

Tradition!

Mark 7:1-13

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- 1) The External Nature of Legalism (1-5)
- 2) Jesus' Personal Diagnosis of Legalism (6-13)



I. The External Nature

- **5** – The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?"



Phylacteries with Scriptures

II. Jesus' Personal Diagnosis of Legalism (6-13)

- **6** - And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.'
 - LXX translation of Isaiah 29:13
 - Two indictments...
 - **1)** Their worship was merely external because it never affects their hearts.
 - **6** - 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.'
 - E.g., Is. 1:12-17; Hos. 6:6; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8
 - **2)** Their worship was worthless because it is built on human rules.
 - **7** - 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'

II. Jesus' Personal Diagnosis of Legalism (6-13)

- **8** - "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."
 - 1) Neglecting commandment God
 - 2) Hold to tradition men
- **9** - He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition."
- **10a** - "For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER';
- **10b** - and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH';
 - Quotation of the LXX in Ex. 21:17.

II. Jesus' Personal Diagnosis of Legalism (6-13)

- **11** - but you say, 'If a man says to *his* father or *his* mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),'
- **12** - you no longer permit him to do anything for *his* father or *his* mother;
 - This could happen in two ways...
 - 1) A good-hearted Jewish person wanting to honor God would devote something to God.
 - 2) A hateful child who was greedy and selfish could find shelter under the laws of Corban to protect all of his estate from having to support his parents.

II. Jesus' Personal Diagnosis of Legalism (6-13)

- **11** - but you say, 'If a man says to *his* father or *his* mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),'
 - Cf. Is. 58:7 - "Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry And bring the homeless poor into the house; When you see the naked, to cover him; And not to hide yourself from your own flesh?"
 - Cf. 1 Tim. 5:8 - if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

The Scribes & Pharisees

- They were hungry for money.
 - Matt. 23:25 - "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence."
 - Mark 12:40 - who devour widows' houses, and for appearance's sake offer long prayers; these will receive greater condemnation."
 - Luke 16:14 - Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him.

Supposed Origin of "Corban"

- Cf. Lev. 27:28 - 'Nevertheless, anything which a man sets apart to the LORD out of all that he has, of man or animal or of the fields of his own property, shall not be sold or redeemed. Anything devoted to destruction is most holy to the LORD.'
- Cf. Num. 18:14 - "Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours."

II. Jesus' Personal Diagnosis of Legalism (6-13)

- **11** - but you say, 'If a man says to *his* father or *his* mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),'
- **12** - you no longer permit him to do anything for *his* father or *his* mother;
- **13** - *thus* invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."
 - 8 – neglected the commandment.
 - 9 – rejected the commandment.
 - 13 – invalidated the commandment.

III. The True Nature of 1st

- **1) Its Source of Authority**
 - In Jesus' time, it was still strictly oral tradition.
 - 200 years after Christ, this oral interpretation would be gathered and written down in a document.
 - That document is called the Jewish *Talmud*.

Herman Wouk, This is My God

- Wouk: "At this point in the very long history of Judaism's legal literature it seems clear that the center of gravity of authority is fixed in the Mishnah and the Gemara; just as the final faith of the Jews is fixed in the Torah."
- Wouk: "The Talmud... is to this day the circulating heart's blood of the Jewish religion. Whatever laws, customs, or ceremonies we observe—whether we are orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or merely spasmodic sentimentalists—we follow the Talmud. It is our common law."

The Jewish Talmud

- A) Mishnah
 - Means "the Review."
 - The legal decisions or interpretation of the Torah by a long line of analysts and judges called, The Teachers, over a period of about 400 years.
 - Passed down by oral tradition and some written documents.
 - Compiled into a written document about 200 AD.
 - Compiled by a wealthy sage of Palestine named, Rabbi Judah the Prince.
- B) Gemara
 - The interpretation of the Mishnah.
 - About 300 years after the Mishnah was compiled, a second line of sages, called the Commenters, explored, debated and interpreted the Mishnah.

Herman Wouk, This Is My God

- Wouk: "The Torah abounds in death penalties. Then we come to the common law, and we find capital punishment in effect abolished by the obstacles to the death verdict. 'A Sanhedrin that condemned one man to death in seventy years was called a Bloody Sanhedrin,' the Talmud says. The chains of witnesses required in a capital case, the rigid rules for proving knowledge of the law and premeditation, the restricted admissible evidence, the special voting procedures of the court, all combine to make death a theoretical punishment almost never reached. These hedges, again, were common law handed down from remote antiquity."

The Jewish Talmud

- The Torah = five books of Moses.
- The Mishnah = the interpretation of the Torah.
- The Gemara = the interpretation of the Mishnah.
- The Mishnah + The Gemara = The Talmud.

The Cruc...

- **3** – "the tradition of the elders."
- **4** – "Many other things which they have received in order to observe."
- **5** – "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders?"
- **7** – "You teach as doctrines the precepts of men."
- **8** – "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."
- **9** – "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition."
- **13** – "invalidating the Word of God by your tradition which you have handed down."
- The primary message of this account is the spiritual bankruptcy of substituting human tradition for divine revelation.

Implications...

- **1)** This is a call to adopt the commitment of the early church.
 - 1 Cor. 4:6 – “Not beyond what has been written.”
- **2)** This is a call to each of us to examine how our personal fences might be in fact, undermining God’s own commands.
 - Cf. 7:13 – “and you do many things such as that.”
- **3)** This is also a call to self-examination.
- **4)** It’s a reminder to be grateful that God has revealed Himself in a book.