

The Homecoming

RED
Letters

Luke 4:18 – 27



And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself.' What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well."

And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian."

Background

Jesus had lived in Nazareth, a small town of around 1600 – 2000 people, until age 30, leaving after He was baptized to live in Capernaum of Galilee, where He began His ministry after John's arrest – Matt 4:12-13

His return is believed to have been about a year into His ministry, by which time His fame had spread everywhere because of the quality of His teaching and the miracles, healings and deliverances He had performed

vs18-21 – Messianic Mission

- Reveal
- Release
- Recover
- Restore
- Redeem
- Revenge

vs 22 – Congregation's Reacts

To the Message:

they marvelled and were impressed by what they heard

To the Messenger:

where on earth did this guy get this stuff?

v23-27: Jesus Responds

Prophecy: You shall demand of me things that you do not actually believe I can do

So his brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, that your disciples also may see the works you are doing. For no one works in secret if he seeks to be known openly. If you do these things, show yourself to the world." For not even his brothers believed in him. John 7:3-5

v23-27: Jesus Responds

Principle: a prophet is not welcome in his own hometown

Elijah: a prophet in need

Elisha: a prophet who met a need

In both cases the beneficiaries are Gentiles and not Jews

v23-27: Jesus Responds

The prophetic functions according to the honour that it receives;

The people best acquainted with a prophet are the least likely to recognise and respect the gift, and therefore are the least likely to benefit from it

God often chooses the least qualified in human terms to carry His grace that no man may boast before Him but that He may receive the glory for all that a prophet does

Recognise

Revelation is important; we cannot receive from what we don't recognise

Revelation comes through the Spirit of God and by the Word of God

The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet."

John 4:19

Respect

Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. 1 Thess 5:19-21

Prophecy is easy to be contemptuous of sometimes because of how it is packaged:

While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'This is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.'" Acts 21:10-11

Respect

Respect for the prophetic isn't in mindlessly believing every word spoken but in weighing what is said to see if God is speaking or He isn't: this is a high level of honour!

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. 1 Cor 14:29

Respond

When prophecy comes that is either an instruction or a call to action it is necessary to respond with obedience:

Now in these days prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. And one of them named Agabus stood up and foretold by the Spirit that there would be a great famine over all the world (this took place in the days of Claudius). So the disciples determined, everyone according to his ability, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so, sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul. Acts 11:27-29

Retain

When prophecy comes as a promise, it must be retained and meditated upon:

And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. Luke 2:17-19

Recite

When we recite prophecies made over our lives we unleash a weapon to wage in spiritual warfare:

This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage the good warfare. 1 Tim 1:18

Some Promises

And they rose early in the morning and went out into the wilderness of Tekoa. And when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem! Believe in the Lord your God, and you will be established; believe his prophets, and you will succeed." 2 Chron 20:20

The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. Matt 10:41