

HEALING A CANAANITE WOMAN'S DAUGHTER

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Abstract: *the article examines in detail the verses of the Holy Scriptures (the Bible)—Matt. 15:21-28—the healing by Jesus Christ a Canaanite woman's daughter. The study is based on an analysis of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments of the New Version of the King James Bible (NKJV). This research was conducted by the biblical method—“proof by the Scriptures.”*

Keywords: *Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments of the New Version of the King James Bible (NKJV); history of the Church.*

Special Abbreviations

f., ff. — following verse, following verses.

Quotes

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version of the Bible (NKJV).

Introduction

The aim of the work is a detailed study of the verses of the Holy Scriptures (the Bible)—Matt. 15:21-28—the healing by Jesus Christ a Canaanite woman's daughter. A brief history of the descendants of Canaan is also given. The study is based on an analysis of the Sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments of the New Version of the King James Bible (Nelson's NKJV Study Bible, Second Edition). This study was conducted by the **biblical method** and is based on convincing verses of the Bible—“*proof by the Scriptures...*” (Acts 18:28f) [5].

This work is thematically related to the research of the authors: “*Nagrada za sluzhenie Gospodu*” [3] and “*Reward for serving the Lord*” [4].

God has a **reward for serving the Lord—salvation and eternal life**. This has been examined in detail and proved in the works [3-4].

For **obedience to the voice of the Lord** God has the **same reward—salvation and eternal life**. This has also been examined in detail and proved in the works [7-8].

For **obedience to the will of God** (humility), the **Lord also has a reward—healing and blessing**. This has been examined in detail and proved in the work [6].

It is true of the Old Testament and the New Testament.

This study differs from the article [6] in that it examines another manuscript—a New Version of the King James Bible (Nelson's NKJV Study Bible, Second Edition; briefly—NKJV). Also, the article and bibliography have been edited for the English-speaking audience only.

1 DESCENDANTS OF CANAAN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

First of all, let's define the word “*Canaan*”:

“**CANAAN, CANAANITES.** *These geographical and ethnic terms have a shifting reference, which doubtless arises out of the migrations of the tribes to which the term ‘Canaanites’ belongs. Thus in Josh. v. 1 the term seems to be applied to a population on the coast of the Mediterranean, and in Josh. xi. 3; Num. xiii. 29 (cf. also Gen. xiii. 12) not only to these, but to a people in the Jordan Valley. In Isa. xxiii. 11 it seems to be used of Phoenicia, and in Zeph. ii. 5 (where, however, the text is disputed) of Philistia. Most often it is applied comprehensively to the population of the entire west Jordan land and its pre-Israelitish inhabitants. This usage is characteristic of the writer called the Yahwist (J), see e.g. Gen. xii. 5, xxxiii. 18; Ex. xv. 15; Num. xxxiii. 51; Josh. xxii. 9; Judg. iii. 1; Ps. cvi. 38, and elsewhere. It was also, as Augustine tells us a usage of the Phoenicians to call their land ‘Canaan.’*” [1, 140].

Sacred Scripture (the Bible) tells us how the earth of Canaan was formed and who were its inhabitants.

1) Noah

From the Bible, we know about the patriarch and righteous man of the Old Testament—Noah.

He and his family were the only people God saved from the flood (**Gen. 6:5ff-9, 13ff-22; 7:1ff-23; 8:15ff-9:1**).

But after that, events occurred that had very sad consequences. The Bible tells us about it:

“Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And **Ham** was the father of **Canaan**. These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated. And Noah began to be a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. Then he drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father’s nakedness. So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said: ‘Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren.’” (Gen. 9:18-25).

From this text of the Scriptures we see that Noah cursed Canaan, the youngest of his son (v. 25). But his youngest son was Japheth. It would seem that there is a contradiction here. How to understand it correctly?

The fact is that in the days of the Old Testament, the people of Israel did not have grandchildren, as is customary in this world, but only children—sons and daughters, elders of the family (father or grandfather). For example, when **Jacob** saw the **children of Joseph** and he did not know them and never saw them, **he called them his sons**:

“Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, ‘Indeed your father is sick’; and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And Jacob was told, ‘Look, your son Joseph is coming to you’; and Israel strengthened himself and sat up on the bed. Then Jacob said to Joseph: God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.’ And now **your two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh**, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, **are mine**; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. Your off spring whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. ... 16 The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. ...” (Gen. 48:1-6ff, 16ff).

Conclusion. God, according to the Holy Scriptures (Bible), has no grandchildren and great-grandchildren, but only sons and daughters born of His word (Isa. 8:18; Matt. 8:11-12; John 1:12-13; 1 Pet. 1:23; Heb. 2:13).

It is also known that Ham had four sons:

“The sons of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and **Canaan**.” (Gen. 10:6).

We see that Canaan was Ham's youngest son, and therefore Noah's youngest son (Gen. 9:25). So Noah cursed Canaan, not Ham. Even in the Old Testament, when punishing, God's justice was manifested:

“The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.” (Ezek. 18:20).

Canaan, the younger son of Ham, had sons as well:

“Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and Heth; the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha.” (Gen. 10:15-19).

But Canaan's progeny became so corrupt that God decided to destroy these people:

“And the Lord said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave,’ ...” (Gen. 18:20ff).

The sin of Sodom and Gomorrah came to the Lord, and He overthrew them:

“Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens. So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground.” (Gen. 19:24-25).

Thus **Noah's prophecy** about his children, including the curse of Canaan, was already starting to be realized (Gen. 9:25-27).

These images are a learning experience for us (1 Cor. 10:11).

Historical facts about Noah are given by the church historian **Eusebius Pamphilus, Bishop of Caesarea** (263–339). In the book “Church History” Eusebius of Caesarea writes:

“That the Hebrew nation is not new, but is universally honored on account of its antiquity, is known to all. The books and writings of this people contain accounts of ancient men, rare indeed and few in number, but nevertheless distinguished for piety and righteousness and every other virtue. Of these, some excellent men lived before the flood, others of the sons and descendants of Noah lived after it, ...” [2, 87 (I, IV, 5)].

2) Abraham

All the lands occupied by the descendants of Canaan the Lord commanded the people of Israel. God called Abraham to fulfill this mission. When God commanded Patriarch Abraham (formerly Abram) to leave his land and go to the Promised Land (Canaan), **he obeyed the Lord**:

“Now the Lord had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.” (Gen. 12:1-4f).

Abraham was **obedient to the Lord** in all things, for he believed Him and the Lord that faith counted to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:5-6).

Abraham, when he was 100 years old, bore his only son—Isaac (Gen. 17:17). God tested his faith and obedience (Gen. 22:1ff-18).

The Lord, having tested Abraham, makes a covenant with him and gives him the land:

“On the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying: ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates—the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.’ ” (Gen. 15:18-21).

These peoples, who lived on this land and at that time had merged, were descended from Canaan. God himself will drive out these nations by the hand of God's people Israel:

“When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. ...” (Deut. 7:1-2).

The people of Israel did not always exactly do the will of God, so then the people of Canaan (for example, the inhabitants of Gibeon) did not disappear to the end (cf. Josh. ch. 9).

God left a few Canaanites to experience Israel's faith:

“Now these are the nations which the Lord left, that He might test Israel by them, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan (this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), namely, five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. And they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the Lord, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses. Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.” (Judg. 3:1-5).

Israel also did not expel the Jebusites from Jerusalem until the end:

“But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.” (Judg. 1:21).

Israel made the Canaanites tributary, but did not drive them out (Judg. 1:27ff). We see the consequences of this in the present day: war, murder, violence, unbelief. ...

Thus we see that through faith and obedience to the Lord's voice, Patriarch Abraham has given all nations God's great blessing.

Eusebius of Caesarea in the book “Church History” writes also historical information about Abraham:

“... **Abraham**, whom the Hebrews celebrate as their own **founder and forefather**.” [2, 87 (I, IV, 5)].

2 THE DESCENDANTS OF THE CANAANITES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Some of the inhabitants of the earth, who were remains of the descendants of Canaan, mixed with their surrounding peoples, lived in the New Testament. Of course, Canaan's curse worked on them. They were possessed by demons and suffered from serious illnesses. One example of this is a Canaanite woman's daughter:

“Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, ‘Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.’ But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, ‘Send her away, for she cries out after us.’ But He answered and said, ‘I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’ Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Lord, help me!’ But He answered and said, ‘It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.’ And she said, ‘Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.’ Then Jesus answered and said to her, ‘O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.’ And her daughter was healed from that very hour.” (Matt. 15:21-28).

The disciples of Jesus Christ were irritated by the woman's cry, and they asked Jesus to let her go. But the Lord had His own plan for this woman and a lesson for His disciples.

The answer of Jesus Christ, about comparing the unbelieving Canaanites with dogs, in our time would cause a strong reaction from the public. But this woman believed the Lord Jesus Christ and meekly humbled herself before the will of God. The words of the Lord about the great faith of this woman are shocking in their

unexpectedness. Only the Lord can heal and deliver from the curse. The woman believed in this and received what she asked of the Lord.

The Lord reminded the Jews that there are believers not only in Israel:

“*But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.’ So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.*” (Luke 4:25-30).

This woman, as we see from the Holy Scriptures (Bible), was from the vicinity of Sidon—she was a descendant of Canaan (Canaanite). She was one of those descendants who had a terrible curse. But she humbled herself before the Lord, before His will, and for this she received a blessing—the healing of her daughter.

God knew that Jesus Christ would humble Himself even to the death of the cross:

“*who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” (Phil. 2:6-11).

The Lord saw that this Canaanite woman came in humility and submission to God's will. She believed Jesus Christ and sought His mercy for her daughter, so the Lord blessed her with the healing of her daughter.

This is a lesson for us too. We also need to seek the face of the Lord, His will, His mercy all our days. Because only He knows our future and can help us live this earthly life for His glory.

3 CONCLUSION

In summing up the study, the following important conclusions can be drawn.

1) Disobedience to the will of God is punishable by damnation and death. This is illustrated by the descendants of Canaan, the youngest son of Noah,

2) Faith and humility before the Lord—submission to His will—bring healing and blessing.

An example of this is the healing by Jesus Christ a Canaanite woman's daughter.

Therefore the Lord calls everyone to repent, to accept the faith of Jesus Christ and to do the will of God—the Word of God.

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