



Jesus Begins His Ministry

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Let's see how Jesus begins His ministry.

Luke 4:13 *And when the devil had finished every temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time.*
Luke 4:14 *And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit; and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district.*

Luke 4:15 *And He began teaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.*

Luke 4:16 *And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.*

Luke 4:17 *And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book, and found the place where it was written,*

Luke 4:18 *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are downtrodden, Luke 4:19 To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD.”*

Luke 4:20 *And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him.*

Luke 4:21 *And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”*

What *Jesus* meant in the synagogue at Nazareth was that the day of Messiah has arrived. The hoped-for King, Son of David, liberator, Savior, world ruler, bringer of justice and peace—Messiah has come.

But the way Jesus quotes Isaiah 61 reveals a mystery about the Messiah's coming. Jesus says in Luke 4:19 that He has been sent “to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord” and He stops. But Isaiah 61:2 says “to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord, *and the day of vengeance of our God.*” **Why didn't Jesus finish the sentence?**

Because there is a mystery about His coming, namely, that it is **a two-act drama.**

The first coming of Jesus Christ ushered in the favorable year of the Lord—[i.e., a space of time] for salvation not judgment. But when the day of salvation is over, and the time appointed by the Father has come, then the day of vengeance will arrive and the prophecy of Isaiah 61:2 will be completed.

Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 1:7–8 that at the end of this interval of patience ***“the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

Before we look at what this good news is, let me give two reasons why I think Luke 4:18–19 describes not only the mission of Jesus but also the mission of the church.

First, Jesus met his disciples after the resurrection just before He returned to heaven and said, **“Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so send I you” (John 20:21).**

Disciples of Jesus are an extension of Jesus' mission in the world. He is the light of the world and we are little beams or little reflections of Him (John 12:36; Matthew 5:14–16).

The **second** reason I think Luke 4:18–19 describes our mission as well as Jesus' mission is that the church is called the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22–23; 4:15–16). Just as our bodies are what people see of us, so the church is what people see of Christ.

Therefore, the mission which Christ once performed in His own physical body on earth, He now performs through his corporate body the church.

Now the first thing that we notice in this passage is the crucial work of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' life.

The second thing that I want you to notice is that He came to proclaim the favorable year of the LORD.

Now, in order for us to understand what He is talking about, we need to back up and understand something from the Old Testament called the year of Jubilee.

On the 50th year, says the 25th chapter of Leviticus, these are the things that are supposed to happen:

- 1. All debts are canceled.**
- 2. All prisoners are set free.**
- 3. All land is given back to those who originally possessed it.**

In Luke 4, as Jesus begins His ministry, He declares that the Jubilee is about to begin through the ministry of Messiah. Remember, the Jubilee of God is good news for the poor. It means debts are forgiven and prisoners are set free. And that is what Jesus goes about providing in His ministry. Debts are forgiven and prisoners are set free.

But it doesn't stop there. Jesus then teaches His disciples to do the same things He was doing—Kingdom ministry. And they do it! The twelve do it. Then seventy others do it.

And then, right before He ascends into heaven, He tells His disciples this....

“Go therefore and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I taught you.. (Matt 28:19-20)

So, this ministry of Jubilee, this ministry of bringing good news to the poor, and release to the captives, and healing to the sick, is supposed to be released through the followers of Jesus. And those followers are supposed to pass this ministry on down to other followers. And this ministry is supposed to be alive and well in the church today.

