

"IS NOT THIS THE CARPENTER?" Mark.6v3.

Behold the workman Jesus!

After Pilate had scourged Jesus and put the crown of thorns and scarlet robe upon Him, Pilate brought Jesus out before the people and said, in Jn.19v5., "Behold, the man!" "Idou ho anthropos, ("Ecce Homo!"). John.19v5. "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!" By this mock coronation of Jesus Pilate intended both to humiliate the Jews by showing what he had done to their supposed king, and also perhaps to show that the charge of the Sanhedrin was completely ridiculous, how could such a pitiable figure be guilty of treason. **Pilate did not realise that he was calling attention to the greatest person of world history, the man Christ Jesus. If we do not meditate upon the early life of Jesus at Nazareth, and His life as a workman, we too can be blind to the glory and victory of our Lord over the pressures of providing for Mary's large family, and the pressure of running a family business among an overtaxed and poor people.** Jesus had a very pressurised, hectic and trying work life at Nazareth. "Behold the workman Jesus!" The sweat poured from Him through long hours of work in the hot sun. His muscles were strong and hard through years of hard labour with primitive tools. His ingenuity and moral fibre was taxed and was tried through difficult and demanding work. His hands were strong and had many seags on them through building with rough stones. "Behold, and worship, the, industrious, and often exhausted through overwork, diligent workman Jesus!"

Jesus the carpenter, the provider for Mary's large family.

After Joseph died the Lord Jesus had to take upon Himself the responsibility of providing for Mary's large family, and took over the running of the family business. This involved years of long hours of hard work, and dealing with difficult and poor people. Satan would make sure that Jesus had to deal with difficult customers and greedy people, who would not pay their bills, or people who wanted a lot of work done for next to nothing. Jesus knew what it was to have bad debts. There were also the genuine poor and widows who could not pay for work that they needed doing. Our Lord's attitude to others in His life at Nazareth is clearly seen in His sermon on the mount. Jesus lived the sermon on the mount before He preached it. The pressures of life that Jesus endured at Nazareth at home and in the family business were all part of the Father's plan for Jesus. Jesus was tempted and tried in all points so that He could be the perfect High Priest and Saviour. We know that He understands because He has been there, done that, and wore that tee shirt. The extremely hard work that Jesus did also gave Him a strong physical constitution, which was necessary for the demanding ministry which He was to do.

Providing for the large family of Mary and running the family business put huge demands on the time and energy of Jesus, but in spite of this Jesus prepared for the work and ministry that God the Father had for Him. It is a wonderful fact that Jesus prepared for His ministry while doing many hours of hard demanding work in the hot sun for six days a week. Jesus was probably working a twelve to sixteen hour shift each day to provide for His mother and brothers and sisters, It is also very likely that His story of rescuing a sheep on the Sabbath, which had fallen into a hole, was taken from His own personal experience, and had probably happened with sheep and other animals on several or many occasions, the Law commanded that this help should be given. Mt.12v11,12. Exod.23v4,5. Deut.22v4. The zeal for God and the redemption of God's people consumed Jesus, and His remarkable dedication under the heavy responsibilities that were placed upon Him, fills us with amazed and thankful love and praise. Jesus was not an out of touch holy man, He personally experienced the severe and overwhelming pressures of life.

Jesus was undoubtedly mocked for His celibate life. In a society that was built around the family, and having a wife was the norm, Jesus would be looked upon as abnormal. Jesus was consumed by a desire to do the Father's will, and we read in Ps.69v9-11., that He subdued all human desires by fasting and prayer and communion with God His Father. Jesus was tempted in all points like we are, but conquered them all by self discipline and communion with His heavenly Father. Heb.4v14-16.

The people of Nazareth knew the answers to the questions they asked, they were a way of ,expressing the shock, astonishment, and unbelief that they felt, they would not accept that the son of Joseph the carpenter , and Mary His mother, could have such wisdom and do such wonderful acts. They knew Jesus, His parents and His brothers, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, and all his sisters, for they were living in their village. Their prejudice blinded them, and we read in both Mt.13v57. and Mk.6v3., "and they were offended in him," "kai eskandalizonto en autoi," they "were made to stumble in him," they were trapped like game by the "skandalon," 4625, a trap-stick, or snare, by their contemptuous unbelief and cynical and hostile familiarity. At Nazareth Jesus became "a stone of stumbling," "petra skandalou," to those who disbelieved. 1Pet.2v7,8. Rom.9v33. "And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands upon a few sick people and healed them." Mk.6v5,6.

Both Mark.6v4. and Mt 13:57., record the declaration of Jesus that a prophet lacks honour in his own country. Mk.6v4. "But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." Mt.13v57. "And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." On his previous visit to Nazareth Jesus said in Lk.4v24., "Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country." On his return to Galilee long before this, we read in Jn.4v44., "For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet has no honour in his own country."

The people were astonished ("ekpleessomai," be astonished, be overwhelmed. See Mk.1v22.), at the remarkable preaching of Jesus, but they rejected both His preaching and Himself.

Jesus definite claim to be a prophet, seer, and the promised Messiah, were despised and rejected by His own townspeople, but received by the despised Samaritans. Lk.4v16-30. John.4v25,26,39-42. The most hurtful thing was that His own brothers and sisters did not believe in Jesus, and His Messianic claims, as Jesus sadly said that unbelief reigned, "among his own kin and in His own house, "en tois suggeneusin autou en te oikia autou." Mk.6v4. Mt.13v57. Mk.3v21,31-35. Jn.7v5. Ps.69v7-12. We read in Mk.6v6., "And He marvelled because of their unbelief," "kai ethaumasen dia ten apistian auton," the aorist tense. Jesus marvelled at the faith of the Roman centurion and the Syrophenician woman, they had great faith where one would not expect any faith. Mt.8v5-13. 15v21-28. Lk.7v9. Jesus marvels at the lack of faith where he had a right to expect it, not just among the Jews, but in his own home town, among his kinspeople, even in his own home. From Mk.3v21,31., it appears that Mary was unwillingly pressurised by the rest of the family to help them to forcibly take Jesus home, when they heard how He had offended the religious hierarchy of Israel. The evidence is that Mary never lost faith in her Son. Jesus left Nazareth and "went round about the villages teaching," "periegen tas komas kukloi didaskon," the imperfect tense, "periegen." Jesus resumed His task of being a roving preacher in Galilee.

Ps.69v6-21. Let not those who wait for You, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed because of me; let not those who seek You be confounded because of me, O God of Israel. v7. Because for Your sake I have borne reproach; shame has covered my face. v8. I have become a stranger to my brothers, and an alien to my mother's children; v9. Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up, and the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me. v10. When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that became my reproach. v11. I also made sackcloth my garment; I became a byword to them. v12. Those who sit in the gate speak against me, and I am the song of the drunkards. v13. But as for me, my prayer is to You, O LORD, in the acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercy, hear me in the truth of Your salvation. v14. Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink; let me be delivered from those who hate me, and out of the deep waters. v15. Let not the floodwater overflow me, nor let the deep swallow me up; and let not the pit shut its mouth on me. v16. Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good; turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies. v17. And do not hide Your face from Your servant, for I am in trouble; hear me speedily. v18. Draw near to my soul, and redeem it; deliver me because of my enemies. v19. You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonour; my adversaries are all before You. v20. Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. v21. They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. (NKJ)

Mark.6v1-6. Then He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. v2 And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished ("ekplesso," 1605, to strike out, to expel by a blow, to strike one out of self-possession, to strike with panic, to shock, to astonish, to be struck with amazement, to be amazed), saying, "Where did this Man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! v3. "Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" And they were offended at Him. v4. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." v5. Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. v6. And He marvelled because of their unbelief. Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

In Mt.13v55., Jesus is described as the son of Joseph the carpenter, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" "Ouch houtos estin ho tou tektonos huios?" The translation by Phillips suggests that there is a bite to the words, he translates it, "He's only the carpenter's son." However, in Mark.6v3., we read, "Is not this the carpenter? "Ouch houtos estin ho tekton;." After Joseph's death Jesus had carried on the family business and was "the carpenter" of Nazareth. The Greek word for "carpenter, " is, "tekton," 5045, it is from "tekein, tikto," to beget, create, (like "techne," craft, or art). "Tekton" originally applied to the worker in wood or builder with wood like our carpenter. Then it was used of any artisan or craftsman in metal, or in stone as well as in wood and even of sculpture. The noun "carpenter" may refer to one who builds with wood or stone. As there was a limited supply of wood in Palestine, houses were usually constructed of stone, which was also more durable and more secure. It is, therefore, quite possible that it would be more correct to call Jesus "the builder and stone mason of Nazareth," however, the majority of the translators prefer to translate "tekton" as "carpenter." We can be quite sure that Jesus worked in wood. Justin Martyr speaks of ploughs and yokes which were made by Jesus. Jesus almost certainly worked in stone and may even have helped to build some of the stone synagogues in Galilee.

The people of Nazareth knew Joseph, Mary and Jesus, and His younger brothers and sisters, (who were technically Christ's half brothers and sisters). They would not accept that a person with the origin of Jesus and the background of Nazareth could possess the wisdom which he had in his teaching, "edidasken."

Matthew 13:55. Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?

In Mt.13v57., "And they were offended in him," is "kai eskandalizonto en autoi," the imperfect passive, it literally means, "And they were stumbled in him." They would not accept the holy character and spiritual power of Jesus, or that He was different from themselves. "Not without honour," is "ouk estin atimos," every prophet of

consequence has proved this to be true. This is a proverb found in the works of Jewish, Greek, and Roman writers. The unbelief of Christ's townspeople blocked the will of God, and the power of Jesus to heal people and do "mighty works," "dunameis," 58, powers..

In Mk.6v1., "into his own country," is "eis ten patrida autou," and exactly the same Greek phrase also occurs in Mt.13v54., scholars say that this means, "to his own native place," and like "patrida" in Mk.6v4., has the specific meaning of "home town," not just a general sense of "country," or "fatherland." It is definitely speaking of the town of Nazareth. Just as in His first visit recorded in Lk.4v26-31., at the beginning of His Galilean ministry, our Lord's ministry and gifting was largely rejected, at this second visit to His home town. Jesus had not lived in Bethlehem since his birth, Nazareth was the town where He was brought up.

We read in Mt.6v2., that Jesus "began to teach," "erxato didaskein," this was His normal practice in the synagogue on the Sabbath. The ruler of the synagogue, the "archisunagogos," who asked people to speak, was aware of the excited rumours, which were circulating all over Galilee about Christ's ministry, and so moved by curiosity he asked Jesus to speak. See Mt.5v32. The reputation and proven ministry of Jesus opened the door for Him.

The reaction of the people of Nazareth to our Lord's sermon was the very opposite of welcoming, reasonable, respectful and good-natured, they said "Whence hath this man these things?" The literal translation of "pothen toutoi tauta," is even more contemptuous, curt, and derisive, "Whence these things to this fellow?" There was a bitter rejection of Jesus in their words, as the following events prove, Jesus was amazed at their determined unbelief.

They were continually amazed and overwhelmed, ("exeplessonto," the imperfect passive tense of "ekplesso," to amaze, the passive means, to be amazed, to be overwhelmed), at the wisdom ("sophia") with which Jesus spoke, and the reports of "the operations of power and mighty works" ("hai dunameis"), which were being repeatedly wrought ("ginomenai," the present middle participle of "ginomai," to become, that is, to come into existence, to come to pass, to happen; when used of miracles, to be performed, to be wrought), "by His hands," "dia ton cheiron."

"Mighty works," is a translation of "dunameis," which is often translated as "miracles," it literally means "acts of powers," they were a sign done by the power of God, God stopped people in their tracks by His miracles. These acts of power produced amazement, wonder, and awe in those who beheld them. People marvelled at them, they gasped in amazement, and "stretched out their necks" to see them.

In Mt.13v57., "and they were offended in him," is "kai eskandalizonto en autoi," the imperfect passive, which literally means, "they stumbled at Him." As with the Jewish leaders, envy and jealousy distorted and perverted the judgement of the people of Nazareth, "It was unpardonable for Jesus not to be commonplace like themselves."

The phrase, "a prophet is not without honour," is "ouk estin prophetes atimos." Scholars say the double negative "not without" may need two sentences and a repetition of the thought to give the complete sense and necessary contrast, and that honour can be translated as a verb, not just as a noun. The following translations illustrate this. Mitla Zapotec, translates it, "a prophet has respect everywhere, but not with his townspeople, ...they don't have respect." Chontal of Oaxaca, translates, "in his own country, ...he is not honoured, but everywhere else he is honoured." Jesus spoke out and confirmed the truth of the proverb that is found in Roman and Greek writers as well as Jewish writers. Jesus stated that prophets who speak the word of God are welcomed, honoured, respected and wanted almost everywhere, but they are not welcome, wanted and respected in their own town.

The people of Nazareth were stubbornly entrenched in unbelief, they were obstinate and implacable, and quite unwilling to believe that God would work miracles through Jesus. In blind unreasoning unbelief they rejected the overwhelming impact of Christ's ministry, and refused to recognise or submit to Him. The years of rejection and mockery of Christ's spirituality while He lived at Nazareth, which are revealed in Ps.69v7-12., had so hardened their hearts against Jesus, that they were not able receive anything from Him. They could not deny the wisdom of Christ's words, or the rumours of the wondrous works that were circulating all over the land, but Satan persuaded them that there was something doubtful and dubious about Christ's ministry. Jesus had lived with the people of Nazareth for 30 years in prayerful integrity, holiness and love, but they despised, rejected and mocked Him, and treated His divinely beautiful life with contempt. God hid Christ's prophetic ministry away from these scoffers. They knew that Jesus was an extraordinarily prayerful person, and mocked him for it, but they never suspected, nor would they believe, even when our Lord's ministry was manifested, that He possessed such extraordinary wisdom, spiritual gifts and graces.

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