



Matthew Lesson 20

December 8, 2020

Scriptures from TLV

“The *Megillah* of Matthew”

15:21-16:12

Tonight we begin with the story of the Canaanite woman. *21 Now Yeshua left from there and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a Canaanite woman from that district came out and started shouting, “Have mercy on me, O Master, Ben-David! My daughter is severely tormented by a demon”* (Matthew 15:21-22 TLV). Danny pointed out to me several weeks ago that there seems to be a conflict between Matthew’s version and Mark’s version. Mark says this: *26 “The woman was a Greek, from Syrophoenicia. And she kept begging Yeshua to drive the demon out of her daughter”* (Mark 7:26 TLV). How can she be both a Canaanite and a Greek? One school of thought about that is that Matthew and Mark were directing their comments to different segments of the population, Matthew to the Jews and Mark to the Romans. I’m not certain that is true. Both Matthew and Mark as writings are very Jewish and contain many Hebrew idioms, Hebraic ways of teaching and also references to the *Tanakh*. There must be a better answer.

The location is obviously the key. Mark tells us that Yeshua was in the region of Tyre while Matthew says that He was in the region of Tyre and Sidon. This map shows that both Tyre and Sidon were located within Phoenicia. They are highlighted in pink near the top left. In the region of most likely means that Yeshua was near the border with Phoenicia. It is unlikely that He would have crossed over and taken His ministry to the Phoenicians, since in just a couple of verses, He will tell the woman that He has only been sent to the “lost sheep of Israel.” It is most likely that this woman had heard about Yeshua and crossed over from Phoenicia to Him in upper Galilee near the border.

But, why did Matthew call her a Canaanite and Mark call her a Greek from Syro-Phoenicia? The answer is that she was a Syro-Phoenician because she was a resident of Phoenicia which at that time was in the province of Syria which was under Roman control. This territory was also an area inhabited by the descendants of Canaanites. Some have suggested that she was called a Greek because she functioned in the Greek culture and spoke Greek. But, the most logical possibility to me is that she was called a Greek because Gentiles were frequently referred to as Greeks. *Sha’ul* wrote: *16 “For I am not ashamed of the Good News, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who trusts—to the Jew first and also to the Greek”* (Romans 1:16 TLV). The word for Greek in the Greek language is *Hellén*, a name for Greek natives, but also a term used to refer to Gentiles. Both Matthew and Mark were correct. The woman could be called a Canaanite. She was from a territory which at one time was inhabited by Canaanites, a sometimes generic term for all of the different ethnicities in the Land of Canaan. She was also living in the then current territory of Syro-Phoenicia. And, she was a non-Jew, in the vernacular, a Greek.

23 *But He did not answer her a word. And when His disciples came, they were urging Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us."* 24 *But He responded, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (Matthew 15:23-24 TLV). What did Yeshua mean by saying He was sent only to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel?" One answer to this is that as the Mediator of the New Covenant which would be instituted at His death, Yeshua was teaching those to whom this covenant was directed. Jeremiah prophesied: 30 *"Behold, days are coming" —it is a declaration of Adonai— "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah"*— (Jeremiah 31:30 TLV). The covenant was made with Israel, and that's who Yeshua's attention was directed at that time. But, now that the New Covenant is in effect, any person, from any nation or ethnicity can become a part of the covenant. In doing so, they also become a part of Israel, to whom it was given. After Yeshua's giving of Himself as a sacrifice for sin, everyone who trusts in Him becomes a covenant partner and a member of the Commonwealth of Israel. Another possible answer is that Yeshua was referring to the short time that He had, 3 ½ years on earth, to minister to the lost sheep of Israel. And, this was a very short period of time to teach His disciples so that they could teach others. We know that this statement was not meant to be exclusionary because Yeshua healed the woman. And, healed many Gentiles. In just a few moments we will see that one ministry session is primarily to Gentiles. Regarding the lost sheep of Israel, He had made a similar statement to His disciples when He sent them out to minister earlier: 5 *Yeshua sent out these twelve and ordered them, "Do not go to the Gentiles, and do not enter into any Samaritan town. 6 But go instead to the lost sheep of the house of Israel"* (Matthew 10:5-6 TLV). It was a practical thing. Neither He nor His disciples had the time to go to others, but Yeshua never failed to heal non-Jews who came to Him.

25 *So she came and got down on her knees before Him, saying, "Master, help me!"* 26 *And answering, He said, "It's not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."* 27 *But she said, "Yes, Master, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table"* (Matthew 15:25-27 TLV). Jews in Yeshua's day sometimes referred to Gentiles as "dogs." The Greek word meaning "wild cur" is *kuon*. When Yeshua said in Matthew 7:6, "Do not give the dogs what is holy," He used this word and was referring to non-Jews, who in actuality were all idolaters. He was referring to pagans, those who did not worship ADONAI. But He didn't use *kuon* for this woman. He said *kunarion*, which means a small dog or a pet dog. By using this phrase, Yeshua emphasized that using His time to heal her daughter was taking time away from His calling to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, which was a violation of His mission. But, it seems that He was just testing Her persistence. I'm certain that He would have healed her anyway. What he said to her could be considered similar to the situation of a father who took needed food from his children to feed the pets. It wasn't an insult, but a challenge seeking a response. And, she was persistent and Yeshua praised her  
her for it.  
28 *Then answering, Yeshua said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."* *And her daughter was healed in that very hour* (Matthew 15:28 TLV).

29 *After Yeshua left there, He went along the Sea of Galilee. Then He went up on a mountainside and was sitting there. 30 And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them the lame, blind, disabled, mute, and many others. And they laid them at His feet, and He healed them. 31 So the crowd marveled when they saw the mute speaking, the disabled made whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel* (Matthew 15:29-31 TLV). Matthew is not explicit about where Yeshua went after He left the region of Tyre and Sidon except to say: 29 *After Yeshua left there, He went along the Sea of Galilee. Then He went up on a mountainside and was sitting there.* The parallel account in Mark 7 says that He left

the region of Tyre and Sidon, went to the Sea of Galilee and the region of the Decapolis. The Decapolis is ten Gentile towns on the east shore of the lake. That would mean that Yeshua and His disciples walked all the way around the northern part of the lake to the eastern shore. On this map, Bethsaida is a Jewish town and Gergasa (Gadara) and Hippos are two of the ten Gentile towns. According to Pliny the Elder, the others were Raphana, Dium, Pella, Gerasa, Philadelphia (modern Amman, Jordan), Canatha, Damascus (capital of modern Syria) and Scythopolis (modern Beit She'an, a city in modern Israel). Of the ten towns, only two, Gergasa and Hippos are near the lake, so that must be the general area where Yeshua healed the many Gentiles that we spoke about a few moments ago. In fact, they were probably the majority that He healed with possibly also some Jews who had followed Him all the way around the lake. Yeshua was only sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, but He also healed many from the nations.

*32 Yeshua called His disciples and said, "I have compassion for the crowd, because they've stayed with Me for three days now and have nothing to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry, because they might pass out on the way." 33 The disciples said to Him, "Where in this wasteland is enough bread to satisfy such a large crowd?" 34 Yeshua said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" "Seven," they said, "and a few small fish." 35 After directing the crowd to recline on the ground, 36 He took the seven loaves and the fish; and after giving thanks, He broke them. And He began giving them to the disciples, and the disciples to the crowds. 37 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they picked up the broken pieces left over—seven baskets full. 38 And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children (Matthew 15:32-38 TLV).* This feeding of the 4000 is very similar to Yeshua's feeding of the 5000 which we read about a few weeks ago. As we said, He was in the region of the Ten Gentile Towns on the eastern shore of the lake, a completely Gentile area. The primary difference I see between the two feedings is how He addressed His Father. If we read these two episodes from the standpoint of the Greek, we can see the difference. In Matthew 14 and the feeding of the 5000, Strong's says that "He spoke a blessing," translated from the Greek, *eulogéó* "and then He broke." Regarding the feeding of the 4000 Strong's says that "haven given thanks," translated from the Greek, *eucharistéó*, "He broke." Our understanding is that when Yeshua fed the 5000 and the Greek says *eulogéó*, it was referring to a *b'racha*, a traditional Hebrew blessing. Whom did He bless? He blessed His Father in heaven. And, we ourselves do this before meals. But, Yeshua didn't give a *b'racha* with the 4000. From the Greek *eucharistéó*, He thanked His Father. Why He did it this way, we don't know.

*39 And after sending away the crowds, Yeshua got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan (Matthew 15:39 TLV).* Where is Magadan. It's no mystery. Yeshua had to cross the lake to get there, but this time He didn't walk, He took a boat. Magadan is the region surrounding the town called Magdala, the home of one of the *Miryams*, *Miryam* of Magdala. Yeshua had been in the upper left of the map in the region of Tyre and Sidon, then walked around the shore of the lake to the region of the Ten Towns where He fed the 4000. He has now gone back across the lake by boat and landed in the region of Magadan. In the parallel account in Mark, the place where He landed is called Dalmanutha. Dalmanutha was a town located within the region of Magadan and near the town of Magdala.

*1 Now the Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Yeshua, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. 2 But He replied to them, "When evening comes, you say, 'Fair weather coming, for the sky is red,' 3 and in the morning, 'Stormy weather today, for the sky is red and gloomy.' You know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times! 4 An evil and adulterous generation clamors for a sign, yet no sign will*

*be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” And leaving them behind, He went away (Matthew 16:1-4 TLV). The Pharisees frequently looked to heaven for signs, including the changing of weather and the alignment of the heavenly bodies, the planets and the stars. These words, “When evening comes, you say, ‘Fair weather coming, for the sky is red,’ 3 and in the morning, ‘Stormy weather today, for the sky is red and gloomy,’ are very similar to a saying that we had in the Navy. On our ship you would frequently hear someone say: “Red sky at night, sailor’s delight; red sky in the morning, sailor take warning.” The two sayings mean the very same thing. But, Yeshua was not predicting the weather. He was pointing out that these Pharisees could look at the sky and tell what the weather was going to be, but did not understand spiritual climate. They wanted a sign, proof that He was the Son of David, the anointed One. They saw his miracles, the thousands of healings and the feeding of thousands miraculously, but they still rejected Him. But, He said that He would only give them the sign of Jonah.*

We know that Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights and also that that is how long Yeshua would be in the belly of the earth after his death. But, what exactly is the sign of Jonah? It is resurrection from the dead. Jonah was facing certain death in the stomach of the fish without ADONAI’s intervention causing the fish to vomit him out, a symbolic resurrection from the dead. He never really died. But, Yeshua’s resurrection was a real one. His human body was completely dead and was then raised to life again by the power of G-d. I’m certain that neither the Pharisees nor even His disciples understood at this time what Yeshua meant by the sign of Jonah.

*5 Now when the disciples came to the other side of the sea, they had forgotten to take bread (Matthew 16:5 TLV). That’s kind of funny to me. The disciples had just picked up seven baskets of broken pieces of fish and bread. But, they forgot to take any of it with them. 6 “Watch out,” Yeshua said to them, “and beware of the hametz of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” 7 And they began to discuss among themselves, saying, “We didn’t bring any bread.” 8 But knowing this, Yeshua said, “O you of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread? 9 You still don’t get it? Don’t you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets of leftovers you gathered? 10 Or how about the seven loaves for the four thousand and all the baskets of leftovers you gathered? 11 How is it that you don’t understand that I wasn’t talking to you about bread? Now beware of the hametz of the Pharisees and Sadducees!” 12 Then they understood that He wasn’t talking about the hametz in the bread, but about the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matthew 16:6-12 TLV).*

The *chametz*, the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees was the sin of those groups. Yeshua had just demonstrated the hypocrisy of the Pharisees as evidenced by their “traditions of the elders” which they placed above obeying *Torah*. The Sadducees, led by the *Kohen Gadol*, the High Priest, along with the ordinary *kohanim*, were in cahoots with the Romans, so to speak. They didn’t want anyone to rock the boat and cause the Romans to crack down on Israel harder. Leaven as represented by yeast in those days was first introduced as symbolism for sin in Exodus 12 when ADONAI brought about the Egyptian Passover. The bread the Israelites made was without leaven and that same principle was carried forward in the *Torah*. Grain and bread offerings made in the Tabernacle were also to be without leaven. Leaven continues to be symbolic of sin in our Passover *seder* today. It’s anything which puffs up the bread, today yeast, baking powder and baking soda. Yeast causes bread to puff up just as sin causes us to puff up against ADONAI’s laws. *Sha’ul* said this to the Corinthians: 6 “Your boasting is no good. Don’t you know that a

*little hametz leavens the whole batch of dough? 7 Get rid of the old hametz, so you may be a new batch, just as you are unleavened—for Messiah, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed”* (1Corinthians 5:6-7 TLV). We are also to be unleavened for Yeshua, sinless. Yet, we do sin. But, as *Sha’ul* said, we are to get rid of it. Confess and repent your sins to Yeshua and then do as He said: “Go and sin no more!”

*Shalom aleichem!*