



Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth

Story Elements

- **Text:** Luke 4:16-30
- **Setting:** circa AD 27 in Nazareth, Galilee
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, and the people of Nazareth
- **Plot:** Jesus preaches in his hometown synagogue, but he (and his message) is rejected.
- **Key word(s):** “_____” – which occurs three times in two verses (vv 18-19)
Preaching was a main activity of the Messiah (cf. v 43) with which he announced the good news of redemption and is a called unbelievers to repentance.
- **Climax:** **Luke 4:21** *And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.* This marks the highpoint of the story because it is the point of decision for the hearers: will they believe Jesus of Nazareth is the prophesied One? or will they reject him?

Synagogue Worship

1. (v 16) Having departed from Capernaum, and arriving at Nazareth, Jesus attended synagogue worship on the Sabbath, *as was his custom.*

APPLICATION → By his example, Jesus “would have us know we are not lightly to forsake any _____ of worshippers, which profess to respect the name, the day, and the book of God...If there be but two or three in the congregation who meet in the name of Jesus, there is a special blessing promised. But there is no like blessing promised to him who tarries at home.”¹

2. Regarding synagogue worship:
 - (a) It was developed during the _____ captivity when the temple was in disrepair and many Jews were dispersed into pagan lands. Instead of temple worship, pious Jews gathered in homes for Scripture reading, teaching, and prayer. After the temple was rebuilt, and Jews began to return from captivity, the synagogue system of worship continued to grow in usage wherever Jewish communities were found.
 - (b) The synagogue is considered by many to be the precursor to local _____ worship. Edersheim shows how this is an “illustration how the dying of Israel is ever life to the world...For the Synagogue became the cradle of the Church. Without it, as indeed without Israel’s dispersion, the Church Universal would, humanely speaking, have been impossible.”²
 - (c) During a synagogue service, there were many prayers made, and several passages read, and a sermon or a lesson given. These responsibilities were managed and delegated by the chief ruler of the synagogue – who would’ve asked “Jesus to act for that Sabbath as the *Sheliach Tsibbur*. For according to the Mishnah, the person who read in the Synagogue the portion from the Prophets, was also expected to conduct the devotions, at least in greater part.”³

Sermon Preached

3. (vv 17-18) Jesus took the scroll of Isaiah and read from 61:1-2.
 - (a) There is a slight difference between what is in Isaiah and what the Savior read aloud. Notice:

¹ J.C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels, Vol. II* (Grand Rapids: Baker House, 2007) 115-116. Emphasis original

² Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, <https://ccl.org/ccl/edersheim/lifetimes/lifetimes.viii.xi.html>

³ Ibid.

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, **and recovering of sight to the blind**, to set at liberty them that are bruised, **19** To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God *is* upon me; Because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; **2** To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord;

- (b) The phrase *recovering of sight to the blind* is from Isaiah 42:7. Jesus' practice of combining different biblical phrases was "not only in accordance with Jewish custom, but formed part of the favourite mode of teaching - the *Charaz* - or stringing, like _____, passage to passage, illustrative of each other."⁴
- (c) (vv 20-21) After reading Scripture (which was done standing) Jesus sat and began to teach the people that the passage (which everyone understood to refer to the Messiah) was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus plainly and publicly announced to the people of his hometown that he was the Christ.
4. (v 22) After Jesus sat down, he would've preached a sermon (not recorded by Luke), elaborating on what he had just read and said. Christ's sermon received a startling mix of two reactions:
- (a) _____ – the people *bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words*. "They could not find any flaw in the exposition of Scripture they had heard. They could not deny the beauty of the well-chosen language to which they had listened. But their hearts were utterly unmoved and unaffected."⁵
- (b) _____ – while they approved his preaching, they despised his person. They could not reconcile his gracious words with the fact that he was *Joseph's son* – a common man from a common family.

Savior Rejected

5. (v 23) Jesus addressed their contempt of him squarely, *Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself*. Barnes explains: "Suppose that a man should attempt to heal another when he was himself diseased in the same manner; it would be natural to ask him *first* to cure himself, and thus to render it manifest that he was worthy of confidence."⁶ In short, they wanted Jesus to _____ himself by doing miracles in Nazareth as he had done in other places.
6. (v 24) But Jesus did not perform miracles to demanding _____, but to manifest his power to those who believed his word. The people of Nazareth were hardened in their unbelief, so our Lord rebuked them with two stories that demonstrated God's sovereignty versus man's assumptions:
- (a) (v 25) _____ was not sent to a Hebrew widow, but to a Gentile widow in Zarephath.
- (b) (v 26) _____ did not heal a Hebrew leper, but a Syrian named Naaman.
7. (vv 27-29) The people listened – until Jesus mentioned God's favor on the _____. At this, they became violent, removed him from the synagogue and from the city, and then attempted to throw him over a cliff.
8. (v 30) But our Lord's time had not yet come. He simply (and miraculously) walked through the crowd.

Answer Key: Key word(s): "preach" • 1. → assembly • 2. a) Babylonian; b) church • 3. b) pearls • 4. a) Admiration; b) Contempt • 5. prove • 6. unbelievers; a) Elijah; b) Elisha • 7. Gentiles

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ryle, 118.

⁶ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: Luke & John*, ed. Robert Frew (London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885), 35.