

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

February 2, 2020

“Great Faith”

8:30 ~ Fellowship & Adult Sunday school

9:15 ~ First Service

10:45 ~ Service with the King’s Kid’s - Communion is for all Christians

NEWS

Love God – Be Happy – Pray for our building project – Love others

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

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Emails: pastor@myaletheia.com, secretary@myaletheia.com, kids@myaletheia.com

MATTHEW 15:21 ~ ^{21NASB} Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.

Leaving Galilee, out to Ptolemais and up to Tyre in the Roman Province of _____.

“Tyre and Sidon” were just two of the many city states making up the _____ Empire. Their most exotic product was _____.

The Greeks called their empire Φοινίκη (foy-nē-kā)...

The Romans Pūnicus (pū-nē-kūs)...

Matthew will call the Phoenician woman a _____. The Akkadians said it as Kinahū (kī-nā-hū), in Hebrew, it is כְּנַעֲנִי (kə-nā-ä-nē)...

Tyre in Hebrew is צֹר (tzōr) (Ezekiel 27:32, etc.)...

Europa was the princess of Tyre...

Hiram I, King of Tyre (II Samuel, I Kings, I & II Chronicles)...

Jezebel was the princess of Tyre (and Sidon)...

In 333 B.C. Alexander the Great...

MATTHEW 15:22-28 ~ ²²NASB And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed." ²³But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us." ²⁴But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" ²⁶And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." ²⁷But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." ²⁸Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once.

Mark 7:26, says she was "A Gentile, of the Syrophoenician race." Further, that her daughter was a _____ (vv. 25&30), and that she was _____ about Jesus.

"Have mercy on me," is probably more like, "Please take pity," but Matthew chose to use a word pregnant with _____ meaning in the Bible.

She called Him "Lord, Son of David." This is important...

Jesus completely ignored her. The text is explicit, He did not even acknowledge her _____. Yet, she _____ all the more.

The Disciples " _____ " Jesus to "Send her away."

It means that Jesus had been ignoring her for...

When they say, "Because she keeps shouting at us," it means that they feel directly _____. There is a hint here that the Disciples, while selfishly motivated, may have suggested that Jesus do what she asked.

The best way to understand it grammatically is that Jesus responded to His Disciples, "But," "I was sent only to..." It is an _____ to what they've begged Him to do.

Jesus used their willingness to see Him help her as an opportunity to confirm that His mission was exclusively to _____.

She came before Him, groveled at His feet, and honored Him, is reasonable, but again Matthew used a word pregnant with the meaning of actual _____ in the Bible for her actions.

"It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." This sounds atrocious. Jesus was not calling her a _____. His analogy has to do with _____.

Americans spend more than \$70,000,000,000.00 every year on pets.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

Verse 27, “But.” That’s another important “But.” It shows that she and Jesus are on the _____ sheet of music. It’s not, “I agree, but,” it’s “I agree and since I do, we can take it a step further.”

Jesus then gushed with _____ for her. She is the only one Jesus ever said had “Great faith” (Matthew 8:10, Luke 7:9 is implied).

If a Christian has any maturity at all, they understand that getting their wish granted, if _____ to God’s Will, would be the last thing they want.

We must be in tune with Jesus, just as she was, trusting Him, and in so doing, pray for our _____ to be aligned with His _____.

Her daughter was healed at once. She was right. For Him, it was a small _____ – for her, it was the world.

- 1) He knew this desperate mother wasn’t going...
- 2) He knew that His guys would eventually get...
- 3) He knew that they would get to the point where...
- 4) He knew that would give Him the opportunity to...
- 5) He knew that the woman would (Matthew 14:31 & 16:8)...
- 6) He knew that in the process this dear mother’s...
- 7) He knew that through it all the shift from a...

 Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

_____ I want to talk with the pastor about _____

_____ I want prayer for _____

_____ I want to volunteer to _____

_____ I want more information about _____

_____ Other _____

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

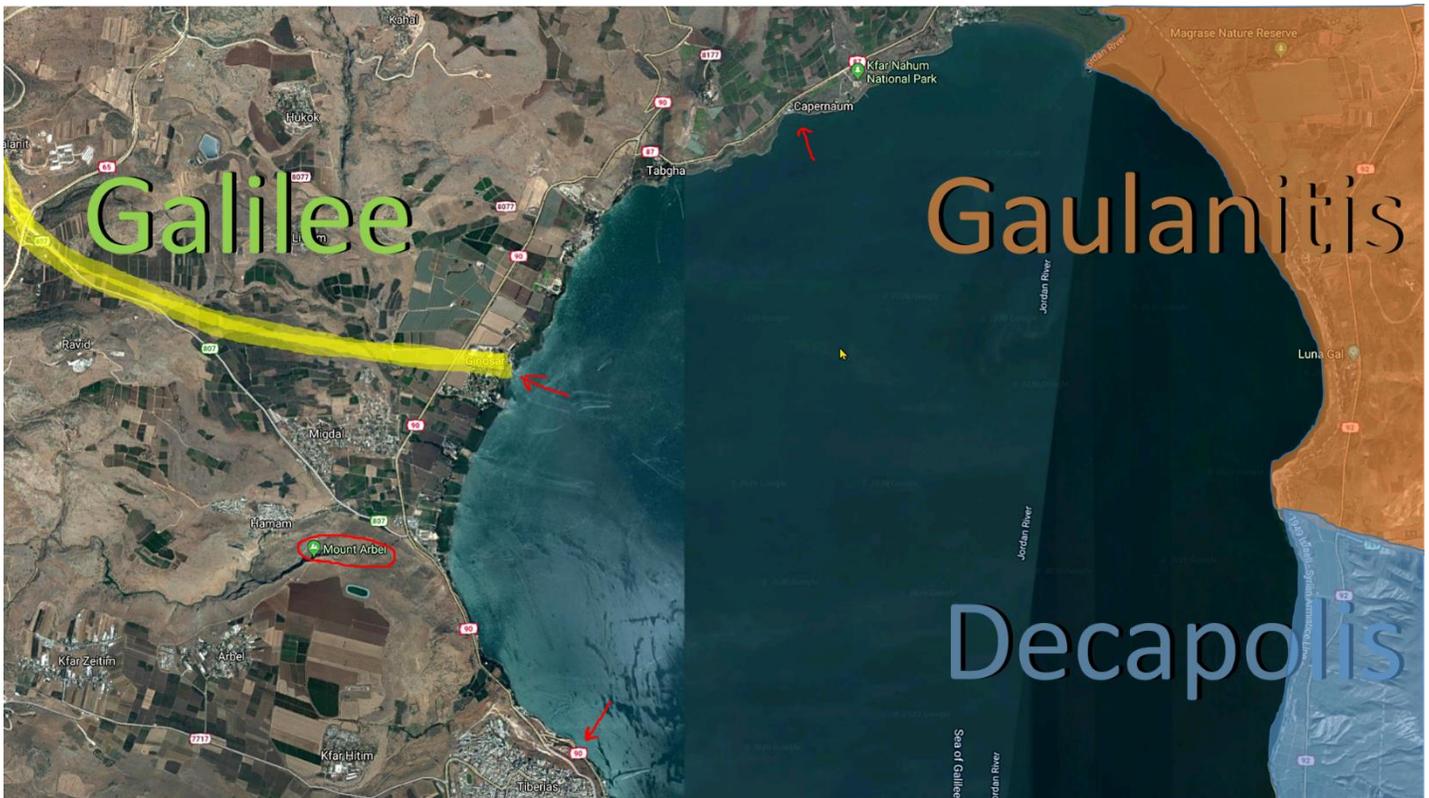
Welcome Friends

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW

A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 15d ~ 020220

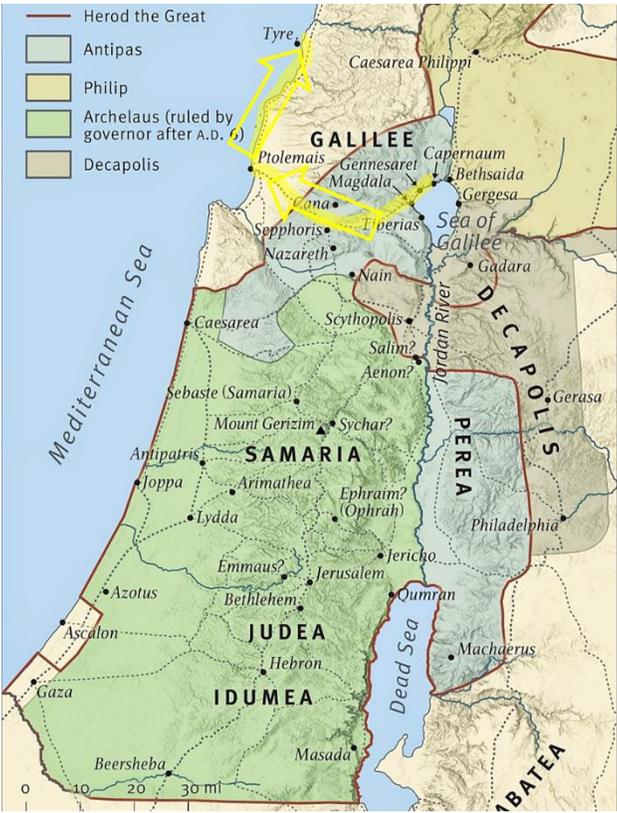


Matthew 15:21 ~ 21NASBJesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.

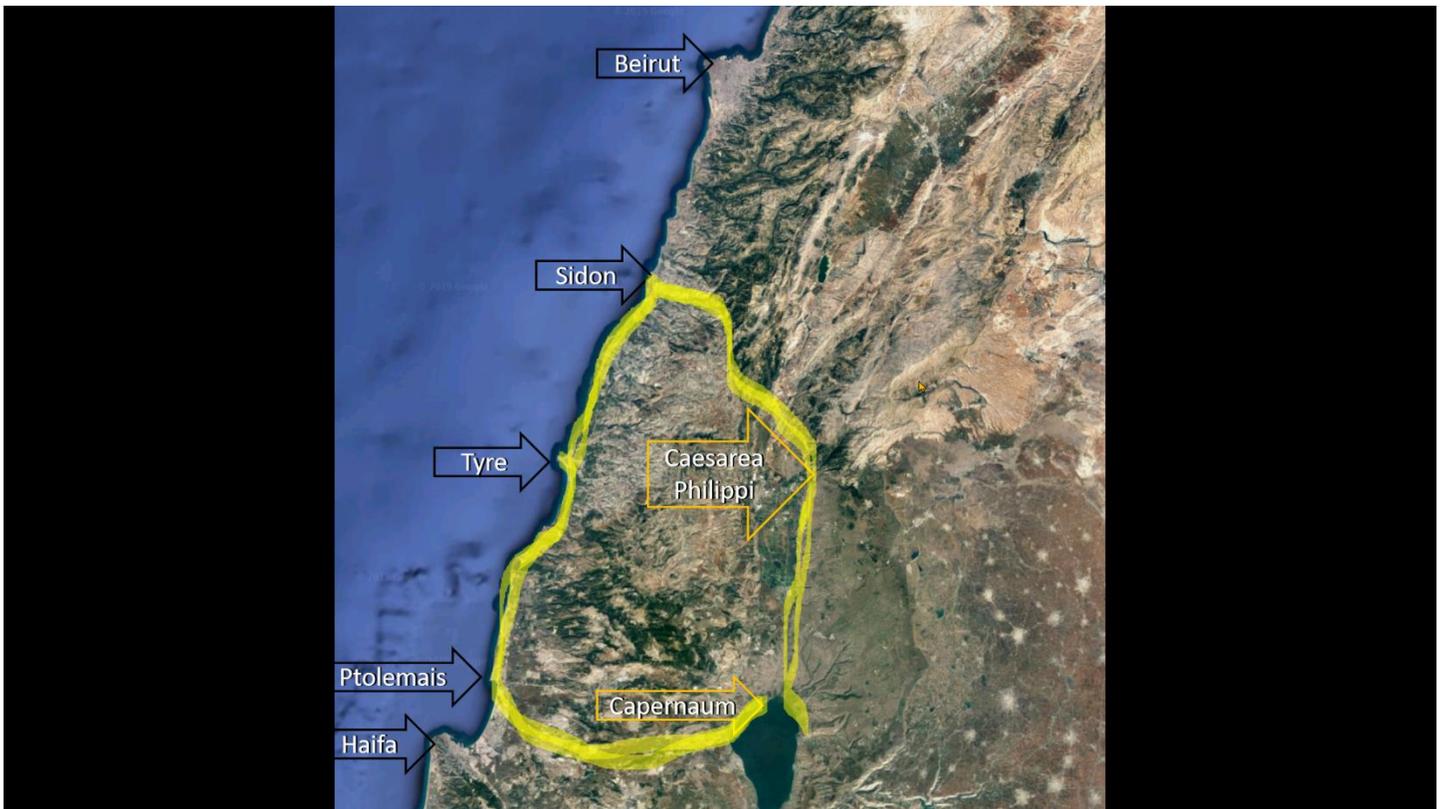
So, it's been a while. We last left Jesus in the plain of Gennesaret. From this area on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus and His band moved northwest into Phoenician Syria. Your Bible may even call this the encounter with the Syrophoenician woman – that title is from the parallel account in Mark chapter 7.



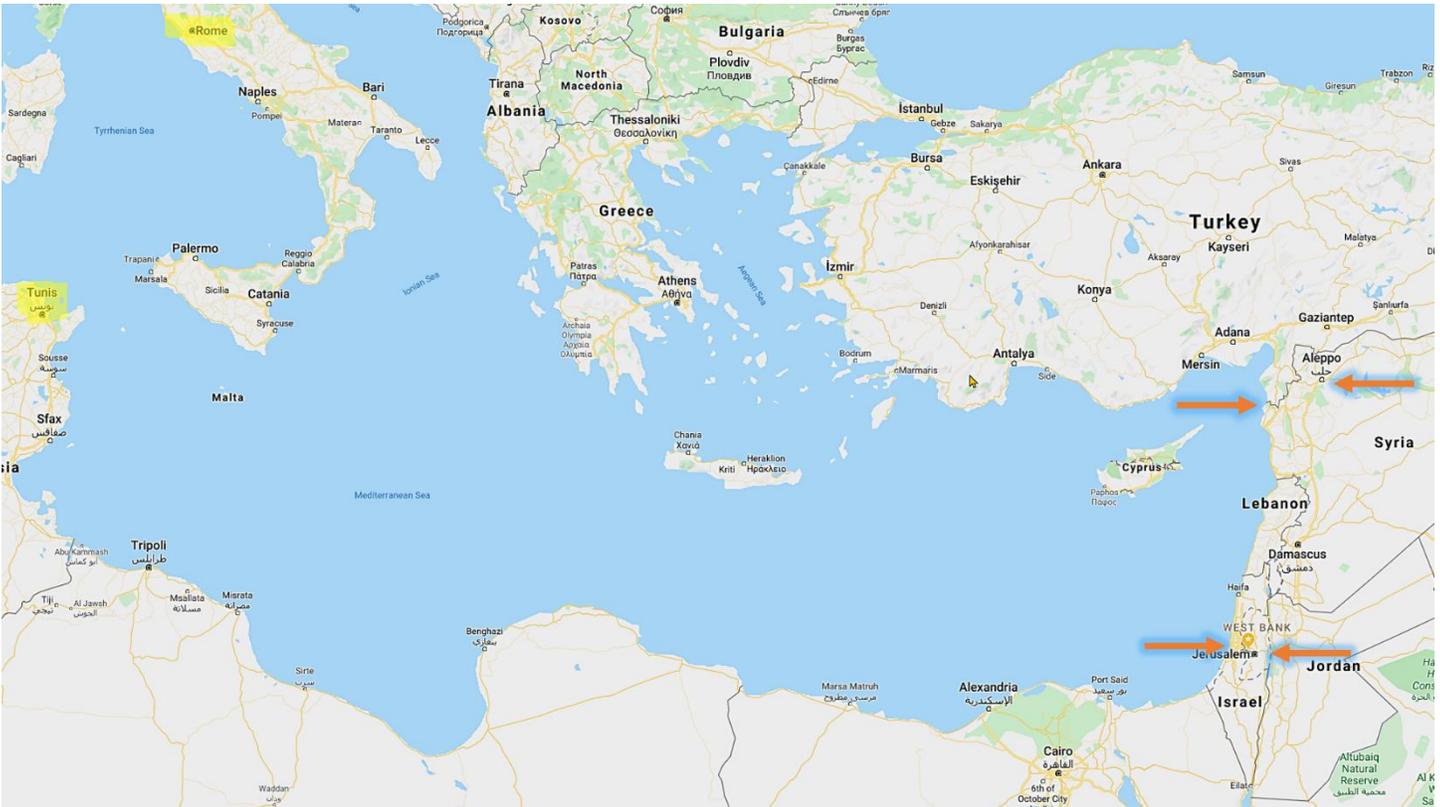
Gennesaret Valley and Sea beyond from Mt. Arbel.



Bigger picture – leaving Galilee, out to Ptolemais and up to Tyre in the Roman Province of Syria.



Here's the whole roundtrip loop they probably took, as illuminated, once again, by the parallel account in Mark, where it says after Tyre they, "Came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis."



A bit about “Tyre and Sidon.” 3,000+ years ago, “Tyre and Sidon” were just two of the many city states making up the Phoenician Empire. In its heyday, the empire stretched the entire coastal area from Joppa, or modern-day Tel Aviv, Israel, north to the Orontes River, near the modern border between Turkey and Syria – a distance of about 275 miles. The Phoenician Empire of city states extended inland to Jerusalem and Aleppo. By the time Jesus and His guys made the trip, Phoenicia had been reduced to roughly the area of modern-day Lebanon and was within the Roman Province of Syria.

The Phoenician people were renowned as a great seafaring people and extensive traders. Their most lucrative and exotic product was purple dye. They were the exclusive suppliers of the dye to make purplish-red colors. Because of that, the dye was extremely expensive and that is why the color purple is still associated with royalty even today. The center of the manufacture of the dye was the city state Tyre.

It took 8,000 ground up purple sea snails from their area to extract 1 gram of purple dye. A very time-consuming process that yielded a small supply and so demand was high and the cost extreme.

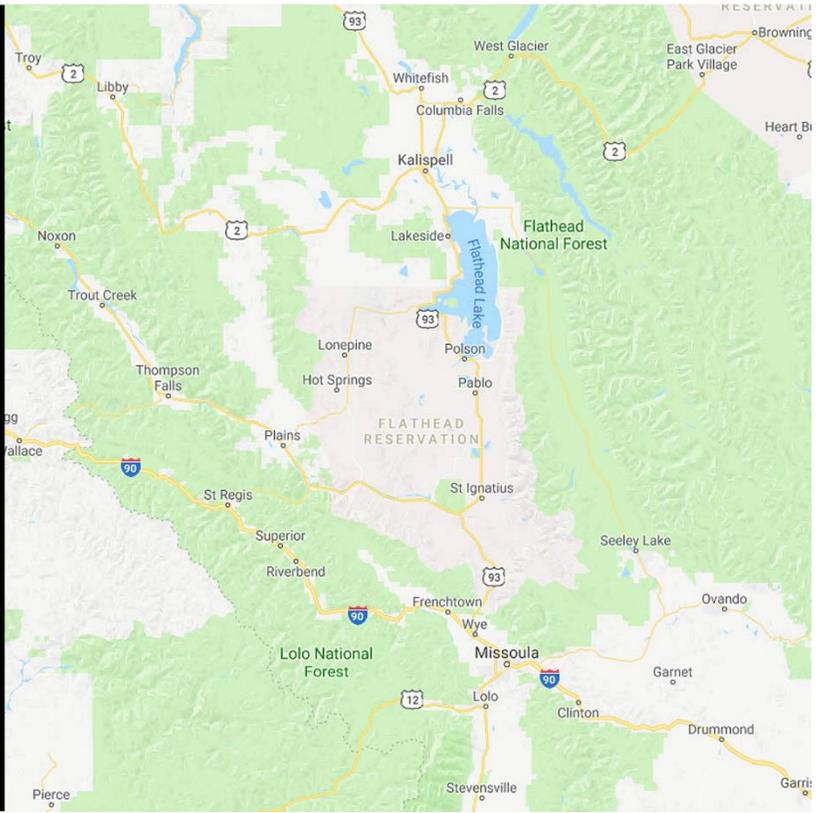
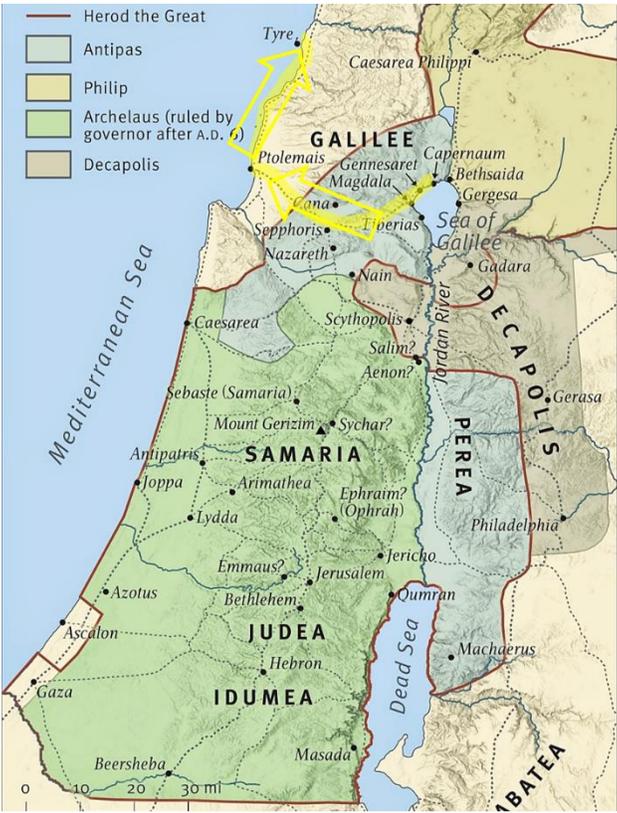
From the eastern coast of the Mediterranean the Phoenicians expanded all the way to modern-day Tunis which was founded by them as the ancient city of Carthage – giving rise to the name Carthaginians and their Carthaginian Empire.

The Phoenicians were so well known for their dye, that the Greeks called their empire Φοινίκη (foy-nē-kā), which means land of purplish-red. It is of course the source of their name today – the Phoenicians. Φοινίκη was simply transcribed into Latin as Pūnicus (pü-nē-küs). If you know your history the Romans fought three

wars with the Carthaginians – remember Hannibal? The Carthaginian General who famously crossed the Alps with African elephants to attack Rome from the north. That was the second war. The Romans eventually defeated them in the third. Anyway, those three wars are called the Punic wars. Why? Because the Romans knew the Carthaginian Empire was really just an extension of the Pūnicus empire.

In Matthew's account he will call the Phoenician woman we are about to meet, a Canaanite. It turns out that the Greek name Φοινίκη was actually a translation of the earlier Semitic name for those people. Going all the way back to the very ancient Mesopotamian Akkadian Empire, the coastal area was called the land of purple, but in Akkadian it is *kinahhu* (kī-nä-hü), and in the closely related Hebrew, it is כְּנָעַנִי (kə-nä-ä-nē), or as we say today Canaan.

It was pressure from many different kingdoms and empires that consolidated the Canaanite/Phoenician people to the area of modern-day Lebanon and caused them to find other areas to settle like Carthage. One of those kingdoms was ancient Israel who pushed them north and west.



By the route Jesus took it was between 50 and 60 miles to Tyre. Another 22 miles up to Sidon.



This is Tyre today. Tyre in Hebrew is צַר (tzōr). Ezekiel 27:32 mentions “Tyre... in the midst of the sea.” It was originally built on two islands in the Mediterranean Sea, the larger had the city and the smaller had a Temple to Ba’al, the primary Canaanite God. In fact, Hannibal, is really Hanno-Ba’al meaning Ba’al is gracious.

It is one of the oldest continually inhabited cities in the world, founded by the Phoenicians almost 5,000 years ago and is today the home of more than 200,000 Lebanese people who are modern-day Canaanites.

A recently conducted, large-scale study, compared the DNA of ancient Phoenicians mummified bodies and

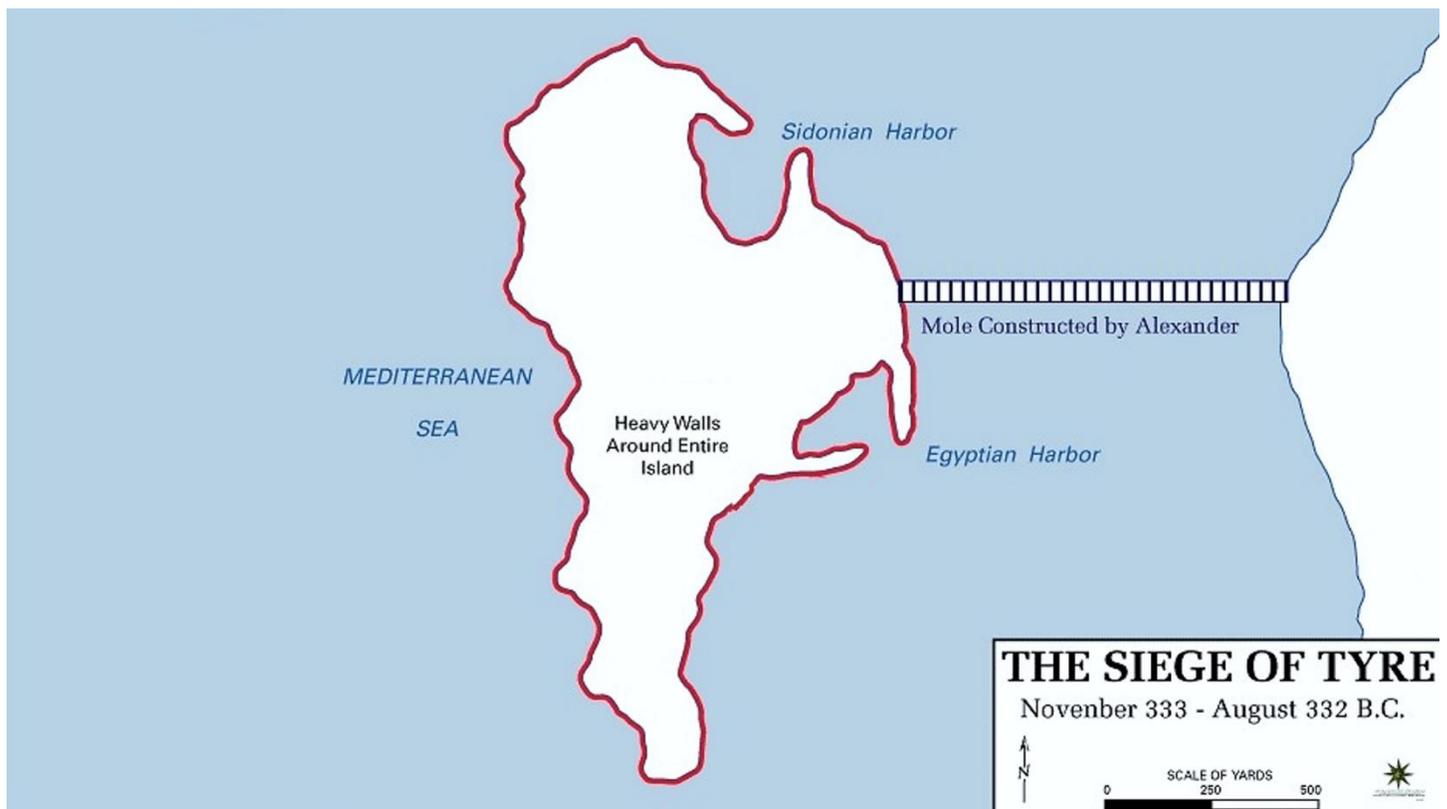
modern Lebanese people, finding them to be 90% identical.

In Greek mythology Europa was the princess of Tyre and was abducted by Zeus and taken to Crete – it's involved, but the continent of Europe gets its name from her and she is considered the mother of the Minoan civilization.

In the early to mid-900s B.C. Hiram I, King of Tyre, became very good friends with the great Jewish King David and his son Solomon... What's cool is we have all kinds of archeological and secular historical evidence proving the Bible accounts true (in II Samuel, I Kings, I & II Chronicles).

About 100 years later, the daughter of the King of Tyre, was married off to the King of Israel. Her name was Jezebel and her husband was Ahab. The Biblical account of both is also verified by extensive external evidence. The Bible mentions that her dad was the King of Sidon. He was actually the King of Tyre, but unified the whole region, including the much bigger city of Sidon under his rule – He became known as the King of Sidon because it was a more prestigious title.

In 333 B.C. Alexander the Great, having defeated the Persians demanded loyalty and tribute from all the Phoenician cities. Tyre, being a fortified island generally assumed to be impenetrable at the time, refused.



Alexander made an example of them by laying siege for nearly a year. After many setbacks, Alexander ordered the construction of a stone causeway from the mainland to the island. 6,000 Tyrian warriors were killed in the battle. Once the city was taken, another 2,000 were crucified on the beach. The remaining 30,000 people were sold into slavery. Alexander made

his point. Most other city states and kingdoms surrendered without much resistance after that.



That causeway he built, has expanded through natural sedimentation over the 23 centuries since, allowing the city to grow and forever changing the island into the peninsula it is today.



Matthew 15:22-28 ~ 22NASB And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed." 23 But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us." 24 But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" 26 And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 27 But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is

great; it shall be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed at once.

As usual with parallel accounts, we see that Matthew is stingy with details. The reason is Matthew is always very careful to keep all the focus on Jesus. Where Mathew simply calls her “A Canaanite,” Mark tells us specifically that she was “A Gentile, of the Syrophoenician race.” Of course, the “Syro” part to due to the Roman Syrian Province.

Mark also tells us that her daughter was specifically a child, probably under 10 years of age.

The event has caused controversy since it was first told shortly afterward. How could Jesus be so unmoved, so uncaring, so rude, so misogynistic and so racist? How could His disciples encourage Him to discard her without trying to help?

To counter the negative impression, people have come up with all kinds of ways to paint Jesus and the guys in a better light. It's unnecessary when we just embrace the text for what's there and what's not there. I hope to show you that...

This Phoenician mom was a thoroughly desperate woman. What mother wouldn't be beside herself in such a situation? Who wouldn't be deeply distressed and willing to do nearly anything if their young daughter was possessed by an evil spirit?

She had heard rumors about Jesus and His ministry. Mark tells us that explicitly. She saw Him and frantically begged Him to help her.



“Have mercy on me,” is probably more like, “Please take pity on me and my daughter and our situation,” but Matthew chose to use a word pregnant with salvific meaning in the Bible. Since he did, it conveys an

element of her willingness to abandon her life as she knew it... there is an air of surrender, of repentance. Subtle, but a hint here of her meaning “Forgive me if I’ve done anything wrong and be merciful to us.” That is somewhat implied by Matthew’s choice of wording.

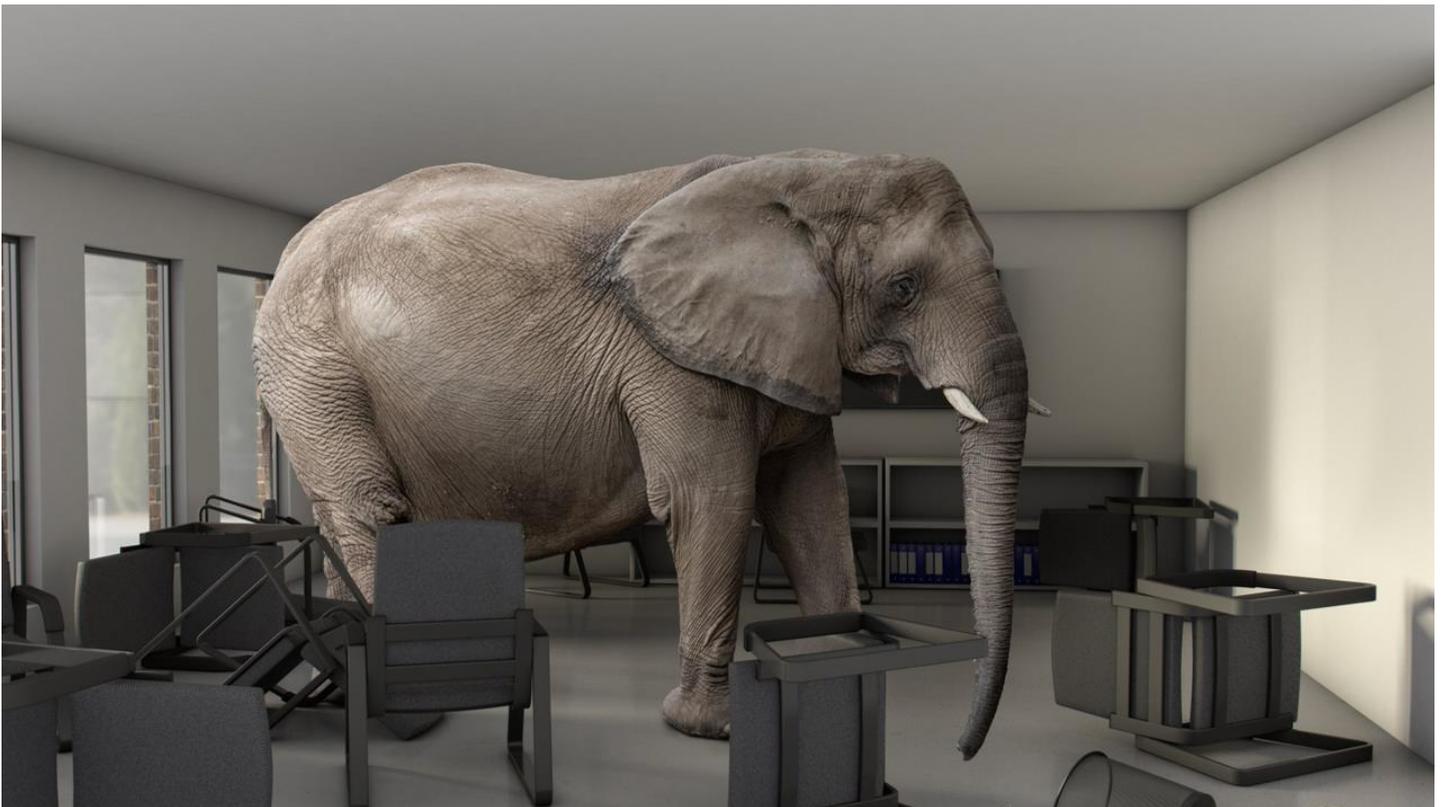
She called Him “Lord, Son of David.” This is important because it establishes that she knew that Jesus was the Messiah for the Jewish people. She fully, freely, plainly acknowledged that fact. She agreed that He was not her Messiah, not her people’s Messiah, not a Messiah for any Gentiles at all. Jesus was the “Lord,” the Messianic “Son of David” sent to save the Jews.

Nevertheless, she implored Him to take pity upon her anyway, because her precious daughter was “Cruelly demon-possessed.”

Jesus completely ignored her. She was going out of her way, loudly making a spectacle of herself, causing a commotion that would have been very hard to ignore, but that’s what Jesus did. The text is explicit, He did not even acknowledge her existence... Yet, she persisted all the more. She was not to be dissuaded.

The Disciples came to Jesus and... Asked Him? Invited Him? Encouraged Him? No, they “Implored Him” to “Send her away.” Please recognize the situation.

They didn’t immediately “Implore” Jesus – “Implore,” implies that they have been greatly annoyed and frustrated for quite some time. In this context, the phrasing means, that they urged, entreated, beseeched, pleaded, begged, Jesus to do something about the annoying woman.



It means that Jesus had been ignoring her for long enough that His guys were rather exasperated with the whole thing.

When they say, “Because she keeps shouting at us,” it means that they feel directly involved. Do you think she hadn’t likewise implored them to get Jesus to answer her? Do you seriously think that they themselves hadn’t already told her to get lost? She won’t go – she won’t leave us alone – we’ve got to get Jesus to remedy this now.

Up to that point, Jesus was acting like He was completely oblivious to the entire affair.

What the Disciples said can be taken as the Message Bible renders it, “The disciples came and complained, “Now she’s bothering us. Would you please take care of her? She’s driving us crazy.”

The “Would you please take care of her?”, bit is what’s important. It implies that the guys are saying, “Just do what she wants, so she will leave us alone.”

There’s a fairly recent Bible out called “The Passion Translation.” It is bad. Please don’t use it. First of all, it is false advertising in the name, because it is not a translation at all, but a paraphrase with extensive commentary within the actual text, which itself is often based upon illegitimate sources.

Anyway, it leaves nothing to the imagination in this verse by saying, 23TPTBut Jesus never answered her. So, his disciples said to him, “Why do you ignore this woman who is crying out to us?” The obvious implication is that while Jesus was cold-hearted, His Disciples begged Him to help the poor woman. In that verse, they have a note stating that it is translated from, “Hebrew Matthew.” My dear friends, it is a sham. People who refer to Hebrew Matthew and especially those, like the Passion people, who claim it is the original version of Matthew are deceived or are deceivers. The Hebrew was translated by anti-Christian Jews less than 700 years ago from the Greek, to be used to argue against Christianity in Europe in the late middle ages.

My point in bringing it up is that there is a sense in the narrative that indicates to me that the Disciples, while clearly motivated by the hope of peace and quiet, may have suggested that Jesus do what she asked.

It wasn't simply, tell her, “No dice” – it was do whatever is within your power and will, to get rid of her. Whatever, just so she will leave us alone.

The attitude is partly because she was a woman. I don't need to tell the ladies in the room that men, especially a group of men on their own agenda, can be dismissive of women. Well, in that day and place it was far worse. Additionally, she was not only a Gentile, she was a Canaanite – the long-hated enemy of the Jews. Beyond that though, there is a thread of what takes place in the church today. We upstanding Christians are easily annoyed by a persistent cry for help from people who we see as less upstanding.

When I was a kid, we attended a church that was chalk full of hippies of all races, creeds and proclivities – it was the Jesus Movement. The two things they all had in common was an aversion to bathing and a willingness to attend church for the help they received. Some became genuine Christians; others took what they could and moved on.

That pastor had been the pastor at an upstanding church in a nice neighborhood, that was full of good clean Christian people. When he began ministering to the homeless hippy community and some of them had the audacity to show up at church services, the good Christians there fired the pastor.

Guard yourself against the judgmentalism that so easily entangles.

Jesus responded and the best way to understand it grammatically is that He responded to His Disciples, not to the woman. He said, “But,” “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” “But,” means it is an objection to what they’ve begged Him to do. If they had only asked Him to “Send her away,” His response makes no sense.

It seems best to understand, that the Disciples came to have no objection to Jesus giving her what she wanted. I imagine that for the reasons I gave they may have been opposed to helping her initially, but after a while, their attitude was probably whatever it takes, even if that’s helping a Canaanite woman.

If you’ve been a parent for very long, you know that when it comes to your kids fighting with each other, you don’t care about justice nearly as much as you just want quiet.



Jesus used their willingness to see Him do whatever it took, including giving in to her plea, as an opportunity to tell them that His mission was exclusively to Israel.

Again, it seems rude, but Matthew has already informed us that she knew that very thing. This isn't an uncaring Jesus; this is a Jesus accomplishing the greatest possible good in the situation. That's what God does. He orchestrates things that sometimes look bad from every possible angle, but it's because He's moving several people in several ways all at the same time.

Jesus intentionally said what the woman herself had said. Basically, I AM the “Lord, Son of David.”

What did she do? She came before Him and essentially groveled at His feet giving Him what we would call worship. It can be taken as greatly honoring Him, but again Matthew uses a word pregnant with the meaning of actual worship in the Bible.

So again, there is a hint of her recognizing Jesus as Divine and acting accordingly. At the very least, she was saying, “I know you were sent by God to the House of Israel, I recognize You as Holy and I’m begging You for help anyway.”



Jesus then upped the ante and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.”

To us this sounds atrocious. It is a modern politically correct mindset. Jesus was not equating her, or her people with dogs except analogously.

Jesus’ analogy, or short parable, simply has to do with priority. No one should ever make their kids go hungry in order to feed their dogs. It goes to the sanctity of human life we talked about last week. We don’t take food away from humans to give it to dogs, Again, Jesus wasn’t calling her a dog – He was calling attention to His priorities. This then, is just another way of her

calling Him the “Son of David,” and of Him saying that He was sent to the “Lost sheep of Israel.”

As an aside, Americans – just Americans, spend more than 70 billion dollars every year on pets. There are 150 million starving children on the planet every day. That’s more than \$1.25 per child, per day – way more than enough to give every one of them the nourishment they need to be healthy.

If Americans gave up their love affair with pets, we would be forced to spend more time with each other, and we could afford to end child hunger in the world. What do you suppose Jesus would say?

Anyway, the point, Jesus was confirming that His God appointed mission was to be the long-awaited Messiah to His children who had been entrusted with His Word enshrined in His Temple in Jerusalem.



Verse 27, “But.” That’s another important “But.” It shows that she and Jesus are actually on the same sheet of music. It’s not, “I agree, but,” it’s “I agree and since I do, we can take it a step further.” So, this is not, as some suppose, an incredibly humble acceptance of a racial and gender slur, it was her saying to Jesus, “Yes, of course, You’re completely correct as I’ve been agreeing all along, no one wants to take food from the children, but surely the Master can spare a small left over scrap for His dogs. That’s all I need is a tiny morsel, because coming from You, Jesus, it will be more than sufficient for me and my daughter.”

It does show humbleness. It does show faith. It does show persistence. Most of all, it is profound. She has a firm grip on the reality of the situation. There are few people in the Bible who are as amazing as this young mother.



Jesus then gushed with the praise for her. I believe it was an explosion of joy, because He had been containing His true desire throughout the exchange.

It is an exuberant exclamation, “O woman, your faith is great.” I want you to get the impact of it. Jesus cannot be saying these words in this context without a huge smile of genuine admiration on His face. She is the

only person Jesus ever said had “Great faith.” The closest was another Gentile – the Centurion back in chapter 8. Jesus said of Him “I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.” There the word great is implied, not explicit as it is with this mother.

Jesus was thrilled with her devotion to her daughter and her persistence in seeking His help and her unwillingness to be offended, but instead to keep trusting.

See? When she first saw Jesus, she knew Who He was. She could have simply assumed – that He wouldn’t help her. She could have given it a try – and gotten discouraged. She could have persisted a while – and when the Disciples dismissed her she could have departed. She could have stayed for the exchange with Jesus – and been offended by His analogy and stormed off.

Life is like that... Trouble comes, and we seek the Lord’s help, but for how long? With what intensity and persistence? How much does it take to derail us or even offend us? How often do we stay the course trusting until end?

From this passage, some think you should pester God until He gives you what “You wish.” That’s not the lesson – this lady was not then a Spirit-filled Christian...



But to address that idea, let me say that a Christian should trust God enough to always finish their prayer as Jesus Himself did, “Yet, not my will, but Father, Yours be done” (Luke 22:42). Jesus could have saved Himself from the Cross, but then what?

If a Christian has any maturity at all they will understand that getting their wish granted, if counter to God’s Will, is the last thing they would want.

To that wonderful woman, Jesus said, it shall be done for you as you wish.” Because her petition was His Will, her wish coincided, therefore Jesus could say in that case your wish is granted.

It is critical that we be in tune with Jesus just as she was – that we trust Him and in so doing pray for our wish to be aligned with His Will. How great when they coincide.

What happened? The demon was instantly and remotely cast out and the little girl was completely restored.

Jesus simply said, “It shall be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed at once. She was right... For Him, it was a small table scrap – for her, it was the world.



Now, if you've paid close attention, you'll agree that this whole thing is a bit contrived. Since it's Jesus we'll say orchestrated. What I mean is Jesus' unexpected silence in the face of great need, His uncharacteristic ignoring of a desperate person, His surprisingly narrow, almost legalistic view of His mission, and His seemingly offensive, insulting, almost abusive analogy... All tells me that Jesus knew precisely what He was doing all along. He was moving the players for a purpose.

1) He knew this desperate mother wasn't going to give up. 2) He knew that His guys would eventually get so exasperated that they would beg Him to send her

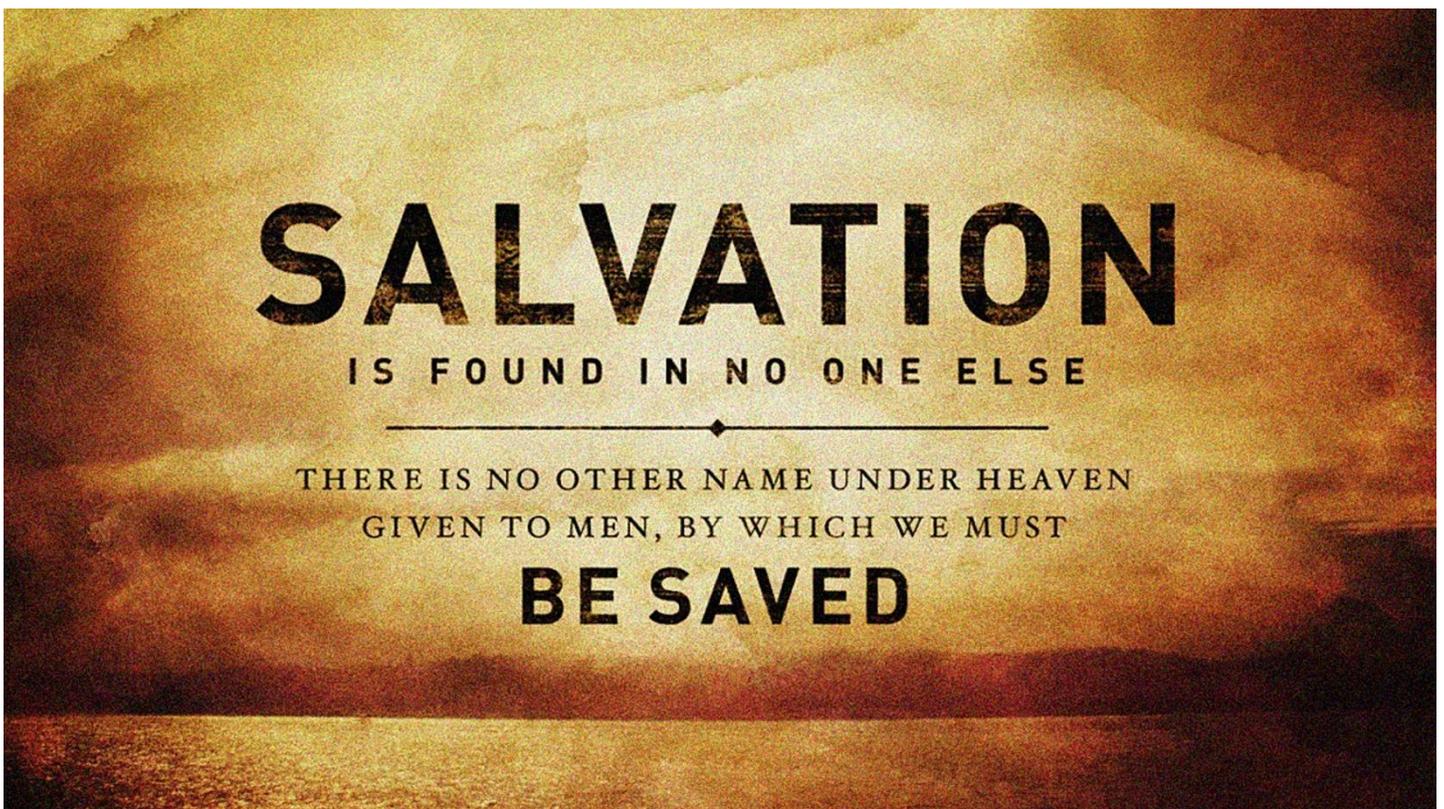
away. 3) He knew that even those men, who were definitely Jew first, and perhaps a bit Jew only, would get to the point where they would be happy to see Jesus use His power and authority to give even a Canaanite woman what she wanted – if that’s what it took. 4) He knew that would give Him the opportunity to clearly confirm that He was indeed the Messiah sent by the Father to the “Nation of Israel.”

5) He knew that the woman would demonstrate the kind of faith that He expected in His own people and especially His own Disciples. Compare this lady “O woman, your faith is great,” to Peter in the previous chapter, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” (Matthew 14:31), or to what Jesus said to all the Disciple in the very next chapter, “You men of little faith, why do you discuss among yourselves that you have no bread?” (Matthew 16:8).

6) Beyond the demonstration of salvific faith expected by Jesus, He knew that in the process this dear mother’s request would be fulfilled, Jesus would completely cleanse and restore her daughter. 7) Jesus knew that through it all the shift from a Jewish Messiah to a universal Messiah would take another step forward.

The Gentile Centurion was a step forward, but He was a man of power who had helped the Jews, and would no doubt continue to do so. He was living in a Jewish Province, interacting with Jews daily, working for an ostensibly Jewish ruler.

This opened the door wider to the Gentile blessing through the Jewish Messiah that had been prophesied in the Scripture. It sets us up for what comes next...



In the end, we will continue to see the Jewish resistance to Jesus grow and intensify, which is the

very thing that ultimately makes the Gospel available to all people... Including you.

No matter who you are, what you've done, how unworthy you are, if you, like the woman in this passage, are desperate enough to pursue the Jesus with abandon, I promise you He will eventually give you an even greater gift... The gift of eternal fellowship with Him.