

ASTONISHING THINGS OF THE BIBLE

by John Isaac Edwards

Acts 13 reports the work of Barnabas and Saul on the island of Cyprus. They encounter Sergius Paulus, the deputy of the country, “*who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God*” (v. 7), and Elymas the sorcerer, who sought “*to turn away the deputy from the faith*” (v. 8). Verse 12 says, “*Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being **astonished** at the doctrine of the Lord.*” To be astonished is to be amazed or thrown into wonderment. Let me call to our attention some astonishing things of the Bible.

1) THE LORD’S DOCTRINE.

The New Testament reveals a number of astonishing things said and taught by the Lord. When Jesus ended His Sermon on the Mount sayings, “*...the people were **astonished** at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes*” (Mt. 7:28-29). Matthew 13 records, “*And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were **astonished**, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?*” (v. 54). When Jesus answered the Sadducees’ resurrection question it is said, “*And when the multitude heard*

*this, they were **astonished** at his doctrine*” (Mt. 22:33). As the Lord taught about riches in Mark 10, “*...the disciples were **astonished** at his words....*” (v. 24). “*And they were **astonished** out of measure...*” (v. 26). Mark 11:18 states, “*...all the people was **astonished** at his doctrine.*”

2) **RAISING OF JAIRUS’ DAUGHTER.** Mark 5 tells of a synagogue ruler named Jairus who fell at Jesus’ feet, “*And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray thee, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live*” (vv. 22-23). As Jesus went with him, there came one to announce, “*Thy daughter is dead...*” (v. 35). Entering the ruler’s house, Jesus “*took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Tal-i-thacu-mi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were **astonished with great astonishment***” (vv. 41-42). This shows Jesus’ power over death.

3) **THE DEAF HEARING AND THE DUMB SPEAKING.** It was prophesied, “*Then the eyes*

of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing...” (Is. 35:5-6). Mark 7 finds deaf ears being unstopped and the dumb tongue singing! “*And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him*” (v. 32). When “*his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain*” (v. 35), they “*were **beyond measure astonished**, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak*” (v. 37).

4) **A GREAT DRAUGHT OF FISH.** After a night of fishing with no success, the Lord directed Simon, “*Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught*” (Lk. 5:4). Would to God we would have respect for the Lord and His word as expressed in Simon’s response: “*Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net*” (v. 5). Now watch what happens! “*And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned*

unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink" (vv. 6-7). Thus, "...he was **astonished**, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken" (v. 9). What a fishing report!

5) THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS. Luke 24 contains an account of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and other women went unto the sepulchre of Jesus very early Sunday morning to find the tomb empty! They "returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest" (v. 9). "And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not" (v. 11). On the road to Emmaus, two of them had a conversation with the risen Lord, in which it was said, "Yea, and certain women also of our company made us **astonished**, which were early at the sepulchre; And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen

a vision of angels, which said that he was alive" (vv. 22-23). Astonishing!

6) THE HOLY SPIRIT FALLING ON THE GENTILES. One of three miracles associated with the conversion of the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius was the Holy Spirit falling on them. In the historical account set forth in Acts 10 it is said, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were **astonished**, as many as came with Peter; because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost" (vv. 44-45). This shows such was an unusual, exceptional thing and not a regular, expected occurrence! The purpose was to convince the circumcision, the Jews, "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:18; 15:7-11).

7) PETER KNOCKING AT THE DOOR. If you went to a service to pray for rain, would you take your umbrella? When Peter was apprehended and put in prison with sixteen soldiers

keeping him, "many were gathered together praying" at Mary's house (v. 12). Would you have been surprised "as Peter knocked at the door" (v. 13)? "But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened the door, and saw him, they were **astonished**" (v. 16). This shows the astonishing power of prayer!

8) THE LORD APPEARING UNTO SAUL. Acts 9 discovers Saul journeying to Damascus with arrest warrants in hand to bind the Lord's disciples. "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and **astonished** said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? ..." (vv. 3-6). The Lord made it possible for this "chief of sinners" to be saved (1 Tim. 1:15; Acts 22:16).

The Bible is an astonishing book!

The Terre Haute **SPEAKER** is published weekly by the church of Christ at Terre Haute, Indiana.

Assembling At:
4017 E Margaret DR
Terre Haute, IN 47803
[Exit 11 (I-70) W on HWY 46,
W on Margaret DR approx. 1 mile]

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