

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 184 – Mark 7:1-37

Day 916: Mark 7:1-8

Verses 1-20

Cf. Mt 15:1-20. "In the sequence of miracle stories around the lake in 6:31-56 Jesus has appeared as a figure of powerful action rather than a teacher, and has met with popular acclaim. With the beginning of chapter 7 we return to a situation of controversy and of teaching, the two closely woven together." France.

Verse 1

Καὶ συνάγονται πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ τινες τῶν γραμματέων ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων

συναγω gather (together), assemble
 γραμματεὺς, εὼς m scribe, expert in
 Jewish law, scholar; town clerk

Suggests that the incident occurred in Galilee. "Matthew's phrase ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων Φαρισαῖοι καὶ γραμματεῖς suggests a single group coming from Jerusalem to Galilee. Mark's wording, however, divides the group into the (presumably local) Φαρισαῖοι and τινες τῶν γραμματέων ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων. Judging from the area of their concern, the scribes from Jerusalem were themselves also Pharisees, and no distinction between the two groups is discernable in the pericope. The local Pharisees are already established in the narrative as the focus of opposition to Jesus in Galilee (2:16, 24; 3:6). Local scribes have also been mentioned in 2:6, 16, but the reappearance here of *Jerusalem* scribes (first encountered in 3:22), indicates a reinforcement of the local opposition by a delegation from the capital. The fact that in both instances they are described as having arrived (καταβάντες, 3:22; ἐλθόντες here) from Jerusalem indicates that they have come specially to investigate and/or dispute with Jesus." France.

Verse 2

καὶ ἰδόντες τινὰς τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ ὅτι κοινὰς χερσίν, τοῦτ' ἔστιν ἀνίπτοις, ἐσθίουσιν τοὺς ἄρτους

ἰδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὄρω
 see, observe

κοινός, α, ον common, unclean

Key word to the theme of this section.

χειρ, χειρὸς f hand
 ἀνίπτος, ον not washed according to
 ritual law
 ἐσθίω and ἐσθώ eat
 ἄρτος, ον m bread, food

France says that the practice of washing hands before eating "was a matter of scribal development, and it is uncertain how far it had progressed by the time of Jesus. It is unlikely that ritual handwashing was yet the norm among ordinary people, and it may well be that what the Pharisees were here expecting of Jesus and his disciples was their own distinctive practice. Surely a self-proclaimed religious teacher might be expected to require of his followers at least as rigorous a ritual practice as the Pharisees expected of theirs."

Verse 3

- οἱ γὰρ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ πάντες οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐὰν μὴ πυγμῇ νίψωνται τὰς χεῖρας οὐκ ἐσθίουσιν, κρατοῦντες τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν πρεσβυτέρων,

Ἰουδαῖος, α, ον a Jew, Jewish

"The inclusion of πάντες οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι in this description along with the Pharisees is more impressionistic than historically exact, since there is no evidence that the sort of precautions described were yet observed by Jews in general, if indeed they ever were. It was precisely the observance of such rules which marked out the members of the Pharisaic party from the general populace." France.

ἐὰν μὴ except, unless
 πυγμῇ, ης f fist (πυγμῇ of doubtful
 meaning with the fist, to the wrist)

Cranfield suggests that πυγμῇ νίψωνται is a reference to minor washing before eating in contrast with βαπτισθῶνται which refers to a more serious ablution. He adds "πυγμῇ might be explained as a not very felicitous way of saying 'up to the wrist'. Perhaps more probably it means 'with a fistful' with reference to the small amount of water necessary for the minor ablution. Other explanations have been suggested, and the problem cannot be said to have been definitively settled." The difficulty of the phrase gave rise to several textual variants.

νίψωνται Verb, aor midd subj, 3 pl νίπτω
 wash; midd wash oneself

κρατέω hold, hold fast

παραδοσις, εὼς f tradition

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder

"What is meant is the Jewish oral tradition or oral law, which was regarded as the 'fence for (preserving the integrity of) the Torah." Cranfield.

Verse 4

καὶ ἀπ• ἀγορᾶς ἐὰν μὴ βαπτίσωνται οὐκ ἐσθίουσιν, καὶ ἄλλα πολλά ἐστὶν ἃ παρέλαβον κρατεῖν, βαπτισμοὺς ποτηρίων καὶ ξεστῶν καὶ χαλκίων [καὶ κλινῶν] -

ἀγορα, ας f market place

Black takes this phrase to mean 'anything from the marketplace', but Cranfield thinks it better to understand it as 'when they come from the marketplace.'

βαπτίσωνται Verb, aor mid subj, 3 pl

βαπτίζω baptise, wash

ἄλλος, α, ον adj other, diverse

παρέλαβον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl

παραλαμβάνω receive, accept

βαπτισμος, ου m ritual washing,

ablution, baptism; washing (of hands)

Some MSS have ῥαντίζονται (sprinkle, wash) rather than βαπτίζονται – Cranfield thinks the term was substituted for the sake of Gentile readers who might not understand Jewish customs. France suggests, "A Christian scribe confronted by βαπτίζομαι as a term of Jewish ritual washing might well have wished to substitute a less 'Christian' word."

ποτηριον, ου n cup

ξεστης, ου m jug, pitcher, pot

χαλκιον, ου n (copper) vessel, bowl

κλινη, ης f bed, couch, stretcher,

sickbed

"The evidence is strong both for and against the inclusion of και κλινων. It is perhaps a little more likely that scribes omitted the phrase (referring to the legislation on unclean beds in Lv. 15) because it seemed inappropriate with a list of food vessels than that it was added subsequently in order to provide a fuller list of Jewish purification rituals (the washing of the bed is not explicitly mentioned in Lv. 15)..."

"The inclusion also of beds [dining couches?] (if original ...) is incongruous, but presumably represents a desire to offer an even more comprehensive account of Jewish purification rites by including also the theme of Lv. 15." France.

Verse 5

καὶ ἐπερωτῶσιν αὐτὸν οἱ Φαρισαῖοι καὶ οἱ γραμματεῖς, Διὰ τί οὐ περιπατοῦσιν οἱ μαθηταί σου κατὰ τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν πρεσβυτέρων, ἀλλὰ κοιναῖς χερσὶν ἐσθίουσιν τὸν ἄρτον;

ἐπερωτῶσιν Verb, pres act ptc, m dat pl

ἐπερωτάω ask, interrogate, question

περιπατέω walk, live

"The use of περιπατέω with reference to a person's way of life reflects Jewish usage (cf. *halak*): it is frequent in Paul (e.g. Rom 6:4; 8:4)." Cranfield.

παραδοσις, εως f see v.3

"Jesus will pick up the term παραδοσις in his response, but will describe it pointedly not as τῶν πρεσβυτέρων but as τῶν ἀνθρώπων (as opposed to the word *of God*, v. 8) and as ὑμῶν (vv. 9, 13), thus questioning the automatic assumption by the Pharisees and scribes that there is authority inherent in tradition as such." France.

Verse 6

ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Καλῶς ἐπροφήτευσεν Ἡσαΐας περὶ ὑμῶν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, ὡς γέγραπται [ὅτι] Οὗτος ὁ λαὸς τοῖς χεῖλεσίν με τιμᾷ, ἢ δὲ καρδίᾳ αὐτῶν πόρρω ἀπέχει ἀπ• ἐμοῦ·

καλως adv well, truly

προφητεω prophecy

"This 'contemporising' use of OT texts is typical of much NT interpretation, and presupposes a typological understanding of continuity in the relationship between God and his people such that earlier events and situations appropriately serve as models for a later era of fulfilment, even though in themselves they had no predictive force." France.

ὑποκριτης, ου m hypocrite

"The thought here is probably not so much that the people concerned were consciously acting a part as that there was a radical inconsistency in their lives." Cranfield.

γέγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω write

The quotation is from LXX Isa 29:13.

λαος, ου m people, a people

χειλος, ους n lip

τιμαω honour, reverence

πορρω adv far away, far

ἀπέχω be distant

Verse 7

μάτην δὲ σέβονται με, διδάσκοντες
 διδασκαλίας ἐντάλματα ἀνθρώπων.

ματην adv in vain, to no purpose

σεβομαι worship

διδασκω teach

διδασκαλία, ας f what is taught,
 teaching, doctrine

ἐνταλμα, τος n commandment, rule

"The contrast in Isaiah between lips (words) and heart is not taken up as a regular form of expression in the gospels, but reflects an important prophetic theme (cf. Is. 1:12-17; Hos. 6:6; Am. 5:21-24; Mic. 6:6-8, etc.) and corresponds to the charge elsewhere in the gospels that scribal religion is more concerned with external correctness than with fundamental attitudes and relationship to God (Mt. 23:23-28; Lk. 11:37-44). The priority of the internal over the external will be picked up as the focus of the alternative approach commended by Jesus in vv. 14-23, where the word καρδια will recur prominently in vv. 19 and 21." France.

Verse 8

ἀφέντες τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ κρατεῖτε
 τὴν παράδοσιν τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

ἀφιημι leave, forsake

ἐντολη, ης f command, order, instruction

"Jesus challenges the authority of the oral law radically. It pretended to be a fence to protect the Law from infringement, but in actual fact it tampered with the Law. Jesus charges the Pharisees and scribes with actually disobeying the Law of God through their exaggerated reverence for the oral law. For the Pharisees the oral law was equally binding with the written law: Jesus rejects its authority – he calls it merely 'tradition of men' ... His attitude to the written Law itself is expressed in the phrase τὴν ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ: it confronts men with divine authority." Cranfield.

Day 917: Mark 7:9-16**Verse 9**

Καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς, Καλῶς ἀθετεῖτε τὴν
 ἐντολὴν τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα τὴν παράδοσιν
 ὑμῶν στήσητε.

καλως see v.6

"Should probably be translated 'well enough', 'all right', the sense being: 'You are making a good job of rejecting the commandment of God...' To take the sentence as a question and render: 'Are you acting rightly in ...?' seems less satisfactory." Cranfield. France speaks of a note of sarcasm.

ἀθετεω reject, set aside

παραδοσις, εως f see v.3

στήσητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl ἵστημι set,
 establish

Many MSS read τηρησητε. It is difficult to decide which is the original reading – the external evidence is finely balanced and both make good sense in context.

Verse 10

Μωϋσῆς γὰρ εἶπεν, Τίμα τὸν πατέρα σου
 καὶ τὴν μητέρα σου, καί, Ὁ κακολογῶν
 πατέρα ἢ μητέρα θανάτῳ τελευτάτω·

τιμαω honour, reverence

Ex. 20:12a = Deut 5:16a.

κακολογεω speak evil of, curse

ἢ οἱ

θανατος, ου m death

τελευταω die

Ex. 21:17 (LXX 21:16).

Verse 11

ὑμεῖς δὲ λέγετε, Ἐὰν εἴπῃ ἄνθρωπος τῷ
 πατρὶ ἢ τῇ μητρὶ, Κορβάν, ὃ ἐστίν,
 Δῶρον, ὃ ἐὰν ἐξ ἐμοῦ ὠφελῆθῃς,

ὑμεῖς an emphatic contrast with Μωϋσῆς
 Κορβαν Corban (Hebrew term for a gift set
 apart to God)

Cranfield says "To declare something *korban* was to fix upon it the character of an offering dedicated to God. It did not always mean that the thing concerned had actually to be offered; rather that it was withdrawn from its originally intended use and was no longer available for a particular person or persons." Cranfield suggests, "Jesus here has in mind a situation in which a man repents of a harsh vow which would deprive his parents of all the help which they would normally expect from their son, but is told by the scribes to whom arbitration of his case has been submitted that he must abide by the vow."

δωρον, ου n gift, offering

ὅς ἐάν whoever, whatever

ὠφελῆθῃς Verb, aor pass subj, 2 s ὠφελω
 gain, profit, benefit

Verse 12

οὐκέτι ἀφίετε αὐτὸν οὐδὲν ποιῆσαι τῷ πατρὶ ἢ τῇ μητρί,

οὐκέτι adv no longer, no more
ἀφιημι allow, tolerate, permit
οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing;
οὐδεν not at all
ποιῆσαι Verb, aor act infin ποιεω

"This example drawn from a quite distinct area of law and ethics [from the food laws] serves merely to illustrate and to hold up to criticism the disproportionate concern for the authority of scribal tradition out of which the accusation in v. 5 has sprung." France.

Verse 13

ἀκυροῦντες τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ τῇ παραδόσει ὑμῶν ἢ παρεδωκατε· καὶ παρόμοια τοιαῦτα πολλὰ ποιεῖτε.

ἀκυρω cancel, disregard, annul

τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ is not a reference to the Scriptures as a whole but to a specific divine pronouncement – the fifth commandment.

παρεδωκατε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl
παραδιδωμι hand or give over

"Perhaps παρεδωκατε is used here rather than παρελαβετε [cf. v.4], because the scribes are here thought of not just as passive recipients of a tradition but as having had an active and responsible part in the matter." Cranfield.

παρομοιος, ον like, similar
τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun
and adjective such, of such kind, similar

I.e. the example is illustrative of a general tendency among the scribes.

Verse 14

Καὶ προσκαλεσάμενος πάλιν τὸν ὄχλον ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς, Ἀκούσατέ μου πάντες καὶ σύνετε.

προσκαλεσάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc,
m nom s προσκαλομαι call to
oneself, summon, invite
παλιν again, once more
σύνετε Verb, pres act imperat συνημι
and συνιω understand, comprehend

Jesus uses their accusation as an opportunity for instructing the crowds.
"The words indicate that what follows is specially important and also that it calls for careful thought." Cranfield. It is important not only to listen but also to understand.

Verse 15

οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ἕξωθεν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου εἰσπορευόμενον εἰς αὐτὸν ὃ δύναται κοινῶσαι αὐτόν· ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκπορευόμενά ἐστιν τὰ κοινοῦντα τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

For the οὐ ... ἀλλὰ ... form cf. 2:17, 22; 10:43; 12:25.

ἕξωθεν prep with gen from outside,
outside
δυναμαι can, be able to, be capable of
κοινω defile, make unclean

Jesus explains his meaning in vv 18-23.

Verse 16

Of v.16 (εἰ τις ἔχει ὠτα ἀκουειν ἀκουετω) Metzger writes, "This verse, though present in the majority of witnesses, is absent from important Alexandrian witnesses. It appears to be a scribal gloss, introduced as an appropriate sequel to verse 14."

Day 918: Mark 7:17-23**Verse 17**

Καὶ ὅτε εἰσῆλθεν εἰς οἶκον ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου, ἐπηρωτων αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ τὴν παραβολήν.

ὅτε conj when, at which time
ἐπερωταω ask, interrogate, question
μαθητης, ου m disciple

For παραβολη see on 4:2 and 11. Cf. 4:10-12, 33-34.

Verse 18

καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀσύνετοί ἐστε; οὐ νοεῖτε ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἕξωθεν εἰσπορευόμενον εἰς τὸν ἄνθρωπον οὐ δύναται αὐτὸν κοινῶσαι,

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. thus, in this way

Here used inferentially – 'then.'

"και ὑμεῖς indicates that the disciples at least should have been able to understand the παραβολή. But their failure to grasp the significance of Jesus' ministry is now, in contrast with 3:31-35; 4:11-12, an increasingly prominent theme of the narrative, highlighted in 6:52 and further developed in 8:17-21, and one which threatens to put them on a level with the uncomprehending crowds with whom they were so sharply contrasted in 4:11-12. What differentiates them is not an inherent ability to grasp spiritual truth, but the fact that they are privileged to receive special instructions from Jesus." France.

ἀσυνετος, ον without understanding, dull
Cf. 4:13; 6:52; 8:17, 21.

νοεω understand, perceive, discern

Verse 19

ὅτι οὐκ εἰσπορεύεται αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν καρδίαν ἀλλ' εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν, καὶ εἰς τὸν ἀφεδρώνα ἐκπορεύεται; - καθαρίζων πάντα τὰ βρώματα.

"Whereas in English 'heart' tends to connote emotion, in both Hebrew and Greek it conveys equally, and perhaps more strongly, the spiritual and intellectual processes, including the will. It refers to what makes people what they really are, their individuality. It is thus particularly with the heart that a person relates to God, and a purported relationship with God which bypasses the heart is a mockery. It is the heart, in this sense, which Jesus declares to be unaffected by what comes in from outside. Food is of merely nutritional significance, and has in itself no bearing on a person's relationship with God." France.

κοιλία, ας f stomach
ἀφεδρων, ωνος m latrine

A rare word.

καθαρίζω cleanse, make clean

The variants καθαρίζων and indicatives και καθαρίζαι (-εται) are best understood as attempts to 'correct' the syntax by scribes who did not recognise the parenthetical nature of the clause.

βρωμα, τος n food, solid food

"The words καθαρίζων παντα τα βρωματα are best explained as the evangelist's own comment, drawing out the implications of Jesus' words with an eye on the contemporary problem of what was to be the church's attitude to Jewish ideas about clean and unclean foods." Cranfield. France speaks of "The revolutionary significance of this declaration, and its relevance to the relations between Jews and Gentiles in the early days of the Christian movement"

If Mark's chief source was Peter, it is interesting to consider the contribution to his understanding from the vision given Peter in Acts 10:9ff.

Verse 20

ἔλεγεν δὲ ὅτι Τὸ ἐκ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐκπορευόμενον ἐκεῖνο κοινοῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον·

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that

Verse 21

ἔσωθεν γὰρ ἐκ τῆς καρδίας τῶν ἀνθρώπων οἱ διαλογισμοὶ οἱ κακοὶ ἐκπορεύονται, πορνεῖαι, κλοπαί, φόνοι,

ἔσωθεν adv. within, inside, from within
διαλογισμος, ου m thought, opinion, reasoning, dispute

Described first by a broad term οἱ διαλογισμοὶ οἱ κακοὶ followed by a list of examples.

κακος, η, ον evil, wrong, harmful

"The evil thoughts, which are the origin of evil acts." Cranfield. France suggests, 'evil machinations.'

πορνεία, ας f sexual immorality
κλοπή, ης f theft
φονος, ου m murder, killing

Verse 22

μοιχεῖαι, πλεονεξίαι, πονηρίαι, δόλος, ἀσέλγεια, ὀφθαλμὸς πονηρός, βλασφημία, ὑπερηφανία, ἀφροσύνη·

"The first part of the list reflects (though less clearly than Matthew) some of the commandments of the decalogue." France.

μοιχεία, ας f adultery
πλεονεξία, ας f greed, covetousness
πονηρία, ας f wickedness, uncleanness
δολος, ου m deceit, treachery
ἀσελγεία, ας f sensuality, vice, debauchery
πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

ὄφθαλμος πονηρός "probably denotes 'envy' or 'grudgingness', 'illiberality'; cf Lk 11:34 = Mt 6:22f ..." Cranfield.

βλασφημία, ας f slander, blasphemy
 ὑπερηφάνια, ας f arrogance, pride
 ἀφροσύνη, ης f folly, foolishness

Used in LXX of the *nabal* – the 'fool' who has no perception of ethical and religious claims – who neither knows God nor wants to know him. Cf. Lk. 12:20; Eph 5:17-18.

Verse 23

πάντα ταῦτα τὰ πονηρὰ ἔσωθεν
 ἐκπορεύεται καὶ κοινοῖ τὸν ἄνθρωπον.
 ἔσωθεν see v.21.

Day 919: Mark 7:24-30

Verse 24-30

Cf. Mt. 15:21-28. "It is hardly a coincidence that in the narrative which follows Jesus himself moves outside Jewish territory and begins to exercise his ministry among non-Jews. The controversy over ritual purity, with its radical implications for the status of the food laws which divide Jew from Gentile, thus appropriately acts as the narrative hinge between the Jewish and Gentile phases of Jesus' ministry in the north, and at the same time points forward to what awaits him in the subsequent phase of the drama when he makes his way to Jerusalem, the place from which the hostile delegation has come..."

"Misunderstandings of the pericope spring largely from the failure to read it as a whole. It is a dialogue within which the individual sayings function only as parts of the whole, and are not intended to carry the weight of independent exegesis on their own. The whole encounter builds up to the totally positive conclusion of vv. 29-30, while the preceding dialogue serves to underline the radical nature of this new stage in Jesus' ministry into which he has allowed himself to be 'persuaded' by the woman's realism and wit. He appears like the wise teacher who allows, and indeed incites, his pupil to mount a victorious argument against the foil of his own reluctance. He functions as what in a different context might be called 'devil's advocate', and is not disappointed to be 'defeated' in argument. As a result the reader is left more vividly aware of the reality of the problem of Jew-Gentile relations, and of the importance of the step Jesus here takes to overcome it. The woman's 'victory' in the debate is a decisive watershed as a result of which the whole future course of the Christian movement is set not on the basis of Jewish exclusivism but of sharing the 'children's bread'." France.

Verse 24

Ἐκεῖθεν δὲ ἀναστὰς ἀπῆλθεν εἰς τὰ ὄρια
 Τύρου. καὶ εἰσελθὼν εἰς οἰκίαν οὐδένα
 ἤθελεν γνῶναι, καὶ οὐκ ἠδυνήθη λαθεῖν·
 ἐκεῖθεν from there

Refers either to the house (7:17) or to Gennesaret (6:53).

ἀνίστημι rise, stand up
 ὄριον, ου n territory, region,
 neighbourhood, vicinity

"ὄριον in the singular means 'boundary', in the plural 'territory'." Cranfield.

"The inclusion of καὶ Σιδωνος after Τύρου, while very widely attested, is best understood as an assimilation to the familiar joint designation in Mt. 15:21, possibly also influenced by the mention of Sidon along with Tyre in 7:31." France.

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδέν no one, nothing
 ἤθελεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s θελω
 wish, will

γνῶναι Verb, aor act infin γινωσκω

Jesus may have been looking for opportunity to teach the disciples privately, or just to rest.

ἠδυνήθη Verb, aor pass dep indic, 3s

δυναμαι

λαθεῖν Verb, aor act infin λανθανω be
 hidden, escape notice

Cf. 1:32-33, 36-37, 45; 2:2; 3:7-12, 20; 6:33-34.

Verse 25

ἀλλ· εὐθὺς ἀκούσασα γυνὴ περὶ αὐτοῦ, ἧς εἶχεν τὸ θυγάτριον αὐτῆς πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον, ἐλθοῦσα προσέπεσεν πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ·

ἀκούσασα Verb, aor act ptc, f nom s ἀκουω
εἶχεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἔχω

θυγάτριον, ου n little daughter

ἀκαθαρτος, ον unclean

ἐλθοῦσα Verb, aor act ptc, f nom s ἐρχομαι
προσέπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

προσπιπτω fall at someone's feet, fall down before someone

πόδας Noun, acc pl ποδες, ποδος m foot

Cf. 5:22.

Verse 26

ἡ δὲ γυνὴ ἦν Ἑλληνίς, Συροφοινίκισσα τῷ γένει· καὶ ἤρωτα αὐτὸν ἵνα τὸ δαιμόνιον ἐκβάλη ἐκ τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῆς.

Ἑλληνίς, ιδος f Greek or Gentile woman

Not Greek by nationality but Greek-speaking or Gentile.

Συροφοινίκισσα, ης f Syrophenician woman

"The term Συροφοντιξ was used to distinguish the Phoenicians of Syria from the Carthaginians (Λιβυφοντιξ). It is interesting to compare Elijah's miracle on behalf of a Phoenician woman (1 Kings 17:8ff; Lk 4:26)." Cranfield.

γένει Noun, dat s γενος, ους n family, race, people, nation

"That such a woman chose to approach a Jewish healer, and even fell at his feet, indicates either desperation or a remarkable insight into the wider significance of Jesus' ministry (and into the biblical pattern of salvation history). The subsequent dialogue suggests at least an element of the latter." France.

ἔρωτα ask, request, beg, urge

δαιμόνιον, ου n demon, evil spirit

θυγατηρ, τρος f daughter

Verse 27

καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτῇ, Ἄφες πρώτον χορτασθῆναι τὰ τέκνα, οὐ γάρ ἐστιν καλὸν λαβεῖν τὸν ἄρτον τῶν τέκνων καὶ τοῖς κυναρίοις βαλεῖν.

ἀφιημι allow

πρωτον adv. first, first of all

χορτασθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin χορταζω
feed, satisfy

τέκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

"In πρωτον ... τα τέκνα we are up against the mystery of divine election. Cf. Rom 1:16 Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρωτον καὶ Ἑλληνι, and also Jn 4:22; Acts 3:26; 13:46. This priority of the Jews is implied in Isa 2:2-4; 42:1ff; 60:1ff.: Israel is first to be gathered, and then afterwards the Gentiles. The Servant of the Lord is first 'to raise up the tribes of Jacob' and then to be 'for a light to the Gentiles' (Isa 49:6). Jesus accepts this divinely appointed order and follows faithfully the path ordained for the Lord's Servant. So his whole earthly life was given to Israel. He was 'made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers' (Rom 15:8). For him during his ministry to conduct a mission to the Gentile world would have been to depart from the way of obedience." Cranfield.

καλος, η, ον good, right, proper

λαβεῖν Verb, aor act infin λαμβανω

ἄρτος, ου m bread, food

κυναριον, ου n house dog, dog

The diminutive means 'house dog'. The point is the priority of the claims of the children of the house over those of household pets. France comments, "The diminutive form (used in biblical literature only in this pericope), perhaps indicates the status of the dogs in Jesus' image as dogs of the house rather than of the yard, but it does not remove the harshness of picturing Gentiles en masse as 'dogs' as opposed to 'children', it is the sort of language a Gentile might expect from a Jew, but to find it in a saying of Jesus is shocking."

Verse 28

ἡ δὲ ἀπεκρίθη καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Κύριε, καὶ τὰ κυνάρια ὑποκάτω τῆς τραπέζης ἐσθίουσιν ἀπὸ τῶν ψιχίων τῶν παιδίων.

ἀπεκρίθη Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

ἀποκρινομαι answer, reply

France comments, "The inclusion of *ναι* [after *Κυριε*] in the majority of MSS is generally accounted for as a further assimilation to Matthew. But its strong attestation suggests the alternative possibility that it was omitted from the tradition represented by *p*⁴⁵ *D W* etc. because it was misunderstood as turning the woman's reply into a meek acceptance of Jesus' words (which it certainly is not) rather than, as it should be read, a firm repudiation of his *οὐκ ἔστιν καλον*. The substitution of *ἄλλα* after *κυριε* in *D* suggests such a misunderstanding. I therefore think it more likely that *ναι* belongs to the original text of Mark, as in Matthew."

In commenting on the omission of *ναι* in the UBS text, Metzger points out that the word occurs 8 times in Matthew, 4 times in Luke but nowhere else in Mark.

ὑποκατω prep with gen under, beneath
τραπεζα, ης f table, food, meal; bank
ψιχιον, ου n small crumb, scap (of food)
παιδιον, ου n child

Calvin comments, "she concludes that the door is shut against her, not for the purpose of excluding her altogether, but that, by a more strenuous effort of faith, she may force her way, as it were, through the chinks."

"France comments, "Jesus' image (and his inclusion of *πρωτον*) have given the woman the clue she needs, and enable her, on the basis of his own saying, to refute his *οὐ ἔστιν καλον* and replace it with a defiant *Ναι, κυριε* (see Textual Note) – 'Yes, it *is* right'... Granted that the children have a priority, the dogs, too (*και*), have a legitimate share in the food available. Jesus' own image is thus pressed to its full extent, and provides the basis for her request to be granted, not refused. It is a remarkable twist to the argument, and one which displays as much humility on the woman's part as it does shrewdness. She does not dispute the lower place which Jesus' saying assumes for the Gentiles, and even accepts without protest the offensive epithet 'dog', but insists that dogs, too, must have their day. Putting it more theologically, the mission of the Messiah of Israel, while it must of course begin with Israel, cannot be confined there. The Gentiles may have to wait, but they are not excluded from the benefits which the Messiah brings. On this basis, she is bold enough to pursue her request; even the crumbs will be enough."

Verse 29

καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Διὰ τοῦτον τὸν λόγον ὑπαγε, ἐξελήλυθεν ἐκ τῆς θυγατρὸς σου τὸ δαιμόνιον.

ὑπαγω go, go one's way, depart
ἐξελήλυθεν Verb, perf indic ἐξερχομαι

"The dialogue, rather than the exorcism, remains the focus of interest in the pericope. No account of the exorcism is offered, and no word of command recorded; the removal of the demon is simply spoken of as already a past event (*ἐξελήλυθεν*)." France.

Verse 30

καὶ ἀπελθοῦσα εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτῆς εὗρεν τὸ παιδίον βεβλημένον ἐπὶ τὴν κλίνην καὶ τὸ δαιμόνιον ἐξεληλυθός.

ἀπελθοῦσα Verb, aor act ptc, f nom s

ἀπερχομαι

βεβλημένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
 nom/acc s *βαλλω* throw, place

κλίνη, ης f bed, couch

ἐξεληλυθός Verb, perf act ptc, n nom/acc s
ἐξερχομαι

Day 920: Mark 7:31-37

Verses 31-37

Cf. Mt 15:29-31. "This story is in a number of ways closely parallel to that in 8:22-26. Both are set outside Galilee; in both the crowd asks for Jesus' help but he takes the patient away to heal him in private; in both he is recorded unusually as touching specifically the organs affected, and in both there is mention of the use of saliva. That both these stories, with their more detailed account of Jesus' healing method, are among the very few pericope of Mark which do not appear in either Matthew or Luke, indicates perhaps either Mark's special interest in Jesus' healing technique or the discomfort of the other synoptists with the more 'earthy' (some would say 'magical') nature of the accounts (and their non Jewish location?)." France.

Verse 31

Καὶ πάλιν ἐξελθὼν ἐκ τῶν ὀρίων Τύρου ἦλθεν διὰ Σιδῶνος εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν ὀρίων Δεκαπόλεως.

παλιν again, once more

ὄριον, ου n see v.24

Instead of ἐκ τῶν ὀρίων Τύρου ἦλθεν διὰ Σιδῶνος some MSS read ἐκ τῶν ὀρίων Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος ἦλθεν... France comments, "Here the reading Τύρου καὶ Σιδῶνος is less well supported, and is best seen as a further reversion to the familiar biblical pair of names. The difficult geography of a journey from the region of Tyre to Decapolis via Sidon (which is in an almost opposite direction) would be another reason for 'correction' by a scribe who knew something of the geography of the area."

θαλασσα, ης f sea

ἀνα μεσον among, between

"Mark's terms may leave us geographically confused, but they convey clearly enough that Jesus, on his return to the lake from his journey into Phoenicia, remains outside properly Jewish territory rather than taking the more direct route to the Capernaum area. However and whomever he got there, Jesus is back in Decapolis." France.

Verse 32

καὶ φέρουσιν αὐτῷ κωφὸν καὶ μογιλάλον, καὶ παρακαλοῦσιν αὐτὸν ἵνα ἐπιθῇ αὐτῷ τὴν χεῖρα.

φέρω bring, carry, bear, lead

κωφος, α, ον dumb, mute, deaf

Here the meaning is 'deaf'.

μογιλαλος, ον having difficulty in speaking; mute, dumb

A very rare word, occurring here only in the NT and in the LXX only in Isa 35:6. Strictly it means 'speaking with an impediment'. France comments, "In view of the likely influence of that passage of Isaiah in v. 37, it is probable that Mark's use of it [μογιλάλον] here is also a deliberate allusion."

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

ἐπιθῇ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἐπιτιθημι place on

χειρ, χειρος f hand

Verse 33

καὶ ἀπολαβόμενος αὐτὸν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου κατ' ἰδίαν ἔβαλεν τοὺς δακτύλους αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰ ὦτα αὐτοῦ καὶ πτύσας ἤψατο τῆς γλωσσης αὐτοῦ,

ἀπολαβόμενος Verb, aor midd ptc, m nom s

ἀπολαμβάνω midd take aside

κατ' ἰδιαν privately

Cf. v.36.

δακτυλος, ου m finger

οὺς, ὠτος n ear, hearing

πτυω spit

ἅπτω midd. take hold of, touch

γλωσσα, ης f tongue

"Such actions are common to the techniques of Greek and Jewish healers." Taylor. France comments, "How far these specific contacts with ear and with tongue were the physical 'means' of healing, and how far a psychological assurance to the patient of Jesus' ability to heal, is a question which is probably both inappropriate and unanswerable. But physical contact is clearly more appropriate in the case of a man who would be unable to hear spoken words."

Cranfield, commenting on the relevance of Mark's narrative to the life of the church says, "We may well see also in the order here (first ears, then tongue) a reminder that it is only as the church hears the Word of God that it has anything worthwhile to say."

Verse 34

καὶ ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἐστέναξεν, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ, Εφραθα, ὃ ἐστίν, Διανοίχθητι.

ἀναβλεπω look up

οὐρανος, ου m heaven

Emphasises the divine dimension in Jesus' healing powers.

στεναζω sigh, groan

Cf. Rom 8:22f. The term "indicates the strong emotion of Jesus as he wages war against the power of Satan, and has to seek divine aid in urgent prayer." Cranfield.

εφραθα (Aramaic word) be opened!

"The use of Aramaic in a probably non-Jewish context is not particularly significant, since the language was widely spoken outside Jewish circles, but Mark's recording of the Aramaic form suggests a memory of an impressive command on the part of someone who was there, perhaps the patient himself, for whom this may have been the first word he ever heard." France.

διανοίχθητι Verb, aor pass imperat, 2 s

διανοιγω open

Verse 35

καὶ [εὐθέως] ἠνοίγησαν αὐτοῦ αἱ ἀκοαί,
καὶ ἐλύθη ὁ δεσμός τῆς γλωσσης αὐτοῦ,
καὶ ἐλάλει ὀρθῶς.

Metzger suggests that Mark's fondness for εὐθύς/εως makes it quite likely that the inclusion is original. France, however, thinks that since there is no good reason for its later omission it is more likely that it is an addition to the original text. Either way, it makes no difference to the sense.

ἠνοίγησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
ἀνοίγω open
ἀκοή, ἡς f hearing
ἐλύθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s λυω
loose, untie, release, set free
δεσμός, οὐ m (& n) bond, imprisonment
λαλεῶ speak, talk
ὀρθῶς rightly, correctly, properly

The impediment cured.

Verse 36

καὶ διεστείλατο αὐτοῖς ἵνα μηδενὶ
λέγωσιν· ὅσον δὲ αὐτοῖς διεστέλλετο,
αὐτοὶ μᾶλλον περισσότερον ἐκήρυσσον.

διεστείλατο Verb, aor midd indic, 3 s
διαστελλομαι order, command
ὅσος, ἡ, ον correlative pronoun, as much
as, how much,
μᾶλλον adv more; rather
περισσότερον adv. more
κήρυσσω preach, proclaim

"The imperfects διεστέλλετο and ἐκήρυσσον suggest a protracted appeal for silence, and equally protracted disobedience." France.

Verse 37

καὶ ὑπερπερισσῶς ἐξεπλήσσοντο
λέγοντες, Καλῶς πάντα πεποίηκεν· καὶ
τοὺς κωφοὺς ποιεῖ ἀκούειν καὶ [τοὺς]
ἀλάλους λαλεῖν.

ὑπερπερισσῶς completely, exceedingly

Occurs here only in the NT.

ἐκπλησσομαι be amazed

Cranfield suggests that καλῶς παντα πεποίηκεν could be an echo of Gen 1:31. The latter part of the verse echoes Isa 35:5-6.