

# Matthew 15:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

## Analysis

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**I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel** (οὐκ ἀπεστάλην εἰ μὴ εἰς τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ, *ouk apestalēn ei mē eis ta probata ta apolōlota oikou Israēl*)—Jesus defined the primary scope of his earthly ministry. The word *apestalēn* (I have been sent) indicates divine commission, specific and intentional. 'Lost sheep' (ἀπολωλότα, *apolōlota*) means destroyed, perished—Israel was spiritually lost despite religious privilege.

This statement wasn't ethnic exclusion but temporal priority in God's redemptive plan: 'to the Jew first, and also to the Greek' (Romans 1:16). Jesus came to fulfill God's covenant promises to Israel, but Israel's rejection would open salvation's door to all nations (Romans 11:11-12). The woman's persistent faith would prove that Gentiles could receive Israel's blessings through Christ.

## Historical Context

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During Jesus's earthly ministry (AD 27-30), he deliberately focused on Jewish people, fulfilling Old Testament prophecies about Messiah coming to his own people (John 1:11). The great Gentile mission came after Pentecost (Acts 1:8, 10:1-48). However, Jesus gave hints of coming Gentile inclusion (Matthew 8:11, John 10:16), and this Canaanite woman received one of these preview glimpses of the gospel's universal scope.

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does understanding God's historical redemptive plan ('to the Jew first') help you trust his timing in your own circumstances?
2. What does the phrase 'lost sheep' reveal about Israel's spiritual condition despite their religious advantages and covenant status?
3. How does this verse prepare for the Great Commission's call to 'make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19)?

## Interlinear Text

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ὁ	δὲ	ἀποκριθεὶς	εἶπεν	Οὐκ	ἀπεστάλην	εἰ	μὴ	εἰς
G3588	<b>But</b>	<b>he answered</b>	<b>and said</b>	<b>not</b>	<b>I am</b>	G1487	G3361	<b>unto</b>
	G1161	G611	G2036	G3756	G649			G1519
τὰ	πρόβατα	τὰ	ἀπολωλότα	οἴκου	Ἰσραὴλ			
G3588	<b>sheep</b>	G3588	<b>the lost</b>	<b>of the house</b>	<b>of Israel</b>			
	G4263		G622	G3624	G2474			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Romans 15:8** (Parallel theme): Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

**Acts 13:46** (Parallel theme): Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

**Isaiah 53:6** (Parallel theme): All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

**Ezekiel 34:23** (Parallel theme): And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

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