

Isn't This The Carpenter's Son? Aren't His Brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Jude? Matthew 13:54-58 and Mark 6:1-6a

DIG: How did the Nazarenes treat Christ months earlier? What do they think they "know" about Him? How does this impede His ministry? What changed between His initial reception and this one? If they asked the right questions, why didn't they get the right answers? How do we know James, Joseph, Simon, and Jude were not Christ's cousins or brothers in the Lord?

REFLECT: What does this teach us about assuming that we "know" all about Yeshua? What relationship does our faith have with Jesus' ability to be at work in our lives? Why does He look to faith?

Jesus left Peter's house in Capernaum and went to His hometown of Nazareth, accompanied by His talmidim (Mark 6:1). It almost seems as if the departure of the Lord from Capernaum marked a crisis in the history of that small Jewish town. From then on it ceased to be the headquarters for Messiah's earthly ministry, and was only visited occasionally as He passed through. Indeed, the concentration and growing power of pharisaic opposition, and the proximity of Herod's residence at Tiberias would have made a permanent stay there impossible at this stage of His ministry. But from this time on, **the Son of Man** would have **no place to lay His head** (Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:58).⁷⁵⁹

Yeshua Messiah was in the middle of a life-changing two-day period. Just the day before He had been accused of being demon possessed and rejected by the Great Sanhedrin, He pronounced a judgment on that particular Jewish generation, and began speaking to the people in parables. This day had begun at night with Him calming the storm, and healing two demon-possessed men. Then, after sunrise, He raised Jairus' daughter, and healed a sick woman. Later He healed two blind men and a deaf mute. It was time to go home.

Months earlier when He revealed His true identity as the long-awaited Messiah in His hometown synagogue they tried to kill Him (see Ch - **The Spirit of the LORD is One Me**). But in the interval of His absence some changes *should have* come in the feeling and attitude of the Nazarenes toward Him. After all, He had been the carpenter of the town, taking the place of the deceased Joseph. So after nine or ten months He had come back to them in totally different circumstances. They could not deny His Godliness of His presence, the wisdom of His words or the power of His miracles. Yet, they could not accept the change.⁷⁶⁰

When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue (Mark 6:2a). The people there were essentially the same ones who had been there for many years - but Jesus was not the same. The main object of the synagogue was the teaching of the people. The teaching part of the service consisted mainly of reading a section from the Torah, then the prophets, which was then taught. It seems that when the ruler of the synagogue invited Him to teach from the Torah, He could not resist the opportunity.

And many who heard Him were amazed (Mark 6:2c). The verb is *ekplesso*, meaning to strike out, to drive out, to strike one out of self-defense. The teaching and miracles of our Lord struck them so forcefully that they were to the point of losing control of themselves. The verb is imperfect, showing that this condition of being beside themselves with amazement continued for some time. In short, they were completely stunned.

"Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles" (Mattityahu 13:54 and 56b; Mark 6:2c)! To their credit they were asking the right questions. The tragedy was that they asked the right questions with the wrong attitude. Their attitude was, "Who does He think He is anyway?" Familiarity had bred contempt that gave birth to unbelief. Nazareth was a microcosm of the nation as a whole.⁷⁶¹ Jesus had been rejected in Nazareth previously, but this was His final rejection.

They asked mockingly: Isn't this the carpenter's son? The language implies that the answer should be a simple "Yes." The real answer, however, is not so simple. Luke's language was crafted very carefully: He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli, the son of Matthat . . . (Luke 3:23b). Joseph the carpenter raised Yeshua and accepted Him as his son even though he had no natural human father, since God the Holy Spirit impregnated Miryam the virgin supernaturally. But to the Nazarenes, Yeshua was just too ordinary. He was just the carpenter's son.

Is not His mother called Mary? Miryam was a woman of extraordinary godliness, but she was no more divine than any other woman ever born, and certainly is not superior to Christ as Catholic dogma maintains (see Ey - Jesus' Mother and Brothers). She even referred to the Lord as God my Savior (see An - The Song of Mary), affirming her own sinfulness and need of salvation.

And His brothers, James (see Galatians 1:19), Joseph, Simon and Jude (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3a NASB)? Jesus had brothers, which means that after He was born, Mary had at least six more children. The four brothers listed here and at least two sisters. The Roman Catholic Church attempts to explain these away as *cousins*, and therefore not children of Joseph and Miryam at all. But the Greek has another word that means *cousin*, *anepsios*, as in Colossians 4:10: **Mark, the cousin of Barnabas**. The mention of His mother and father in the immediate context shows this is immediate family, not distant cousins.

Neither are they "brothers in the Lord." The Greek word for brother here is *adelphos*. It can be used for a physical brother or a brother in the Lord, context determines which should be used. For example First Corinthians 15:6 we learn the Yeshua appeared to more than five hundred brothers (*adelphos*). That context would obviously be brothers in the Lord. Some contend these are spiritual brothers or cousins, but they have to take that out of context. If you want to pull things out of context you can use the Bible to prove anything you want to prove. The context here, however, is mother, father, brothers and sisters. In other words, immediate family. No mention of aunts, uncles or cousins in the context here.

Aren't all his sisters here with us (Mattityahu 13:56a; Mark 6:3b)? From this text and numerous others (Matthew 12:46-47; Luke 2:7; John 7:10; Acts 1:14), it is clear the Mary did not live in perpetual virginity, as the Roman Catholic heresy claims. She was a virgin when God the Holy Spirit impregnated her. But afterward, Mary had normal sexual relations with her husband Joseph, and they had a family together. Whether the inspired Gospel writers used the masculine *adelphos* for brother, or the feminine *adelphē* for sister, they both have the same root, and mean *from the same womb*.⁷⁶²

And they took offense at Him (Matthew 13:57a; Mark 6:3c). While multitudes throughout Judea and Galilee and even the regions beyond had accepted Yeshua's word as that of a Prophet because of the miracles He did, it seems like the village of Nazareth was totally unresponsive.⁷⁶³ A Nazarene was not supposed to know all those things. Nazareth was such a small town that even the Nazarenes themselves, like other Galileans, did not expect a great prophet to come from their midst (John 1:46). Any one from there was supposed to be the lowest of the low. They could not explain Him so they rejected Him. The saddest part of all was that His own brothers and sisters, the sons and daughters of Mary and Joseph, did not believe His messianic claims until after His death and resurrection. They had lived in the same home with Yeshua for many years, but it made no impression on them.

Like the Pharisees and Torah-teachers, the people of Nazareth refused to make the logical and obvious connection between His power and His divinity because they willfully refused to believe. The seed of the Gospel fell on the hard-packed soil of sin-loving hearts into which God's truth could not penetrate (see Et - [The Parable of the Soils](#)). As Yeshua

had explained to Nicodemus: **Whoever believes in [the Son of God] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but the people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed (Yochanan 3:18-20).**

Those who heard and saw **Messiah** did not reject **Him** for lack of evidence - but in spite of overwhelming evidence. **They** did not reject **Him** because **they** lacked the truth - but because **they** rejected **the Truth**. **They** refused forgiveness because **they** loved **their** sins more than **they** loved **Him**. **They** denied the light because **they** preferred darkness. The reason for rejecting **the Lord** has always been that **people** prefer **their** own way to **His**.⁷⁶⁴

But Jesus said to them: **Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor (Matthew 13:57b; Mark 6:4).** This proved to be true. It is significant here that **Jesus** made a definite claim to being **a prophet**. **He** had already claimed to be the Jewish **Messiah (John 4:26; Luke 4:21)**, the **Son of Man** with the power of **God (Matthew 9:6; Mark 1:10; Luke 5:24)**, and the **Son of God (John 5:22)**.

But **He** did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith, except lay **His** hands on a few sick people and heal them. At that time **Jesus** was only performing individual miracles based on **faith**. But the **people** of Nazareth were so consistently unbelieving that **they** would not even bring **their** sick to **Him** to be healed. **And He was amazed at their lack of faith (Mattityahu 13:58; Mark 6:5-6a).** The fact that our omniscient **Lord** was **amazed** at the unbelief of the **people** of Nazareth, gives us some understanding of **His** human limitations. As **God**, **He** would not be **amazed** at anything. Yet, in **His** humanity, **He** seemingly expected a different reception at Nazareth than **He** received.

Jesus must have been sad and disappointed as **He** went down the valley toward the plain of Esdraelon and looked back for the last time on **His** native town. Humanly, **He** needed **their** friendship and moral support as **He** faced **His** ministry in Galilee and **His** destiny in the City of David. But, in reality, **they** needed **Him** more than **He** needed **them**. **They** had sadly lost **their** last opportunity to have **Him**.

Faith calls for obedience to **God**. As we obey **Him** out of love, **God** can work in our lives. **Jesus** told **His** apostles: **If you love Me, keep my commands (Yochanan 14:15).** When we believe or have **faith**, we put ourselves under **ADONAI** and submit to **Him**.

To be obedient to **God's** Word, we have to trust and hope in **Him**. In **Hebrews 11**, the writer gave example after example of the holy men and women in the TaNaKh who because

of their **faith**, persevered in following **the Lord**, trusting that **His** Word was reliable. They could place their hope in **God**, knowing that **He** would be true to all **His** promises.

Obedience, trust, and hope are essential parts of **faith**. When confronted by **Jesus'** words and deeds, **the people** of Nazareth did not believe. Since **they** would not submit to **Christ** and obey **Him**, and since they had no trust in **Him**, **He** could not work among them. Let us pray that we will believe in **Jesus** and will experience **His** presence and work in our lives.

Holy Spirit, increase in me my faith in Yeshua. Enable me to place my trust and hope in the Father and obey His Son's words. Spirit, I want to know the power of ADONAI in my life. I believe, I want to believe - please help my unbelief.⁷⁶⁵