

School of the Word 2018

God has visited his people (Luke 7:16)

Taking another look at Luke's Jesus

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(2) Setting the scene: Luke 4:14-20

Programme

1. Luke: a (re-)introduction
2. *Setting the scene: Luke 4:14-30*
3. Teaching in parables: Luke 18:1-8
4. Prayer in Luke's Gospel
5. The death of the Prophet Messiah Luke 23:1-56
6. On the road to Emmaus: Luke 24:13-35
7. *Getting ready for Christmas (Luke 1-2)*
8. *Getting ready for Christmas (Luke 1-2)*

Sequence

- Making comparisons
- The sources for Luke 4:16-30
- Detailed commentary
- Clues
- Luke 4:16-30 as "overture"
- Jesus a spirit-filled prophet
- And it goes on...

Making comparisons

Mark 6:1 Now Jesus left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. **2** When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue. Many who heard him were astonished, saying, "Where did he get these ideas? And what is this wisdom that has been given to him? What are these miracles that are done through his hands? **3** Isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren't his sisters here with us?" And so they took offence at him. **4** Then Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour except in his hometown, and among his relatives, and in his own house." **5** He was not able to do a miracle there, except to lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. **6** And he was amazed because of their unbelief. Then he went around among the villages and taught.

Matt 13:53 Now when Jesus finished these parables, he moved on from there. **54** Then he came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue. They were astonished and said, "Where did this man get such wisdom and miraculous powers? **55** Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother named Mary? And aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas? **56** And aren't all his sisters here with us? Where did he get all this?" **57** And so they took offence at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honour except in his hometown and in his own house." **58** And he did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

Luke 4:16 Now Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, **17** and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

- 18** *"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 release to the captives
and the regaining of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."*
- 19** *"to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."*

Luke 4:20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him. **21** Then he began to tell them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled even as you heard it being read." **22** All were speaking well of him, and were amazed at the gracious words coming out of his mouth. They said, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" **23** Jesus said to them, "No doubt you will quote to me the proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself!' and say, 'What we have heard that you did in Capernaum, do here in your hometown too.'" **24** And he added, "I tell you the truth, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. **25** But in truth I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's days, when the sky was shut up three and a half years, and there was a great famine over all the land. **26** Yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to a woman who was a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. **27** And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, yet none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." **28** When they heard this, all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage. **29** They got up, forced him out of the town, and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. **30** But he passed through the crowd and went on his way.

Luke 4:31 So he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he began to teach the people.

Notice

- Same scene
- Same message about the prophet
- Negative reaction
- Brought forward by Luke
- Amplified: Isaiah
- Amplified: Elijah and Elisha
- Amplified: mysterious hill in Nazareth
- Jesus' messianic vocation is developed with the aid of several significant associations:
 - * empowerment by the Spirit of God; fulfilment of Scripture; the prophetic role; a mission of deliverance for the marginalised, the needy, and outsiders; and resulting rejection by well-placed insiders.
- This "year of the Lord's favour"—this "today of fulfilment"—will be complicated! Jesus' ministry will benefit the poor and the outsider, and it will provoke the powerful and the insider.

Sources

- Mark 6
- Isaiah 61:1-2a and 58:6
- Leviticus 25:10
- 1 Kings 17:9-24
- 2 Kings 5:1-14

Hebrew Bible (OT)

Isa 61:1 The spirit of the sovereign Lord is upon me,
 because the Lord has chosen me.
 He has commissioned me to encourage the poor,
 to help the brokenhearted,
 to decree the release of captives,
 and the freeing of prisoners,
 2 to announce the year when the Lord will show his favour,
 the day when our God will seek vengeance,
 to console all who mourn.

Greek Bible (OT)

Isa 61:1 The spirit of the Lord is upon me,
 because he has anointed me;
 he has sent me to bring good news to the poor,

to heal the brokenhearted,
 to proclaim release to the captives
 and recovery of sight to the blind,
 2 to summon the *acceptable* year of the Lord
 and the day of retribution,
 to comfort all who mourn.

Hebrew and Greek Old Testaments

Isa 58:6 MT No, this is the kind of fast I want.
 I want you to remove the sinful chains,
 to tear away the ropes of the burdensome yoke,
 to set free the oppressed,
 and to break every burdensome yoke.

Isa 58:6 LXX
 I have not chosen such a fast, says the Lord;
 rather loose every bond of injustice;
 undo the knots of contracts made by force;
 let the oppressed go free,
 and tear up every unjust note.

Lev 25:10 MT So you must consecrate the fiftieth year, and you must proclaim a release in the land for all its inhabitants. That year will be your jubilee; each one of you must return to his property and each one of you must return to his clan.

Lev 25:10 LXX And you shall hallow the year, the fiftieth year, and you shall proclaim release on the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a year of release; a signal this shall be for you, and each one shall depart to his possession, and each shall depart to his clan.

Commentary

Luke 4:16 Now Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom.

- Nazareth: Jesus is known as Jesus of Nazareth (4:34; 18:37; 24:19)
- Brought up: cf. 2:39-40, 51-52
- Synagogue
- Sabbath
- Custom: Jesus is a devout, Torah-observant Jew

Luke 4:16b He stood up to read, **17** and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

- Bar-Mitzvah
- Scroll
- Isaiah
- Notice the slowing down of the telling
- Notice the passive (was given) and the active (he found)

Luke 4:18 *"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 release to the captives and the regaining of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."*

- Spirit
- Anointed
- Good news
- Release etc.
- Jubilee year
- The ministry of Jesus accents **gracious** divine **benefaction** and **liberation**, not divine vengeance

Luke 4:20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him.

- Reverse action
- Slow telling = suspense
- Expectations

A Jesus stood up to read (4:16b)

B the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him (4:17a)

C after unrolling the scroll (4:17b)

D he found the place where it had been written (4:17c) (and he read the Scripture) (4:18-19)

C' After rolling up the scroll (4:20a)

B' he gave it back to the attendant (4:20b)

A' and sat down (4:20c)

Luke 4:21 Then he began to tell them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled even as you heard it being read."

- **Today:** Luke 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 12:28; 13:32-33; 19:5, 9; 22:34, 61; 23:43.
- **Fulfilled:** Luke 1:1, 20, 45; 4:21; 21:22, 24; 22:16, 37; 24:44).
- **Hearing** = literally "in your ears."

Luke 4:22 All were speaking well of him, and were amazed at the gracious words coming out of his mouth. They said, "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

- Positive reaction
- Gracious words = the words of grace
- Biblical language
- The question is not evidently hostile.
- A subtle hint of conflict: they understand Jesus' sonship in relation to Joseph, not God

A Jesus's speech (4:16b-21)

B crowd's reaction (4:22)

A' Jesus's speech (4:23-27)

B' crowd's reaction (4:28-29)

Luke 4:23 Jesus said to them, "No doubt you will quote to me the proverb, 'Physician, heal yourself!' and say, 'What we have heard that you did in Capernaum, do here in your hometown too.'"

- Unprovoked.
- Proverb = prove it to us.
- Jesus has not been to Capernaum yet in this Gospel.
- Physicians who would heal others ought to tend to their own health (Euripides, Frag. 1086)
- Also: look after your own, first of all!!
- Jesus has not been to Capernaum yet in this Gospel.

Luke 4:24 And he added, "I tell you the truth, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.

- Unprovoked.
- Other versions of this saying, see Mark 6:4; Matt. 13:57; John 4:44
- Prophet
- Acceptable

Luke 4:25 But in truth I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's days, when the sky was shut up three and a half years, and there was a great famine over all the land. **26** Yet Elijah was sent to none of them, but only to a woman who was a widow at Zarephath in Sidon.

- 1 Kings 17:9-24
- Elijah goes to the non-Israelite.

Luke 4:27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, yet none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

- 2 Kings 5:1-14
- Elisha heals the non-Israelite.
- It is not without relevance that in Luke (only) Jesus heals the ten lepers and only one—a Samaritan—comes back to give thanks.

Luke 4:28 When they heard this, all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage. **29** They got up, forced him out of the town, and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff.

- Rage?
- Hill? Cliff?
- Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the next day, because it is impossible that a prophet should be killed outside Jerusalem.' (Luke 13:33)

Luke 4:30 But he passed through the crowd and went on his way.

- Mysterious
- Went on his way: *poreuomai*
- Further echoes are (i) the story of the elusive Elijah in 1 Kings 18:7-12, who is mysteriously taken up by the Spirit of God and (ii) the stories of the escapes from prison in Acts 12:6-11 (Peter) and Acts 16:25-28 (Paul).

Clues

- The historical Jesus had very little contact with non-Jews.
- The inclusion of non-Jews anticipates the expansion of the Way in the Acts of the Apostles.
- Clue: "He saved others. Let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, his chosen one!" (Luke 23:35)

Luke 4:14-20 as overture

- Jesus the prophet fulfilled the prophets.
- Originally acceptable to his own people.
- Later, he will be taken outside a town on a hill (Jerusalem)
- He will be taunted, just as here.
- He will "escape" into resurrection
- The Gentile expansion will happen in the Acts
- The Nazareth pericope sets before the reader the entire program of Jesus' ministry:
 - * **his bold teaching, inspired by his reading of Scripture; his acts of compassionate care for the poor, sick, and marginalised; and the rejection that he, like countless prophets before him, will experience.**
- If there will be suspense in the narrative that unfolds from this starting point, it will not be from lack of clarity about the purpose and outcome of Jesus' ministry, but from uncertainty about how it will all happen.
- And, will Jesus prove to be faithful, to the end, to the vocation he has embraced and here publicly announces?

Luke 7:1 After Jesus had finished teaching all this to the people, he entered Capernaum. **2** A centurion there had a slave who was highly regarded, but who was sick and at the point of death. **3** When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his slave. **4** When they came to Jesus, they urged him earnestly, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, **5** because he loves our nation, and even built our synagogue." **6** So Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to say to him, "Lord, do not

trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. **7** That is why I did not presume to come to you. Instead, say the word, and my servant must be healed. **8** For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me. I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it." **9** When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him. He turned and said to the crowd that followed him, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith!" **10** So when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave well.

Luke 7:11 Soon afterward Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. **12** As he approached the town gate, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother (who was a widow), and a large crowd from the town was with her.

13 When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." **14** Then he came up and touched the bier, and those who carried it stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" **15** So the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him back to his mother. **16** Fear seized them all, and they began to glorify God, saying, "A great prophet has appeared among us!" and "God has come to help his people!" **17** This report about Jesus circulated throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.

Luke 7:18 John's disciples informed him about all these things. So John called two of his disciples **19** and sent them to Jesus to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" **20** When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?'" **21** At that very time Jesus cured many people of diseases, sicknesses, and evil spirits, and granted sight to many who were blind. **22** So he answered them, "Go tell John what you have seen and heard: The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news proclaimed to them. **23** Blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me."

4:18-19 The Spirit of the Lord...	7:1-10 Healing of a sick slave (belonging to a Gentile soldier)
4:22 All spoke well of him...	7:11-17 Raising of a Widow's Son
4:25-26 Raising of a Widow's Son	7:18-20 Are you the one?
4:27 Cleansing of a Leper (Gentile soldier)	7:21-23 Details of Jesus' ministry
4:28-30 Offence is taken	7:23 Happy the one who takes no offence at me.

Jesus as Spirit-filled prophet

- In the synagogue at Nazareth
- Themes: Jesus as spirit-filled prophet, as healer, as bearer of Good News
- Ministry: Good news, rejection, death and resurrection
- Mission: Fulfilled in the Acts

And so it goes on...

- Luke tells the story of Paul's final arrest and attempted defence speech in Jerusalem (Acts 21:27-22:29) in a way that recapitulates the pattern evident in Luke 4.
- In Paul's case, too, discourse that culminates in mention of a divine sending to Gentiles (22:21) elicits murderous rage.
- In Luke's two-volume project, the identity and composition of Israel, and specifically the incorporation of Gentiles within God's people Israel, are matters of deep and contested significance.

Conversation