

## 'Ephphatha!' -- that is, 'Be opened!'

the Bible independently, but when they finished the scholars found that each translation was identical!

LXX is arranged differently than the Hebrew version and contains more books. Some of those additional books were written in Hebrew; others were done in other languages including Greek and Aramaic, the language of Jesus. These are the books we call *Apocrypha* (from the Greek, meaning *hidden*). In the New Testament, Biblical quotations come from both the Greek and the Hebrew version.

### Jesus' Healing Techniques

2), 2a), 2b) and 2c) above give witness to the inadequate understanding of the healing arts and to the believed origins of illnesses and their cures according to the popular or "folk" medicine of the first century. Disease was believed to be caused by evil spirits. Jesus does not debate the cause of disease; instead he borrows the methods of the faith healers of the day which included spitting, touching and certain incantations. Scholars have noted that, at least in part, the Lord's recorded words of healing regularly mimicked those of the faith healers, but, after the words were said, there were two great differences. First, he did not charge money and, second, people are healed, not "healed" for a few emotion filled moments induced by some faith healers' mumbo jumbo, but rather, his healings had permanence.

### Spreading the Word

3) and 4) are a testimonial to Jesus who revealed his glory to the world. But .... people being people, the more he said "Don't Tell", the more they proclaimed the Lord!

**Please prepare Saint Mark 8:27-38 for next Sunday.**

## 'Ephphatha!' -- that is, 'Be opened!'

"



**The Healing of the Deaf Man**

Graphic by Pat Marrin

### Today's Gospel Saint Mark 7:24-37

✠ FROM THERE HE SET OUT AND WENT AWAY TO THE REGION OF Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know he was there. Yet he could not escape notice, but a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him, and she came and bowed down at his feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. He said to her, 'Let the children be fed first, for it is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs.' But she

## 'Ephphatha!' -- that is, 'Be opened!'

answered him, 'Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.' Then he said to her, 'For saying that, you may go—the demon has left your daughter.' So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone. Jesus returned **1) from the region** (Greek: *borders*) **of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region** (Greek: *borders*) **of the Decapolis**. They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; (*μογιλάλος*, *mogilálos*) and they begged him to lay his hand on him. He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, **2) and put his fingers into his ears, 2a) and he spat and touched his tongue. 2b) Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, 'Ephphatha,'** that is, 'Be opened.' And immediately his ears were opened, **2c) his tongue was released** (literally *the fetters on his tongue were released*), and he spoke plainly. **3) Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.** They were astounded beyond measure, saying, **4) 'He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'** [© NRSV]

### Two Other Acts of Healing

After a long distance healing of a Gentile's daughter Jesus goes on a surprising and improbable trip **1) from the region** (Greek: *borders*) **of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region** (Greek: *borders*) **of the Decapolis**, Jesus is now in the Decapolis, the 10 towns of Greco/Roman civilization on the then Eastern borders of the Roman Empire. The Decapolis was surrounded by cities of Semetic culture.

One of those 10 cities, Hippus, lay on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. Perhaps this is where the second miracle took place, but our Scripture does not tell us where Christ actually was. We also do not really know the background of the man Christ healed, but it would be unlikely for him to have healed a gentile without the Evangelist noting the man's origin. He does so with the first healing of the child of the Syro-Phoenician woman, There are two accounts. In the version found today in St. Mark she is likely of Grecian origin.

## 'Ephphatha!' -- that is, 'Be opened!'

In the St. Matthew account the same woman is termed a Canaanite. (Matt 15:21-28). The area had formerly been Canaanite property.

### Map Reading and Healing

Perhaps Mark had a poor grasp of Palestinian geography. Sidon is about 20 miles south of Beirut, in modern day Lebanon. Tyre is an island off the Mediterranean coast about fifty miles south of Beirut, just north of Galilee, The Sea of Galilee is far to the southeast. The trip would be as silly as if a person in Chicago deliberately flew to LA by taking a "short cut" via New Delhi, then Paris, then New York, and finally, Hong Kong.

Wherever it was that they went in the Decapolis, Christ and the Apostles met a man who is both deaf and *μογιλάλος* [*mogilálos*] that is, he is not able to speak *plainly*. The word is found only twice in entire Bible. It's used here once in Mark and once in the *Greek* Old Testament, Isaiah 35<sup>6</sup>, (today's lesson) translated *speechless*.

then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the **speechless** sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; [© NRSV]

The Greek OT version was completed in 132 BC. It served as the first Bible of the early Church. The 27 New Testament books (all written within 100 years of the Resurrection) were added gradually until the Bible was closed in the 4th in the west and in the 7th century in the east. But note, some 400 other NT-type books were not accepted by the Church because they were not written by Jesus' contemporaries or because they contained questionable and/or fanciful teachings.

The Greek Old Testament is called the *Septuagint*, abbreviated LXX, the Roman Numeral for 70. The LXX is named for the traditional story of its supposed translation. The legend is that 70 (or in some versions 72) scholars translated