

Dear Christopher,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You wanted to know who the swine were in Matthew 7:6.

“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”

Jews often referred to the Gentiles (all non-Jews) as “dogs” because they were thought of as unclean, as dogs were, roaming the streets and indiscriminating eating whatever was available. (See Matthew 15:21-28 where the Canaanite woman of great faith asks Jesus to heal her daughter.) Jesus tells her, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs.” (Matthew 15:26) Jesus means that it was not yet the time to perform miracles to any other people except his own, the Jews. The woman understood the term “dogs” and answered Jesus saying, “Yes, Lord, but even dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” (Matthew 15:27)

Swine were also considered an unclean animal. Under the Mosaic Law, Jews were forbidden to eat them. In Matthew 7:6 Jesus is telling his followers in his Sermon on the Mount not to waste their time preaching about spiritual matters such as the beautiful kingdom message (pearls) to swine (those who have no interest in God’s precious truth, but think only of the sensual things of this life). Because such people, who our Lord refers to as “swine”, would see no value in God’s “pearls”, they figuratively trample them under their feet and then turn on the messenger and tear him to pieces, either literally or figuratively by angry words or actions.

Who were the swine? They were people who were not interested in spiritual truths, but interested only in fleshly pursuits.

We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio