

\* This reference seems inappropriate. Should perhaps be Matthew 15 v.29.

## CHAPTER 42

### Jesus in Decapolis

Mark 7 vv.31-37.

Luke 11 vv.14 & 15.\*

Because the Lord Jesus had healed the devil-possessed daughter of the Canaanite woman in the land of Tyre and Sidon, He could remain there no longer, for it would not be long before that miracle would be made known throughout the country. So it was that the Saviour departed from that district and went, with His disciples, to the East side of the Lake of Gennesaret.

In Chapter 14 there is a little map printed. You can see there that the land to the East of the Lake of Gennesaret was called DECAPOLIS. There were high mountains there, and wild, lonely stretches with no inhabitants. Certainly many cattle were grazed on the grassy hill slopes.

Well then, the Lord Jesus now makes His way with His twelve disciples to Decapolis.

Some of the people however seem to have seen and recognised Him, for large crowds of people make for the place where the Lord Jesus is.

But, how is it that they recognised the Lord Jesus? ... Just listen carefully for a moment.

In Chapter 34 we read about the healing of the mad Gadarene. Can you still remember that? ... The devils then went into the swine and the whole herd of two thousand swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea. You can remember surely, that the Gadarenes prayed Him to depart out of their coasts? Jesus had then left, but the restored man, who also wanted to get into the ship, was not permitted to do so, but had to tell everywhere what had happened to him.

And that is just what he did. Just read what it says in Mark 5 v.20. "And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him."

The inhabitants of that province had listened to him and ... they did not laugh at him. On the contrary, it says: "And all men did marvel."

Those people knew what he had been like before. They knew that he had once made the whole district unsafe, and now he was preaching. What this man told

Jesus in Decapolis

Mark 7 vv. 31-37.

Luke 11 vv. 14 & 15.\*

Because the Lord Jesus had healed the devil-possessed daughter of the Canaanite woman in the land of Tyre and Sidon, He could remain there no longer, for it would not be long before that miracle would be made known throughout the country. So it was that the Saviour departed from that district and went, with His disciples, to the East side of the Lake of Gennesaret.

In Chapter 14 there is a little map printed. You can see there that the land to the East of the Lake of Gennesaret was called DECAPOLIS. There were high mountains there, and wild, lonely stretches with no inhabitants. Certainly many cattle were grazed on the grassy hill slopes.

Well then, the Lord Jesus now makes His way with His twelve disciples to Decapolis.

Some of the people however seem to have seen and recognised Him, for large crowds of people make for the place where the Lord Jesus is.

But, how is it that they recognised the Lord Jesus? ... Just listen carefully for a moment.

In Chapter 34 we read about the healing of the mad Gadarene. Can you still remember that? ... The devils then went into the swine and the whole herd of two thousand swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea. You can remember surely, that the Gadarenes prayed Him to depart out of their coasts? Jesus had then left, but the restored man, who also wanted to get into the ship, was not permitted to do so, but had to tell everywhere what had happened to him.

And that is just what he did. Just read what it says in Mark 5 v.20. "And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him."

The inhabitants of that province had listened to him and ... they did not laugh at him. On the contrary, it says: "And all men did marvel."

Those people knew what he had been like before. They knew that he had once made the whole district unsafe, and now he was preaching. What this man told them was certainly no lie, but the truth. They could see it. That is why they marvelled at the miracle which had been wrought in him.

And now the rumour spreads that this same mighty Prophet has come into the land. Look, they are on their way to look for Jesus. They want to see and

hear for themselves this wonder-working Prophet. They come from all directions and before long the Lord Jesus is surrounded by a great multitude.

Jesus climbs a mountain side and sits down there. From that mountain He will teach the multitude. He will bring to them the Gospel.

Look, they are bringing a poor man to the Lord Jesus. He is both deaf and dumb. In God's Word it says that he "was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech." This man could only utter unintelligible sounds. How terrible that was for him. No-body could ever speak to him, for he could not understand them. If he needed anything, or if he was in pain, he could tell no-one about it, for he was also dumb.

In our country there are also many deaf-mutes. Oh, children, never tease or laugh at such unfortunates, for the Lord will not leave such behaviour unpunished. It is your duty to help such people as much as you can. Luckily (? Happily) there are also schools for such deaf and dumb children.

This deaf and dumb man is now brought to the Lord Jesus. The inhabitants of Decapolis believe that Jesus can cure him too, for had He not also saved the demoniac from those hellish spirits? The friends of the deaf and dumb man beseech Him to put His hand upon the poor sufferer.

The Lord goes aside from the crowd with the deaf-mute. Why did He take him to one side? Oh, the Lord Jesus wants to heal him unseen. He does not want to show off with His mercies. The emphasis was not to be upon the temporal but upon the eternal blessings which He would obtain. That is why He took him to one side, alone.

When Jesus has withdrawn with the man, He puts His fingers into his ears. Then the Lord spits upon the ground and touches the poor man's tongue. Why did He do that? Surely that was not necessary? ... He need but speak one word, and the deaf-mute would be healed. What meaning had Jesus in acting thus? ...

Well, if Jesus had spoken, the man would not have understood, for he was deaf, wasn't he? Still less could he have given an answer, for he was dumb. But now the man could see by Jesus' actions, that something would take place. And through those actions he could believe that Jesus had the power to heal him of his double affliction.

There is still more written in God's Word however. Just read it. The Lord Jesus looked up to heaven and He sighed. In looking upwards He prayed

to His heavenly Father. He sighed. "Why? ... Oh, all this misery, all these diseases came through sin. How destructive sins are, aren't they? Do you ever think about that? ... Jesus sighed because the consequences of sin are so terrible.

Listen, there comes from the lips of the Saviour a word ~~XXX~~ "Ephphatha!" That means: "Be opened."

At that same moment the deaf ears are opened and the tied tongue is loosed. The deaf-mute hears and speaks! What a wonder, what a double wonder. Jesus has command over all sickness and disease.

They both return to the multitude. Jesus charges the people to tell no-one what has happened. That charge is not carried out though, for later they repeat everywhere what wonders had been done by the Prophet of Nazareth. It is written: "So much the more a great deal they published it." (Mark 7 v.36).

---

Matthew 15 vv.29-38.

Mark 8 vv.1-9.

Still more people ~~g~~ gather around Jesus. They bring their sick and afflicted friends. Cripples struggle along with difficulty, but in their eyes shines hope of restoration. Blind people are led by friends or ~~family~~ <sup>relations.</sup> The dumb come full of expectation to the Lord. The lame are borne along with great care. Yes, many others, whatever their complains<sup>t</sup> may be, are brought by the people to Jesus. They cast them down at Jesus' feet.

The Lord Jesus heals them all, without exception. What joy and happiness must have reigned there.

The multitude watches all this in speechless amazement. They see that the dumb are speaking; the lame stand up and walk; cripples throw away their crutches and walk; the blind are let go by their leaders, for they can see again and need no more be led. Thousands of people, who are there present, glorify the God of Israel.

Moreover the Lord Jesus preaches to the assembled multitude. It does not say in God's Word that He spoke in parables. Evidently that was not there necessary, for there were no Pharisees and Scribes there, who might mock and ridicule His words. Some writers say that the people there were very ignorant,

and that is why the Lord spoke there very simply, so that all could understand. Otherwise, what good would it have done them? ...

Hours pass by. The people forget the time and listen open-mouthed to the wonderful words. They are not in the least bored.

Is it like that with you too, boys and girls? ... Alas, with most it is just the opposite. If the service in church should last a little longer, then many become angry. Most people become upset. The sooner the minister says "Amen", the better it is for them. And when they ~~xxxx~~ leave the building, many walk away grumbling. Is that not true? ~~xxxxxx~~ Oh, not with all, but certainly with some.

Here, in Decapolis, the people do not grumble. They do not want to leave Jesus. Evening begins to fall. Oh, never mind. The hearers stretch out upon the ground and sleep outside under the open sky. That was possible in the land of Canaan, for it was so warm there.

The next morning they surround the Lord Jesus again, and listen to His preaching with just as much attention. The day wears on. Again, evening falls. For the second time they sleep upon the hard ground. Yes, even the third day they do not leave the Lord Jesus. What a shaming example for us. They cannot permit themselves to go back to their homes.

Most of them however have no food with them. So far hunger has not troubled them, and they have not suffered thirst. Throughout Jesus' preaching, they had forgotten everything else.

The Saviour knows however, that many will not have the strength to return home. At the moment they do not realise it, but soon their hunger will gnaw with redoubled strength. They will faint by the way, for many of them have hours to walk to get home.

The Lord Jesus has compassion on them and He resolves to feed them first. Feed them? ... Here, in this lonesome wilderness, feed so many people? ... That cannot be done. It is impossible.

Oh, with the Lord Jesus nothing is impossible. Just see what happens.

---

On the evening of the third day the Lord Jesus stops preaching. He calls His disciples and says: "I have compassion on the multitude, because

they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way."

The disciples look at their Master in surprise. They do not understand what Jesus will do. True they have not yet forgotten the miracle of the feeding of the <sup>five</sup> (four) thousands, but they do not expect the Lord to do such a thing again. They answer: "From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?"

To feed all these people in the normal way is indeed impossible.

Jesus asks calmly: ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ "How many loaves have ye?"

At once the answer comes: "Seven, and a few small fishes."

And what then? ... Oh, just look! ... Jesus commands the people to sit down. Full of wonder those thousands of people sit down upon the green grass.

The Lord Jesus stands up, asks a blessing for ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ the food and begins to break the loaves in pieces. Again the disciples walk among the people with full baskets of bread and share out the priceless food. The few fishes too are shared out. What a wonderful, nourishing meal: bread with fish.

The hungry multitude eats. There is plenty. Nobody need go away ~~XXXXX~~ hungry. No, they all eat, and are filled.

Here too there is bread left over. Look, there go the disciples among the people, and every fragment of bread left over is carefully gathered up. Nothing is thrown away. A lesson for us!

At last, all is gathered up, and then it appears, that seven baskets full remain. Yet here there had been a multitude of four thousand men without the women and children.

This is the second time that Jesus fed thousands of people in a wonderful manner. After this He let the multitudes depart and we read in Mark, that the Lord entered straightway into a ship and sailed away. But - why so suddenly? ... Did these people also perhaps want to declare Him as king? ... We do not know. The Bible does not tell us.