

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' (ἤρξατο 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 exeplēssonto*)—the imperfect tense suggests continuous amazement. Yet their questions reveal the problem: 'From whence hath this man these things?' (πόθεν τούτῳ 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	G3588	the synagogue
G2532	G1096	G4521	G756	G1722		G4864
διδάσκειν	καὶ	πολλοὶ	ἀκούοντες	ἐξεπλήσσαντο	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	G3588	wisdom
G4159	G5129	G5023	G2532	G5101		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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