

Matthew 4:12-23^v

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: “Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned.” From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

^v **About the Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23**

Matthew's account of the beginning of Jesus' ministry includes Jesus' journey into Galilee, a statement of the meaning of Jesus' ministry, the call of the first disciples and a summary of Jesus' activity.

The Isaiah citation in verses 15-16 was originally written in a context of messianic hope as Galilee faced conquest by the Assyrians in 732 B.C. This defeat for Israel meant that the native Israelites were exiled and foreign populations resettled there, thus allowing the region to be described as "Galilee of the Gentiles" (v. 4). In Jesus' time it was heavily influenced by non-Jewish culture and religion.

Here Jesus announces that the long period of expectation is completed. The reign of God is a present reality but will only be realized fully in the age to come. The response he expects is repentance, literally turning around, and so a description of the entire reorientation of one's whole being as illustrated by the call of the first disciples.