

Matthew 4b

The Judean ministry of Jesus, which lasted almost one year, is not discussed by Matthew. This one year period is covered in John 1-4 and fits between Matthew 4:11 and 4:12. So, Matthew takes us from the temptation of Jesus directly to the Galilean ministry.¹ In doing so, Matthew leaves out the accounts of the first miracle of Jesus at the wedding at Cana, Jesus clearing the temple, Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus, and Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well.

Why did Matthew begin his account of Jesus' ministry with John's arrest (v. 12)? John's arrest by Herod signaled the beginning of a new phase of Jesus' ministry. John the Baptist's work was now complete. He had successfully heralded the arrival of the Messiah. It was now time for the King to appear publicly.²

Why did Jesus move the base of his ministry from Nazareth to Capernaum (vv. 13-16)? To fulfill prophecy (Isaiah 9:1-2). Secondly, in moving to Galilee of the Gentiles, He was showing that His rejection by the Jews would result in the gospel going out to the Gentiles.³ The ignorant, superstitious Gentiles living in Galilee saw a great light—that is Christ, the Light of the world.⁴

What was Jesus' preaching message from that time on (v. 17)? From then on Jesus took up the message which John had preached: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* Here it signals the beginning of Jesus' public preaching that the kingdom was near....in the sense that the King was present.⁵ 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.⁶

If one wanted to be a part of the kingdom, he must repent. Repentance was mandatory if fellowship with God was to be enjoyed.

This message must be remembered by all students of the life of Christ, because, in our day, the tendency is to emphasize other things that Jesus taught and did, such as showing compassion, healing the sick, feeding needy people, etc.⁷

What did Jesus do when walking beside the Sea of Galilee (vv. 18-19)? Jesus called two fishermen, Peter and Andrew, to leave their profession behind and to begin following Him permanently. He would take them from fishing for fish and make them fishers of men. The calling carried with it a cost, for it involved leaving not only their profession but also their family responsibilities.⁸

How did Peter and Andrew respond (v. 20)? They heard the call and responded immediately. In true faith, they left their nets. In true commitment and devotion they followed Jesus.

They recognized Jesus' authority and left all to follow Him. Disciples of other rabbis normally continued their established trades, but Jesus wanted His disciples to be with Him fulltime. Also, in contrast to the rabbinic model, Jesus chose His disciples; typically the disciple chose the rabbi he wanted to follow. Furthermore, Jesus called His disciples to follow Him, not to follow the Law, or some unspecified teaching.⁹

What did Jesus do next (v. 21)? The call came next to James and John to sever all earthly ties and follow after Jesus.

How did James and John respond (v. 22)? In the same manner as Peter and Andrew, they, too, became instant disciples; they immediately left their means of livelihood and their father to unhesitatingly follow Jesus.

The call of God through Jesus is sovereign and absolute in its authority; for those of us who have received the call, our response is to be both immediate and absolute, involving a complete break with old loyalties. The actual shape of this break with the past will undoubtedly vary from individual to individual, but that there must be a fundamental, radical reorientation of a person's priorities is taken for granted.¹⁰

How would you describe Jesus' ministry at this point (v. 23)? As an itinerant preacher, the ministry of the Lord Jesus was threefold: He taught God's Word in the synagogues; He preached the gospel of the kingdom; and He healed the sick. One purpose of the miracles of healing was to authenticate His person and ministry (Hebrews 2:3, 4).¹¹

Who were the recipients of His preaching and healing (v. 24)? Matthew described the painfully diseased people who sought Jesus out in three categories: There were those whom demons oppressed. Others had ailments that resulted in mental and physical imbalances that demons did not induce. Still others suffered paralyzes of various kinds. Jesus' miracles dealt with "incurable" afflictions, not just trivial maladies (cf. Isaiah 35:5-6).¹²

What do we know about the crowds that followed Jesus (v. 25)? The ministry of Jesus was dramatic as multitudes of people heard of Jesus and began to flock to Him. As people came, they brought many who were afflicted with a variety of illnesses and Jesus healed them all. No wonder large crowds began to follow Jesus from Galilee, from the largely Gentile-inhabited Decapolis, from Jerusalem and Judea, and the region across the Jordan River.¹³

¹ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1214.

² Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Matthew, 2025 Edition* (published by Sonic Light), 120.

³ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1214.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Matthew, 2025 Edition* (published by Sonic Light), 123. .

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 27-28.

⁹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Matthew, 2025 Edition* (published by Sonic Light), 128.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 129.

¹¹ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1215.

¹² Dr. Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Matthew, 2025 Edition* (published by Sonic Light), 131.

¹³ Louis A. Barbieri Jr., "Matthew," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Victor Books, 1985), 28.