



The DAILY JESUS NEWS #051 Jesus' Great Galilean Ministry

Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee

Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth

LK 4.16-30 (Parallel Text: JN 4.44)

^JNow Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.

¹⁶ ^JJesus went on to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day, he went into the synagogue, as was his fixed custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it stands written, and read:

¹⁸ *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.*

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,

To set people whose lives have been destroyed free—

¹⁹ *To proclaim the time of the Lord's favor."* (Isaiah 61.1-2)

²⁰ Then, he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. Everyone in the synagogue fastened his or her eyes firmly on him.

²¹ He began by saying to them, *"Today this scripture has been permanently fulfilled, in your hearing."*

²² All were speaking well of him, and they continued to marvel at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Is this not Joseph's son?" they asked.

²³ Jesus said to them, *"Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will say to me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'*

²⁴ *Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his own hometown. ²⁵ I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years, and there was a severe famine throughout the land. ²⁶ Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. ²⁷ And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian."*

²⁸ All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. ²⁹ They got up, drove him out of town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built in order to throw him off the cliff.

³⁰ But he walked right through the crowd and went his own way. ³¹ Then, he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee.

NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = ^{MT}, Mark = ^M, Luke = ^L, John = ^J, Acts = ^A. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *red italics identify the words of Jesus*.

| CONTEXT DIGEST | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Location | Capernaum in Galilee |
| Time | August, when Jesus was 31 (Month 8) |
| Stage of Jesus' Life | Stage IV: His Great Galilean Ministry |
| Chapter 10 | Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee |
| Section #051 | Jesus is Rejected at Nazareth |

After performing his second miracle--on the boy in Capernaum by speaking it into existence from Cana--Jesus departed for his hometown of Nazareth. The news about the healing at a distance had preceded him to Nazareth, and raised expectations that he would perform more wonders. Jesus referred to these expectations in his message in the Nazareth Synagogue. ***"And you will say to me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"***

We have seen that the people of Galilee and the surrounding regions generally received Jesus with open arms after he left Judea, due to the reports they had been hearing about him. However, the people of Nazareth rejected him as the Messiah from the beginning of his Galilean ministry. Today's reading describes that rejection.

It was Jesus' life-long, firmly established practice to attend synagogue worship on the morning of every Sabbath. This always gave him an opportunity to proclaim the good news of the kingdom. In these services, any adult male was free to read the Scripture and speak a word of exhortation or instruction. Jesus took the initiative, and stood up to read, then speak.

Providentially, the scroll of Isaiah 40-66 was handed to him (Scrolls of Isaiah were generally divided into two rolls: Ch 1-39, and 40-66.). Jesus had to unroll it most of the way to find the passage he wanted: 61.1-2. The scroll was not divided into chapters and verses like we are used to in our modern Bibles. The text was comprised of just the consonant letters, with no spaces or punctuation at all. Jesus' ability to find a specific passage of just a couple of sentences of text shows how well he knew the content of that scroll.

Jesus chose one of the most obviously Messianic texts in all the Old Testament. In fact, the term "Messiah," or "anointed one" came directly from these very words of Isaiah, which describe the anointing of the Holy Spirit that would empower the Messiah's ministry of healing and setting people free from their sins. Jesus was announcing the arrival of his Messianic ministry in Galilee through this text, in his hometown Synagogue. It should have been a massive spiritual high for him, and his former neighbors.

After reading, Jesus said: ***"Today this Scripture has been permanently fulfilled, in your hearing."*** In the original Greek this statement is a very clear, emphatic claim to BE the Messiah--there is no mistaking it. As he began to speak, the people in the synagogue were very impressed with what Jesus was saying. But clearly, their initial positive response was for the wrong reason. Jesus, who knew their hearts, was about to bring this out.

The people of Nazareth were delighted that the Messiah was from their own town--one of them. This gave them an inside track on the new power base that would soon rule the entire world. Perhaps he

would even establish a second palace and sub-headquarters in Nazareth! They were all too happy to be on a first name basis--life-long, family friends-- with the Son of David that was about to conquer the world, and then reign over it forever. The status of their lowly town was about to change dramatically!

However, there was a huge problem. Their concept of the Messiah was a mighty military and political ruler, like David, who would make the conquests and reigns of Alexander the Great, or the Roman Empire look small in comparison. However, the Messiah prophesied by Isaiah was a suffering servant, the Lamb of God, who came to take away the sins of the world. The people's expectations, and the reality of Jesus' Messianic ministry were worlds apart. So Jesus spoke the truth in love to them.

Jesus pointed out that his ministry was to all people, including Gentiles. He had just left the scene of a huge revival in "pagan" Sychar of Samaria just the week before. In fact, many more Gentiles than Jewish people would end up receiving his ministry. He was not about to fit into their misconceptions of being a military/political Messiah solely for the Jewish nation--he came to be the Savior of all the people in the world.

Jesus reminded the people that the Old Testament contained famous stories of the way God ministered to Gentiles, and hid himself from his own people when they were actively rebelling against him. What Jesus was saying in Nazareth was the witness of the Scriptures.

Jesus enraged the people of Nazareth by mentioning these truths. In a matter of minutes they went from falling all over themselves with delight in him, to forming a mob and driving him to the edge of a cliff, where they were about to execute him by throwing him off! They were fickle in their affections and loyalty, and motivated by self-interest in their attitudes toward him.

Jesus, for his part, simply walked through the crowd with his inimitable sense of divine authority, and left town. He would only return to Nazareth one more time in his life.

APPLICATION:

Misunderstandings about the Scriptural role and ministry of the Messiah among the Jewish people created consistent trouble for Jesus. It was a problem he would face till the day he died.

When we misunderstand and misinterpret Scripture like the people of Nazareth, even when Jesus himself explains it to us, we inevitably develop false expectations of what God is going to do for us.

The people of Nazareth were not unique in failing to recognize the true person and work of Jesus as the Messiah. All of us start with all the wrong ideas about him. We are sinners living in a sinful world.

Reading the life of Jesus every day is serious business indeed. We cannot base our faith in him on our own pre-conceptions. We cannot rely upon the faith of others. We must see Jesus as he really is in the truth of the four gospels, and continue to adjust our own thinking in repentance to match him. This is what it means to "follow" him as a learner (disciple).

Either we choose to remain in our own spiritual Nazareth, or we begin to follow him on the basis of what he actually said and did to reveal himself to us. The people of Nazareth, and their rejection of Jesus give us a sobering reminder that we too, are liable to make the same mistake.

How much of your understanding of Jesus is really based upon what he has said and done to reveal himself to us?

How much of your view of him comes from what other people think about him, and have taught you?

How much comes from your religious environment? What will you do about that?