

Tradition!

Mark 7:1-13

First-century Judaism

- Authority
 - replaced *Sola Scriptura* with human tradition.
- Salvation
 - replaced *Sola Fide* with works-righteousness.

The Demise of Harvard



Mark 7:1-13

- **I. The External Nature of Legalism (1-5)**
- **II. Jesus' Personal Diagnosis of Legalism (6-13)**
- **III. The True Nature of 1st Century Judaism**
 - A. Its Source of Authority
 - B. Its Way of Salvation

Harvard, Sept. 26, 1642

- “Let every student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of his life and studies, is to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life, John 17:3, and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, let every one seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seek it of him. Prov. 2.3.”

Judaism Today

- Herman Wouk, in *This Is My God*: “in Judaism right conduct is the path to God. This path lies open to Jews and non-Jews.... Judaism has never tried to save souls by converting them. It teaches that salvation lies in people’s conduct before God, not in their taking on the special commands that bind the house of Abraham.”
- A “universal ethical religion of right-thinking men.”
- Called “the law of the sons of Noah.”
- It demands ...
 - 1) The worship of God.
 - 2) The ban on murder.
 - 3) The ban on theft.
 - 4) The ban on incest and sexual aberrations.
 - 5) The ban on eating “the limb of the living” – cruelty to animals.
 - 6) The ban on blasphemy.
 - 7) Justice – the establishment of courts, judges, and a system of equity.
- Wouk: “Nations and persons that live by these precepts

"The New Perspective

- E.P. Sanders
 - Born and grew up in Grand Prairie, Texas.
 - Wesleyan College, Fort Worth (1955-1959)
 - Perkins School of Theology at Southern Methodist University, Dallas (1959-1962).
 - 1962-1963 at Göttingen, the University of Oxford, and in Jerusalem.
 - Sept. 1963 – May 1966 at Union Theological Seminary, New York for his Th.D.
 - Professor of Religion at Duke University, North Carolina, from 1990 until he retired in 2005.
- N.T. Wright
 - Bishop of Durham in the Church of England
 - A leading New Testament scholar

Wright's Views

- Wright's answer as summarized by Piper and approved by Wright:
 - "Paul's problem was not that these Jewish people were trying to earn God's favor by their own self-wrought righteousness, but rather that they failed to see their calling to reach the nations and instead used their badge to exclude Gentiles from the covenant."

Wright's Views

- (1) The gospel is not about how to get saved.
- (2) Justification is not how you become a Christian.
- (3) Justification is not the gospel.
- (4) We are not justified by believing in justification.
- (5) God's righteousness is the same as His covenant faithfulness.
- (6) The imputation of God's own righteousness to the sinner makes no sense at all.
- (7) Future justification is on the basis of the complete life lived.
- (8) First-century Judaism had nothing of the alleged self-righteousness and boastful legalism.

The NT Evidence

- (1) Consider the example of the apostle Paul.
 - Paul was a first-century Pharisee (Phil. 3:5).
 - Rom. 7:7-12
 - Rom. 10:1-3 - Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for *their* salvation. 2 For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. Not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.
 - Eph. 2:1, 3, 5 - And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.... Among them *we* too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.... even when *we* were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).
 - 1 Tim. 1:13 - I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief.
 - Titus 3:3 - *We* also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.

Wright's Views

- Wright in *What Paul Really Said*:
"Judaism in Paul's day was not, as has regularly been supposed, a religion of legalistic works-righteousness. If we imagine that it was, and that Paul was attacking it as if it was, we will do great violence to it and to him.... The Jew keeps the law out of gratitude, as the proper response to grace—not, in other words, in order to 'get into' the covenant people, but to stay in. Being 'in' in the first place was God's gift."

The NT Evidence

- (1) Consider the example of the apostle Paul.
 - How Paul describes those who held the very views he used to hold...
 - Phil. 3:2 – Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision.
 - Phil. 3:5 - circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee.
 - Phil. 3:8-10 - More than that, I count all [those] things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.

The NT Evidence

- **(2) The teaching of Jesus**
 - Mark 7:6-7 (from Is. 29:13)
 - Matt. 5:20 - "I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.
 - Matt. 12:38-39 - Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and *yet* no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet (cf. Matt. 16:1-4).
 - Matt. 23:5-7, 13*, 15*, 23, 25-28, 33*
 - Matt. 24:51
 - Luke 16:14-15 - the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him. 15 And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God.
 - Luke 18:9-11*

Lessons from

- **3) What it tells us about Christ.**
 - **a) He knows our hearts, just as He knew the Pharisee's hearts.**
 - John 2:25 - He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.
 - Matt. 9:4 - And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?"
 - John 6:64 - "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.

Lessons from

- **1) What it tells us about false religion.**
 - First century Judaism provides us with the two markers of all false religion.
 - a) A rejection of Sola Scriptura – the source of authority.
 - b) A rejection of Sola Gratia – the source of a right standing before God.

Lessons from

- **3) What it tells us about Christ.**
 - **b) He is the only way to God.**
 - John 3:36 - "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."
 - John 8:24 - "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."
 - John 14:6 - Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.
 - Acts 4:10-12 – "let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by this *name* this man stands here before you in good health.... And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."

Lessons from

- **2) What it tells us about ourselves.**
 - a) There is no way we will ever earn heaven by our own righteousness.
 - Matt. 5:20 - "Unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.
 - Cf. Phil. 3:9 - and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith.
 - b) We desperately need grace—and grace alone.
 - c) It is only those who understand their need of grace who can be justified before God.
 - d) If we will repent and believe, God will in a moment of time declare the worst of sinners, justified!

Lessons from

- **3) What it tells us about Christ.**
 - **c) Jesus has the power to save even those captured in any false religion with its works-based righteousness.**
 - Nicodemus (John 3:1 – a Pharisee; cf. 19:39)
 - Paul (Phil. 3:5, 8-9)