

OUR LORD RETURNED TO NAZARETH

TEXT: MARK 6:1-6

Introduction:

1. Mark 6:1 says, “And he went out from thence (i.e., Capernaum), and came into his own country” (i.e., Nazareth – 1:9, 24).
2. The city of Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament.
3. In Luke 1:26, 27 we are told that “the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.”
4. It was there in Nazareth that Gabriel announced to Mary that she would be the mother of our Lord.
5. In Matthew 2:23, we read that Joseph, Mary, and the young Jesus left Egypt and “came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.”
6. In Luke 2:22 we are told that they brought Jesus to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord.
7. Then Luke 2:39 says, “And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.”
8. Elsewhere in the Gospels we read that our Lord grew up in Nazareth, and taught in the synagogue there.
9. Because of our Lord’s long association with the city of Nazareth, He is often referred to in the four Gospels and in the book of Acts as “Jesus of Nazareth.”
10. Tonight, I do not want to spend too much time on the city of Nazareth, but on the people of Nazareth.
11. You may recall the words of Nathanael, recorded in John 1:46: “Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? ”
12. Philip saith unto him, “Come and see.”
13. That was a good reply.

I. THEY WERE ASTONISHED

II. THEY WERE OFFENDED

III. THEY WERE FAITHLESS

I. THEY WERE ASTONISHED (6:1, 2).

1. First, we are told they were astonished at our Lord’s “wisdom” (6:2). We saw a similar response in the synagogue in Capernaum (1:21, 22).
2. In John 7:45, the chief priests and Pharisees said to the temple officers, “Why have ye not brought him?” and they replied, “Never man spake like this man.”
3. But despite their astonishment at our Lord’s wonderful teachings, the people were not willing to accept Him as their Messiah.

4. Their questions indicate their unbelief. First of all, they asked, “From whence hath this man these things?” (6:2). They wanted to know where our Lord received His training. They knew He had not studied under any rabbi.
5. They were challenging our Lord’s credentials (cf. Mark 11:27-33).
6. Later on, they perceived that Peter and John were “unlearned and ignorant men.” (Acts 4:13).
7. I have had RC relatives question my academic credentials. Apparently their priests receive more training than Baptist pastors.
8. But their priests do not have a “BA” (Born Again).
9. They were unwilling to acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah, and His wisdom the wisdom of God (6:2).
10. They said, “and what wisdom is this which is given unto him” (6:2), recognizing our Lord’s wisdom was not acquired by laborious study, but was “given.”
11. However, they refused to acknowledge that our Lord was sent by God, implying that He was getting His teachings and power from the devil (Matt. 12:22-24; John 8:48, 52; 9:29).

II. THEY WERE OFFENDED (6:3).

1. This is Mark’s last mention of Jesus teaching in a synagogue, or of even being in a synagogue. The Jewish leaders rejected Him and “were offended at him” (6:3).
2. From this point on, our Lord did His teachings outside the synagogues, and often in private homes (cf. 6:10; 7:17, 24; 9:33; 10:10).
3. HA Ironside said, “Instead of owning His Messianic claims they became suspicious of Him as an impostor and arraigned themselves in definite opposition to Him, even going as far as to seek some method whereby they might destroy Him” (*Mark*).
4. “Is not this the carpenter?” (6:3). They were trying to bring Jesus down to their level – to them He was only a “carpenter.”
5. They did not mention Joseph, because he had probably died.
6. The Bible teaches that after the birth of our Lord, Mary and Joseph had a normal married life. Jesus is referred to in Matthew 1:25 as Mary’s “firstborn son.”
7. However, the RCC has long insisted that Mary was a “perpetual virgin.”
8. According to the Bible, Jesus had at least four brothers and three sisters (6:3; cf. Matthew 13:54-58). Matthew records, “And his sisters, are they not all with us?” (Matt. 13:56). If there only two, it would say, “both with us.”

9. Rome claims these siblings were “cousins,” though the Greek word used here does not mean “cousin.” Some Romanists teach that these were children of Joseph’s from a previous marriage, though the Bible does not teach that.
10. The RCC gets away with this subterfuge because most Roman Catholics never read the Bible.
11. It would be absurd for Joseph and Mary to live together as husband and wife if Mary remained a virgin. In his excellent book, *Roman Catholicism*, Loraine Boettner, wrote, “Back of Rome’s insistence on the perpetual virginity of Mary, of course, is the desire to justify the celibate state of the priests and nuns. Rome teaches that the single state is holier than the married state, that there is something inherently unclean and defiling about marriage. Says one Roman Catholic writer concerning the Virgin Mary: ‘It cannot with decency be imagined that the most holy vessel which was once consecrated to be a receptacle of the Deity should be afterwards desecrated and profaned by human usage.’” (p. 158).
12. James (6:3) became one of the leaders of the church in Jerusalem, perhaps the pastor (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18; I Cor. 15:7; Gal. 1:19; 2:9, 12).
13. James wrote the epistle of James. Josephus, the famous first-century Jewish historian, says James was violently executed by the Jewish high priest Annus the younger.
14. Eusebius, a Christian historian, also says James was martyred.
15. Nothing is known about Joses (Joseph) and Simon (6:3).
16. Jude wrote the epistle of Jude.
17. “And they were offended at him” (6:3). This is a strong word, indicating rejection (cf. Mark 4:17). Bible scholars tell us the word means, “stumbled.”
18. Our Lord’s deity was a stumbling block for the Jews. The apostle Paul said, “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness” (I Cor. 1:23).
19. “But Jesus, said unto them, A prophet is not without honour...” (6:4). Our Lord compared Himself to a prophet (cf. 6:15).
20. The Jews’ rejection of Jesus was explained by the commonly observed fact that those who know the prophet best think least of him (6:4).
21. John 7:5 tells us that our Lord’s brethren did not believe in him, though we know some of them (e.g., James and Jude) did after His resurrection from the dead.

III. THEY WERE FAITHLESS (6:5, 6).

1. Their unbelief actually hindered our Lord (6:5; cf. Matt. 13:58).

2. Is your unbelief hindering the Lord from working in your life? Or in our church? In your home?
3. God is omnipotent and can do anything, but He has chosen to limit Himself in response to unbelief.
4. There are only two occasions where it is recorded that Jesus marveled. In Matthew 8:10 (also recorded in Luke 7:9), our Lord marveled at the Roman centurion's "great faith."
5. But here we see our Lord "marveled because of their unbelief" (6:6). Consider the contrast – the great faith of the pagan soldier, and the astonishing unbelief of the Jews in our Lord's hometown.
6. Their unbelief had a paralyzing effect on His ministry, and so He left His hometown of Nazareth, apparently never to return.

CONCLUSION:

1. This story reminds us of the importance of faith. Our Lord was hindered by their lack of faith (6:5, 6).
2. On the other hand, great things are accomplished through faith (cf. Mark 5:34-36).
3. Our Lord said to Jairus, "Be not afraid, only believe" (Mark 5:36).
4. Andrew Murray said, God is "willing to fill the hearts of many of His children with a measure of the Holy Spirit such as they have never known. As we look out upon a Church so weak and faithless, do let us listen to the voice of Jesus as He says, 'Fear not, only believe.'"