

## God Loves the Deaf

***“For God so loved the world (Deaf nation) that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whoever (the Deaf) believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.” John 3:16 (paraphrase mine)***

Does the Bible speak about the Deaf? Yes, it does. Our loving Father has never forgotten about the Deaf people. In the Old Testament, Moses knew about the Deaf and commanded the people of Israel that they *“...must not curse the deaf...”* Leviticus 19:14. As well in the book of Isaiah, Isaiah has prophecies about the Deaf.

There are 16 biblical words for “deaf” in the whole Scripture as follows: - Exo 4:11; Lev 19:14; Ps 28:1, 38:13 & 58:4; Isa 29:18, 35:5, 42:18, 19 & 43:8; Mic 7:16; Mat 11:5; Mar 7:32, 37 & 9:25 and Luke 7:22. Out of 11 words from O.T. five words are found in the book of Isaiah, while out of another 5 words from N.T. three are in the Gospel of Mark.

God does love the Deaf people. Just like everyone on earth – regardless of races, gender, language, tribe or culture – God loves you as a unique, whole and equal being – Jeremiah 31:3, *“Jehovah... saying, Yea, I have loved you (Deaf people) with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness I have drawn you (Deaf people).”* God has confirmed that the Deaf people are His people too. He knows your name. Isaiah 43:1, *“... Fear not, for I have redeemed you (Deaf people); I have called you (Deaf people) by your name; you (Deaf people) are Mine.”*

God can help Deaf people and God understands each Deaf person’s needs just like hearing person around us. The love of God was shown to Deaf people by His Son, Jesus Christ, found in Mark 7:31-35, *“And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, He came to the Sea of Galilee, in the midst of the borders of the Decapolis. And they brought a deaf one to Him, hardly speaking. And they begged Him to put His hand on him. And He took him aside from the crowd and put His fingers into his ears. And He spat and touched his tongue. And looking up to Heaven, He sighed and said to him, Ephphatha! (that is, be opened!) And instantly his ears were opened and the bond of his tongue was loosened, and he spoke plainly.”*

Jesus took the Deaf man away from the crowd to a quite place as Jesus wanted to give him undivided attention. Jesus ministered and talked to him in a special way. Jesus wanted to be alone with this Deaf man and put His finger into the ears of the Deaf man, He spat and touched the Deaf man's tongue. Why did Jesus do this? Because Jesus is using a simple sign language with the Deaf man. By looking heavenward, Jesus showed the Deaf man that the help comes from our Father God in heaven. Jesus’ compassion for the Deaf people is seen through this. When Deaf people pray to God – God understands what you are saying, even if the hearing people do not always understand. Jesus said to the Deaf man, *“Ephphatha!”* which means, *“Be opened.”* Jesus opened the Deaf man's ears and loosed the strings of his tongue. The Deaf man received full speech from Jesus, and could talk with other people. BUT Jesus had given the Deaf man more than this – Jesus had given him a hearing heart! A deaf heart is worse than closed ears (not listening). Many hearing people are deaf in their hearts (hardened hearts) and do not hear or accept the Word of God. An ear of the heart of the Deaf man was opened to hear the Word of God. Is your heart deaf? Jesus wants to give you a hearing heart, an amazed answer found in Isaiah 29:18, *“And in that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book...”* It is more important to have a hearing heart than hearing ears so we can accept God's Word into our hearts and growing into the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Jesus shows his greatest care, love and compassion for you that He died in your place for you, so that you may be saved from eternal hell. If you believe in Jesus and confess that Jesus died for you to take away all your sins and believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and is alive again, you will be saved. Romans 10:9-10. He will never leave or forsake you, and always has you in His heart 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for rest of your life, Hebrews 7:25 & 13:5. Amen!

*(Written by Paulo Pinto (D), Johannesburg, August 2002)*