

GREAT GOOD NEWS

Early in His earthly ministry, Jesus Christ returned to Nazareth to His home synagogue to make a big announcement. It's all recorded in Luke 4:14-22. All eyes were upon Him as He read from Isaiah, and then proclaimed, "*Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.*"

Specifically, Christ Jesus declared that He had come for the redemption of the captive ones. This is the measure of the Messiah, to do what His afflicted people can not do for themselves. They are in bondage to sin, but He heals the broken, frees the captives, comforts the oppressed, and brings joy to those who are released and redeemed.

1- "The Spirit of the Lord" Jesus read, "*is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*" This anointing happened in Luke 3:22 at His baptism. His name is Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph. Jesus means "Jehovah is salvation."

His title "Christ" means one anointed by God for His task (*christos* Greek, *messiach* Hebrew). In the Old Testament, anointing of kings and prophets was a picture of the poured out Holy Spirit, as God empowers to accomplish His purposes. Prophets taught a coming not just of an anointed one but *The Anointed One, The Messiah*, notes RC Sproul, "ultimately and uniquely endowed by the Holy Spirit, anointed by God for the special task of redeeming His people."

2- "Proclaim good news" (gospel) to the poor fell on welcome ears. Poverty can be economic, moral, or spiritual. Matthew 5:3 says "*blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*" As in Revelation 3:17 the "rich" are often unaware of their spiritual poverty. All people need the good news of the gospel of the kingdom of Jesus Christ! "*Liberty to the "captives"* refers to prisoners of war, as Old Testament slaves in exile. This is foremost a spiritual warfare in which people are captivated by material things, and by sensuality, guilt, hatred, and all the lies of the world, the flesh and the devil. Some fifteen times in the New Testament, *liberty* refers to forgiveness of sins (as in Colossians 1:14-18).

"*Recovering of sight*" refers to spiritual (and physical blindness) as Jesus heals both. This is the veil over the minds of unbelievers when reading the Bible (2Corinthians 3:14-18) until their spiritual rebirth. It is spiritual blindness of the unsaved (2Corinthians 4:3-6) until they receive the glorious light of the good news about the Lord and Savior. "*Those who are oppressed*" refers to being broken in pieces, shattered, crushed. Such people have no way out of their situation. They need a Savior! Jesus proclaims not the need but the present reality - He is here!

3- "The year of the Lord's favor" echoes the "jubilee" (Leviticus 25:10) when debts were released. But it primarily points to the Christ, who is the prophet proclaiming and the priest reconciling, and the king delivering. "*He will save His people from their sins*" and all their bondage, by God's grace (Matthew 1:21). He is the one described in the scroll of Isaiah.

RC Sproul notes how Jesus outlines the agenda of the Christ, ending with "*to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*" In Jewish terminology this is "*age of Messiah.*" Inaugurated with the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, it will be consummated when He comes again to usher His people into new heavens and earth, a total restoration and fulfillment of God's creation.

4- "This Scripture has been fulfilled" by Jesus Christ. But has it yet been fulfilled in your life? How are you set free? Apart from Him we are broken, blind, in bondage physical and spiritual. Even believers, when they forget His indwelling truth and power, can fall into such brokenness and bondage. But the good news about Jesus truly does set captives free. This happens when you are spiritually reborn by His Spirit as new creations, receiving Him as Lord and Savior, with His new spiritual life and indwelt by Him, to live for Him.

2Corinthians 6:2 says "*behold now is the favorable time, the day of salvation.*" Don't let another day go by without putting all your trust in Jesus Christ. He said in Acts 26:16-18, "*I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.*" Have you received His grace? Proclaim it today! ☐