**Healing of deafness and an impediment in his speech**

**Mark 7:32, 34-37**

Mark 7:31 [not in the Bible Lesson citations]

31 And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

“None of the other evangelists record this story. Mark includes it because it gives an account of another healing on Gentile territory, and this is its connection with the preceding story. The geographic references are difficult. Jesus journeys north from Tyre through Sidon and then apparently in a southeasterly direction through the territory of Herod Philip to the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee and into the territory of the Decapolis.…The Decapolis (the territory of the ten Greek cities) was largely Gentile, but there were also a significant number of Jews living there” (*EBC* 8*.*683).

32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

“This healing, like the preceding, is the result of an apparently unsolicited approach to Jesus by the local people, which suggests that his reputation as a healer was now strong in the Decapolis as well” (France 302).

Friends bring the deaf mute to Jesus. The man could not request the healing himself, which might emphasize his helplessness. Also, notice that the friends recommend to Jesus how to heal their friend. Jesus should put his hand upon him. This man would have felt excluded and isolated from society. No one can communicate with him, and having to endure that unending silence would have most likely made his solitude quite dreary.

“Deaf” in Greek is *kophon*. “The original meaning of this word is ‘blunt’ or ‘dull.’ It is probably not accidental that the deaf man is a Gentile, since Gentiles are associated with deafness in several passages from the OT prophets (Isa. 42:17-19; 43:8-9; Mic. 7:16) because of their presumed insensitivity to God’s word” (*AB Mark* 472).

“Impediment in his speech” in Greek is literally: “difficult of speaking” or “lacking all power of speech” (*AB Mark* 472).

33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; [not in the Bible Lesson citations]

“Took him aside” is a way to show the reader how Jesus extricates the man from the skeptical environment of crowds who may think that a healing such as this is impossible.

“Put” in Greek is *ebalen*. Literally, it means “threw or cast” (*AB Mark* 474).

“Spit” in Greek is *ptysas* – literally, “having spat” (*AB Mark* 474).

Mary Baker Eddy writes:

“Spitting was the Hebrew method of expressing the utmost contempt” (*Mis* 170:26). Mark does not say where Jesus spits – whether on the ground as a sign of contempt for the problem or on his fingers.

34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

“Both the Jews and the more numerous Gentiles in the Syrian Decapolis region spoke a dialect of Aramaic, so there is nothing unusual about Jesus’ use of that language here. Words in the original language were considered to be especially potent” (*AB Mark* 474-475).

“The story conveys the impression that it was Jesus’ word of command which effected the cure. For looking up to heaven in a healing context see John 11:41. Like the upward look at the feeding of the five thousand, specifically mentioned in all four accounts (6:41 and parallels), it emphasizes the divine dimension in Jesus’ power” (France 303).

*Ephphatha* would have been the first word this man may have heard. “Mark’s recording of the Aramaic form suggests a memory of an impressive command on the part of someone who was there, perhaps the patient himself” (France 304).

35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

This alludes to Isaiah 35, verses 5 and 6: “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing:...”

The healing is immediate. Both deafness and dumbness are cured at once. The man speaks clearly without any defect whatsoever.

“These events are probably meant to be understood not only literally but also symbolically. The motif of the opened ear, for example, is used in Jewish texts as a symbol for revelation. Mark’s audience would probably identify strongly with the healed man in our story; they, too, had once been deaf to God’s word, but Jesus has opened their ears and freed their tongues to proclaim his glory” (*AB Mark* 479).

36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;

“Jesus initially forbids the healed man and helpers who had brought him to Jesus to employ their loosened tongues in this laudatory manner; but they immediately go out and proclaim what has happened anyway, and the more Jesus tries to suppress them, the more they disobey” (*AB Mark* 479).

“**the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it**: They could not be restrained; nay, the prohibition seemed only to whet their determination to publish his fame” (Jamieson 3.166).

37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

“Beyond measure astonished” – is “an over-the-top adverb” which means “superexceedingly.” “The Greek indicates the unprecedented nature and huge significance of the event that has just taken place” (*AB Mark* 475).

“The choral acclamation of Jesus to which it leads (‘He has done all things well’) is an expression of uncomprehending wonder” (*AB Mark* 480).

“Mark 7:37 does not just relate our story of healed deafness and muteness to the movement out into the Gentile world in the Markan present; it also relates the narrative to the Old Testament, so that even the outreach to the non-Jewish world is shown to reflect the Jewish Scriptures. The double use of *poiein* (maketh) calls to mind Gen. 1:1-2:3, where the verb is repeatedly used for God’s creative act; nor is this echo accidental, since Mark 7:37, with its reference to Jesus doing all things *well* (*kalos*), seems explicitly to echo Gen. 1:31, where God sees all the things that he has *made* (*epoiesen*), and pronounces them very *good* (*kala*). The allusions to Genesis 1 and Isaiah 35 reiterate a common Markan theme: Jesus’ healings are important not just as testimonies to his skill but as signs that by God’s will a new world of plenitude and blessings is springing into existence through him” (*AB Mark* 480-481).