

# The Truth Series

## Part 1

### Mark 7:1-23

By Gary Hoffman

Many in Christianity today are immersed in religious doctrines that do not properly reflect the doctrines and teachings of Jesus as the example of our faith. Within the estimated 22,000 denominations and subgroups of these denominations we have chosen to raise disputes over what Jesus was teaching and all but ignore the prophetic picture of Messiah in the “Old Testament” as well as the example that He set in his actions of obedience. We know for certain that He was unblemished in every aspect of the commandments, obeying every word of the Father with perfection. He set an example of obedience to the commandments, statutes, testimonies, law, etc... in a way that no other could accomplish. His disciples were also petitioned to learn from His example and follow Him, to the point of where Paul could confidently say, “*Imitate me as I imitate Messiah*”. These men and their writings were and still are our greatest example of obedience. The main point of this series is to openly refute the idea that the Law is not for the Christian, by looking at the Scriptures in context. The purpose being in letting the writers and the context in which they have written determine the truth and not our interpretation. It is important to note that context in these studies will include: the context of a verse within the paragraph, chapter and book, as well as an overall agreement with the other writers of the “New Testament”, also including an agreement with the “Old Testament” Prophets, Writings and the Torah.

**Matthew 5:17-19** *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19 **Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.**”*

**Matthew 24:35** *Heaven and earth will pass away, but **My words will by no means pass away.***

**2 Timothy 3:14-17** *But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, <sup>15</sup> and that from childhood you have known **the Holy Scriptures**, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> **All Scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

The truth is that not one jot or tittle has passed from the law, nor has His word passed away. The Law /Holy Scriptures that Paul exhorts Timothy concerning is still today profitable for doctrine, reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness. The law is given by inspiration of God, is still able to make one wise for salvation and is the standard that thoroughly equips us for every good work.

With this in mind is it possible that the law has been nullified for the “New Testament” believer. Did Jesus nullify food laws or any of the Law in Mark chapter 7? Did Jesus make ALL FOODS (those previously listed in Leviticus as unclean and an abomination the LORD) now OK for followers of Jesus to eat?

- *1 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. 2 **Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with **unwashed hands, they found fault.**** 3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat **unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the **tradition of the elders.*****

- The issue here was concerning a traditional manner of washing hands that was not addressed in the written Torah. This was one of the many thousands of man made additions to the Scriptures that the religious leaders of the day came up with in order to keep the Torah. This was called the oral torah and later put in a writing called the Mishnah. During the time of Jesus these teachings were elevated as equal to the written Torah of Moses. According to these man made laws it was necessary to go through a ritual washing of the hands that nullified any possibility of being "defiled" by a food or an item that may have come into contact with something or someone that was by this same law unclean. It is important to note that this was not a commandment of the LORD as written by Moses, but of men or "the tradition of the elders". This was called a "fence" and was erected, in order that one stay far away from breaking a written commandment. These fences were not in the Scriptures given to Moses, but the fabrication of men. This whole section of Scriptures is specifically focused on this man made law and this is the context and subject of Jesus rebuke. This is NOT and could not possibly be an issue of written Levitical food laws. The context of this entire section is an excellent example of how the context clearly establishes the point of the text.
  
- *4 When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which **they have received and hold**, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. 5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "**Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders**, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"*
  - The issue that these Pharisee's and scribes had with Jesus was that He and His disciples were not following the man made rules and regulations of the religious institution of His day. Again the subject of this dispute is clearly established in the text. This was NOT an issue of following the rules of the written law, but an issue of following the traditions of men, as these Pharisees and Scribes clearly state.
  
- *6 He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 7 And in vain they worship Me, **Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**'*
  - To confirm that this is the issue, Jesus uses a quote from the prophets to cement the issue and the error of these men. He condemned them for teaching that their man made traditions were simply man made traditions. His biggest dispute was that they had made these into doctrines that were elevated to that of the law itself. Jesus did not accept these as authoritative, but condemned those who teach and enforce these rules or dogma. Their contention here was in no way suggesting that Jesus broke the laws of Moses, but the commandments and doctrines of men.
  
- *8 **For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men**— the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."*
  - Jesus goes further in His accusation in implying that they not only made new doctrines that were not Scriptural, but they also laid aside the actual commandments of the LORD (the Torah) to do so. This is the leaven of the Pharisees and the heavy yoke that Jesus spoke of in other texts. The Torah that was given by the mouth of God at Sinai, when observed according the manner in which it was written was never a heavy yoke or legalism.

- 9 He said to them, **“All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition.**
  - They not only lay them aside, but reject Yahweh's word. (Torah or OT). This is where the danger of our man made traditions leads. It becomes our law and we reject Gods law. We become submissive and fear men while rejecting the written law of God. We elevate the traditions of our fathers in higher esteem than that which came from the very mouth of God Himself.
  
- 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ 11 But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban”—’ (that is, a gift to God), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, 13 **making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”**
  - They even override and make the commandments of no effect through their UN Biblical tradition. Men begin to pursue and focus on these and their importance replaces the original writing in which they are seeking to uphold. I believe that the sole emphasis of this portion of Scripture is a warning anyone who has a doctrine that supercedes the written commandments. I believe that this is the warning for the church today. I believe that we need to ask the LORD to reveal in us any doctrines that we adhere to that He may look at in the same way he is looking at this oral law of the Jews.
  
- 14 When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, “Hear Me, everyone, and understand: 15 **There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.** 16 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!”
  - The importance of context must be noted here. This verse has a context in which it is set. To pluck this verse out of this context and interpret it outside of the surrounding verses would be in extreme opposition to the writers intent. I will note that most who use this verse to say that Jesus abolished the food laws must remove it from the surrounding Scripture to do so. This verse simply CANNOT be support text for eating what ever we want.
  - A study of the word uses here is also in support of this being a different issue than food. The following is a word study on the key word defile. The question is: “Is this the word used to describe unclean foods or any other designation as found in the OT. NOTE: that the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT from Jesus day) never uses this Greek word. Thus it is NEVER the word used in any of the OT passages for "unclean"
    - **DEFILE - 2840 κοινόω** [*koinoo* /koy·no·o/] v. From 2839; TDNT 3:809; TDNTA 447; GK 3124; 15 occurrences; AV translates as “defile” 11 times, “call common” twice, “pollute” once, and “unclean” once. 1. to make common. 1a. to make unclean, render unhallowed, defile, profane. 1b. to declare or count unclean.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Strong, James. *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed., G2840. Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996.

- However, "unclean" in the OT and every instance in Leviticus, especially chapter 11 is represented by the Greek word *akathartos* which is used numerous occasions in the NT. It is used exclusively in the Gospels in association with demons or literally "unclean (*akathartos*) spirit, and predominantly in the rest of the NT in the same manner. A good question as a side note is the following: Did the writers of the Septuagint know more about the spiritual issues concerning these unclean animals than simply dietary in nature?
    - **Unclean-176** □κάθαρτος (*akathartos*), ov (*on*): adj.; α DBLHebr 3237, 3238; Str 169; TDNT 3.427—1. LN 53.39 defiled (religiously), impure, unclean (Ac 10:14, 28; 11:8; 1Co 7:14; 2Co 6:17; Eph 5:5; Rev 17:4; 18:2); 2. LN 12.39 πνε□μα □κάθαρτον (*pneuma akatharton*), unclean spirit, evil spirit (Mt 10:1) <sup>2</sup>
    - This is the word used in the NT for In all but 5 instances for "unclean spirit". It is used also to translate a quote from 2 Cor 6:17 from Isaiah 52:11.
  - The use of *koinoo* instead of *akathartos* here is added (very significant) support that Jesus was not implying that all foods, including those already established as unclean (*akathartos*) are now clean, but simply denouncing the authority of the traditions of men. His point is that food that God already determined to be acceptable can not be made common or unclean by mans influence. Basically your laws are changing the Laws of God.
- 17 When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. 18 So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? **Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him,**
    - "Whatever" here cannot thus be an all encompassing statement, outside of the context of this argument. Within the context it cannot mean that now all things, including the ones already addressed in Leviticus, are OK as food. It is simply a misunderstanding of ours because of our tradition and the interpretation of men. For the very reason Jesus had to set these religious leaders straight. Their problem is our problem: we have taken the tradition of men and made it into doctrine. A doctrine which we so boldly and vehemently hold to. We cannot make the same mistake as the one group of people that Yahshua so seriously chastised. We MUST look into our own lives and see where our traditions and doctrines are the same, i.e. where "our interpretation" and other teachers (even our church fathers) have a system in place that overrides the Word of God. Look close, they are to numerous to count. We are in bondage to our own traditions and refuse to follow God's teachings. We are doing the very thing that Jesus is opposed to here. And interestingly we are using the very Scriptures that rebuke this theology to support our breaking of the Law.
    - **NOTE:** The NIV ads in parenthesis: (*in saying this Jesus declared all food "clean"*) this is an extremely disturbing addition to the Word of God, designed to sway the reader to make a conclusion that is no where evident in this passage. These Greek scholars "knowingly" chose to create doctrine that is non existent.
    - Another important note to point out here is that the dietary prohibitions in Leviticus list certain animal's ad food and certain others as NOT FOOD. To say that there are unclean foods and clean foods is missing the emphasis of the LORD. He is clearly saying that some animal meat is not to be considered food. What God has determined as clean to eat is food and what He has determined as unclean is not food. The issue with the Pharisees and Scribes is that they

<sup>2</sup>Strong, James. *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible : Showing Every Word of the Test of the Common English Version of the Canonical Books, and Every Occurrence of Each Word in Regular Order.* electronic ed., G2840. Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship., 1996.

are making what God has called food, unclean by contact with a gentile or a gentile's food ware, which was not possible according to the Law.

- **19 because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?"**
  - The process that purifies all foods is our own body system. This portion of text is clearly concerning the God given processes of the body to eliminate the by-products of food through the excretion of waste. Not about changing food laws or about making what is not food now food.

*20 And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within and defile a man."*<sup>3</sup>

- This is and always was and always will be a heart issue. Is your heart clean? These things all come from your heart. It is these that make us (*koinoo*) common and deprives us of the capacity for fellowship with God. This points to the focus of this section of Scriptures is about evil things and not food. It is not saying that what we eat is of no concern.
- We must read the Word of God and check all our interpretations of a verse, first with the context or the sentence, then the paragraph, then the chapter, then the book, then with the NT, then with the OT. If there is any deviation or contradiction, WE are the ones who are wrong in our interpretation, not the writers or the Creator.
- Let us not forget that there is **one** law and **one** law giver (James 4:12.)

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<sup>3</sup>*The New King James Version*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996, c1982.