

# "Faithful"

## Nazareth & Cana

Reminder – not meant to be a Travel Log, but some new lessons that we can learn by observation of the area & people.

Question for you before we even get started – Is Nazareth mentioned in the O.T.?

Notice Nathaniel's observation when told by Philip that they had "found" the Messiah:

(John 1:46 NIV) "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked.  
"Come and see," said Philip.

What impression does Nathaniel's remark relate to you about Nazareth?

Nazareth is up in the Galilee area, approximately 75-80 miles north of Jerusalem. **On the North side of the Valley, or Plains of Jezreel. Hilly & some small mountains – not too unlike the area around New Braunfels. As with much of Israel, very rocky. Rocks cleared to farm, and used to build fences and buildings, very much like parts of Ireland.**

Nazareth today is a city of **74,619** population and is, of course, best known as the place where Jesus grew up. Otherwise, Nazareth is just a typical Jewish community with no special recognition or achievements that would make it stand out. **It is now known as the Arab capital of Israel, with Arab owned industry! The, now separate, Jewish community today is perhaps 40,000.**

**But,** I would like to think that Joseph and Mary represented the typical Jewish family. They did all that God had commanded (Lk. 2:39) and each year they returned to Jerusalem for the Passover (Lk. 2:40-41). I think that they raised their family with the proper training and respect for God's law. The scriptures specifically identify Jesus' growth as being well balanced (Lk 2:51-52).

How would you compare our insight into this Jewish family with Nathaniel's comment? **They were faithful, but faithfulness to God is not recognized by the world! Just not a point of reference that most people even think about!**

How much are we influenced by news broadcasts and other reports about other places & people? Are we, today, only allowed to "see" the problems and difficulties in much of the world because that, for the most part, is all that is reported?

We are expected to believe things like "Well, it is ok because everyone is doing it". In what is reported in our news media, we see:

- the lack of a moral standard
- a lack of family fidelity
- a lack of being responsible for our actions
- a lack of respect for God and his word

Do we, at times, feel despair because **our** whole country is giving way to major sin and corruption even in high places?

Have we lost our 'status' as a "Christian" nation?

Often referred to as the silent majority , are **we guilty** of not speaking out?---  
by voting - letters to editors - writing the TV networks, etc. along with praying?

I don't think things have really changed, I think that the majority of people still hold to good, moral character, but it is **overshadowed** by a very small vocal portion of the population who make the headlines and news reports. Good moral lives don't make news material. So just like Nathaniel's perspective of Nazareth, I don't think it (**the negative view**) was representative of the mainstream population.

Remember, Elijah's despair when he protested to God that - "only I am left", but God said "I have 7,000 who are still faithful to me just like you."(1 Kings 19:10-18)

**(1 Ki 19:14 NIV)** He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

**(1 Ki 19:18 NIV)** Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel--all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him."

Our son, Michael, has found that many foreigners' view of America is very distorted because of what they observe reported on TV & in the newspapers, **movies, & now the internet, etc.** Even people in other parts of our own country often view cities such as Houston, **Chicago & New York City** in such a way that they are afraid to visit those areas. And, I think the same thing happens here with us regarding many other countries. **On hearing that we were from Texas, people have actually asked if we still have problems with Indians! (example of German friend of Michael in France studying Aerospace Engineering – his mother afraid for him to come to Houston area.)**

In Nazareth, there is a church built over the location of a well fed by a natural spring that supposedly dates back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century (oldest construction dates to 4<sup>th</sup> century).

The main structure in front was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century over an earlier 13<sup>th</sup> century structure that, in turn, was constructed over the 4<sup>th</sup> century structure and this ancient water source. It could have been a water source that Mary and her children may have drawn water from as Jesus was growing up. We can only know for sure that they would have obtained water from a similar source somewhere in the area, if not this one.

One thing I found very interesting was a carpenter's shop just a few blocks away. Even though it had relatively modern power equipment, I reflected back on Jesus' family occupation perhaps very close by.

**(Mark 6:3 NIV)** Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?"

**Jesus was grown at this time, but can't you imagine seeing a family of at least 7 playing around Joseph's shop? The word translated 'carpenter'**

could have also referred to a stone mason, as well, which was very common in this area.

When John was preaching & baptizing in the Jordon River, Jesus left Nazareth and went to John to be baptized. **About 15 miles to the East.**

**(Mark 1:9 NIV)** At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

Jesus returned to Nazareth and taught in the Synagogue, but the people were not receptive (Mk 6:4), so he soon moved on to Capernaum. (Matt 4:13)

**(Mark 6:4 NIV)** Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor."

**(Mat 4:13 NIV)** Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali--

Jesus did his first miracle in Cana, a small village about 9 miles north of Nazareth. Cana is surrounded by green rolling hills.

**Was this first miracle in God's 'plan', or was this beginning of miracles 'allowed' in order for Jesus to honor his mother's request?**

**(Mat 15:3-4 NIV)** Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? {4} For God said, 'Honor your father and mother'

**(John 2:4 NIV)** "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."

Nathaniel was from the village of Cana.

**(John 21:2 NIV)** Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.

**Probably the best explanation of Nathaniel's initial comment – neighboring town competition!**

Even though he had been born in Bethlehem, and had then lived in Egypt for a short time, the people always identified Jesus as being from Nazareth, (Mat 21:11 NIV) The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

John encouraged the early Christians to be faithful in spite of whatever they may face, even death itself! How do we stack up today?

**(Rev 2:10 NIV)** Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

**Would our faithfulness today be as strong and dedicated as the First Century Christians if we faced similar situations as they did? There are people around the world who are very much in that same situation!**

**(Luke 1:26-27 NIV)** In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to **Nazareth**, a town in Galilee, {27} to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

**(Luke 2:4 NIV)** So Joseph also went up from the town of **Nazareth** in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

**(Mat 2:23 NIV)** and he went and lived in a town called **Nazareth**. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

**(Luke 2:39-41 NIV)** When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. {40} And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. {41} Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover.

**(Luke 2:51-52 NIV)** Then he went down to **Nazareth** with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. {52} And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

**(John 1:43-46 NIV)** The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Follow me." {44} Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of **Bethsaida**. {45} Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of **Nazareth**, the son of Joseph." {46} "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

**Bethsaida was thought to have been on the North shore of the Sea of Galilee, just east of Capernaum. Not there today (but several of the towns that my great grandparents lived in here in Texas are no longer here.)**

**(Mark 6:1 NIV)** Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples.

**(John 2:1-11 NIV)** On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, {2} and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. {3} When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine." {4} "Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." {5} His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." {6} Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. {7} Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim. {8} Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet." They did so, {9} and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside {10} and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now." {11} This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.

**(Mark 6:2-6 NIV)** When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. "Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles! {3} Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him. {4} Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor." {5} He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. {6} And he was amazed at their lack of faith. Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

**(Mat 26:71 NIV)** Then he went out to the gateway, where another girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with **Jesus of Nazareth**."

**(Acts 4:10-12 NIV)** then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of **Jesus Christ of Nazareth**, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. {11} He is "'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.' {12} Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."