

The Gospel of Mark

Inside Out

Lesson #6 for August 10, 2024

Scriptures: Mark 7; 8:11-21; Isaiah 29:13; Exodus 20:12.

1. In this lesson, we will follow Jesus in the final days of His work in Galilee. He already knew that the religious leaders in Judea were seeking to kill Him. (John 5:18; 7:2) But, He did not hesitate to condemn those religious leaders in a way that clearly showed that He was supporting the Old Testament Scriptures while they were not. They were following their religious tradition over and above the actual Scriptures.
2. As things were becoming dangerous, Jesus left Galilee and traveled outside of Jewish territory to Tyre and Sidon and healed the daughter of a Canaanite woman. He returned to Galilee by a circuitous route, going all the way to Caesarea Philippi, and then, into Decapolis where He healed a deaf-mute man. When the people of Decapolis heard that Jesus was in their territory again, they remembered what they have been told by the one (or two) formerly-demon-possessed man (or men). So, thousands wanted to see Jesus for themselves.

Mark 7:1-13: ¹ Some Pharisees and teachers of the Law who had come from Jerusalem gathered round Jesus. ²They noticed that some of his disciples were eating their food with hands that were ritually unclean — that is, they had not washed them in the way the Pharisees said people should.

³ (For the Pharisees, as well as the rest of the Jews, follow the teaching they received from their ancestors: they do not eat unless they wash their hands in the proper way; ⁴nor do they eat anything that comes from the market unless they wash it first. And they follow many other rules which they have received, such as the proper way to wash cups, pots, copper bowls, and beds.)

⁵ So the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law asked Jesus, “Why is it that your disciples do not follow the teaching handed down by our ancestors, but instead eat with ritually unclean hands?”

⁶ Jesus answered them, “How right Isaiah was when he prophesied about you! You are hypocrites, just as he wrote:

‘These people, says God, honour [*sic-Br*] me with their words, but their heart is really far away from me.

⁷ It is no use for them to worship me, because they teach human rules as though they were God’s laws!’

⁸ “You put aside God’s command and obey human teachings.”

⁹ And Jesus continued, “You have a clever way of rejecting God’s law in order to uphold your own teaching. ¹⁰For Moses commanded, ‘Respect your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever curses his father or his mother is to be put to death.’ ¹¹But you teach that if a person has something he could use to help his father or mother, but says, ‘This is Corban’ (which means, it belongs to God), ¹²he is excused from helping his father or mother. ¹³In this way the teaching you pass on to others cancels out the word of God. And there are many other

things like this that you do.”—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., Mark 7:1-13). New York: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible*].^{†‡}

3. Does this passage have something to do with personal cleanliness? Not at all! So, where did those ideas come from?

[From the Bible study guide=BSG:] In Jesus’ day, many people in that land were very concerned with ritual purity. **During the time between the testaments, the idea of washing hands in order to remain ritually pure was extended to common people, even though these rules originally applied only to the priests in the Old Testament (Exod. 30:17–21).** It is in keeping with this concept that the religious leaders complain to Jesus about His disciples.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, August 4.^{†‡§}

4. As Jesus was trying to explain to them, they had expanded on the teachings that were designed just for the priests as they carried out their ceremonial activities within the temple precincts to include ritual or ceremonial cleanliness for all Jews in all situations. They had carried this matter (i.e., ritual cleanliness) to the extent that after going to the marketplace and purchasing fruits and vegetables, they had to clean both the food and themselves in a special way when they came home for fear that those fruits and vegetables might have been touched by a Gentile, and thus, made impure according to their teachings!

5. So, where did the original idea of ritual cleaning come from?

Exodus 30:17-21: ¹⁷ The LORD said to Moses, ¹⁸ “Make a bronze basin with a bronze base. Place it between the Tent and the altar, and put water in it. ¹⁹ Aaron and his sons are to use the water to wash their hands and feet ²⁰before they go into the Tent or approach the altar to offer the food offering. Then they will not be killed. ²¹They must wash their hands and feet, so that they will not die. This is a rule which they and their descendants are to observe for ever [*sic-Br*].”—*Good News Bible*.^{*‡}

6. When asked why His disciples were eating without going through the ritual purifications, Jesus did not answer their question directly. He started by quoting Isaiah.

Isaiah 29:13: The Lord [*sic*] said, “These people claim to worship me, but their words are meaningless, and their hearts are somewhere else. Their religion is nothing but human rules and traditions, which they have simply memorized.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

[BSG:] The second part of Jesus’ reply plays off the Isaiah quotation. The Lord cites the command of God to honor one’s parents (*Exod. 20:12*)—that is, to take care of them in their old age—and contrasts this with a religious tradition where one could give something to God (a gift, *corban*), use it for oneself, but deny its use to elderly parents in need. One can just imagine the encounter: “I am sorry, father. I would love to help you, but I gave the money to the temple.”—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, August 4.^{†§}

Exodus 20:12: “Respect your father and your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

[BSG:] **It is this type of hypocrisy that Jesus attacks uncompromisingly. They have placed human tradition above the Word of God and, in so doing, have sinned.**

So what was the answer to the Pharisees' question? The response of Jesus implies that He does not find convincing their insistence on hand purification as necessary to be in accordance with the will of God. Instead, **His response clearly supports the commandments of the Law over against human tradition.** (See also Mark 1:44; Mark 7:10–13; Mark 10:3–8; and Mark 12:26, 29–31.)—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sunday, August 4.†‡§

7. In this and other situations, Jesus repeatedly showed how they were completely wrong because they followed their own traditions instead of following Scripture. **Is it possible that we have some “traditions” that might be contradictory to the principles of God’s law?**
8. Having answered the Jewish leaders in a way that they could not refute, Jesus then turned to the other people around and gave this advice:

Mark 7:14-19: ¹⁴ Then Jesus called the crowd to him once more and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵There is nothing that goes into a person from the outside which can make him ritually unclean. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that makes him unclean.” [Note: Some manuscripts add verse 16: *Listen, then, if you have ears! (see 4:23).*]

¹⁷ When he left the crowd and went into the house, his disciples asked him to explain this saying. ¹⁸ “You are no more intelligent than the others,” Jesus said to them. “Don’t you understand? Nothing that goes into a person from the outside can really make him unclean, ¹⁹because it does not go into his heart but into his stomach and then goes on out of the body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared that all foods are fit to be eaten.)—*Good News Bible*.*†§

9. So, what do these words really mean? Was Jesus possibly telling us that virtually anything is safe to eat? Is it safe even to eat poison?
10. As virtually all scholars have recognized, this was not a question about what is safe to eat. That is a separate issue. Jesus was talking about foods that were safe or not safe to eat as is dealt with in places like Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14.
11. Their traditions were supposed to be methods of acquiring human merit or favor in the sight of God, and thus, helping them to earn salvation. Jesus pointed out clearly that it is not what a person puts in his mouth **that has something to do with his salvation**, but rather what comes out of his mouth!

[BSG:] **First**, it would be odd for Jesus suddenly to dismiss Mosaic instructions in Mark 7:14–19 when He had just defended Moses against tradition in Mark 7:6–13. **Second**, the very tradition that the Pharisees were promoting does not have a basis in Old Testament teaching; the food laws, in contrast, do. **Third**, what Mark 7:19 means when it says that Jesus cleanses all food is not that the food laws are abolished but instead that the tradition of touch contamination that the Pharisees had made was invalid. This, for example, is that false notion that if you could be contaminated by coming in contact with Gentiles, then you

also could be contaminated through contact with food that they had touched.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, August 5.†‡

Mark 7:20-23: ²⁰ And he went on to say, “It is what comes out of a person that makes him unclean. ²¹For from the inside, from a person’s heart, come the evil ideas which lead him to do immoral things, to rob, kill, ²²commit adultery, be greedy, and do all sorts of evil things; deceit, indecency, jealousy, slander, pride, and folly — ²³all these evil things come from inside a person and make him unclean.”—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] When the reference to the fifth commandment in Mark 7:10 is included with the vice list, every commandment of the second table of the Decalogue is there. Further, Jesus refers to vain worship, in Mark 7:7, the breaking of what is at the heart of the first four commands of the Decalogue. Thus, Jesus stands as a defender of the Law of God throughout this passage.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Monday, August 5.‡

12. ***You might have the right theology. However, who fully and ultimately has your heart?***
13. When Jesus recognized that the situation in Galilee was becoming contentious and potentially dangerous, He left the territory of Galilee. He left, not just because of that, but also because He needed time to teach His disciples and also to reach out to a Canaanite woman whose daughter was possessed by the Devil.
14. In the area of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus encountered a woman whose daughter was “possessed” by an evil spirit.

Mark 7:24-30: ²⁴ Then Jesus left and went away to the territory near the city of Tyre. He went into a house and did not want anyone to know he was there, but he could not stay hidden. ²⁵A woman, whose daughter had an evil spirit in her, heard about Jesus and came to him at once and fell at his feet. ²⁶The woman was a Gentile, born in the region of Phoenicia in Syria. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷But Jesus answered, “Let us first feed the children. It isn’t right to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”

²⁸ “Sir,” she answered, “even the dogs under the table eat the children’s leftovers!”

²⁹ So Jesus said to her, “Because of that answer, go back home, where you will find that the demon has gone out of your daughter!”

³⁰ She went home and found her child lying on the bed; the demon had indeed gone out of her.—*Good News Bible*.*

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] Christ knew this woman’s situation. He knew that she was longing to see Him, and He placed Himself in her path. By ministering to her sorrow, He could give a living representation of the lesson He designed to teach. For this He had brought His disciples into this region. He desired them to see the ignorance existing in cities and villages close to the land of Israel. The people who had been given every opportunity to understand the truth were without a knowledge of the needs of those around them. No effort was made to help souls in darkness. **The partition wall which Jewish pride had erected, shut even the disciples from sympathy with the heathen**

world. But these barriers were to be broken down.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 400.1.†‡

[\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.1937&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.1937&index=0)‡

15. Why did Jesus seem to disrespect and talk down to that Canaanite woman?

[BSG:] The story in this passage also raises troubling questions. Why does Jesus respond so harshly to this woman, in so many words calling her a dog?

He does not openly explain, but two characteristics in His response to her suggest what He is teaching. In Mark 7:27, He says that the children should be fed “first.” If there is a “first,” it seems logical that there would be a “second.” The other characteristic is that Jesus uses a diminutive form of the word “dog,” not meaning puppies but rather, in context, dogs allowed inside the house in contrast to street dogs. The woman picks up on these two markers in her response to Jesus, which helps explain her response.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Tuesday, August 6.‡

16. This woman had heard about Jesus, probably from Jews who lived in that area and were aware of what He had been doing. She realized that Jesus was her last and only hope. So, she took advantage of every possible hint that she could find to achieve her goal.

[EGW:] ... By His dealings with her, He has shown that she who has been regarded as an outcast from Israel is no longer an alien, but a child in God’s household. As a child it is her privilege to share in the Father’s gifts. Christ now grants her request, and finishes the lesson to the disciples. Turning to her with a look of pity and love, He says, “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” From that hour her daughter became whole. The demon troubled her no more. The woman departed, acknowledging her Saviour, and happy in the granting of her prayer.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 401.3.‡ [\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.1944&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.1944&index=0)‡

17. ***So, where does prejudice against other races, tribes, and nationalities come from? Isn’t it clear in this story that all such prejudices are contrary to Jesus’s teachings?***

18. The time had come for Jesus to make His way back to the area on the east side of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan River. He had left that area because of the incident with the demon-possessed man/men and the 2000 pigs. As soon as He entered that territory, some people recognized Him and His capabilities. They immediately asked for help.

Mark 7:31-37: ³¹ Jesus then left the neighbourhood [*sic*-Br] of Tyre and went on through Sidon to Lake Galilee, going by way of the territory of the Ten Towns. ³²Some people brought him a man who was deaf and could hardly speak, and they begged Jesus to place his hands on him. ³³So Jesus took him off alone, away from the crowd, put his fingers in the man’s ears, spat, and touched the man’s tongue. ³⁴Then Jesus looked up to heaven, **gave a deep groan**, and said to the man, “*Ephphatha*,” which means, “Open up!”

³⁵ At once the man was able to hear, his speech impediment was removed, and he began to talk without any trouble. ³⁶**Then Jesus ordered the people not to speak of it to anyone; but the more he ordered them not to, the more they spoke.** ³⁷And all who heard were completely amazed. “How well he does

everything!” they exclaimed. “He even causes the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak!”—*Good News Bible*.*†‡§

[BSG:] Jesus understands the man’s predicament and takes him aside privately. The Lord’s manner of healing the man is curious, particularly for modern readers. He puts His fingers in the man’s ears, spits, touches his tongue and sighs. Jesus touches the affected parts of the man that He will heal, **but why the sigh?** [Next, the Bible study guide quotes Ellen White as below.]—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Wednesday, August 7.‡

[EGW:] ... He sighed at [the] thought of the ears that would not be open to the truth, the tongues that refused to acknowledge the Redeemer.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 404.2.‡ [<https://egwritings.org/read?panels=p130.1961&index=0>]‡

19. The Bible study guide invites us to explore this idea further by considering:

Genesis 2:7: Then the LORD God took some soil from the ground and formed a man out of it; he breathed life-giving breath into his nostrils and the man began to live.—*Good News Bible*.*

Isaiah 43:7: “They are my own people,

and I created them to bring me glory.”—*Good News Bible*.*

[BSG:] **Genesis describes the creation of the first man on our planet. The word “formed” comes from the Hebrew verb *yṣr*, which also means “fashion, create, shape.”** (See David J. A. Clines, ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, vol. 4 [Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998], p. 269.) The author of Genesis uses this verb to describe the work of a Creator who forms, or a Potter who shapes, His creation. The tactile image of One who puts His hands on matter in order to shape from it the first human being is undeniable in Genesis. In addition, the following sentence in Genesis 2:7 describes the part in the process that renders the inert materials into living, conscious matter. The Lord imparts the breath of life into the clay. That is, He “breathed into his nostrils.”

Similarly, in Mark 7, we have an allusion to the making of Adam. In the case of the deaf man, who speaks with difficulty (*Mark 7:32*), **Jesus intervenes by using His own hands and mouth as a vehicle of healing. In this way, Jesus seeks to “reshape,” as it were, His creation, which He does by putting His fingers into the man’s ears. Then, He spits and touches the man’s tongue with His saliva, and at the command of His word, the man is re-created. In that instant, the man is a new person.** “And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly” (*Mark 7:35, NASB*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 83.†‡§

[BSG:] **Thus, the Creator of the universe has come to earth to restore the creation, which Satan has ruined.** According to Mark, Jesus has come to start **His work of re-creation** in doing “all things well.” There is no doubt, such work is the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy, once again from Isaiah.

“Say to those with anxious heart,

‘Take courage, fear not.

Behold, your God will come with vengeance;

The retribution of God will come,
But He will save you.’
Then the eyes of those who are blind will be opened,
And the ears of those who are deaf will be unstopped.
Then those who limp will leap like a deer,
And the tongue of those who cannot speak will shout for joy”
(*Isa. 35:4–6, NASB; emphasis added [by the authors of the Bible study guide]*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 83-84.†§

20. **Why did Jesus ask many of the people that He healed to keep quiet about what He had done especially since we know that He knew in advance that they would not?**

21. **What “traditions” are believed and practiced today that are contrary to the Scriptures?**

22. Jesus took a boat back from the area of Decapolis to the area of Galilee. Immediately He was confronted by Pharisees!

Mark 8:11-13: ¹¹ Some Pharisees came to Jesus and started to argue with him. They wanted to trap him, so they asked him to perform a miracle to show that God approved of him. ¹²But Jesus gave a deep groan and said, “Why do the people of this day ask for a miracle? No, I tell you! No such proof will be given to these people!”

¹³ He left them, got back into the boat, and started across to the other side of the lake.—*Good News Bible.**

23. As they were leaving Galilee and headed back for Decapolis in their boat, Jesus took advantage of the opportunity to teach some very important lessons.

Mark 8:14-21: ¹⁴ The disciples had forgotten to bring enough bread and had only one loaf with them in the boat. ¹⁵ “Take care,” Jesus warned them, “and be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod.”

¹⁶ They started discussing among themselves: “He says this because we haven’t any bread.”

¹⁷ Jesus knew what they were saying, so he asked them, “Why are you discussing about not having any bread? Don’t you know or understand yet? Are your minds so dull? ¹⁸You have eyes — can’t you see? You have ears — can’t you hear? Don’t you remember ¹⁹when I broke the five loaves for the 5,000 people? How many baskets full of leftover pieces did you take up?”

“Twelve,” they answered.

²⁰ “And when I broke the seven loaves for the 4,000 people,” asked Jesus, “how many baskets full of leftover pieces did you take up?”

“Seven,” they answered.

²¹ “And you still don’t understand?” he asked them.—*Good News Bible.**

24. Matthew added:

Matthew 16:12: Then the disciples understood that he was not warning them to guard themselves from the yeast used in bread but from the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.—*Good News Bible.*†*

25. Jesus was disappointed that after feeding 5000 men plus women and children from two fish and five small loaves of bread, they still thought He was concerned about not having physical food with them! What would you have done with the disciples at that point in time? Surely, they must have at least begun to understand that their physical limitations were not limitations for Jesus. Read **Mark 8:1-10 about the feeding of the 4000 which we discussed in our last lesson.** Remember the seven baskets of food left over from those seven loaves and “few small” fish.

26. Do we need the warning against the sin of hypocrisy as much as the Pharisees did?

[EGW:] Among the followers of our Lord today, as of old, how widespread is this subtle, deceptive sin [hypocrisy]! **How often our service to Christ, our communion with one another, is marred by the secret desire to exalt self! How ready the thought of self-gratulation, and the longing for human approval! It is the love of self, the desire for an easier way than God has appointed that leads to the substitution of human theories and traditions for the divine precepts.** To His own disciples the warning words of Christ are spoken, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.”

The religion of Christ is sincerity itself. Zeal for God’s glory is the motive implanted by the Holy Spirit; and only the effectual working of the Spirit can implant this motive. Only the power of God can banish self-seeking and hypocrisy. This change is the sign of His working. When the faith we accept destroys selfishness and pretense, when it leads us to seek God’s glory and not our own, we may know that it is of the right order. “Father, glorify Thy name” (John 12:28), was the keynote of Christ’s life, and if we follow Him, this will be the keynote of our life. He commands us to “walk, even as He walked;” and “hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.” 1 John 2:6, 3.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages** 409.2-3.†‡ <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p130.1987&index=0>‡

27. **Think about what you would have done if you had been a disciple of Jesus on those occasions. What do we need to do to keep ourselves spiritually clean? Are there “unclean” people living in and around us? How can we reach out to them? Remember that Jesus had just fed 4000 men, not counting women and children, who were mostly Gentiles. According to the Jews, those were outside of the realm of salvation!**

28. Why do you suppose it was that even though the religious leaders knew the Scriptures very well, they still tended to place their human traditions above Scripture?

29. In the study of this portion of Mark, Jesus dealt with three clear challenges to the Jewish way of thinking:

1. Following Isaiah 29:13, He pointed out that they were just as bad as the people in Isaiah’s day, doing things the way they wanted instead of God’s way!
2. They had elevated their traditions above the teachings of Scripture.
3. In His healing of the deaf-mute man, He was showing that He had the power to form and create human beings, just as He did at creation!

30. In Isaiah’s day also, mere formality had taken over their religion.

Isaiah 1:2-19: ² The LORD said, “Earth and sky, listen to what I am saying! The children I brought up have rebelled against me. ³Cattle know who owns them, and donkeys know where their master feeds them. But that is more than my people Israel know. They don’t understand at all.”

⁴ You are doomed, you sinful nation, you corrupt and evil people! Your sins drag you down! You have rejected the LORD, the holy God of Israel, and have turned your backs on him. ⁵Why do you keep on rebelling? Do you want to be punished even more? Israel, your head is already covered with wounds, and your heart and mind are sick. ⁶From head to foot there is not a healthy spot on your body. You are covered with bruises and sores and open wounds. Your wounds have not been cleaned or bandaged. No ointment has been put on them....

⁹If the LORD Almighty had not let some of the people survive, Jerusalem would have been totally destroyed, just as Sodom and Gomorrah were.

¹⁰ Jerusalem, your rulers and your people are like those of Sodom and Gomorrah. Listen to what the LORD is saying to you. Pay attention to what our God is teaching you. ¹¹He says, “Do you think I want all these sacrifices you keep offering to me? I have had more than enough of the sheep you burn as sacrifices and of the fat of your fine animals. **I am tired of the blood of bulls and sheep and goats.** ¹²Who asked you to bring me all this when you come to worship me? Who asked you to do all this tramping about in my Temple? ¹³**It’s useless to bring your offerings. I am disgusted with the smell of the incense you burn. I cannot stand your New Moon Festivals, your Sabbaths, and your religious gatherings; they are all corrupted by your sins.** ¹⁴I hate your New Moon Festivals and holy days; they are a burden that I am tired of bearing.

¹⁵ “When you lift your hands in prayer, I will not look at you. No matter how much you pray, **I will not listen, for your hands are covered with blood.** ¹⁶Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. **Yes, stop doing evil ¹⁷and learn to do right. See that justice is done — help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows.”**

¹⁸The LORD says, “Now, let’s settle the matter. You are stained red with sin, but I will wash you as clean as snow. Although your stains are deep red, you will be as white as wool. ¹⁹If you will only obey me, you will eat the good things the land produces.”—*Good News Bible*.*†‡

31. Mark 7 alludes to Isaiah 29:13 which says in this chiasm (based on the translation by the author of the Bible study guide):

- A. [BSG:] People draw near with their mouths and lips
- B. To honor Me
- C. But their hearts are far from Me [The main point!]
- B1. Their reverence for Me
- A1. Is *like* commandments repeated *by rote*.

—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 81.†§

32. In regard to the issues in Isaiah and also in Mark 7, notice this commentator’s thoughts.

[Motyer in BSG:] “As the Sovereign reviews their worship, all he sees is conformity to human rules. It is not that the Lord belittles the use of words; but **words without the heart are meaningless; and worship is not worship (Mark 7:6–8) unless it is based on and responds to what God has revealed.**”—Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 20 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), pp. 215, 216.—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 81].^{†‡§}

33. Notice what another commentator said (as quoted in the Bible study guide).

[BSG:] The people of Israel, God’s own people, lived out a religious dichotomy. They kept a ritualistic and liturgical formality, but they did not live according to the scriptural principles that had been taught to them and which were repeated so often among them. Worship, including all its elements, is meaningless without obedience. God was not against a proper cultic celebration; His indignation came as a consequence of the heavy formalism that characterized their worship. (See Teófilo Correa, “El contexto veterotestamentario de Marcos 7:6–7,” in *Marcos: El Evangelista del “tiempo cumplido.” Leyendo el evangelio de Marcos: su mensaje en el pasado y en la actualidad*, ed. Merling Alomía, Joel Leiva, Juan Millanao [Lima: Ediciones Theologika, 2003], p. 129.)—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 81].^{†±Ω§}

34. Imagine the disappointment of Jesus as He repeatedly came in conflict with religious leaders who were dead set against Him and in favor of their religious traditions.

35. What can we conclude?

[BSG:] Both in Isaiah’s generation in the seventh century B.C., and in Mark’s generation in the first century AD [*sic*], **the worship of God’s people is in vain because of their wrong emphasis and the hypocritical attitude of their hearts.** In some sense, the Pharisees and the scribes are responsible for this condition because, as leaders, they use their considerable influence with the people to uphold human traditions over divine revelation and elevate human regulations over God’s commandments. Here, in an implicit manner, Christ invites His people to come back to the Scriptures and to its path of justice and mercy. Christ also proclaims spirituality that transcends mere external and formal religiosity. Instead, Christ advocates a spiritual experience that is anchored in a conscious and devoted decision to serve God with a sincere heart in light of what God has revealed.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 82.^{†‡}

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