

(41) Short Journey to Phoenicia (Mt. 15:21–28; Mk. 7:24–30)

1. Following the conflict with the Pharisees over their traditions, Jesus departed for Phoenicia.
 - a. This was a “withdrawal” (Matt. 15:21; Mk. 7:24). ἀναχωρέω *anachōreō* ^{#402}_{14x}: *withdraw, retire, take refuge*. Used 14x (10x in Matt. See comment at Matt. 4:2).
 - b. He could not escape notice (Mark. 7:24). λανθάνω *lanthanō* ^{#2990}_{6x}: *escape notice*; succeed in avoiding attention or awareness (Mk. 7:24; Lk. 8:26; Heb. 13:2; 2nd Pet. 3:5,8).
2. Tyre and Sidon were among the most ancient locations founded after the flood (Gen. 10:15–19). Canaan was the youngest son of Ham. Sidon was the firstborn of Canaan.
3. The woman in this episode is described as a Canaanite (Mt. 15:22), and a Greek of the Syrophoenician race (Mk. 7:26). (Inhabitants of Carthage were called Libyphoenicians).
4. Despite her Gentile background she has a significant spiritual perspective.
 - a. She correctly identifies the Divine provision for mercy (ἐλεέω *eleeō* ^{#1653}_{28x}).
 - b. She correctly identifies Jesus as Lord (κύριος *kurios* ^{#2962}_{717x}) and Son of David (υἱὸς Δαυίδ).
 - c. She correctly identifies her daughter’s physical condition as being a consequence of demon possession (κακῶς δαιμονίζεται *kakōs daimonizetai* Mt. 15:22; πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον *pneuma akatharton* Mk. 7:25; δαιμόνιον *daimonion* Mk. 7:26).
5. Jesus is reluctant to act.
 - a. The disciples request for Jesus to send her away is apparently intended for Him to send her away with her request granted (Mt. 15:23).
 - b. Jesus is silent towards the woman, and explains to the disciples that He is not prepared to perform a miracle in this location because His purpose is to minister to the lost sheep of Israel (Mt. 15:24).
6. The woman has not yet received a “no” from the Lord so she continues her request (Mt. 15:26–28; Mk. 7:26–30).
 - a. Jesus moves from silence to parable. It is important to observe that His statement to her is not a rejection.
 - b. The use of a parable is designed to ascertain what has “been granted” (Mt. 13:10–11; Lk. 8:10).
 - c. The woman indeed sees and understands and embraces her estate as a dog (κυνάριον *kunarion* ^{#2952}_{4x}).
 - 1) κυνάριον *kunarion* is a diminutive for κύων *kuōn* ^{#2965}_{5x}.
 - 2) All she’s asking for are “little crumbs” which the children weren’t going to eat anyway. ψιχίον *psychion* ^{#5589}_{2x} is a diminutive for ψίξ *psix*.
 - d. The woman’s faith and understanding of the parable tells the Lord that “it shall be done” according to her will which is consistent with the Father’s will (Mt. 15:28).