

A Study of Mark – Lesson 21

Mark 7:31-37 Working with the Mute and Deaf Man

7³¹ Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre / and went through Sidon, / down to the Sea of Galilee / and into the region of the Decapolis. /³² There / some people brought to him a man / who was deaf and could hardly talk, / and they begged Jesus / to place his hand on him.



³³ After he took him aside, / away from the crowd, / Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. / Then he spit / and touched the man's tongue. /³⁴ He looked up to heaven / and with a deep sigh / said to him, / "*Ephphatha!*" / which means / "Be opened!"). /³⁵ At this, / the man's ears were opened, / his tongue was loosened / and he began to speak plainly. /

³⁶ Jesus commanded them / not to tell anyone. / But the more he did so, / the more they kept talking about it. /³⁷ People were overwhelmed with amazement. / "He has done everything well," / they said. / "He even makes the deaf hear / and the mute speak."

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Vocabulary

1. **Deaf:** People who cannot hear
2. **Mute:** Those who cannot speak. Someone with a speech impediment.
3. **Spit or spittle:** Saliva that comes from the mouth.

Questions

4. Why is Jesus traveling with the disciples in areas away from the Pharisees and teachers of the law?
5. Look at the cities on a map. How long do you think that might take a group to travel?
6. How do you think Jesus and the disciples traveled?
7. Why would Jesus remove the deaf-mute from the crowd?
8. Why do you think Jesus told followers not to tell about the healing?

Notes

1. The Decapolis actually means ten cities. You can count the cities on the map. These were Greek/Roman areas and they formed a league, ruled by the Roman Governor in Syria. Here Jesus was fairly safe from the religious “police” or Pharisees.

2. William Barclay, in his Daily Study Bible Series *The Gospel of Mark*, states that Jesus was very considerate to the feelings of the deaf man. He took him aside so he would not be a spectacle.
3. As Jesus touched and motioned to the man, he mimed what he was going to do to heal the man. He made him understand his efforts.
4. In olden days, people believed that spit or spittle had curative properties, and was used in healing efforts. Old Roman histories, by Suetonius, tell the story of the Emperor Vespasian who was healed by the use of spittle.

