

Jesus Christ the Savior and the Syrophoenician (Mark 7:25-30) or Canaanite (Matthew 15:21-28) Woman. Several Key Lectures

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Abstract

The Syrophoenician or Canaanite woman pericope, which is found in Mark 7:25-30 and paralleled in Matthew 15:21-28, is one of the most important evangelical texts to explain the Jewish-Christian attitude toward the Gentiles. One can learn a lot about Mark's and Matthew's theology by considering their stories apart. These two versions must first be studied apart in order to see these similarities, differences, and disagreements in the context of each writer's Sitz im Leben that informed their approach to Jesus. Jesus have been teaching His disciples, first assuming a familiar Jewish prejudice toward non-Jews, and then abandoning it as its inequity was exposed. The story may have served as an object lesson about prejudgment to His disciples as a barrier is broken down between Jews and Gentiles. Jesus have been challenging the woman's faith. Jesus' final word to her is one of affirmation and approval. She passed His test! There have been a deep struggle within Jesus as he dealt with the rights of both Jew and Gentile. He had openness to Jews who were outside of accepted circles (publicans, sinners, prostitutes etc.). It is clear that Jesus had to give himself totally to Israel, and yet also to the rest of the world. The moral of the story is bigger than that, for as a result of the woman's brilliant reply participation in God's kingdom is possible for the Gentiles after all.