

# Mark

A Study of the Gospel of Mark

Mark 7:1-13

**“Only in the latest of our Gospels, John, a Gospel that shows considerably more theological sophistication than the others, does Jesus indicate that he is divine. I had come to realize that none of our earliest traditions indicates that Jesus said any such thing about himself. And surely if Jesus had really spent his days in Galilee and then Jerusalem calling himself God, all of our sources would be eager to report it. To put it differently, if Jesus claimed he was divine, it seemed very strange indeed that Matthew, Mark, and Luke all failed to say anything about it. Did they just forget to mention that part? I had come to realize that Jesus’ divinity was part of John’s theology, not a part of Jesus’ own teaching.”**

**— Bart D. Ehrman, Jesus, Interrupted: Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible**

# Mark 7:1-2

## The Historical Situation Explained

The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were “unclean,” that is, unwashed.

# Mark 7:3-4

## Pharisaical Traditions Explained

3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

# Mark 7:5

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with ‘unclean’ hands?”

**The Answer is in the Question!**

# Mark 7:6-7

6 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’

# Isaiah 29



# Mark 7:8

## Jesus' Application of Isaiah 29 to the Pharisees

**8 You have let go of the commands of  
God and are holding on to the  
traditions of men.”**



# The Problem with Legalism

Here is the irony: every time we add to the law of God, we inevitably subtract from it, because instead of putting our attention on the things that God is concerned about, human regulations cause us to lose sight of what concerns Him. We begin to major in minors. We begin to give our devotion to our own traditions, our own human regulations.”

- R. C. Sproul

# The Problem with Legalism

The major problem with legalism is that it is a subtle form of idolatry; it elevates that which is human above that which is divine. It substitutes human traditions, human policies, and human regulations for the very Word of God. Whenever we serve the creature rather than the Creator, we are involved in idolatry. The Pharisees and scribes thought they were the most righteous people on the face of the earth, but they were idolaters.

- R. C. Sproul

# Mark 7:9

The Application restated with an  
example to follow

9 And he said to them: “You have a fine  
way of setting aside the commands of  
God in order to observe your own  
traditions!

# Mark 7:10-13

## An example of hypocrisy

10 For Moses said, “Honor your father and your mother,” and, “Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.”

11 But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: “Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban” (that is, a gift devoted to God), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

# Galatians 6:7-10

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

# Mark

...the way  
...the way  
...the way

...boat, preparing their  
...he called them, and they  
...saw in the boat with  
...him.