Jesus’ Rejection at Nazareth

SYNOPSIS When Jesus left Judea, he returned to his hometown of Nazareth. In the synagogue, he read from the scroll of Isaiah and declared himself to be the Messiah. The people were initially amazed, but Jesus knew their heart and lack of faith. When he said that no prophet is accepted in his hometown, they tried to throw him off a cliff.

Luke 4:16-30
16 He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. As usual, he entered the synagogue on the Sabbath day and stood up to read. 17 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written:
18 The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.

20 He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 He began by saying to them, “Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled.”
22 They were all speaking well of him and were amazed by the gracious words that came from his mouth; yet they said, “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?”
23 Then he said to them, “No doubt you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Doctor, heal yourself. What we’ve heard that took place in Capernaum, do here in your hometown also.’”
24 He also said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 25 But I say to you, there were certainly many widows in Israel in Elijah’s days, when the sky was shut up for three years and six months while a great famine came over all the land. 26 Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them except a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. 27 And in the prophet Elisha’s time, there were many in Israel who had leprosy, and yet not one of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”
28 When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was enraged. 29 They got up, drove him out of town, and brought him to the edge of the hill that their town was built on, intending to hurl him over the cliff. 30 But he passed right through the crowd and went on his way.

Notes:
The Scroll of Isaiah was given to him. Here we see God’s providential hand. We should also pay attention to events that seem to be coincidences but are, in fact, events of God’s designing.

He does not read Isaiah 6:2b “…and the day of our God’s vengeance” because he has not come to condemn. Yet he will certainly judge the world at his return.

Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled. Here he declares himself to be the Messiah.

They were initially pleased…until Jesus referenced the Widow at Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian, neither of whom were Jewish.

No prophet is accepted in his hometown. This is the key verse of this passage.

Then they wanted to kill him, first because they had no faith (see Mark and Matthew’s account) and second because they were insulted.

APPLICATION: No prophet is accepted in his hometown” means that when we begin following Jesus, our friends and the members of our own family may not understand us. They may even reject us. This is a sign that we are truly part of God’s family. Jesus himself felt the pain of rejection from the people he loved. We should also look for events of God’s designing, which often serve as mile markers in our spiritual journey.

John F. Longmire - Study Notes - Christology

HYPERLINKS
Parallels:
Mark 6:1-6 & Matthew 13:54-58

Old Testament References:
Isaiah 61 - a Messianic foretelling
Leviticus 25 - The Year of Jubilee
1 Kings 17:7-16 - Widow at Zarephath
2 Kings 5 - Naaman the Syrian