

“Jesus Marveled!”

Matthew 8:10; Mark 6:6; Luke 7:9

Intro. – 30 times in the four Gospels you will find the verb form of the word “to be amazed” or “to marvel” used. Of these 30 times, only three of them are used in reference to Jesus. Our texts are these three and as you can see two of them refer to the same event.

Now, what does it mean, “Jesus marveled?” What significance does this hold to you and me? To many, it strikes them odd that the Creator of all should even be struck with wonderment. Is it possible that He Who knows the depths of men’s hearts, who knows when a sparrow falls, and who knows the number of hairs on each of our heads could be amazed by anything? Indeed! Not only is it possible, but it is factual. There is nothing sinful in such a reaction – Jesus really did marvel! This phrase brings out the fact of Christ’s humanity. Being fully God, Christ was/is fully man. The implications/significance of this is far reaching. This; however is not the purpose of this message. Instead, we want to focus attention on the two matters that made Jesus marvel.

In one instance, Jesus marveled because of one’s faith. In the other instance, Jesus marveled at the exact opposite; He marveled because of unbelief!

Purpose: to see man’s responsibility in both belief and unbelief

By looking at these two incidents where Jesus marveled, we will clearly see that faith cannot possibly be a gift from God AND that man has just as much responsibility in unbelief as he does in belief.

I JESUS MARVELED AT BELIEF (Matthew 8:10; Luke 7:9)

- background (read Luke 7:1-10)
- Illus. – an army of occupation in a conquered country is susceptible to great temptation to oppressive, greedy and riotous living. At the end of WW II, Gen. MacArthur issued a solemn warning to all American soldiers being stationed in Japan at the end of war. He warned them of what usually happens to an army of occupation...:
 - 1) centurion in such a position = responsible for law and order in a defeated nation
 - 2) rather than being oppressive and finding ill-gotten gain:
 - a. he built the synagogue
 - b. had respect of religious leaders – v 4
 - 3) request made to Jesus – servant was sick (close friend)... sent elders... and then friends...
 - 4) centurion’s faith – “I understand this whole matter is one of authority... You have authority over all. You can do whatever is right/good. Not necessary to come to my house... simply give word!”
 - 5) Jesus marveled – “I’ve not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.” – i.e. Jews with all their privileges didn’t have the depth of faith this man did!
- all given to establish two things:

A. Faith’s SOURCE

- i.e. where did such faith come as demonstrated by this centurion?
 1. It is NOT a gift from God
 - a. Ephesians 2:8 often referred to as proof text but “it” refers to grace and not to faith
 - b. note: if faith a gift from God, how could Jesus have been amazed at centurion’s faith?
 2. It comes by the hearing/applying of God’s Word
 - a. Romans 10:17... i.e. evidence for faith based upon God’s Word
 - b. centurion had the evidence – student of OT, eyewitness of Jesus’ ministry... all of which led him to believing/trusting commitment to Christ.
 - c. Bible is sufficient to produce believing, trusting commitment in Christ.... Study the SOURCE to grow in faith!

B. Faith’s RESULTS

1. Centurion reaped the results of faith in Christ – his servant was healed!

2. We too, through faith (belief/trust) will reap the following results of faith:
 - a. the promises of Christ... AT baptism... FOR good works!
 - b. second death will hold not threat to those saved by grace through faith at baptism...

Faith is the victory that overcomes the world. A believing/trusting attitude was manifested from the centurion to Christ. Because he was one most unlikely to have such depth of faith – Jesus marveled!

II JESUS MARVELED AT UNBELIEF (Mark 6:6)

- background (read Mark 6:6)
- Luke 4:16-50 speaks of 1st visit of Jesus to Nazareth... ended in a riot and attempted assassination.
- this is the 2nd visit of Jesus – rejected again only this time instead of violence there is indifference and unbelief. Jesus was not *their kind* of Messiah... even though He proved by miracles He was in fact...
- Jesus' response – “He marveled at their unbelief.” Why? Brings us to 3 important matters of unbelief:

A. What Causes Unbelief

1. People of Nazareth serve as perfect examples = rejected the evidence before them...:
 - a. Illus. – Actor Paul Newman, after being in car race, Portland Airport checking aboard a plane to LA. Man beside him started conversation by asking Newman if he'd been to the big race. Newman responded, “yes he had been there.” Man went on to say, “I hear there was some Hollywood actor in the race. I can't remember his name... He was some sort of has been... I think he played in the movie ‘Butch Cassidy & the Sundance Kid.’” Paul Newman smiled, opened his ticket and held it up to this man to see. On the ticket was his name, “Paul Newman” clearly printed out. Newman asked, “Is this the guy?” “Yea,” said this passenger, “that's the guy” and then he simply walked off.
 - b. Illus. – George Graves (elder at River Park Church of Christ, So Bend, IN invented the corn puff machine...) walked into an American Motors dealership in So. Bend. Salesman looked at how he was dressed and blew him off... Another salesman eventually helped George... “How you going to pay for this?” asked the salesman. George Graves opened his wallet and handed the man sufficient funds. George said, “I'll be paying in cash.”
2. False reports and teachings
 - a. denominationalism/cults = weak doctrine and man's traditions taking precedence over the Bible... and no it is not a matter of interpretation...
 - b. liberalism = again, rejection of Bible's authority... more prevalent than we'd imagine...
 - c. willing ignorance
 - Illus. – former governor of New Jersey, Harold Hoffman claims the following did in fact take place. A long-time state employee was driving a truck along the New Jersey turnpike and was exceeding the speed limit. A state trooper stopped him and said, “Do you realize you were doing seventy miles an hour?” “No, I didn't,” said the driver. “Don't you have a governor on that truck?” asked the trooper. “No sir,” said the state employee, “the governor's in Trenton – that's fertilizer you smell.”
3. Lack of early training – how we need from day one to tell and show little ones faith in X is about...
4. Some hang faith on humans and not on Christ – what happened at Nazareth & happening today...
 - Illus. – recently at the University of Nebraska, officials prevented Athletes For Christ wrestling team from giving testimonies during an appearance. Many students, professors and even a couple newspapers asked “why?” – why other groups were free to promote radical politics, homosexuality and the like while [Christians] were muzzled. The Omaha *World Herald* took the school to task for such action by printing an editorial entitled “Sit Down, Shut Up for Jesus.”

B. What Unbelief Causes

1. Hebrews 4:6 “*Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience.*”

2. Romans 11:20 *“Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, and you stand only by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear;”*
3. Hebrews 3:12 *“Take care brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.”*

In short, unbelief causes, is the root, main reason people depart from God.

C. What is Unbelief’s Results

1. Matthew 13:58 *“He did not do many miracles there because of unbelief.”* – imagine the rejections Jesus experienced at Nazareth... His own family... goes beyond our own comprehension...
2. All promises, hopes and assurances in and through Christ are forfeited because of unbelief!
3. Romans 6:23 *“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord!”*

Conclusion:

“I Stand Amazed”

I stand amazed in the presence
 Of Jesus the Nazarene.
 And wonder how He could love me,
 A sinner, condemned unclean
 How marvelous! How wonderful!
 And my song shall ever be:
 How marvelous! How wonderful!
 Is my Savior’s love for me!

Brethren and friend, we should find it easy to be amazed with Jesus, but, often we find it difficult to understand that He too is amazed with us! He is either amazed because of our belief (faith) or He is amazed because of our unbelief!