

Rejected

Jesus' offer of salvation will be rejected by some, leading to judgment.

LUKE 4:16-30



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and he entered into one of th
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4 ¶ Now when he had left speaking

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vv. 33-
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5:1-3 Gennesaret was an alternate name for the sea of Galilee, which is also called the sea of Tiberias (John 6:1-12). The boat Jesus chose belonged to Simon Peter's mother-in-law. He had recently healed (Luke 4:38-41). Jesus **sat down** in the boat; this was the normal posture of a teacher (see note at 4:19-21).

5:4-7 In spite of the fact that his night labors had been fruitless, at Jesus' command Peter responded in faith

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How can one decision impact future decisions? Give an example.

Life is a series of related decisions. Think about the decisions we already have made today and how they impacted where we are right now or what we are wearing. Even the color of our socks or if we have on socks might be dictated by another decision made earlier in the day. In the same way, what we do with Jesus impacts other areas of our lives. Believing in Him or rejecting Him will dictate other decisions. The people of Nazareth faced the same decision and would face the consequences of what they decided.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Jesus' earthly ministry officially began with His baptism by John in the Jordan River (Luke 3:21-22). Luke followed this account with Jesus' genealogy. As a historian, it would have been important for Luke to trace Jesus' roots. Interestingly, he worked in reverse order, beginning with Jesus, who had been declared God's Son at His baptism, and ending with a different "son of God," Adam (3:38). In this passage, Adam represents a type of Christ—an individual with no human father and given life by the breath (Spirit) of God.

Following His baptism, the Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to face the temptations of Satan (4:1-13). Again, readers can reflect back to a similar situation faced by Adam in the garden of Eden. But unlike Adam, Jesus did not fail. He used the power of God's Word to repel Satan's repeated attacks.

Once tempted and proven faithful, Jesus began His public ministry with a trip to His home region of Galilee and particularly His hometown of Nazareth (4:14-30). Jesus' hometown failed to embrace Him, offering

resistance and even rejection. His claim to be the Messiah offended those who believed they knew Him well, leading them to expel Him from the local synagogue.

Jesus moved on from Nazareth to Capernaum. His time there began with an exorcism on the Sabbath (4:31-37) and a healing at the home of Simon Peter (4:38-39). In each instance, Luke presented a Messiah who held power over all spiritual kingdoms (as first demonstrated in His rejection of Satan earlier in the chapter) and over all human diseases. With these examples, the writer may have been showing the error of Nazareth's residents. One with this kind of authority should be accepted rather than rejected.

Luke concluded this section with a reference to even more healings and exorcisms in Capernaum (4:38-44). Sharing the good news of God's kingdom to as many people as possible remained Jesus' mission.

LUKE 4:16-30

16 He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. As usual, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. **17** The scroll of the prophet **Isaiah**^A was given to him, and unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written: **18** The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to **preach**^B good news to the poor. **He**^C has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, **19** to proclaim the **year of the Lord's favor**^D. **20** He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him. **21** He began by saying to them, "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled" **22** They were all speaking well of him and were amazed by the gracious words that came from his mouth; yet they said, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" **23** Then he said to them, "No doubt you will quote this proverb to me: 'Doctor, heal yourself. What we've heard that took place in Capernaum, do here in your hometown also.'" **24** He also said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. **25** But I say to you, there were certainly many widows in Israel in Elijah's days, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months while a great famine came over all the land. **26** Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them except **a widow at Zarephath**^E in Sidon. **27** And in the prophet Elisha's time, there were many in Israel who had leprosy, and yet not one of them was cleansed except **Naaman the Syrian**^E." **28** When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was **enraged**^F. **29** They got up, drove him out of town, and brought him to the edge of the hill that their town was built on, intending to hurl him over the cliff. **30** But he passed **right through the crowd**^G and went on his way.

Passage Outline

True Identity
(Luke 4:16-21)

False Understanding
(Luke 4:22-27)

Misguided Response
(Luke 4:28-30)

Key Words

- A. The passage Jesus read is Isaiah 61:1-2.
- B. Here Jesus emphasized His prophetic role.
- C. The Holy Spirit (Ps. 146:7-8)
- D. God ordained that every fifty years, debts would be forgiven and slaves would be set free (Lev. 25).
- E. Jesus referenced two instances of prophets ministering to non-Israelites (1 Kings 17:8-24; 2 Kings 5:1-19).
- F. Jesus' two examples implied God's acceptance of Gentiles and rejection of Israel.
- G. Either by a miracle or simply by the force of Jesus' presence, He showed His power and walked away because His time at the cross had not yet come.

EXPLORE THE TEXT

Luke emphasized that Jesus' appearance in the *synagogue* was *as usual*. He was in the habit of attending services and on this occasion was invited to stand and read in the assembly. The passage Jesus chose comes from Isaiah 61 and anticipated the work of the coming Messiah.

DID YOU KNOW? The entire text of Isaiah could be contained on a single scroll, as shown by the Dead Sea Scrolls. One of the most famous and best-preserved ancient scrolls is the "Isaiah scroll," a nearly complete copy of the Book of Isaiah dated to the second century BC.

What role does Scripture play in helping us understand Jesus' identity and purpose?

The residents of the town where Jesus grew up thought they knew Him well, so what He was saying was hard for them to understand and embrace. It's not difficult to think the people could appreciate His powerful delivery and teaching about God's grace, even if their kind words did not translate into genuine faith. While some responses were likely positive, the residents were skeptical. They had seen Jesus grow up and identified Him with His earthly family. They had difficulty seeing Him as anything other than *Joseph's son*. Jesus recognized the doubts behind the kind words, and He addressed their attitudes directly.

What preconceived ideas about Jesus might a person hold today? How do those ideas get in the way of accepting Him as Savior?

Jesus continued with an illustration from Israel's history involving two of their greatest heroes: Elijah and Elisha. Through these real-life illustrations, Jesus demonstrated that familiarity does not guarantee God's work. Nazareth could not assume God's blessing if they insisted on rejecting the One whom He sent. Both the widow of Sidon and the general from Syria were shown mercy and miracles. The residents of Nazareth would get neither.

BIBLE SKILL: Observe when and for what purpose a New Testament passage includes an Old Testament quotation (or reference).

Read Elijah and the widow of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17 and the story of Elisha and Naaman in 2 Kings 5. What aspects of these Old Testament stories and Jesus' application might enrage strict Jewish adherents? What kind of situations might cause us to respond in similar circumstances?

All the platitudes ended abruptly once Jesus called out the people of Nazareth for their lack of faith. Their subtle disdain transformed into outright violence. But Jesus, who had demonstrated power over demons and diseases, once again showed His authority, proving His identity as Messiah.

How does the crowd's reaction to Jesus compare to the reactions of people today?

APPLY THE TEXT

- Jesus came to offer salvation.
- All people must examine their presuppositions about Jesus.
- Rejection of Jesus does not change His identity.

If a friend asked what you believe about Jesus, how would you respond? What could you share from this passage that might help you give an answer?

Discuss ways your Bible study group could help other people explore what they believe about Jesus and discover the truth. What actions can the group take to help others discover the truth about Jesus?

When have you reacted poorly to something Jesus was doing in your life? What did you learn from that experience?

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: Jesus described the Messiah.

Read Luke 4:16-19, highlighting the Scripture Jesus shared about Himself.

The passage Jesus chose comes from Isaiah 61 and anticipated the work of the coming Messiah. First, the Messiah would *preach good news to the poor* and *proclaim release* to the captives. In Luke's writings, the poor can refer to the humble, not just the economically disadvantaged. Likewise, *release* included salvation from sin as well as physical healings and demonic exorcisms. The Messiah also would provide *recovery of sight to the blind*. While this would certainly include physical healing, Isaiah also recognized the need to heal spiritual blindness (Isa. 6:9-13). Likewise, freeing the *oppressed* carried spiritual implications. While many first-century Jews interpreted the Messiah as a military leader who would rescue them from bondage to Rome, Jesus' role as Messiah involved salvation from bondage to sin. Finally, the Messiah would proclaim the *year of the Lord's favor*. This was Jesus' announcement of God's kingdom at work on earth. While this was good news to those who believed, it also served as a warning that God's favor would not always be available. A time would come when the window of opportunity would close.

What role does Scripture play in helping you understand Jesus' identity and purpose?

Day 2: Jesus told the people that He was the Messiah.

Read Luke 4:20-21, considering how the people would have felt to be in the presence of Jesus as He made this announcement.

Luke pointed out that the eyes of every attender were *fixed* on Jesus. They were anticipating His explanation or interpretation of the passage He had just read. Jesus told them that Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in their presence. In essence, He was letting them know that their long-awaited Savior was standing in their midst.

KEY DOCTRINE: Salvation (Regeneration) Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Savior (Eph. 2:8-13).

What was "usual" about Jesus' actions in these verses?

Day 3: Jesus followed God's commands, not people's commands.

Read Luke 4:22-24, understanding the proverb Jesus shares.

Jesus recognized the doubts behind the kind words, and He addressed their attitudes directly. The term *proverb* can refer to a parable or allegory, a short story that serves to illustrate a deeper point. It represented a saying that had been passed down orally from one generation to another. In this case, the command to *heal yourself* may have been a call to show loyalty to one's hometown first. While the people showed a measure of appreciation for their hometown product, they also would require proof to truly believe His declaration. They had heard all the great stories from other towns. Now, they wanted Him to help them. They had heard about Him healing in *Capernaum* and wanted Him to do the same in Nazareth. But Jesus had no intention of turning His mission into some kind of carnival attraction. He only acted to accomplish what God commanded in God's timing. So in response, Jesus turned Nazareth's proverb on its head with a proverb of His own. The idea that *no prophet is accepted in his hometown* was historically accurate. In Jesus' case, the people of Nazareth rejected the boy they knew because He refused to meet their expectations. They might have wanted a show of power like Jesus had presented in other parts of Galilee, but their mental and spiritual obstacles made that nearly impossible.

What preconceived ideas about Jesus might you hold today?

Day 4: You cannot reject Jesus and receive God's blessing.

Read Luke 4:25-27, noticing the examples Jesus gives.

During the days of the divided monarchy, *Elijah* fearlessly preached against the sins of the Northern Kingdom. For all his faithfulness, his own people turned against him. When God sent a *famine* to the land, He went outside the Jewish nation to provide protection and support for Elijah. Instead of sending the prophet to an Israelite widow, the Lord directed him to a Gentile widow from the town of *Zarepath* in *Sidon* (1 Kings 17:7-16). Likewise, Jesus pointed to the ministry of *Elisha*, who also served God faithfully in the middle of the Northern Kingdom's wickedness. Like his mentor Elijah, Elisha experienced rejection and abuse at the hands of Israelites. Jesus reminded His listeners that lepers were abundant in Israel at that time. God could have moved to bring healing to any one of them. However, He chose to use Elisha to make a difference in the life of a Syrian military leader named *Naaman* (2 Kings 5:1-14). Through these real-life illustrations, Jesus demonstrated that familiarity does not guarantee God's work. Nazareth could not assume God's blessing if they insisted on rejecting the One whom He sent. Both the widow of Sidon and the general from Syria were shown mercy and miracles. The residents of Nazareth would get neither.

What is it about familiarity with people that makes us miss the good God is doing through them?

Day 5: Jesus' work was done in God's timing.

Read Luke 4:28-30, noting Jesus' authority.

The combination of Jesus' criticism and His suggestion that God blessed Gentiles was more than the residents of Nazareth could take. They expected their Messiah to meet their needs and secure their land. The flipside meant the Gentiles should be punished, not embraced. Jesus' teaching upended their core beliefs. Ironically, the crowd's passion might have been expected toward Jesus' initial proclamation. By claiming to be the Messiah, He was also claiming to be God. That was enough to raise a charge of blasphemy and a sentence of death. But they seemingly were not offended by His claims of deity. They were angered by His apparent disregard for them as God's chosen people. In their minds, He had rejected Nazareth, so Nazareth rejected Him. Jesus did not need an army of angels to rescue Him. The fact is, that Jesus' time had not come. He knew His mission would end in His death, but He also understood God's timing. Until then, nothing would prevent Him from continuing His work.

How does the crowd's reaction to Jesus compare to the reactions of people today?

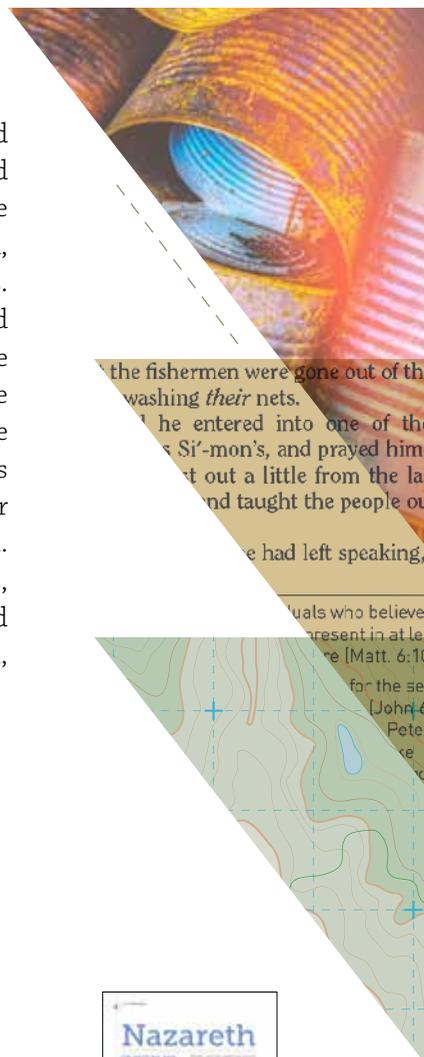
TALK IT OUT

Reflect on the truths found in Luke 4, sharing with other members of your Bible study group.

How did Jesus handle his neighbors' rejection? What in His approach can we imitate?

How can we help others see the true nature of Jesus?

How can you develop a habit of listening to Jesus?



For additional context, read "Nazareth: Its Setting and Significance" in the Winter 2020-21 issue of *Biblical Illustrator*. Available at LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator.