

Mark 6:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

Analysis

And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Jesus' teaching in the Nazareth synagogue created astonishment without producing faith—a critical distinction. 'When the sabbath day was come' (γενομένου σαββάτου, genomenou sabbatou) indicates Jesus followed customary worship patterns, attending synagogue on the Sabbath. 'He began to teach' (ῆρξατο διδάσκειν, ērxato didaskein) shows He took the teaching role, likely invited as visiting rabbi to expound Scripture after Torah reading.

'Many hearing were astonished' (πολλοὶ ἀκούοντες ἐξεπλήσσοντο, polloi akouontes exeplessonto)—the imperfect tense suggests continuous amazement. Yet their questions reveal the problem: 'From whence hath this man these things?' (πόθεν τούτω ταῦτα, pothen toutō tauta) expresses incredulity, not faith. They acknowledged His wisdom and mighty works but couldn't reconcile these with His ordinary origins. Astonishment doesn't equal faith; intellectual recognition of divine power doesn't constitute saving trust. Their question 'what wisdom is this which is given unto him' admitted supernatural origin yet remained skeptical.

Reformed theology distinguishes between intellectual assent (acknowledging truth) and saving faith (trusting Christ personally)—the Nazarenes had the former without the latter.

Historical Context

Synagogue worship in first-century Judaism followed set pattern: recitation of Shema, prayers, Torah reading, prophetic reading, exposition/teaching by qualified person, and benediction. Visiting rabbis were typically invited to teach, especially those with growing reputations. Jesus had taught in this synagogue before (Luke 4:16-30), possibly making this a second visit. The congregation's astonishment at His teaching reflected several factors: His authoritative style differed from scribal tradition of citing previous authorities (Mark 1:22), His wisdom exceeded what formal rabbinic training would produce (Jesus hadn't studied at Jerusalem's schools), and reports of His miracles (raising dead, healing incurables) seemed incredible for someone they knew as village carpenter. The cognitive dissonance between Jesus' ordinary background and extraordinary ministry produced amazement without faith—they couldn't integrate the familiar (Jesus of Nazareth) with the fantastic (miracle-working rabbi). Early church fathers noted this as warning: familiarity can breed contempt, and intellectual recognition without heart transformation leaves one unchanged.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the Nazarenes' astonishment without faith warn against intellectually acknowledging Christianity's truth while withholding personal trust in Christ?
2. What role does pride play when familiarity with someone's ordinary origins prevents recognition of God's extraordinary work through them?

Interlinear Text

καὶ γινόνται σαββάτου ἤρξατο ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ
And are wrought when the sabbath day he began in the synagogue
G2532 G1096 G4521 G756 G1722 G3588 G4864

διδάσκειν καὶ πολλοὶ ἀκούοντες ἐξεπλήσσοντο λέγοντες
to teach And many hearing him were astonished saying
G1321 G2532 G4183 G191 G1605 G3004

Πόθεν τούτῳ ταῦτα καὶ τίς ἡ σοφία ἡ
From whence hath this man these things And what wisdom
G4159 G5129 G5023 G2532 G5101 G3588 G4678 G3588

δοθεῖσα αὐτοῦ ὅτι καὶ δυνάμεις τοιαῦται διὰ
is this which is given his that And mighty works such by
G1325 G846 G3754 G2532 G1411 G5108 G1223

τῶν χειρῶν αὐτοῦ γινόνται
G3588 hands his are wrought
G5495 G846 G1096

Additional Cross-References

John 6:42 (Parallel theme): And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

Matthew 4:23 (Parallel theme): And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

John 7:15 (Parallel theme): And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

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