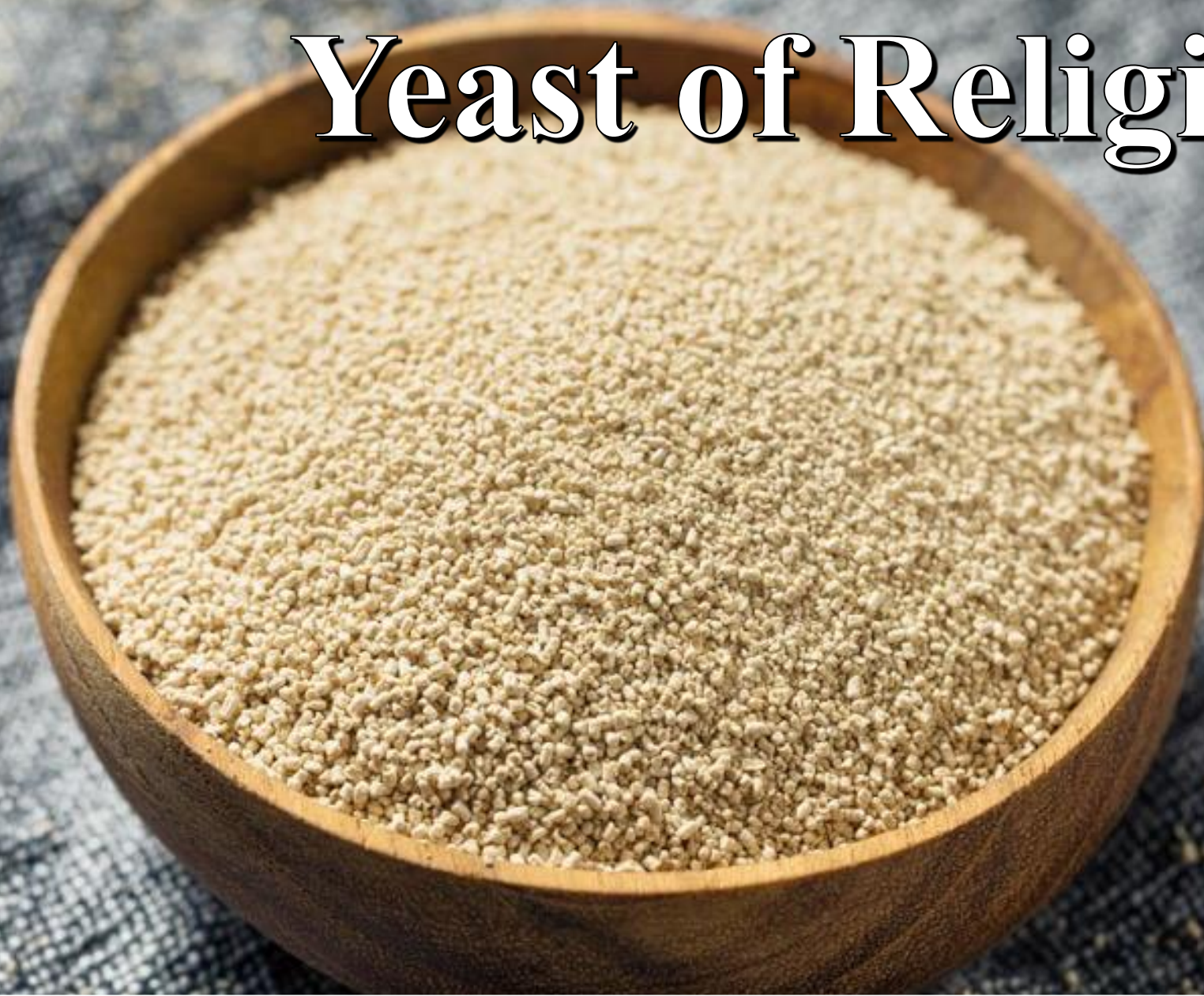
A scenic view of a beach with waves, a white cross, and birds in the sky. The background shows a sandy beach with gentle waves lapping at the shore. In the foreground, there are some green and brown plants. A large white cross is superimposed on the left side of the image. The sky is blue with a few birds flying. The text "Senior Bible Study Ministry" is centered in the upper half of the image.

Senior Bible Study Ministry

<https://www.seniorbiblestudies.org/>

Yeast of Religion



Matthew 16 (NIV)

1 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' 3 and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. 4 A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah."

Matthew 16 (NIV)

Jesus then left them and went away. 5 When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. 6 “Be careful,” Jesus said to them. “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” 7 They discussed this among themselves and said, “It is because we didn’t bring any bread.” 8 Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, “You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? 9 Do you still not understand?

Matthew 16 (NIV)

Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? 10 Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? 11 How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Religionist

Religionists

- People who follow religious rules very strictly
- The Pharisees and Sadducees were two groups of religious leaders during Jesus' time
- They were respected & had a lot of influence
- They asked Jesus for a miraculous sign because they wanted to test Jesus & see if He was really from God
- Jesus refused to give them a sign, except the sign of Jonah

Religionists

- Jonah was in the belly of a fish for three days, just as Jesus would be in the grave
- These religionists felt threatened by Jesus' teachings & popularity
- Their focus was more on rules than on a relationship with God
- They missed the heart of God's teachings – love, mercy & grace

Religionists

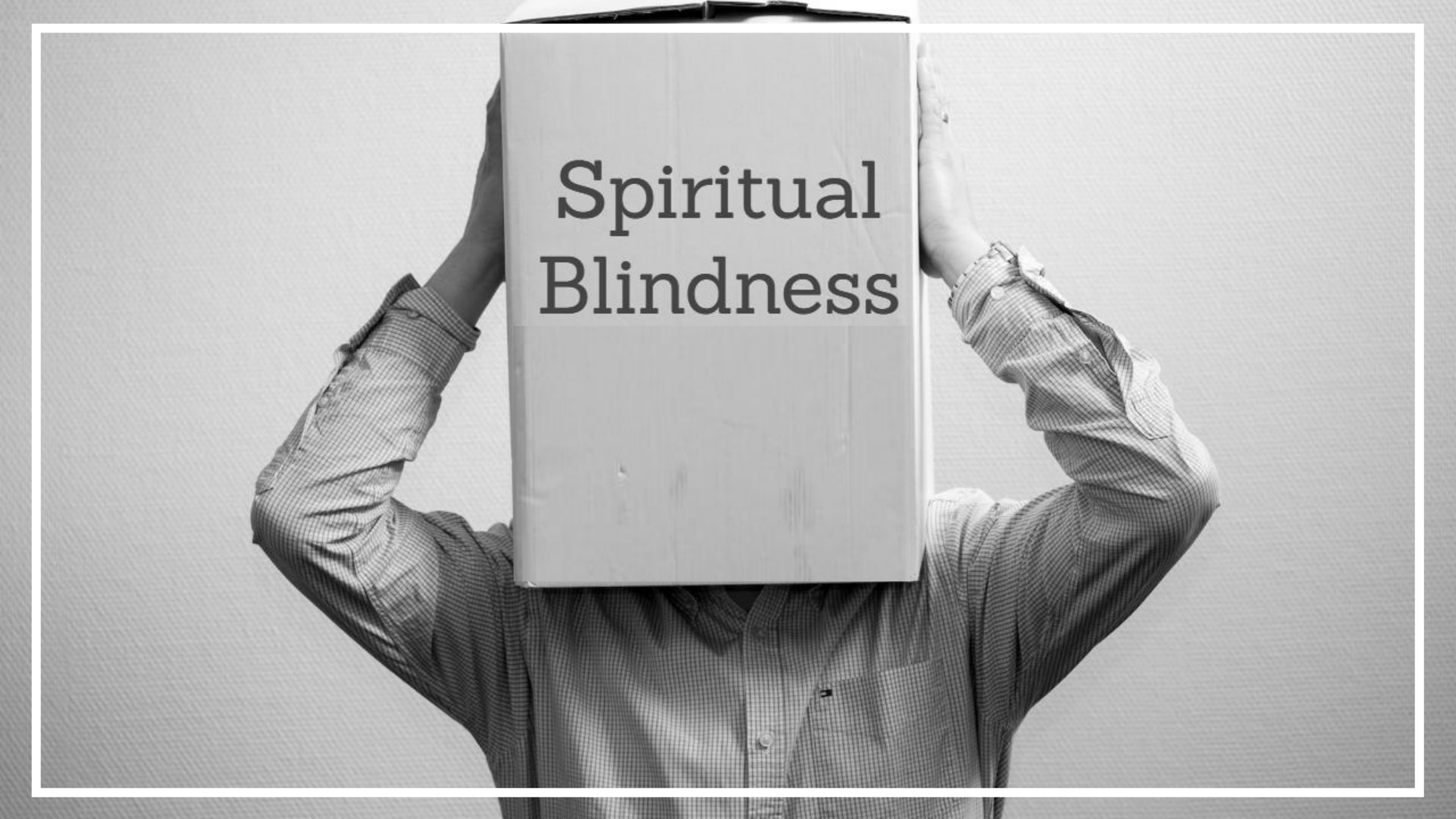
- These religionists often acted holy but their hearts were not right with God
- They liked to show off their religious practices to others
- They practiced strict adherence to the law without understanding its purpose
 - God's standard
 - Mirror of our sinfulness

Religionists

- They were quick to judge others who did not follow their rules
- Jesus criticized them for being outwardly righteous but inwardly corrupt
- He used yeast as a metaphor for the pervasive influence of their teaching
- These religionists lacked humility before God

Religionists

- They cared more about human approval than God's approval
- Their actions often kept others from coming to God
- There are still people today who focus on rules over relationship with God

A black and white photograph of a person from the chest up, holding a large, rectangular cardboard box in front of their face. The person is wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved, button-down shirt with a fine grid pattern. Their hands are visible at the top corners of the box. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The text "Spiritual Blindness" is printed in a dark, serif font across the center of the box.

Spiritual Blindness

Spiritual Blindness

- Inability to see and understand spiritual truths
- Despite being religious leaders, the Pharisees & Sadducees couldn't recognize Jesus as the Messiah
- They asked for more signs but not acknowledging the miracles Jesus already performed
- Their hearts were hardened against Jesus' message
- They didn't understand the true meaning of the Scriptures

Spiritual Blindness

- The religionists misinterpreted the prophecies about the Messiah
- They focused on physical signs instead of spiritual truths
- They were not open to new teachings or perspectives
- The fear of losing their influence blinded them to Jesus' authority
- They couldn't see that Jesus was fulfilling God's plan

Spiritual Blindness

- Their preconceived notions about who the Messiah should be blinded them
- They resisted the change Jesus brought to their religious system
- They relied heavily on traditions rather than seeing God's plan being accomplished

Spiritual Blindness

- Jesus often spoke about the blind leading the blind
- He described Himself as the light of the world, exposing darkness
- True understanding of God comes from being open to the Holy Spirit
- We must examine our own lives for areas of spiritual blindness

Spiritual Blindness

- Despite their blindness, Jesus showed compassion & was patient with them
- We need to keep our hearts & minds open to God's truth
- As we study Scripture, we can ask God to open our eyes to see His truth

Avoid False Teaching



False Teaching

- Teaching that goes against the truth of God's Word
- Jesus warned His disciples about the "yeast" of the Pharisees & Sadducees
- Yeast represents how false teachings can spread & affect many
- Examples of false teachings include legalism, adding rules not found in the Bible & denying that Jesus is the Messiah

False Teaching

- It is important to be able to discern truth from falsehood
- False teaching can lead people away from God
- Scripture is the ultimate authority for truth
- The Pharisees' teachings focused on external rituals rather than internal change
- The Sadducees' teachings denied the resurrection & other spiritual truths

False Teaching

- False teachings can confuse & mislead believers
- The Holy Spirit helps us understand & discern the truth
- We can stay rooted & grounded in God's truth by regular Bible study
- Bible teachers must be teaching with honesty & faithfulness to Biblical truths
- They must be vigilant against teachings that deviate from the gospel

False Teaching

- We must test teachings to see if they align with God's Word.
- We must stay away from those who persistently teach contrary to the Bible
- When encountering false teachers, we must speak the truth in love to correct false teachings
- As believers we must continually seek to learn & grow in understanding God's Word

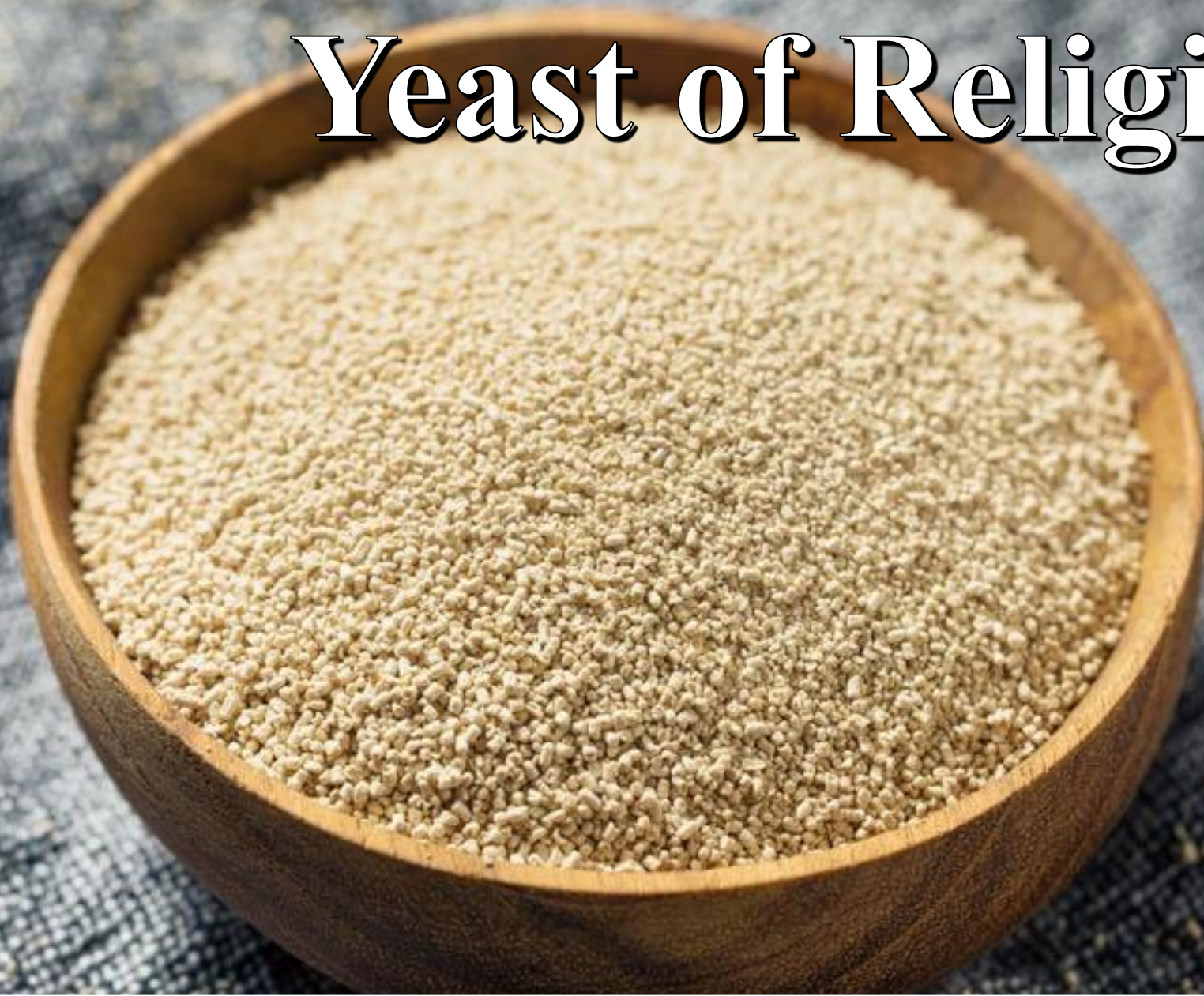
Main Points

Jesus warns against the yeast of religion by highlighting the spiritual blindness of religionists and the dangers of false teaching.

Questions

- How can you guard against the "yeast of religion" as you are taught by pastors & Bible teachers?
- How do you ensure your own religious practices & beliefs are rooted in genuine faith rather than the superficial signs & traditions?
- How can you discern true teaching from false teaching in a world filled with diverse religious ideas and doctrines?

Yeast of Religion



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