

Rejected at Nazareth

by C.I. Scofield

The sermon highlights the failure of Jesus to win over the people in Nazareth due to their unbelief, and the limitation of divine power in the face of stubborn unbelief.

Topics: "Rejection Of Christ", "Overcoming Unbelief"

Description

C.I. Scofield delves into the profound religious life of Jesus in Nazareth, emphasizing the value of right habits and the fulfillment of prophecy in Isaiah. Despite witnessing His miracles and hearing His gracious words, the people of Nazareth rejected Jesus, showcasing the power of unbelief as a barrier to divine intervention. This rejection led to Jesus turning to the Gentiles, highlighting the consequences of rejecting the Savior. The sermon underscores the deep-seated hatred in the hearts of rejecters and the importance of overcoming unbelief to receive the grace of God.

Transcript

(Luke iv:16-30.)

I. The Analysis.

1. The "Custom" of Jesus (verse 16).--It is only a word, but what a wealth of revelation it contains. "As His custom was." It suggests the profoundly religious life of our Lord during the long years of silence at Nazareth. The word "religious" is used advisedly. Israel had a religion to practice (Gal. i:13); Christians have a life to outlive (Gal.

ii:20)--a very different thing. It suggests, too, the exceeding value of right habits (cf. Dan. vi:10).

2. The Fulfilled Prophecy (verses 17-21). Here is a wonderful illustration of the minute accuracy of that verbally inspired Word of God, so impiously assailed by modern critics. The passage quoted by our Lord is found in Isaiah lxi:1, 2, reference to which will show that our Lord suspended the reading at a comma, and in the middle of a sentence: "to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord"-- "and he closed the book * * * and began to say unto them, This day has this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears. The conclusion of the sentence is, "and the day of vengeance of our God." But that day had not come then, nor has it yet come. It will be the baptism with fire (Matt, iii:11) at His second coming.

3. The Rejection of Jesus (verse 22).--Men foolishly fancy that if they could see our Lord as in the days of His humiliation they would instantly believe. Ah, no. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will

they be persuaded though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi:31).

4. Jesus Rejecting the Rejecters (verses 23-27).--This is the invariable order (Matt, xi:19-24). The rejection may be cast in a polite form (Luke xiv:16-24), or a contemptuous one (Matt. xxii:2-7), but the result is the same--the rejecter of Jesus will find himself rejected at last. Not even the cloak of profession will avail (Matt, xxv:10-12, 24-30).

5. Jesus, Rejected by Israel, Will Turn to the Gentiles (verses 25-27).--This foreview was wonderfully fulfilled in the Apostolic age, and since (Acts xviii:6; xxviii:25-28; xv:i4).

6. The Wrath of the Rejecters (verses 28, 29).--Deep in the heart of every rejecter of the Lord Jesus is black hatred of Him, and of His will. The world of unbelief would tear

God from His throne if it were possible. Think what a message of love and of helpfulness had been given from the lips of Christ that day. What a revelation of the deep evil of the natural heart is involved in the hatred of perfect grace!

II. The Heart of the Lesson.

If the underlying philosophy of the moral influence theory of the atonement were true, Jesus would have won His first mighty victory that day in Nazareth; for He was in the company that knew Him best. For nineteen years that small community had been in contact with the blameless and holy life of our Lord. Every soul in Nazareth would have some story of His loving helpfulness; every soul had felt the sweetness and power of His nature. One would say that here of all places He would be surest to win converts.

But it was not so. They wondered at His gracious words, but when He came to press His messianic claims they drew back. "Is not this Joseph's son?" And He made them see that He understood their thoughts. He was a Prophet in His own country, and could do mighty works there because of their unbelief. Unbelief--that stubborn barrier against which even divine power beats in vain. Mysterious limitation upon almightiness! With a breath He could have blotted them out of existence, but He "could do no mighty work" in the face of their unbelief. With unbelief alone millions are staying the grace of God which seeks to save them.

But it is only the grace of God which can be thrust back by unbelief. When again our Lord shall call for the roll of the prophet Isaiah, and begin to read at the place where He stopped that day in Nazareth, He will say: "And the day of vengeance of our God," and then unbelief will not stay His hand.

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