

The New Testament story of the Canaanite woman and her demon-possessed daughter appears to be one of the most controversial passages in the entire New Testament. Critics have deliberately misinterpreted it to undermine the character and integrity of Christ.

We are informed that Jesus had gone on a retreat with His Disciples to the area of Tyre and Sidon, but could not escape being noticed. A Canaanite woman came to the place where He was staying and begged Him for help.

Now, here is where the problem for some arises. First, Jesus wouldn't even give her an answer. Then, after she continued to insist, He almost insults her! But to understand what has been suggested were harsh words for Jesus to utter, we need only go back to an incident recorded in the Book of Genesis to discover His true intent.

In chapter nine, we read that Noah had three sons that went out of the Ark with him after the Global Flood. They were Shem, Ham and Japheth.

One day Noah got drunk and lay completely naked in his tent. His son Ham saw him, and told his two brothers. Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward to cover the nakedness of their father, without looking at him.

Moses tells us that when Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what Ham had done, he put a curse on the house of his son Canaan. The text reads:

Cursed be Canaan; lowest of slaves shall he be to his brothers. He also said, "Blessed by the Lord my God be Shem; and let Canaan be his slave.

(Genesis 9:25-28)

Before we continue, there are many opinions concerning the meaning of this text. Some believe it must have been something more grievous than Ham just seeing his father without clothes and drawing the attention of others to it.

Suggestions range from Ham, or his son Canaan, sodomizing Noah, or even castrating him, to the idea that one of the two probably raped Noah's wife, who may also have been under the influence of wine.

However, as many Christian and Hebrew commentators have rightly pointed out, in this case, speculating beyond what the text actually says is completely unnecessary.

Therefore, we can conclude that Jesus first had to help the Canaanite woman recognize and confess her origins before she could enter the blessings of Shem!