

## A Study of Mark 7

### I. Outline. From Headings in *NJKV*

1. Pharisees and Defilement (Mark 7.1-23; cf., Matthew 15.1-20).
2. Syro-Phoenician's Daughter is Healed (24-30; cf., Matthew 14.21-28).
- 3 Deaf and Mute Man is Healed (31-37).

### II. Summary.

“This incident [Pharisees and Defilement, DRL] appears to be linked with vv. 14-19 and vv. 20-23 by the common theme of ‘cleanness.’ It is similar to the conflict stories found in 2.1—3.6 but is placed here (along with vv. 14-19 and vv. 20-23) to function as an introduction to the extension of the ministry of Jesus to the Gentiles in vv. 24-30 (the Syro-Phoenician woman), in vv. 31-37 (the deaf-and-dumb man in the Decapolis) and, less obviously, in 8.1-10 (the feeding of the four thousand). No hint is given as to when or where the incident took place” [Walter W. Wessel, *Mark, The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Volume 8, pp., 677].

### III. Chronology.

**BIBLE PERIOD:** The Period of the Christ.

*If you are not familiar with the 15 Bible Periods, please click here:*

<https://maplehillchurchofchrist.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/15bibleperiods.pdf>

### IV. Words/Phrases to Study

- 7.02... **EAT BREAD WITH DEFILED, THAT IS TO SAY, WITH UNWASHEN, HANDS**—“Another delegation of fact-finding theologians (Pharisees and teachers of the law) came down from Jerusalem (cf., 3.22) to investigate the Galilean activities of Jesus (v. 1). What they discovered was that Jesus' disciples did not wash their hands before eating (v. 2). Their complaint was not, of course, that the disciples by this failure were being unhygienic. The Pharisees had no concern with that. The question was one of ceremonial purity versus ceremonial defilement. We know that the Jews placed great importance on this as is shown by the fact that an entire division of the Mishnah (*Tohoroth*, ‘cleannesses’) is devoted to this section” [Walter W. Wessel, *Mark, The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Volume 8, pp., 677-78].
- 7.04... **AND MANY OTHER THINGS THERE BE, WHICH THEY HAVE RECEIVED TO HOLD**—“Mark felt it necessary to explain to his Gentile readers the Jewish custom of ceremonial handwashing, a custom based on the ‘tradition of the elders’ (v. 3). The consisted in a great mass of oral tradition that had arisen about the Law. About A.D. 200 it was written down in the Mishnah, but in Jesus' day it was still in oral form. Its purpose was to regulate a man's life completely. If the law was silent or vague about a particular subject, one could be sure that the tradition would be vocal and explicit. The tradition, created and promulgated by the great rabbis, was passed on from one generation to the next and was considered binding” [Wessel, p. 678].      “In the present passage, Jesus rejects the criticism of the Pharisees with its elitist overtones and answers with a charge that hits at the very heart of the Pharisaic intention. The supposed intent of the many rules of the Pharisees was both to make the law of God applicable to every area of life and to ensure that the law was observed by making it even more precise than it was in its OT form. All this might be commendable in intent, but in operation the result might be less so. Aside from the feelings of superiority just mentioned, in any program like that of the Pharisees there is the danger of making a particular application of God's law a sacrosanct obligation that may eventually lose its original meaning and value with the passage of time and circumstances. Perhaps even worse, in a religious lifestyle that emphasizes the observance of a multitude of commandments as a means to religious and social respectability, there can arise the practice of enforcing particular

commandments in such a way as to violate others (and plenty of examples in Christian circles are available too!). It is just this sort of error that Jesus attacks in 7.6-13” [Larry Hurtado, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, *Mark*, Baker Books, An Olive Tree Bible App Module]

- 7.06... **WELL HATH ESAIAS PROPHESIED OF YOU HYPOCRITES**—“The hypocrite is the man who hides or tries to hide his real intentions under (hypo) a mask of simulated virtue. As the passage now under study presents it: he honors God with his lips but his heart (see on Mark 6:52) is far from God. Also (note last two lines), while pretending to teach doctrines that are divine in origin he is actually teaching ‘precepts of men,’ fussy (‘persnickety’) rules and regulations laid down by hair-splitting, legalistic ancient rabbis—mere men!—and passed on from one generation to the next. See Matthew 6:2, 5, 16; 23:23-28. So also at this occasion, these ‘pious’ (?) critics pretended to be very concerned about that which they presented as an infraction of a divine (?) statute that had been handed down to them. Their real intention was the destruction of the very Son of God. A hypocrite, then, is a fraud, deceiver, phony, snake in the grass, wolf in sheep's clothing. He pretends to be what he is not” [William Hendriksen, Baker’s New Testament Commentary, 1975, an e-Sword Module].
- 7.07... **TEACHING FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN**—“Emptiness is all you give me in your worship. He gives the reason in the next clause. The precepts of men were the doctrine they taught. ‘Doctrines’ refer to those things taught as binding upon the conscience, as obligatory. Jesus applies it to the Pharisees and scribes as religious teachers” [C.E.W. Dorris, A Commentary on the Gospel According to Mark, Gospel Advocate, 1973, p. 170].
- 7.11... **IT IS CORBAN**—“*Corban* is a Hebrew word adopted into the Greek of the New Testament and left untranslated. It occurs only once, that being in our text-verse. It means a gift or offering consecrated to God. Anything over which this word was once pronounced was irrevocably dedicated to the temple. Land, however, so dedicated might be redeemed during the year of jubilee (Leviticus 27:16–24). Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for their false doctrine, because they had destroyed the commandment that requires children to honor their father and mother, teaching them to find excuse from helping their parents by the device of pronouncing “corban” over their goods, thus releasing them from all obligation to sustain their parents. It did not, however, bind them to consecrate their goods to sacred uses. These could be used for their own purposes, or given to whomever they pleased, except to those to whom they had said, ‘It is corban.’” [Freeman, J. M., & Chadwick, H. J. (1998). *Manners & customs of the Bible* (p. 494). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos Publishers].
- 7.13... **MAKING THE WORD OF GOD OF NONE EFFECT THROUGH YOUR TRADITION**—“In replying, Jesus did not explain or justify His disciples’ conduct. Instead He addressed the issue of the source of religious authority (Mark 7.6-13) and the nature of defilement (Mark 7.14-23)” [Thomas Constable, The Expository Notes of Dr. Constable, an e-Sword Module].
- 7.19... **PURGING ALL MEATS**—“The process of digestion is a cleansing one. Whatever is impure is separated from the food and carried off, leaving whatever is nutritious to enter into the blood and become part of the body. What is thrown out of the body is the innutritious part of the food taken into the stomach, and leaving only that which is proper for the support of life, and cannot, therefore, defile the soul. All food is taken into the body to support life. The meaning is that the economy or process by which life is supported purifies or renders nutritious all kinds of food. The unwholesome parts are separated, and the wholesome only are taken into the system” [Dorris, p. 175].
- 7.26... **THE WOMAN WAS A GREEK, A SYROPHENICIAN BY NATION**—“The Jews called all persons ‘Greeks’ who were not of their nation. Compare Romans 1:14. The whole world was considered as divided into Jews and Greeks. Though she might not have been strictly a ‘Greek,’ yet she came under this general appellation as a foreigner” [*Barnes’ Notes*].

- 7.27... **LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE FILLED: FOR IT IS NOT MEET TO TAKE THE CHILDREN'S BREAD, AND CAST UNTO THE DOGS**—"The dogs. It was customary for the Jews to speak of the Gentiles as 'the dogs,' and the word certainly had an offensive meaning, which we can best understand by remembering how particular the Jews were as to what they eat, and how the dogs were, as they still are in the East, the scavengers of the streets. Comp. *Matt. 7:6*, where the heathen are spoken of as dogs. But Jesus softens the expression by using a diminutive which might be translated 'little dogs,' or 'house dogs,' as opposed to street dogs, and it is his comparative courtesy in doing this which enables the woman to give her turn to the argument" [Solly, H. S. (1893). *The Gospel according to Mark: A Study in the Earliest Records of the Life of Jesus*. (J. E. Carpenter, Ed.) (p. 89). London: The Sunday School Association].
- 7.34... **AND LOOKING UP TO HEAVEN, HE SIGHED**—"Heaven us upward. To lift up the eyes to heaven is an act imploring aid from God, and denotes an attitude of prayer (Psalm 121.1-2; Mark 6.41; John 11.41). By looking up to heaven, as representing the abode of God, He gave God recognition in the miracle. **SIGHED** ...pitying the suffering man who stood before Him. The expression of His compassion in His sigh heavenward would naturally impress all present with the necessity of looking to God for help" [Dorris, p. 183].

## V. Lessons & Applications.

- Mark 7.1-13... **Concluding Lessons:** (1) Religious authority is objective. (2) We must be able to show that our authority is from God and not from man. (3) Man-made religious will always conflict with true religion. (4) We may not place one religious duty against another in order to be relieved of its obligations. (5) We have no right to act without religious authority from God. (6) God is not pleased with only lip service. (7) is evil when it replaces the will of God [Leslie G. Thomas, *Companion Annual Lesson Commentary*, 1984-85, p. 137].
- Mark 7.1-13... **Application Questions:** (1) Why are man-made religions wrong? (2) How may we identify man-made religions? (3) When is tradition right? (4) When is tradition wrong? (5) How do men today seek to excuse themselves from duty by placing one moral obligation against another? (6) Prove that our every action and attitude morally and religiously must be authorized by God [Thomas, p. 137].
- Mark 7.1-13... **Points for the Teacher to Emphasize...**
  1. Every person has before him two choices: (1) to follow the will of God, or (2) to follow the will of men (Deuteronomy 11.26; Matthew 7.24-27; Romans 11.22).
  2. No matter how many seemingly good things can be said about the religious activities of a given person, if he is following the precepts of men, then his worship is in vain (Matthew 15.1-8).
  3. It is the case with all who follow the precepts of men that their hearts are far from God (Matthew 15.8).
  4. It is the case that all those who believe, follow, and teach the precepts and commandments of men rather than the commandments of God are "blind guides" and that both they and those who follow them will eventually fall into the ditch (Galatians 1.6-9; 2 Thessalonians 2.10-12).
  5. No one can worship God according to the commandments of men and avoid rejecting the commandments of God. The two actions are mutually exclusive.
  6. No one can truly follow the instructions of God and fail to reject the traditions and commandments of men.
  7. There are many things which are morally right but which are religiously wrong. It is *morally* right to wash one's hands, but it is wrong to wash one's hands as a *religious* ceremony.
  8. The fundamental question which each person must ask as regards his religious beliefs and practices is: are they authorized by the sacred Scriptures? Since the Scriptures do not

authorize such matters as the “baptizing” (sprinkling, pouring) of infants, the lighting up of lambs, the counting of beads, the burning of incense, the use of instrumental music in the worship of God, etc., then none of these things can be done without being disobedient to God [Thomas B. Warren, *Teacher’s Annual Lesson Commentary*, 1973, p. 41].

- **DEFILE THE MAN (7.23)**—“The Jews were anxious about keeping their hands clean when they ate, thinking they would be defiled to eat with unwashed hands. But Jesus taught them that defilement comes from within, not from without. The word defile means unclean, that which is unfit to be used by the Lord. If we allow such things as these a place in our hearts, we will be unfit for the Lord to use. Constantly we must be on our guard, for at all times there are conditions and situations and circumstances around us which suggest such things to our minds. These things will come in, but we must not allow them to stay and defile us” [Roy H. Lanier, Sr., *Teacher’s Annual Lesson Commentary*, 1951, p. 201].
- **YES, LORD: YET THE DOGS UNDER THE TABLE EAT OF THE CHILDREN’S CRUMBS (7.28)**—“The woman would understand the ‘children’ to be the Jews and the ‘dogs’ to be the Gentiles, for the Jews were accustomed to speaking thus of the Gentiles and the Gentiles knew it. The word Jesus used for ‘dogs’ was a diminutive term—*kunaria*, ‘little dogs.’ This has received opposite interpretations One is that reference was to house-dogs or lap-dogs in contrast to the dogs of the street or farm, thus somewhat softening the epithet, for so the term was often used. The opposite concept is that Jesus used a ‘contemptuous diminutive,’ not an affectionate one. And it is true that the term was also sometimes used with no diminutive force at all intended. It could be interpreted either way. And the woman, neither dismayed nor insulted so as to give up and not pursue the matter further, brilliantly turned the Lord’s statement to her advantage. As if He meant the little house-dogs, she instantly replied: ‘Yea, Lord; even the [little] dogs under the table eat of the children’s crumbs.’ She was not asking that ‘bread’ be withheld that might otherwise go to the ‘children’ (Jews), but only for a ‘crumb.’ If Gentiles were but dogs, she begged only for a little dog’s part. **What humility and control of the tongue! What resourcefulness of wit! And how wondrously rewarded!**” [Author not known to me, *Teacher’s Annual Lesson Commentary*, 1981, p. 96].

## VI. Questions.

### True or False

01. \_\_\_\_\_ Jewish tradition made the word of God of none effect.
02. \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus told the people who saw the healing of the deaf man with a speech impediment to go everywhere telling about what had happened.
03. \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus lists 13 sins that do indeed defile a man.
04. \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus only healed those of the household of Israel.
05. \_\_\_\_\_ The scribes and Pharisees were teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

### I Found it in Verse(s)

06. \_\_\_\_\_ Certain ones found FAULT with the disciples of Jesus.
07. \_\_\_\_\_ Fingers in ears.
08. \_\_\_\_\_ Something Moses “said.”
09. \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus could not be hid.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Disciples asking about a parable.

### Short Answer

11. Jesus said \_\_\_\_\_ prophesied of these hypocrites He spoke to at the first of this chapter.
12. What is it, coming from without, and entering into a man can defile him? \_\_\_\_\_
13. Evil thoughts proceed: \_\_\_\_\_
14. What was the response of the Syro-Phoenician woman to Jesus' statement about casting the children's bread to the dogs:  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. At Decapolis, the people said about Jesus: He hath done... \_\_\_\_\_

*Each Question is worth 7 Points*

**My Score is:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Answers will be found on next week's handout*

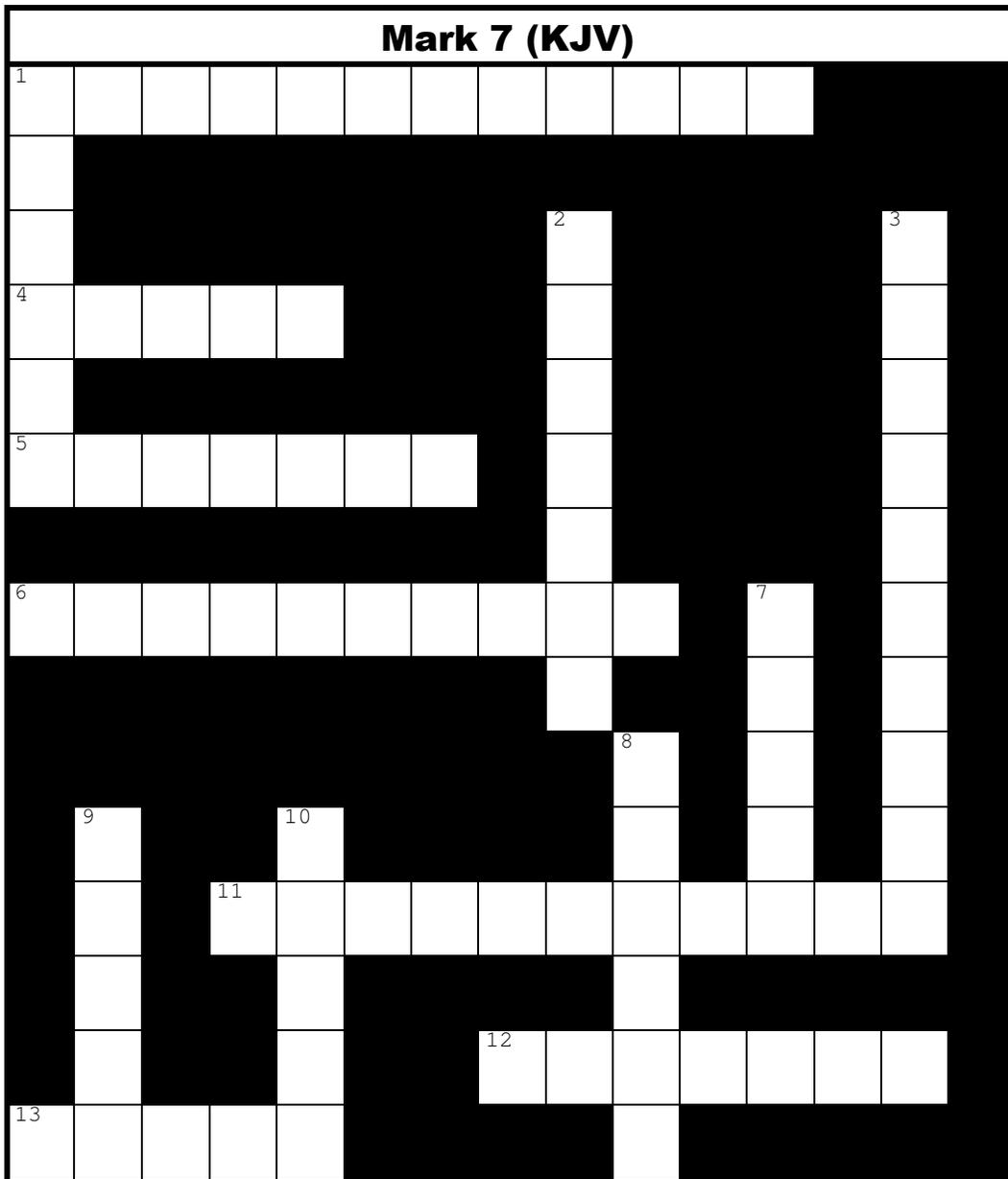
**ANSWERS to Mark 6 Questions...** **01**—True (18); **02**—False (48); **03**—False (12); **04**—True (34); **05**—True (43); **06**—50; **07**—20; **08**—8; **09**—24; **10**—41; **11**—The border of Jesus' garment (56); **12**—green (39); **13**—rest (31); **14**—cast, devils (13); **15**—In his own county; among his own kin; in his own house (4).

VII. **Seek-A-Word Puzzle.** The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. -DRL

**S U N D E R S T A N D**  
**R T A B L E N N H E T**  
**D I S C I P L E S R R**  
**A N E B F P A M A D A**  
**U E N T E R E D W L E**  
**G H G O D A I N F I H**  
**H W P N R T D A Y H O**  
**T L A S I A T M N C U**  
**E H H O E H N M A L S**  
**R O N R E H T O M P E**  
**O L B R E M A C O M E**  
**M D I A S S F L G O T**

<b>BREAD</b>	<b>CAME</b>	<b>CHILDREN</b>	<b>COME</b>	<b>COMMANDMENT</b>
<b>DAUGHTER</b>	<b>DEFILE</b>	<b>DISCIPLES</b>	<b>EARS</b>	<b>ENTERED</b>
<b>FATHER</b>	<b>HAND</b>	<b>HEAR</b>	<b>HEART</b>	<b>HOLD</b>
<b>HOUSE</b>	<b>MANY</b>	<b>MORE</b>	<b>MOTHER</b>	<b>PEOPLE</b>
<b>SAID</b>	<b>TABLE</b>	<b>THING</b>	<b>TRADITION</b>	<b>UNDERSTAND</b>
<b>WASH</b>	<b>WHEN</b>			

VIII. Crossword Puzzle.



**ACROSS**

- 01) Included in the list of things that defile.
- 04) What the disciples ate with so-called "defiled hands."
- 05) Can from without enter into a man to defile him.
- 06) Isaiah the prophet described them.
- 11) Some reject the \_\_\_\_ of God to keep tradition.
- 12) The disciples asked Jesus about the \_\_\_\_.
- 13) Said: "let the children first be filled."

**DOWN**

- 01) A gift.
- 02) Jesus said of Isaiah's work, "it is \_\_\_\_."
- 03) A deaf man's speech was described with this word.
- 07) The dogs eat under here.
- 08) Twice Jesus refers to the tradition of the \_\_\_\_.
- 09) Between blasphemy and foolishness.
- 10) Said "Honor thy father and thy mother."

**IX. EXTRA CREDIT FOR “SUPER” Bible Students...**

*Will you please consider answering these **three SIMPLE questions** based on the Bible text of this chapter? I will try to make use of your answers. Bring them with you next week. Tear out this last sheet from the Study Guide and be prepared to put it in a basket. I think it will be a great help to all of those in the class if you will do so. Thank you in advance for your marvelous cooperation!*

**W O R D: What word would you like to know more about in this chapter?**

**W O N D E R: I wonder what this phrase, verse, or series of verses means...**

**W I S H: I wish myself—or others whom I know or even don’t know—would understand this fact, principle, or concept from this chapter...**