

Exegetical Notes, Mark 7:31-37

“Ephphatha!”

Prepared by Charles H. Jensen, Cornerstone Fellowship
101 Kylies Road, Coatesville, PA 19320
610-384-1375
charleshjensen@aol.com

Mark 7:31-37

Verse 31

Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.

- Jesus is on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. He is clearly in non-Jewish territory.

Verse 32

There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man.

- A man was brought to Jesus who could not hear or speak well. The exact cause of his problem is unknown.
- The people who brought this man to Jesus wanted Jesus to touch the man so that he could be cured.

Verse 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.

- Jesus took the man away from the crowd. There is no reason from him to do so except the odd nature of the cure.
- Jesus' method of healing this man is odd. He sticks his fingers in the man's ears. He spits on his hands and touches the man's tongue with his fingers. There is no explanation for the procedure. Is it because Jesus is not among Jews that he does this exceptional thing? Is it for the sake of those who brought the man to Jesus? Is it for the man's sake? Answers to these questions are, at best, guesses. We do not know why Jesus used this strange method to heal this man.

Verse 34-35

***He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, “Ephphatha!” (which means, “Be opened!)* At this, the man’s ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.**

- The word, “Ephphatha” is an Aramaic word. Aramaic was the common language of the area. Mark translates the word so that anyone unfamiliar with the dialect will understand what Jesus said. The word means, “be opened!” It is spoken as a command. Jesus commands the man’s ears to open.
- It is interesting to note that the healing does not happen when Jesus touches the man. The healing happens with the word of the Son of God. It happens when Jesus speaks. The man is instantly and completely healed at the command of Jesus.
- The word Jesus used suggests more than just a physical healing. It suggests that the man could not be healed until he was open to the blessing of God.

Verse 36

Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it.

- Was Jesus using reverse psychology? Did he tell them not to tell because he understood human nature so well? Did he know that if he said, “don’t” they would?

Verse 37

People were overwhelmed with amazement. “He has done everything well,” they said. “He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.

- See Isaiah 35:5-6. These are the very things the Scripture says the Messiah will do. How interesting it is that those learned in such things missed the point but that those unlearned in them saw and were amazed.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Ephphatha!* They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen*. They are used here by permission.)