

Second Rejection In Nazareth

During our last study in the life of Christ, Jesus healed two blind men and cast a demon out of a man who could not speak nor hear. The Pharisees responded by accusing Jesus once more of performing miracles by demonic power. They must have found their accusation effective or they would not have repeatedly used it with the crowds. It was war between them and Jesus. In this study (Matt. 13:54-58; Mark 6:1-6), Jesus revisits the city of Nazareth. The last time that He had visited the city (Luke 4:16-30), He had entered the synagogue, quoted Isaiah 61:1-2, declared that He was the Messiah, and then the people attempted to murder Him by throwing Him off a cliff. But Jesus escaped. So why did Jesus return to Nazareth? The answer is not found in some inner wish to die or some fanatical campaign. The answer is found in Jesus' heart. Come and see!

COMING TO NAZARETH. The account of Jesus' second visit to the city of Nazareth begins in Mark 6:1.

Jesus went out from there and came into His hometown; and His disciples followed Him. (NASB) Mark 6:1

Jesus' parents had fled to Egypt after they had been warned by God that King Herod would attempt to murder Him and every child under two years of age (Matt. 2:13-14). So they fled to Egypt in order to save Jesus. Later the family returned from Egypt after God told them that King Herod had died and directed them to return to Israel (Matt. 2:19-21). When the family returned, they settled in Nazareth, a city in the northern part of Israel in a region known as Galilee. Consequently, Nazareth became Jesus' hometown. There He grew up from a child into an adult and then started His ministry.

Early in Jesus' ministry He relocated His family (apparently after His father had died), from Nazareth to Capernaum (John 2:12-13).

His sisters remained in Nazareth, perhaps because they were already married (Mark 6:3).

WHY DID JESUS RETURN? As we have already stated, sometime later in Jesus' ministry, He returned to Nazareth to tell the people that He was the Messiah. They responded by attempting to murder Him. Later Jesus decided to return again. This study describes this second return. Jesus did not return to Nazareth because the city was important. In John 1:46, Nathanael reveals that the city was unimportant when he said,

"Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (NASB) John 1:46

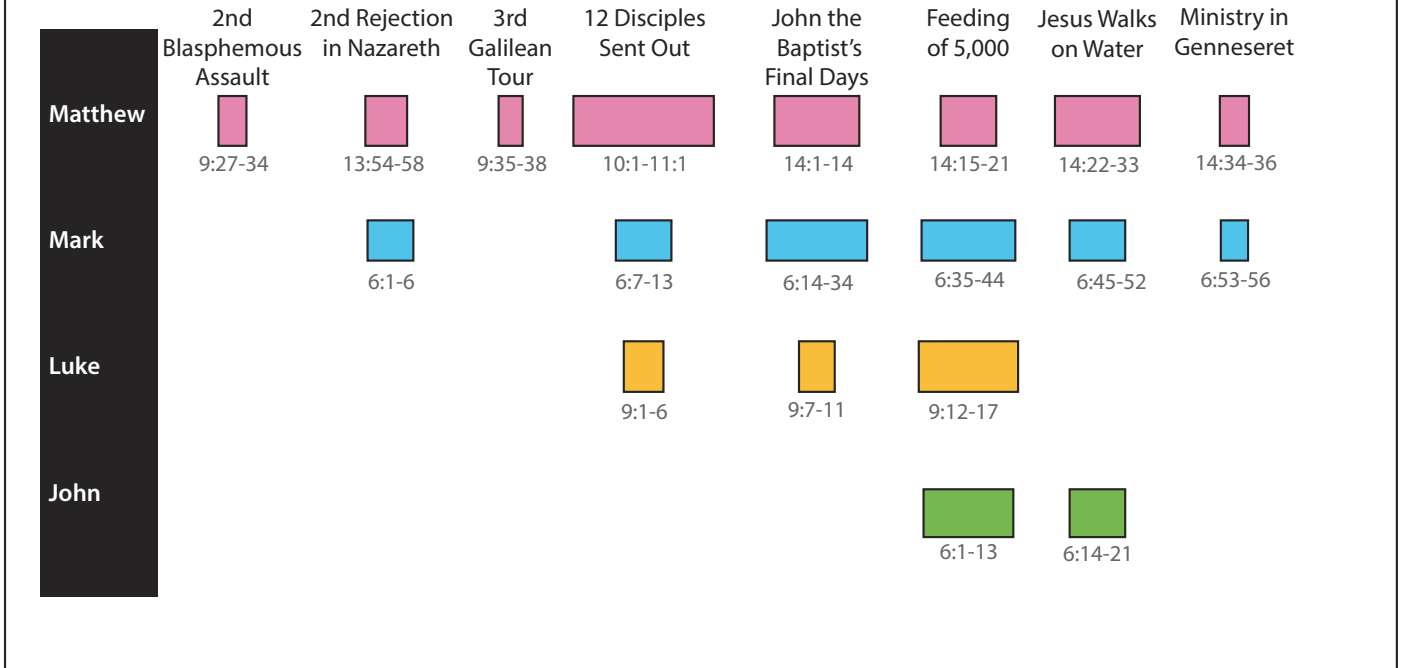


Nathanael's comment was negative. Nazareth was nothing special. It was a small, isolated city in the Galilean hills. Jesus did not return because it was a large wonderful city. Dr. J. Vernon McGee makes this comment about Jesus' return,

There are certain men in God's work who do not want to go to a small place to minister. I've

Life and Heart of Jesus

Ministry Outside of Galilee - Mid A.D. 32



actually been criticized by some ministers and Christian workers for going to certain small churches instead of going to larger ones. My feeling is that our Lord set us an example here . . . There is a story about Dr. C. I. Scofield, the man who was responsible for The Scofield Reference Bible. He had been invited to speak in a church in North Carolina. Because it was a rainy night, about twenty-five people came to the meeting. The young preacher leaned over and apologized to Dr. Scofield for the small number who had come to hear his preaching and teaching. Dr. Scofield replied, "Young man, my Lord had only twelve men in His school and in His congregation most of the time. If He had only twelve, who is C. I. Scofield to be concerned about a big crowd?"¹

Jesus did not return because the crowd was large. He returned because He was concerned about the people. He loved the people. He was concerned that they were sinners who needed their sins forgiven. He was concerned that they were going to miss eternal life. It is possible that He also returned to visit His sisters.

From a human perspective, I am personally amazed that Jesus returned to a group of people who had wanted to murder Him. They had run Him out of town. Jesus demonstrated an important truth for us - God has not called us to avoid conflict in the ministry. Sometimes we think that trouble is a sign of God's judgment or that we did something wrong. But the Christian ministry is spiritual warfare! We have witnessed this fact in the pages of the gospels. The religious leaders of Jesus' day repeatedly rejected Him. They continued to reject the apostles even after Jesus left. They persecuted the apostle Paul, and the Roman politicians persecuted Christians for many years after the apostles.

In our next study we will discover that conflict and ministry go together. One who desires to serve God will suffer. We will suffer just because we serve Jesus. We will suffer because there is a spiritual battle. We will suffer for living a godly life. Conflict is part of the Christian life.

[If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you . . . \(NASB\) John 15:20](#)

1. J. Vernon McGee. Matthew. Thru The Bible. Nelson Publishing Co., pp. 83-184.

Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

(NASB) 2 Tim. 2:3

Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (NASB) 2 Tim. 3:12

So Jesus returned to the city of conflict!

Those who never suffer are probably not in the battle. They may be passive Christians. Yet, God encourages us to seek peace and avoid conflict. There are some Christians, however, who are warriors. For them, everything is a crusade. They enjoy controversy and conflict. Those who suffer for doing wrong deserve it. 1 Peter 2:20 tells us that we gain favor with God when we suffer for doing what is right.

For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

(NASB) 1 Pet. 2:19-20

THE SABBATH. Some time after Jesus arrived in Nazareth, the Sabbath arrived; and so Jesus went to the synagogue.

When the Sabbath came, He began to teach in the synagogue; and the many listeners were astonished, saying, “Where did this man get these things, and what is this wisdom given to Him, and such miracles as these performed by His hands? (NASB) Mark 6:2

Many people were present, when Jesus started teaching. It is very possible that the people had come because they had heard that Jesus would be speaking. The listeners could not

believe what they heard. They started asking one another, “Where did He get these things? Where did He get His wisdom? Where did He learn how to do these miracles?”

We can just imagine their thoughts. Surely, He got His wisdom from some other place or some tutor. We will discover later in John 7:15 that it was common knowledge that Jesus did not have any formal rabbinical education.

If Jesus were alive today, the questions might be something like this, “What commentaries does Jesus own? Did Jesus learn that from a tape, book, CD, or DVD? Did He

attend a pastor’s conference or get His material from some famous rabbi or pastor?” Many today think that a seminary education is important to prepare men for ministry. While a seminary education can be helpful, it is not essential.

What is essential is a man’s love, faithfulness, and obedient walk with God and a never ending search of the scriptures in order to increasingly know God resulting in ongoing transformation into Christlikeness. There are those in the

ministry today who do not have formal education, but they really know the One who was the from the beginning (1 John 2:12-14). There have been some noted pastors down through history who had no formal theological education, but they have been terrific spiritual examples. For example, C. H. Spurgeon (1834-1892), a British preacher, had no formal education beyond Newmarket Academy. Another example is Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899), an American evangelist, who also lacked formal education. Formal education can be very helpful, but it is not essential.

Just as some today show disrespect for those without formal seminary training, the people in this small Nazareth synagogue showed disrespect for Jesus’ lack of formal education. They did not realize that schools can educate only the mind. Religious education cannot guarantee that the heart



is in love with God or that the person is growing spiritually.

HE IS ONE OF US! Then the people added another insult and rejection.

**“Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?”
And they took offense at Him. (NASB) Mark 6:3**

Their message was simple. “He is, ‘Just one of us!’ Surely, He is nothing special.” In the Greek text, a definite article appears before “carpenter.” This implies that Jesus had been “the” carpenter or craftsman of the town. When Jesus had lived there, He was the carpenter. Not only was Jesus the carpenter, but they also knew His family: Mary, James, Joses, Judas, and Simon. Note that Matt. 13:55 provides the same list of Mary’s children. Those who claim that these children were not the offspring of Mary do so without proof. There is no hint in these passages that these men were not Mary’s sons. Since Matthew 1:25 reveals that Mary had sexual relations with Joseph, it is difficult to argue that Mary never had children unless one chooses to discredit the apostle Matthew and the Holy Spirit who jointly wrote . . .



Street In Nazareth - A.D. 1890

. . . but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus. (NASB) Matt. 1:25

Mary ceased to be a virgin after Jesus was born.

PROPHET WITHOUT HONOR. After the people rejected Jesus once again, He responded to them with these words,

Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and among his own relatives and in his own household.” (NASB) Mark 6:4

The people in the synagogue responded as some might today. Some discredit those whom they know in favor of those they do not know. Why will some churches select a man who has recently graduated from seminary, whom they do not know, and ask him to become their pastor even if they have a man who is highly gifted and capable of being their pastor sitting among them? We tend to highly value someone we do not know, only later to be often disappointed with them. Kent Hughes responds to our peculiar attitude with this account,

There are people who find it personally offensive if someone who - was one of them yesterday should have become much more today. Monlaigne, the famous French philosopher, politician, and writer, said that at home he was considered just a scribbling country proprietor, in the neighboring town a man of recognized business ability, and farther away a noted author. The greater the distance away, the greater he became.²

That was Jesus’ point.

Those who heard and saw Jesus 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 wanted to keep their sins. They denied the light because they

preferred darkness. The reason for rejecting the Lord has always been that men prefer their own way to His.³

UNBELIEF. The people in Nazareth did not approve of His message. Therefore, they rejected Him. As a result, very few people came to Jesus for healing, and very few miracles were performed. That is the message of verses 5-6.

2. R. Kent Hughes, Mark. Crossway Books. 1989. vol. 1, p. 133.

3. John MacArthur. Matthew 8-15 . The MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Moody Press. p. 409.

And He could do no miracle there except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them. And He wondered at their unbelief. (NASB) Mark 6:5-6

The first part of the passage seems to suggest that Jesus was unable to perform any miracles. However, the rest of the passage reveals that Jesus did perform healings when people came to Him. Since Jesus was the God-man who had divine power for healing, the passage should not be understood as an inability to perform miracles. Instead, we should notice that very few people came to Jesus for healing. Therefore, He was prevented from healing many. Few people were interested and so few people came. Few believed in Him! Should Jesus have forced many people to be healed anyway? The answer is obviously, “No!” Only a few people came to Him because the hearts of the others were unbelieving. They did not come because they had found reasons for rejecting Him. As a result, they missed some tremendous blessings.

We are told that Jesus was surprised by their unbelief. The rejection of Jesus Christ is not something that has started only during our lifetime. As we have already discovered, Jesus was rejected early in His ministry. Many religious leaders rejected Him, but not all of them. That is the testimony of history and the gospel accounts.

Therefore some of the Pharisees were saying, “This man is not from God, because He does not keep the Sabbath.” But others were saying, “How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?” And there was a division among them. (NASB) John 9:16

We will discover later in our study that the religious leaders would join together and devise a plot to get rid of Him.

Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, “What are we doing? For this man is performing many signs. (NASB) John 11:47

Many people did reject Jesus. The religious leaders contributed to His rejection. Others just refused to believe because they preferred their own way - darkness.

But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, “When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?” (NASB) John 7:31

But though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him. (NASB) John 12:37

Jesus’ teachings and the rumors about His miracles should have encouraged them to respond, but they did not.

CONCLUSION. Why did Jesus return to Nazareth? Why did Jesus return to a city that had previously attempted to murder Him? I believe that Jesus returned because He loved them, desired to see them believe in Him, and gain eternal life. But in order to accomplish that goal, He had to be willing to suffer rejection!

Are you willing to suffer in your service for God? God has not called us to peace at all costs. Jesus returned knowing that the majority of the people in Nazareth did not welcome Him, but He returned anyway. God has called us to be peacemakers (Matt. 5:9). He has asked us to be at peace with all men as much as possible (Rom. 12:18). If one is actively engaged in spiritual warfare and if one is doing what God has called him or her to do, then peace will not always exist. Warfare comes with serving God because the Evil One is waging spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:12). The following words should ring in our ears and be memorized.

Suffer hardship with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. (NASB) 2 Tim. 2:3

Spiritual conflict (Eph. 6:12) is unavoidable in the Christian life. Jesus, our God, has set the example. We must not shrink from telling others about Christ. We must not avoid spiritual conflict when wrong has occurred just because our culture or others in the church say conflict is wrong. There is a raging war between good and evil in our homes, churches, and nations. Sometimes spiritual warfare is an indication that one is a “good soldier” who is engaged in a conflict for 1) righteousness and 2) for the souls of those who believe in Jesus Christ. Be a good soldier! Jesus is our example!