



January 26, 2025 – Epiphany 3 (C)
Epiphany Bible Study: Week 3

During the season of Epiphany, The Episcopal Church’s Office of Global Partnerships is offering a weekly Bible study prepared by writers across the church and Anglican Communion. Each piece, consisting of the Sunday readings, can be studied alone, in small groups, or even with a congregation. You can find the whole study for each week at www.sermonsthatwork.org. This week’s study for Epiphany 3 (C) was written by **Lynnaia Main**, The Episcopal Church’s representative to the United Nations.

Luke 4:14-21

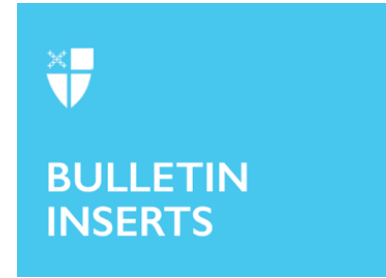
¹⁴ Then Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding region. ¹⁵ He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

¹⁶ When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free those who are oppressed,

¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”



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²⁰ And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

Commentary from Lynnaia Main

Luke writes of Jesus’ return to Galilee, after having been tempted by the devil in the wilderness. He is now filled with the power of the Spirit and about to begin his ministry in Galilee. Jesus begins to teach in the synagogues and word begins to spread about him through the surrounding country. When he arrives on the Sabbath day at the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth, which would have been his usual practice when he lived there, he stands up and reads from Isaiah: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me...” along with subsequent verses that seem to describe the ministry he is beginning. This might have appeared to the listeners in the synagogue to be simply a regular reading of the scriptures... until Jesus goes on to say, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

One might think that those who were listening to Jesus in the synagogue that day would have been incredulous about his seemingly self-important conclusions. On the contrary, although it is not included in the passage chosen for this commentary, the next verse reveals that his actions are, at first, well received: “All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, ‘Is not this Joseph’s son?’”

Discussion Questions

Imagine yourself in the synagogue the day that Jesus read these scriptures aloud. What would have been your reaction to his declaring, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing”? What would have convinced you that his seemingly outlandish statement should be taken seriously?

As Christians, we believe that God calls each of us to ministry. Imagine that you, like Jesus, are called to read this Isaiah passage that begins with “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.” What actions of ministry would you describe thereafter? What *has* God called you to do at this point in your life, or what *is* God calling you to do?

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