

Jesus Preaches in the Synagogue

Luke 4:14, 16-19, 21. Isa 61:1,3

14 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.

“In the power of the Spirit. Christ’s miracles and preaching in Judaea had already made him famous, so that when he was come unto Galilee, the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast” (Dummelow 745).

“In the power of the Spirit. By the influence or direction of the Spirit. *A fame.* A report” (Barnes 196).

“Armed with the power of the Spirit. Lit. ‘in the power of the Spirit,’ i.e. which descended on him at the baptism (3:22) and with which he has been filled (4:1). It now leads him to his own country” (*AB Luke i-ix.523*).

“Reports of him circulated throughout the neighboring countryside” (*AB Luke i-ix.523*).

“We have already observed Luke’s frequent mention of the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ life. Now we see that Jesus’ ministry will be uniquely marked by the presence of the Spirit as prophetically foretold” (*EBC 8.867*).

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

“Instinctively and habitually Jesus prayed, not only in the solitary hours of his own communion, but in the public worship of God’s people. To put it in modern terms, he made a practice of going to church.

Why did he do this? Nazareth was a little place, inhabited by ordinary people. The service in the synagogue could hardly have seemed in itself to be particularly inspiring. Nevertheless, Jesus was there. What made him choose to go? Jesus knew in shining reality that which some lightly prate about: that God is everywhere.

“Jesus did find him in the beauty of the Galilean lilies or under the silences of the stars; but he knew God there because he knew him also in the place where since he was a little boy he had gone to think of him, in the house of worship consecrated to his presence, where the revelation of himself was both intensely and particularly set forth.

” . . . The synagogue meant fellowship. And it is in fellowship that the fire of the spirit may kindle best. For a soul in isolation the fire may die, as the fire dies out in a coal set off by itself; but as coals, each one of which was only partially glowing, when brought together turn into flame, so do the souls of men when they are brought together in corporate worship attain the glowing heat which one by one they might have lost” (IB 8.90).

“From this, it appears that the Saviour regularly attended the service of the synagogue. There was great corruption in doctrine and practice at that time, but Christ did not, on that account, keep away from the place of public worship” (Barnes 196).

17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

“*The book.* The volume containing the prophecy of Isaiah. It would seem, from this, that the books were kept separate, and not united into one as with us.

“*When he had opened the book.* Literally, when he had unrolled the book. Books, among the ancients, were written on parchments, or vellum—i.e. skins of beasts, and were rolled together on two rollers, beginning at each end; so that while reading they rolled off from one to the other” (Barnes 196).

Jesus deliberately selects the Messianic passage from Isaiah 61, giving the spiritual description of the Messiah in prophecy. At the end of his reading these passages, Jesus looks up and announces that ‘This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears’ (KJB Luke 4:21). This announcement was a very staggering one to the listeners in the synagogue, and they were extremely upset and filled with anger.

“His choice and use of this passage indicated his comprehensive knowledge of the Old Testament, for he read only that portion uniquely applicable to his present ministry. . .” (Shotwell 249).

“*There was delivered unto him.* By the minister of the synagogue, or the keeper of the sacred books. They were kept in an ark or chest, not far from the pulpit, and the minister gave them to whomsoever he chose, to read them publicly” (Barnes 196).

18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

“Or, I speak by Divine appointment. I am Divinely inspired to speak. There can be no doubt that the passage in Isaiah had a principal reference to the Messiah. Our Saviour directly applies it to himself, and it is not easily applicable to any other prophet” (Barnes 196).

“*Spirit* in Greek is *pneuma* and means “breath, wind, movement, life . . . the divine nature of Christ . . . the vital principle” (Thayer 4151).

because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor;

Anointed in Greek is *chrío* and means “to smear or rub with oil, i.e. to consecrate to an office or religious service; consecrating Jesus to the Messianic office, and furnishing him with the necessary powers for its administration” (Thayer 5548).

“*hath anointed me*. Anciently, kings and prophets, and the high priest, were set apart to their work by anointing with oil. . . . Hence those who were set apart to the work of God as king, or prophet, or priest, were called the Lord’s anointed. Hence the Son of God is called the *Messiah*, a Hebrew word signifying the Anointed; or the *Christ*, a Greek word signifying the same thing” (Barnes 196).

“The *Gospel* means good news--the good news of salvation” (Barnes 196).

Gospel in Greek is *euangelizo* and means “to bring good news, to announce glad tidings; in the NT used especially of the glad tidings of the coming kingdom of God, and of the salvation to be obtained in it through Christ, and of what relates to this salvation” (Thayer 2097).

“*to the poor*. Our Saviour gave it as one proof that he was the Messiah, or was from God that he preached to the poor. The Pharisees and Sadducees despised the poor. . . . The poor feel their need of some sources of comfort that the world cannot give, and accordingly our Saviour met with his greatest success among the poor; it is also one proof that the gospel is true. If it had been of *men*, it would have sought the rich and mighty” (Barnes 196).

he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted,

“*To heal the brokenhearted*. To console those who are deeply afflicted, or whose hearts are broken by external calamities, or by a deep sense of their sinfulness” (Barnes 196).

Brokenhearted in Greek is *syntribo* and means “to crush completely, i.e. to shatter or break in pieces, bruised; to tread down; to put Satan under foot as a conqueror, trample on him; to tear one’s body and shatter one’s strength” (Thayer 4937).

to preach deliverance to the captives,

To preach in Greek is *kerysso* and means “to proclaim after the manner of a herald always with the suggestion of formality, gravity and an authority which must be listened to and obeyed; to publish, proclaim openly something which has been done” (Thayer 2784).

Deliverance in Greek is *aphesis* and means “to release from bondage or imprisonment; forgiveness or pardon; of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed), remission of the penalty; freedom, pardon, forgiveness, liberty, remission” (Thayer 859).

“to proclaim release to the captives. The original words have reference to the release of the Jewish captives from Babylon. Jesus applies them to the release of sinners from the guilt and bondage of sin, through his ministry” (Dummelow 745).

“This is a figure originally applicable to those in captivity in Babylon. They were miserable. To grant deliverance to *them*, and restore them to their country; to grant deliverance to those who are in prison, and restore them to their families; to give liberty to the slave, and restore him to freedom, was to confer the highest benefit, and impart the richest favour” (Barnes 197).

and recovering of sight to the blind,

Recovering of sight is *anablepsis* in Greek and means “restoration of sight, recovery of sight” (Thayer 309).

Blind in Greek is *typhlos* and means “opaque (as if smoky), physically or mentally blind” (Thayer 5185).

“*Sight to the blind*. This was often literally fulfilled, Matt 11:5; John 9:11; Matt 9:30, etc. (Barnes 197).

to set at liberty them that are bruised,

To set at liberty is *aphesis* in Greek and means “to release from bondage or imprisonment, forgiveness or pardon, of sins (letting them go as if they had never been committed) remission of the penalty” (Thayer 859).

“The word *bruised*, here, evidently has the same general signification as *brokenhearted* or the contrite. It means, those who are *pressed down* by great calamity or whose hearts are *pressed* or *bruised* by affliction or sin. To set at liberty is the same as to free them from this pressure, to give them consolation” (Barnes 197).

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

“The ‘year of the Lord’s favor’ is reminiscent of the Jubilee (one year in every fifty) when debts were forgiven and slaves set free. It means not so much a time that is ‘acceptable’ to people but the time in history when God in sovereign grace brings freedom from the guilt and effects of sin” (EBC 8.867).

21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

“Jesus’ comment is short but of the highest importance. We do not know whether he said more than Luke recorded. But that is not important, for the single sentence recorded is of profound significance. . . . The term ‘fulfilled is not as prominent in Luke as in Matthew. Only here and in

the Emmaus conversation does Luke use the word in relation to the fulfillment of OT prophecy, and in both cases the Matthean formula 'to fulfill what was spoken' is lacking. These two lone references to fulfillment stand out then at the beginning and end of Jesus' public appearance (EBC 8.868).

Fulfilled is *pleroo* in Greek and means "to make full, to fill up, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally, to render full, i.e. to complete, fill to the top; so that nothing shall be wanting; full measure; full to the brim; carry through to the end; to accomplish; carry out; to fulfill, cause God's will to be obeyed as it should be, and God's promises to receive fulfillment" (Thayer 4137).

In your ears. In your *hearing*; or you *hear*, in my preaching, the fulfillment of this prophecy" (Barnes 197).

The effect of this preaching is mentioned in verse 28: "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath." And in verse 29, "And [they] rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong."

It is interesting to note that these men were used to believing in prophecy – that was easy for them to accept. But to believe in the fulfillment of prophecy was beyond their understanding. The fact that the fulfillment came as one of their own community members did not align with their expectations.

However, Jesus walked through the crowd unharmed and left Nazareth, so lacking in receptivity, to preach elsewhere.