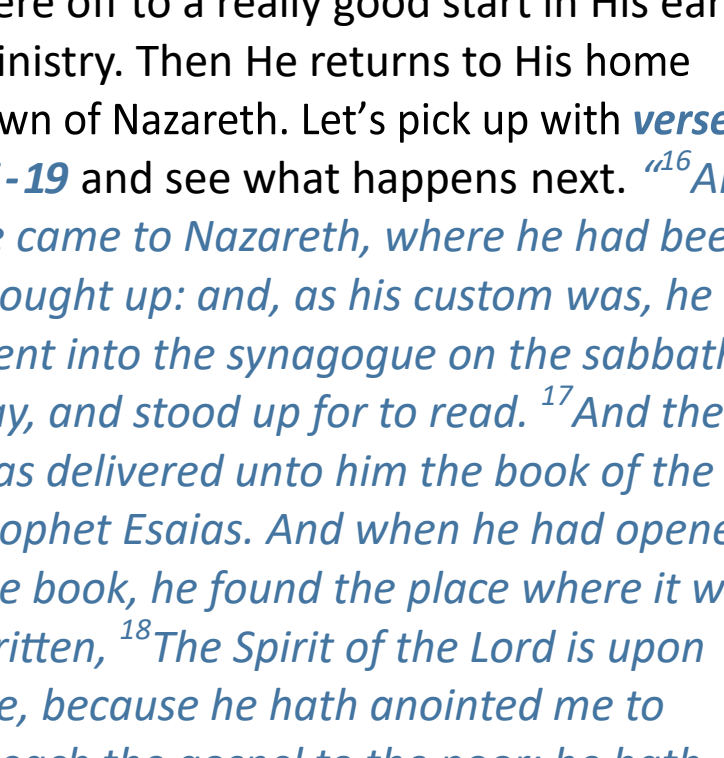


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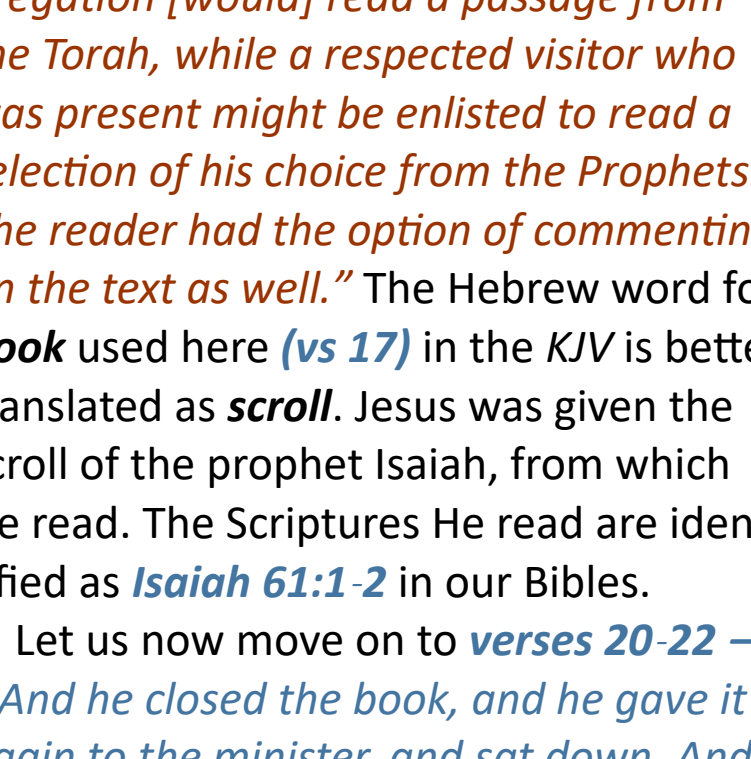
God's anointed Son will be rejected by some. However, His love reaches to the ends of the earth, seeking and saving those who will trust and obey.

Many and varied are the responses people have to Jesus. That can be said of today, and that can be said of the first century A.D. In our lesson, we'll look at a very strong response people had to a claim Jesus made while ministering in a synagogue in the small town of Nazareth where He grew up. Before we get to that incident, Luke gives us a couple of verses that cover the time between Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and the events that unfold in today's lesson. **Luke 4:14-15** says, *"¹⁴And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. ¹⁵And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all."*

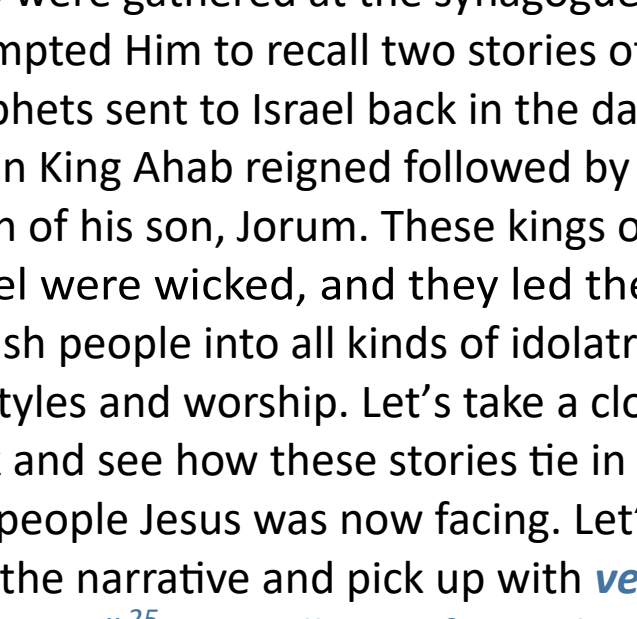


Our Lord's early ministry in Galilee

A lot of things happened in the period covered in **verses 14 & 15**. This was considered the time of Jesus' early ministry, during which He selected His twelve disciples and also drew a significant following. Capernaum had been established as His base of operations. It sounds like things were off to a really good start in His early ministry. Then He returns to His home town of Nazareth. Let's pick up with **verses 16-19** and see what happens next. *"¹⁶And 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. ¹⁷And 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, ¹⁸The 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, ¹⁹To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."*



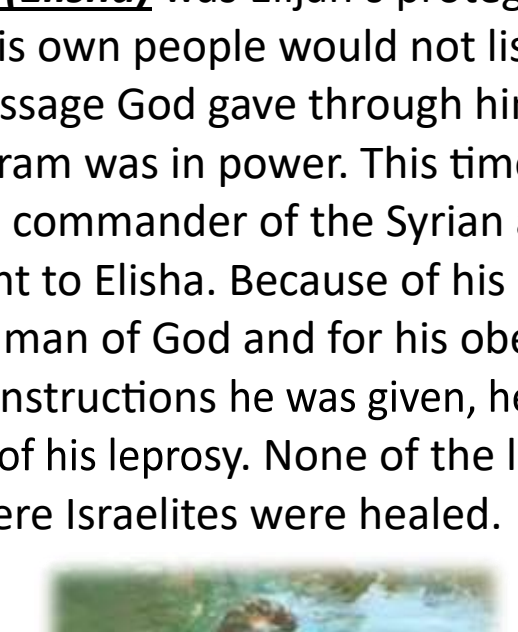
It can be understood by the text that Jesus was a regular attendee of synagogue services on the sabbath days wherever He was located at the time. Now He was back in Nazareth attending a worship service in a synagogue there. It was typical for a synagogue service to be conducted in this manner. Our quarterly says on page 82 that, *"A designated member of the congregation [would] read a passage from the Torah, while a respected visitor who was present might be enlisted to read a selection of his choice from the Prophets. The reader had the option of commenting on the text as well."* The Hebrew word for **book** used here (**vs 17**) in the KJV is better translated as **scroll**. Jesus was given the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, from which He read. The Scriptures He read are identified as **Isaiah 61:1-2** in our Bibles. Let us now move on to **verses 20-22** — *"²⁰And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. ²²And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?"* Notice in **vs 21**, it says, *"And He began to say"*. It is believed by some scholars that Jesus had more to say following His claim to be the Messiah. The words Jesus used definitely affected them, causing them to wonder. Luke even mentions *"the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."* Part of their wonder and amazement could possibly be attributed to both the authority and grace comingled in His words contrasted with their troubled thoughts which gave voice — *"Is not this Joseph's son?"* Others who have studied **vs 22** interpret it as having tones of criticism and skepticism. Jesus knew the sentiments of the crowd and possibly heard some of them say, *"Is not this Joseph's son?"* As we have learned about our Lord, He is able to look far below the surface and see what's going on in people's hearts and minds.



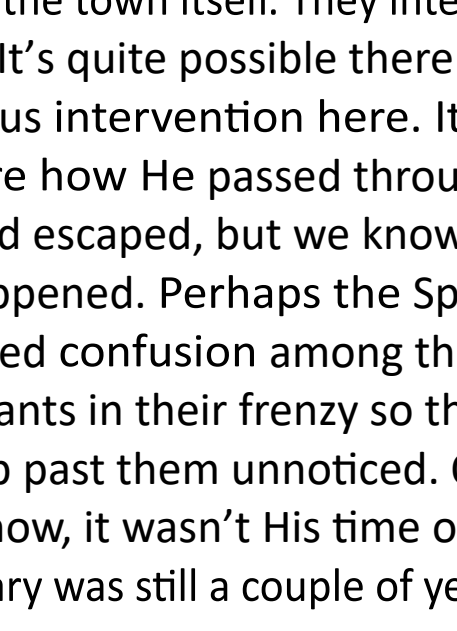
His response to them is spoken in **vs 23**— *"²³And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. ²⁴And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country."* Jesus definitely knew what they were thinking. The assembly He was addressing had heard the news of His activities in Capernaum, which included healing the sick. Jesus used two common proverbial statements in **verses 23** and **24**.

Jesus' rejection from His own people in His hometown, as represented by those who were gathered at the synagogue, prompted Him to recall two stories of prophets sent to Israel back in the days when King Ahab reigned followed by the reign of his son, Joram. These kings of Israel were wicked, and they led the Jewish people into all kinds of idolatrous lifestyles and worship. Let's take a closer look and see how these stories tie in with the people Jesus was now facing. Let's follow the narrative and pick up with **verses 25-27** — *"²⁵But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; ²⁶But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. ²⁷And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian."* Let's take a look at a few more details about these two Old Testament prophets—

Elias (Elijah) preached to his own people during the reign of King Ahab. They did not listen to his preaching. God sent him to a Gentile widow of Sarepta. She had respect for the man of God and who he represented. God blessed her for her faith and obedience. Also, her dead son was raised to life.



Eliseus (Elisha) was Elijah's protégé. Likewise, his own people would not listen to the message God gave through him when King Joram was in power. This time, a Gentile commander of the Syrian army was sent to Elisha. Because of his respect for the man of God and for his obedience to the instructions he was given, he was healed of his leprosy. None of the lepers who were Israelites were healed.



Now we'll take a look at the final three verses of today's lesson, **verses 28-30**— *"²⁸And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, ²⁹And 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. ³⁰But he passing through the midst of them went his way,"* It's plain to see that Jesus' message hit them really hard and it induced a unified response. There was no "agreeing to disagree agreeably" here. The assembly at the synagogue not only expelled Jesus from their place of worship, but from the town itself. They intended to kill Him. It's quite possible there was miraculous intervention here. It's hard to picture how He passed through their midst and escaped, but we know that's what happened. Perhaps the Spirit of God stirred confusion among the would-be assailants in their frenzy so that Jesus could slip past them unnoticed. One thing we do know, it wasn't His time or place to die. Calvary was still a couple of years away.

Here are a couple of questions to consider as we wonder why the crowd became so enraged:

→ *Was it the reference to Gentiles being blessed instead of the Jewish people?*

→ *Did the crowd think that Jesus' claims to be anointed of God were blasphemous?*

→ *Were they offended by Jesus' refusal to bless the people of His hometown with the same miracles He had done elsewhere?*

Another marvelous Scripture passage that fits so perfectly with this lesson is John 1:12-13, which says, "¹¹He came unto his own, and his own received him not. ¹²But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"