

Exorcism and Healings Beyond Galilee



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Jesus' initial responses to the **Canaanite/Syrophoenician woman** (Matthew 15:21–28; Mark 7:24–30) are striking and seem harsh at first glance. Let's examine each one and unpack what He likely meant.

Jesus' Three Key Responses (Matthew 15)

1. "He did not answer her a word." (*Matthew 15:23*)

- **Meaning:** Jesus is **silent**, which is rare in the Gospels.
- **Purpose:** This may be a test of **faith and persistence**, both for the woman and **for the disciples**, who immediately urge Him to send her away.
- **Teaching moment:** Silence highlights the woman's desperation and **draws out her bold faith**.

2. "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (*Matthew 15:24*)

- **Meaning:** Jesus affirms His **primary mission** — to Israel (see Matthew 10:5–6).
- **Not exclusion**, but **order**: God's covenant plan begins with Israel, then extends to Gentiles.
- **Foreshadowing:** He is preparing to include Gentiles, but this is a **pivotal turning point**, not yet the full expansion.

3. "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs." (*Matthew 15:26*)

- **Meaning:** This metaphor refers to **Israel ("children")** and **Gentiles ("dogs")**.
- **"Dogs"** here (Greek: *kynaria*) is **not the harsh street-dog term**, but a diminutive word — **"little dogs"** or house pets.
- Jesus is **not insulting her**, but using a **common Jewish idiom** to set up the next step: her response of humility and insight.
- **Purpose:** He's drawing out a deeper truth — **does she believe there's mercy for Gentiles too?**

Her Brilliant Reply

"Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." (Matt. 15:27)

- She **accepts the metaphor**, but flips it with faith affirming her **unworthiness** and **Jesus' abundance**.
- She doesn't demand equality but believes that even the **overflow of God's grace** is powerful enough to heal.

Jesus' Final Response

"O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." (*Matt. 15:28*)

- Jesus **commends her faith** — one of only a few individuals in the Gospels to receive such praise.
- He **grants her request immediately**, validating her belief and showing that **God's mercy crosses boundaries**.

Summary Chart

Jesus' Statement	Surface Meaning	Deeper Purpose
Silence	Ignoring her plea	Tests her persistence; sets the stage
"Sent only to Israel"	Priority to Jews	Shows God's covenant order
"Don't throw bread to dogs"	Gentiles are outside the promise	Invites her to express deep faith
"Great is your faith"	Final blessing	Shows inclusion of Gentiles through faith

Key Takeaway


Jesus' initial responses are **not rejection**, but **invitation through testing** — designed to reveal and reward **bold, humble, persistent faith**. This moment becomes a **turning point in His public ministry**, prefiguring the Gospel's spread to **all nations**.

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Mark 7:32–35, where Jesus heals a **deaf and mute man** in the region of the **Decapolis**, holds deep symbolic and theological meaning. This miracle is more than a physical healing — it reveals truths about **spiritual deafness**, **Gentile inclusion**, and the **Messianic mission** of Jesus.

Mark 7:32–35 (ESV)

1. Symbolism of Deafness and Muteness

- **Deafness** = Inability to hear the Word of God.
- **Muteness** = Inability to respond with praise, prayer, or proclamation.
- This man **represents the Gentiles** — historically cut off from the Word of God (Romans 3:2).
 Isaiah 6:9–10 and 42:18 speak of people who "have ears but do not hear" — This miracle **fulfills Isaiah's vision** of a day when **God opens the ears of the spiritually deaf**.

2. Jesus Is in the Decapolis (Gentile Territory)

- This miracle happens **outside of Jewish lands**, showing that Jesus' power and compassion **extend beyond Israel**.
- It mirrors the spiritual awakening of the **Gentile world** — ears that had never heard the truth are now opened.
It's a preview of the **Great Commission** and Acts 10 (Peter & Cornelius).

3. The Method: Touch, Spit, Ephphatha

Element	Meaning
Took him aside privately	Jesus values personal, intimate healing.
Fingers in ears / touch tongue	Jesus physically identifies with the man's brokenness.
Spit	In the ancient world, saliva was considered healing; here it's likely symbolic of divine impartation.
"Ephphatha" (Aramaic)	Means "Be opened." It's a direct, divine command , highlighting Jesus' authority.
Sigh/groan	Greek: <i>stenazō</i> — indicates compassion , and perhaps frustration at the brokenness of the world (cf. Romans 8:23).

4. Connections to Isaiah 35:5–6

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped... the tongue of the mute shall sing for joy."

- This miracle **fulfills Messianic prophecy** and shows that the **Kingdom of God has arrived**.
- It shows Jesus is **the one who opens ears** — physically and spiritually.