

COMMENTARY

GOSPEL OF MARK
Chapter 7

vs. 1-23:

The Pharisees and teachers of Jewish law (both groups being experts in the traditions of their people) noticed that Jesus' disciples ignored the "ceremonial" washing of their hands before eating. God had told His people that those who were "unclean" were unacceptable at that time and had to offer "cleansing" themselves. The Jewish people had added their own ideas about what causes one to become "unclean" and held it equal to God's teaching. Neglecting these traditions was considered sin to these teachers of the law.

Jesus refers to Isaiah 29:13 when He replies. He emphasizes that they have placed undue weight on the teachings of men and that they are neglecting the very things taught by God. At times their traditions contradict God's teachings. This is why Jesus emphasizes that they are in reality "far from God".

Jesus goes on to logically present how only things that come from within can make one "unclean" (various sins--see vs. 21-23). These are things which should be avoided whereas the teachings of men have no bearing.

vs. 24-30:

Jesus has headed northwest and is on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea. There, He encounters a Gentile woman who is seeking healing for her demon possessed daughter. Jesus states that the children of Israel have first rights to the miracles from God, since they were chosen to be His people. The woman argues that others could derive benefits from the leftovers. Because of her wise reply, Jesus casts the demon from the woman's daughter.

vs. 31-37:

Jesus then left the region of Tyre (by the Mediterranean) and went to the land southeast of the Sea of Galilee. There a man was brought to Him who was deaf and could hardly talk. Jesus healed the man and the man could instantly hear and talk plainly. In spite of Christ's command to be silent, the people spread the good news and people were amazed at the power of Jesus.

GOSPEL OF MARK
Chapter 8:

vs. 1-13:

While in the region of Decapolis (10 cities), Jesus had compassion on those who had been with Him for 3 days. Upon Jesus' insistence, the disciples find 7 loaves and a few small fish. Jesus gave thanks and had the disciples distribute the food. Jesus multiplied the food to feed 4,000 men (not including the women and children) and the disciples still picked up 7 basketfuls of broken pieces.

Jesus then headed by boat to the west coast of the Sea of Galilee. There the Pharisees asked that Jesus give them a sign that He was from God. Jesus refused their request. They had seen fulfilled prophecies and multitudes of miracles, yet they had refused to believe all of those. There was no reason to give an additional sign.

vs. 14-21:

Jesus warned His disciples to beware of the "yeast" of the Pharisees (their false teaching which could corrupt them if they were not careful). The disciples misunderstood and thought Jesus was warning them not to eat any food that the Pharisees might give them, as they had no food. Jesus makes it clear that the disciples are wrong in their interpretation of His words.

vs. 22-26:

Jesus and His disciples arrived at Bethsaida (Northeast coast of the Sea of Galilee). A blind man was brought to Jesus to be healed. Jesus took the man out of the village and spit on the man's eyes and put His hands on him. The man's sight was partially restored and Jesus then put His hands on the man's eyes again. This time the man's sight was completely restored. He was then instructed by Jesus not to return to the village.

vs. 27-30:

Jesus and His disciples went much farther north to the area around Caesarea Philippi. Jesus asked His disciples who the people thought He was. The people realized He was a man of God, but were not sure which prophet of the past had returned. Jesus then asked who they thought He was. Peter replied that Jesus was the Christ (Christ referred to the Messiah that God had promised to send to Israel to redeem and rule them). Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about their realization.

vs. 31-38:

Jesus then began to explain how the Messiah would be mistreated, a rejected by the religious leaders. He would be killed and then raised the third day. Peter, a man of good intentions, was off the mark when he rebuked Jesus concerning this course of action. Jesus replied to Peter, looking at all of His disciples, "Out of my sight Satan!" He realized that Peter was not thinking of what would be best at accomplishing God's will, but was thinking from selfish motives, instead.

Jesus then called the crowd together and challenged them to deny and give up living for themselves and instead follow Jesus, no matter what hardships they might face because of it. Those who live for themselves will perish for all of eternity, but those who live for Jesus will live in heaven forever. It is these who are proud and faithful that Jesus will be proud of and claim in the day of Judgement!

STUDY GUIDE

Mark 7

1. What did some of the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law see?
2. What did the Pharisees expect Jesus' disciples to live according to?
3. What had they let go of? (See vs. 8)
4. What did they observe?
5. What makes a person "unclean"?
6. Who asked Jesus about "this parable"?
7. What came from men's hearts?
8. What could Jesus not keep secret?
9. Who begged Jesus to drive a demon out of her daughter?
10. What did this woman find upon returning home?
11. What was wrong with the man that was brought to Jesus?

BONUS:

1. What are some of the traditions of men that ignore God's laws?
2. What does it mean to be "unclean"?
3. Why was Jesus hesitant to heal the girl?

STUDY GUIDE

Mark 8:

1. How long had the people been with Jesus?
2. How many loaves did they have on this occasion?
3. How many were fed and how much was left over?
4. What did the Pharisees ask Jesus for?
5. What did Jesus warn his disciples to watch out for?
6. Why did the disciples think Jesus had said this?
7. What two miracles does Jesus then refer to?
8. What did Jesus do when he healed the blind man?
9. What question did Jesus ask His disciples?
10. Who did Peter say that Jesus was?
11. How did Jesus respond to Peter's rebuking him?

BONUS:

1. What did Jesus mean when he said "no sign will be given"? Weren't his miracles signs? Explain.
2. What was Jesus referring to when He spoke of the "yeast" of the Pharisees?
3. Can good Christians be mistaken regarding what is best for the Kingdom? Defend your position.