

Revealed in Rejection

Key Verse: *“He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.”*
—**Matthew 13:58**

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 13:54-58;
Luke 4:16-30

ALTHOUGH THE POPULAR-ity of Jesus among the people was widespread, it seemed to be noticeably absent in the region of Nazareth, in which he grew up. Through the scriptural account (Matt. 13:54-56) we see that, because the people of his own country knew him so well as a boy and young man, that he was merely a carpenter’s son, and that his family did not seem to have any special credentials, they were taken aback by his preaching and mighty works.

Many of these who thought of Jesus as only a carpenter’s son, when presented with his powerful teachings, rather than desiring to learn more about him and search out the things which he taught, simply dismissed him as offensive to their fleshly desires and goals. “They were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.” (vs. 57) How ironic it was that Jesus had received much honor from total strangers, but not by those who supposedly knew him best.

In the Luke account of this experience (Luke 4:25-27), Jesus pointed out that the rejection of him by those of his own country was not new, but had also happened in the cases of both Elijah and Elisha. Elijah, who needed sustenance during a time of great famine, was ignored by the people of Israel and was sent to a

faithful widow in the heathen city of Sidon. In the case of Elisha, there were many lepers in Israel who could have come to him to be healed, but only Naaman the Syrian did so.

After Jesus recounted the examples of Elijah and Elisha, many were even more angry. “All they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.” (Luke 4:28,29) This was hardly a godlike response to one who had done them no wrong, one whom they themselves had spoken of in this way—“All . . . wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.”—vs. 22

Many had revealed their true heart condition by rejecting him. They were amazed by his teachings, astonished at his works, and even acknowledged his gracious words, but because of their pride and self-conceit, they refused to accept him, desiring rather to continue in the traditions of their fathers. Jesus’ response to all this was very simple and clear. Luke 4:30 states, “He passing through the midst of them went his way.” The Key Verse gives the account of Matthew, which also indicates that Jesus simply left the area, moving on to places where his message would be better received.

The lesson for us is the same. There are many times in our lives when our message, our works, or how we live our life is an offense to those of the world, perhaps even to those who know us well. Yet we should not let that bother or discourage us, but rather we should simply continue to press on in our Christian walk, realizing that we are not subject to the judgment of men, but of God. “Who-soever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.” “[Since] God be for us, who can be against us?”—Matt. 10:14, Rom. 8:31 ■