

What Is My Calling?

Key Verse: *"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."*
—Luke 4:18

Selected Scripture:
Luke 4:14-30

THIS LESSON'S KEY VERSE

is part of the proclamation that was read by our Lord Jesus at Nazareth when he arose to speak in the synagogue on that eventful Sabbath Day. It was written by the Prophet Isaiah (Isa. 61:1-3) approximately seven hundred years before Jesus was born, and now the time had come for its fulfillment.

The Heavenly Father pledged to give Jesus the Holy Spirit that would positively legitimize his earthly ministry for the great work of redemption and reconciliation that he was about to enter. The scriptural account records the events of his baptism in the waters of Jordan, and the wonderful manner in

which the promised Holy Spirit of God had indeed come upon him. In Matthew's Gospel we read, "Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. 3:16,17

In the Key Verse, Jesus applies Isaiah's prophecy to himself as an introduction to his earthly ministry. He

made this matter clear to the people when he had finished reading from the scroll. "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. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. 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 4:20-22) This promise would ultimately be fulfilled when his greater work of restitution and recovery would be made available for the whole groaning Creation.

This wonderful prophecy, we note, was not addressed to the proud, or the hard-hearted, who heard his words that Sabbath Day, but to the poor and meek in spirit. He knew that it would be the humble ones who would receive his ministry and respond to it with a pure and contrite conscience. The brokenhearted ones would have been humbled by the difficulties, adversities, and perplexities of life. His ministry would thus proclaim blessings to those who heard him on that day, as well as all mankind in due time.

The whole human family, suffering under the bondage of death, has been blinded by sin that has corrupted the mental and moral faculties of all. Further, as Isaiah's prophecy confirms, deliverance will also be made available for all who are captives of death. Jesus' kingdom work of restitution will free, and set at liberty, all who are sleeping in the grave. All have been bruised by the effects of the curse, and all are promised a recovery.

The people at Nazareth bare witness to the beginning of our Lord Jesus' wonderful ministry nearly two thousand years ago. The miracles he performed, such as healing the sick and raising the dead to life, were but illustrations of the grander power that will be exercised on behalf of all mankind during the future time of his kingdom. ■