

Fulfilled Right in Front of You

Read Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:14-30

Jesus came to Nazareth, his hometown, *“in the power of the Spirit”* (Luke 4:14), fresh from His baptism and His temptation in the wilderness. News about Him and His teaching was spreading, so on the Sabbath, He was asked to read and teach in the synagogue.

As was their custom, he stood to read, then sat down to teach. The scroll He was handed was the book of Isaiah, so He turned to chapter 61. Chapter 60 tells of all the wonderful future blessings God would shower on His people. Then the opening verses of chapter 61 tell how these gifts would come – or more specifically, through whom they would come. The passage He read would have been familiar to His hearers and well-loved, but what He said next was a total shock: *“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing”* (Luke 4:21, NASB).

Jesus was claiming that a 700-year-old scripture was being fulfilled right in front of them - and by a hometown boy they had known since childhood. Look again at what was being fulfilled:

- Jesus was claiming that God had specially anointed Him. Prophets, priests, and kings were anointed, and Jesus put Himself in that category.
- God had equipped Him with His own Spirit, a heavenly gift that at this point was reserved for specific persons set aside by Almighty God for specific tasks at a specific time. The Spirit had come down as a dove to witness to Jesus at His recent baptism (Luke 3:21-22), and Jesus had come to Nazareth in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14).
- The ministry for which Jesus had been anointed was to the lowest and most helpless: preaching to the poor, proclaiming release to captives, giving sight to the blind, and freeing those oppressed (Luke 4:18). This was not what the people expected from their Anointed One, their Messiah! The Jews expected a mighty king to deliver them from the Romans. John the Baptist seemed to expect One who would judge the world with fire. Both were surprised and confused by a humble healer and teacher.
- Jesus had come to proclaim “the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 4:19); that is, that the age of Messiah had dawned, and the Kingdom of God was at hand.

Their initial response was positive, but before long, they were attempting to throw Him off a cliff. This Anointed One wasn’t who they expected or who they wanted.