

Lesson 7 – Jesus at Nazareth

Text: Matthew 4:13-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 4:16-30; 5:1-11

Main Characters: God, Jesus, Peter, Andrew, James, John

Key Passages:

- Luke 4:24 – Jesus pointed out that no prophet is accepted in his own country.
- Luke 5:11 – Peter, Andrew, James, and John gave up everything in order to follow Jesus.

Main Storyline:

Once in Galilee, Jesus returned to his hometown, Nazareth. As his custom was, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read scriptures. Jesus was given the book of Isaiah to read from. He opened to a particular passage in Isaiah and read it (Isaiah 61:1-2). After reading the passage, he rolled the scroll back up, handed it to the attendant, and sat back down in his seat. Even after sitting down, however, everyone in the assembly was still looking at him. He said to them, “Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing,” implying that the Messiah had come and that Jesus, himself, was that Messiah.

The assembly was very surprised by what Jesus had said. They were asking each other, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” Jesus went on to prophesy against the people of Nazareth, however. He told them that no prophet is accepted in his own country (implying that he would not be accepted by the people of Nazareth). Instead, like Elijah and Elisha, he would be sent to bless the Gentiles in the area.

When the people heard what Jesus had said, they all became very angry. They got up from the synagogue and threw Jesus out of the city. They took him to the top of a cliff, where they planned to throw him off. However, before they could kill him, he passed through the mob and went away (likely miraculously).

From Nazareth, Jesus went on to Capernaum, which was by the Sea of Galilee, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali (where these two tribes existed when they had their own territories in ancient Israel). Jesus appears to have used this city as his headquarters, so to speak. He lived there some of the time, but would often return to the city after preaching in some other area in Galilee. By living there, he fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah 9:1-2. Note that the darkness and gloom as prophesied in Isaiah is most likely a reference to the fact that this was one of the first areas devastated by the Assyrians (Tiglath-Pileser) when they attacked the kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 15:29). The light of Jesus was about to shine upon the people of that region.

One day, Jesus was walking along the Sea of Galilee. The multitude of people following him began to get so close to him that he hardly had any room to stand or teach. Fortunately, some fishermen had left two of their boats near where he was so that they could clean their nets. Jesus got into one of the boats (Simon Peter’s) and asked him to go out into the sea so that he could sit down and teach the people following him.

After he was done speaking, he told Peter and Andrew (one of Peter’s partners) to go further into the sea and let down their nets to catch some fish. Peter protested somewhat, saying that, even though he and Andrew had fished all night and caught nothing, he would do it simply because Jesus requested it. When they let down the fishing net, they caught so many fish that the net began to break. When they saw what was happening they called to their other partners, James and John, to bring the other boat to help with the huge catch of fish. When they came, they pulled up the catch and were able to fill both boats with fish. The catch was so large that the boats began to sink under the weight of the catch.

When Peter saw what was happening, he fell at Jesus’ knees and told Jesus to get away from him because Peter was such a sinful man (he likely felt remorseful for doubting Jesus). Peter, Andrew, James, and John were all amazed at what had happened. Jesus reassured them and told them that they would, from that point, become fishers of men. After bringing their boats to land, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Lessons/Applications:

- 1.) The people closest to us are often the most difficult to teach/influence; still we must persevere in it.
- 2.) Even though we might initially have doubts regarding Jesus’ teachings, we must have faith and obey.
- 3.) In order to be true followers (disciples) of Jesus, we must be willing to give up everything for him.