

LUKE THE RESEARCHER (from Transcription Notes)
by B. Cobbey Crisler (with earlier permission from Janet Crisler)

to try to get a hook into Jesus' thinking. Jesus counters again with Scripture, for Deuteronomy (6:16) in Verse 12, "*Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*"

Certainly, Luke's insight tells us this has been a power struggle. Where does power lie? Is it something that must be humanly grasped, something that Jesus has to seize? To take personal power, political power, and priestly power, and immediately cut a dramatic swath across the world? Or does he find another message in the law that relates man directly to God, the source of the only power there is?

Luke indicates that he understands this has been a power test for Jesus because in Verse 14 he uses that word, "*Jesus returned*" not in any form of power that Satan had tried to impose upon him. But rather, "*in the power of the Spirit into Galilee.*"

He appears in his hometown of Nazareth. Here is a hometown boy that has made good, locally, mostly in Capernaum, not far away. He comes back. "*His fame has spread.*" They invited him to do some of the reading publicly (Verse 16). They hand him Isaiah (Verse 17). If they handed him a scroll, he would have had to spend some time unrolling it to find exactly what he was looking for. This particular verse is very close to the end.

Isaiah 61, Verse 1, is what Jesus is reading. Notice, it's very specifically a prophecy of the Messiah. The word related to Messiah appears in the word "*Anointed.*" In Hebrew that's the word relating it to the Messiah. "*The Spirit of the Lord (is) upon me.*" Notice, Luke has just said in Verse 1 of this Chapter that "*Jesus was filled with the Spirit.*" Here the prophecy says (in Luke 4, Verse 18), "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.*"

Jesus is saying this in the congregation of the synagogue of his hometown. He's simply reading the Old Testament. If he read Scripture like he cited it spontaneously, like he healed with it, you can imagine you probably would have heard a pin drop in that synagogue. Add to that the fact that Jesus knew he was fulfilling every word of that prophecy in himself and in his own career. Think of the impact in that environment.

Here, then, is God's definition of the Messiah through prophecy:

Number one, the Messiah would do what? *"Preach the gospel to the poor."* Gospel doesn't just mean "good news." It means, in particular, news of victory.

What's the second one? *"Heal the brokenhearted."*

The third, *"Preach deliverance to the captives."*

The fourth, *"Recovering of sight to the blind."*

The fifth, *"To set at liberty them that are bruised."*

And finally, Verse 19, *"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."*

Having said all those things, having defined the Messiah in the Bible, he closes the Book and he sits down (Verse 20). There is a long silence. Everyone is looking at him. He adds (in Verse 21), *"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."*

LUKE 4:28

Unfortunately, his hometown reacts violently (Verse 28), especially to Verses 25 through 27, where he goes back into the Bible for two very significant events in

A mental obstruction is the only resistance between that man and his normal completeness, health, and perfection.

the history of the Jews, and certainly in the history of healing. One was the widow that Elijah visited (Verse 26). In the midst of the famine, she had an endless supply of oil (1 Kings 17:16). The next one in Verse 27 is Elisha's healing of Naaman's leprosy (2 Kings 5:14).

Why would the audience at Nazareth be so incensed by what Jesus is bringing out in these stories? He was talking about foreigners, wasn't he? When you read it, think of this emphasis. He said, *"I tell you quite factually, there were many wid-*

ows in Israel. There were many Jewish widows. But Elijah didn't go to any of them. (Verse 26) Instead he went to a Lebanese widow."

Is it really nationality that makes the difference? Is it really sex that makes the difference? Or age, or economic status?

No, it's *receptivity*, isn't it? You couldn't find it in Israel, but you could find that in Lebanon. In fact, that's the only place Elijah found it.

It's quite a commentary on the lack of faith among the monotheists of Israel. There were many lepers in Israel during Elisha's time, but he didn't go to any of them. He went to the commander in chief of the enemy forces, the Syrian general. There was more receptivity in Naaman's thought than he found in Israel.

Remember how often Jesus says to some of those he cures, like the centurion and some of those who were not Jewish, he says in Matthew 8:10, "*I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.*"

The receptivity message is that God is universally accessible. They didn't like that message. Verse 29, They "*thrust him out of the city.*" They nearly killed him. That was the attempt. (Verse 30,) "*But Jesus passing through the midst of them went his way.*"

I suggest to you, as my father suggested to me once in discussing this incident, that it is easier to accept prophecy than it is to accept fulfillment. With prophecy, one may have been trained to respect and revere it over the years. But when fulfillment occurs, who's ready for that, especially in one's own home town? That's the point Jesus said (in Verse 24), "*No prophet is accepted in his own country.*"

Later we find Jesus telling his followers to search the Scriptures (John 5:39). They will find him there which more or less implies that if we can't find Jesus in prophecy, we can't find Jesus.

Luke 4:33, This first specific healing is the one of the unclean devil. Many of these healings require steps. There is a sequence in healing, in many cases, three specific phases that Jesus goes through before the healing occurs.

One asks the question, "Why? Couldn't Jesus heal instantaneously?" We know he did. But look at the value for us in having the method that he used preserved step by step.