

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD QUARTER: STUDIES IN LUKE'S GOSPEL.

A. D. 26. LESSON IV. JESUS AT NAZARETH; or, The son rejected. Luke 4, 16-30. July 28.

EXPLANATORY.

VERSE 16. HE CAME. From Cana, where he had wrought a miracle at Capernaum, fifteen miles away, on the son of a nobleman. Nazareth. See note, lesson 3, verse 31. Where he had been brought up. What a change had come across his condition in the months since he had last handled the carpenter's tools in the home of his boyhood! In his desire to begin his ministry among the companions of his earlier years, we see 1. Love of friends. 2. Courage; for home is the hardest place where one can commence to speak for God. 3. A strong consciousness of divine call; for without the sanction of God's command no one would venture to claim Messiahship among his own familiar acquaintances. Lessons: (1) Let us carry Christ's cause first to those we know best. (2) Let us not be ashamed to be his followers anywhere. As his custom was. Though taught by the Spirit far beyond the instructions of the scribes, he yet gave respectful attendance upon the services of worship. (3) We should commence in our earliest childhood to attend God's house [Teacher, urge this duty, by the example of Christ.] (4) Our faithfulness to the church should not depend upon our interest in the preaching, but should be a matter of principle. Into the synagogue. In all the Jewish world there was only one temple, with its sacrificial services; but every village or community of Jews had its synagogue, or house of worship, where the people assembled on Sabbath days. The services consisted of psalms of praise, the reading of a selection from the law, and generally another from the prophets, after which any Jew who was present could have the privilege of speaking. Stoop up. There is a flutter of interest and expectation in the assembly, as a young man, well known to all present, not as a religious teacher, but as a simple mechanic, blameless in life, and earnest in piety, just beginning to be the subject of strange reports as a miracle-worker and prophet, rises and requests that the roll of the prophets be handed to him.

17. DELIVERED UNTO HIM. The form of the expression might indicate that the roll was given at his own request, and that he read from it, not the lesson for the day, but one of his own selection. The book. Each book was written on a separate parchment, which was rolled together on two cylinders, beginning at each end, so that the place was found by rolling off from one end, and rolling on at the other. (See illustration on page 37 Berean Question Book, and Freeman, p. 267.) The sacred books were kept in an ark or chest in the synagogue. Esaias. The Greek form for Isaiah. The place. The first sermon of the New Testament dispensation finds its fitting text in the Old. (5) Let us revere and study the Old Testament, whose pages lead so directly to Christ. Where it was written. This passage is taken mostly, but not precisely, from the Septuagint version of Isa. 61, 1, 2, with a clause from Isa. 58, 6. He chose those selections from the prophet which most distinctly proclaimed himself and his mission.

18, 19. SPIRIT OF THE LORD. He had already been pointed out, vouched for, and endowed with God's Spirit. Anointed me. Turned into English, this would be "christened me," as the same word "anointed" is Christ in Greek and Messiah in Hebrew. Gospel. Literally, "glad tidings," a suitable term to express God's message of salvation to men. (6) Never let us forget that Christ comes to bring gladness and joy to troubled hearts. To the poor. (7) While the world notices the rich, Christ comes with his special mercies to the poor and the down-trodden. Heal the broken-hearted. (8) Every heart has its sorrow, and every sorrow finds a comforter in Christ. Deliverance to captives. (9) The world lies fettered in the prison house of sin, Christ comes to set it free. Acceptable year. A reference to the year of jubilee, which came every half century, when debts were cancelled, slaves freed, and estates redeemed. (10) The Gospel brings men back into right relations with one another.

20. CLOSED THE BOOK. By rolling it together. The minister. Not in any sense the pastor, but the chozan, whose duties were rather like those of a sexton, having charge of the building and its furniture, including the sacred box containing the books of Scripture. Sat down. The Jews stood in token of respect while the Scripture was read, but were accustomed to sit on the raised platform at the side of the synagogue while speaking. All the

sitting position. Fastened on him. The fact that his townspeople were surprised at his fame and wondered at his words is an evidence that his childhood and youth had been without special tokens of divinity. [Teacher, suggest that even these rude Nazarenes may afford us an example of behaviour in God's house.] (11) We should listen with eyes as well as ears to those who speak in God's name.

21, 22. SCRIPTURE FULFILLED. We have no report, nor even an abstract of his discourse; but its subject was the fulfillment of Scripture in himself. Eight hundred years the word was waiting, but the man foreshadowed came in God's own time. (12) Every sentence of Scripture is sure of its accomplishment. (13) God rarely brings to pass his word in the way expected by men. His providence is a perpetual surprise. In your ears. It was a bold assumption, this carpenter calling himself the Christ! We cannot blame these Galileans for their rough treatment of him, unless he spoke the truth, and was divine. Wondered. At his clear insight into the Scriptures, at his original interpretation and forcible presentation of the truth. The whole address was a revelation. (14) Wondering at the word will not save men. Some who begin with wonder end in love, but others, as these men of Nazareth, end in hate. Gracious words. (15) Let us learn at the feet of Jesus how to present God's message to our classes tenderly and affectionately, as gracious words. Joseph's son. The name by which he was known, as his true parentage was unknown outside the holy family 23, 34. YE WILL SURELY SAY. With divine intelligence he reads the thought of their hearts before it is fashioned into speech. Heal thyself. By this proverb current at the time, and in common use they remind him that, if his powers are supernatural, they can best be shown by lifting himself and his family from their low condition, and by benefitting his fellow-villagers. (16) How utterly the world misapprehends Christ and the Christian! The carnal mind cannot look through spiritual eyes. We have heard. At least two miracles had already taken place, and probably others not reported by the evangelists. Capernaum. A city on the north-west shore of the Sea of Tiberias. As it lay on the highway between Damascus and the Mediterranean Sea, it was anciently a flourishing town. Now it is so completely in ruins that its locality is undecided between Khan Minyeh, and Tell Hum, three miles to the northward. No prophet. The great dome of St. Peter's seems loftier when seen across the Campagna than from the square where it stands. So the great men of God loom up to grandeur across the centuries. (17) Let us beware of that little jealousy which often keeps us from estimating others at their true worth.

25, 26, 27. OF A TRUTH. Christ desires to impress on his hearers the principle (17) That God works, not according to human plans, but along the lines of his own will. He exercises his sovereign choice in the bestowment of temporal blessings; though he gives salvation to all who will receive it. Elias. The prophet Elijah. Sarepta. Zarephath, near the Mediterranean coast, between Tyre and Sidon, now Sarafend. A widow. She was not an Israelite, but a Phœnician. God sent him there as the safest place in the famine and pers-cution. (19) God knows who are his true ones, though they may be obscure and unknown to men. Eliseus. The Greek form for Elisha. Naaman. Elisha's gifts of healing were not to be used as a convenience and means of gain, but only in such instances as would prove most for God's glory and the good of his cause among men.

28, 29, 30. FILLED WITH WRATH. At the disappointment of their expectations and at being compared to Gentiles, whom they held in the most utter contempt. (20) Human honors are fleeting; the applause of one hour becomes a curse the next. (21) Christ's first public discourse resulted only in hatred and opposition; let not his workers be discouraged when they fail of success. Brov of the hill. Nazareth stands on a steep hill four hundred feet high, overlooking a valley. Might cast him down. We cannot be surprised at the low opinion of Nazareth expressed by Nathanael (John 1, 46), as we behold its people's treatment of their innocent townsman. (22) That he grew up holy in such surroundings gives hope to us all. Passing through. The escape was in a measure miraculous, though no less strange events have occurred in the lives of reformers and preachers since. Went his way. He left Nazareth, probably forever. [Teacher, impress the lesson.] (23) How much we may lose to all eternity by the passion of one moment!

GOLDEN TEXT: And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power. Luke 4, 32. DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION: The public worship of God.

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