

Jesus heals many Gentiles. Matthew 15:29-31

A well known radio presenter, John Laws, had a saying, “The harder you try, the luckier you get.” Now while we wouldn’t support the principle of “luck” I think we can agree on the principle, “The harder you look, the more you will find.” Jesus did say, “Seek and you will find.” I’ve been finding this true over the last few days as I have had more time to look more closely at passages in my daily Bible reading.

Let me share some of the things I’ve found by reading more carefully, with the help of Bible maps and commentaries.

Jesus heals many Gentiles Matthew 15:29 - 31

“Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. ³⁰Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. ³¹The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.”

Gentiles bringing their loved ones to Jesus for healing



In my last reading I was considering the encounter that Jesus had with the man in Decapolis who was deaf and mute, Mark 7:31-37. It is significant that we learn from Mark that this happened in the region of Decapolis because Decapolis is a strong Gentile region, dominated by Greek and Roman cultures with very few Jews living there. Their religion was far from the religion of the Jews. Now remember Jesus had just come from another Gentile region, Tyre and Sidon. And in this next passage, Matthew 15:29-31, we find Jesus healing great numbers of Gentile people from Decapolis.

This raises a question; hadn’t Jesus been telling the disciples and then the Canaanite woman that his mission was only to the Jews? Also, I read earlier in Matthew 10:5-6 that Jesus told the twelve disciples not to go to the Samaritans or the Gentiles when he sent them out to preach and heal. Yet we can see in the gospels, that although Jesus ministered far more in the Jewish regions of Galilee and Judea, he did also deliberately connect with the Gentiles. Some things mentioned in scripture are hard to make sense of and like tough meat need more chewing on before they make sense.

I’m not sure if I have all the pieces of this puzzle but here are some pieces that might help and maybe others have another explanation.

- Jesus was himself a Jew, and in fact was the one that God had promised to come and be the king of the Jews. He was the promised Messiah, which means ‘anointed one’, and he did

offer himself first as such to the Jewish nation. John 1:11 says “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.”

In Matthew 21:33-45 Jesus says that because of this rejection of him, the kingdom of God would be given to others. Jesus did offer himself to the Jews first.

- The Jews, including the disciples, thought the kingdom of God was only for them. Jesus taught that the Gentiles **were** included in God’s favour. He referred to Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in Sidon, Elisha and leprous Naaman of Syria and said he had other sheep in another pen, referring to Gentiles being included in his kingdom.

- Jesus showed by his actions that Gentiles were not outside his grace and mercy.

He healed the servant of a Roman centurion Luke 7:1-10.

He healed many Gentiles in the account above. And it is significant that we see Gentiles praising “the God of Israel” who is not the god they normally worship.

- Jesus led the Samaritan woman at the well to himself and salvation.

- We see God’s inclusion of the Gentiles in the OT.

Isaiah 49:6 speaking of the Messiah “ I will also make you a light for the Gentiles , that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.”

- God sent Jonah to the Ninevites to warn them of coming judgment, and they were spared.

- See also if you have time. Hosea 2:23, Isaiah 56,3,6,7,8, Psalm 2:8, Daniel 7:14, Zechariah 9:10, Malachi 1:11-14, Ez 37:28, 38:23, 39:7.

It’s great news that God loves us Gentiles too.

Paul wrote to Gentile believers in Ephesians

Eph 1:11 **“In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.”**

Ephesians 2:11

¹¹Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” — ¹²remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. ¹³But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ¹⁷He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. ¹⁸For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

¹⁹Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household. ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²²And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.