



Amir Tsarfati
Israel Unveiled: Mount Precipice

<https://youtu.be/bZ66eVGrTlc>



We are on top of Mount Precipice. In fact, I'm sitting right next to that cliff, next to the city of Nazareth. We're about 1,300 feet above sea level. And this is the only steep cliff around the city of Nazareth. That brings us, of course, to the story from Luke chapter 4, when Jesus spoke at this synagogue in Nazareth. And, of course, the people were not too happy with some of the things He had to say to the point that they brought them all the way to this very place in order to push him

off that cliff. But in order to understand what really happened here, one must understand why Nazareth of all places?

This place would not have been important if it was not the only cliff near the city of Nazareth. Jesus wasn't born in Nazareth; He was born in Bethlehem. The Bible said that He had to be born in the city of David. He had to be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah so that the words of the prophet Micah in chapter 5 would be fulfilled. Jesus Himself said that "I came to fulfill all that was written about Me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms." So, he had to be born in Bethlehem. Yet, the prophet Isaiah speaks of something completely different when it comes to how Jesus had to grow up and what turned out of Jesus eventually, from the baby to the man who will eventually start an amazing ministry. The Bible says in **Isaiah 11:1**, "**¹ There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.**" Amazing!

The word *branch* in Hebrew is *netser*. This is the exact root of the word or the name Nazareth. In the Hebrew language, it says (speaking in Hebrew) netser—that Branch—is, of course, a hint of Messiah Himself. Now when we read Isaiah, at first, we read about a Branch but as we go all the way deep into the Scriptures, we can clearly see that that Branch is not just a plant, this is a person, a very, very unique person. Allow me to read from **Isaiah 11:1–4**, “¹ **There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.** ² **The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.** ³ **His delight is in the fear of the LORD, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears;** ⁴ **but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.**” We see here a picture of a very important person who not only will come with an amazing grace, with amazing compassion to speak healing, to speak compassion, to speak freedom to those who are oppressed, but we also see that that person one day will also come to judge the world and consume with the breath of His mouth all of His enemies.

The only person in the Bible that will come twice—once to save the world, to release those that are oppressed, and to open the blind people’s eyes, the second time [He] will come to judge and rule— it is, of course, the Messiah Himself, Jesus. And so, Nazareth was given a name that originally was given in the book of Isaiah in chapter 11. And again, we see in chapter 61, now in the first-person, how Jesus is speaking of Himself, where He says, **Isaiah 61:1**: “¹ **The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me,...**” That’s why we should not be really surprised when Jesus entered the synagogue in Nazareth, He was handed the book of Isaiah and the chapter He chose to read was chapter 61. In the Gospel of **Luke 4:16**, the Bible says, “¹⁶ **So He came to Nazareth, where**

He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day,...” Isn’t that interesting? So many people around the world think that Jesus was not really a Jew. In fact, I heard a sermon of one African-American pastor in Washington, DC saying that Jesus was a Palestinian. Well to the best of my knowledge, as I read this particular Scripture, not only that Jesus was a Jew, but the Bible says that **“¹⁶And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read.”** And that was His custom. Not only that Jesus was born from the house of David, He was also from the line of the tribe of Judah. Jesus even lived the Jewish lifestyle, keeping the Sabbath, attending the synagogue, and reading from the books of the prophets. This is something that a Jewish person would do. And if it’s a custom, we obviously can tell the Jewish roots of Jesus were never doubted, neither by those who followed Him from among His own people, nor by people that followed Him from all the other places, even pagan Gentiles.

So, Jesus, **Luke 4:17–19: “¹⁷ ...was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ¹⁸ ‘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 liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹ to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.’”** The Bible says that “Behold, He comes in the scroll of the book.” The book of Jeremiah in chapter 36, in Psalm chapter 40 and even in Ezekiel chapter 2, we hear about the scroll of the book. Something unique, something prophetic.

And Jesus is now speaking to the people of His own town— a small town. Nazareth was so small that Nathaniel from Cana asked in a very innocent way, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” It wasn’t a derogatory term to use, it was just a question. A township of 15–20 families,

where a lot of people who are very, very religious, but yet, they're very corrupt in their hearts and their minds. What good can come out of that place? A place that is not even mentioned in the list of Galilean towns and villages that the historian Josephus Flavius mentioned in his book. So insignificant, so not important, so small, can anything good come out of Nazareth? And Jesus returning to His hometown, entering into His own synagogue, [was] handed the book of Isaiah, is reading Messianic-prophetic Scripture about Himself. Now how do we know that it's about Himself? It's very simple. Jesus closed the book—in verse 20—gave it back to the attendant and sat down. We already know that when Jesus sits down, you better get ready for some teaching. This is when the teacher is about to teach. So, He sat down, and the Bible says that in **Luke 4:20–24**: “²⁰... **And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.**” Everybody was ready. Everybody was ready already before even He came into the synagogue, knowing what Jesus had done in Capernaum and other places. The expectation was high. Jesus is about to teach. He's about to open His mouth and say words of wisdom and grace. And the Bible says that “²¹ **And He began to say to them, ‘Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.’**” Jesus confirmed that He is the one upon whom the Spirit of the Lord is. He is the one who came to preach the gospel to the poor. He's the one who was sent to heal the brokenhearted. He told them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

No one opposed that; no one opposed that because their perception of Messiah is that He is a human being, flesh and blood, anointed by God, to come and liberate them from different oppressions. Interestingly enough, when He said those words, the Bible says, “²² **So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.**” In fact, the Jewish people of Nazareth accepted Jesus as Messiah. But the problem was that their perception of what Messiah is was completely wrong. So for them, if You come, if You deliver us

from the oppressors, if You are the one, we're with You; we're there for You. So Jesus at this point is accepted. Although Jesus Himself said, right after that, "²³ ... **'You will surely say this proverb to Me, "Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country."**'" ²⁴ Then He said, **'Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.'**" So, the people accepted Him on their own terms. But Jesus tells them, "No prophet is accepted in his own country, in his own town." Which means, Jesus just predicted that they're not going to accept Him once they understand who He really is.



In fact, they're going to reject Him. I'm seated right now next to that cliff. We're 1,300 feet above sea level. It's a very deep valley behind me. This is the valley of Armageddon, and the people were ready to push Jesus off this cliff once they heard the truth coming out of His mouth. So Jesus told the people, "No prophet is accepted in his own town, in his own country." And now He moves on to tell them there were many widows in the land during the time of Elijah, the prophet. But to none of them he was sent, but to that widow who lives in Zarephath. Zarephath, which is in the area of Lebanon today. Definitely, out of Israel, and definitely she wasn't Jewish. And there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha, the successor of Elijah, and to none of them he was sent, but to Naaman, the Assyrian. An Assyrian. Not a Jew. Not an Israelite. To him Elisha was sent.

That, of course, is to say that God is not a respecter of men. God doesn't look at your religion. God doesn't look at your birth certificate. God looks at the heart of the people. Jesus is not a Christian. Jesus is Christ. God is not Jewish. God created the world. [John 3:16 paraphrased] "For God so loved the *whole* world that He gave his only begotten Son, that he whosoever believes

in Him...” —not as the deliverer and redeemer from the Roman army, or from their own oppression—but deliverer and redeemer from their own sins, from their own wicked hearts and minds. And so, the Jewish people of Nazareth were filled with wrath when they heard these words. And the Bible says, at that time, **Luke 4:28–30: “²⁸ So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, ²⁹ and rose up and thrust Him out of the city;”** And they dragged Jesus, the Bible says, all the way to “²⁹ ... and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.” And in verse 30, “³⁰ Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.” Wow!

Jesus did not condemn them. Jesus did not rebuke them. Jesus did not curse them. Jesus just predicted that they are going to rebuke Him. In fact, not only Judaism, but every religion in the world also bases itself on good works, on the efforts of man to reach to God, and to justify his salvation by his own deeds and his own good works. Jesus basically told the people of Nazareth, being a Jew is not your lifeline to get to Heaven. This is not your shortcut to get to eternal life. You need a Savior, just as much as the widow from Zarephath, or Naaman the Assyrian; you all need healing, you all need a Savior.

There were two problems with the people of Nazareth: (1) The perception of Messiah; (2) the perception of themselves. The Jewish tradition is all about the fact that Messiah is a human being, flesh and blood, who will deliver Israel from its oppressors and will bring about an era of peace and prosperity. Therefore the Jewish people always chose the wrong messiah throughout the course of the years. Almost 100 years after they rejected Jesus, they embraced a new person called Bar Kokhba, who wasn't the messiah and led them to a greater devastation, when Israel was no longer named Israel, and the Romans leveled Jerusalem, and the name Palestine was given to this whole place.

Interestingly enough, nowhere in the Bible do we have a suggestion that the Messiah is just a human being. The Bible tells us more than once that Messiah will be the Son of God, whether you read in the book of Isaiah, that unto us a son is given, and He will be mighty God, everlasting Father, or you can even read in the book of Proverbs in chapter 30, what is His name, and what is His Son's name; you shall know. The Bible tells us that in the days to come, God will give Israel a new testament, a new covenant. In the book of Jeremiah 31:31, it suggests that the new covenant will not be based upon the Law of Moses, which was broken by the people of Israel because it's simply impossible to be fulfilled. Jesus fulfilled the Law and by doing so, no one else is required anymore to do so. He *fully filled* the Law. There is no other way to reach to God but through Jesus. Jesus said that to the Jews: "I am the way, I am the truth, and I am the life. No one can come to the Father but through Me."

But the Jewish people who lived in Nazareth, they had it all wrong. They had it all twisted. In **Isaiah 29:16** it says, **"¹⁶ Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; for shall the thing made say of him who made it, 'He did not make me'? Or shall the thing formed say to him who formed it, 'He has no understanding?'"** How can Jesus, being God in the flesh, being the Word of God, be accused of breaking the Word of God, of breaking the law of God? They surely had it all turned around. The people of the city of Nazareth were just the picture of religious people: whether Jews, Catholics, Muslims, Hindus, it doesn't really matter. Any person who holds on to religion, eventually will come to the wrong conclusions. Jesus is saying to the people: it is not about who you are; it is about who I am.

He looks at them, and He feels sorry for them. In **Isaiah 29:13** it says, **"¹³ ... 'Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths, and honor Me with their lips, but have removed their hearts far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men.'"**

God is not into religion; God is into relationship. So, yes, they got it all wrong. The perception of Messiah, being just a human being, flesh and blood, was completely wrong. And therefore, by the way, they accused Jesus of blasphemy. They never really crucified Jesus for saying that He is the Messiah. They crucified Jesus for equating Himself to God, for saying, I and My Father are one. That's the problem the Jews have until today, with the understanding of Messiah Himself, although throughout the entire Old Testament we see that Messiah was there before the foundations of the world. He was part of the *Creator* and certainly not part of the *creation*.

God is not into religion. Keeping the Sabbath, keeping the holidays, keeping the New Moons will not lead you any closer to God if your heart is not turned towards Him. In chapter 1, Isaiah says that in the best way. Harsh words indeed, but yet, something that must be heard and taught. **Isaiah 1:11–19** says to the people of Israel, “¹¹ **To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?’ says the LORD. ‘I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. ¹² When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample my courts? ¹³ Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of the assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. ¹⁴ Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates;...**” Look what God says, “¹⁴ ... ‘They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵ When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood.’” And so, what is the solution? The solution is, “¹⁶ **Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷ learn to do good; seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. ¹⁸ Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the LORD, ‘Though your**

sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. ¹⁹ If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land;...’”

And so, the people, not only that they had the wrong perception of Jesus, the wrong perception of Messiah, but also the wrong perception of themselves. Thinking that by just being Jews it's enough. By just doing what Jews do— keeping the Sabbath, keeping the New Moons, keeping the holidays, bringing sacrifices, spreading their arms to pray, doing the things by the book—they thought it's enough. But Jesus comes and just unmasked that hypocrisy from them, and He tells them: religion is not the answer, relationship is. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that he whosoever only believes in Him will not die but will have eternal life.

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** Scripture is taken from the New King James Version unless noted otherwise.*

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