



## Daily Verse and Comment

### Matthew 15:24

(24) He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

*New International Version*

[Jesus](#) seems to encourage the woman's hopelessness by saying, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (see also [Matthew 10:5-6](#)). As a Gentile woman, she normally would not have had any right to receive help from and access to Jesus, since His responsibility at the time was to those of the circumcision, Israelites (see, for instance [Galatians 2:9](#); [Ephesians 2:11](#)).

A contradiction seems to lurk here, since He came as the Promised Seed in whom *all nations* would be blessed ([Psalm 72:11](#); [Luke 2:32](#); [Romans 15:9-12](#)). He had also declared that other sheep, not only Israelites, must be brought to Him ([John 10:16](#)). Although He came as Savior of [the world](#), there was purpose in restricting His ministry to Israel (specifically to the Jews). His first priority was to fulfill the Messianic, redemptive promises to them. He was reserving the good news of the salvation of the Gentiles until He had fulfilled His God-given responsibility. In following this plan of salvation, His initial work was specifically to Israelites.

Jesus' work thus began locally in preparation for it to spread to all nations. His followers would go into the entire world and preach [the gospel](#) (see [Mark 16:15](#); [Acts 1:8](#)), which His death and resurrection made possible. Therefore, Jesus' personal, physical ministry was limited to Judea and Galilee where He performed the majority of His miracles and delivered His teachings. The scattered instances of Gentiles receiving His [goodness](#) are forerunners of the Spirit being poured out on Israelite and Gentile alike ([Acts 10:1-31](#); [Romans 11:11](#)).

— Martin G. Collins

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