

Rejected (Luke 4:16-30)

1. The Mission of Jesus (v.16-20)

- Approximately one year has transpired between Jesus' empowerment of the Holy Spirit for public ministry in Galilee to His return to His hometown in Nazareth (v.14).
- When Jesus returns to Nazareth, he is the visiting rabbi (teacher) in the synagogue at Nazareth. This synagogue had a copy of the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, and Jesus selected the text of His teaching, a combination of Isaiah 58:6 and 61:1-2.
- His mission is to: "Proclaim good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to the captives, give sight to the blind, and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (v.18-19).

Who are the poor?

- Primarily those aware of their spiritual poverty, which is often the fruit of economic or physical poverty.
- Economic poverty during Jesus' time was not always due to a deliberate choice but significant life circumstances. In providence, these circumstances have softened their hearts to receive the good news of forgiveness of sin, though the reason for their poverty may not have been the result of sin.

What is the year of the Lord's favor?

- It is an allusion to the Year of Jubilee (Lev.25), where every 50 years, all debts held by Jews were canceled, and land confiscated from debt was restored to the family/clan. The year of the Lord's favor is also an allusion to release from Satan's power and bondage (Lk. 8:26-39; 13:10-17; Acts 10:38; 1 Jn. 3:8).

The dawn of salvation has come as the long-awaited, anointed Messiah proclaims the good news of His arrival: the poor, blind, and oppressed who are all burdened with the weight of sin will be forgiven as the "age of Jubilee" commences.

2. The Offense of Jesus (v.21-30)

- When Jesus finished His address, He returned the scroll to the attendant and sat down. Whether this was His shortest sermon or a summary of the message itself, the message is clear: He is the servant of YHWH sent to proclaim God's favorable time of forgiveness to sinners (Isa. 59-61). He is here!
- All eyes in the synagogue were not only "fixed on Him" in amazement, but they also spoke well of Him (v.20, 22). This is no surprise, as He grew in favor of God and man (2:40, 52).
- Their question, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" was not intended to be degrading, but instead of surprise: "how can this be that we have a carpenter-rabbi-miracle worker?"
- Jesus already knows what is in man (John 2:25) and anticipates their wicked hearts and selfish doubts (v.22-23):
 - He alludes to the doubts first-century Palestinian patients had in their doctors and includes their expectations for a miracle.
 - The Nazarenes want Jesus to perform the same miracles He supposedly did in Capernaum (v.31-41; Mark 6). Luke has not ordered His account chronologically but thematically (Lk. 1:3).
- Jesus rebukes the Nazarenes for following the typical pattern of Israel; they reject the prophet God has sent to bring them to repentance.

Jesus condenses two accounts of two great prophets sent to the nation of Israel:

- A. Elijah (1 Kings 17:8-16): Elijah is sent to a poor Gentile widow with a son during the famine.
- B. Elisha (2 Kings 5:1-15): Elisha encounters a Gentile leper, Naaman, a Syrian army commander.

Why did Jesus allude to these two accounts?

- Elijah, Elisha, and Jesus were all *sent* to Gentiles, not Jews (v.18).
- Elijah was sent to a poor widow, while Elisha was sent to a rich man.
 - While there were poor Jewish widows during the time of Elijah and unclean lepers during the time of Elisha in Israel, God sent His prophets to the Gentiles.
 - Embedded in the seed of the promise to the seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15) is the promise of deliverance to the nations (Gen. 12:1-3; Lk. 2:32).
- Jesus compares the current generation to the Jews of one of the least spiritual times in the history of Israel.
- Both Gentiles (the widow and Naaman) had to believe God before they experienced the miracle.
- Unlike these Gentiles during the time of Elijah and Elisha, Nazareth is Israel's "poster child"; they demand signs before they believe (1 Cor. 1:22) and are spiritually destitute.

The Nazarenes in the synagogue, who at first marveled, are filled with wrath (v.29). Why?

- He will not perform any miracles because of their hard-heartedness and unbelief.
- He will not honor His hometown.
- They suspect He will perform miracles for the Gentiles instead of the Jews.
- In anger, some may have been "cut to the heart" in His rebuke and refused to worship Him if he did not perform a miracle.

They miss the whole point of His sermon; they are the poor, blind, and oppressed.

- The service in the synagogue at Nazareth did not close with the Aaronic blessing (Num. 6:22-27), for the attendees were filled with fury.
- In a mob-like fashion, they "rose" and drove Him to the cliff's precipice so they could throw Him off. They treat Jesus as a false prophet that was worthy of complete rejection. Since Jesus would perform no miracle in their midst, they considered him a false prophet (Deut. 13:5-6).
- While the Torah did not prescribe this "death" penalty, the Nazarenes were so furious with Christ's indictment for their unbelief that they sought to kill him (v.29).
- Jesus escaped the mob by simply "passing through their midst."

Points of Application:

- A.
- B.
- C.
- D.