

The story so far...

We are in a second period of the life of Jesus as Mark tells it. A second phase began in Mark 3:7, where Mark describes how Jesus withdrew from the Capernaum area^{□1} and went to the lake side^{□2}. People came to Him from a very wide area^{□3}. He would preach on the beach and when the crowds became too oppressive He would take a break by being taken out to the lake^{□4}. He was now famous as a healer^{□5}. Evil spirits obeyed Him^{□6}, although He refused to allow them to advertise who He was^{□7}.

He appointed His disciples as official workers, with the title 'apostles'^{□1}. His family did not understand Him^{□2} and the official teachers of the law rejected Him^{□3}, so Jesus gathered around Him a family of those who were willing to do God's will^{□4}. He taught this inner group^{□5}. As they crossed over the sea there were miracles showing His control over nature^{□6}, and when they arrived at Gerasa Jesus revealed His power over Satan^{□7}. Travelling back to the western side of the sea they are met by great crowds and more miracles are performed^{□8}. Now Jesus pays a visit to His own town of Nazareth^{□9}. It is again a turning-point in the work of Jesus. Once again there is a rejection of Jesus on a Sabbath in a synagogue^{□10}.

□1 1:21; 2:1
 □2 3:7
 □3 3:8
 □4 3:9
 □5 3:10
 □6 3:11
 □7 3:12

□1 3:13-19
 □2 3:20-21
 □3 3:22-30
 □4 3:31-35
 □5 4:1-34
 □6 4:35-41
 □7 5:1-20
 □8 5:21-43
 □9 6: 1-6a
 □10 as in 3:1-6

Rejection at Nazareth**1. Jesus' great authority**

1. **The dominant impression that Jesus gives is that of authority.** He leaves 'that place' (presumably Capernaum) and goes to Nazareth^{□1}. He teaches in the synagogue^{□2}. The people are immediately impressed with the knowledge and authority of Jesus. Jesus knows that He is from God. He knows He has the Holy Spirit. He knows that what He is saying is true. It all combines to give Jesus great authority.

□1 6:1
 □2 6:2

2. Unbelief is Unreasonable

2. **We see how unreasonable is unbelief.** The people of Nazareth recognize Jesus' knowledge^{□1} and they have heard all about the many miracles that Jesus has worked in nearby Capernaum^{□2}. Only recently He has controlled the waves, ordered demons to depart, conquered disease and death. They know all about the facts of what He has done. And yet they will not believe! Unbelief has a powerful grip on the human heart. Even though the blessings of God are under our very noses we are capable of rejecting them!

□1 6:2b
 □2 6:2b

3. The cause of unbelief is the claim to familiarity

3. **What causes unbelief is the claim to familiarity.** It is a strange thing that men and women like to think that they have a certain knowledge about everything! When we feel we know something we reject anything that does not measure up to what we think we know. Yet it is possible to be very familiar with something and yet be entirely ignorant! Jesus was very well-known to the people of Nazareth. They had known Him since He was a boy. They knew His background as a carpenter^{□1}; they knew His family^{□2}. So they felt they knew everything! 'How can there be something about Jesus that we do not know?'

□1 6:3
 □2 6:3

People find it very difficult to accept a **new** thought about something that is **familiar**. This is why theologians often reject

something new that is found in the Bible. This is why Pentecostals may reject a new work of the Holy Spirit. They say 'We know all about this! This is our area of expertise. This is something that we know everything about!' It is humbling for an 'expert' to discover something new in the very topic about which he thinks he is an expert!

4. Unbelief leads to loss of blessing

4. Unbelief leads to loss of blessing. Jesus 'was not able to perform any miracles there'¹. What sort of 'inability' is this? Jesus did not always need faith. He could raise the dead even when no one else believed He could or would do so. When necessary His **own** faith was enough for Him to perform any miracle.

¹ 6:5

Mark 6:5 surely means that He was not 'able' in the will of God. It would be inappropriate for miracles to be performed in a place of great unbelief.

It caused Jesus surprise! Jesus was a real human being. He did not know everything. Somehow, as a man, the knowledge He could have had as God was restrained, and He did not carry around in His mind the knowledge He could have had as the Son of God. When the Son of God became a man it meant that He left aside the knowledge He could have had as the Son of God. As a result He was capable of being surprised!



Nazareth was the place that should have experienced the greatest blessing. But they thought they were 'experts' in their knowledge of Jesus. And experts often lose blessing because their very expertise holds them back from faith. Faith is not being an 'expert'. Faith is acknowledging that we are ignorant and submitting to what God reveals. Nazareth missed a blessing because they knew too much!

Jesus responds to yet another decisive rejection with a further development

So we come to the end of this phase in the story of Jesus as Mark tells it. We have seen a period where Jesus rose to fame and yet was rejected by the Jewish leaders¹. And we have had a time where Jesus has travelled around the areas of the sea of Galilee, but that too has ended in decisive rejection even in His own town of Nazareth². Yet each time Jesus gets rejected He does not withdraw from His work; instead He develops it further. When the Pharisees planned to kill Jesus, He chose His apostles. Now something similar happens. When Nazareth rejects Him, He sends the Twelve out on their first mission.

¹ 1:21-3:6

² 6: 1-6a

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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