

1. This is a most fearful thing to do any time.
  2. Could we "full well" be guilty of this very grievous sin in any way?
  3. Is there any time we attach greater importance to custom, appearance, tradition, or human approval, than to truth, godliness, and God's approval?
- IV. THE FEARFUL, SPECIFIC CHARGE OF JESUS (7:10-13).
- A. "For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and he that speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death" (10).
    1. God said it through Moses (Matt. 15:4; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; etc).
    2. Severe penalties attached to cursing parents (Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9).
  - B. But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or his mother, That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is Corban, that is...Given" (11,12).
    1. That is, a gift--given, or devoted--to God, relieving the child of his obligation to honor his parents in the way required by the law of God.
  - C. "Making void the word of God by your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things ye do" (13).
- V. THE NEED OF DIVINE AUTHORITY IN RELIGION.
- A. Divine authority is needed because the way of life is not in man himself (Jeremiah 10:23). The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord (Psalm 37:23).
  - B. Divine authority is needed because external human authority has been tried and found wanting (Prov. 14:12; Matt. 16:14; 1 Tim. 4:1-3).
  - C. The word of Christ is man's only protection against sin and its wages.
  - D. The only possible basis for unity of believers is the word of Christ (John 17:20-23; 1 Cor. 1:10), which produces religion based upon divine authority.
  - E. Bible authority is the only bulwark against a flood of human innovations or additions which would otherwise engulf the Lord's church (Deut. 4:2; 12:13; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18; 1 Peter 4:11).

STUDIES IN MARK--LESSON SEVENTEEN  
Divine Authority In Religion Defended  
Mark 7:1-13

INTRODUCTION -

- I. THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF AUTHORITY.
  - A. Matthew 7:28,29; 8:9; Acts 9:14; Luke 9:1; John 5:27.
  - B. Authority is the power to command, the right to demand obedience and/or to grant freedom or liberty.
  - C. Divine versus human authority was discussed freely in the days of Jesus: "By what authority...? Who gave thee this authority" (Matt. 21:23-27)?
  - D. This lesson has to do with the authority of God vs. human tradition.
- II. A STANDARD OF AUTHORITY IS NECESSARY IN SECULAR/TEMPORAL MATTERS.
  - A. If every meat cutter, every official in each athletic contest, every employee in every business were allowed to set his own standard and make his own rules, there could not be any meaningful society.
  - B. If every man were left free to do as he pleases in his own eyes, chaos in music and material matters is certain to reign.
  - C. In all human affairs, authority must exist, be known & respected.
- III. "WHERE DOES FINAL AUTHORITY REST IN RELIGION"?
  - A. Luther and John Eck debated this in 1519 in Leipzig and it became a turning point in Luther's life.
  - B. The greatest documents and sermons of the early 19th century Restoration Movement all reflect the same genius and emphasis: An appeal to accept the Bible as the supreme and final authority in Christianity (1804; 1809; 1816).
  - C. The Bible claims, for Jesus Christ, supreme authority over the lives and souls of men here and hereafter (Matt. 28:18-20).
    1. It claims to reveal the only Saviour and remedy for sin.
    2. It claims to show what men "must do" to obtain pardon.
  - D. But not all "see it alike:" Many false religious standards exist.
    1. Not all claim the Bible is an "only rule of faith and practice."
    2. Some say, "You can prove anything by the Bible:" They desire and contend for a religious consensus.
    3. Others say, "The Bible is a confusing book," and is "an authority only in Catholic hands."
  - E. Only three possible sources exist: (1) Internal human authority: man's own conscience, judgment, personal feeling or taste; (2) External human authority: Custom, tradition, human creed, the papacy, or a council,

as derived from the reason, judgment, or feelings of other men; and (3) Divine authority: Originating with God, centered in and operating through Christ, as recorded and revealed in the Bible.

#### DISCUSSION -

#### I. JESUS WAS WATCHED AND OPPOSED BY PHARISEES AND SCRIBES FROM JERUSALEM (Mark 7:1-4).

A. Gathered together unto him: "And there are gathered together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, who had come from Jerusalem" (1).

1. The work of Jesus in Galilee, which included feeding the 5,000 and other signs, together with two trips he had made to Jerusalem (John 2:13; 5:1), had arrested the attention of leading Jews in Judaea.
2. This gathering was doubtless arranged by the leading minds of Jerusalem to counteract his influence in the area where most of his works were done, and where local, less cultivated scribes & Pharisees were failing.

B. With unwashed hands: "And had seen that some of his disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, unwashed, hands"(2).

1. These "watch dogs" of Jewish religious traditions (orthodoxy) had come 80-100 miles to hinder, oppose, or quarrel with Jesus.
2. Had their coming been to admit his claims, established by his miracles, to be taught by the Master, or point to some real breaking of the law, their great effort might have been justified or commendable.
4. They found the opportunity they sought when they saw some of Jesus' disciples eat "with defiled, that is, unwashed hands" (Cf. Matt. 15:2).
4. This tradition did not involve washing because one's hands were actually dirty, but "was an extension by human authority of the Mosaic law of uncleanness"—McGarvey, *Commentary on Matthew-Mark*, 134.

C. The tradition of the elders: "For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands diligently, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders; and when they come from the market-place, except they bathe (baptize) themselves, they eat not; and many other things there are, which they have received to hold, washings of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels" (4,5).

1. These rules, though not kept by the Sadducees, were based not upon the written law of Moses but

oral traditions handed down from previous generations, held, by Jesus' accusers, as equal in authority to the word of God.

2. "The tradition of the elders" were not of the elders of that generation, but traditions handed down from preceding ones, though there is no reliable evidence tracing them to Moses and Aaron as claimed by some. McGarvey indicates no higher antiquity for them than the time of the return from Babylon.
3. In his reply, Jesus does not deny that his disciples broke tradition, but, in defending them, he attacked the authority of such tradition itself.

#### II. THE SPECIFIC CHARGE AGAINST JESUS (7:5).

A. Why not: "And the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands" (5)?

B. What concerns or disturbs people most reveals what they regard as most important: Their standard of authority, treasure, God, etc.

1. Attaching more importance to tradition than to Scripture did not perish with the first century.
2. What determines whether one is a heathen worthy of disfellowship, a hypocrite, brother, or saint, with us?
3. Are all our religious convictions proportioned to the strength of Bible evidence on which they rest?

#### III. THE LORD'S GENERAL REPLY (7:6-9).

A. It is written: "And he said unto them, well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:  
This: people honoreth me with their lips,  
But their heart is far from me" (6).

1. This is the first time he openly accused them of hypocrisy.
2. He based his attack upon the authority of tradition upon a prophecy which predicts and condemns it (Isaiah 29:13).

B. Vain worship: "But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men" (7).

From this we necessarily conclude one may worship God in vain (Cf. Matt. 7:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17; John 4:23,24; 17:17).

C. Ye reject God's command: "Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition" (8,9).