

A Prophet In His Own Country

- A. **MAT 13:53-58; MAR 6:1-6; LUK 4:16-31; JOH 4:43-46.**
- B. (**MAR 6:4**) But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.
- C. The words of these passages were not to the credit of those in Nazareth who were offended.
1. The offence that they took to Jesus is connected with their unbelief, a sin. **JOH 16:9.**
 2. Their contempt of Jesus' teaching went so far that they attempted to kill Him.
- D. Because a prophet's ministry will not be accepted by a people does not necessarily mean that God will not send him to them. **MAT 23:34.**
1. God sent Jesus to Nazareth. **LUK 4:18.**
 2. God sent Ezekiel to his own people and told him in advance they would not accept him. **EZE 3:4-11.**
 3. (**1CO 1:28**) And things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are.
- E. No one is ever justified in resisting a prophet of God for any reason, most especially the Lord Jesus Christ. **ACT 3:22-23; 7:37-39, 51-52.**
1. Every soul, including his nearer as well as his distant kin, was held responsible to obey the teaching of the Prophet God would raise up *from among his brethren*.
 2. That the prophet was from one's kin does not justify rejecting him.
 3. Cain slew his brother Abel, a prophet of God, and was judged by God for doing so. **LUK 11:49-51.**
 4. Korah the Levite led a rebellion against Moses and Aaron assuming the other Levites had as much right to the priesthood as they. **NUM 16:1-11.**
 - a. They had a "who do you think you are?" attitude toward Moses and Aaron.
 - b. They did not respect the fact that God had chosen their brethren to be over them.
 5. The men of Anathoth, Jeremiah's brethren, were severely judged of God for persecuting Jeremiah. **JER 11:18-23; 12:6.**
- F. The priests and Levites who were teachers of the law in Israel were drawn from their own country and kin. **DEU 33:8-11.**
1. Levites were given cities to dwell in throughout the twelve tribes of Israel. **JOS 21:1-8.**
 2. Thus there were Levites throughout all the country of Israel.
- G. Israel was forbidden to set any king over them which *was not their brother*. **DEU 17:15.**
- H. Consider this information we are given about New Testament preachers.
1. Being from a country other than one's own was never given as a qualification for the office of bishop. **1TI 3:1-7; TIT 1:5-9.**
 2. The apostles ordained elders "...in every church..." (**ACT 14:23**).
 3. Titus was commanded to ordain elders "...in every city..." (**TIT 1:5**).
- I. Jesus' brethren did not believe on him at first (**JOH 7:5**), but later they did (**ACT 1:14**). Compare this with Joseph's brethren who also rejected him at first only later to submit to him.
- J. Matthew Henry observed: "Note, (1.) Prophets ought to have honour, because God has put honour upon them and we do or may receive benefit by them. (2.) The honour due to the Lord's prophets has very often been denied them, and contempt put upon them. (3.) This *due* honour is more frequently denied them *in their own country*; see Luk 4:24; Mat 13:57. Not that it is universally true (no rule but has some exceptions), but it holds for the most part. Joseph, when he began to be a prophet, was most hated by his brethren; David was disdained by his brother (1Sa 17:28); Jeremiah was maligned by the men of Anathoth (Jer 11:21), Paul by his countrymen the Jews; and Christ's near kinsmen spoke most slightly of him, Joh 7:5. Men's pride and envy make them scorn to be instructed by those who once were their school-fellows and play-fellows. Desire of novelty,

and of that which is far-fetched and dear-bought, and seems to drop out of the sky to them, makes them despise those persons and things which they have been long used to and know the rise of.” (Matthew Henry Commentary on JOH 4:44)

- K. Jesus was citing a proverb, an observation about human nature.
1. proverb: A short pithy saying in common and recognized use; a concise sentence, often metaphorical or alliterative in form, which is held to express some truth ascertained by experience or observation and familiar to all.
 2. The modern proverb that contains the same idea is “Familiarity breeds contempt.”
 3. Proverbs admit of exceptions.
 4. Compare this with other proverbs which also cite general observations about human nature but have exceptions.
 - a. **PRO 18:11**. Job was a rich man who did not trust in his riches. **JOB 31:24-25**.
 - b. **PRO 18:19**. One who is led by the wisdom from above is not so hard to be reconciled. **JAM 3:17**.
 - c. **PRO 18:23**. Job did not answer roughly, but was tender to the intreaties of the poor **JOB 31:16-22**.
- L. It is the grace of God that enables men to overcome the tendencies and prejudices of fallen human nature.
1. Consider the tendencies of fallen human nature as described in **ROM 3:10-18** and note how divine grace overcomes them.
 2. Jesus “...came unto his own, and his own received him not.” But there were those who did receive him because of God's grace in the new birth. **JOH 1:11-13**.
 3. (**2CO 5:16**) Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.
 - a. Compare this text with **2CO 11:18; JOH 8:15**.
 - b. This applies to those of our country, house, and kin.
 - c. Our relationship to someone in the flesh should have no bearing on our relationship to them in the church either for them or against them. **1TI 6:2; JAM 2:1**.
- M. Consider that after a period of time the newness wears off and any man becomes familiar.
- N. Consider that people often enlist with a new and foreign teacher because of novelty only to become disinterested when the novelty wears off or they hear something they don't like. **ACT 17:21, 32**.
- O. A man assuming a pastorate in his own country does not have the advantage of novelty to enhance his appeal. However, this can work to his advantage in that people are not likely to follow him simply because he is new and different.
- P. Focusing on the man rather than on his ministry is a mark of carnality and spiritual immaturity **1CO 3:1-9**.
- a. Such are walking as men.
 - b. We should not walk according to ways of men, such as Jesus mentioned in this proverb, but according to the Spirit of God.
- Q. People should love God's people and God's ministers in the truth *for the work's sake and the truth's sake*. Truth will outlast the novelty of our experiences and be with us forever. **1TH 5:12-13; 2JO 1:1-2; 2CO 4:2**.
- R. Conclusion: This saying of our Lord is a maxim of human nature and not a rule for deciding who should be set as a pastor in a church.