

# The Nazareth Manifesto

## Luke 4 v 14-30

### Context:

We are currently in election season as we build up to polling day on 4<sup>th</sup> July. Each political party will publish their manifesto outlining what they will do for us if elected. Party managers carefully choreograph the manifesto launch to maximise positive impact and avoid any embarrassing gaffes. Towards the beginning of his ministry, Jesus published and launched *his* manifesto in his hometown synagogue in Nazareth. Luke tells us the story in Luke 4 v 14-30, so let's join the congregation and listen to what Jesus has to say.

### Observation:

1. Where did Jesus return to after his testing in the Judean wilderness and in what state (v 14)?
2. What effect did his return have according to v 14?
3. What was he doing to earn such approval (v 15)?
4. Where did he go and when according to v 16?
5. What did he do at the end of v 16 and in v 17?
6. What did he read in v 18-19?
7. What did he do next (v 20) and what was the atmosphere like in the synagogue?
8. How did he begin his sermon in v 21?
9. What was the reaction of the congregation in v 22?
10. How did Jesus respond in v 23?
11. How did Jesus go on in v 24-27?
12. What was the congregation's response now in v 28?
13. What did they do in v 29?
14. What did Jesus do in v 30?

### Meaning:

1. This incident took place immediately after Jesus' baptism and wilderness testing (see 3 v 21-22 & 4 v 1-13. Luke mentions in 4 v 14 that Jesus returned to Galilee 'in the power of the Spirit' – what effect do you think the baptism and testing of Jesus had on the presence and power of the Spirit in him?
2. Why do you think everyone was talking about Jesus (see v 14b-15)?
3. Why do you think Jesus deliberately chose to launch his manifesto in Nazareth (v 16)?
4. Why do you think Jesus deliberately chose to read from Isaiah 61 and what do you think this text tells us about Jesus' perception of his identity and mission?
5. What do you think Jesus means by his words in v 21?
6. The beginning of v 22 is mistranslated in most English versions of the Bible. Rather than being a positive expression of approval, the words are better translated as a negative rejection of Jesus' words (literally: 'All witnessed against him'). Why do you

think the congregation reacted this way after hearing him read from Isaiah 61 and after claiming that those ancient words were being fulfilled in Jesus there and then?

7. Jesus clearly understood their reaction to him to be negative, hence his words in v 23-24. What do you think Jesus means by these words?
8. Why do you think Jesus makes reference to two Gentiles in v 25-27?
9. Why do you think the reaction of the congregation turned from anger to violence in v 28-29?
10. How could Jesus react in the way he did in v 30?

#### **Application:**

1. Jesus' testing in the wilderness seemed to increase his spiritual power and effectiveness (v 14). To what extent is this the same for us – how might times of challenge and testing strengthen rather than weaken us spiritually?
2. How do we see the manifesto of v 18-19 being played out and fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus?
3. The principal reason for the anger of the Nazareth congregation and their murderous rejection of Jesus seems to have been his deliberate omission of the verse about the day of God's vengeance on the Gentiles when he quotes from Isaiah 61, and his reference to God's blessing on two particular Gentiles from the OT (v 25-27). Why would this have upset the congregation so much and what can we learn from this for ourselves in our day?

#### **Pray:**

- Thank God that Jesus brought God's favour and grace at his first coming.
- Thank God that God's favour and grace are not dependant on ethnic origin.
- Pray for anyone known to you who hasn't yet repented and received God's favour.