

The Sunday School

BIBLE LESSON.

Abridged from Peloubet's Notes.

First Quarter, 1904.

JANUARY TO MARCH.

Lesson IV.—January 24. Jesus Rejected at Nazareth.—Luke 4:16-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.

He came unto his own and his own received him not.—John 1:11.

EXPLANATORY.

Subject: A Gospel Sermon by Jesus, and its Sequel.

THE PREACHER.—V. 15. A man who had been brought up in Nazareth from the time he was two or three years old, and was a familiar figure in the town. Of a good, but not prominent, family, a carpenter and cabinet-maker whose handiwork was, doubtless, in many of their houses, and who had often taken part in their synagogue services. Something more than a year before this time, he had left Nazareth, was baptized by John, and tempted in the wilderness, and entered upon his work in Judea. Here he labored for a year, with an occasional visit to Galilee with a few disciples.

THE PLACE.—In Galilee. At the close of his year in Judea Jesus began his great work in Galilee, the most fertile and populous portion of Palestine; full of trees, orchards, gardens, grain fields, olive groves, and vineyards; abounding in business activities, manufactories, fisheries, and exports of olive oil and fruits. Being in closer contact with the outer world, the great Roman highways between the Euphrates region and Egypt and Italy passing through it, and farther away from the narrowing influences of the Scribes and Pharisees, Galilee was more open to new truths and more receptive than was Judea.

In Nazareth (v. 16). After a few weeks in Galilee, Jesus came to Nazareth. According to Stapfer, Nazareth was a town of not over 2,000 inhabitants, but our consul, Selah Merrill, in accordance with Josephus, regards it as a city of 15,000 to 20,000.

In the Synagogue. AND, AS HIS CUSTOM WAS. All his life long Jesus regularly attended the Jewish church. He went into the synagogue, the old familiar place where he had worshipped, and where he had been to school. The synagogue took the place of our modern church, usually a square room, with a platform and pulpit for preaching at one end, behind which was the ark containing the rolls or books. The reading-desk was on a platform in the centre. The arrangement can be seen in the modern orthodox synagogues of the Jews. The women were within a latticed partition. On the Sabbath day, showing how Jesus kept the Sabbath.

THE AUDIENCE.—Most of the faces Jesus looked upon, as he stood by the reading-desk with the roll in his hands, must have been familiar; his teachers, the elders of the church, his schoolmates, the men he had worked with, his neighbors and acquaintances, and many rougher men who had often seen his familiar figure in the streets, but had no desire for intimate association with one so thoughtful, so pure, whose very presence was a reproof to vice and folly.

KNOWS NOW.

Doctor Was Fooled by His Own Case for a Time.

It's easy to understand how ordinary people get fooled by coffee when doctors themselves sometimes forget the facts.

A physician speaks of his own experience: "I had used coffee for years and really did not exactly believe it was injuring me although I had palpitation of the heart every day.

"Finally one day a severe and almost fatal attack of heart trouble frightened me and I gave up both tea and coffee, using Postum instead and since that time I have had absolutely no heart palpitation except on one or two occasions which caused severe irritation and proved to me I must let it alone.

"When we began using Postum it seemed weak—that was because we did not make it according to directions—but now we put a little bit of butter in the pot when boiling and allow the Postum to boil fifteen minutes which gives it the proper rich flavor and the deep brown color.

"I have advised a great many of my friends and patients to leave off coffee and drink Postum, in fact I daily give this advice." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Many thousands of physicians use Postum in place of tea in their own homes and prescribe it to patients. "There's a reason."

A remarkable little book "The Road to Wellville" can be found in each pkg.

THE TEXT.—Vs. 16, 17, 18. AND (he stood up for to read. Jesus had, doubtless, as one who had gained distinction in other parts of the country, been invited to conduct the services. The reading was always done standing. Jesus went up into the reading-desk and stood waiting for the roll.

17. THERE WAS DELIVERED UNTO HIM (brought by the attendant from the case where the rolls were kept) THE BOOK (or roll) OF THE PROPHET ESAIAS, Isaiah. In Hebrew. The Bible was necessarily divided into quite a number of volumes or rolls. HE FOUND THE PLACE. He selected it as the most fitting for his purpose, or, possibly, it came in the order of the cycle of lessons, though it is not certain that there was any such cycle in those days. WHERE IT WAS WRITTEN (Isa. 61:1, 2). The words are a free reproduction of the Septuagint, the Greek translation at that time in common use.

INTRODUCTION.—V. 18. THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD. Jehovah, the eternal, Almighty God. IS UPON ME. There was no resistance, or perversion, or prejudice in the nature of Jesus which would mar in any way the Spirit working through him. We always have to consider the personal equation in every human being, even when guided by the Spirit. BECAUSE HE HATH ANOINTED ME. Set apart, divinely appointed, as kings and priests were by the ceremony of anointing.

I. JESUS BRINGS GOOD NEWS TO THE POOR. ABUNDANT SUPPLIES FOR EVERY NEED.—(V. 18.) TO PREACH THE GOSPEL, the good tidings, good news. Our word "gospel" is a compound of "good," or "good," and "spell," story, tidings, news. TO THE POOR. "In Scriptural language the poor represent all who are destitute of good necessary to their perfection and happiness, especially those who feel their want and are disconsolate.

II. GOSPEL OF COMFORT, RELIEF, AND A NOBLER LIFE FOR THE BROKEN HEARTED.—(V. 18.) TO HEAL THE BROKEN HEARTED. Overwhelmed with sorrow for their sins, or their losses and sufferings. These Christ came to heal. For them he wrought many miracles. He cared for and sympathized with them in bodily sufferings and at the same time led them to higher things. And Jesus is doing the same to-day.

III. THE GOSPEL OF DELIVERANCE TO CAPTIVES.—(V. 18.) TO PREACH (a different word from preach in the first part of the verse), to herald, to proclaim aloud to all. DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES. Literally, those conquered by the spear-point, prisoners of war. "Compare Isa. 42:7; 'To bring out captives from the prison, and those who sit in darkness from the house of restraint.' The allusion is to Israel, both as captive exiles and as prisoners of Satan in spiritual bondage."

IV. THE GOSPEL OF LIGHT.—(V. 18.) RECOVERING OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND. There are three sorts of blindness.

1. Blindness of the body—an example of the darkness of sorrow and trouble abounding in the world.

2. Mental blindness—ignorance, low idea, narrow outlook, failure to know what is wisest and best for this life.

3. Moral blindness—ignorance of God, of righteousness, of heaven, of the possibilities of the soul, of highest hopes and joys of true life.

V. THE GOSPEL OF LIGHT.—(V. 18.) TO SET AT LIBERTY THEM THAT ARE BRUISED. These words come from another part of Isaiah (58:6); but belong to the prophet's words, and are a part of the longer passage which Jesus doubtless read, of which the words recorded by Luke are the real text of Jesus' discourse. Bruised refers to those "who are shattered in fortune, and broken in spirit." The gospel is the good tidings of the liberty which is the portion of the children of God.

VI. THE WORLD WIDE WELCOME.—Vs. 19-21. TO PREACH (herald, the same as the second preach in v. 18) THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD. The year or era in which God has been pleased, for the best of reasons, to bring these blessings to the people. God's chosen opportunity had come. The allusion is, no doubt, to the great year of jubilee, every fiftieth year (Lev. 25:8-17). This was the great year of the Jews, full of unnumbered blessings. The Jewish captives were all set free.

20. AND HE CLOSED THE BOOK. By rolling up the roll. AND . . . GAVE IT . . . TO THE MINISTER. The attendant. AND SAT DOWN. "The habitual position of a Jewish teacher." So that his sitting down was the signal that he was about to speak.

21. THIS DAY IS THIS SCRIPTURE FULFILLED. This prophecy was originally spoken to the exiles in Babylon. They were poor, oppressed, broken-hearted, away from home, blind to the goodness and promises of God. Then the prophets came with glorious promises and invitations: visions of hope, of a new kingdom, of a prosperous nation, of a time when "Gentiles should come to their light and kings to the brightness of their rising," "when the waste places should break forth into joy, and sing together."

Now Jesus says, "These prophecies, fulfilled in a measure to your fathers, are now to have their fuller, larger, and more glorious fulfillment. I myself am the Messiah, through

whom these promises shall be realized. The year of jubilee has come. This verse expresses the substance of what Jesus said to audience before him.

HOW THE SERMON WAS RECEIVED.—Vs. 22-30. First: By Some it was Welcomed with Joy. 22. ALL BARE . . . WITNESS. There was a general agreement as to the GRACIOUS WORDS (literally, the words of grace) of Jesus. His promises were beautiful; the visions he presented were entrancing; his application of the Scriptures most comforting. To some these feelings were, doubtless, sincere and deep. The words of grace found lodgment in their hearts.

Second: By the Many it was Rejected. The impression was like the sunset glow on the sea, that soon fades away and leaves no trace behind. They immediately saw the difficulty of believing that Jesus was the Messiah, and inquired, IS NOT THIS JOSEPH'S SON? "Just as a single sentence is given as a summary of his discourse, so a single question is given as a summary of their skepticism."

25. YE WILL SURELY SAY. For he saw the taunt in their hearts, even if it had not been murmured among themselves. PHYSICIAN, HEAL THYSELF. Do for yourself what you have promised to others. Show in your own person the powers and glories you say belong to the Messiah, and you can do it by working here and now such miracles as we have heard done in CAPERNAUM.

24. AND HE SAID. This statement between two utterances of Christ imply a space of time between them. He proceeds to tell them that his conduct in this case was exactly in accordance with that of the prophets whom they revered, in the fact that they were not accepted by their own countrymen.

NO PROPHET IS ACCEPTED IN HIS OWN COUNTRY. A general truth, the statement of a common experience. No matter what Jesus should do there, they would not accept him. Greatness is often an invisible quality, manifested on special occasions, and hence, not realized in ordinary circumstances.

28. AND ALL THEY IN THE SYNAGOGUE . . . WERE FILLED WITH WRATH. The tense (aorist) implies a sudden outburst. The implication that they were not worthy of having miracles done for them, the assumption of conscious superiority was "the climax of all that was intolerable to them as coming from a fellow-townsmen whom they wish to rank among themselves; and at these words their long-suppressed fury burst into a flame. The speaker was no longer interrupted by a murmur of disapprobation, but by a roar of wrath."

29. AND ROSE UP, irreverently breaking up the service. AND THRUST HIM WITH VIOLENCE. They were a furious mob. UNTO THE BROW OF THE HILL. "Nazareth spreads itself out upon the eastern face of a mountain, where there is a perpendicular wall of rock from forty to fifty feet high." MIGHT CAST HIM DOWN HEADLONG. "Compare the Tarpeian rock at Rome, from which the Roman mob cast unpopular persons."

30. BUT HE PASSING THROUGH THE MIDST OF THEM. Alford thinks this was miraculous. Many others think it is not, but that, as Godet says, "he passed through the group of these infuriated people with a majesty which overawed them." "It seems at times that the divinity within Jesus shone forth with awe-producing power" (John 18:6; 10:39; 8:59).

DO YOU CARE?

When you hear some one say, "I don't care what church a person belongs to just so he is a Christian," look out for that man. He is insincere or else of no account to his church. If he loved his church home—as he should, he would as lief say of one of his own children, "I don't care what family that child belongs to, just so it is white." I find it is bad practice to argue with neighbors over the yard fence; but it is a good thing to keep your chickens at home. They scratch and misbehave till the neighbors complain.

If they stray too much the neighbors claim them." I had three neighbors who fell out and did not speak for fourteen years over one gadabout hen, and that hen was not worth killing. In fact, it would have been happiness in those homes and dollars in the pockets of the men if some bad boy had killed the old hen with his bean shooter. She got to gadding to one house, laid a few eggs and raised a big cackle, but before she got to setting she imagined that the other hens were pecking at her and left for another flock. Being of a suspicious unsettled temperament, she was satisfied nowhere and running everywhere.—O. E. Moffet.

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