

## When Jesus Went To “Church”

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Luke 4:16-30; Isaiah 61:1-2

Jesus was raised in Nazareth (v. 16). This is His first visit to His hometown since His baptism. But Jesus wasn't well received.

Jesus' return to His hometown reminds me of a baseball player named Del Ennis. During his career, he hit 288 home runs. He hit 25 or more home runs in a season seven different times.

Del Ennis played for his hometown team—the Philadelphia Phillies. You would think that being a hometown boy would make him popular with the Philadelphia fans. But during the eleven years he played for the Phillies, the fans usually booed him. Nothing he did was good enough.

Later he was traded to the St. Louis Cardinals and the fans loved him.

Jesus remarked, “*A prophet is not without honour but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house*” (Mk. 6:4).

### I. **The CUSTOM of Jesus** (vs. 16-17).

➡ A synagogue was like a church. The word *synagogue* means “gathering / assembly / congregation.” The word *church* also means “a called out assembly.” Synagogues came into being after the Temple at Jerusalem was destroyed. Jewish communities would erect a local synagogue and gather on Sabbath days to worship and study the Scriptures.

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Many of the components of the New Testament church were patterned after the service of the synagogue: Reading of Scripture; Prayers; Sermon (exposition of Scripture); Benediction. The sermon was given either by the chief of the synagogue, or someone he selected. A layman could ask permission to preach a sermon.

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➡ Jesus was faithful in attending the local synagogues. Growing up in Nazareth, He never missed a service.

- A. Jesus attended when He was away from home as well as when at home (cf. vs. 15, 16).
- B. Jesus attended even though He already knew everything any man could ever teach Him.

- Some only attend church if they think they will hear “*some new thing*.” “Oh, I already knew that.” Do you think Jesus ever learned something that He didn’t already know?
- C. Jesus attended even knowing hypocrites would be there also.
- So, why did He attend? He attended because it was the right thing to do. He attended to give and be a blessing.
- D. Since it was Jesus' custom to attend the synagogue, how much more so should we, His followers, be faithful to attend church. He set the example for us!
- J. C. Penny said, “If a man's business requires so much of his time that he cannot attend the services of his church, then that man has more business than God intended him to have.”

## II. **The COMMISSION of Christ** (vs. 16-21).

- Jesus had one supreme mission when He came the first time—To become the Savior (Mt. 1:21; Luke 19:10)!
- A. The **READING** the the text (vs. 16-17).
1. The **standing** to read (v. 16). Standing showed respect.
  2. The **selection** of the text (vs. 17-19).
    - Jesus being a visiting Rabbi was given the opportunity to read a portion of Scripture and expound on it. Jesus selected Isaiah 61:1-2—a prophecy concerning the coming Messiah.
  3. The **sermon** from the text.
    - Typically, someone having read Isaiah 61:1-2, would expound on what what the passage was talking about.
    - Jesus was a **PREACHER** (vs. 18-19). Therefore, He preaches a sermon from the text—A sermon about Himself, the Messiah. Isaiah 61:1-2 was Jesus’ “purpose statement.”
    - All eyes are on Him, every ear tuned in, to hear what Nazareth’s hometown boy would say (vs. 20).
    - Most preachers today spiritualize the text. In a spiritual sense, Jesus came to...

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- ◆ “*preach the gospel to the poor*”—The unsaved are spiritually bankrupt. The “gospel” makes us spiritual rich.
  - ◆ “*heal the brokenhearted*”—Jesus fixes broken hearts.
  - ◆ “*preach deliverance to the captives*” — Jesus will deliver you from the bondage of sin.
  - ◆ “*recovery of sight to the blind*” — Satan has blinded the spiritual vision of the lost man. Jesus can give you sight to see the truth.
  - ◆ “*set at liberty them that are bruised*”—No matter how damaged you are by sin, Jesus can free you to live for Him.
  - ◆ “*To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*” — Behold now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation!
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- Jews would interpret Isaiah’s prophecy *literally*—The Messiah would come as a liberator and drive the Romans back to spaghetti land, and reign as King on the earth.
    - a) He would preach good news to the poor that their financial debts were cancelled (Jubilee).
    - b) He would heal the brokenhearted whose hopes were shattered by Roman tyranny.
    - c) He would free political captives from prison (Jubilee).
    - d) He would miraculously give sight to the blind. Jesus performed many miracles, but giving sight to the blind was *the single miracle* confirming Him to be the Messiah. Why this miracle?

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Jesus is the only person in the Bible to heal the blind. O.T prophets raised the dead, healed the sick, and did other miracles, but none gave sight to the blind.

When Jesus healed the blind man in John 9, the Pharisees confirmed, “*Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind*” (John 9:32).

Isaiah prophesied giving sight to the blind would be the proof of God's anointing on the Messiah.

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e) Jesus alluded to the year of Jubilee, as it says in Isaiah 61:2, "*to proclaim liberty to the captives*" (Cf. Lev. 25:10).

B. The RENDERING of it's meaning (v. 20-22).

- Jesus stopped mid-sentence (v. 19 cf. Isa. 61:1-2). [**GAP** principle]. The second part of Isaiah 61:2 ("*...and the day of vengeance of our God...*") would be fulfilled at Christ's second coming.
- Jesus was saying their wait for the Messiah was over. What Isaiah wrote about was being fulfilled before their eyes!
- Jesus was telling them, "That's Me Isaiah wrote about."

C. The RESPONSE of the congregation (v. 22)

1. **Wonder** (v. 22). "Hey, that's a pretty bold claim coming from a guy who is just the son of the village carpenter."

- Jesus knew what they were going to say (John 2:24-25). "*Physician, heal thyself...*"—Suppose a doctor claimed he could cure you of a sickness when he was sick himself. Would you buy a tonic to grow hair from a bald man? ILLUSTRATION: Jack Hyles buying a bottle of hair restorer from a bald barber.
- The people of Nazareth were thinking: "You claim to be the Messiah. You say You're able to deliver us from our troubles, hurts, and afflictions. Prove it by doing some miracles here, like we heard You were doing at Capernaum." (v. 23).
- Jesus gave two O.T. examples of what happens when Israel rejects the message of it's prophets—God turns to the Gentiles: First, there were many widows in Israel during the days of Elijah. But whom did God send Elijah to help? A poor widow of Zarephath (a Zidonian- vs. 25-26). Second, There were no shortage of lepers in Israel during Elisha's ministry. But it was a Syrian captain named Naa-

man who was healed under Elisha's ministry (v. 27). God bypassed all those Jewish widows and lepers to deal with Gentiles.

- When people reject God's man, God will go elsewhere. Christ worked many miracles in other cities, but not in Nazareth because they rejected Him (see Mt. 13:55-58).
- When the Jews rejected God, He turned to the Gentiles.

2. **Wrath** (vs. 28-29)— Their wonder turned to wrath. After hearing these two O.T. examples, they were livid. To be told God would pass them by for Gentile dogs was more than they could stand! It cut at the roots of their religious snobbery.

### III. **The CONTEMPT for Christ** (vs. 23-30).

➡ If you cannot deal with the preacher's message, you attack the preacher and try to get rid of him.

- A. Their MURDEROUS frenzy: They were so enraged they wanted to throw Him off a cliff. "How dare He claim to be the Messiah and to imply God would bypass us for Gentiles? Let's kill Him!"
- People wouldn't want to kill a man if they believed He was the Messiah. Obviously, they rejected His claim of being the Messiah.
  - He came unto His own and His own received Him not!
- B. Jesus' MIRACULOUS escape: Jesus wouldn't allow them kill Him. It was not time for His death! The Scriptures regarding His death were not fulfilled.
- He just walked through the midst of them without one hand being laid on Him!
  - They wanted a miracle... They got one!

**SUMMATION:** Is attending church your custom? What is the purpose statement for your life? Are you fulfilling it?

Jesus will never force His way into anyone's life (Rev. 3:20). If you turn Him away, He'll pass by you also. Don't miss your chance to receive Him! Call on Him while He is near (Isa. 55:6)!