

Sunday, January 26, 2025

Luke 4:14-21 This is the Day

If someone shook you awake from a deep sleep and cried out to you, "It's happening!," what would be the first thing you would think of? What is it that you are waiting for—something good or something bad?

Background

Jesus told the people of his hometown, Nazareth, that the Day of the Lord, the Year of Jubilee, had come with him that day. Synagogue, readings, prayers, psalms. Isaiah 61: 1,2; 58: 6. Doesn't include mending the brokenhearted or the vengeance of God. Sat down to teach. Synagogue leaders would invite visitors to speak. Jesus here, then Paul and others later in Acts.

They had waited, under the rule of Rome, as they had waited under Egypt, under Assyria, under Babylon, for the Good News of deliverance. The poor, the prisoners, the blind and the oppressed are entering the year of the Lord's favor.

There is no evidence that the Year of Jubilee was ever actually implemented, but every 50th year (7 X 7) was when the land went back to the families and tribes they had been distributed to on entering Canaan. Anyone who had sold their labor was freed from bondage. This is the year that Jesus proclaimed. All the good ideas would now be implemented.

It's happening NOW

It is an exciting claim. The deepest and finest promises are coming true for God's people.

The way Jesus spoke and the beauty of his message surprised the people of Jesus' hometown. Why, we remember when he was a little kid playing in the dirt with his nose running! Look at him now! Isn't that something, how well he speaks!

We will read about their response next week. The delight in hearing Christ will also expose their hearts, revealing resistance and anger, as the word of God does to our own hearts.

Positive thinking, good habits and management

Today is the first day of the rest of your life.

"This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice it and be glad." Psalm 118:24

Make of your life and this day what you choose.

How can you be sure.

Hope and self-delusion. Hedge your bets.

Authority of Jesus.

Sure you are hearing the authentic words of Christ, and understand them?

Led by the Spirit

Coming from the Baptism by John to the trials in the desert and now led by the Spirit to a concrete place and time. Prophecy unfolds.

Turning point of history.

In Luke the Spirit has already come to Zechariah, John the Baptist, Elizabeth, Mary, Simeon. It seems that the Year of the Lord is attested to by the working of the Holy Spirit in many lives.

The Year of Jubilee will not be a movement that overpowers all other voices, covering over evil and silencing protest. The Year of Jubilee will actually put things right.

So, when you hear Christ anointed to preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, release of the oppressed, and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, who do you think that is for?

Good News for yourself, and other people, all people

69th Street National Day of Prayer. Penny on sidewalk. I picked it up and offered to one of the other church leaders who was there. "No, I leave it for someone who needs it." She is not someone the church knows, and is a selfless servant of God. But I thought, "I'm a sinner in need of Christ, too." I kept the penny.

Can you hear this for yourself, not as a wholesaler receiving goods you will disperse to others? Not that we skim off the aid meant for others, but that we are among the needy receiving the blessings of God's Good News.

So, according to the Gospels, the life, death and resurrection of Christ have begun the Year of the Lord. In what way do you see the fulfillment of the promises that Jesus said were being fulfilled during the past 2000 years? What do you believe is yet to happen? Has the church received and passed on the good news, or built a warehouse to protect the blessings?

What exactly are you waiting for, and what are you waiting to happen in this congregation?

The judgment will be the next step, with the return of Christ? Now is the year of Jubilee.

Resources

Bovon, Francois. Luke 1: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 1:1-9:50. Hermeneia Series, Fortress, 2002. Pp. 148-152.

Fitzmyer, Joseph, S.J. The Gospel According to Luke I-IX. Anchor Bible Series, Vol. 28, Doubleday, 1981, Sixth Printing, 1986. Pp. 521-540.

Reiling, J. and J.L. Swellengrebel. A Translator's Handbook on the Gospel of Luke. United Bible Societies, 1971. Pp. 186-196.