

1. Mk 7:1-13

- a. Were the acts in question acts that seemed to result from and promote holiness? What in the text supports your answer? (**vv2,6**) _____
- b. Were these acts encouraged by their spiritual leaders? What in the text supports your answer? (**vv1,5**) _____
- c. Were these acts widely observed? What in the text supports your answer? What in the text supports your answer? (**v3**) _____
- d. Were these acts new or had they been practiced for some time by those of this religion? What in the text supports your answer? (**vv3,5,9,13**) _____

2. Easter (this year - April 5)

You can read about its origin, significance, and observances surrounding it in Acts 29 and Rom 17.

Or, you can look on the back side of this page for some information.

On the following questions, simply make brief notes for the purpose of recall when we discuss them in class.

- a. Easter Sunday is often given more attention and preparation by churches than other 1st days of the week. What is your opinion of this and why? _____
- b. Do you believe devoted and informed Christians will wear ashes on their foreheads and observe the days of “Lent”? If yes, or if no, explain why. _____
- c. On Palm Sunday, would you participate in an reenactment of Jesus’ return to Jerusalem a week before his death? Would it not serve to remind us and honor Him? Make brief notes about your reasoning. _____
- d. If you were to tell a religious friend that Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and Palm Sunday were human traditions and unauthorized for the worship of Christ, how do you think you would be thought of? _____

3. Rom 14:5

- a. What is the background of Roman readers observing certain days or not eating certain meats? Note **Rom 2:17,23; 3:1; 9:3-7**. _____
- b. Considering **Mk 7:1-13**, would it be OK to establish a special method of “washing” hands, cups, pots, and even bodies to symbolize “washing” of baptism into Christ? What about a special day to do these things in honor of Christ? If not, why not? _____

Compare **Rom 14:3,14,16,20** with **Mk 7:2,7-8**.

4. 1Co 11:23-26

- a. Here is a memorial practice Jesus instituted — He said, “Do this...” Here we see the church in Corinth, established through Paul’s teaching some 25+ years after Christ died and rose again, observing this memorial. Likewise, when “a door was opened” to preach in Troas (**2Co 2:1**), he preached and a church was established and that church also gathered on the 1st day of the week to observe this memorial (**Ac 20:7**). Jesus said, “as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup” (**1Co 11:26**), pointing to a recurring event. Evidently, this church and the churches of Galatia also, like Troas, gathered on the first day of the week (**1Co 16:1-2**). *This* is the 1st day of the week “tradition” handed down by the apostles, yet some churches lay it aside to observe the Easter tradition instituted by the tradition of men!
- b. What “traditions” did Paul urge the church in Thessalonica to “hold to”? (**2Th 2:15**) _____

“(πάσχα, a Greek form of the Hebrews ..., and so Latinized by the Vulgate *pascha*), i.e., *Passover*. *Easter* is a word of **Saxon origin, and imports a goddess of the Saxons, or, rather, of the East, *Ester*, in honor of whom sacrifices being annually offered about the Passover time of the year (spring)**, the name became attached by association of ideas to the Christian festival of the resurrection, which happened at the time of the Passover: hence we say *Easter-day*, *Easter Sunday*, but very improperly; as we by no means refer the festival then kept to the goddess of the ancient Saxons. ... The occurrence of this word in the A.V. of Acts 12:4 — “Intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people” — is chiefly noticeable as an example of the want of consistency in the translators. ... In the earlier English versions Easter had been frequently used as the translation of πάσχα. At the last revision Passover was substituted in all passages but this.” McClintock & Strong Cyclopaedia [bold mine]

“Easter is really an entire season of the Christian church year, as opposed to a single-day observance. **Lent**, the 40-day period leading up to Easter Sunday, is a time of reflection and penance and represents the 40 days that Jesus spent alone in the wilderness before starting his ministry, a time in which Christians believe he survived various temptations by the devil. The day before Lent, known as **Mardi Gras** or Fat Tuesday, is a last hurrah of food and fun before the fasting begins. The week preceding Easter is called **Holy Week** and includes **Maundy Thursday**, which commemorates Jesus’ last supper with his disciples; **Good Friday**, which honors the day of his crucifixion; and **Holy Saturday**, which focuses on the transition between the crucifixion and resurrection. The 50-day period following Easter Sunday is called **Easter tide** and includes a celebration of Jesus’ ascension into heaven.” <<http://www.history.com/topics/holidays/history-of-easter>> [bold mine]

Ash Wednesday “Ash Wednesday, a day of fasting, is the first day of Lent in Western Christianity. It occurs 46 days (40 fasting days, if the six Sundays, which are not days of fast, are excluded) before Easter and can fall as early as February 4 or as late as March 10. Ash Wednesday is observed by many Western Christians, including Anglicans, Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics.”[1]

“According to the canonical gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, Jesus Christ spent 40 days fasting in the desert, where he endured temptation by Satan.”[2] Lent originated as a mirroring of this, fasting 40 days as preparation for Easter. Every Sunday was seen as a commemoration of the Sunday of Christ’s resurrection and so as a feast day on which fasting was inappropriate. Accordingly, Christians fasted from Monday to Saturday (six days) during six weeks and from Wednesday to Saturday (four days) in the preceding week, thus making up the number of 40 days.”[3] Orthodox Christians do this 40 days in a row.

“Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of blessing ashes made from palm branches blessed on the previous year’s Palm Sunday, and placing them on the heads of participants to the accompaniment of the words “Repent, and believe in the Gospel” or “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

“Ashes are ceremonially placed on the heads of Christians on Ash Wednesday, either by being sprinkled over their heads or, in English-speaking countries, more often by being marked on their foreheads as a visible cross. The words (based on Genesis 3:19) used traditionally to accompany this gesture are:

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.

“In the 1969 revision of the Roman Rite, an alternative formula (based on Mark 1:15) was introduced and given first place:

“Repent, and believe in the Gospel.

“The old formula, based on the words spoken to Adam and Eve after their sin,[6] reminds worshippers of their sinfulness and mortality and thus, implicitly, of their need to repent in time.[7] The newer formula makes explicit what was only implicit in the old.” <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ash_Wednesday>

“The Flowering Cross This is an especially striking and beautiful way to **symbolize the new life that emerges from the death of Good Friday**. There are many adaptations of this symbol, but they center on a very rough-cut wooden cross, often of cedar since it easily retains a rough texture. This **cross can be of various sizes, but a full-sized cross six to seven feet high is most impressive** (and most expensive to decorate!). For added effect, **there can be three metal spikes driven into the wood at the arms and feet**. This cross is **usually erected at the front of the sanctuary on Ash Wednesday or on Palm Sunday**. If it is erected on Ash Wednesday, it **can also be used as a Prayer Cross throughout Lent** (see [The Journey of Lent](#)). Sometimes it is draped with the purple of Lent and a crown of thorns made of thorny vines, but is often left bare throughout Lent until Good Friday. **On Good Friday, the cross is draped in black, the color of mourning for the death of Jesus.**

“Before the Easter Sunday service, the spikes and black drape are removed, and the cross is covered with real flowers and the top draped in white. There are various ways to do this. Some churches use a chicken wire mesh over the cross and have worshippers each place flowers on the cross as part of the Easter Vigil service or as they arrive at church on Easter morning. For this to be effective, there must be enough flowers to cover all of the front and sides of the cross. Another approach is to have small holes drilled in the wood to accept florist-type vials that hold cut flowers. The entire cross is covered with the flowers and is placed prominently at the front of the church to greet worshippers as they enter the sanctuary on Easter Sunday. **The contrast between the starkly bare cross that worshippers have seen for 40 days and the living flowering cross of Easter Sunday dramatically and visually represents the new life** that they are celebrating as they witness the very instrument of death and endings transformed into life and new beginnings.” <http://www.cresourcei.org/cyeaster.html> [boldmine]