

Nazareth

“Places in the life of Christ”



“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. ‘Come and see,’ said Philip.” John 1:46

Is Nazareth really an important place in the life of Christ? Has your home town had an influence on your life? If you consider these two questions, we may think there is a new significance with the people of Nazareth. We are mostly led to believe that the people of Nazareth didn’t think too much of Christ. He was just the son of a carpenter. His parents

left town before He was born and didn’t come back right away after they went for the census. In Matthew 2:23 we are told His parents left Egypt and returned to Nazareth “And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Wasn’t Nazareth good enough for them at the first? The people of Nazareth did not have the knowledge we have now that God told them to flee to Israel. A study of the Scriptures and the time Christ spent on this earth tells us that the people of Nazareth did not treat Christ as any one special. Christ didn’t preach and do His miracles in the town of Nazareth.

What did Nazareth have to make it think it was so great? It had no bustling business or commerce. Actually it had the greatest honor of any town, but the people didn’t know it. It was chosen to be the birthplace of the King.

After the devil had tempted Christ (Matthew 4:1-11) Christ heard that John had been cast into prison. He may have feared for His life, or He may have felt He could not be effective in Nazareth, but he left and went to Capernaum. It was shortly after this that he began to call His twelve disciples.

Nazareth was just an obscure village tucked away in the hills of Galilee. Many of us grew up in towns like that, just a dot on the map. No one of importance came from there. But aren’t we important? God doesn’t just go to the big cities. He comes to us in the small town also. He comes to the farm, the slums. He comes to the rich and the poor alike.

Nathanael’s response can be understood because we often respond the same way today. One may say “Look where he came from. Can he be worthwhile?” This is a negative response we often hear. However, some interpret this same verse with a positive attitude.

Barclay, a noted authority on the scriptures, feels that the quote “Can anything good come from there?” is evidence that Philip and Nathanael had been searching for the Messiah. Nathanael’s response is more of a wonderful fulfillment of a prayer than a statement of disbelief. Further, Nathanael’s response showed that he had knowledge that a Messiah was to come, and he believed he had found Him. Christ told Nathanael He had known about him even before Philip brought him to join the disciples!

Even the angel Gabriel found the town of Nazareth. “And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary.” Luke 1:26-27. You may remember that a second angel appeared in Nazareth to speak to Joseph because Joseph knew that Mary’s pregnancy before marriage was against the law. Sometime after Christ’s birth an angel appeared to Joseph to tell him it was safe to return to Nazareth.

One time man who had not accepted Christ cried out again Him saying “Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.” Mark 1:24.

Many times we need to stop and look at the people that God has chosen to lead us. We can begin at the birth of Christ with the lowly shepherds, and some guys running around the country side following a star. They thought they were hunting the Messiah, a new King. And, that King was born in a lowly stable. Come on, let’s get real. None of them had any –doctoral degree!

Perhaps we need to realize that God chooses the people He knows will do the job regardless of their background, education, social status, or even where they were born. Nathanael was willing to take Christ on His word and follow Him. I don’t think Nathaniel would have been willing to give the rest of his life to following a man he did not think was worthwhile because he came from the small town of Nazareth.

Christ never denied His birthplace. One day he went to the synagogue and actually told them who He was. I wonder at their reaction. Read Luke 4:16-22. They were still referring to Him as the son of Joseph. To them He was still just a home town boy.

Then when Pilate wrote a title for Christ when He was crucified on the cross, he wrote In John 19:19 “And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

Also when Christ was not in the tomb when the women went, the angel told them “And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.” Mark 16:6-7

Prayer: Thank You for the gift of Your son so that we might have Eternal Life with You. Open our eyes, Lord, to see You as You are, and not as the world sees You. May we

always see you as Wonderful Counselor, Almighty God, and the Everlasting Father. Amen.

1. Why was it important for Christ to be from Nazareth?
2. Is a home town ever an influence on someone's life decisions? How?
3. Are there positive/negative reactions to be known as the son/daughter of a person in the town?

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