



MATTHEW 15:21-39  
MESSIAH ON A MISSION (PART 30)

“Lessons On Rebounding  
From Contention”

Jesus dealt with contention throughout His ministry. Someone from without was often contending with Him, and when they weren't, someone from within His inner circle was contending with Him. He was no stranger to harsh criticism. What is unique about Jesus is how He rebounded from drama and strife.





# God Wants Us To Give Him Our Hearts And Not Just Our Words (15:11)

1. We believe in the heart (Rom. 10:9,10)
2. We should love from the heart (Matt. 22:37)
3. Singers should sing from the heart (Col. 3:16)
4. Apostolic Christians should obey from the heart (Rom. 6:17; Eph. 6:6)
5. Givers should give from the heart (2 Cor. 9:7).



## Notice The Tension Between The Relationship Of Jesus With The Unbeliever And The Believer!

- To the unbelieving Jews, Jesus tells them what they ***must*** do. *“Then after He summoned the crowd He said to them, You ***must*** listen and understand” (15:10)*
- The believing Gentile, she begs of Him what He ***must*** do. *“You ***must*** have mercy on me right now, Lord, Son of David: my daughter has an evil spirit” (15:22)*
- This Gentile woman who was now on her knees bowing before Him said, *“Lord, you ***must*** help me” (15:25)*

**(15:21-28) Tyre Was A Gentile City Located In  
Phoenicia (Modern Lebanon),  
Which Bordered Galilee To The Northwest.  
Sidon Was About 25 Miles (40 Km) North Of Tyre.**

For a third time in the book of Matthew, Jesus withdraws from controversy (15:21; cf., 12:15; 14:13) to minister and heal the hungry crowds. Given that Matthews's writing emphasizes that Jesus' mission is to the house of Israel, this is very important when we see these deviations (10:5-6). This is only the second time Jesus interacts with a Gentile, the first was the centurion (8:5-13).





## **Why Jesus' Response To The Canaanite Woman?**

This passage points out the priority of Israel's restoration as a fundamental expectation of the Old Testament prophets concerning the Messiah. God would first come and save His people from bondage and captivity, which would result in a redemptive harvest in the nations (Isaiah 2:2-5; 60:1-3; 66:18-21; Micah 4:1-5).

Jesus as Messiah would answer all the Old Testament promises of God to be their Saviour (cf., Isaiah 43:11; 45:21; 49:26; 60:16; Hosea 13:4; Matthew 1:21; 2 Timothy 1:10; Acts 4:12). According to Isaiah 43:11 there is only one Saviour and Jude calls Jesus “the only wise God and our Saviour (Jude 25). God is the Saviour of His people. The one God of the Old Testament stated emphatically that “the Holy One of Israel, (is) thy Saviour” (Isaiah 43:3) and Peter speaking of Jesus our Saviour said, “Ye denied the Holy One” (Acts 3:14). This powerful salvation of God toward His people will have a spill-over redemptive effect that will include salvation to the nations (28:18-20).

**This Passage (15: 21-28) Raises The Question:  
Does Jesus Treat Gentiles In A Demeaning Way? Is He A Jewish Chauvinist?  
The Notes To The Following Verses Address This Issue. Here Is A Teaching  
On This Passage By Messianic Rabbinical Scholars:**

“The Syrophoenician woman knew that Yeshua was the Son of David (v. 22), i.e., the Messiah. Yeshua puts this piece of information in the context of Ezekiel 34; see Ezekiel 34:24. Thus his answer about coming only to the lost sheep of Israel (v. 24) reflects Ezekiel 34:12, 16; in effect he says, "If, as you say, I am the Son of David, the shepherd who was King of Israel, I was sent to find my lost sheep and am not sent to you. So I'm surprised that you recognize me." It's a straightforward Middle-Eastern style friendly joke, not an insult. But his remark also reflects the biblical truth that God cares for his own people first—as Sha'ul put it, "Let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Ga 6:10). However, God does not neglect the others, as we learn from 1 Kings 7:7ff., where the prophet Elijah asks to be fed first, yet the widow of Tzarfat, coming second, gains a miraculous lasting food supply.”





### ***Woman, You Have Great Faith! (15:28)***

When Jesus is contending with unbelieving people's lack of faith, He finds great faith to realign Himself with. The only other place that "great faith" is mentioned in Matthew is describing the other Gentile who came to Jesus for a miracle (8:10). Jesus responds to hatred and accusation with a display of compassion and ministry to those who are truly hungry. If hurt, don't retreat and hide- realign and minister to those who are hungry.

### ***Great Crowds Came To Him...And He Healed Them. (15:30)***

Matthew again shows that Jesus answers conflict by going about doing good and healing people (4:23-25; 9:35; 12:15; 14:34-36). Answer strife and hatred by doing good for people.

### ***"He Had Compassion For These People." (15:32)***

This is a key motif throughout the book of Matthew, Jesus as a compassionate Messiah (8:3; 9:36; 14:14; 20:34). Jesus always answers hatred with a demonstration of compassion.

## FOOTNOTE: NET Exegetical note on the use of "Dog"

(Matthew 15:26) b tnOr "lap dogs, house dogs," as opposed to dogs on the street. The diminutive form originally referred to puppies or little dogs, then to house pets. In some Hellenistic uses κυνάριον (kunarion) simply means "dog."

sn The term dogs does not refer to wild dogs (scavenging animals roaming around the countryside) in this context, but to small dogs taken in as house pets. It is thus not a derogatory term per se, but is instead intended by Jesus to indicate the privileged position of the Jews (especially his disciples) as the initial recipients of Jesus' ministry. There are two Greek words for "dog": "kuôn," scavenging hounds that roam the streets in packs (7:6, Lk 16:21, Pp 3:2, 2 Ke 2:22, Rv 22:15), and "kunarion," small dogs kept as house pets (only in this passage and its parallel, Mk 7:27-28). Yet even if Gentiles are not here compared with wild snarling beasts, are they still not being insulted? The answer can only be: no more than in the Tanakh itself, where the people of Israel are taken by God in a special way as his children. And although Judaism teaches that the righteous Gentiles of the world have a share in the world to come, this is not a primary focus either in the Tanakh or in rabbinic Judaism. The woman's response of faith and her willingness to accept whatever Jesus would offer pleased him to such an extent that he granted her request.



## FOOTNOTE: Apologetical Notes: (Matt. 15:32)

Critics have accused the gospel writers of deliberately falsifying the records in order to prove that Jesus performed more miracles. They claim that the feeding of the four thousand was merely an adaptation of the previous miracle of feeding five thousand. A careful examination of the records shows that this accusation is false and that the critics are wrong. This chart shows the differences between the two events.

Feeding 5,000

Primarily Jews

Galilee, near Bethsaida

5 loaves, 2 fish

12 baskets left over

Crowd with Jesus 1 day

Spring of year (green grass)

Tried to make Jesus king

Feeding 4,000

Primarily Gentiles

The Decapolis

7 loaves, "a few small fish"

7 baskets left over

Crowd with Jesus 3 days

Summer season

No popular response