

# In The Fulness of Time – Part 96

by Dr. Thomas O. Figart

## **The Rejection of Christ at Nazareth, His Hometown. Matthew 13:53-58**

### ***From Capernaum to Nazareth. Matthew 13:53***

13:53 “And it came to pass that, when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed from there.”

As far back as Matthew 4:13 Jesus had left Nazareth and made His center of ministry outward from Capernaum. After the Sermon on the Mount He came down again and entered Capernaum (8:5). Subsequently He sent out the Twelve (10:1-23) and did some itinerant preaching Himself, according to 11:1. In chapters 12-13 He is back at Capernaum, until 13:53, when He departs for Nazareth “*where he had been brought up*” (Luke 6:16). His teaching in parables was finished; He had done everything He intended to do in Capernaum, because of their hardness of heart.

### ***Reaction in His Hometown. Matthew 13:54-58***

#### **Astonishment at His Power. 13:54**

13:54 “And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, From where hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works?”

If the account of His visit to Nazareth in Luke 4:16-32 is an earlier one, it would have been some months before, and they would have had time to hear of His teaching and miracles. If it was the *same* occasion, He still could have taught in their synagogue and performed *some* miracles, as Mark 6:5 indicates. In addition, His Galilean ministry was near enough to Nazareth for them to have heard of His fame. In any event, they were astonished at His obvious power and wisdom; thus the question, “*From where did these come?*”

#### **Offense at His Person 13:53-57a**

13:55-57a “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother’s name Mary? And His brethren, James and Joseph, and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? From where, then, hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him.”

It is rather amazing to read that they rejected His obvious proofs of Deity, namely, wisdom and might; yet even more puzzling that they would still somehow ascribe this rejection to His family background. Did not Jesus say on another occasion, “*The*

*same works that I do, bear witness of me that the Father hath sent me*" (John 5:16); and in John 14:11: "*Believe me for the very works' sake.*" What they refused to understand was that God would use one who was not trained in the rabbinical school, but was merely one of their hometown young men. The Jews in Jerusalem used this same argument: "*We know this man from where he is*" (John 7:27). But these were only half-truths. The Old Testament prophesied that Messiah would come from David's family and be born in Bethlehem (John 7:42), but that He would also show Himself to be "*the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father*" (Isaiah 9:6).

Their specific mention of His family members proves that the perpetual virginity of Mary is wrong. There is absolutely no evidence that these brothers and sisters were any other than the younger siblings of Jesus through Joseph and Mary. Four brothers are named, and at least three sisters (*pasai*, "*all*") are included, not simply "*both.*"

As for His profession they reminded themselves that Jesus was a mere *tehton*, one who worked on wood, a carpenter. Where could such a man get "*all these things?*" The text does not say so, but it is not impossible that these people of Nazareth were thinking the same as the Pharisees in 12:23, that Jesus was not "*the son of David, the Messiah,*" but that He was empowered by Beelzebub (12:24). His own friends (Mark 3:21) and His family (John 7:4-5) thought He was beside Himself.

The word "*offended*" here in 13:57 is from *skandalidzo*, indicating their scorn for Him as a person. He would certainly not qualify as Messiah; a carpenter, indeed!

#### **Unbelief in His Position. 13:57b-58**

13:57b-58 "But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country and in his own house. And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

This is a well-known principle; someone who has grown up in a small town will always be one of the boys, no matter how prominent he becomes. It would be harder still to convince them that He was a prophet, speaking for God, since they had not had a prophet for four hundred years. It is no wonder that He did not perform many mighty works there. It was not that His power was weak, but that their unbelief was strong! Still, as Lenski remarks, "He was ready to do many, as elsewhere, but could only do few. Note, however, that He did do some. It has become traditional to assume that faith precedes every miracle, although this tradition is forgotten every time a miracle is wrought where faith is plainly not present." (R.C.H. Lenski, *The Gospel of Matthew*, pp. 536-537).

Such hardness of hearts and offensive attitudes with regard to our Lord, will result in a Christless eternity, "***in the fulness of time.***"