

## 28.22 First Rejection at Nazareth (Luke 4:16–30)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

### Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- The *Jesus* DVD, based on the book of Luke
- The scroll found at the end of this lesson. It is printed on two pages that need to be glued together.

**Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:** Vocabulary words are enlarged for flashcards at the end of this lesson. Print, cut out, and glue to card stock, or just print on colorful cardstock.

- *synagogue*: a place like a Jewish “church”
- *Nazareth*: the town in Galilee where Jesus grew up [Locate on a map.] This town had a steep area with a 50-foot drop to the bottom of the cliff.
- *anointing*: having oil poured on the head in order to show God’s selection of a king or priest. “Anciently kings and prophets and the high-priest were set apart to their work by anointing with oil. . . . These people were then called the Lord’s anointed. . . . Hence the Son of God is called the *Messiah*, a Hebrew word signifying the *Anointed*, or the *Christ*, a Greek word signifying the same thing. And by his being anointed is not meant that he was literally anointed, for he was never set apart in that manner, but that God had set him apart for this work; that he had constituted or appointed him to be the prophet, priest, and king of his people” (Barnes).
- *Gentile*: anyone not a Jew

### Scripture Passage: (ESV)

Luke 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

18 “The Spirit of the Lord 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, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” 22 And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” 23 And he said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, “Physician, heal yourself.” What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.” 24 And he said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. 25 But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, 26 and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” 28 When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. 29 And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. 30 But passing through their midst, he went away.

### Introduction/Review:

Two of the greatest prophets of the Old Testament were Elijah and Elisha. They ministered during some very difficult days in the northern tribes of Israel.

God had sent a famine because the people were worshiping idols. He took care of Elijah by sending him to a widow in the city Zarephath, north of Israel in a country called Sidon [locate on a map]. God took care of this widow, too, even though she was not an Israelite.

Elisha also had an experience with a non-Israelite, the man named Naaman from Syria [locate on a map]. Do you remember his story? If so, tell it. I'll give you a hint: his servant girl from Israel told him of a man to see so that he could be healed of leprosy. [Naaman came to Elisha. Elisha sent a message that Naaman should dip seven times in the Jordan River; then he would be healed of his leprosy. Naaman worshiped God after that.]

Do you know that people can be fickle? They might love you one moment and despise you the next. This turnabout can happen in even less than a day—in just a few moments. Today's story tells of fickle people.

Jesus was in Galilee. He had been in Cana, where He sent the nobleman home to a son He had healed twenty miles away in Capernaum. [Locate these cities on a map.]

### Story:

Now Jesus was visiting His hometown Nazareth. This is where Mary and Joseph had lived before they were married. This is where they returned after taking Jesus to Egypt when Herod killed all the boy babies of Bethlehem. This is where Joseph worked and ✓Jesus helped, no doubt, in carpentry work. Jesus was familiar with this town and its people. They were familiar with Him.

Jesus fulfilled all righteousness—He did all that God's law required; so His custom was to go to the synagogue every single Sabbath. What day of the week was that? [Saturday.] Not Sunday? No. Believers in Jesus Christ now worship on the first day of the week, Resurrection Day, not on the seventh day.

Bible historians tell us that the synagogue worship consisted of readings from the Old Testament, prayers, and preaching. The Scripture scrolls were kept in a special chest and taken out to be read by seven readers every week: a priest, a Levite, and five Israelites from the local synagogue (Matthew Henry). When the Scripture was read, the reader (and maybe the people) stood up; when the man preached, he and all the people sat down.

✓Maybe the synagogue ruler saw the “hometown boy,” remembering He was a “good kid,” and said, “You take a turn reading today, Jesus.” Jesus accepted the opportunity, took the scroll offered to Him, found the place to read—Isaiah 61—and read a little more than the first verse in our Bibles.

These are the words Jesus read. Listen to them and think, while I read, if they sound as if they are speaking of the Messiah, whom the people did not yet know was Jesus Himself: [Teacher, read from the scroll you've prepared from the text found at the end of this lesson.]

“The Spirit of the Lord 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.”\*

Yes, these words are indeed about the Messiah, the One anointed by the Holy Spirit Himself—the One given authority by God to save people, to make blind people see, to liberate the downtrodden, and to proclaim the time of God's favor.

Well, when Jesus finished reading this short passage, He handed the scroll back to the attendant and sat down. What did His sitting indicate? [That He was about to preach or explain the Scripture He just read.]

The eyes of all the people were fastened on Jesus, this good kid from Nazareth now grown up. Jesus opened His mouth and began to speak: “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

What was Jesus saying? He was saying that He was fulfilling this passage that prophesied the Messiah, the One looked for since Genesis chapter 3, the One who would come to earth in order to save His people.

I wonder if the congregation understood the importance of Jesus’ words—the fact that He was Messiah—for they marveled at Him, maybe because of the fact that He, their hometown boy, had grown into such a fine young man. [Teacher, look up dreamily.] The words He spoke—“proclaiming good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty, recovering sight, setting at liberty, proclaiming the year of the Lord’s favor”—were such gracious words, so kind, so loving, so wonderful! “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked each other, ✓proud for their town that He was such a celebrity.

By the time Jesus uttered a few more sentences, however, the crowd changed from being adoring to being oppressive. What were those sentences? Jesus said, “You are saying, ‘What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well.’ Well, no prophet is received well in his own town. Take Elijah, for example. Did he go to his own people, the Israelites, during the famine when the heavens were shut up three years and six months? No. Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a widow who was not an Israelite.”

I can almost see some of those Jews perking up at the mention of a *Gentile*! Jesus went on to give another example: “There were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”

✓“Another Gentile,” those people thought, “a *Syrian*, our ancient enemy! How dare he talk like that in our synagogue!?”

Yes, Jesus was proving His point that a prophet is not accepted in his own territory. Notice the change of these people. They who had been so wowed by Jesus suddenly were full of wrath. ✓See them shaking their fists at Jesus. Watch as they force Him out of the synagogue, push Him out of town, shove Him to the area outside of town where they might throw Him off the cliff.\*\*\* Will they kill Jesus before His time? What will happen to Him?

The Bible doesn’t tell us exactly how it happened, but it does say, “Passing through their midst, he went away.” How do you imagine that took place? There are lots of possibilities. ✓Maybe the people were all struck with powerlessness—their hands and bodies wouldn’t work. ✓Maybe they were frozen in time [Teacher, freeze in one position]. ✓Maybe they were blinded as soldiers once were in Elisha’s time. The Bible doesn’t tell us, but it does say Jesus walked through the middle of the crowd and went away.

[Pray.] Thank You, God, for protecting Your Son that day. Thank you for the many times you protect us, even when we don’t know You are doing it. Thank You for the examples of Gentiles that you saved, for you have saved Gentile believers like me in our time. Thank You that there are other places to evangelize besides our own towns. Help us, though, to be faithful to present Your Word in our town as well as in other places. Keep us trusting You. Because of Jesus we can pray. Amen.

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\*“*The Spirit {m}* of the Lord is upon me. Or, I speak by divine appointment. I am divinely inspired to speak. There can be no doubt that the passage in Isaiah had a principal reference to the Messiah. Our Saviour directly applies it to himself, and it is not easily applicable to any other prophet” (Barnes).

\*\*“Our Lord takes the book and reads, stopping precisely at the point where mercy terminates. It is the description of His grace in ministry; it is not so much His Person as His devoted life, His work, His ways on earth. . . . Immediately after in the prophecy follows ‘the day of vengeance of our God.’ But our Lord does not read these words. Is not this, too, extremely remarkable, that our Lord should stop in the middle of a verse, and read what describes His grace and not what touches on His judgment? Why is this? Because He is come only in

grace now. By and by He will come in judgment, and then the other verses of the prophecy will be accomplished” (WK E 64f in Online Bible).

\*\*\*“ . . . though to put any man to death, or to inflict any punishment on a person on the sabbath day, as this was, was contrary to their own canon . . . [He] went his way; from Nazareth elsewhere; nor do we read of his returning there any more” (Gill).

### **Lessons from this lesson:**

- Jesus is God: He claimed to be the Spirit-anointed Messiah prophesied in Isaiah 61:1, 2 (Luke 4:21).
- “As his custom was.” If Jesus needed to regularly attend worship services, certainly we do. *Regularly* means every week.
- The Jewish people stood up to read the Scriptures. We should respect and reverence the Scripture.
- The people fixed their eyes on Jesus. In church we should give careful attention to the speaker—to look at him.
- “This was the first insult which the Son of God received, and it came from ‘them of His own household!’” (JFB). Sometimes we will be disrespected by those closest to us for our spiritual stance.

### **Activities:**

- Play dough: scroll
- Discuss Jesus’ purpose in coming to earth, going over Isaiah 61:1, 2 that Jesus quoted.
- Find the document “28.22 First Rejection in Nazareth booklet” on the Lessons page at [teachingthebibletokids.org](http://teachingthebibletokids.org). Print the first two pages and cut them in half lengthwise (hot-dog cut). Assemble the pages, fold, and staple. Have students color the booklet.
- Enact “freeing prisoners” with the following activity: “Use a bandana or other soft cloth to tie the kids hands together as if they are prisoners. While their hands are tied, challenge them to build a tower, color a picture, clap hands, *etc.* These tasks will be challenging since their hands are tied up. As you remove their ‘chains,’ say: *When the Bible talks about Jesus’ setting prisoners free, it doesn’t mean that He is freeing people from a jail. It means that when people are all tied up in sin, He can take the sin away and set them free. Sin takes away our happiness and keeps us away from God* (<https://ministry-to-children.com/lesson-jesus-teaches-in-the-synagogue/>).
- Game for “giving sight to the blind”: Blindfold a student. Have him feel and identify 3 or 4 objects in an opaque plastic bag or a paper bag. Change the objects for the next students. Suggestions: key, pencil, ruler, envelope, CD, small book, small calculator, scissors, glue bottle, closed safety pin, paper clip.
- Review questions: (Game: Print the scrolls found below. Back with flannel or flocked scraps and cut out. A student may place a scroll on the flannel board for each correct answer to a question.)
  1. Why was Nazareth an important town in Jesus’ life? [He grew up there.]
  2. Where did Jesus preach in Nazareth? [In the synagogue.]
  3. What did Jesus say after reading Isaiah 21:1 and 2? [“Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”]
  4. How did the people seem to think of Jesus before He talked about God’s blessing two Gentiles? [They spoke well of Him and His gracious words.]
  5. Which two Old Testament prophets did Jesus mention? [Elijah and Elisha.]
  6. Briefly tell about one of the Gentile people Jesus mentioned. [The widow of Zarephath fed Elijah; God used Elisha to heal Naaman of leprosy.]
  7. What did the people do to Jesus after He told these stories of Gentiles? [They were full of anger, drove Him out of town, and were about to throw Him over a cliff.]

8. What happened to Jesus? [He walked away from the people.]

**Memory Verse[s]:**

- Luke 4:24—[Jesus] said, “Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown.”
- John 1:1–14:
  - 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
  - 2 He was in the beginning with God.
  - 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
  - 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
  - 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
  - 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.
  - 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.
  - 8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.
  - 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.
  - 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.
  - 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.
  - 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
  - 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
  - 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

**Handwork:**

- Print enough copies of the final page of this lesson for each student to have one 8 ½ x 5 ½ ” copy. Glue or tape two lengths of 6 ½ ” dowelling, one on each of the 5 ½” sides of the paper. Roll up the Scripture as a scroll. Open the scroll from side to side to read horizontally as in the picture of Jesus’ reading found below.
- Or have students color the booklet found in a separate document. (See “Activities.”)

synagogue

Nazareth

anointing

Sabbath

Gentile

(Use this paper, rolled at the top and bottom as a scroll, from which to read Isaiah as Jesus read.)

Isaiah 61:1–2

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon  
me,

because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the  
brokenhearted,

to proclaim liberty to the  
captives,

and the opening of the prison to  
those who are bound

and recovering of sight to the  
blind,

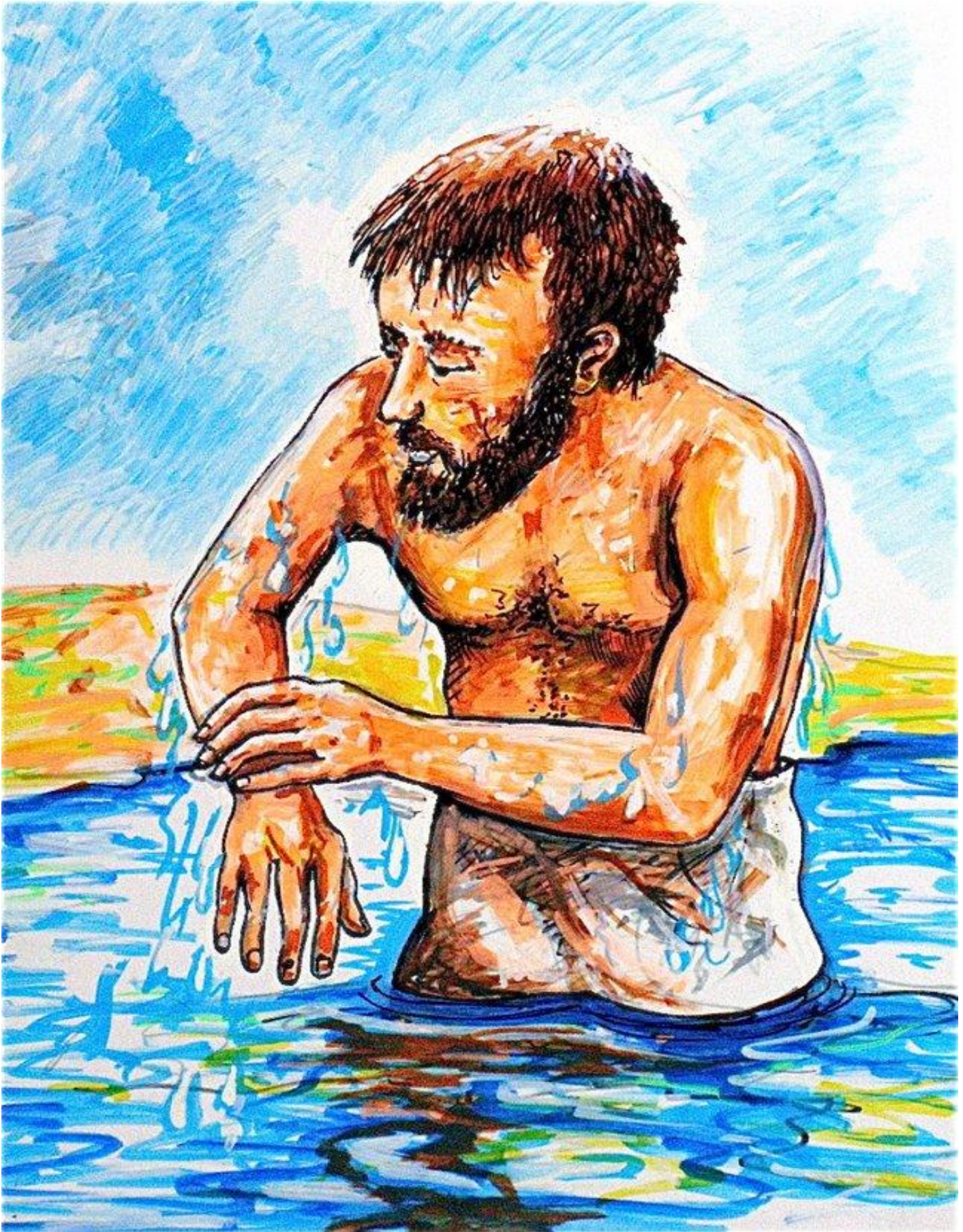
to set at liberty those who are  
oppressed,

to proclaim the year of the Lord's  
favor.

Elijah asks the widow of Zarephath in Sidon to fix him a meal.



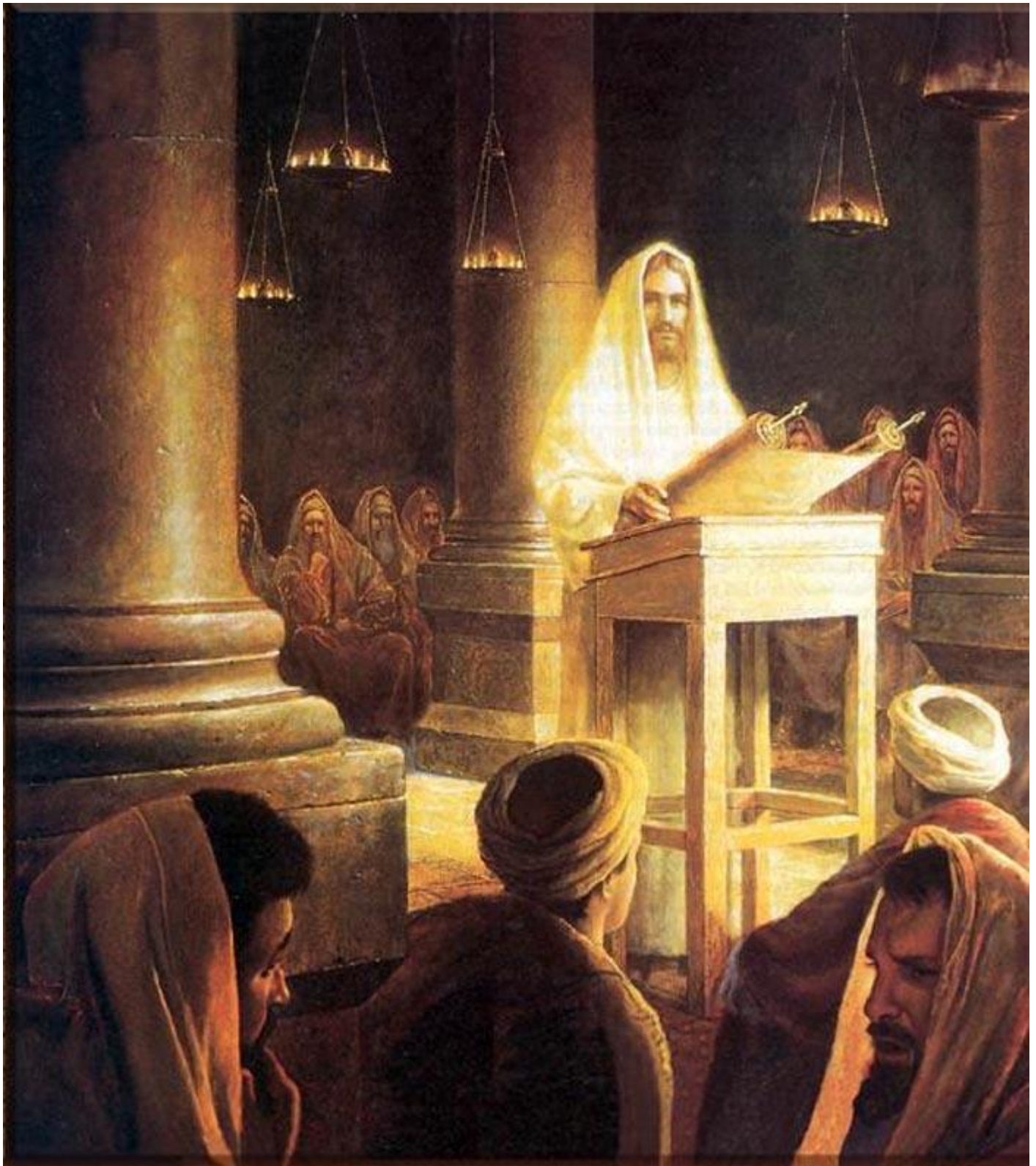




<http://www.jobelser.org/2012/01/01/2122012-sermon-god-is-with-us/naaman/>

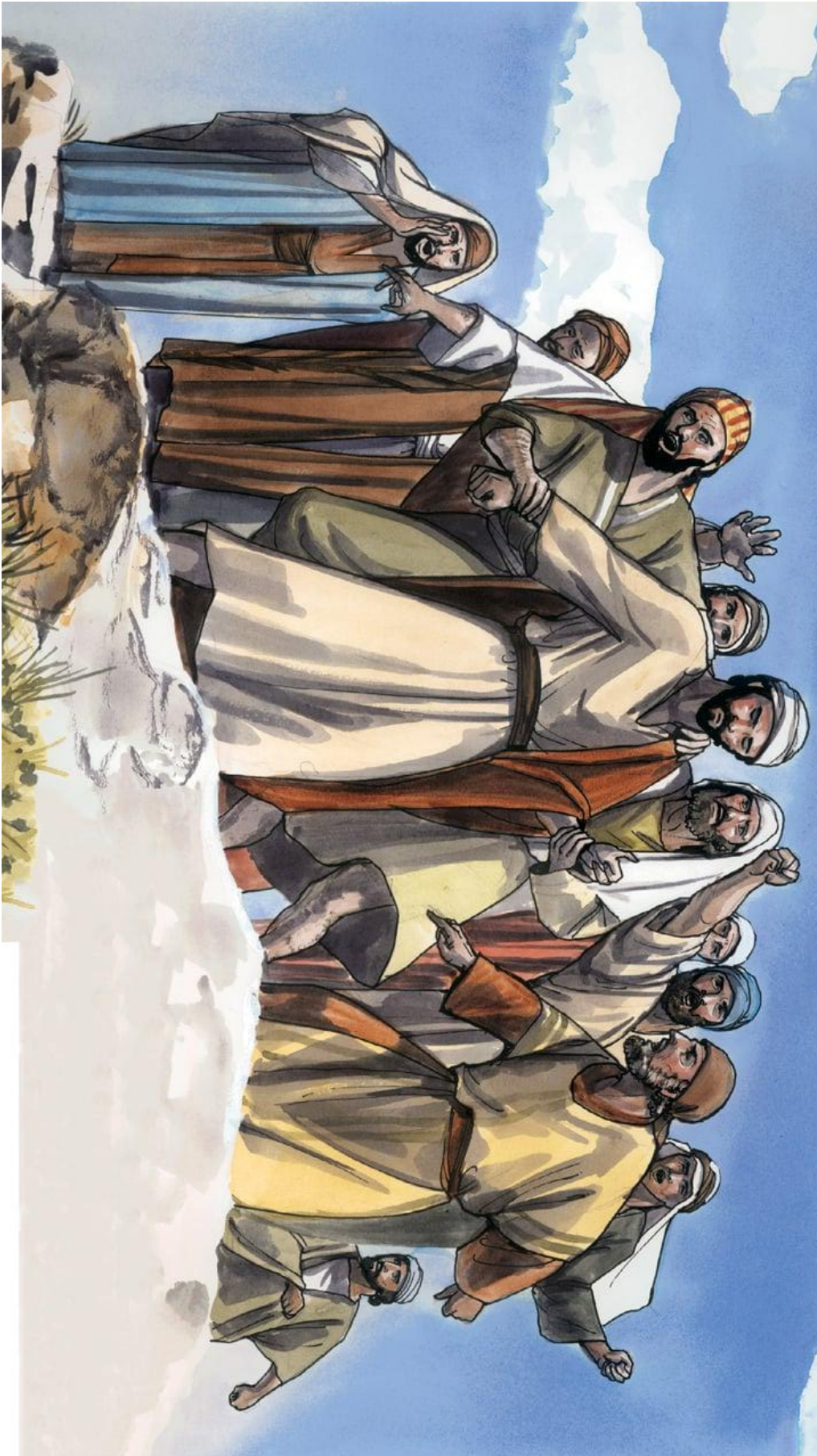
Naaman dips seven times in the Jordan River and is cured of leprosy.





<https://readingacts.com/2012/09/21/luke-416-21-reading-isaiah-in-nazareth/>



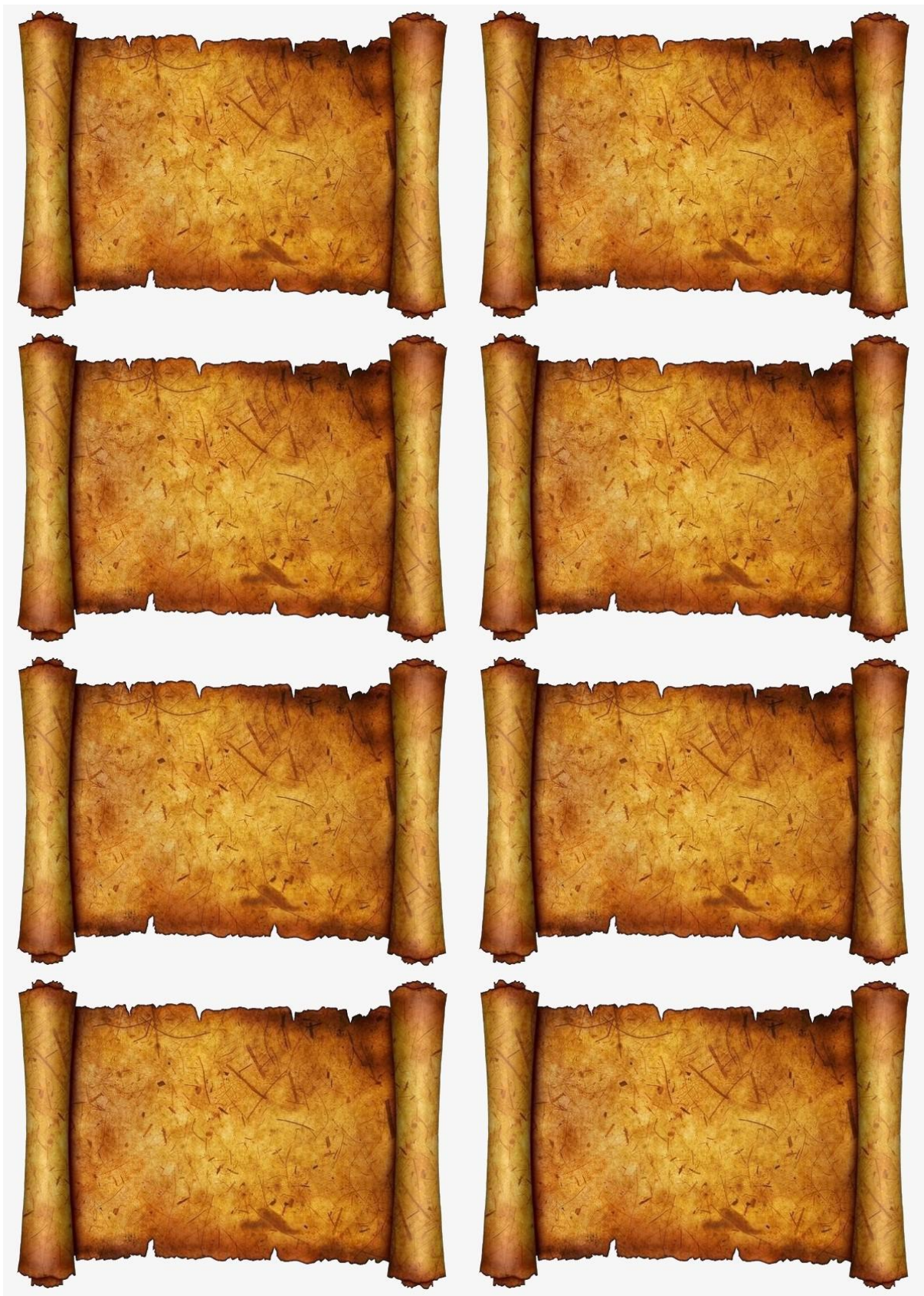






Cliff outside Nazareth <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/208291551492479307/?lp=true>





## Isaiah 61:1-2

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because the LORD has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor;  
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

*Jesus said, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."*

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