

NOT YOUR TYPICAL MESSIAH

LUKE 4:16-30

Many People Who Call Themselves Christian Have Come To Believe In A False Jesus.

I. A Typical Worship Service (Vs 16-21)

The Bible Is The Most Authoritative Source In Which We Come To Know Who Jesus Is.

- A. Jesus' Hometown Church (16-17)
- B. Jesus' Messianic Message (18-21)

II. Mixed Reviews (Vs 22-28)

People Love The Jesus They Create For Themselves. However, They Are Not So Happy To Embrace The Jesus Of The Bible.

- A. A Great Response (22)
- B. A Minor Correction (23-27)
- C. An Angry Response (28)

III. Meeting The True Messiah (Vs 29-30)

People Who Deceive Themselves End Up Enemies Of Jesus.

- A. Rejecting The True Messiah (29)
- B. A Messianic Miracle (30)

IV. Summary

Not Your Typical Messiah

Luke 4:16-30

Here is where we are so far in the Gospel of Luke. From the beginning, Jesus and His ministry have been intimately connected with his cousin John and his ministry. It was clear that John would be the forerunner of Jesus and that he would prepare people to receive the ministry and message of Jesus, the promised Jewish Messiah.

John preached baptism and repentance. In order to identify with the people He came to save, Jesus asked John to baptize Him even though He was without sin. At this point in the Gospel, Luke records that John was arrested by Herod and Jesus was led into the desert to be tempted by the devil and strengthened by God. Jesus defeated the attacks of the Devil and after being strengthened by God, He returned home to Galilee, in particular, His hometown of Nazareth. However, from the way this story is worded, there seems to be a gap in Luke's narrative. John recorded Jesus' first public miracle in Cana when He turned the water into wine, and from this story, it seems as if Jesus had already performed some miracles in Capernaum.

Nevertheless, Luke gives us some insight into what it was like for Jesus in His own hometown after gaining a measure of public notoriety. I have come to finally realize that people don't often think of us as we think they think of us. Basically it boils down to this. If we are doing something that pleases people, they are often happy with us. On the other hand, if we are doing something that is contrary to what people want, they are often unhappy with us. I don't think that is an attitude that promotes healthy relationships between us, but it is a disaster if we do this with God.

I have come to observe over my years in the ministry that people often create for themselves a Jesus Who they are comfortable with. They have come to believe in a Jesus Who simply loves them unconditionally and accepts whatever they do as alright. I think that we have to be careful about worshiping a made-up-Jesus. The Jesus Who talks about love, mercy, and forgiveness, is also the Jesus Who talks a great deal about judgment, punishment, and eternal damnation in hell.

I think the people in Nazareth, give us some real insight into how we end up making Jesus into Who we want Him to be rather than Who He is in reality. There are many forces trying to define for us Who God is. But the only reliable source is the Bible.

One day, a boy was sitting on a park bench with one hand resting on an open Bible. He was loudly exclaiming his praise to God. "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! God is great!" he yelled without worrying whether anyone heard him or not.

Shortly after, along came a man who had recently completed some studies at a local university. Feeling himself very enlightened in the ways of truth and very eager to show this enlightenment, he asked the boy about the source of his joy.

"Hey" asked the boy in return with a bright laugh, "Don't you have any idea what God is able to do? I just read that God opened up the waves of the Red Sea and led the whole nation of Israel right through the middle."

The enlightened man laughed lightly, sat down next to the boy and began to try to open his eyes to the “realities” of the miracles of the Bible. “That can all be very easily explained. Modern scholarship has shown that the Red Sea in that area was only 10-inches deep at that time. It was no problem for the Israelites to wade across.”

The boy was stumped. His eyes wandered from the man back to the Bible lying open in his lap. The man, content that he had enlightened a poor, naive young person to the finer points of scientific insight, turned to go. Scarcely had he taken two steps when the boy began to rejoice and praise louder than before. The man turned to ask the reason for this resumed jubilation.

”Wow!” exclaimed the boy happily, “God is greater than I thought! Not only did He lead the whole nation of Israel through the Red Sea, He topped it off by drowning the whole Egyptian army in 10 inches of water!”

I. A TYPICAL WORSHIP SERVICE

We are going to see this morning, that as long as Jesus met their expectations of what they thought Messiah ought to be, they liked Him. However, when Jesus demonstrated to them the truth of what Messiah was supposed to be, they no longer liked Him. Actually, that’s an understatement. They actually tried to kill Him. This passage ought to be a warning to all of us. The main idea is this. **MANY PEOPLE WHO CALL THEMSELVES CHRISTIAN HAVE COME TO BELIEVE IN A FALSE JESUS.** In other words, we are deeply attracted to the Jesus Who welcomes us and forgives us. But we are often repelled when Jesus rebukes us and talks about sending people to hell for an eternity. Let’s watch how this happens to Jesus’ hometown friends and neighbors. In verses 16-21, we happen in on a typical worship service. For our edification, we must understand and accept that **THE BIBLE IS THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE IN WHICH WE COME TO KNOW WHO JEJUSUS IS.**

Jesus’ Hometown Church (16-17)

Luke picks up the narrative on a particular Saturday morning worship service. In verses 16-17 we are introduced to Jesus’ hometown church. Nazareth is a city in Galilee. A great deal of Jesus’ ministry takes place in Galilee. Galilee is the region that occupies the northern most part of Palestine. It is region that is about 50 miles north to south and 5 miles east to west. There is a lot of international influence in this region. There were about 204 cities in the region all with a population of over 15,000 people. The region was very fertile and all sorts of produce grew up there. There were great underground water supplies and the people were known for their pioneer spirits. It was estimated to have a population of over 3,000,000 people. So you can see Jesus didn’t come from some hick town. He had spent 30 years living there with His family and working in His father’s carpenter shop.

Luke informs us that it was Jesus’ custom to attend worship services regularly. Jesus saw that synagogue life was important. I hear people say often that it really doesn’t matter if they go to church and worship or go for a walk in the woods and worship. God makes it clear throughout the entire Bible that synagogue life was important and church life is important as well. The local

church is important to God and it should be important to us. Jesus made it a regular habit to attend synagogue and to attend the required temple feasts in Jerusalem. How important to us is the existence and growth of our local church?

The New Testament commentator Barclay laid out the typical synagogue service into three main parts; the Worship portion that consisted of prayers, the Scripture portion that consisted of 7 people reading portions of Scripture, and the Teaching portion which consisted of a local member or visiting teacher to expound on the Scripture texts. The Scripture is the document that guides all we say and do in the church. Paul writes this to Timothy, the young pastor he is mentoring, about the Bible:

“16All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. 17It is God’s way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do” (II Timothy 3:16-17 / NLT).

If we want to be a church in whom God is pleased, then we need to operate according to His Word. We need to submit to all the Bible’s teachings and commands, not just the ones we are comfortable with.

At any rate, it seems that the rabbi handed Jesus the book of Isaiah, and Jesus opened it to Isaiah 61. Since the entire Bible was inspired by God, is all about God, and that Jesus is God, no matter what book of the Bible was handed to Him, Jesus couldn’t help but find a passage that pertained to Him. We must read the Bible in order to know God more intimately. The more we read and submit to Him, the more of Himself He will reveal to us.

Jesus’ Messianic Message (18-21)

Jesus gave the typical Messianic message in verses 18-21. Now here is what we all have to understand. Ever since Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews carried off into captivity about 600 years earlier, the Jews never regained their status prior to their captivity. Under the Medes, they were allowed to return to Babylon. But then the Persians conquered the Medes, the Greeks conquered the Persians, and the Romans conquered the Greeks. They enjoyed some measure of freedom under the Romans, but they were never totally ever free in the Promised Land since they were conquered. And so the concept and the desire for the coming of Messiah grew more and more fervent and the Jews eagerly anticipated the coming of Messiah. They felt oppressed and downtrodden. They were looking for their Messiah to come and rescue them from the crushing hand of the Romans. They were looking for a political Messiah to come and set them free from Rome, to conquer Rome and become the new world power and to establish Judaism as the worldwide religion. With this hope, they heard the following words from Jesus, coming from the prophet Isaiah:

“18“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:18-19 / NIV).

They interpreted this to mean that Jesus was there to bring about social justice for them. They had been imprisoned and oppressed by the Roman government. They were poor, second-class citizens. Jesus was coming to set all that straight.

In the Jewish worship calendar, every 50th year was a Jubilee year. Everyone who had to sell themselves as slaves in order to pay their debts were released and set free. Their debt was wiped out. All the land that had been sold or used to pay debts was returned to the original family owners.

Jesus handed back the scroll, sat down and told the people that today the Messianic age had begun to unfold.

The Jews were looking to be set free and their land returned to them. They were waiting for Jesus to give those Romans what for. That was only a portion of the Messianic promise. You see the Jews like us, only focused on the parts of the Bible they felt comfortable with. We must remember this point. **THE BIBLE IS THE MOST AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE IN WHICH WE COME TO KNOW WHO JESUS IS.** And again, let me say that we must constantly be reading and studying our Bibles lest we gain a distorted view of Who Jesus is.

II. MIXED REVIEWS

As Jesus reads and teaches we see that He gets mixed reviews in verses 22-28. Here is what we find out about the Nazarenes and about us. **PEOPLE LOVE THE JESUS THEY CREATE FOR THEMSELVES. HOWEVER, THEY ARE NOT SO HAPPY TO EMBRACE THE JESUS OF THE BIBLE.**

A Great Response (22)

In verse 22 Jesus received a great response. I'm not sure they understood that Jesus was referring to Himself as the Messiah yet. They were simply excited to hear that Messiah was coming on the scene. Perhaps they made some connection. It says that all spoke well of Him and they were all amazed at the gracious words He spoke. I think they were equally excited and amazed to think Messiah had arrived and that Jesus might actually be the Messiah.

Most people translate the next phrase, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" as negative. In other words, Who does this Guy think He is? He's just one of us. However, I don't think it is that negative at all. I think they asked the question in response to their own amazement at His grace and understanding. In other words, they may have been saying, "Jesus grew up with us. When did He get so smart, so insightful, and so powerful?"

A Minor Correction (23-27)

It really doesn't matter because Jesus makes a minor correction in verses 23-27. If Jesus' words were gracious up until this point, they certainly take a turn here for the worse here. One of the things the Gospels consistently point out is that Jesus has this uncanny ability to read people's thoughts. He starts out by saying, "Surely you will quote this proverb to Me." In the last

section, people were amazed at how gracious His words sounded. Unless some people were thinking these negative thoughts, Jesus wouldn't have needed to make this clarification and open this can of worms.

When I read this proverb the people had in their minds, I didn't quite get it. Based on what Jesus had just said, why would some people be thinking, "Physician heal yourself!"?

Let's first review quickly what Jesus said. He said that He had been anointed by the Spirit of God. The word anointed means Messiah in Hebrew. So Jesus was chosen by God to preach the Gospel to the poor. Jesus was chosen to set prisoners free, to release the oppressed, to heal the blind, and to proclaim a Sabbath year.

We said that the Jews expected the Messiah to come and rescue them. Add to that, many in this crowd watched Jesus grow up and many grew up with Him. Now some were amazed and awed that this grace fell on Jesus and Jesus became the conduit of God's grace, this Jesus they grew up with and watched grow up.

On the other hand, others may have been jealous or put off because one of their own was chosen by God to be their rescuer. It's that way with us as well, isn't it? Some of us feel joy and shared honor when one of us make it big or are chosen for a position of honor. Others of us feel jealous of our peers because we weren't the one chosen. These people may have been thinking, "Yes, I want a Messiah to come and deliver me ... but Jesus? I grew up with Him. He's no better than I am. Besides, He is a Jew and He needs to be delivered from Roman oppression just like I do. Who does He think He is? How could this ordinary Jesus, Joseph the carpenter's Son, save me? I think I'm better qualified than He is. Save Yourself Jesus, I can take care of myself."

And then their jealousy becomes irrational. It appears that Jesus had already done some healing miracles in the city of Capernaum that later becomes the hub of His ministry. Why don't you heal some people here in your own town Jesus? Show us what You got. Can you hear what some of the crowd were saying in their minds? The Gospels often state the sad fact that many people don't receive miracles because of their lack of faith or hard hearts. Let me make another aside comment here. Jesus came to bring social justice to His kingdom people. We will see over and over again when Jesus fails to be the political Messiah they wanted and expected, people are disappointed with Jesus and then turn on Him.

Jesus points out that Elijah, one of the most powerful prophets who worked many mighty miracles went to a widow's house who was not Jewish and miraculously provided her with a continuous supply of flour and oil that sustained her through the famine years. The story also showed that when Elijah asked her for bread, she gave him bread. Her faith opened the door for God's miraculous provision.

Then there was the Syrian commander who came to Elisha for healing. Elisha told him to go wash himself in the Jordan River 7 times and he would be healed. But the proud commander thought that to be stupid and simple. However, Naaman's servant talked him into humbling himself and to do what he was told to do in faith and humility. The leprosy was healed.

The problem with the Jewish nation during these periods in their history was that they had turned away from God and were not acting and living in faith. They rejected the prophets and God's messages through them.

Jesus is saying that without faith and humility, miracles were impossible, not because Jesus couldn't do it, but the condition set to receive a miracle was faith. We will see that throughout the Gospel of Luke. Faith and humility opens the door to receiving God's grace and miracles. So in essence Jesus is saying that the people in Nazareth were faithless, and because of their pride and resistance, no prophet could work a miracle there. Jesus is kind of writing off His hometown and then makes Capernaum the central hub of His ministry.

An Angry Response (28)

Now please notice how fickle crowds are and how quickly they turn on Jesus when they don't like what He says. In verse 28 we see an angry response. Now it seems as if even the people who were amazed by Jesus are now angry at Him as well. It says that "All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this" further explanation. How dare this local homeboy talk about us like that? Who does He think He is anyway? We know Jesus is the Promised Messiah. But just like the Nazarenes, just like us, PEOPLE LOVE THE JESUS THEY CREATE FOR THEMSELVES. HOWEVER, THEY ARE NOT SO HAPPY TO EMBRACE THE JESUS OF THE BIBLE.

I know that people often get angry with me when I preach the Jesus of the Bible because people don't like to think about the fact that Jesus will send people to hell and that all of us deserve to go to hell. I would encourage you to simply read through the Gospels in a version that has the words of Jesus printed in red. See how many times Jesus mentions hell and judgment and look who He is addressing. Believe me, in a religious sense; we are in no way close to being as good or doing as much good as the Pharisees. We are in no way as religious nor do we give the money, nor do we do as much good as they did. And yet Jesus continually singles them out for judgment and hell. Please let the Gospels speak to us with its full force and let us hear it speaking to us as those who need to hear the Good News of His salvation.

III. MEETING THE TRUE MESSIAH

Let us look forward to meeting the true Messiah as described in His fullness in the Gospels. It's important because PEOPLE WHO DECEIVE THEMSELVES END UP ENEMIES OF JESUS. How could this possibly happen? Jesus went to His hometown and they rejected His offer of grace and healing.

Rejecting The True Messiah (29)

Verse 29 describes people who reject the true Messiah. I want you to take a moment and think of this mellow Jesus we have come to think of. He is kind, and forgiving, and gentle. He preaches love and forgiveness, peace and joy. Now, think with me, who would want to kill that Jesus? No one would want to kill that Jesus. Nevertheless they took Him to the very edge of a cliff with the intent to push Him off the cliff to His death. Their intent was to kill Jesus. You see, when we come into contact with the One True and Living Jesus, we at once come to know how evil and pathetic we truly are. The proud will take a stand against Jesus and reject this view

of themselves. The humble will immediately see the truth of it all and give themselves in faith to Jesus.

A Messianic Miracle (30)

This incident in Jesus' life ends with a miracle. Here is the whole crowd from the synagogue pushing Him towards the cliff, and Luke simply says, "He walked right through the crowd and went on His way." It was clearly miraculous that Jesus walked right through them as if He were a ghost. Think with me for a moment the last time Jesus was high over a cliff. Satan had brought Jesus to the top of a temple peak that overlooked the valley. Satan told Jesus to jump from the cliff and God would catch Him. Jesus refrained from demonstrating a miracle. He walked away from Satan. This time, Jesus did perform a miracle. He walked through and away from the crowd. In the first instance Jesus walked away to avoid a miracle. In the second, walking away was the miracle. Do you think the crowd ever wondered where Jesus went? When it came time to push Him over the cliff, where was He? **PEOPLE WHO DECEIVE THEMSELVES END UP ENEMIES OF JESUS.**

IV. SUMMARY

Look, I never want to stand up here and sound as if I have life all together and I am speaking down to you or judging you. I struggle with all the issues I preach about. I too must struggle to believe in and submit to the God of the Bible, not society's notion, or some of the church's made up notions of God. **MANY PEOPLE WHO CALL THEMSELVES CHRISTIAN HAVE COME TO BELIEVE IN A FALSE JESUS.**

Let me just take a quick moment to share my heart with you. When Israel left Egypt, when God set them free, no Israelite was left behind in Egypt. All the Israelites made it safely out. As your pastor, I don't want any of us left behind. I don't want any of us to miss out on the grace and blessings God has for us. But if we are going to make it, we need to keep our eyes on and follow the Jesus of the Bible. Listen to what Jesus says about those who have come to believe in a false Jesus:

"21 'Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" (Matthew 7:21-23 / NIV).

Sometimes I feel as if I'm beating a dead horse. I continue to preach and teach the importance of reading and studying God's Word. Please, start by carefully reading through the Gospels and let God reveal to you the Jesus of the Bible. And then read your bibles cover to cover, over and over again and let God reveal Himself to you. That's the only way we can keep ourselves from believing in a false Jesus.