

# Lesson 5

## Proper 18

### The Holy Gospel: Mark 7:24–37

Jesus had taken His disciples out of Galilee to the region of Tyre, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. They probably had traveled there on the Way of the Sea, the trade route that connected Damascus with the cities on the coast, bending down to touch the region of Galilee near Capernaum. This was “getaway time” for Jesus and the Twelve. Phoenicia, on the coast, and the Decapolis, east of the Sea of Galilee, were Gentile areas. Away from the pressure of Jewish crowds, Jesus could devote Himself to instruction of the Twelve, preparing them for their ministry. Occasionally, Gentile people approached Him for help, and He ministered to their needs. Generally, however, He kept a low profile.

68. How is it that people in these Gentile areas came to Him for help and healing?

Matthew also records the healing of the woman’s daughter, and he adds that she approached Him as “Lord” and “Son of David,” and that she persistently called out to Him until Jesus responded to her, much to the chagrin of His disciples (see Matthew 15:21–28). Jesus tested her with His comparison of children and dogs. Her humble readiness to accept the fact that in the eyes of Jews, she was an outsider—a “Gentile dog,” as the Jews often referred to foreigners—combined with her eager confidence that Jesus could help her daughter prompted His positive response to her persistent faith. Instead of bristling at Jesus’ words, she said, “Yes, Lord; yet even the \_\_\_ eat the \_\_\_.”

69. How was the woman’s faith tested yet again by Jesus? What may we learn from the Syrophenician woman as we approach Jesus for help in time of need?

Jesus and the disciples continued north to Sidon, then east and south on “back roads” into the Decapolis, a region to the south and east of the Sea of Galilee. *Decapolis* means “Ten Cities.” These cities were founded and populated by Greek colonists after the conquests of Alexander the Great some three centuries before Christ as part of an effort to spread Greek culture throughout the area. The whole journey took them well over 100 miles, giving time for instruction along the way.

70. In interacting with the man who was deaf and mute, what was Jesus’ purpose in taking the man aside, away from those who had brought him to Jesus? Why did Jesus put His fingers into the man’s ears and touch the man’s tongue? What did Jesus convey to the man by looking to heaven and giving a deep sigh?

71. Do you think “Ephphatha” was the first thing the deaf man heard? What were the man’s first words?

72. As was frequently the case, Jesus told those who witnessed this miracle not to tell others about it. Why? What resulted anyway?

73. What does Jesus’ power to make the deaf hear and the mute speak say to us for our own faith and life? (See Luke 10:21–24.)

### **The Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 35:4–7a**

Isaiah ministered as God’s prophet during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah. It was a time of great peril for Judah as a nation. The armies of Assyria, under Sargon and his son, Sennacherib, had conquered the nations to the north, including the kingdom of Israel, and had deported large portions of Israel’s population for settlement elsewhere in the vast area they ruled. The Assyrian armies swept southward toward Jerusalem. Isaiah continually assured Hezekiah and the people of Judah that the Lord would prevent the Assyrians from conquering Jerusalem. The siege of Jerusalem was begun, and it ended suddenly when, in response to the arrogance of the Assyrians, “the angel of the LORD went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the camp of Assyrians” (Isaiah 37:36). Secular history records their sudden departure, but does not give this as its cause. The first 39 chapters of Isaiah deal with that history and Isaiah’s related messages.

Chapter 35 is titled “The Ransomed Shall Return.” It is a poetic song that describes the blessing of God on His people even in time of danger, and brings assurance of their ultimate redemption in the plans of their gracious covenant Lord. The words of the song are meaningful to every generation of God’s people. With all the fears that press in on us in our complex world, it is good to hear this prophetic Word to “those who have an anxious heart.”

74. Why did Isaiah describe God as coming “with vengeance” and “with the recompense of God”?

75. What assurance was there for the people of Judah in the promise of the eyes of the blind being opened, the ears of the deaf being unstopped, the lame leaping like a deer, and the mute singing for joy?

76. What commitment was the Lord making to His people in the picture of waters breaking forth in the wilderness to form streams, pools, and springs? What do such poetic pictures offer us for our encouragement?

77. How does this First Lesson tie in with today's Holy Gospel?



MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Orontes R. Euphrates R.

UGARIT

CYPRUS

HAMATH

SYRIA (ARAMEAN STATES)

PHOENICIA

BYBLOS

DAMASCUS

SIDON  
Zarephath  
TYRE

SEA OF GALILEE

ISRAEL

SAMARIA

Jordan R.

PALESTINE

SYRIAN

PHILISTINES  
GAZA

JERUSALEM

DEAD SEA

DESERT

JUDAH

PHENICIA  
OSHEN

GYPT

SINAI

PENINSULA

MOUNT SINAI

RED SEA



Mediterranean Sea

Damascus

Tyre

Caesarea Philippi

Galilee

Canatha

Capernaum

Sea of Galilee

Nazareth

Hippius

Dion

R. Yarmuk

Raphana

Gadara

Scythopolis

Pella

Gerasa

Samaria

Joppa

R. Jabbok

Jerusalem

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Dead Sea

Beersheba

R. Arnon

The Decapolis

Assyria - During Isaiah's time & Hezekiah's Reign

