

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
XXIX. Christ's Rejection By His Hometown And God's Plan
(Luke 4:14-30 et al.)

I. Introduction

- A. Jesus had told His disciples that a prophet was not without honor except in His own country (John 4:43-44), and His frustration that the Galileans were impressed with His miracles but not His Person had surfaced in His conversation with the royal official whose son he healed at Cana in John 4:45-54.
- B. The tension between Christ's desire that His Galilean neighbors accept His Person as Messiah and God Incarnate versus the will of the Galileans to accept Him only as a miracle worker came to a disruptive head in His ministry at His hometown synagogue in Luke 4:16-30. The results were humanly life altering, but they revealed God's plan in it all, so we view that passage for our insight, application and edification (as follows):

II. Christ's Rejection By His Hometown And God's Plan, Luke 4:14-30 et al.

- A. Jesus' ministry in the region of Galilee eventually led to His return to the familiar synagogue of Nazareth in His hometown where He had grown up from human infancy, Luke 4:14-16a.
- B. Christ entered the synagogue on the Sabbath Day as had been His custom and He stood up to read from the Scriptures, Luke 4:16b. Normally, the ruler of the synagogue chose who was to read on a given Sabbath, but by Jesus' standing with His new reputation of being a miracle worker, the ruler quickly had the attendant give Jesus the scroll of Isaiah to read, Luke 4:17a. (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 139, citing C. J. Ellicott, Historical Lectures on the Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ, 1896, p. 159, fn.)
- C. The portion to be read was assigned to the reader, but Jesus possibly overlooked that portion to turn to Isaiah 61:1-2a and read it, Luke 4:17b-19. That portion predicted Messiah's earthly ministry that Jesus was then fulfilling. [Significantly, Jesus **stopped partway** through Isaiah 61:2, for the next phrase in verse 2b that reads, ". . . and the day of the vengeance of our God . . ." along with Isaiah 61:3 is yet to be fulfilled at His Second Coming (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Isaiah 61:1-3). Jesus was thus a dispensationalist!]
- D. Jesus then closed the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down to teach in typical rabbinic fashion, Luke 4:20a. At that moment, all eyes were on Him, the miracle worker, to hear His message, Luke 4:20b.
- E. Christ then said that the words He had just read were fulfilled that day, implying that He was the Messiah, and the people marveled at His gracious words as He expounded the passage, v. 21-22a; *Ibid.*, Pentecost, p. 140.
- F. Jesus' townspeople were astonished to hear that Jesus Whom they all had viewed as just a son of Joseph could be the Messiah and God that the Hebrew Scriptures had promised down through the ages to Israel, Lk. 4:22b.
- G. However, the people of Jesus' hometown of Nazareth who had known Him since His infancy were not prepared to accept the Person of Jesus as Messiah and God Incarnate. Rather, they were fascinated in seeing Him perform miracles, so Jesus critiqued their unbelief in His Person, Luke 4:23.
- H. Jesus explained that in Israel's history, God had often overlooked performing miracles for faithless Hebrews in order to perform miracles for Gentiles because those Gentiles exercised faith in Israel's God, Luke 4:24-27:
 - 1. Jesus reported that though there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's day, he had been sent only to the Gentile widow in Sidon because she had true faith in Israel's God, Luke 4:24-26.
 - 2. Jesus added that though there were many lepers in Israel in Elishah's ministry, none of them was healed except the Gentile leper named Naaman because he had exercised faith in Israel's God, Luke 4:27.
- I. Jesus' hometown neighbors were infuriated at His implication that God would favor Gentiles over them because they were like Old Testament apostate Israel, so they rose up, thrust Him out of the city, brought Him to the brow of the hill south of Nazareth that they might cast Him down its slope to kill Him, Luke 4:28-29.
- J. However, Jesus miraculously passed through them and left for Capernaum (Lk. 4:30-31), a move that fulfilled the Isaiah 9:1-2 prediction that He minister on the border of the tribal lands of Zebulun and Naphtali. God had foreknown of Christ's rejection at Nazareth, so He had predictively planned that Jesus relocate to Capernaum.

Lesson: *The conflict between God's will that Jesus' hometown people believe in His Person, not be enamored with His miracles, versus the Galileans' will to see Him do miracles came to a disruptive head, and Christ was rejected by His townspeople in accord with God's foreknowledge. Jesus then relocated to Capernaum to fulfill prophecy.*

Application: *(1) May we trust in Christ's Person, not just be captivated by His miracles, for eternal life. (2) May we not be shocked or hurt if people who have known us since childhood do not accept us as God's servant or messenger, nor that God might then lead us to minister away from those people like He did His own Son!*