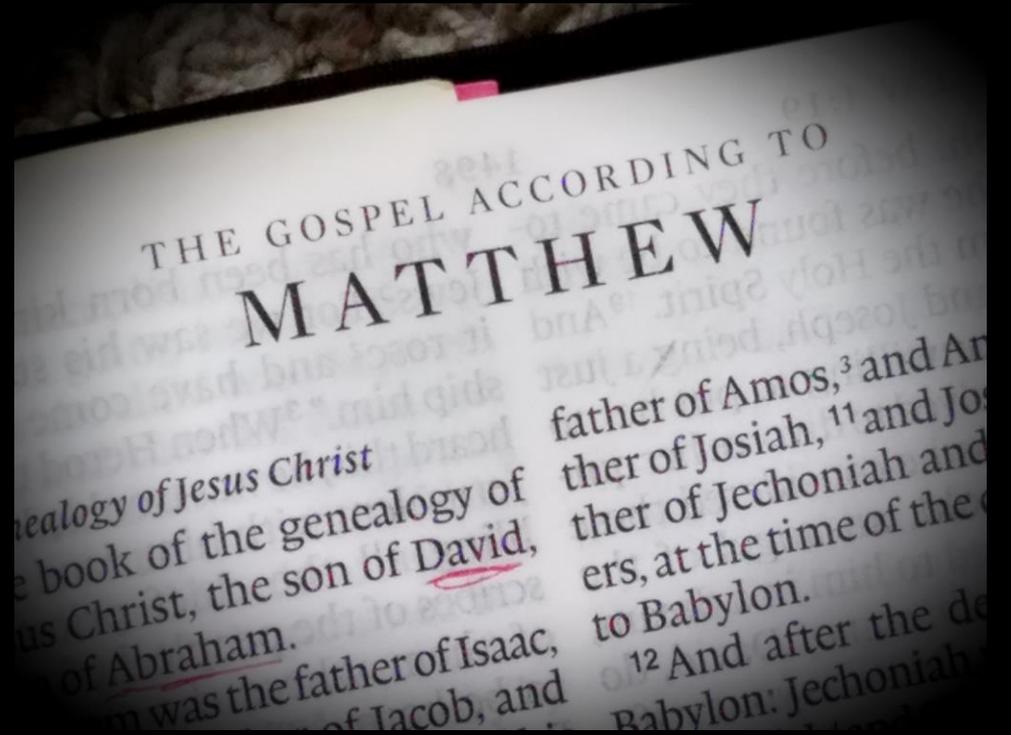


# Verse by Verse

## Matthew 15



# Matthew 15 Introduction

# Matthew 15 Introduction

- Deuteronomy 18:15-18 (ESV)

<sup>15</sup> “The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers—it is to him you shall listen ... <sup>18</sup> I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers. And I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. <sup>19</sup> And whoever will not listen to my words that he shall speak in my name, I myself will require it of him.

# Matthew 15 Introduction

- Many rabbis of Jesus's day expected a Messiah that would do similar things to what Moses did in fulfillment of this text.
- Matthew highlights the similarities between Jesus and Moses to show that Jesus is this prophet.
- He is a new and better Moses.

# Matthew 15 Introduction

## Jesus is like Moses

- In his infancy story, almost being killed by the king.
- In his teaching ministry – even going up on a mountain.
- In his fasting “40 days and 40 nights.”
- In his miracles.
- In providing for the needs of people – think especially of manna in the wilderness.

# Matthew 15 Introduction

- An interesting difference that Matthew will bring out today is that Jesus does these works **not only for Israel**.
- He will also do mighty works **for the Gentiles**.
- In doing so he will downplay the importance of Jewish identity in order to open the door to **a largely Gentile church**.

# Matthew 15    Key Verses

# Matthew 15 Key Verses

- Matthew 15:17-19 (ESV)

<sup>17</sup> Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? <sup>18</sup> But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. <sup>19</sup> For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. <sup>20</sup> These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone.”

# Matthew 15 Outline

1. Tradition 15:1-9
2. Defilement 15:10-20
3. Great Faith 15:21-28
4. Healing 15:29-31
5. Feeding 15:32-39

# 1. Tradition 15:1-9

# 1. Tradition 15:1-9

- 15:2 The controversy was not so much about hygiene as ritual uncleanness.
- These were not always connected.
- The tractate *Mishnah Yadayim* was later written based on the Pharisaic rules in question.

# 1. Tradition 15:1-9

- 15:2 The regulations are amazingly detailed.
- When are hands to be washed?
- How much water is used?
- From what kind of vessel can it be poured?
- How much of the hand is to be washed?
- You get the idea.

# 1. Tradition 15:1-9

- **15:2-3** Jesus and his questioners both admit that these rules are **not found in the Law** or any other part of Scripture.
- The religious leaders made up these rules – **the oral law** – as a way of interpreting obedience to the written Law.
- Eventually the oral law became the standard rather than the Scriptures and the actual commandments of God.
- Take for example the practice of **Corban** – dedicating one's property to God.

# 1. Tradition 15:1-9

- 15:5 From an inscription we know,  
*The Corban practice in view was that of pledging money or other material resources to the temple to be paid upon one's death. These funds could therefore not be transferred to anyone else but could still be used for one's own benefit while one was still alive.*

– Craig Blomberg, Denver Seminary



# 1. Tradition 15:1-9

- 15:4-6 This was a convenient way to not give anything as long as you lived – not even to a family member in need.
- Religion became a way to avoid reality.

# 1. Tradition 15:1-9

- 15:7-9 Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13.
- The people of Isaiah's day were religious, but not biblical.
- They practiced a religion that justified their godless lives.
- The people of Jesus's day were no different.
- How about us?

## 2. Defilement 15:10-20

## 2. Defilement 15:10-20

- The Jewish people of that time built their identity largely around their traditions connected with:
  1. Dietary laws
  2. Sabbath
  3. Circumcision

## 2. Defilement 15:10-20

- Food, Sabbath and Circumcision
- These were the more obvious day-to-day differences between themselves and the Gentiles around them.
- They are also things that do not require a change of heart.
- Jesus is preparing his disciples to go out into the world where a change of heart will be the main point.

## 2. Defilement 15:10-20

- Mark 7:18-23 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, <sup>19</sup> since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) <sup>20</sup> And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, <sup>22</sup> coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

## 2. Defilement 15:10-20

- 15:12-14 The Parable of the Weeds in Matthew 13 described seeds that were sown by the devil.
- Jesus is comparing these Pharisees with those weeds.

## 2. Defilement 15:10-20

- 15:15-20 On the other hand, if we ignore the dietary rules and work on the heart, real change will happen within us.
- 15:19 The sins Jesus lists in this verse are an accurate description of Western culture at this time.

## 2. Defilement 15:10-20

### Important Application Point

- Jesus downplayed mere ritual or ceremonial practices.
- He did not downplay sin in the least.
- Make it your goal to learn the difference because this is presently being muddied in the church.

## 2. Defilement 15:10-20

### Important Application Point

- The church in Corinth lived in a grossly immoral environment and that environment seeped into the church.
- The same is happening to us today.
- Take **verse 19** and think about it deeply.

## 2. Defilement 15:10-20

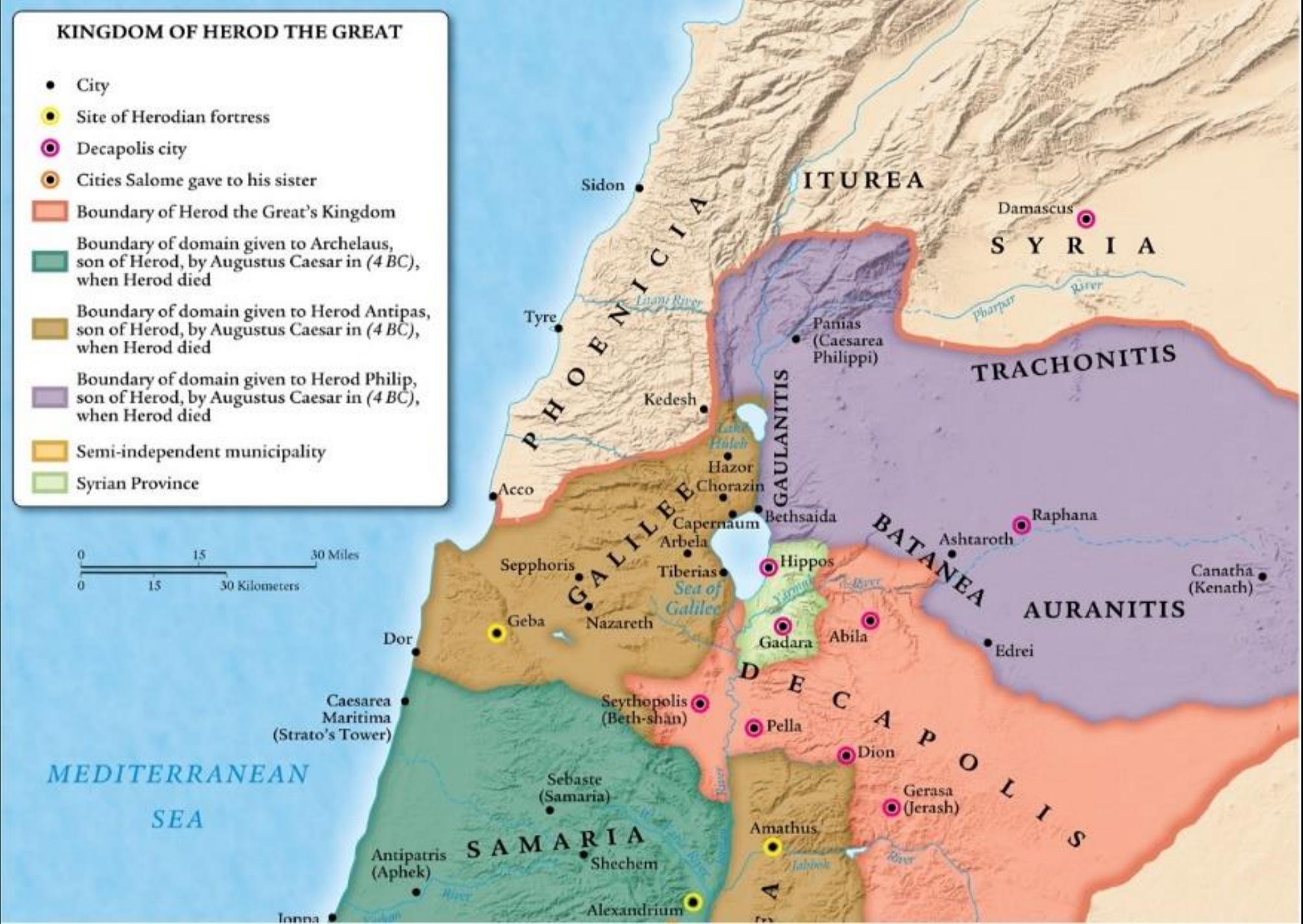
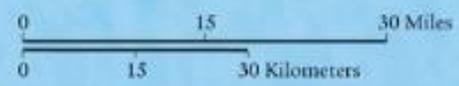
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### 3. Great Faith 15:21-28

# KINGDOM OF HEROD THE GREAT

- City
- Site of Herodian fortress
- ⊙ Decapolis city
- ⊙ Cities Salome gave to his sister
- ▭ Boundary of Herod the Great's Kingdom
- ▭ Boundary of domain given to Archelaus, son of Herod, by Augustus Caesar in (4 BC), when Herod died
- ▭ Boundary of domain given to Herod Antipas, son of Herod, by Augustus Caesar in (4 BC), when Herod died
- ▭ Boundary of domain given to Herod Philip, son of Herod, by Augustus Caesar in (4 BC), when Herod died
- ▭ Semi-independent municipality
- ▭ Syrian Province



### 3. Great Faith 15:21-28

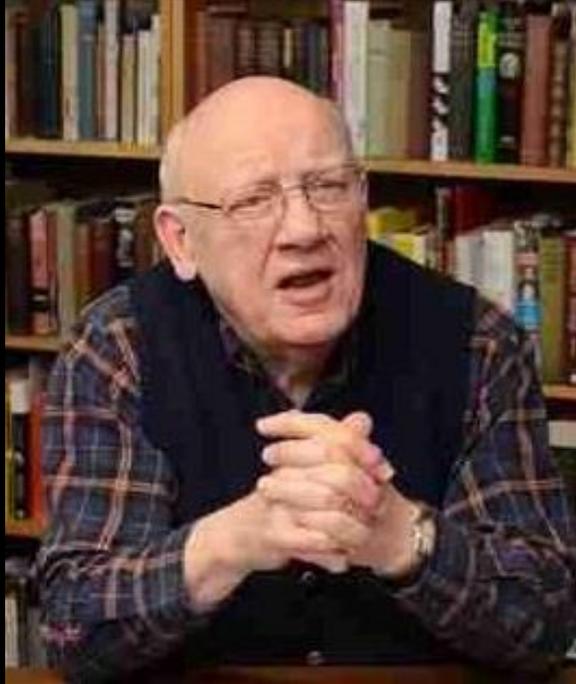
- Three things to notice about the woman.
  1. She is a **Canaanite**, not a Jew.
  2. She calls Jesus “**Son of David**,” a Jewish messianic term, as we saw in **Matthew 1:1**.
  3. She responds with **humble persistence** when Jesus does not do what she asks.

## 3. Great Faith 15:21-28

Consider this woman's faith.

- In a way, the woman had no business putting her faith in Jesus. Her people had their own gods.
- She is confident that Jesus is the Messiah and somehow knew that she should trust him to meet her need.
- As Jesus resists her she doesn't stop asking.

### 3. Great Faith 15:21-28



*This woman's faith was great because she persisted in asking and trusting when everything seemed against her. Certainly her race was against her: She was a Gentile ... It seemed that the disciples were against her, and Christ's words might have led her to believe that even He was against her. All of these obstacles only made her persist in asking.*

– Warren Wiersbe (1929 – 2019),  
Indiana Native

## 3. Great Faith 15:21-28

This is our lesson on faith.

- You may feel you have no business praying for anything.
- Believe that **Jesus is Lord** and that you should **trust him** to meet your need.
- When he does not answer quickly, **don't quit** asking.

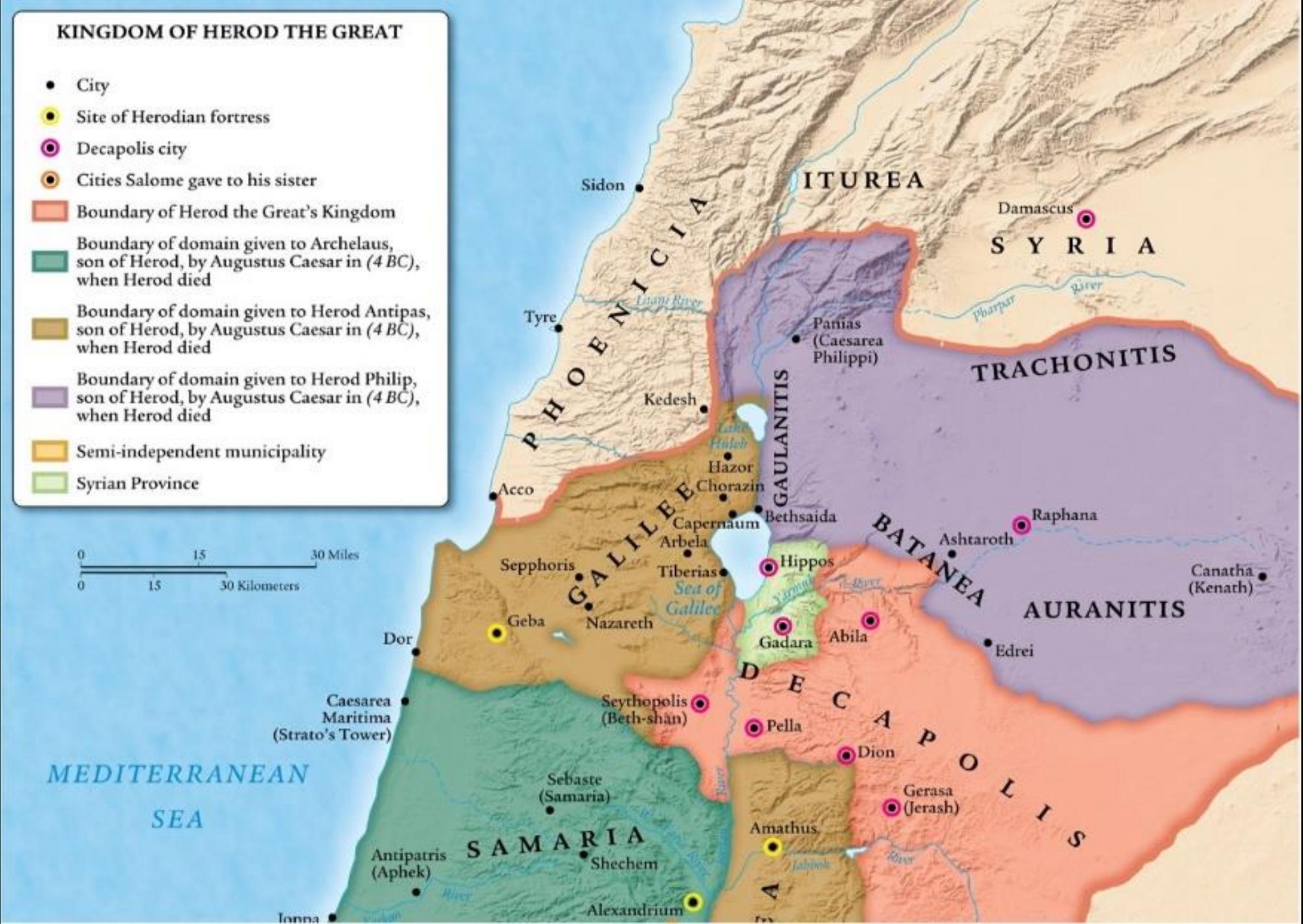
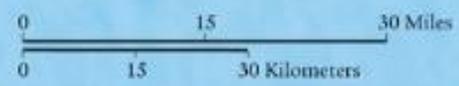
## 4. Healing 15:29-31

## 4. Healing 15:29-31

- Mark tells us in **Mark 7 – 8**, that Jesus now moves into the region known as the **Decapolis**, the “**Ten Cities**” in Greek.
- This was also Gentile territory.

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## 4. Healing 15:29-31

- Mark zeroes in on the healing of a man who is deaf with a speech impediment.
- That may be “the mute” in Matthew 15:30-31.
- 15:31 The people glorify “the God of Israel.”
- This is a subtle way of reminding us that these people were mainly Gentiles.

## 5. Feeding 15:32-39

## 5. Feeding 15:32-39

- We are still in Gentile territory and Matthew gives us more subtle hints to that.
  1. The word for “baskets” in 15:37 is different from the baskets in 14:20, which was a specifically Jewish basket.
  2. Afterward they went to Magadan by boat, meaning they crossed the lake to get back into Jewish territory.

## 5. Feeding 15:32-39

- Matthew has been presenting Jesus as a **new Moses**.
- His teaching, working of miracles, feeding the multitudes and more all point in that direction.
- **This chapter has shown us more.**

## 5. Feeding 15:32-39

- Jesus downplayed Jewish tradition.
- He provided for Gentile needs.
- Jesus opened the door to a largely Gentile church.
- The church came into being later, after the resurrection, but Jesus pointed forward to it during his ministry.

# Matthew 15    What We Just Read

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# Matthew 15    Key Points

- Do not let religious tradition override the word of God.
- Beware of any form of religion that somehow gives you permission to sin – and let the Bible define sin for you.
- When it feels like God is not answering your prayers, do not assume that you are not worthy or that he does not care.
- (You are not worthy, but so what? Neither is anyone else.)
- And he cares. Jesus proved it by meeting the needs of both Jewish and Gentile crowds during his ministry.

# Matthew 15    A Prayer

# Matthew 15    A Prayer

- Heavenly Father,
- Some of the most religious people of Jesus's day misunderstood both his heart and yours. Please help me to avoid making the same mistake.
- Help to put aside any religious traditions or views that stand in the way of your word. And help me to avoid any concept of faith that goes soft on my own sin. I want to live a truly holy life that consistently brings glory to you.

# Matthew 15    A Prayer

- I also ask that you would help my faith to be strong.
- I understand that sometimes having great faith means being persistent in prayer.
- When I feel like I am not the kind of person that should be praying, help me to remember that you want everyone to pray. When I feel like you are ignoring my prayers, help me to be persistent. And when I feel like you will never answer my prayers, help me to be persistent again.

# Matthew 15    A Prayer

- And finally, I thank you for your unending goodness and mercy toward me.
- In the name of Jesus Christ,
- Amen.

# Matthew 15    References