

Rejecting Jesus

"They got up and drove him out of the town..."

Luke 4:29

During His public ministry – which probably lasted about 3 ½ years – Jesus suffered two rejections in His home town of Nazareth. The first is described in Luke 4:16-31. The first rejection took place on a Sabbath when Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah. It was not the reading of God's Word that incensed the leaders against Him. It was when He taught them from their own Scriptures that God had, at times past, ignored the nation of Israel to bless Gentiles. Their national pride could not accept this information from their own Scriptures, and so they were livid with rage.

It was too much for them to think that God had blessed anyone besides themselves. So they sought to kill Him by pushing Him off the cliff at the edge of town. However, Jesus miraculously escaped. This incident of rejection took place near the beginning of His great work in the province of Galilee, in the north of the land.

The second and last time Jesus was in Nazareth, after He began His public ministry, is over a year later toward the time when His ministry in Galilee collapsed (John 6:66). Jesus again entered the synagogue He knew so well from

his many years of living in Nazareth.

He taught so skillfully in the Synagogue that day that the people in attendance were astonished at His wisdom. However, Matthew 13:58 records that Jesus could not do many powerful works there because of their unbelief. So Jesus leaves Nazareth for the last time. Having been twice rejected He never comes back to His home town.

Already Jesus has been rejected by the people of Decapolis (Mark 5:17). The word Decapolis in Greek means 10 cities, and the area lay east of the Jordan and south of the Sea of Galilee. The religious leaders of Jerusalem also demonstrated hostility to Jesus (John 5:1-18). In fact the hostility there caused them to seek to kill Him.

Jesus is always pictured in the Gospels as the One who seeks the lost. Sadly, we see people from various geographic regions rejecting the One Who came to seek and save the lost. His message, however, was the cause of many simply rejecting Him altogether and not recognizing in Him the gateway to eternal life.

Have your issues in life caused

you to turn from the Lord and walk away into the realm of those who have given up hope? What can the world possibly give you in return for you attaching yourself to it? Are there words of wisdom from the world when you lose a loved one? Can the world make useful promises to you when your body is ravaged by disease? When your spouse leaves you for someone else, what comfort can be found in the wisdom of the godless?

Really, the only place for lasting peace and comfort in the difficult times of life is to turn to the God Who made us. Jesus demonstrated great patience with the people of His time. He never turned away from anyone until after they clearly turned from Him.

Perhaps you need to start praying Psalm 71:1 (NIV)

"In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame."

Then read Psalm 71:20-24 and see the latter end of the Psalmist. Such a blessing may be yours also as you continue faithful to the Lord.

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