

Luke 4:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

Analysis

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written. The formal liturgical action unfolds: *epedothē autō biblion* (ἐπεδόθη αὐτῷ βιβλίον, there was delivered to him the scroll) indicates the hazzan (attendant/minister) handed Jesus the Isaiah scroll. The term *biblion* (βιβλίον, scroll/book) refers to a rolled parchment containing Isaiah's prophecy. **When he had opened** (*anaptuxas*, ἀναπτύξας, unrolling) describes the physical action of unrolling the scroll to the desired passage.

The phrase **he found the place where it was written** (*heuren ton topon hou ēn gegrammenon*, εὑρεν τὸν τόπον οὗ ἦν γεγραμμένον) may indicate either divine providence directing Him to Isaiah 61:1-2 or His intentional selection of this messianic text. Given Jesus' perfect knowledge of Scripture and His deliberate self-revelation, this was likely purposeful choice, not coincidence. He selects the passage that most clearly defines His messianic mission, preparing to make the stunning claim: 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears' (v. 21).

Historical Context

First-century synagogue worship followed established liturgy: Shema recitation, prayers, Torah reading (fixed lectionary), prophetic reading (Haftarah, often selected by reader), exposition, and benediction. Visiting teachers or honored

members were invited to read and comment on the prophetic portion. Jesus' literacy enabled Him to read the Hebrew text—many first-century Jews, especially in Galilee, spoke Aramaic but couldn't read Hebrew. The Isaiah scroll would have been expensive and carefully preserved. That Nazareth's small synagogue possessed a complete Isaiah scroll indicates the community's commitment to Scripture. Jesus' selection of Isaiah 61:1-2 was profoundly significant—this passage was recognized as messianic, describing the Spirit-anointed deliverer who would bring good news to the poor and liberty to captives.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What does Jesus' deliberate selection of Isaiah 61:1-2 teach about His self-understanding and mission?
2. How does the careful preservation and reverent handling of Scripture in synagogue worship model proper attitude toward God's Word?
3. Why is it significant that Jesus reads from Isaiah, the most explicitly messianic prophetic book?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐπεδόθη	αὐτῷ	βιβλίον	Ἡσαίου	τοῦ	προφήτου	
And	there was delivered	unto him	the book	Esaias	G3588	of the prophet	
G2532	G1929	G846	G975	G2268		G4396	
καὶ	ἀναπτύξας	τὸ	βιβλίον	εὔρεν	τὸν	τόπον	οὗ
And	when he had opened	G3588	the book	he found	G3588	the place	where
G2532	G380		G975	G2147		G5117	G3757
ἦν	γεγραμμένον						
it was	written						
G2258	G1125						

Additional Cross-References

Acts 13:15 (Prophecy): And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.