**Setting The Record Straight**

(Luke 4:28-30 KJV)

*28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,29 And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.30 But he passing through the midst of them went his way,*

Jesus began to rise in popularity as he simultaneously preached without hesitation. As Jesus went about preaching in the power of the Spirit; He was being glorified by all. Jesus was gaining in popularity because of His teaching, and miracle working capabilities. People were talking about him over dinner. Rather than talk about what was happening on their favorite television show, they were talking about what Jesus was teaching. People all over Judea wanted to be with Him. They wanted to hear Him. And He was gaining quite a following.

One Sabbath -most probably a year after he had started his ministry, Jesus received an invitation to speak at the synagogue in Nazareth. It was the custom to allow visiting teachers to give expressions to the congregation with the special invitation of the synagogue leaders.

Although he was born in Bethlehem, he grew up in Nazareth. This was his hometown. Nazareth wasn't the most eloquent place to live, some might call it the ghetto. Nathanael a follower of Christ once asked a legitimate question to Philip:

*And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.* (John 1:46).

How many of you know that God can raise a genius out of the ghetto. Let me hurriedly testify someone emerged out of Nazareth named Jesus. Now, Nazareth was in a lot of trouble with so called pagans all around. Phoenicians lived to the west and north, Samaritans to the south, Greeks to the west. They were far away from Jerusalem, their holy city. Surrounded by so many pagan influences, it was hard to be a good pious Jew in Nazareth. They were eagerly awaiting Jesus return, hoping Jesus would make things right. Maybe he could turn it into a godly city again.

They were waiting for that day when their enemies would get what’s coming to them. All those Gentiles and others that had given them so much trouble would finally be avenged by God, and Jesus was the one they thought could give it to them. Jesus would run all of those ungodly Gentiles who surrounded them out of town. They were hoping that maybe Jesus was the one who could turn Nazareth around so that their life would be better without Gentiles.

Now, you would think that the people who had watched Jesus grow up would have been excited that such a popular preacher had come from their town. Let us not lose focus on who these people were. These were the people who watched Jesus as he moved into adolescence. They watched him as he became a man at his bar mitzvah. When a boy comes of age at 13-years-old he has become a "bar mitzvah" and is recognized by Jewish tradition as having the same rights as a full grown man. They watched him as he worked with his father as a carpenter. They watched him as he took over the business when his father, Joseph, died. They knew a lot about Jesus. But when he came to the synagogue at the outset of his public ministry, they had difficulty seeing him as he was and as he proclaimed himself to be.

This man Jesus was completely God mingled with humanity. He was fully God and fully man, a God-man. His inward essence was his divinity, and His outward shell was His humanity. In His tripartite He was, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. And as God he triadically transformed Himself into human frailty.

1. **The People's Reaction:**

In this synagogue, I can imagine that Jesus has positioned himself to prepare for the service. I can visualize the members of the church arriving in their Sunday's best. I can see them pulling up on their finest donkeys (we call ours automobiles today) I can see the young energetically running down the aisles and the elders most of which their bodies have bowed beneath the burden of the many years moving at a slow pace. They are all anticipating on having a good time in worship with someone who was popular!

Now, being popular is not essentially a bad thing. Wanting to be popular is not a appalling thing. But we must always watch very carefully who we are trying to be popular with, and what we are doing to become popular. To keep popularity in context, we must always focus on being popular with God first and foremost. We must always please him above everybody else. We must make sure that we do what He wants the way he wants it done rather than do it the way people want it done. Whatever we do, think or say, it doesn't matter too much what other people think about it. The only thing that really matters is what God thinks. We should always be asking ourselves one question: "Am I being faithful to God?"

* **Let me hurriedly explain in depth the purpose of the synagogue:**

ell done good and faithful servant"?