

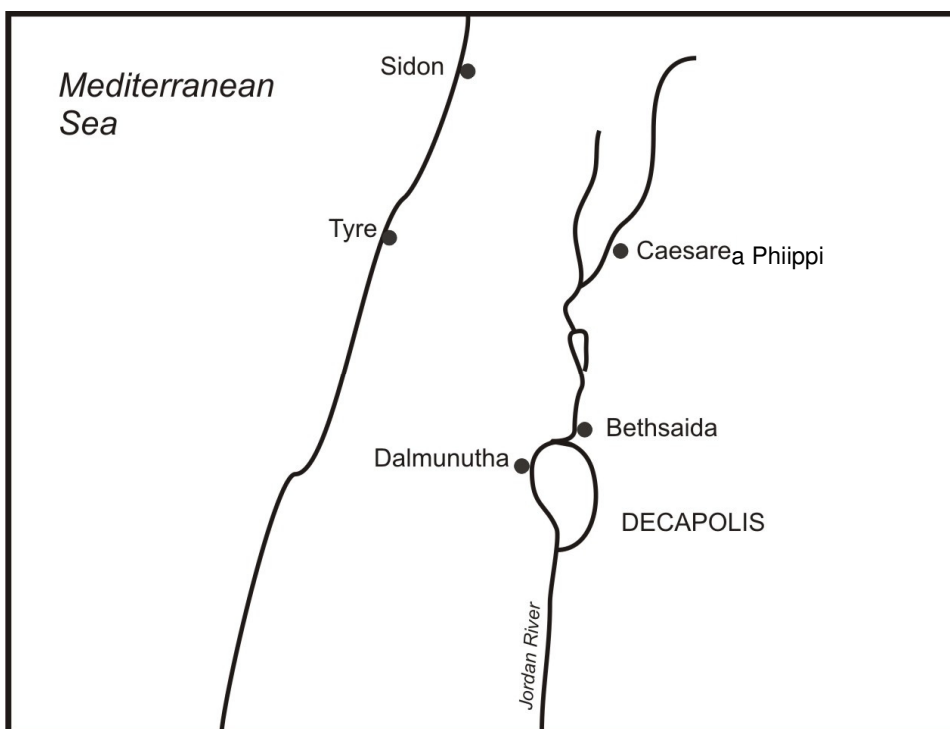
## Study 10: Jesus—The Messiah Man

### Mark 7:31-8:38

### Personal Preparation 1

Throughout these studies on Mark chapter 1-8, the question has been hanging in the air – ‘Jesus, Who Are You?’ But now as we travel with Jesus, we’ll read of how that question finally reaches a climax.

As you read **Mark 7:31-8:26**, mark on the map the route that Jesus is taking to get to the various locations.



In this section of Mark, we see different responses to Jesus but for this Personal Preparation, we’re going to look at those who get pretty close to giving the answer for ‘Jesus Who Are You?’

#### Reread Mark 7:31-37 and 8:22-26

The first healing takes place in the region of the Decapolis (7:31). It’s worth noting that Jesus has already been in the region of the Decapolis. See 5:20. That was the time that Jesus exorcised the demon ‘Legion’ out of the man who lived amongst the tombs and near the pigs. Though there are Jews living in the area, Decapolis is a heavily gentile populated region.

1. What is the physical condition of the man that people bring to Jesus? 7v32
2. How does Jesus heal him? 7v33-34

3. What are the reactions of the healed man and the people who are there? 7v35-36
4. In the town of Bethsaida, what is the physical condition of the man that people bring to Jesus? 8v22
5. How does Jesus heal him (8:23) and what is similar to Jesus' action with the previous healing?

Isaiah 35:5 says 'Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.' This is a passage that speaks of the time when God's kingdom would come – the time when God would bring healing and rescue for his people from exile in the nations – the age of the Messiah.

6. After the healing in the Decapolis we're told that the people were amazed, and they say, 'He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak'. With this Isaiah background, what do the people of the Decapolis seem to be understanding?

## Personal Preparation 2

In the previous Personal Preparation, we looked at those who were open to Jesus and were coming very close to discerning his true identity. And they were people living in the dodgy part of Israel – the gentile area! But now we come to look at the Pharisees. Given their pure religious background, you would think they would be even better attuned to identifying who Jesus is. But that doesn't seem to be the case at all.

### Read Mark 8:1-13

1. You may have noticed that we have a case of de-ja-vu. What are some similarities and differences with Jesus' earlier feeding miracle? (6:30-44)
2. By looking at his response to the crowds in both instances, 6:34 and 8:2, what do we learn about Jesus?
3. What is the Pharisees' response to Jesus when they see him in the region of Dalmanutha? v11
4. From Jesus' reaction he doesn't seem pleased with the Pharisee's request, v12. What do you think is wrong with the Pharisee's asking for a sign?

5. Is there anything wrong with people asking God for a sign today?

thoughts. questions. insights

## Jesus: The Messiah Man, Group Discussion Questions

### Read Mark 7:31-8:30

1. In Personal Preparation time, we've looked at two groups of people and how they've responded to Jesus. Firstly, how would you describe the response of the crowds to Jesus when he performs the speaking/hearing/seeing healing miracles?

2. Secondly, how would you describe the response of the Pharisees to Jesus?

3. What is significant about the crowd's statement in the Decapolis - 'He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak'?

The crowds in this region are getting very close to working out who Jesus is. So you would expect the disciples to be even further advanced in their understanding of Jesus. But in fact, they are in danger of having more in common with the Pharisees!

4. On the boat trip with the disciples, Jesus warns them, "Be careful. Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod". What do you think this means?

5. It's a harsh word when Jesus uses the Old Testament rebuke of hard hearted Israel (Jeremiah 5:21; Ezekiel 12:2) to rebuke the disciples – v17-19. What do you think they fail to see and understand with the two feeding miracles?

But for the disciples, their lack of understanding at this point is not the end of the story. Like the deaf man in the Decapolis – they are given ears to hear. And like the blind man in Bethsaida – their eyes are truly opened so they can see. But like the blind man, it just doesn't come all at once.

6. The climax of this question, 'Jesus, Who Are You?' has finally arrived. On the way to Caesarea Philippi Jesus asks some questions of his disciples. To the question, 'Who do people say I am?' who are the candidates that the disciples mention?

7. Jesus then turns the question directly on his disciples, 'Who do you say I am?' How does Peter respond?

Finally! What Mark the author told us at the start (**read 1:1**) – is what Peter now understands for himself. Remember, 'Christ' means the 'anointed one', or the 'Messiah'.

Mark 8 is a turning point in the gospel. Now that Jesus' true identity has been given by one of his disciples, Jesus now turns to talking about his purpose. From now on—Mark will record more of Jesus' words about what he has come to do, and what this means for anyone who wants to follow him.

8. What *must* Jesus do? v31

9. What *must* anyone do if they want to follow Jesus? v34

10. What does it mean to deny yourself and take up the cross?

11. Why is it worth it?

12. When people generally think of Jesus—what sort of images do you think they have in their mind? How does this compare with the sort of Messiah Jesus has shown himself to be in Mark 1-8?

13. Are you ever tempted to think it's not worth taking up your cross to follow Jesus? Why? How can we encourage each other?

## Pray

- Give praise to Jesus the Messiah who came to save and bring restoration to Israel and all the world.
- Though the 'Jesus-Pure & Simple' event has now past, continue to pray for those friends/family you have been praying for.

## Remember

- Freshchurch Working Bee at Eatons Hill State School this coming Saturday Morning, 10 May