

**Message #7****Matthew 4:12-17**

That is precisely what Jesus Christ did in the early days of His public ministry to Israel. Matthew is showing the nation Israel that they did not love their King; in fact, He was so threatened He relocated to a Gentile area.

**MATTHEW WANTS JEWISH PEOPLE TO REALIZE THAT JESUS CHRIST, ISRAEL'S KING, TOOK HIS KINGDOM PREACHING MINISTRY FROM JUDEA, THE LAND OF THE JEWS, TO GALILEE, THE LAND OF THE GENTILES.**

**HISTORICAL POINT #1** – The location of Christ's ministry. **4:12-16**

**Reason #1** - Jesus moved from Judea to Galilee because of safety. **4:12-13**

After the temptation, Christ returned to Judea and traveled and preached in synagogues for about a year (John 3:22-4:3; Luke 4:15-16). So when John was arrested, Jesus moved his headquarters from Nazareth to Capernaum, a city about 25 miles NE of Nazareth on the shore of the Lake of Galilee. What actually happened in Nazareth is important. Luke tells us that Jesus had gone to Nazareth and stood to read the Scriptures. He was handed a scroll of Isaiah and He went to Isaiah 61:1-2 and read it and then said He was the fulfillment of that prophecy. Christ stopped in the middle of verse 2 because the “day of vengeance of our God” He will fulfill at His second coming. This made the religious leaders angry and they tried to kill Jesus (Luke 4:16, 28-30). I want you to see something very important here—the religious leaders of Israel were not sympathetic to John's ministry nor to Jesus' ministry. They hated them both. Why? Because their ministries were true, pure ministries of God and the Jewish religious leaders were not right with God. When Jesus was threatened in one place, He simply moved on to another place. Jesus Christ will not fellowship with people who do not care about Him, His Word or His will.

**Reason #2** - Jesus moved from Judea to Galilee because of prophecy. **4:14-16**

Matthew wanted the religious leaders and all of Israel to know that Jesus Christ fulfilled all O.T. kingly prophecies. This is so interesting because the religious leaders hate Christ and run Him out of their district, yet they don't have the upper hand; this is a fulfillment of divine prophecy. The prophet Isaiah, who saw the dark oppression of the Assyrians against Israel, made a remarkable prediction—the most corrupt, depraved spot on the planet would be some of the first people to see the Light of the King.

May we remind ourselves that part of our responsibility is to be a light in a dark world. Sometimes we will be rejected when we are that light, but that does not mean we are not supposed to be a light somewhere else.

**HISTORICAL POINT #2** – The proclamation of Christ’s message. **4:17**

Now the prepositional phrase “from that time” is important. This phrase is used only here and in Matthew 16:21 where the emphasis changes to His preaching the cross. The reason this is so important is because it shows us that Jesus Christ preached a legitimate message and offer to Israel of His Kingship and Kingdom.

The message Christ proclaimed to Israel was this—**I am your King on earth and I am prepared to give you your earthly Kingdom right now if you will repent.** He was making Israel a bona-fide offer. He was offering Israel and earthly Kingdom with Him as King. But the contingency factor was she needed to repent.

Now we make three observations about Christ’s ministry:

**(Observation #1)** - Jesus Christ had a preaching ministry.

A ministry that is serious about preaching God’s Word is a Christ-like, God-honoring ministry. Think of the options Christ had available to Him to entertain people. Yet His ministry was a preaching ministry.

**(Observation #2)** - Jesus Christ preached a repentance message.

The actual word “repent” means to change one’s mind or to change one’s thinking. W. H. Griffith Thomas makes an interesting observation about repentance when he says it means two things:

- 1) To change one’s mind, specifically in regard to sin and Jesus Christ;
- 2) To change ones’ feelings—specifically to regret or have remorse over ones’ sin (Matt. 21:29, 32; II Cor. 7:8-9).

The specific repentance that Jesus is preaching to Israel is to change their minds about the fact that they are sinners and they need Jesus Christ to get them into their Kingdom. They were not going to inherit this Kingdom on their own Jewish merit and they needed a change of heart and mind on that reality.

**(Observation #3)** - Jesus Christ preached the Kingdom Gospel, not the Grace Age Gospel.

You and I do not preach “repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” We preach “believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” Actually the words “kingdom of heaven” literally in Greek read “the kingdom of the heavens.” This is a reference to the reign of the heavens on earth which features Jesus Christ and the nation Israel. The Jews were continually thinking in terms of earthly land and a Kingdom in which they stood out as the great people of God.

Jesus preached this Gospel to Israel—I am your King and I can give you this Kingdom if you will repent.