

August 20, 2017

The Opposition Illustrated (9)

Matthew 15

The Question of Clean vs. Unclean (v. 1-20)

- The Pharisees accused Jesus and His disciples of breaking the tradition of the elders by not washing their hands when eating.
- Under the Mosaic covenant, a person had to be ritually clean in order to be fit for the presence of God.

Lev 10:10 You are to distinguish between the ...unclean and the clean...

- This requirement pointed to the time when Jesus would cleanse the people of God of all their defilement of their sin (**1 John 1:7**).
- However, over the years since the Babylonian captivity, over 600 regulations had been added to the original Law to explain and describe how to carry out these rituals. They added their unclean works to God's law.
- Jesus exposed their hypocrisy by asking them why they were breaking the 5th Commandment.
- Jesus explained that cleanliness was not a matter of the externals but a matter of the heart.

- The Pharisees emphasized the washing of the externals while Jesus emphasized the washing of the heart which He would accomplish at the cross to be applied by the Spirit (**Ez. 36:25**).

The Canaanite Woman (v. 21-28)

- After leaving the region of the Gentiles (of Tyre and Sidon), a Canaanite woman came to Him begging Him to deliver her daughter from demon oppression.
 - She calls upon Jesus for mercy (v. 22)
 - Jesus ignores her (v. 23a)
 - She turns to the disciples who ask Jesus to deal with her (v. 23b)
 - Jesus again refuses to help her, explaining that he was sent to the lost sheep of Israel (v. 24)
 - However, she persists in asking (v. 25)
 - Jesus again refuses to have mercy on her, telling her that to do so would be like giving the children's bread to the dogs (v. 26)
- In this exchange, Jesus draws her faith out of her.
- One of the major misconceptions of the Jews was that the Messiah was just for them. They missed or refused to believe that He had come for all of God's people who had been scattered throughout the nations.

The Feeding of the 4,000 Gentiles (v. 29-39)

- Again Matthew relies on the Moses motif as he records a similar event when Jesus feeds another crowd. But there are important differences that emphasize that Jesus is the Messiah to the Gentiles as well.
 - Seven loaves & two fish
 - Seven baskets leftover

- The feeding prefigured the feeding of the Gentiles with the food of the Gospel in keeping with God's original purpose in **Gen. 1:28**, and as promised to Abraham in **Gen. 17:4**, explained by Paul in **Rom. 4**.