

# Jesus in Nazareth



Luke 4:16-30

*Jesus Christ went to Nazareth, where he had grown up. The Nazarenes had already heard of his miracles. He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath as was his custom, read out of the writings of the prophet Isaiah and spoke to all who had gathered there. But they did not understand him, nor did they believe that Jesus was the Messiah announced by Isaiah. They became angry at his words and drove him out of the city. They even wanted to push him over a cliff, but the Son of God just walked through the midst of the excited crowd and went his way.*

The children see how the Lord Jesus was rejected in Nazareth.  
The desire is awakened in them to accept the Son of God.

# R

amon lives with his parents and sister Salome in Nazareth. They have all had a busy day and are now sitting in the courtyard of their home chatting together. But they are not really alone as the houses are built closely together and the neighbours are never far away.

"Mother, I heard the people speaking about a certain Jesus at the synagogue. Do you know him?" Little Ramon looks up at his mother questioningly. "Yes, I know him very well," she replies. "Jesus grew up here in Nazareth and we are about the same age. I used to see him quite often, but he hasn't been living here for some time now." Ramon's father remarks: "When I was a young man, I often met Jesus in the synagogue. We used to speak about our faith, the holy scriptures and the history of Israel."

Ramon's uncle has also heard the conversation and now joins the family. "Jesus is the son of Joseph, the carpenter, and his wife Mary, Ramon. Surely you know them." Of course, Ramon and Salome know both of them! Salome suddenly remembers something else: "I recently overheard two women discussing Jesus in the market-place. They said that he had healed the sick and even made a lame person walk again." More neighbours join them and also sit down. All are speaking at the same time. Everyone has already heard of Jesus' miracles. "I heard that he has healed a seriously ill

person and he is also said to have driven out evil spirits," one of the women relates excitedly. Ramon's father says: "And I've heard that Jesus is coming to Nazareth tomorrow." Everybody looks up in surprise. Jesus is coming to Nazareth! They do not want to miss that. Everyone is curious whether all these rumours are really true. "Will he be performing miracles in Nazareth too?" they wonder. Most of them are rather uncertain as to what to expect of the Lord Jesus.

The following day is the Sabbath, and the Nazarenes go to the synagogue as usual. The women and children see Jesus already in front of the synagogue. The Lord Jesus knows most of them personally. The men, including Ramon's father and uncle, enter the synagogue. They are excited and expect that Jesus will read to them. And that is what happens. He gets up. One of the scribes hands Jesus the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. The Son of God unrolls it and reads the section where it says: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim deliverance for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to let the broken victims go free. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." The Lord returns the scroll to the scribe and sits down. All eyes are fixed on him. Those listening to him wonder as to how he will explain these words. The Lord Jesus says: "Today in your hearing, this text has come true."

1

An animated discussion starts. Salome's father and uncle al-

## Jesus Christ is the Son of God

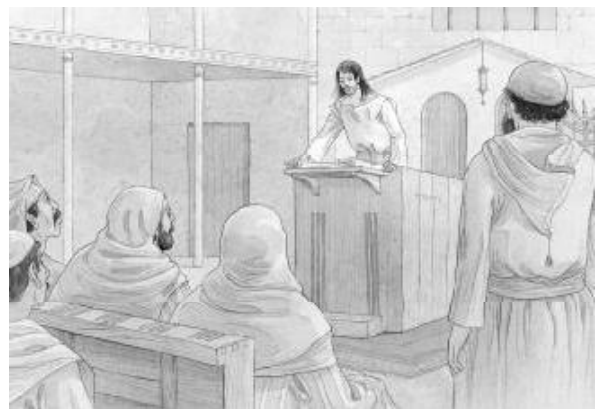
so ask themselves: "Has the Messiah really come? Does that mean we no longer have to wait?" They are surprised at these words. Someone asks: "Is this man not the son of Joseph, the carpenter?" The initial surprise turns into suspicion. What has this carpenter's son just claimed? Does he really believe himself to be the Messiah? The Lord Jesus, seeing their disbelief, continues: "You are now thinking: 'In Capernaum he performed great miracles. He should do the same here in the city of his birth.' But no prophet is accepted in his own country. Elijah did not heal the sick in his own country, he performed miracles elsewhere." The men become furious. What is he saying? Angriily they jump to their feet. They drive Jesus out of Nazareth. Salome and Ramon are still in the vicinity of the synagogue and therefore hear the excited crowd. What are they doing to Jesus? The children run after the men and fearfully observe the goings on. Jesus is pushed and jostled to the edge of a cliff. Do they really want to push Jesus down the mountain? By now Salome is thoroughly frightened. But suddenly the children see how the Son of God turns around—his persecutors draw back. Jesus strides through the crowd and walks away. The children are greatly relieved and wait for their father and uncle. They discuss these happenings on the way home. Ramon's father says

*The Lord Jesus went to Nazareth where he grew up. He read aloud in the synagogue: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has sent me to proclaim the gospel, to heal, to preach and to help. Today these words have been fulfilled in your ears."*

*The Nazarenes did not recognize him as the Messiah, however, and drove him out of the city.*

thoughtfully: "No one could stop Jesus. A great power emanated from him, and this power and his superiority impressed me." Uncle nods. Salome and Ramon also find themselves thinking about this extraordinary man very often.

2/3



- 1 We discuss the picture. The children read the text in their book. What was Jesus' commission? (To proclaim the gospel / to care for the poor, the sick, the outcasts, the sinners / to save mankind.) With the sentence: "Today these words have been fulfilled," he reveals that he is the promised Messiah.
- 2 The Lord Jesus was not accepted in Nazareth. Why did the Lord Jesus not perform any miracles there? (Perhaps he did not want the people to believe in him merely because of his miracles. He wanted them to recognize him as the promised Messiah and to believe in him. Miracles should only strengthen faith, not be the basis of it.
- 3 We do not want to behave like the people of Nazareth. How do we accept the Lord Jesus? (By accepting the Apostles and the ministers commissioned by them, by following their advice because in them we see and meet Jesus Christ.)