

## Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

### J. Jesus Withdraws to the Gentile Regions Surrounding Galilee

The DAILY JESUS NEWS #122

#### 2. Miracle #22: Jesus Heals a Deaf Man, and Many Others MK 7.31-37; MT 15.29B-31

31 <sup>MT</sup>Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went up through Sidon, then down to the Sea of Galilee and into the middle of the region of the Decapolis.

<sup>MT</sup>He went up on a mountainside and sat down. Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. (MT 15.29B-31)

32 <sup>MT</sup>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 by himself, 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!"* (a command that meant: *"Be opened!"*).

35 At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was set free, and he began to speak normally.

36 Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept on talking about it. 37 People were totally overwhelmed--in a state of amazement. "He has made everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

<sup>MT</sup>And they gave glory to the God of Israel.

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, **the words of Jesus are italicized in red**. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

	CONTEXT DIGEST
Location	The Decapolis area, Southwest of the Sea of Galilee
Timeline	May (Month 27)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry
	J. Jesus Withdraws to the Gentile Regions Surrounding Galilee
Title	2. Miracle #22: Jesus Heals a Deaf Man, and Many Others

#### COMMENT:

After healing the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter in Tyre, Jesus continued his sojourn in Gentile regions by traveling up the Phoenician seacoast another 25 miles (40 kilometers) to the North, to the port city of Sidon. The gospels do not tell us anything about what happened there. Tyre and Sidon are located in modern Lebanon.

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Jesus next traveled Southeast, to the land on the east side the Jordan river, below the Sea of Galilee. This region was known as the "Decapolis," or the "Ten Cities." It was a substantial journey of roughly 80 miles (130 kilometers) from Sidon to Decapolis. Jesus no doubt spent many hours teaching his disciples on the long trek on foot from Capernaum to Tyre, then up to Sidon, and finally back down to the Decapolis.

It was probably mid to late May at this point, and temperatures reached 90-100 F (32-38 C) in that desert region. Jesus therefore went up to a cooler mountain location, and another great multitude of people flocked to him there.

Jesus had briefly visited Gerasa in Decapolis about 8 months earlier on his second tour of Galilee, when he cast out the "Legion" of demons. After disappearing to the North, his arrival back in the region created a sensation, and gave an opportunity for healthy people to bring their sick, handicapped, or demonized loved ones to Jesus for ministry.

The crowd was in a constant state of amazement as they saw many blind people restored to sight, the lame walking, the dumb speaking, and the demonized set free. Because the Decapolis was Gentile territory, it is highly significant that "they gave glory to the God of Israel," because YHWH was not one of their pagan gods. In the context, Matthew made it clear by this reference that in praising Jesus, they were actually praising "the God of Israel." Matthew was calling attention to the Deity of Jesus.

Matthew chose to emphasize the healing of many people in his account. Mark, on the other hand, chose to focus in on the healing of one individual, as a representative example of the way Jesus healed the many.

Several things stand out in Mark's account. Note the way Jesus pulled the man aside and ministered to him privately, away from the gawking eyes of the crowd. Jesus felt compassion for the man's pride and need for privacy. He loved him as an individual. Jesus also made the point of touching the man's ears, and tongue. This also showed great compassion. Finally, Jesus healed him by speaking a command. He spoke the man into speech, just as he spoke the universe into being.

Along with giving glory to the God of Israel, the crowd kept on repeating another aspect of praise for Jesus. *"He has made everything well."* Another common translation of this phrase is: *"He does all things well."* The full meaning of this statement is hard to capture in one English sentence. The people used the Greek perfect tense (the Decapolis was a Greek speaking region) to describe *"doing well,"* or *"making well."* That meant that Jesus not only made everyone totally whole in his healing ministry, he did it in such a way that they were made permanently well.

Jesus' healings were not temporary phenomena. People entered into a state of wholeness in which they remained. It is one thing to do something well in the moment. It is another and much greater thing to do something so well that it always remains perfect. The permanent physical wholeness that Jesus gave to bodies was a picture of the permanent quality of eternal life that he gives to all who believe in him.

#### **APPLICATION:**

Jesus went aside, one on one, to minister to the man who was enable to speak. In the same way, he ministers and communes with each of us as individuals. Because he loves everyone, he loves us individually, and relates to each of us in a personal way, one on one. How marvelous!

We all need to take time out to be with Jesus in private , one on One. We need to do this every day. Private worship, prayer, and Bible reading...alone in the presence of the Trinity...is our sacred, high privilege.

*What is your plan for spending time alone with God every day? How are you doing with this?*

*What can you do to improve your time alone with Him?*