

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Luke 4:13-21

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, May 11, 2014

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, May 11, 2014**, is from **Luke 4:13-21**. This commentary is the second part of a two part Bible Lesson that includes **Isaiah 61:1-3**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught.

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Luke 4:13-21

(Luke 4:13) When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness where the devil tempted Jesus to prove that He was the Son of God in various ways and forsake the mission that His Father had sent Him to perform according to Old Testament prophecies about Him. Jesus passed these tests, but the devil would return to tempt Him again. Perhaps the Bible does not record many of Jesus' temptations because Jesus and His mission as our Savior is the focus of the New Testament, not the devil and his temptations of Jesus.

(Luke 4:14) Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country.

Luke's Gospel and his Acts of the Apostles describe the work of the Lord Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus and the apostles. Jesus did the work of His heavenly Father in the power of the Holy Spirit with complete unity of purpose among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. His apostles learned from Jesus and saw how the Holy Spirit worked through Him and would work through them. After Jesus resurrection and ascension into heaven, the apostles waited for the power of the Holy Spirit to come upon and fill them on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus began His ministry in Galilee, where He was raised as a child and good news about Him spread from there to "all the surrounding country."

(Luke 4:15) He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

Jesus taught first in the synagogues, and later the apostles (including the Apostle Paul) would teach first in the synagogues when they travelled to Samaria and other parts of the world. They began to teach where the people had the best opportunity to know the Hebrew Scriptures (the Law and the prophets), and where they could teach how Jesus came to fulfill the promises of God and do the work of the Messiah. For the first time in their lives, the people began to see the work of the Holy Spirit in the Son of God and later in His apostles. Everyone praised Jesus, and later thousands would be drawn to hear Him preach and receive healing from all their diseases.

(Luke 4:16) When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read,

Notice! Jesus established the custom or habit of going to the synagogue every sabbath day. Jesus did what He later inspired the author of The Letter to the Hebrews to write: “And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25). Jesus preached from town to town in Galilee until He came to his hometown of Nazareth to read the Hebrew Scriptures and teach in their synagogue. By now, those who knew Him as a child had heard how He was praised in other places.

(Luke 4:17) and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

Jesus followed the custom of standing to read from the Scriptures and sitting down to teach. Some believe that Jesus read from the text in Isaiah that had been assigned for that sabbath day; others believe that Jesus chose the Isaiah scroll and the place to read in Isaiah. God could have providentially arranged for Jesus to be in Nazareth the day that text was to be read, or Jesus might have read from that text numerous times from synagogue to synagogue (since the Bible does not tell us, we only know that Jesus was familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures in scroll form and could easily find what He wanted to read by unrolling the scroll to the right place).

(Luke 4:18) “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,

The Jews might have heard many messages on these verses from Isaiah as people looked forward to the coming of the Messiah. Scribes and priests would have shown how they thought these verses would be fulfilled by the Messiah when He came and how they would recognize Him. The Messiah would bring good news and healing to the neediest of God’s people. The focus of the passage was not on how God would make the rich more rich or the powerful more powerful. Jesus did not put the focus on freeing the oppressed

Jews from Roman rule; instead, He freed the spiritually oppressed by His words and actions. The very day He preached from Isaiah in Nazareth, He was able to do all that Isaiah foretold, and He had already done all of these things throughout Galilee.

(Luke 4:19) to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

In some sense, the year of the Lord's favor began when John the Baptist began preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah, but it came fully when Jesus began His public ministry as the Messiah in the power of the Holy Spirit. The year of the Lord's favor continued year by year throughout Jesus' public ministry, the ministry of His apostles, and the ministry of His true Church throughout the subsequent centuries.

(Luke 4:20) And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

Jesus followed the standard synagogue practices of His day and these verses give us a glimpse of them. Churches that teach from the Bible today follow the example of the synagogues in Jesus' day where the Scriptures were read, taught, and applied (as Jesus applied the Scriptures). The apostles always taught from the Scriptures and they showed how the Scriptures taught about and applied to Jesus and everyone's need of Jesus. The eyes of the people looked expectantly upon Jesus because they had heard so much about Him. Probably, they wanted Jesus to prove to them all that was being said about Him elsewhere.

(Luke 4:21) Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Jesus did not teach as the scribes and Pharisees, who often quoted and debated the traditions and opinions of various rabbis throughout their history when they taught from the Scriptures. Jesus taught with authority and not as their scribes (Matthew 7:29; see also Matthew 9:6-8). In teaching from Isaiah, Jesus declared in so many words, “These teachings apply to me! I have fulfilled and am fulfilling the words of the prophet Isaiah! The prophet Isaiah revealed Who I am! I am the promised Messiah! The year of the Lord's favor has begun, and I am the One Who will bring it to fulfillment!” In one short sentence, Jesus kept the focus on himself, and today the Church keeps the focus on Jesus as the promised Lord and Savior of the world.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

Since this is the second of a two part Bible Lesson, only three of the five Study Questions will be asked below.

1. Give one reason why the Bible teaches that Jesus taught and did His work in the power of the Holy Spirit instead of just by himself.
2. Give one reason why Jesus and the apostles began to teach first in the synagogues

instead of just beginning on street corners.

3. Why was it important for Jesus and the apostles to teach from the Hebrew Scriptures instead of disregarding the Bible and just teaching their own ideas?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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