

Bible Study Guide: Week of 1-24-2022

1. Read through the passage below
2. Read my notes and commentary
3. Read the questions at the end and ponder or discuss with others

Pastor Andrew

Luke 4:21-30

²¹Then [Jesus] began to say to [the crowds], “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” ²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” ²³He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” ²⁴And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. ²⁵But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” ²⁸When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

²¹Then [Jesus] began to say to [the crowds], “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Here we pick up where we left off in last week’s reading. Jesus has appeared at his hometown synagogue on the Sabbath and has read to them from the scroll of Isaiah. This reading becomes, in a sense, Jesus’ manifesto for his ministry. He ends the reading by rolling up the scroll and explaining that the words of Isaiah have been fulfilled. This indicates to the crowds gathered in his hometown that he himself is the fulfillment of the scripture.

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The crowds have a difficult time accepting Jesus as a fulfillment of God’s word because they assume that he is simply the son of Joseph—a hometown kid whom they had known for his whole life up to this point.

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Jesus acknowledges their skepticism about his identity. The proverb he quotes underscores the connection between Jesus and his hometown. Likewise, his explanation that follows in v. 23 shows that

the crowds are aware of his previous acts of power in other places and shows that Jesus understands that they are expecting him to replicate his miracles there in his hometown. His follow up to this comment in v. 24 shows that Jesus is indeed aware that he will face rejection from his hometown crowd.

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Jesus goes on to explain two episodes from Israel’s history from 1 and 2 Kings: the widow at Zarephath and Naaman. Jesus highlights that God favored these two gentiles over any in Israel. By extension, we can understand that his own ministry will reach out to the outsiders rather than to those in his hometown.

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Apparently the crowd was pushed over the edge by his comments about Naaman and the widow. At this point, they are enraged and run Jesus out of town, even attempting to guide him off a cliff to his death. Jesus, however, passed through their midst (a phrase recalling Jesus’ passing through walls after the resurrection) and “went on his way.” His mission is by no means finished, but it will not focus on his hometown, but rather on other areas and regions.

Discussion/Reflection Questions:

1. What do you think Jesus meant by saying that the reading from Isaiah was “fulfilled in your hearing”?
2. Why do you think the crowds were so enraged by Jesus’ words?
3. In what way(s) are we scandalized by Jesus’ words today? How are we to respond to Jesus’ teachings which challenge us?