

## **THE TEACHER AND HIS MESSAGE REJECTED.**

– LUKE 4:16-30. – JANUARY 24. –

**Golden Text: "He came unto his own and his own received him not."  
– John 1:11.**

OUR LORD began his ministry in Judea, and is supposed to have spent a year there before going to Galilee, the province in which most of his life had been passed. And even when he did go to his home province he chose to visit Capernaum before going to his native city, Nazareth. This was a wise course, considering the fact that a prophet is generally less esteemed at home than abroad. As it was, his fame in Judea and still later at Capernaum had aroused quite an interest in the people of Nazareth, where he had lived from about three years of age until thirty. A certain amount of pride in their fellow-townsmen had thus been awakened, and we may be sure that there was a large attendance at the synagogue on the first Sabbath day after our Lord's arrival in Nazareth.

But while it was an object of our Lord's ministry to awaken and draw the interest of the people of Palestine to himself and to the message which he had to deliver, nevertheless it was not the object of that message to gather all the people to the Lord, but rather to separate the wheat from the chaff – to gather the wheat to Jesus and, naturally, to array the chaff class in opposition. This foretold result of the Lord's ministry we see was fully accomplished. "He came unto his own [people] but his own received him not, but to as many as received him, to them gave he liberty [privilege] to become the sons of God" – to be transferred from the house of servants, of which Moses was the head, to the house of sons, of which our Lord Jesus is the Head. We remark incidentally, however, that although faithful servants were gathered during our Lord's ministry, they were not begotten again until Pentecost. Pentecost brought the begetting of the Spirit to such of them as were then ready – the begetting necessary to a spirit

development of character, necessary to an ultimate birth of the spirit in the First Resurrection.

The first verse of our lesson shows distinctly that it was our Lord's custom to attend the synagogue meetings every Sabbath day, and his custom also to be the reader for the congregation. The synagogue services were not at all like the temple services. The latter was the house of prayer, and the place where typical atonement was made for the sins of the people with the blood of bulls and goats, etc. The synagogue more nearly resembled present day Bible classes, where the Scriptures are read and freely discussed, not only by the leader but also by all in attendance as they may feel disposed. There are certain good features connected with this arrangement, one of which is the opportunity it affords for bringing out discussion on any Scriptural topic. We warmly commend the Bible study and Bible-class methods as still appropriate to the Lord's people and still beneficial for the elucidation of Truth.

### **RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.**

The Jews had a certain order in which the Scriptures were read in the synagogue, and apparently the book of Isaiah was the appropriate one for this occasion. The Lord turned to what we now call the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah and read the first verse and part of the second, and closing the book he sat down and made certain comments upon the passage read. We find that our Lord read discriminatingly, or, as the Apostle expresses it, he "rightly divided the Word of truth." He read the part appropriate to the time, but did not read about the day of vengeance. His teaching was to test the people: if his message were received no day of vengeance would be necessary; if not received the day of vengeance would follow, as it did follow upon that nation after it had rejected him. There is a lesson for the Lord's people in this: it is better that we should read one verse understandingly and appreciatingly than that we should merely read chapter after chapter of the Lord's Word in a formal manner.

Our Lord brought home to his audience the meaning of his text, saying, "This day is this Scripture [R3300 : page 12] fulfilled in your hearing." It had been written centuries before and read hundreds of times, but now, in the harvest of their age, for the first time it could be said that it was fulfilled. The holy Spirit had come upon the Lord Jesus about a year before, after his consecration at Jordan. It constituted his anointing. The Jews were accustomed to this thought of anointing: their high-priests were anointed, as representing the Lord's power or spirit upon the priest, to authorize him to perform the sacrifices and to mediate between God and the people. Their kings were anointed, representing that divine power and guidance was upon them, and that they were specially authorized to represent the Lord in the government of the people.

The promise was that the Lord's anointed, the Messiah, should by and by come and establish a reign of righteousness in the earth, and now our Lord announced himself as the anointed of the Father. He did not do this in any coarse or rude manner, saying, "I am the Messiah. I am the anointed of Jehovah, with authority as priest and king;" but he did it in a quiet, unassuming manner, by calling attention to the prophecy and declaring that its fulfilment had now taken place. The announcement was not that the Lord had anointed him to rule, but that the first part of his mission was to preach, to declare, to be the mouthpiece of God to humanity. He had a great message, which should ultimately be unto all people, but which at that time was only for so many as had ears to hear.

It would undoubtedly be disappointing to many to have the royalty feature passed by, and to find that Messiah's work as herein delineated by the prophet and announced by the Lord, was one of preaching a good message rather than of raising a great army – of preaching to the meek and poor, rather than of rallying round himself the rich and wise and proud. They would be disappointed, too, at the part of the message which says that he was to bind up the broken-hearted. They had expected, perhaps, that, like the great warriors and

leaders amongst the other nations, their deliverer would be the one who would cause the loss of many lives and the breaking of many hearts with sorrow and with trouble. Even those whose hearts were somewhat broken were probably disappointed because of their wrong expectations.

The proclaiming of liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound, our Lord's hearers probably did not understand. Their thoughts may have gone out to John the Baptist, who at this time was in prison, and they may have wondered whether Jesus would take any steps for his release. They probably had little conception of the real meaning of this Scripture – that it signified the liberation of Satan's captives from the bondage of sin, and ultimately the release from death and its bondage of the millions who have gone down into that great prison-house, the tomb. Even the Lord's disciples, who had ears to hear his message and hearts to respond thereto and become his followers at any cost, could not at this time have appreciated the greatness of the Lord's work. Little by little he needed to make known unto them the meaning of the prophecies and explained that the hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and shall come forth. **[R3301 : page 12]**

### **THE ACCEPTABLE TIME.**

"The acceptable year [time, period] of the Lord" mentioned by the prophet was not understood either. Blessed are our eyes that we now see that this acceptable year or acceptable time or acceptable period is the entire Gospel age, during which God is willing to accept all that come unto him through Christ – willing to accept them as joint sacrificers with Jesus, as members of the great Royal Priest. True, by and by, at the close of the Millennial age, the Lord will be willing to accept so many of the world of mankind as the great Redeemer shall have brought into heart-harmony with him, and, by restitution processes, back to the image of God. But that acceptance of the world,

after restoration by Christ, is a very different one from the acceptance of the Church in this present time.

Our acceptance now means our change of nature, our begetting to the new nature, the spiritual; and the terms or conditions of this acceptance are, as expressed by the Apostle, that having been first justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, we should, secondly, "present our bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God and our reasonable service." This acceptable day, then, means the day in which our heavenly Father is willing to accept the sacrifices of the anointed. He had only accepted Jesus' initiatory sacrifice of consecration, which later our Lord fulfilled and finished at the cross. It was the ground upon which the heavenly Father gave him the exceeding great reward of the First Resurrection blessing – to glory, honor and immortality. So with all the members of the body following in the footsteps of the Savior, justified by his blood – their sacrifices are counted in as acceptable to the Father during this antitypical Day of Atonement; and by its close all of these "better sacrifices" – then the typical bullock and goat sacrifices – will have been offered and will have been accepted, and thereafter no sacrifices will be either needed or accepted.

This wonderful prophecy which our Lord declared was being fulfilled in his own person is still in process **[R3301 : page 13]** of fulfilment in the persons of his truly consecrated followers – the members of his body. This was shown in the type. The holy anointing oil was poured upon the head of Aaron, but ran down even unto the skirts of his garments, thus anointing in the figure each member of his body. So it is with us. We are members of the Anointed One, and that which was true of our Head is true in a measure also of each one of us. We are all anointed to preach, all authorized of the Lord to declare the good tidings of the coming Kingdom to all the meek and broken-hearted. It is a mistake to suppose that our commission and the Gospel message given us is intended of the Lord to break men's hearts. It is a mistake to suppose that we are commissioned to go especially to the

froward. Our message, while given out broadcast, must not be expected to attract any except the meek and broken-hearted. True, the light shining in the darkness will reprove the darkness and convince of sin, of righteousness and of coming judgment, or discrimination between the righteous and the unrighteous; but this is an incidental feature. The real mission of the Gospel is to the meek and to the broken-hearted.

As respects the world our general message, so far as they are able to hear it, is liberty to the captives and ultimately opening of the prison-doors of death, that all the families of the earth may in due time receive from the Lord through his Anointed the great blessing of the knowledge of the Truth, the opening of the eyes of the understanding, opening of the deaf ears, that they may know their God and be able to return by way of holiness and the restitution processes which will ultimately be at their disposal during the Millennial Kingdom. We can do still more for those who have ears to hear now. We can tell them of their liberty, of their freedom from the domination of Satan and sin and the weaknesses of the flesh. We can assure them in God's name, and through the merit of the great sacrifice for sins given by our Savior, that their past sins are forgiven and that their present weaknesses and imperfections are covered, if so be that they are trusting in Jesus and seeking to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit to the extent of their ability. This justification by faith is for the Lord's servants and handmaidens now, but an actual justification or release from the bondage of sin and Satan is the glorious provision for the world in general during the coming age, when Satan shall be bound, when he will deceive the nations (peoples) no more.

### **GRACIOUS WORDS TO UNGRACIOUS HEARTS.**

The Lord's discourse is not given, but unquestionably it was a grand one based upon so grand a text. The record is that all present bore witness to the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth – words of favor, of blessing, of comfort, of peace. We know not to

what extent the Lord may have described the blessings yet to come upon the world through his Millennial Kingdom, secured by his work of redemption. His old neighbors and friends were beginning to think very highly of him, and apparently the old proverb that a prophet is without honor in his own country and amongst his own kin was about to be disproved. Apparently, also, the people of his home city were about to receive him as indeed being a great prophet, and rejoice in him and be proud of him because he was of their city – Jesus of Nazareth.

But how short-lived was their appreciation of him! How quickly the natural mind and perverse reasoning turned everything upside down, and turned his admirers into enemies, hating him and seeking his life! They began to say, Is not this the one we have known as Joseph's son? And then they began to wonder what mighty works Jesus would do in their midst, having heard of the great miracles wrought by him in the province of Judea and in the nearby city of Capernaum. Our Lord interpreted their thoughts and said, "Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, 'Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do here in thine own country.'"

We know not why our Lord refused to perform miracles in Nazareth. We may surmise, however, that this being his home city, where he was well known and where undoubtedly he had previously read in the synagogue, the people being in a right condition of mind should have been ready to accept the good tidings without any attestation of miracles; whereas in the other cities, where the Lord was not known, the miracles were more or less necessary as his credentials, and none might have been expected to receive him and to accept his teachings without having either a personal acquaintance with him or the attestation of miracles. The thought would be that the miracles of our Lord were not intended to be restitution blessings, because the restitution times had not yet come – that the miracles performed were merely to witness, to attest, to substantiate, fortify and clinch our Lord's teachings. Secondly, the people of Nazareth



should not have expected miracles, did not need miracles, having another attestation instead, namely, their acquaintance with Jesus.

**HAVE WE NOT DONE MANY WONDERFUL WORKS IN  
THY NAME? – MATT. 7:22,23.**

A lesson may be drawn from this circumstance applicable to our day. Miracles are not necessary today amongst the Lord's people, and hence they have passed away. Not that the Lord has any the less power, but that the time for restitution has not yet come, and the necessity for miracles as introductions [R3301 : page 14] to the Gospel message is no longer manifest. Hence, although not for a moment doubting the divine ability to heal all manner of diseases today, we are inclined to look with suspicion upon the miraculous healings of the present time, whether done by Mormons or by Christian Scientists or by Christian Alliance people or by Spiritualists or by Mr. Dowie and his followers or others. We are inclined to look upon miracles as some of the "wonderful works" mentioned by our Lord, to the performers of which he will say, I do not recognize you as my faithful disciples.

Satan and his work are undoubtedly opposed to life and healing, etc.; nevertheless, he is quite able and willing to reverse his processes and to become either a preacher or a healer, as may best suit his convenience. Our Lord in speaking on this subject implied such a course on the part of Satan, but intimated that it would mean the fall of Satan's kingdom – that it would imply that such efforts were necessary in order to perpetuate the superstition and blindness which he has been exercising over mankind, necessary in order to distract attention from the glorious light of Present Truth, gradually breaking in upon the hearts and minds of those who are the Lord's truly consecrated people.

The present time, so far as the Lord's people are concerned, is a time for sacrifice and not a time for restitution – a time for laying down their lives and not a time for saving them. It is a time for the



binding up of their broken hearts, though not a time for the repairing of their marred bodies; a time for a reckoned deliverance from sin and death, but not a time for actual deliverance. As for the world, it has now a sufficient witness on every hand to the greatness of Messiah and to his merit as a teacher, it needs no temporary healing of the sick for this purpose, and as for the permanent healing of the world's sickness, the time has not yet come for this; but, as the Apostle Peter points out, it will come at the establishment of the Lord's Millennial Kingdom at his second advent. "The times of restitution of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began" shall follow, and they will indeed be "times of refreshing."

The people of Nazareth were interested in Jesus from the standpoint of selfishness – pride in him as the representative of their city – and hoped that the great miracles that he had wrought in other cities would be more than duplicated at his home. And so when he intimated that he would do no such miracles there they were chagrined. His citation of previous similar [R3302 : page 14] dealings in no measure placated their anger. They were filled with wrath and rose up and thrust him out of the city in the direction of a precipitous hill about forty or fifty feet high, with the evident purpose of killing or maiming him by pushing him over the brink.

### **"MARVEL NOT IF THE WORLD HATE YOU."**

What a picture we have here of the natural man in his fallen condition! At one moment rejoicing in the Master's gracious words, at another desiring to destroy him because of the failure of their selfish hopes and ambitions. So it has been with the Lord's people since, and particularly is this true in the present time, the harvest of this Gospel age. Many hear the good tidings of great joy for all people, and while declaring it to be the grandest Gospel message conceivable, yet selfish interests – especially sectarianism, and the feeling that instead of this message building up their favorite sect or party it will have the effect of discrediting the same – seem to evilly influence

those who rejoiced in the gracious message but a short time previously.

Apparently our Lord permitted the matter to go far enough to show the real spirit of his opposers, and then, turning himself, he overawed them with the glance of his eye and passed through their midst unmolested. He exercised this power because his time was not yet come. So, too, we may suppose it will be with all the members of his body. As the Father had a due time for the Son in which to accomplish his work, so, doubtless, divine providence is overruling and guiding the affairs of each member of the body of Christ so that not even a hair of their heads could fall without divine notice; and so, their lives being precious in the Father's sight cannot be taken from them in any manner until their time shall have come – until they shall have finished the work which the Father has for them to do – until they shall have experienced the chastening and polishing necessary to fit them for the Kingdom, or until by their own wilfulness they shall have taken their affairs out of the Lord's hands or have refused to walk in his steps.

### **"HIS OWN RECEIVED HIM NOT, BUT – "**

Our Golden Text was fulfilled not by the above rejection of our Lord at Nazareth, but by his rejection by the whole nation of Israel. The Apostle, however, points out that, while the nation as a whole rejected the Lord, there were individual exceptions; and hence, while the nation as a nation was rejected by the Lord, these faithful individuals who became his disciples were received of him, were granted liberty to become members of the house of sons, and at Pentecost received the spirit of adoption, the spirit of begetting to the new nature.

A parallel to this experience of fleshly Israel is to be sought and is readily to be found in antitypical Israel – nominal spiritual Israel. At our Lord's second advent he comes to Christendom as his professed people; and, in harmony with the prophets, he is again

rejected – yet not by all. As there were some amongst the Jews ready to receive him and to follow in his steps, so, today, there are some to whom his words are applicable, "Blessed are your [R3302 : page 15] eyes for they see and your ears for they hear." Those of the spiritual house now accepting the Lord are in due time to receive a great blessing – the antitype of the Pentecostal blessing – it will be glorification. Soon shall the wheat class of this Gospel age be blessed and changed that they may "shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." (Matt. 13:43.) Thus we see that the Lord will be for a stone of stumbling to both the houses of Israel, but for a blessing to some, the faithful of each. They shall become as the very elect, his body members, his Bride, and be associated with him not only in the anointing and sufferings of this present age, but also in the glories of the future work of blessing all the families of the earth with a knowledge of the Lord and with an opportunity to return to favor if they will.

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