(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 anachōrēō #402: 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: 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 eleēō #1653).
   b. She correctly identifies Jesus as Lord (κύριος kurios #2962) 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).
      1) κυνάριον kunarion is a diminutive for κύων kuōn #2665.
      2) All she’s asking for are “little crumbs” which the children weren’t going to eat anyway. ψιχίον psichion #5589.
   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).