

JESUS IN NAZARETH

TEXT: LUKE 4:14-30

INTRODUCTION:

1. Our Lord was in Judea for fourteen months. After John the Baptist was put in prison (cf. 3:19, 20), our Lord "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee" (4:14).
2. Galilee was about 70 miles north of Jerusalem. On the east was the upper Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee.
3. The Sea of Galilee is actually a lake, and it is called "the lake of Gennesaret" in Luke 5:1.
4. It is called "the sea of Tiberias" in John 6:1 and 21:1. John 6:1 says, "After these things Jesus went over the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias."
5. In the Old Testament, it is called the "sea of Chinnereth" (Numbers 34:11; Joshua 13:27), and the "sea of Chinneroth" (Joshua 12:3).
6. The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* says, "In Galilee also the Messianic hope was cherished with the deepest intensity. When the Messiah appeared, with His own Galilean upbringing, it was from the north-countrymen that He received the warmest welcome, and among them His appeal elicited the most gratifying response."
7. Luke 4:14 says, "And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about."
8. John 4:45 says, "Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast."
9. Between Luke 4:13 and 14 comes chronologically all the events recorded in John chapters 2 through 5 -- the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, our Lord's trip to Jerusalem for the passover, His conversation with Nicodemus, His return to Galilee, His conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well, etc.
10. One of the more notable cities in Galilee was Nazareth, the city of our Lord's youth and young adulthood (4:16).
11. Matthew 21:11 says, "And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."
12. When the apostle Paul stood before Agrippa, he said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 26:9).

13. Our Lord is never referred to as "Jesus of Bethlehem." It is always "Jesus of Nazareth." When the orator named Tertullus stood before Felix, he falsely accused Paul, and said, "For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5).

I. THE LESSON FROM ISAIAH (61:1, 2)

1. Luke 4:1 says our Lord was full of the Holy Spirit, and was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. Then verse 14 says, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."
2. So it is appropriate that when our Lord went into the synagogue in Nazareth and opened the Scriptures, he read from the prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me" (Luke 4:18; cf. Isaiah 61:1).
3. Peter said in Acts 10:38, "That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power."
4. If our Lord needed to be anointed with the Holy Spirit, how much do you and I?
5. Matthew Henry said, "Those whom God *appoints* to any service, He *anoints* for it."
6. Our Lord used the word "preach" three times in Luke 4:18 and 19.
7. Matthew 4:17 says, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
8. This has always been God's program -- preaching the Gospel (Luke 4:18).
9. Jonah 3:2 says the LORD said to Jonah, "Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."
10. Matthew 3:2 says, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea."
11. Luke 9:6 says the twelve disciples "went through the towns, preaching the gospel."
12. Acts 8:4 says, "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
13. Acts 20:9 says, "Paul was long preaching."
14. First Corinthians 1:18 says, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."
15. Titus 1:3 says God has "manifested his word through preaching."

16. Reading from Isaiah 61:1, our Lord said, "He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted" (Luke 4:18). There are many brokenhearted people in this sad sinful world, and the Gospel is their only cure.
17. Our Lord preached "deliverance to the captives" (4:18), that is, those captivated by sin. Our Lord said in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
18. We have great freedom here in America, but sadly many people are slaves to sin. They are spiritually blind, and bruised from sin (4:18).
19. Second Corinthians 4:4 says Satan "hath blinded the minds of them which believe not."
20. Of course, this prophecy was literally fulfilled as well. In John 9 we read about the blind man healed by the pool of Siloam.
21. In Matthew 9 he gave eyesight to two blind men.
22. In Matthew 11:5, our Lord said to two disciples of John the Baptist, "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."
23. In the synagogue in Nazareth, our Lord stopped reading after, "To preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (4:19), which is in the middle of Isaiah 61:2. He did not read, "And the day of vengeance of our God" (61:2b).
24. Instead, "He closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down" (Luke 4:20).
25. Our Lord stopped where He did because "the day of vengeance of our God" is still future. Today is the day of grace. Today we "preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:19).
26. But God's day of grace will soon be over, and God's day of vengeance will dawn. It is important to note that God's period of grace is referred to as a "year," but His time of vengeance is but a "day."
27. But it will be a terrible day for those without Christ!

II. THE MESSAGE FROM OUR LORD

1. Luke 4:20 says the eyes of all them were "fastened" on our Lord. Their eyes were intently fixed on Him, waiting to see what explanation He would give of the words He just read from the prophet Isaiah.
2. Our Lord said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (4:21). He would not have said that had He read the rest of Isaiah 61:2 -- "And the day of vengeance of our God."

3. That part of Isaiah's prophecy will not be fulfilled until the coming tribulation (cf. Luke 21:20-28, esp. vs. 22).
4. Commentators believe that our Lord probably said much more than is here recorded, but Luke only preserved the substance of His discourse.

III. THE RESPONSE FROM THE PEOPLE

1. Our Lord's message was well received (4:22). The people "wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." Our Lord's words were much different from the cold, hard and unfeeling words of the Pharisees.
2. But their attitude changed very quickly. Soon they "were filled with wrath" (4:28).
3. Soon the same people who spoke well of Him and marveled at His gracious words wanted to kill Him by throwing Him off a cliff (4:29, 30).
4. Why were they so full of murderous rage? Our Lord's "proverb" was probably in common use at that time (4:23).
5. The people in Nazareth had heard of our Lord's miracles in Capernaum, and they wanted to see similar miracles there in His hometown as well (4:23).
6. This indicates that Christ had before this performed miracles in Capernaum, though Luke has not recorded them. The end of John 4 records the miraculous healing of the nobleman's son in Capernaum, which probably had taken place earlier.
7. Capernaum was not very far from Nazareth. It was our Lord's adopted hometown. Albert Barnes said, "It is not improbable that some of those who then heard him might have been present and witnessed some of his miracles at Capernaum."
8. They were probably jealous of Capernaum, and this contributed to their anger.
9. The people of Nazareth demanded that our Lord would show them evidence by miracles why they should believe in Him, and our Lord told them why He would not give them their evidence (4:24-27).
10. Undoubtedly, our Lord's reference to Gentiles such as the widow woman in Sidon, and the leprous Naaman the Syrian infuriated the proud people of Nazareth.
11. They were very proud and did not see themselves as poor, brokenhearted captives, blind and bruised (4:18).

12. Matthew 13:58 describes the situation in Nazareth, "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

CONCLUSION:

1. Reading from Isaiah 61:1, our Lord said, "He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted" (Luke 4:18).
2. D .L. Moody often preached to brokenhearted sinners, with wonderful results. This is a true story he told about a young soldier in the Civil War who was sentenced to be shot.

During the war I remember a young man, not twenty, who was court-martialed down in the front and sentenced to be shot. The story was this: The young fellow had enlisted. He was not obliged to, but he went off with another young man. They were what we would call "chums." One night this companion was ordered out' on picket duty, and he asked the young man to go for him. The next night he was ordered out himself; and having been awake two nights, and not being used to it, fell asleep at his post, and for the offense he was tried and sentenced to death. It was right after the order issued by the President that no interference would be allowed in cases of this kind. This sort of thing had become too frequent, and it must be stopped. When the news reached the father and mother in Vermont it nearly broke their hearts. The thought that their son should be shot was too great for them. They had no hope that he would be saved by anything they could do. But they had a little daughter who had read the life of Abraham Lincoln, and knew how he had loved his own children, and she said: "If Abraham Lincoln knew how my father and mother loved my brother he wouldn't let him be shot." That little girl thought this matter over and made up her mind to see the President. She went to the White House, and the sentinel, when he saw her imploring looks, passed her in, and when she came to the door and told the private secretary that she wanted to see the President, he could not refuse her. She came into the chamber and found Abraham Lincoln surrounded by his generals and counselors, and when he saw the little country girl he asked her what she wanted. The little maid told her plain, simple story — how her brother, whom her father and mother loved very dearly, had been sentenced to be shot; how they were mourning for him, and if he was to die in that way it would break their hearts. The President's heart was touched with compassion, and he immediately sent a dispatch canceling the sentence and giving the boy a parole so that he could come home and see that father and mother. I just tell you this to show you how Abraham Lincoln's heart was moved by compassion for the sorrow of that father and mother, and if he

showed so much do you think the Son of God will not have compassion upon you, sinner, if you only take that crushed, bruised heart to him?