

6.05.22 ~ Luke 4:14-30, Jesus is Rejected in His Home Town

Read Luke 4:14-15... It would appear from this narrative, that after the temptations and taunting by the devil, Jesus returned to Galilee and word of Him spread throughout the region.

Luke says Jesus was empowered by the Holy Spirit (cf. **Luke 4:1**), Jesus was "full" [*plērēs = to be saturated or permeated thoroughly with*] of the holy Spirit. **John 1:14** says Jesus was full of grace and truth.

Luke's narrative from **4:14-9:50** focuses on Jesus ministry in and around Galilee, as do the narratives of **Matthew 4:13-18:35**, and **Mark 1:14-9:50**, covering a period of about 1.5 years.

John's gospel (**1:19-42; 2:13-3:36**) on the other hand, gives attention to Jesus' ministry in Judea, immediately following His baptism (by John at the Jordan) and the 40 days of testing (by the devil) in the wilderness. John's narrative has Jesus ministering in Judea for a year or so, before going to Nazareth, although He did make trips to Galilee to select His disciples.

See again Luke 4:15... Jesus' priority and practice was to teach at the synagogues throughout Galilee's some 200+ towns/villages [the requirement for a synagogue was a minimum of 10 Jewish men. Synagogues were built of stone, and oriented toward Jerusalem].

During the time of Christ, Jerusalem itself had over 400 synagogues. The purpose of the synagogue was to provide instruction from the Law and the Prophets. Most synagogues didn't have a full-time pastor/rabbi, but there was always a ruler of the synagogue and a council of the leading men of the town/village.

Larger towns had a Sanhedrin [*court, assembly*] consisting of 23 elders/judges and the ruler of the synagogue; whereas the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem had 71 elders/judges and the current Chief Priest: Israel's Supreme Court for all civil and religious matters.

A typical Synagogue Service might be, as follows:

- 1.** Thanksgiving/Blessing given before the reading of the Shemâ (**Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21; Numbers 15:37-41**).
- 2.** Prayer
- 3.** Reading of a passage from the Pentateuch (in Hebrew, followed by translation into Aramaic).
- 4.** Reading of a passage from the Prophets (in Hebrew, followed by translation into Aramaic).
- 5.** Sermon (exhortation/instruction) from the content of the Scripture Reading.
- 6.** Benediction by a priest, but if no priest is available, one of the elders provides a closing prayer.

Read Luke 4:16-21... Jesus returns for the first time to His boyhood home, about 1.5 years after beginning His ministry.

We don't know much about His boyhood years, except the time when He was 12 years old, in Jerusalem with His extended family for Passover (**Luke 2:41-47**). Jesus had gone to the temple and was speaking with the Rabbis/Teachers; and evidently, Jesus' family left to return to Nazareth and later discover Jesus wasn't among them, so they returned and found Him three days later (cf. **Luke 2:48-49**) and Mary said to Him, "Son, why have You treated us this way? Behold, Your father and I have been anxiously looking for You."

To which Jesus said, "Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?"

Luke closes that narrative (**Luke 2:50-52**) with, "But they did not understand the statement which He had made to them. And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

See again Luke 4:16-19... Jesus now grown up, affirmed by God the Father, empowered by God the Holy Spirit, enters the synagogue in Nazareth on the Sabbath. He is handed the scroll of Isaiah and He stands up to read the text from **Isaiah 61:1-2**.

Jesus declares His mission is to preach the gospel to those who are spiritually poor, i.e., those who are without the knowledge of salvation and the forgiveness of sins. Jesus came to proclaim *release* [lit. *forgiveness*] to all who are captives of sin. To give sight to those who are spiritually blind and set free those who are spiritually oppressed.

Psalms 82:5, "They do not know nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness," **Jeremiah 5:21**, "O foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see; who have ears but do not hear."

John 3:19-20, "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed."

2Corinthians 4:4-6, "The god of this world [Satan] has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

John 8:12, Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."

Jesus came to save us from the darkness of deception and damnation that takes captive and corrupts the hearts of those who reject God's Son. He came to free us from condemnation and judgement through the person of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. He came (**Luke 4:19**) "To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."

We were all doomed before Christ's coming, but through Him we receive God's gift, the forgiveness of sins, that we might live for Him (cf. **Ephesians 2:1-10**); those who are saved will live differently (**Ephesians 5:7-10**), "For you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light... ..trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord."

See again Luke 4:20... After reading the text, Jesus hands the scroll to the attendant, then sat down. Rabbis stood, everyone in the synagogue stood, when the Scripture was read; then they sat down, at which time the teacher would explain the passage.

But Jesus simply says (**verse 21**), "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing (ears)," speaking of the hard-hearted Jesus says, (**Matthew 13:13**), "while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand."

No doubt, other rabbis had read this passage at synagogue, which talks about what will be fulfilled when the Messiah comes; but Jesus basically says, I AM HIM! **Read Luke 4:22...** At first, everyone is amazed at the manner and the message of Jesus' teaching. The truth is, no one had ever taught with the authority and wisdom and power that Jesus displayed. See **Luke 4:31-32**.

The people of Nazareth, familiar with Joseph and Mary, were no doubt thinking, how could this Jesus, their son, be the Messiah. It was thought that no one would know where the Messiah was from (see **John 7:25-29**).

Read Luke 4:23-24... Knowing what was in their minds, that they were thinking, "prove it, put up or shut up," so Jesus says, you want Me to prove myself to you by doing similar miracles to the ones I did (**Luke 4:33-37**) in Capernaum?

Jesus tells them no prophet is respected or welcomed in his own hometown. Familiarity often breeds contempt, and a person of renown often gets no respect from his own family and friends, compared to that of his followers or students.

Read Luke 4:25-27... Jesus now speaks to the people of two prophets who, like Him, were not welcomed or respected by Israel: Elijah and Elisha.

Elijah prophesied during the reign of the wicked king Ahab, whose Gentile wife (Jezebel) led him and the nation into Baal worship, a demonic deity of the Canaanites. God used Elijah to bring a 3.5 year draught that resulted in a famine, as a curse on Israel for turning away from God.

Jesus reminds the people how Elijah, although there were many widows in the land at that time, did not help any of them, but instead went to a God-fearing Gentile widow named Zarephath, who lived in Sidon (the homeland of Jezebel).

Jesus also reminds the people of the story of Elisha who healed a Gentile leper, named Naaman, who was captain of the Syrian army, an enemy of Israel. There were many lepers in Israel at that time, but Naaman believed in the God of Israel and was healed.

Why did Jesus bring up two prophets who were used to help a Gentile widow and heal a Gentile leper, during a time when Israel had many widows and lepers who did not receive any help?

Jesus made it clear that those who please God are those who believe in and honor Him, not those who claim ancestral heritage, engage in religious rituals, or boast of anything received or achieved through human effort or acquisition.

Read Luke 4:28-30... It would appear that the people in the synagogue know exactly what Jesus is saying - being a Jew won't save you, unless you become like the outcast Gentile widow and the outcast Gentile leper; both of whom were without hope, until they believed in God to help and heal them.

The crowd became so enraged that they charged Jesus and drove Him to the edge of the cliff, on which Nazareth was built. Their intent was to throw Jesus to His death, but He passed "through their midst." Several times the religious leaders attempted to capture Jesus (cf. **John 7:30; 8:59; 10:39**), but He hid Himself, eluded them, and went on His way, because "His hour had not yet come."

The people in Jesus' hometown rejected Him as their Messiah; they remained spiritually poor, blind, oppressed, and captive to sin; for they were unwilling to believe in Christ to receive forgiveness for their sins and eternal life.

In **Matthew 16:13-14** we are told, "Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, Who do people say that the Son of Man is? And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.'" Then Jesus asked them the question that every person will have to answer on this side of heaven and hell. **Matthew 16:15**, "But who do you say that I am?" To which Simon Peter answered, **Matthew 16:16**, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

John 20:31 tells us the reason for the Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus, "these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

1John 5:11-13, "And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life."

Pastor Mike
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