



Prepared to Proclaim the Gospel

March 31, 2019

Matthew 4:12-22

*"From that time Jesus began to preach, saying,
'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matthew
4:17).*

To prepare his listeners for the coming of the Messiah, John the Baptist preached repentance for sins. People needed to turn their lives around and begin seeking the LORD seriously. They needed to stop doing what dishonored God, harmed others, and would eventually destroy themselves. If they would heed John's teaching, they would prepare themselves in heart and mind to understand and apply the truths Jesus came to reveal. After John the Baptist introduced some of his disciples to Jesus, the Lamb of God, Jesus taught them quietly. In this way, Peter, Andrew, and some others first met Jesus. After Herod arrested John the Baptist, Jesus began His public ministry as the Messiah. When Jesus began to preach and heal in Galilee and Capernaum, He fulfilled Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. When Jesus preached repentance and added "because the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," He fulfilled John's preaching of preparation. The Kingdom of Heaven came near whenever Jesus the King (Messiah) was in their midst, near at hand. Then, Jesus officially called some of those He had prepared previously to come and follow Him, to become His disciples (students). The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us that Jesus first called fishermen to follow Him so He could teach them how to fish for people. Having been prepared in advance by Jesus' teachings and having seen many of His miracles, whenever Jesus called them to come and follow Him, they did so immediately with good and sufficient reasons. Jesus taught them how to win followers to Him, and after Jesus' resurrection, they led thousands to kneel before Jesus the King.

Thinking Further

1. When and why did Jesus begin His ministry in Galilee?
2. Do you think beginning a ministry in Galilee would be easy or difficult? Give a reason for your answer.
3. Do you think Peter, Andrew, James, and John knew much about Jesus when He called them to follow Him? Why or why not?
4. Why do you think Jesus called some fishermen to follow Him?
5. How was Jesus' preaching like John's preaching? How is preaching different from their preaching today?