

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

7, The Gospel purifies from the corruption of external man-made religious traditions of self-righteous rules and rituals clarifying the internal transformation of the soul by saving faith: self-righteousness by law-works vs God's righteousness by grace-faith

Part 7B

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Introduction: Remember how Jesus had compassion on the multitude of 5,000 men plus women and children when they were hungry out in the country-side in the late afternoon (Mk. 6:30-44, et al.). Jesus prayed and asked God's blessing. Neither Jesus nor His Apostles practiced ritual hand washing following man-made religious traditions during that event or in their daily lives.

Did you make the connection with the opening of Mark chapter 7 about the dispute over rituals of washings? Jesus is once again accosted by the Jewish religious establishment over His rejection of man-made religious traditions that violate the revealed Word of God, (cf. Mk. 2:18ff re: religious fasting, Mk. 2:23ff re: Sabbath keeping). "Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him" (Mk. 3:6). Evidently among the multitudes that followed and flocked to Jesus there were spies filling-up the gossip lines back to Jerusalem.

Chapter 7, The Gospel purifies from the corruption of external man-made religious traditions of self-righteous rules and rituals clarifying the internal transformation of the soul by saving faith: self-righteousness by law-works vs God's righteousness by grace-faith.

vv. 1-16, Jesus preached the law-word of God and applied the New Covenant Gospel by first clarifying that sin is sourced in the human heart...

- Man-made rules and rituals of outward washings cannot purify the corruption of the sin-hardened heart shown in all manner of self-righteousness disguised as religious piety, cf. Exodus 20:12, et al., the 5th Commandment.

vv. 1-4, The ritualistic washings in dispute are not about basic hygiene/cleanliness, but about false beliefs that man-made rituals and rules of external religious practices can effect personal righteousness and holiness...

- **v. 2, "common"** [Gk. κοινός/*koy-nos'*, *common*, that is, (literally) shared by all or several, or (ceremonially) *profane*: - common, defiled, unclean, unholy. Same word used to identify the Greek language in use at the time of the New Testament as distinct from Classical Attic Greek or Modern Greek...]
This description is important in the context to contrast the religious man-made traditions from common lifestyles that do not violate God's commands and teachings revealed in Scripture
- **vv. 2-4, "unwashed"** [Gk. ἀνίπτος/*an'-ip-tos*, (as a negative particle) and a presumed derivative of νίπτω/*nip'-to*, to *cleanse* (especially the hands or the feet or the face); ceremonially to *perform ablution*: - wash; *without ablution*: - unwashed.]

This description is important in the context to contrast the qualifying those religious man-made traditions not to be confused with New Covenant Baptism...

“wash...in a special way” [Gk. π υ γ μ ῆ /poog-may', From a primary word, π ὅ ζ / pux, (the fist as a weapon); the clenched hand, that is, (only in the dative case as adverb) with the fist (hard scrubbing): - often.

ν ἰ π τ ω /nip'-to, to cleanse (especially the hands or the feet or the face); ceremonially to perform ablution: - wash.]

“wash (bathe themselves)...washing of...” [Gk. β α π τ ἰ ζ ω /bap-tid'-zo, to make whelmed (that is, fully wet); used only (in the New Testament) of ceremonial ablution, especially (technically) of the ordinance of Christian baptism: - baptize, wash. The claim that this word is one dimensional always meaning to dip by total immersion is not supported by generic usage...]

These several Greek words are used to describe the man-made religious tradition of ritualized washings of various things, e.g. hands, utensils for eating, drinking and cooking, also furniture, giving a negative review of external rules that become more elaborate and detached from common, every-day life as oppressive, burdensome, and unattainable resulting in false-guilt but also cultivating an elitism of self-righteousness achieved by selfishness, pride, and double-standards of regulatory loopholes for the initiated...

**Rules about ritualistic practices of washings are commonly found in false man-made religions (note Pontius Pilate's symbolic hand-washing was a moral act, cf. Matt. 27:24), both non-Christian and also various groups claiming Christian identity, however the New Testament's consistent teaching is that New Covenant Baptism is not to be confused as an external ritual of washing by mode, i.e. immersing, pouring or sprinkling water over the body, but is a New Covenant sign and seal of saving union with Christ by the Holy Spirit's regenerating power described by terms of soul-washings that effect the conscience rather than the outward body, “There is an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ...” 1 Peter 3:21—not the outward and often ritualistic washings and bathing from head to toe over the guilt of defilement...:*

- ❖ *The person of the Holy Spirit is described as being poured out in fullness of plenary power of Christ's resurrection, cf. Acts 2:17//10:45 [ε ' κ ἔ ω /ek-kheh'-o, ε ' κ χ ὕ ν ω /ek-khoo'-no]...*
- ❖ *New Covenant Baptism is not a sign by mode, but a covenant sign and seal symbolized by water replacing blood “In Him you were circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism [β ᾰ π τ ἰ σ μ α /bap'-tis-mah], in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.” Colossians 2:11-12//Romans 6:3-6...*
- ❖ *The symbolic use of water, not mode of baptism, represents the Holy Spirit's soul-washing power of new life, “...not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing [λ ο ὕ τ ρ ὶ ν /loo-tron']of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit whom He poured out [ε ' κ ἔ ω /ek-kheh'-o, ε ' κ χ ὕ ν ω /ek-khoo'-no] on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior...” Titus 3:5-6...*
- ❖ *The symbolic use of water applied to the body outwardly as explained by Scripture is witnessed to by the Holy Spirit as effectual in the heart to remove guilt from the conscience because of the promised mediation of Jesus Christ giving hope through faith not man-made religious rituals and rules of self-righteousness, “...and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled [ρ ᾰ ν τ ἰ ζ ω /hran-tid'-zo] from an evil conscience and our bodies washed [λ ο ὕ ω /loo'-o] with pure/clean water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” Hebrew 10:21-23*

