

## The Light to the Nations (Mark 7:24-8:10)

12.17.17

The purpose of Jesus' one and only excursion into Gentile territory was to reprogram His disciples and get them on board with God's global purpose to redeem a people from every tribe, and nation, and to gather them into one body, the church.

### **A Father of Many Nations**

Should the disciples have recognized God's global purpose? Yes, and no.

- No, because Paul calls the Gentile inclusion into the covenant people a **mystery** (Eph. 3:4-6), meaning that it was not fully known in ages past.
- Yes, because the Old Testament is full of glimpses into this mystery:
  - Abraham is called the father of many **nations** (Gen. 12:1-3).
  - The psalmist spoke of the **nations** being glad in God (Ps. 67:1-5).
  - Isaiah spoke of the coming Messiah as a **light** to the nations (Isa. 49:6).

### **God's Salvation Extends to the Gentiles**

Jesus' encounter with the Syrophoenician woman taught the disciples two truths:

- God's mercy is not limited in its **quantity**. There is plenty for all who hunger – both **Jew** and **Gentile**.
- God's mercy must be received by **faith**. Salvation depends not on whether you are a child (Jew) or dog (Gentile), but in whether you partake of it in true **faith**.

### **God's Compassion Extends to the Gentiles**

The point of Jesus' healing of the deaf and mute man is that God is not **grudging** in His mercy. Notice four components of this healing:

- It is **private**
- It is **intimate**
- It is **compassionate**
- It is **immediate**

### **God's Revelation Extends to the Gentiles**

Just as in the feeding of the five thousand **Jews** (6:30-44), the feeding of the four thousand **Gentiles** displays that the Gentiles, too, need the bread of life – the **word** of God – and that God intends to feed it to them.