

## Introduction

How many of you have seen a map with an inset map showing more detail about a certain part of the map? Many times, the state maps will have insets with maps of the larger cities. Here is a map of Israel with an inset of the area around the Sea of Galilee. The scene today takes place on the southern end of the Sea of Galilee in an area called Decapolis.

I bring up the example of a map with an inset because our account today is very similar to a map with an inset map. The larger map of this scene is given in Matthew 23:29-31. Matthew records that “Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee and that large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them. So, the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.”

(Matt 15:29-31) “Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there. {30} And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them *those who were* lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them. {31} So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.”

But the scene in our text today is not given in the broad overview that Matthew gives. Our account is an inset map that zooms in on one particular man who was healed. John wrote that if all the details were written about all the things that Jesus did, the world could not contain the books. We are glad that we are given details of some of those things, and today is one of those accounts.

(John 21:25) “And there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books that would be written.”

This particular man was deaf and dumb, and Jesus healed him. Mark does not talk about all the other people that got healed; he focuses our text on this one man who was healed by Jesus. Mark gives lots of details. He tells us where this happened. He tells us who Jesus healed. He tells us how Jesus ministered to him and healed him. He tells us why Jesus healed him. Finally, Mark gives us the result of the healing. So, this morning, we are going to look at all these details about the healing of the deaf and dumb man. Let’s read our passage.

## The Healing of the Deaf and Dumb Man

1. Where (does the healing take place) (vs 31)
2. Who (does Jesus heal) (vs 32)
3. How (does Jesus heal him) (vs 33-35)
4. Why (does Jesus heal him) (vs 31-35, Is 35:1-7)
5. What was the result of the healing (vs 37, Matt 25:31)

(Mark 7:31-37) “Again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis. {32} They brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they implored Him to lay His hand on him. {33} Jesus took

him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue *with the saliva*; {34} and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!" {35} And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he *began* speaking plainly. {36} And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it. {37} They were utterly astonished, saying, "He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

### 1. Where (does the healing take place) (vs 31)

Jesus left the region of Tyre and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis. Last week we looked at the encounter that Jesus had in the region of Tyre with the Syrophenician woman who had a daughter with a demon. Sidon is about twenty miles north of Tyre, so it is not on the way to the area south of the Sea of Galilee called Decapolis. We don't know why Jesus went north, but we know He did not take a straight path to Decapolis.

(Mark 7:31) "Again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis."

Some scholars point out that Jesus fed the five thousand, which was realistically more like twenty-five thousand, and He had them sit on the green grass. This indicates it was early spring. When I lived in the Middle East, we had flowers and green plants for a very brief time in the spring time. Then, it would turn very hot and dry and it would become desolate and brown. The scene that immediately takes place after this is the feeding of four thousand, not counting the women and children. Jesus has them sit on the ground. Scholars point out that the five thousand was in the spring and this scene is several months later. They say it has taken Jesus and His disciples a while to go north, then across a mountain range, across the Leontes River, and then down alongside the Sea of Galilee to the area called Decapolis.

We do not know the exact route that Jesus took. There are some scholars that point to a possible route that He took, and they say that it was because He was retracing the steps of Tiglath-Pileser III in his conquest of the region seven centuries earlier. Tiglath-Pileser was an Assyrian king who brought unimaginable suffering, death, and destruction to Phoenicia and Israel. It was said that "no people group was crueller to their enemies than were the Assyrians." They believe that Jesus retraced the path that Tiglath-Pileser traveled, and brought life and healing to both Jews and Gentiles. Jesus was bringing restoration, life, and hope to an area that had been devastated centuries earlier.<sup>1</sup> This map shows that possible route.

Jesus has been ministering primarily to Jews. He said He had come to the children of Israel. However, this trip from Tyre to Sidon and then down to Decapolis was primarily a Gentile area. We saw last week that Jesus ministered to the Gentile woman. Jesus was testing her faith. He was not the least bit reluctant of ministering to a Gentile. The woman that He ministered to by the well was a Samaritan, and the Jews had no dealings with them, but Jesus did. In Luke 4, when Jesus began His public ministry and read from Isaiah in the synagogue. He told them that the Scripture had been fulfilled in their hearing. Then, He told them that no prophet is welcome in his hometown. He gave them the account about Elijah being sent to Zarephath (Sarepta in the

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mysteriesofthemessiah.net/2016/01/10-01-23-tyre-and-sidon-canaanite-mother-pleads-with-jesus/>

KJV), in the land of Sidon, to a widow (1 Kings 17:8-16). Zarephath is a town in between Tyre and Sidon. Both Elijah and Jesus visited this town. This woman was a Gentile, and then Jesus brought up the account of Naaman the Syrian, another Gentile, who was healed of his leprosy. When Jesus brought up these accounts, it infuriated the Jewish religious leaders so much that they led Him to the brow of the hill on their city and tried to throw Him down the cliff. Jesus passed through their midst and went on His way. God's plan was inclusive of all nations; it was never intended to be exclusive of everyone but the Jews. Jesus came to Tyre, Sidon, Zarephath, and Syria, the very places that He quoted in Luke 4 when He began His ministry.

(Luke 4:24-30) "And He said, "Truly I say to you, no prophet is welcome in his hometown. {25} But I say to you in truth, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months, when a great famine came over all the land; {26} and yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to Zarephath, *in the land of Sidon*, to a woman who was a widow. {27} And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." {28} And all *the people* in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; {29} and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. {30} But passing through their midst, He went His way."

In our text today, He was ministering to thousands of Gentiles. At the end of Matthew's account, after so many people had been healed, "they glorified the God of Israel." They worshiped other gods, not the God of Israel.

(Matt 15:31) "So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel."

## 2. **Who (does Jesus heal)** (vs 32)

The second question is who did Jesus heal. Our text says that "they" brought to Jesus one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty. The KJV says that the man was deaf and had an impediment in his speech. Most deaf people cannot speak intelligibly, if at all. Speech and hearing go hand in hand. Because he could speak some, even though with difficulty, he probably had his hearing for a while but lost it at a young age. People brought him to Jesus because he would have no way of knowing that Jesus was in the area.

(Mark 7:32) "They brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they implored Him to lay His hand on him."

We don't see who "they" are in our text until we get to Mark 8, where we find that this was a crowd of people. After a few days without food, Jesus feeds the crowd, and there were 4,000 men, not including women or children. There were probably 20,000 to 25,000 people there in the crowd. The "they" is not all the people, but some people in the crowd. They were probably his family or relatives.

In those days, people who were deaf and dumb were considered outcasts. In fact, historical records show that some deaf and dumb people were put to death. Jesus had a record of ministering to the outcasts. He healed the lepers. He healed the woman who had been

hemorrhaging. He ate with prostitutes and tax collectors. Jesus reached out to many people that were not socially accepted, and this deaf and dumb man was no exception.

Whoever the “they” is in our text, Jesus was their hope for their loved one. They hoped that if they brought him to Jesus that He would heal him. There was no medical help to restore hearing. There was no other hope. In many ways the plight of this deaf and dumb man is similar to all of our plight. We have a sin problem, not a hearing problem. There is no one else or no other way to deal with our sin problem besides Jesus. We cannot enter into the kingdom of God with sin. Jesus is our only hope. He died for our sins and took our punishment so that we could be made righteous. He healed us of our sins. We need to be the friends that bring our loved ones to Jesus.

### 3. **How (does Jesus heal him)** (vs 33-35)

The third question is how does Jesus heal him. The crowd implored Jesus to lay His hand on him. They had obviously seen Jesus healing many other people and one of the things that Jesus did was to lay His hands on them when He healed them. We saw last week that Jesus did not lay hands on the Syrophenician woman, He just told her that the demon had left. Jesus did not have to lay hands on anyone. He is all powerful, and could heal people without laying hands on him. There is a transfer of power often done through the laying on of hands, but Jesus did not use that method with the deaf and dumb man.

The first thing that Jesus did is to take him aside from the crowd. Jesus frequently did this. When Jesus brought Jairus’ daughter back to life, He put everyone out of the room but the child’s mother and father and His disciples (Mark 5:40). It may have been for privacy. It may have been to show the deaf and dumb man respect and honor. He got alone time with the Messiah. While no one else would associate with an outcast, Jesus took him aside and personally ministered to him. There are lots of people that need a personal touch. They don’t need a crowd; they need a friend. They need someone like you, me, or Jesus to personally reach out to them. We cannot say enough about personal touch. Statistically, it is not programs or crusades that bring people to Christ; it is people sharing the gospel with their friends. It is personal touch that wins people to Christ.

(Mark 7:33-35) “Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue *with the saliva*; {34} and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!" {35} And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he *began* speaking plainly."

The second thing that Jesus did was put His fingers into his ears. I asked the question, why did Jesus put his finger into his ear. I read a lot of commentaries and there were some very sophisticated answers that I did not identify with. Then, I read something that John MacArthur wrote and it made a lot of sense. I don’t know why I did not see it myself; it was very obvious. Jesus could not tell the man what He was going to do. The man could not hear Jesus and sign language was not yet in existence. Jesus put His fingers into the man’s ears to show him what He was going to do. He was using His own non-verbal language to let him know that He was going to heal his ability to hear.

At our dinner table, the children very often converse in sign language. They say something to me in sign language and ask me what I think they are saying. I try to make them laugh by saying

something off the wall about their hand motions. Joanna and the children do a pretty good job communicating with their sign language. Well, they did not have sign language, but when Jesus put His fingers in the man's ears, I think the man fully understood what Jesus was getting ready to do.

Then, Jesus spit and touched the man's tongue with the saliva. He was telling the man that He was going to heal his tongue and remove the impediment. We don't know what the impediment was. Perhaps the man's tongue was always dry and did not work properly. I believe that Jesus communicated clearly with the deaf and dumb man that He was going to heal his ability to hear and to speak.

Jesus was not done with the sign language. Next, He looked up to heaven. By looking up to heaven, the deaf and dumb man would clearly understand that God was going to heal the man. This man was going to know very clearly that Jesus was sent by God and doing the work of God. He was going to know all of this by this one motion of looking up to the heavens.

Finally, Jesus sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha", which means, "Be Opened!" Immediately the man's ears were opened and the impediment of his tongue was removed. Those two miracles were not the only miracles. If you healed a man's ability to hear, he would then have to learn all the different sounds, words, meanings, etc. I can go to a foreign country and clearly hear the people speaking, but I will have no understanding of what they are saying because I have not learned their language. This man has not been able to hear, and yet he was immediately able to speak clearly. There was no speech therapist. There was a healing of the ears, tongue, and an immediate miracle of understanding and conversing in their language.

#### **4. Why (does Jesus heal him) (vs 31-35, Is 35:1-7)**

The fourth question is why did Jesus heal him? There were many people healed that same day according to Matthew's account. But, why did Jesus heal this particular man. In verse 37, the crowd was utterly astonished. They declared, "He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak." This healing was considered most spectacular. This was clear evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. This miracle attested to the deity of Christ.

(Mark 7:37) "They were utterly astonished, saying, "He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

In Genesis, God spoke and there was light. God spoke and separated the heavens from the earth. God spoke and made the vegetation. And we read that "God saw that it was good." (Gen 1:12) Then God spoke and made the sun and the moon to govern the day and night. And "God saw that it was good." (Gen 1:18) Then God made the living creatures of the seas, and the birds. Then God spoke and said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind...and God saw that it was good." (Gen 1:24-25) God spoke the world into existence. And, everything that He created was good. God did all things well. The Gentiles saw that everything that Jesus did was good. He did all things well. Jesus' ministry to the deaf and dumb was a picture of the Creator of the heavens and earth continuing to work in peoples' lives.

In Matthew's account, it says that they saw the lame walking and the blind seeing, and they glorified the God of Israel. Why did Jesus heal this man? He healed him to glorify His Father.

Everything that Jesus did brought glory and honor to the Father. He was a perfect role model for us. Everything that we do should glorify God.

(Matt 15:31) “So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.”

In Jesus’ priestly prayer in John 17, He said, “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.” Everything that Jesus did on earth was to glorify God, the Father. Jesus healed this deaf and dumb man to glorify His father.

(John 17:4) “I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.”

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:31, “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Everything that you and I do needs to be for the glory of God. Our work needs to glorify God. Our relationship with our wife needs to glorify God. Our relationship with our children needs to glorify God. Our relationships with our neighbors need to glorify God. Our food, drink, work, play and entire life needs to glorify God. Whatever we do, we are to do to the glory of God.

(1 Cor 10:31) “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

In 1 Peter 4, Peter gives a similar teaching to us. He mentions that whoever speaks or serves is to do it so that God is glorified through Jesus Christ. Everything we do in life should bring glory and honor to God. Jesus healed this man and it brought glory to God.

(1 Pet 4:11) “Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

There was a second reason that Jesus healed this man. In Isaiah 35:1-7, we have a prophecy that was fulfilled in our passage today. It says the Arabah will rejoice. Arabah means desert, and the Arabah is the desert plain that runs south from the Sea of Galilee. Where is Jesus ministering? He is in the Arabah. It says that this area will see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. The people in this area have just seen the glory and majesty of God.

(Is 35:1-7) “The wilderness and the desert will be glad, And the Arabah will rejoice and blossom; Like the crocus {2} It will blossom profusely And rejoice with rejoicing and shout of joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, The majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of the LORD, The majesty of our God. {3} Encourage the exhausted, and strengthen the feeble. {4} Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come *with* vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you." {5} Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. {6} Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness and streams in the Arabah. {7} The scorched land will become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; In the haunt of jackals, its resting place, Grass *becomes* reeds and rushes.”

It says that the glory of Lebanon will be given to it. Tyre and Sidon are part of Lebanon. In verse five it says the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. The lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness and streams in the Arabah. We saw in Matthew's account that the lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others were healed. We saw in our account in Mark that a deaf and dumb man was healed. Isaiah's prophecy has just been fulfilled. Jesus was carrying out God's plan that had been prophesied hundreds of years before this account took place.

(Matt 15:30-31) "And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them. {31} So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel."

#### 5. What was the result of the healing (vs 37, Matt 25:31)

The fifth question is what was the result of the healing. We saw that Jesus healed the man to bring glory and honor to God. The result of the healing was that God was glorified. In that sense, the motivation (why) and the result (what) are the same. Jesus healed the man so that God was glorified, and the result was that people glorified God. It is really nice when things work out exactly like you plan. Jesus' plans always worked out that way. Sometimes I plan on something and it doesn't work out like I planned.

(Mark 7:37) "They were utterly astonished, saying, "He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

I want to talk about another plan. In Mark 5, Jesus was in this same area. He ministered to the demoniac, a man that I nicknamed, Luther. In Galatians 6:1, it says that it was for freedom that Christ has set us free. The Greek word for freedom is *eleutheria*, and I named him Luther because Jesus had just set him free. Luther asked Jesus if he could accompany him, but Jesus did not allow him. He told Luther to "go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you." Luther did exactly that. He went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him. When Jesus was there, they implored Him to leave their region (Mark 5:17). But, Luther went about this whole region of Decapolis proclaiming Christ. Jesus has just returned to Decapolis, and there are thousands of people who have come and brought people to be healed. Luther has done an outstanding job of preparing the fields for harvest. He has been plowing and sowing seeds, and Jesus has come to harvest the fruit. God had a plan and we see the fulfillment of that plan today.

(Mark 5:19-20) "And He did not let him, but He said to him, "Go home to your people and report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and *how* He had mercy on you." {20} And he went away and began to proclaim in Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed."

As a result of the healing of the deaf and dumb man, Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone. I have often said that when Jesus does something miraculous like this, where everyone is amazed, you cannot keep silent about it. Jesus tells the church to go preach the gospel and most people don't. I think the real problem is that people are not experiencing God in their lives. If they were, they could not keep from sharing it. Jesus healed this man who could not speak and then told him

not to say anything to anyone about it. That is humorous to me because there is no way that this formerly deaf and dumb man can be silent. His very life will testify of what happened. If he goes to the market place to buy some food, and he asks the storekeeper about something, the storekeeper will recognize that this man had been the one who was deaf and dumb. His life will scream out to everyone what God has done for him. He can't keep it a secret.

(Mark 7:36) "And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it."

In Mark 1, Jesus healed a leper and told him not to say anything to anyone, but to go show himself to the priest and to give his offering for his cleansing. But, the healed man went out and proclaimed it to everyone. His life had been touched by God and he would never be the same. This outcast was no longer an outcast. This outcast had been personally touched by God and there was no way to keep silent. In the same way, the deaf and dumb man had been touched and could not keep silent about it. The key to getting the word spread is to have people experience more of God in their lives. The man testified and the crowd testified. They had all seen people touched by God.

(Mark 1:44-45) "and He said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." {45} But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere."

### **Conclusion and Applications**

There are lots of possible take-aways from our passage today. We saw today that Jesus' ministry to the Gentiles caused them to give glory to God. We are exhorted to do everything for the glory of God. Whatever we do, whether eating, drinking, playing or working, we need to do it for the glory of God.

The main take-away that I have for us today is about personally reaching out to others. Jesus went out of His way to reach out to the Gentiles with the gospel message. Jesus reached out to this deaf and dumb man and took him aside, away from the crowd. People around us want a personal touch from God. You and I are God's representatives here on earth. We are His ambassadors. We have been given the ministry of reconciliation. God wants us to personally touch the people that He brings into our lives. He wants us to find ways to communicate His love to them. Jesus put His fingers in the man's ears, touched His tongue, looked up into the heavens, and then spoke healing to the man. God wants you and I to find ways to share the love of God with people, and to communicate that to them. This man's only hope was Jesus. That is the only hope for anyone. We may be able to hear or to speak, but spiritually, we are all sick with a disease called sin. Jesus is the only solution to our sickness. You and I have the good news. We have the privilege of going about and declaring what God has done in our lives and what He wants to do in their lives. There are many applications, but I want to challenge our body with reaching out to the people that are deaf and dumb in our lives. Who are those around us that need a personal touch? Who are those that need to be brought to Jesus? Are we going to be the friends and family of the deaf and dumb man that brought him to Jesus? Are we going to be the ones that take individuals aside and personally minister to them? That is the example that Jesus gave us today.

Lessons from “They”	Lessons from “Jesus”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They brought this man to Jesus. They cared enough to do this. We need to care enough about those without hope and bring them to Jesus.</li> <li>• They implored Jesus to heal him. We can pray for others.</li> <li>• They went and testified about what Jesus had done. We need to testify and proclaim.</li> <li>• They glorified God. We need to glorify God.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jesus personally ministered to the man. This is not crowd ministry, but one-on-one. This is where most people get saved. We need to get personally involved.</li> <li>• Jesus communicated effectively to the man. We need to communicate in a way that people that are deaf and dumb to “christianeeze” can understand.</li> </ul>

**Introduction** (Matt 15:29-31, 7:31-37)

1. **Where (does the healing take place)** (Mark 7:31, 1 Kings 17:8-16, Luke 4:24-30, Matt 15:31)
2. **Who (does Jesus heal)** (Mark 7:32)
3. **How (does Jesus heal him)** (Mark 7:33-35)
4. **Why (does Jesus heal him)** (Mark 7:31-35, Is 35:1-7, Gen 1:12, 1:18, 1:24-25, Matt 15:31, John 17:4, 1 Cor 10:31, 1 Pet 4:11, Is 35:1-7, Matt 15:30-31)
5. **What was the result of the healing** (Mark 7:37, Matt 25:31, Gal 6:1, Mark 5:19-20, 7:36, 1:44-45)

**Conclusion and Applications**