

Lesson 4 20 August, 2017

Jesus Begins His Earthly Ministry

Lesson Scope: [Luke 4:16-44](#); [Luke 5](#)

References in brackets refer to Luke 5 and 5 unless otherwise noted

Lesson Focus

Jesus returned from His time in the wilderness, not defeated by repeated temptation, but strengthened from heaven and empowered for service. His ministry began with a tour of Galilee. His presence in the synagogue at Nazareth may have been His first public appearance after His baptism. The minister of the synagogue chose the scroll of Isaiah and chose Jesus as the reader for that particular Sabbath. Jesus Himself chose the exact portion of Scripture to read.

The focal point of Jesus' work on earth was the cross. However, He did not immediately go to the cross at the outset of His earthly ministry. He came "to preach the gospel to the poor." The goal of this ministry was that men might recognize Him as the promised Messiah and put their faith in Him.

The first and greatest evidence that Christ is the Messiah is His divinity. Men who have rejected this foundation have no other basis to benefit from His sacrificial work.

As Jesus began to teach, many believed on Him as the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies. His power over nature, disease, and demons further confirmed His divinity.

Jesus' divinity has always been a focal point that divided believers from unbelievers. It has been observed that one cannot say Jesus was merely a good man with no right to deity. He Himself said, "I and my Father are one" (John 10:30) and "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). If He is good, His words are true and He is God! If we say these words are lies, we make Him a liar and not a good man at all. There is no middle ground.

By the same token, Jesus' power is absolute. He did not heal partially or find any demons that were too strong for Him. He is only limited by the extent of man's faith and cooperation. It is possible for the demons to return to one who once was cleansed. And some experienced healing who did not receive forgiveness of sins. These were not lacks from the perspective of our Lord's power, but on the part of men.

We need to grasp the meaning of Jesus' divinity for us today. His Word is

authoritative. His sacrifice atones for our sins. He is our Mediator to span the gap between God and man. He is preparing for a glorious future with His chosen bride. Either we will surrender ourselves to His lordship and use our energies in His service, or we will be among the ranks "whose damnation is just."

Lesson Aim: To see evidences of Jesus' divinity.

Theme Verse: [Hebrews 1:3](#) Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Lesson Text

Anointed to Preach With Power

[Luke 4:17-22](#)

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, ¹⁸ The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, ¹⁹ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. ²⁰ And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. ²² And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

[Luke 4:28-32](#)

And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, ²⁹ And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. ³ But he passing through the midst of them went his way, ³¹ And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. ³² And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

Authorized to Command Devils

[Luke 4:33-37](#)

And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, ³⁴ Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, *thou* Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. ³⁵ And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. ³⁶ And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word *is* this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. ³⁷ And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

Empowered to Forgive and Heal

[Luke 5:18-26](#)

And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought *means* to bring him in, and to lay *him* before him. ¹⁹ And when they could not find by what *way* they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with *his* couch into the midst before Jesus. ²⁰ And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. ²¹ And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? ²² But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? ²³ Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? ²⁴ But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. ²⁵ And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. ²⁶ And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

Questions for Study

Anointed to Preach With Power

1. What evidences of Jesus' divinity are in Isaiah's prophecy (4:18-19)?
2. Why did the people of Nazareth reject Him?
3. How do men reject the divinity of Jesus today?

Authorized to Command Devils

4. What did the devils acknowledge about Jesus' divinity?

5. What was amazing about Jesus' "word" (4:36)?

Empowered to Forgive and Heal

6. What evidences of faith did Jesus see in this sick man and his friends?

7. How did Jesus reveal His divinity to the on looking crowd?

8. What are evidences of Christ's divine touch on the lives of men today?

Analyzing the Passage

Jesus chose to read a Messianic prophecy, not one that foretold His suffering as does Isaiah 53, but an explicit foretelling of His evangelical ministry (Isaiah 61:1-2). "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me" (4:18) is a reference to the oneness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in the plan of salvation. "The acceptable year of the Lord" (4:19) is an allusion to the year of Jubilee—one year in fifty when oppression would cease and God's covenant people could enjoy a year of restoration and liberty. The anger of the multitude came not only from the proclamation that He was the Messiah, but also from the inference that they as Jews could miss the Messiah while the Gentiles received Him (4:24-27).

Christ's power over the demon (4:35) was absolute. Anyone who witnessed this occasion with a discerning mind could see the conflict of two opposing kingdoms, and not some power struggle within the devil's realm as some tried to say.

Jesus, in meeting the needs of the man sick of the palsy, met the man's greatest need first. He saw this man's need and his faith, and spoke first to the need that everyone in the audience shared. The miraculous physical healing provided evidence of the miraculous spiritual healing. Both can come only from God. Strange (5:26) is translated from the Greek word *paradoxes*, which in turn is a combination of the two roots *para* (near), and *doxa* (glory), thus giving us this rendering—"We have seen things near to glory today." How true!

Principles and Applications

Anointed to Preach With Power

1. The fulfillment of Messianic prophecies declares Jesus to be the Anointed One (4:18-21). These verses focus on the universal need of man and the unique ability of the Redeemer to meet those needs. Saints of the postexilic era anticipated the fulfillment of these prophecies. Though the strains of "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and "Is not this the carpenter's son?" echoed across the land, those who sincerely sought to know the truth about Jesus saw these prophecies fulfilled in unmistakable proof.

2. The redemptive work of Jesus Christ is evidence of His divinity (4:18, 19). None other but God could heal and liberate the way Jesus could. Satan and his forces, including men who serve him, can maim and blind, but not even the best of men can redeem himself from the downward pull of this power. Christ focused on this redemptive role in His Scripture reading, breaking off at the point where the focus changes to judgment. The judgment will come, but not before men have had opportunity for redemption.

3. The rejection of Jesus by many was a fulfillment of Messianic prophecy (4:28-30). Jesus Himself said that no prophet is accepted in his own country. Isaiah 53 portrays a lamb before his shearers, one despised and rejected of men. This passage shows us God's power over satanic powers. Men could reject the Messiah, but they could not ruin His work.

Authorized to Command Devils

4. The powers of evil gave witness to the divinity of Jesus Christ (4:34). Whether this was a mocking pretense, or an uncontrollable response on being confronted with Christ, we cannot be completely certain. We do know that Jesus did not allow this witness to continue. Rather, He silenced the devils and freed the soul in bondage. The result was a much greater testimony of Christ's power. The devils still believe and tremble. But the greater witness rises from the deliverance from bondage that only Christ can bring.

5. Only divine power can command the compliance of demon power (4:35, 36). We can recall when the disciples were unable to cast out a dumb spirit due to a weakness of faith (Mark 9:17-29). The seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-16) attempted to cast out devils and were not able to do so by their own power. We must sense our need for the power of Christ to experience personal victory over Satan.

6. The spoken Word of Christ has divine authority and power (4:32, 36). The power of a word is first of all vested in its speaker. Christ's Word has power because He is divine. But the power of a word can also be judged by its effects. Christ's Word is "quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Empowered to Forgive and Heal

7. Jesus declared Himself to be divine by His authority to forgive sins (5:20, 21). The faithless Pharisees murmured that this declaration was blasphemy. But Jesus refuted their unbelief by showing His power to heal as well as to forgive. Both are humanly impossible and neither is harder for

God. The proof of Christ's power to forgive is the ability of the forgiven man to rise from his bed and go forth to serve and glorify God.

8. Jesus by divine wisdom discerned the thoughts of men (5:22). He simply asked a question that somewhat sidestepped their thoughts and directed their thinking into more profitable channels. Jesus not only knows our thoughts, He has the power to direct our thoughts. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalm 139:23, 24).

9. Jesus displayed His divine power to the people by His mighty works (5:24-26). The people rightly gave God the praise for the "strange things" that they had seen. Are you and I seeing the touches of Christ's divinity at our doorsteps each day? Some of our neighbors will miss seeing the touch of Christ and will credit an admirable subculture with strong work ethics and good social morals. Let us not fail to point them to the work of Christ. Demonstrations of His divine power are on every hand.

Answers to Questions

1. What evidences of Jesus' divinity are in Isaiah's prophecy (4:18-19)?

Here we see the Spirit's presence and the Father's anointing. He brings the good news of salvation that can liberate captive souls. He can heal broken hearts, blind eyes, and bruised spirits, bringing to all a glorious jubilee from the jaws of human woes.

2. Why did the people of Nazareth reject Him?

They saw Him as a common man and were rather faithless. But the thing that really sparked their anger was His implication that Gentiles would benefit from His great work but the Jews might miss it.

3. How do men reject the divinity of Jesus today?

Some try to bring Him down to the level of a good man by denying the Trinity or otherwise denying His Deity. All who grapple with Jesus' divinity also fail to recognize the authority of His Word. They resist His lordship, and will not surrender their own will to His.

4. What did the devils acknowledge about Jesus' divinity?

They said that He was the Holy One of God, and implied that they had nothing to do with Him—that they were from a totally separate kingdom. They acknowledged His power over them by their worry that He might destroy them.

5. What was amazing about Jesus' "word" (4:36)?

They were amazed at His authority and power over the unclean spirit. Jesus had first silenced the mouth of the devil, a sign of His power to con-

vict. Then He told the devil to come out of the man, evidencing His power to convert. Though the devil exercised all of his powers, the man was not hurt and his healing was complete.

6. What evidences of faith did Jesus see in this sick man and his friends?

They had faith that Jesus could meet the needs of this man, and that his healing was worth overcoming any obstacle to reach Christ.

7. How did Jesus reveal His divinity to the on looking crowd?

He forgave the sins of the sick man upon seeing his faith. He discerned the thoughts of the scribes and Pharisees and addressed them. He then healed the man—immediately and completely—and the man was able to carry his own bed as he went home, glorifying God.

8. What are evidences of Christ's divine touch on the lives of men today?

Souls are saved and we see those who once were manifesting the works of the flesh, now producing the fruit of the Spirit. Sins are forgiven and saints can live in daily victory. Those who once were unbelieving and rebellious can now be surrendered servants of Christ. Some who once were timid and fearful now boldly preach and testify for Christ.

Important Teachings

1. The fulfillment of Messianic prophecies declares Jesus to be the Anointed One (4:18-21).

2. The redemptive work of Jesus Christ is evidence of His divinity (4:18, 19).

3. The rejection of Jesus by many was a fulfillment of Messianic prophecy (4:28-30).

4. The powers of evil gave witness to the divinity of Jesus Christ (4:34).

5. Only divine power can command the compliance of demon power (4:35, 36).

6. The spoken Word of Christ has divine authority and power (4:32-36).

7. Jesus declared Himself to be divine by His authority to forgive sins (5:20-21).

8. Jesus by divine wisdom discerned the thoughts of men (5:22).

9. Jesus displayed His divine power to the people by His mighty works (5:24-26).

Summarizing the Lesson

"I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [but] he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.... And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him" (1 John 2:21-23, 28-29).

Research Guide

1. Read the Scriptures in Nave's Topical Bible under "Jesus, the Christ—Divinity of" (pages 665-667).
2. Read Unger's Bible Dictionary on "Jesus Christ." Especially the comments on His title "The Son of God" (second column of page 682), and the closing paragraph on page 686 are very pertinent.