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## OUR LORD'S VISIT TO NAZARETH.

IV. QUAR. LESSON 1., OCT. 7, LUKE 4:16-30.

**Golden Text – "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh."  
– Heb. 12:25.**

In this lesson the special point of interest is our Lord's reference to his authority and commission from God, through the Prophet Isaiah, to preach the gospel of his coming Kingdom. This commission is contained in Isa. 61:1-3; but it will be observed that the Lord read only to the middle of verse 2, and then closed the book and sat down, saying, "*This day* is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." It was fulfilled in him, as the Prophet declared, he having received the anointing of the holy spirit. Therefore he had come to them with divine authority to declare unto them the good tidings of great joy unto all people.

The question naturally arises, Why did he not read the entire commission? The answer is obvious: it was because the remainder was not fulfilled *in that day*. It was time *then* to preach (1) the good tidings of the Kingdom to all who were meek enough to receive it by faith from the humble [R1714 : page 318] and unpretentious Nazarene; (2) to bind up the broken-hearted; to tell those in trouble that by and by the Kingdom would bring order, peace and joy out of present confusion and trouble; (3) to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound – What captives? Surely not those lawfully detained for criminality in prisons of the state. No, but for all the dead race still lying in the prison-house of death – the grave: The hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and shall come forth (John 5:28,29); and (4) it was time then to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord – the year or period of acceptable sacrifices: the "better sacrifices" than bulls and goats, the sacrifices of Christ and his body, the Church. (Heb. 9:23.) That was the beginning of the Gospel age – the time appointed as the great

atonement day\* for the world, the time of special favor to the called and faithful and chosen who should follow in the footsteps of their leader and head, Christ Jesus, and eventually become joint-heirs with him of the coming Kingdom.

\*See **TABERNACLE SHADOWS OF BETTER SACRIFICES**.

This was all of the commission that was due in the beginning of the age. It was not yet time to proclaim – "the day of vengeance [R1715 : page 318] of our God," nor to comfort all that mourn – the whole "groaning creation" (Rom. 8:22), nor "to grant unto the mourners in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." Had he read the entire commission, he could not have added the words, "*This day* is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." This latter part of the commission was not due until the harvest or end of the age; and while the entire commission belongs to the whole body of the Anointed – the Christ, head and body, – the latter part must of necessity be declared by those members of the body living in the last times – the harvest or end of the age, from A.D. 1874 to A.D. 1915.

It is upon this generation that "the days of vengeance" are coming; and it is this generation therefore, that should hear the voice of warning. It is in the midst of the great afflictions of the now impending time of trouble "such as never was since there was a nation," that the "groaning creation" is to learn that it is the chastening hand of God upon them, who wounds to heal, and that by means of this great affliction he is subduing all things unto himself. And when the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. (Isa. 26:9.) Thus in due time – the end of the harvest and time of trouble – "all that mourn" will be "comforted." Then the whole world will have learned to be still and to know that the Lord's reign of righteousness is begun – the Kingdom of God established in the earth. – Psa. 46:10.

The last proposition of this commission also belongs to this harvest period. During this time is the gathering together of the elect from the four winds – from all parts of the great nominal Zion, the nominal Christian church. These are they who mourned in nominal Zion, who realized the decline of vital piety in her, who sadly lamented the great discrepancies between her creeds and the divine Word of promise and prophecy, and who hungered and thirsted for righteousness and searched for truth as men search for silver. To all such the Lord now appoints beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for the spirit of heaviness. Within this harvest period he has given us refreshing views of the completeness and beauty of the divine plan: he has given to us the beauty and symmetry of divine truth for the ashes of human creeds, and the oil of joy in consequence, for the spirit of heaviness. And in the end of the harvest all such who prove faithful to the end shall be exalted and glorified: they shall be made heirs of the Kingdom, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. They shall be "trees of the Lord, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified."

This commission through the Prophet Isaiah is the only divinely authorized commission that was ever given to any man to preach the gospel. And it belongs only to those, and to all those, upon whom the anointing of the holy spirit of God has come – to the Christ, head and body. They all can say, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach," etc. Our Lord Jesus received this anointing of the holy spirit immediately after his baptism in water, which symbolized his entire consecration to the will of God, even unto death, when the holy spirit visibly descended upon him and a voice from heaven was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And as **[R1715 : page 319]** in the typical anointing of the typical high priest in the service of the typical tabernacle, the anointing oil was poured upon the head only, but from thence ran down even to the skirts of his garments, thus bringing the whole body under the anointing (Lev. 8:12; Psa. 133:2), so all who have come into Christ by faith and full consecration to the will of God have likewise come under the same anointing. It was at Pentecost, after the Lord's

ascension, that this spirit of anointing began to descend upon the consecrated body of Christ (Acts 2:1-18); and all who have been added to the body since have likewise received of the anointing, by right of which they can also claim the divine commission to preach the gospel in the use of whatever talents they may possess, be they few or many, or be they humble or brilliant; and for the proper use of their commission they are accountable to him who gave them authority as his ambassadors.

The inference is also plain that no man should be regarded by the saints as a minister of the gospel, or received or heard as such, who cannot claim this commission (which alone grants the divine authority), as conferred upon him by virtue of his anointing as a consecrated child of God and member of the body of Christ. All such are of the "royal priesthood," whose duty and privilege it is to serve in holy things.

Unto those who have not fully submitted themselves unto the Lord, but who would nevertheless pose as leaders and teachers in the Church, the Word of the Lord is very explicit, saying, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee?" (Psa. 50:16,17.) "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets [teachers] that prophecy unto you: they make you vain; they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord...I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied." (Jer. 23:16-21.) Alas! there are many such false teachers who are ambitious to declare the visions of their own heart, and claim that the Lord sent them and that they are teaching his truth. And many, too, there are who, ignoring the command of God, hearken to the words of such false prophets and are thereby deceived and led astray.

Our Lord's sermon from this gospel-laden text must have been one of great power, proclaiming the blessed tidings of redemption and

restitution and giving some intimations of the special favor to be granted to the Gospel Church. While he thus spake to them as never man spake, and opened up the Scriptures to their understanding so that the blessed rays of hope and joy penetrated their hearts, the people "*wondered* at the *gracious words* which proceeded out of his mouth." And they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" It was just as some remarked on other occasions – "Whence hath this man this wisdom?" Ah, it was by reason of the anointing. Being thus brought into close fellowship with the Father, the divine plan was clearly revealed to him through the "sure Word of prophecy," and his lips gave expression to the glorious message of love and grace.

VERSES 23-27 are words of reproof to a heedless and merely curiosity-seeking people. While he spoke to them wonderful words of life, he saw that the hearts of the great majority at least were not prepared to receive them, as evidenced by the fact that instead of looking for the correspondency in the teacher to the prophetic forecast of him to which attention had been called, they were inquiring about his earthly pedigree, and desirous to see some manifestation of his power to work miracles.

This incredulity and idle curiosity the Lord severely rebuked by citing them two historic instances where God through the prophets manifested his saving power, not to the curious and unbelieving, but passing all such by, he showed his great favor and power to the meek and humble who loved and believed God. This was too much for the hot-headed, impetuous pride of the unworthy hearers of that noble sermon. Who was this son of Joseph, one of their humblest citizens, that he should thus brand them as unworthy of the favor of God? And in their wrath and haste they seized him and with violence bore him away toward the brow of the hill, intending to hurl him to death. – Verses 28,29.

VERSE 30 records his escape – "Passing through the midst of them, he went his way." His hour had not yet come, and therefore he

seems to have exerted that power which belonged to him as a perfect man over the weaker, imperfect men – the power of his mind alone, we believe, which [R1715 : page 320] overwhelmed and cowed their fierce passions, so that none dared take the responsibility of casting him headlong; and he, therefore, passing through the midst of them, went his way. The same power was also exerted on other similar occasions. (See John 7:30,43-46.) But when his hour was come he opened not his mouth, nor resisted in any degree the throngs that sought his life.

The words of the *Golden Text* are most appropriate to all that hear the word of life – "this gospel of the Kingdom:" "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh...from heaven." The latter part of the divine commission – the harvest message – now due, and hence now declared, by those members of the body of Christ now living, is just as important to this end of the age as was the former part to the beginning and all through the age: therefore, let him that heareth see that he refuse it not, however humble and unpretentious may seem that member of the body through whom it may be declared to him.

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