

Book of Matthew

Chapter 4:12-25

¹² **Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee;**

Now when > Precept Austin > *Now when* is an important expression of time. Why so? Because by comparing the events in the beginning of the Gospel of John it is apparent that all three Synoptic writers bypass the events that transpire during the first year of Jesus' ministry. In other words, between Matthew 4:11 and Matthew 4:12 there is time gap of from 12-14 months of Jesus' early ministry, a period which is omitted from the Gospel of Matthew

MacArthur > We learn from the apostle John (1:19—4:42) that about a year elapsed between Jesus' wilderness temptations and the events recorded in Matthew 4:12-17. Among the other highlights of that year were Jesus' first miracle at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11), His cleansing of the Temple (2:12-25), His testimony to Nicodemus (3:1-21), the final public testimony of John the Baptist (3:22-36), and Jesus' ministry in Samaria at Sychar (4:1-42).

Taken into custody > Strong's > to hand over, to give or deliver over, to betray

HELPS > *paradídōmi* (from *pará*, "from close-beside" and *dídōmi*, "give") – properly, to give (turn) over; "hand over from," i.e. to deliver over with a sense of close (personal) involvement.

Vincent > The verb means, first, to give, or hand over to another. So, to surrender a city or a person, often with the accompanying notion of treachery. The Rev., therefore, rightly renders, was delivered up.

Precept Austin > So, to surrender a city or a person, often with the accompanying notion of treachery. Thus this is the verb Matthew used to describe "Judas Iscariot, the one who *betrayed* (*paradidomi*) Him." (Mt 10:4)

Withdrew > Strong's > to go back, withdraw

Constable > It is unlikely that Herod Antipas (Herod the Great's son who ruled in Galilee) would have imprisoned John if the religious authorities had supported John. Matthew used the same Greek word, *paredothe* ("taken into custody"), that he used here (v. 12), later when he described Jesus' arrest. The religious leaders evidently played a significant role in both arrests.

He withdrew into Galilee > John's Gospel adds that Jesus *withdrew to Galilee* because of the Pharisees not because of Herod. He was not afraid of them but wanted to avoid a premature confrontation, the Jewish leaders being less likely to directly oppose Him since He was farther away from Jerusalem.

John 4:1-3 > ¹ So then, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that ^[a]He was making and baptizing more disciples than John ² (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing; rather, His disciples were), ³ He left Judea and went away again to Galilee.

Galilee > Carson > Josephus, writing one generation later, Galilee had 204 cities and villages, each with no fewer than fifteen thousand persons. Even if this figure refers only to the walled cities and not to the villages (which is not what Josephus says), a most conservative estimate points to a large population, even if less than Josephus's three million.

Broadus > Josephus had ample opportunity to know, having been commanding general in Galilee in A. D. 66.

Phillips > Galilee was cut off from the theological bastion of Jerusalem. The district had never been wholly Jewish, for Solomon had given twenty Galilean cities to Hiram, king of Tyre. Constant invasions and settlement by Gentiles gave the area a mixed population; the western shore of the sea of Galilee was dotted with numerous towns and fishing villages occupied by large numbers of Gentile people. The more racially pure cities of Judea looked with scorn on Galilee and ridiculed the Galilean accent. By leaving Judea and settling in Galilee, Jesus made a significant gesture. It was an indication of His worldwide purpose, always present in His thinking even when He was ministering to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Wuest Translation > *Now, Jesus, having heard that John was delivered up to prison, withdrew into Galilee.*

¹³ and **leaving** Nazareth, He came and **settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali.** ¹⁴ This happened so that what was spoken through **Isaiah the prophet would be fulfilled:**

Leaving > Strong's > forsake, leave, reserve. > From *kata* and *leipo*; to leave down, i.e. behind; by implication, to abandon, have remaining

Barnes > Leaving Nazareth - Because his townsmen cast him out and rejected him.
See Luke 4:14-30

Settled > HELPS > from *katá*, "down, according to," intensifying *oikéō*, "dwell, reside") – properly, settle *down* as a permanent resident, i.e. in a *fixed (permanent)* dwelling place as one's personal residence; (figuratively) "to be *exactly at home*."

Settled in Capernaum > Swindoll > When Jesus made Capernaum His base of ministry, it was a practical and strategic move. From here, Jesus ...

- called Peter, Andrew, James, and John
- called Matthew, the tax collector
- taught in the synagogue
- healed Peter's mother-in-law
- healed a centurion's servant
- healed a paralytic who was lowered through the roof
- raised Jairus's daughter from the dead
- healed a woman who had experienced twelve years of bleeding
- healed two blind men and a mute demoniac.

By the sea > Broadus > It is important to observe this usage; for many persons think of the Sea of Galilee as a large body of water, when it is only a small lake, twelve and a quarter mile long, and six and three-quarter miles in its greatest breadth.

MacArthur > the reaction of many Jews in Jerusalem was, "Surely the Christ is not going to come from Galilee, is He?" (John 7:41). When Nicodemus tried to convince the Pharisees that Jesus should be given a fair hearing, "They answered and said to him, 'You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee'" (vv. 51-52). Yet, as Matthew here reminds his readers, Isaiah had long before prophesied that in Galilee of the Gentiles—The people who were sitting in darkness saw a great light, and to those who were sitting in the land and shadow of death, upon them a light dawned (cf. Isa. 9:1-2).

¹⁵ "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, on the other side of the Jordan, **Galilee of the Gentiles**. ¹⁶ The people who were **sitting in darkness saw a great Light**, and those who were **sitting in the land and shadow of death**, upon them **a Light dawned**."

Galilee of the Gentiles > Broadus > The name appears to have come from the Galil or 'circuit' of twenty cities given by Solomon to Hiram, king of Tyre, (Joshua 20:7, 1 Kings 9:11, 2 Kings 15:29) and was gradually extended to denote the northern part of the Holy Land in general. From its proximity to and connection with Phenicia this district would be largely occupied by Gentiles, and so was called by Isaiah, literally (Isaiah 9:1) 'circuit of the Gentiles.'

Sitting in darkness > Wiersbe > Matthew quoted Isaiah (see **Isaiah 9:1–2**). The prophet wrote about people who “walked” in darkness, but by the time Matthew quoted the passage, the situation was so discouraging that the people were sitting in darkness!

Isaiah 9:1–2 > ¹ *But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish. In earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He will make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.* ² *The people who walk in darkness will see a great light; those who live in a dark land, the light will shine on them.*

Vincent > The article with the participle (lit., the people, the one sitting) signifying something characteristic or habitual' the people whose characteristic it was to sit in darkness. This thought is emphasized by repetition in a stronger form; sitting in the region and shadow of Death. Death is personified. This land, whose inhabitants are spiritually dead, belongs to Death as the realm of his government.

Saw a great Light > Barnes > Saw great light - That is, as the passage is employed by Matthew, the light under the Messiah would spring up among them. In that region he grew up, and in that region he preached a great part of his discourses and performed a great part of his miracles.

Sitting in the land and shadow of death > Barnes > This is a forcible and beautiful image, designed also to denote ignorance and sin. It is often used in the Bible, and is very expressive. A "shadow" is caused by an object coming between us and the sun. So the Hebrews imaged death as standing between us and the sun, and casting a long, dark, and baleful shadow abroad on the face of the nations, denoting their great ignorance, sin, and woe.. It denotes a dismal, gloomy, and dreadful shade, where death and sin reign, like the chills, damps, and horrors of the dwelling-place of the dead.

¹⁷ **From that time** Jesus **began to preach** and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

From that time > Carson > the phrase “from that time on” nevertheless marks an important turning point because it ties something new to what has just preceded it.

Constable > The clause "From that time Jesus began" is very significant in Matthew's Gospel. The writer used it only twice, here and in **16:21**, and in both instances it indicates a major change in Jesus' ministry. Here it signals the beginning of Jesus' public preaching that the kingdom was at hand. Until now, His ministry had been to selected individuals and groups, which John's Gospel records. Jesus "went public" after John had ended his ministry of preparing Israel for her Messiah.

Matthew 16:21 > ²¹ *From that time Jesus began to point out to His disciples that it was necessary for Him to go to Jerusalem and to suffer many things from the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and to be killed, and to be raised up on the third day.*

Began > Strong's > A primary verb; to be first (in political rank or power) -- reign (rule) over.

Precept Austin > The verb *began* literally means to be first and in the middle voice means to begin or start and thus calls attention to the "special" status or importance of what follows (the primacy of preaching!)

Preach > Vincent > Originally, to discharge the duty of a herald; hence to cry out, proclaim

McGee > Preaching is the proclamation of certainties, not the suggestion of possibilities. Jesus also preached "as one having authority, and not as their scribes" (Matt. 7:29).

Jesus not only preached with certainty and authority but preached only what He was commissioned by His Father to preach.

- John the Baptist said of Jesus, "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God" (John 3:34).
- Jesus Himself said, "I speak the things which I have seen with My Father" (John 8:38).
- Later he gave the same testimony even more pointedly: "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak" (John 12:49).

¹⁸ *Now as Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen.*

McGee > By comparing the gospel accounts we discover that there were at least five different phases of Jesus' calling of the twelve. Each gospel writer emphasized those phases which best suited his particular purpose.

Sea of Galilee > Barnes > Its form is an irregular oval, with the large end to the north. It is about 14 miles in length, and from 6 miles to 9 miles in width. It is about 600 feet lower than the Mediterranean, and this great depression accounts for some of its special phenomena. There is no part of Palestine, it is said, which can be compared in beauty with the environs of this lake. Many populous cities once stood on its shores, such as Tiberias, Bethsaida, Capernaum, Chorazin, Hippo, etc. The shores are described by Josephus as a perfect paradise, producing every luxury under heaven at all seasons of the year, and its remarkable beauty is still noticed by the traveler.



He saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew > Precept Austin > One might get the impression this was the first time they had met Jesus, but in fact they had met Him some time earlier, John recording ...

John 1:35-42 > ³⁵ Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, ³⁶ and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What are you seeking?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" ³⁹ He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying, and they stayed with Him that day; it was about the tenth hour. ⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. ⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). ⁴² He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

Casting a net > Carson > Simon and Andrew were casting a "net" (*amphiblēstron*). It refers to a circular "casting net" and is not to be confused with the more generic term *diktua* in v.20.

Strong's > something thrown around

McGee > In that day, three methods of fishing were used. One was by hook and line, the second was by a throw net cast from the shallow water along the shore, and the third was by a large dragnet strung between two or more boats in the deep water. Peter and Andrew were here obviously using the second method. That net was probably about nine feet in diameter, and the two brothers were skilled in its use, for they were fishermen by trade.

¹⁹ *And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of people."*

²⁰ *Immediately they left their nets and **followed** Him.*

Followed > Strong's > From *a* (as a particle of union) and *keleuthos* (a road); properly, to be in the same way with, i.e. To accompany (specially, as a disciple) -- follow, reach.

McGee > Followed is from *akolouthe*, which conveys the idea of following as a disciple who is committed to imitating the one he follows.

²¹ *Going on from there He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, **mending** their nets; and He called them.* ²² *Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Him.*

Mending > Ray Stedman > The Greek word for "mending" is the same word which appears in Ephesians 4, where Paul says of pastor/teachers that they are to "equip" (or mend) the saints to do the work of the ministry. Just as James and John were equipping their nets, getting them ready, when Jesus called them, so this would be the work they would be doing as fishers of men. They would do it as teachers, equipping the saints. Again, this is what you see in the lives of these men throughout Scriptures.

²³ *Jesus was going about in all of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness among the people.*

Going about in all of Galilee > Robertson > literally Jesus "was going around (imperfect) in all Galilee." This is the first of the three tours of Galilee made by Jesus.

- This time he took the four fishermen whom he had just called to personal service.
- The second time he took the twelve.
- On the third he sent the twelve on ahead by twos and followed after them. He was teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom in the synagogues chiefly and on the roads and in the streets where Gentiles could hear.

Teaching in their synagogues > He was in a region heavily populated by Gentiles ... but ministered to those who should have been presenting the gospel to those individuals.

Gospel of the kingdom > Wiersbe > In the New Testament, the word kingdom means "rule, reign, authority" rather than a place or a specific realm. The phrase "kingdom of heaven" refers to the rule of God.

Healing every disease and every sickness among the people > McGee > Six features of Jesus' healing have never been duplicated since New Testament times.

1. First, Jesus healed directly, with a word or a touch, without prayer and sometimes even without being near the afflicted person.
2. Second, Jesus healed instantaneously. There was no waiting for restoration to come in stages.
3. Third, He healed completely, never partially.
4. Fourth, He healed everyone who came to Him, everyone who was brought to Him, and everyone for whom healing was asked by another. He healed without discrimination as to person or affliction.
5. Fifth, Jesus healed organic and congenital problems, no matter how severe or longstanding.
6. Sixth, He brought people back to life. He healed even after disease had run its full course and taken the life of its victim.

²⁴ *And the news about Him spread throughout **Syria**; and **they brought to Him** all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and severe pain, demon-possessed, people with **epilepsy**, and people who were **paralyzed**; and He healed them.*

Syria > Carson > The geographical extent of “Syria” is uncertain. From the perspective of Jesus in Galilee, Syria was to the north. From the Roman viewpoint, Syria was a Roman province embracing all of Palestine, Galilee excepted, since it was under the independent administration of Herod Antipas at this time.

Syria ... they brought to Him > Precept Austin > Who are “they”? In context, this refers to Syrians, who would be Gentiles!

Epilepsy ... paralyzed > Wiersbe > The term “lunatic” (KJV) did not refer to people who were insane. Rather, it was used to describe those afflicted with epilepsy. Palsy (KJV) meant “paralytic.”

²⁵ *Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the **Decapolis**, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.*

Decapolis > Carson > The Decapolis (lit., “Ten Cities”) is a region east of Galilee extending from Damascus in the north to Philadelphia in the south, ten cities (under varied reckonings) making up the count.

