

**THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK**

**LESSON 7**

**BELIEF AND UNBELIEF 5:1-8:30**

The Pharisees' Defense of Tradition 7:1-23

Praise God for your desire to study the Bible. We welcome you to join our Thursday Night Bible Study sessions at FAME, 7:30 – 9:00 PM.

*Directions: Please read and study the scripture lesson and any other scripture references, the Illumination section, and the Observation section, than answer the questions in the Exploration section. When you submit your answers on the answer sheet a Bible study teacher will review your answers and provide comments within 2 weeks of submission. These comments will enrich your Bible study experience and is not intended to grade or judge your knowledge or understanding.*

Mark 7:1 - 23 NIV	Illumination
<p><sup>1</sup>The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and <sup>2</sup>saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were "unclean," that is, unwashed. <sup>3</sup>(The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. <sup>4</sup>When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other Tradition, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.) <sup>5</sup>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?" <sup>6</sup>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. <sup>7</sup>They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men." <sup>8</sup>You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the Tradition of men." <sup>9</sup>And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own Tradition! <sup>10</sup>For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death. <sup>11</sup>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), <sup>12</sup>then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. <sup>13</sup>Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that." <sup>14</sup>Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. <sup>15</sup>Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.'" <sup>16</sup>After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. <sup>17</sup>"Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'?" <sup>18</sup>For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.") <sup>19</sup>He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.'" <sup>20</sup>For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, <sup>21</sup>greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. <sup>22</sup>All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.' "</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <b>Tradition of the Elders</b> – refers to the oral interpretation of God’s laws. These oral laws and Tradition regulated every aspect of the Jewish life. The Pharisees and scribes considered them as binding as the Law/Torah.</li> <li>❖ <b>Hypocrite</b> – the Greek word, <i>hypocrities</i> is comprised of two words – <i>hypo</i> which means “under” and <i>krino</i> which means to “judge”. It was also a term used to refer to actors who wore masks on stage as they played different characters.</li> <li>❖ <b>Corban</b> – this phrase refers to an offering to the Lord that was set aside for holy use. (Deut. 23:21-23; Numbers30:1-16)</li> <li>❖ <b>Defile</b> - this phrase refers to make foul, dirty, or unclean; pollute; taint; debase, desecrate.</li> </ul>

Observations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ In these verses, 7:1-23 the opposition of the scribes (teachers of the law) and Pharisees became more vocal. Remember there had been other confrontations – 2:6-12; 15-17; 18-20; 23-28; 3:1-6; 22-30. The teachings of Jesus and man-made tradition are further revealed and the gap is further widened.</li> <li>❖ Jesus had become very popular with the people therefore the Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem to check Him out. What was His position on the issues that count the most to them? This delegation had probably been sent by the Jewish religious authorities. Verse 1</li> <li>❖ The Jerusalem delegation observed Jesus and His disciples. They find fault with some of the disciples since they ate bread (bread refers to a meal) with un-washed hands. (Verse 2) Mark in verses 3 and 4 explains the importance of washing hands for Jews. It is important to note that all Jews did not follow these traditions. These tradition/oral laws were mainly followed by the religious leaders which caused them to think they were superior to everyone else. They reasoned that the people were must be ignorant not to follow the Tradition of the elders.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Tradition of the Elders was oral interpretations of the Law which established Tradition/regulations to help people to follow the Law. However since there were so many for every aspect of life they became a burden to the people. This oral traditions were passed along until in the third century BC, it was collected and written down, eventually forming the foundation of the Jewish Talmud. (On pages 5-8 of this lesson I have included addition information on the Talmud.)</li> <li>○ The Tradition of the Elders said that Jews should not eat a meal unless they gave their hands a ceremonial washing. This ceremonial washing cleansed a person from any defilement he or she might have contacted without knowing it.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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**Observations, continued**

- The religious leaders considered cleanliness equal to godliness. They considered that the ceremony of washing proved their devotion to God. It also cleansed them from any contact with sinners and Gentiles which they felt caused them to be unclean/defiled.
  - The origin of this ceremonial washing was from the priests in performing their sacred duties in the tabernacle which was part of God's law (Exodus 30:17-21). They had to wash their hands and feet prior to performing their duties. This was a symbolic need of being cleansed from their sins.
  - But oral tradition extended this law to all Jews to be performed before formal prayers and before eating. Thus, before each meal, devout Jews performed a short ceremony, washing their hands and arms in a specific way.
  - The Tradition of the Elders were not a requirement of God's Law. They were man made rules and Tradition which were considered equal or greater than the Law.
- ❖ The Pharisees and scribes asked Jesus why His disciples did not live/walk according to the Tradition of the Elders. They wanted to show to the people that Jesus and His disciples were not devoted Jews. This question provided another teaching moment for Jesus. He does not answer there direct question. But He does address their false teachings – man-made Tradition and God's law are equal and ceremonial and true moral defilement are equal.
- Jesus began His response, His argument by calling the delegation, "hypocrites". Jesus knew that they were not truly religious according to God's laws/scriptures. They were playing a part. They were more interested in the outward appearance than the inward condition of their heart.
  - Jesus quoted Isaiah 29:13 as the law/scriptures which showed they were hypocrites.
    - They honored God with lip service.
    - Their heart was far from God. The heart is the center of their emotions, feelings, moods, passion, decisions, obedience, devotion and intentions.
    - They worshipped for appearance sake. They do not worship God based on their love and devotion to Him.
    - They were teaching as God's law, the human made commandments. The oral tradition of humans had become as important or as more important than the Torah.
  - They were keeping the tradition of humans and rejecting the Law. The Law was given by God and was the authority. Jesus provided an example for their understanding.
    - The fifth commandment of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:12) instructs us to honor our parents. Another law in Exodus 21:17 said that those who curse their parent should be put to death.
    - Some people would dedicate their money for God's use; but still maintain possession of it. It had become religiously acceptable to use Corban as a reason not to honor parents. The religious leaders would not allow the people to change their minds in order to care for their parents.
    - The vow of Corban placed tradition above God's Word/Law.
- ❖ Jesus' teaching on the Tradition of Elders had been directed to the delegation from Jerusalem as the crowd listened. In verse 14 He began to teach to the entire crowd as He called them together and told them to listen. This lesson is on the true nature of defilement. What makes a person spiritually unclean?
- There is nothing that enters a person from the outside that can make people spiritually unclean. Ceremonially washing of hands does not make a person spiritually clean. It does not make person acceptable to God. Defilement is not an external matter which includes keeping food laws, ceremonial washing, keeping Sabbath requirements, etc.
  - It is that which comes from within the person that makes and shows that the person is spiritually unclean. The condition of a person's heart will be revealed by their actions and words. Sin begins in the heart. Jeremiah 17:9-10 God had told the people numerous times that He required mercy and obedience based on love for Him rather than merely observing rules and rituals – I Sam 15:22-23; Psalms 40:6-8; 51:16-19; Jeremiah 7:21-23; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8
  - In summary the ceremonial washing was not making or showing that the person was spiritually clean. It is your attitude and reason.
  - Verse 16 is not in the earliest manuscripts therefore may not be printed in the text of some modern English versions. It will depend on which manuscript was used for the translation of the version being used.

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**Observations, continued**

- ❖ The disciples did not understand Jesus' teaching on defilement. Therefore they asked Him about it when they entered a house away from the crowd and Jesus taught the lesson again. (Verses 17-23) Matthew 15:15 informs us that it was Peter who asked the question.
  - Jesus realized that the people did not understand the lesson as the disciples did not. However the disciples asked questions, but the people did not. Verse 18
  - What enters a human from the outside does not affect the heart (spiritual condition of the person). What we eat, take in goes through the stomach and is expelled.
  - Jesus was preparing the way for spiritual life after He pays the ransom for sin. There was going to be a new way of living that was not based in keeping the Law. There was going to be change in the internal person related to their attitude and reason for their actions and speech. (This was a huge issue in the early church between Jews and Gentiles.) Jesus was declaring all food as spiritually clean because it did not impact the heart. The Lord had established strict dietary laws for several reasons which were about to change. Some of these laws are recorded in Leviticus 11.
    - To ensue the health of the nation of Israel.
    - To visibly distinguish Israel from other nations. For example, the pig was common sacrifice of pagan religions.
  - Sin and defilement does not come from eating forbidden foods or following rituals. It comes from choosing to be disobedient which begins in the heart. Peter learned in Acts 15:22-29 that Jewish ceremonial regulations should not be a barrier to proclaiming the gospel to the Gentiles.
  - Uncleaness occurs because of sin. Sin begins in a person's heart and comes out in words and actions. Paul explains this further in Romans 6-8. This is why as Believers we are born again.
  - Jesus provided twelve examples of evil thoughts that come out of the heart of humans. Even though they are thoughts they are still sin because they show the condition of the person's heart. The first six are individual actions and the last six are attitudes or principles.
    - Sexual immorality/Adulteries & Fornication – various kinds of extramarital sexual activity
    - Theft – taking something that belongs to another
    - Murder- Taking the God-given life of another person
    - Adultery/Adulteries - A married person having sex with someone other than their spouse.
    - Greed/ Covetousness – Relentless urge to get more for oneself
    - Malice/Wickedness – Doing evil despite the good that has been received.
    - Deceit – To trick or misled by lying.
    - Lewdness/Lewdness – Immoral behavior that is neither restrained nor concealed.
    - Envy /Lewdness of an evil eye – Desire for something possessed by another
    - Slander/Blasphemy – To destroy another's good reputation
    - Arrogance/Pride – Making claims of superior intelligence or importance
    - Folly/Foolishness – In ability to discern between immorality and morality.

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Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Reviewed By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Exploration**

Consider the Introduction to the Gospel According to Mark and the Illumination section and Observation section for your answers.

1. Why would the religious authorities in Jerusalem send a delegation to observe the teaching and mission of Jesus and His disciple? Do you think that they anticipated a confrontation with Jesus?
2. Today do you know of any traditions/rituals/laws that Christian religions consider being as important as or more important than the Bible? Please make a list and indicate it origins if known.
3. Are traditions a bad happening. Why or why not?
4. Why did Jesus say that the members of the delegation from Jerusalem were hypocrites? Are their hypocrites today? If yes or no, why? What has been the impact of hypocrites on the testimony of the church?
5. Why do you come to Bible study or 7:30 or 11 AM worship services?
6. Why was Jesus teaching on defilement so important and prophetic?
7. Why is Jesus teaching on this topic so important today? How would you explain His teaching to a baby in Christ?

**Thought For The Week:** We can't fool the Lord. He looks at the heart, in addition to your walk.



## TALMUD

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/talmud.htm>

Book 1: Tract SabbathBook 2: Tracts Erubin, Shekalim, Rosh HashanaBook 3: Tracts Pesachim, Yomah and HagigaBook 4: Tracts Betzh, Succah, Moed Katan, Taanith, Megilla and Ebel Rabbathi or SemahothBook 5: Tracts Aboth, Derech Eretz-Rabba, Derech Eretz-Zuta, and Baba Kama (First Gate)Book 6: Tract Baba Kama (First Gate), Part II and Tract Baba Metzia (Middle Gate)Book 7: Tract Baba Bathra (Last Gate)Book 8: Tract Sanhedrin: Section Jurisprudence (Damages)Book 9: Tracts Maccoth, Shebuoth, Eduyoth, Abuda Zara, and HoriothBook 10: History of the Talmud

A search for Talmud at Google will turn up hundreds of thousands of hits, a depressing number of which are to anti-Semitic sites. However, to our knowledge this is the first extensive English translation of the Talmud to be posted on the Internet. The Talmud is a vast collection of Jewish laws and Tradition. Despite the dry subject matter the Talmud makes interesting reading because it is infused with vigorous intellectual debate, humor and deep wisdom. As the saying goes, 'you don't have to be Jewish' to appreciate this text. If you put in the hard work required to read the Talmud, your mind will get a world-class workout. The process of studying the Talmud has been compared with the practice of Zen Buddhist Koan meditation, and for good reason.

Rodkinsons' ten-book edition, the only extensive one currently in the public domain, contains complete translations of the 'Festivals' and 'Jurisprudence' sections of the Talmud. Rodkinson only finished about a third of the Talmud. All ten volumes were prepared at Sacred-texts and are available here in their entirety.

Rodkinson has been widely criticized, both from traditionalist Jews who feel that translating the Talmud is not an acceptable practice, as well as from those hostile to the Talmud and Judaism in general. As often seems to be the case, the political spectrum seems to be a Mobius loop. All of these viewpoints are abundantly represented on the Internet. Some quote material out of context, or ascribe hostile intent to innocent passages. The most hurtful critics are those who claim that Rodkinson deliberately left out material to conceal an evil Jewish agenda. After completion of this text, I can unequivocally state that this is hogwash. Rodkinson's Talmud is, by definition, an abridgement for modern readers. He left out only the sections where the debate spins off into complete obscurity, and was careful to document where he did so. Now that this incredible text, lovingly translated, is on the Internet perhaps these criticisms can finally be put to rest.

*Bibliographic note on Rodkinsons' Talmud*

Rodkinson's translation went through at least two editions. The sacred-texts version was prepared from the second edition. All of these were from the 1918 printing, with the exception of book 1, which was scanned from a 1903 printing. The numbering of the volumes changed radically between the first and second edition; to add to the confusion the second edition was bound into a ten book set, two volumes per book. This numbering is consistent, for instance, the second edition book 1 contains volumes 1 and 2; book 5 contains volumes 9 and 10, and so on. However, the volume sequence of the first edition was completely shuffled in the second edition; for instance, volumes 9 and 10 of the second edition (in book 5) correspond to volumes 1 and 2 of the first edition. This confusion will be evident if you shop the used book market for individual books of this set (which are fairly abundant at reasonable prices).

**Book 1: TRACT SABBATH**

TRACT SABBATH DISCUSSES WHAT CAN AND CANNOT BE DONE ON THE JEWISH HOLY DAY. This tract has a wealth of information on everyday Jewish life in late Classical times, including, for some reason, a great number of medical recipes. Because almost everything is done differently on the Sabbath, this contains an incredible level of ethnographic detail about a wide range of household activities including livestock, clothing, meals, horticulture, hunting, and other more obscure topics, such as fire-fighting and feminine hygiene. Rodkinson makes the point in an appendix that many of the Talmudic regulations which seem to be arbitrary were developed as a response to political persecution. He also includes a prayer which is offered upon the conclusion of studying any tract.

**Book 2: TRACTS ERUBIN, SHEKALIM, ROSH HASHANA**

TRACTS FROM SECTION MOED (FESTIVALS). Tract Erubin deals with regulations concerning travel on the Sabbath, and the proper construction of 'Erub', propitiatory offerings for transgressions of these rules, usually, but not always,

constructed of food. Tract Shekalim deals with tithes. Tract Rosh Hashana discusses the Jewish New Year, a floating holiday tied to lunar observations.



Book 3: **TRACTS PESACHIM, YOMAH AND HAGIGA**

CONTINUING WITH TRACTS FROM SECTION MOED (FESTIVALS). These are primarily discussions of the rituals to be performed on important holy days: principally Passover and the Day of Atonement. The short third tract, Hagiga, discusses the Holocaust ceremony, (meaning a burnt-offering), which today has come into use as a term for the Nazi genocide. Among other points of interest is description of the ritual of the scapegoat in Chapter VI. of Tract Yomah; and Chapter II. of Tract Hagiga has a notable digression on a variety of subjects, including the cryptic Chariot of God, and the names and characteristics of the seven heavens.



Book 4: **TRACTS BETZAH, SUCCAH, MOED KATAN, TAANITH, MEGILLA AND EBEL RABBATHI OR SEMAHOH**

COMPLETING THE FESTIVALS PORTION OF RODKINSON'S TALMUD TRANSLATION. Tract Betzah details regulations about cooking, fishing, hunting and other activities on feast days. Tract Succah discusses the Festival of the Tabernacles, particularly the construction and use of the Succah, or booth. Moed Katan is about miscellaneous laws about some minor festivals, for instance activities which are permissible during intercalary periods. Taanith has discussions about the beginning of the rains, including a sequence of folktales about rainmaking Rabbis. Megilla is about Purim, particularly about the public reading of the book of Esther during that festival. Ebel Rabbath is about mourning and other funerary activities.



Book 5: **TRACTS ABOTH, DERECH ERETZ-RABBA, DERECH ERETZ-ZUTA, AND BABA KAMA (FIRST GATE)**

THIS BOOK STARTS OUT WITH THREE TRACTS ON ETHICS, including the lucid and moving Pirke Aboth (Sayings of the Fathers), (also [available at sacred-texts in a translation by Taylor](#)). This edition of Aboth comes with extensive commentary. The Baba Kama is the first section of a three-part opening arc of the Jurisprudence section. To the modern reader it is of interest because of the unintentional and (sometimes pungent) atmospheric details of everyday life in first century Israel. Many of the Baba Kama cases start when 'an ox gores' someone or something; the modern equivalent would probably be automobile moving violations. The debates are notable because they are based equally on scripture and appeals to an emerging standard of common-sense justice and human rights.



Book 6: **TRACT BABA KAMA (FIRST GATE), PART II AND TRACT BABA METZIA (MIDDLE GATE)**

THE CONCLUSION OF BABA KAMA, THE FIRST GATE, AND BABA METZIA, THE MIDDLE GATE. The second half of Baba Kama continues with cases involving stolen items. Baba Metziah continues with civil law, particularly cases involving damages: among the topics are found and loaned articles, real estate, loans, titles, what constitutes usury and fraud, and labor law. Many of the cases in Baba Metziah are extremely convoluted, more so than usual. There are a few scattered legends about the life and death of the principal authors of the Talmud, and some notable passages, mostly in [Chapter IV](#).



Book 7: **TRACT BABA BATHRA (LAST GATE)**

THIS, THE THIRD PART OF THE 'GATE' SEQUENCE OF TRACTS, DEALS WITH ISSUES OF CIVIL LAW REGARDING PROPERTY, including real estate, moveable possessions, and inheritance, in the usual great detail. At times the discussion becomes so hypothetical that Rodkinson, thankfully, skips ahead a bit. Sandwiched in this *very dry* volume is [one wild section of Haggada](#) (at the end of Chapter V) which consists of some very tall tales about fish, alligators and nautical going-ons. Also, notably, this tract includes what has to be one of the first attempts to discuss where transgender people fit into the legal framework.



Book 8: **TRACT SANHEDRIN: SECTION JURISPRUDENCE (DAMAGES)**

THE SUBJECT MATTER OF TRACT SANHEDRIN IS PRINCIPALLY CRIME AND PUNISHMENT. One of the most notable discussions in this book is the debate about the 'stubborn and rebellious son' (Chapter VIII). The rabbis openly express scepticism that a son who disrespects his father in a particular way should be put to death. Out of this quibble over an obscure 'worst case scenario' we see the emergence of a key principle of jurisprudence: the execution of divine law must be tempered by human mercy. This book also wanders far and wide, dispensing wisdom on such topics as the location of the lost tribes, what the windows on Noah's ark were made of, and when the Messiah is due to arrive.



Book 9: **TRACTS MACCOH, SHEBUOTH, EDUYOTH, ABUDA ZARA, AND HORIOTH**

THIS IS THE FINAL BOOK OF THE RODKINSON TRANSLATION OF THE TALMUD; IT CONTAINS THE REMAINING PORTIONS OF THE JURISPRUDENCE SECTION. Tract Maccoth deals with corporal punishment. Tract Shebuoth discusses oaths: what constitutes an oath, false oaths, and so on. Tract Eduyoth is a grab-bag of Mishna without commentary which give various cases related to other Talmud tracts. Tract Abuda Zara elaborates the Biblical commandment not to worship idols; it is of historical interest because of the tangential information about what the idolators (i.e. ancient Pagans) did

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**Rev. Ronald Boykin, Pastor**

or did not do. Tract Horiath is another short tract which discusses a number of very technical issues, including the hierarchy of dogs, cats and mice.



Book 10: **HISTORY OF THE TALMUD**

**THIS IS THE INTRODUCTION TO RODKINSONS' TALMUD TRANSLATION.** A history of the Talmud, starting with its five hundred years of composition from the first to fifth centuries C.E., and its bitter persecution from antiquity, through the Reformation up to the 19th Century. Includes biographies of the dozens of authors who wrote the Talmud, and a detailed bibliography through 1900.