

## Third Sunday after the Epiphany January 26, 2020

Lectionary Year A – the Gospel of Matthew

# Living the Lutheran Lectionary

*A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday since May 4, 2014.*

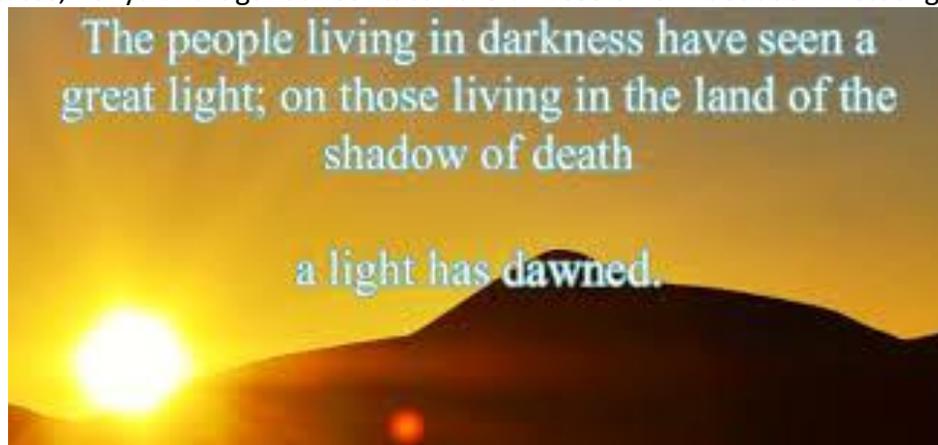
*An opportunity to make Sunday worship more meaningful and to make the rhythms of the readings part of the rhythms of your life.*

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- ✦ **Thursdays at 10 AM:** At Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH 44134 and on line through <https://zoom.us/j/815200301>
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- ✦ **Tuesdays at 12:00 PM (8pm Kenya time)** via Zoom to the Lutheran School of Theology - Nyamira , Kenya
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<https://nazeingcongregationalchurch.co.uk/sermons/matthew-412-25-a-dawning-light/>

### Hymn of the Day

**Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 839 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 512**

**“O Christ, our true and only light”**

“Johann Heermann wrote this hymn in the midst of the Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648). But Heermann seems to be looking beyond the current disruption and destruction of peaceful daily life to the realm of people’s spiritual condition. We are told that the hymn is modeled on a prayer in a booklet by Philipp Kegel (Hamburg, 1592), a prayer for those who have never yet known Christ as well as those who may be misled by false teachers. Interestingly, it is doubtful that Heermann knew that Kegel’s prayer reflected one by a Jesuit priest seeking the return of misled Protestants! Heermann’s hymn and prayer sings from the light of the truth of pure doctrine as contained in the Lutheran Confessions...”

- <https://www.lcms.org/worship/hymn-of-the-day-studies>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4BaEacSNfg> Pipe organ with congregational singing. Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Worcester, MA
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29Mzpa-ulwc> Electronic accompaniment Music and vocals by Fr. J. Roel Lungay
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASLeltOnF1c> Alternate melody, *Pentecost*, Congregational singing Metropolitan Tabernacle,

Commentaries have been chosen because the author has written in a way that compliments the reading. Not all of the commentaries are from Lutheran sources. They have been edited for length and in some cases for additional content that is not in keeping with a Lutheran understanding of Scripture. Links are provided for those who wish to read the entire commentary.

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001 by [Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.](#)

**O.T.**– “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light ”

**Psalms** – “The LORD is my light and my salvation”

**Epistle** – “For the word of the cross ... is the power of God. ”

**Gospel** – “**“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”**”

**Isaiah 9:1-4; Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), the same reading**

*(Next week: 1 Samuel 1:21-28; RCL, Micah 6:1-8 or Malachi 3:1-4)*

*This section of the book of Isaiah, chapters seven through eleven, contain some of the most difficult passages with which to deal in the church. It is not that these passages are especially difficult to interpret. Rather, it is that they have such a history of interpretation and use within the Christian tradition that we often simply assume what they mean in a Christian context without much study. That assumption often prevents us from actually hearing the text itself. As a result, too often, we are really hearing a multitude of layers of meaning laid over the text by twenty centuries of tradition.*

*If we are going to do biblical study rather than study of doctrine or interpretation, we need to be especially diligent that we hear the message of the text itself. Then we can ask how that message might be applied within the context of the Christian faith and our understanding of the revelation of God in Jesus the Christ. This is especially true in light of the Lectionary editing of this text which pairs it with a Gospel reading both for the Third Sunday after Epiphany in Year A as well as the Christmas Reading I in all three years of the RCL cycle. (Also included in the Christmas Midnight reading of the Lutheran Lectionary as verses 2-7)*

*This suggests that in order to understand Isaiah 9 it needs to be examined apart from the Lectionary editing that shapes the text in ways that Scripture itself has not done, moving it far beyond the text itself into intentional Christian worship. Also, our study of the reading needs to begin somewhere much earlier than the New Testament passages and with assumptions other than seeing the text only as a prediction of the coming of Jesus 700 years before it occurred. For some, that is the only function of this and other passages in Isaiah, which essentially assumes that the text had no meaning to the people of Isaiah's time or to the community of Faith for that 700 years.*

*However, contrary to much popular rhetoric, to suggest that there is another dimension to the text perhaps even a more important theological dimension than prediction, does not reject anything about prophecy or the supernatural or the authority of Scripture. It simply suggests that we first hear the text in its own context and on its own terms **as Scripture** before we move it into our context on our terms..."*

- <http://www.crivoice.org/lectionary/YearA/Aepiphany3ot.html> Dennis Bratcher, Copyright © 2019, Dennis Bratcher - All Rights Reserved, "Copyright © 2019 CRI/Voice"

## **For to Us a Child Is Born Continues through verse 7**

9 <sup>[a]</sup> But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. <sup>[b]</sup>

<sup>2</sup> <sup>[c]</sup> The people who walked in darkness  
           have seen a great light;  
 those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
           on them has light shone.  
<sup>3</sup> You have multiplied the nation;  
       you have increased its joy;  
       they rejoice before you  
       as with joy at the harvest,  
 as they are glad when they divide the spoil.

## **Judgment on Arrogance and Oppression Verses 8-21**

- a. [Isaiah 9:1](#) Ch 8:23 in Hebrew
- b. [Isaiah 9:1](#) Or *of the Gentiles*
- c. [Isaiah 9:2](#) Ch 9:1 in Hebrew

"...what matters for us today is understanding the historic context of chapter 9 and specifically verses 1-9. Chapter 7 indicates that this is the time of King Ahaz, who came after King Uzziah. During this period, history tells us that Israel, under king Pekah, (not Judah where Ahaz was king and where Isaiah prophesied) allied with Aram and waged a war of independence against the Neo-Assyrian empire under Tiglath-Pileser III. Judah refused to join in with Israel and was invaded by Aram and Israel. Jerusalem was besieged and, according to 2 Chronicles, lost as many as 120,000

soldiers in one day, along with the king's son. Philistines and Edomites raided villages in Judah as well, taking advantage of the situation. King Ahaz asked Assyria for help. Tiglath-Pileser III sent armies that freed Jerusalem and defeated Israel, Aram, and the Philistines. But the alliance brought problems of its own: Ahaz paid for Tiglath-Pileser III's help with money from the royal treasury and with consecrated items from the temple. He also built idols of Assyrian gods to please the foreign king...

Isaiah is not happy with Ahaz. In Chapter 7, he had instructed Ahaz that the invasion by Israel and Aram would not be successful and to ask God for a sign. Ahaz refused and Isaiah says, well fine then, God has already picked on. Then we have the verses so many of us know as Messianic—a woman shall conceive and bear a son and call his name Immanuel. In Isaiah 8, we have another prophecy about a child: Maher-shalal-hash-baz—Hurry to the spoils! In chapter 7, the Isaiah had said that before the child knew good from evil the two kings would be defeated. Now he says that before the child can talk, Aram and Ephraim will be defeated. This brings us to chapter 9 and another foretelling concerning a child. Verse one speaks of lands taken for Judah in the invasion, lands Isaiah says will be returned to Judah. Then the prophet becomes poetic...

In verse 4, we first see the oppression that is being detailed: a yoke of burden, a staff on the shoulders, the rod of the oppressor. It is this all encompassing tyranny which is completely broken by God. That's the framework for understanding verses 2 and 3, where those who have been subject to such maltreatment are now free and experience joy, light, and gladness. This destruction is comparable to that of Midian, which is a reference to Gideon's victory in Judges 6... And for a third time in the book of Isaiah, a child is the portent of justice, righteousness, peace, and prosperity, as orchestrated by God...

Now, given that this is the historic background that the text comes out of, one can easily see how church fathers like Origen and Tertullian and Justin Martyr read Christ back into the story. A child is not usually seen as a powerful ruler. Throughout history, when the king was a cradle king, the nation was at risk. But God's politics are not the same as ours. God is using the symbol of a child to indicate that the promise of a kingdom to David is still valid. And when Christ is born, in the line of David, a child who is Immanuel, God with Us, the scholars of the ancient church saw a beautiful parallel and completion to the story. And they were right."

- <http://www.aplainaccount.org/epiphany-3a-1st-reading/> Melissa Smith Wass, Missional director, Dayton Central Church of the Nazarene

**Psalm 27:1-9 (10-14); RCL, Psalm 27:1, 4-9**  
*(Psalm 84; RCL, Psalm 15 or Psalm 84/Psalm 24:7-10)*

*"One of the brightest jewels in the Psalter is the Psalm 27.*

*It's situated on the third Sunday of Epiphany but could be read and pondered with great profit and joy any Sunday, or at any moment.*

*How profound is the first verse? "The Lord is my light." In ancient times there were two kinds of light: the sun and the lamp. First, the sun: brilliant, unable to be stared at, and, like God, the sun gives light, warmth, and life, and highlights beauty. No wonder pagans worshipped the sun. God's first concoction, and God's most primal gift to us, is light. On Day 1 of all history, "God said, 'Let there be light'" (Genesis 1:3). John echoes, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5).*

*We're not much afraid of the light, but we do fear the dark -- and many other things. The antidote to fear -- in our culture -- is security, locks, guns. But in God's kingdom, the fix for fear is this Lord who is our light.*

*When it got dark in biblical times, they lit lamps -- not the brilliant LED lanterns you can purchase today, but simple pottery lamps, with a single wick and flame, casting just enough light to see a short ways ahead. Psalm 119:105 says, "Your Word is a lamp to my feet, a light to my path." If we follow God's will, we do not know what the road will look like in a few miles or years. God gives us just a pottery lamp's worth of light, just enough to take a few more steps. You have to trust God with that kind of light..."*

- [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1872](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1872) [James Howell](#) Senior Pastor, Myers Park United Methodist Church, Charlotte, N.C.

## **The LORD Is My Light and My Salvation**

### **Of David.**

27 The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?  
The LORD is the stronghold<sup>[a]</sup> of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?

<sup>2</sup> When evildoers assail me  
to eat up my flesh,  
my adversaries and foes,  
it is they who stumble and fall.

<sup>3</sup> Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war arise against me,  
yet<sup>[b]</sup> I will be confident.

<sup>4</sup> One thing have I asked of the LORD,  
that will I seek after:  
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,  
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD  
and to inquire<sup>[c]</sup> in his temple.

<sup>5</sup> For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;  
he will lift me high upon a rock.

<sup>6</sup> And now my head shall be lifted up  
above my enemies all around me,  
and I will offer in his tent

sacrifices with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

<sup>7</sup> Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud;  
be gracious to me and answer me!

<sup>8</sup> You have said, “Seek<sup>[d]</sup> my face.”

My heart says to you,

“Your face, LORD, do I seek.”<sup>[e]</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Hide not your face from me.

Turn not your servant away in anger,

O you who have been my help.

Cast me not off; forsake me not,

O God of my salvation!

<sup>10</sup> *For my father and my mother have forsaken me,  
but the LORD will take me in.*

<sup>11</sup> *Teach me your way, O LORD,  
and lead me on a level path  
because of my enemies.*

<sup>12</sup> *Give me not up to the will of my adversaries;  
for false witnesses have risen against me,  
and they breathe out violence.*

<sup>13</sup> *I believe that I shall look<sup>[f]</sup> upon the goodness of the LORD  
in the land of the living!*

<sup>14</sup> *Wait for the LORD;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the LORD!*

- a. [Psalm 27:1](#) Or *refuge*
- b. [Psalm 27:3](#) Or *in this*
- c. [Psalm 27:4](#) Or *meditate*
- d. [Psalm 27:8](#) The command (*seek*) is addressed to more than one person
- e. [Psalm 27:8](#) The meaning of the Hebrew verse is uncertain
- f. [Psalm 27:13](#) Other Hebrew manuscripts *Oh! Had I not believed that I would look*

As much as any psalm in the Psalter, Psalm 27 expresses trust in the lord and claims absolute dependence on God.<sup>1</sup>

This is apparent in verse 1, which begins the lectionary reading: “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

The psalm is a prayer for help. It presumes the psalmist is in some type of trouble (verses 7, 9, 12). Psalms of this type typically contain petition, complaint, and expressions of trust (see Psalm 13 as an example). Psalm 27 is unique in its heightened emphasis on trust...

Verses 2-3 continue the statement of confidence that began in verse 1. The lectionary reading, however, skips to verse 4 (*RCL*). The reason for omitting verses 2-3 is not clear, but verse 4 is certainly worthy of attention. It sums up the faith embedded in the psalm with the declaration, “One thing I asked of the lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the lord all the days of

my life, to behold the beauty of the lord and to inquire in his temple.” Here the psalmist identifies the place of God’s protection and shelter as the central sanctuary in Jerusalem.

This identity is evident in the way verse 4 pairs the general expression, “house of the lord” (see also Psalm 23:6) with the specific term, “temple” (*hekal*). An additional expression “in his tent” here and in verse 6 has the same meaning. This is a poetic name for the temple that conjures images of both protection and intimacy. A tent does not have multiple rooms as permanent structures do. Therefore, the guest in the tent of another naturally participates in the life of those who dwell there (see Psalm 61:4)...

This remarkable claim of singular desire for God’s presence is similar to the statement in Psalm 23:1b (“I shall not want”) to the effect that the lord’s guidance provides all that is needed for life. The psalm actually petitions God for more, namely for deliverance from an enemy’s false accusations (verse 12), but it suggests that such deliverance comes under the care of God’s sheltering protection. Psalm 27 thus invites the reader to live into such trust that is complete and comprehensive.

Verse 5 continues to express confidence in the Lord’s protection with further descriptions of the safety of the temple. The images continue and expand on the notion of God as stronghold. The psalmist speaks of safety in terms of being hidden, covered, and placed “high on a rock.” “Stronghold” (verse 1b), “shelter” (verse 5a), “cover of his tent” (verse 5a), and “rock” (verse 5b) are expressions related to the overarching notion of refuge that appears so often in the Psalms (Psalms 2:12; 16:1; 18:1-3[2-4]; 31:1[2]; 34:8[9]; 91:1-2; 142:5[6]). That is, the psalmist here and elsewhere speaks of God as a hiding place, a shelter from the storms of life...

In verse 6 the psalmist declares the intention to worship with song and sacrifice in response to God’s salvation. But then the psalm turns to complaint and petition for the rest of the lectionary reading and for the rest of the psalm (verses 7-14)...

Nevertheless, verses 1-6 and 7-14 hold together around themes of salvation (verses 1, 9), enemies (verses 2-3, 12), trust (verses 3, 14) and seeking God (verses 4, 8). The psalm closes with petitions that draw upon the language of trust earlier in the psalm: “seek his face” (verse 8 [see verse 4]); “O God of my salvation” (verse 9; see verse 1). Thus, as Mays\* points out, “the two parts of the psalm are one more way in which the Psalter teaches how closely related are trust and need.”

\* James Luther Mays, *Psalms* (Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), p. 132.

➤ [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=4358](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=4358) Jerome Creach

Robert C. Holland Professor of Old Testament, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Penn.

## **1 Corinthians 1:10-18; RCL, the same reading**

*(Hebrews 2:14-18; RCL, 1 Corinthians 1:18-31 or Hebrews 2:14-18)*

*“In the previous sermon starter on the first 9 verses of 1 Corinthians 1, I riffed on Tom Long’s suggestion that Paul wrote those opening verses with tongue firmly embedded in cheek. He praises the Corinthians for the very things Paul knows full well they were in deep trouble over. He names as would-be compliments the core of the arguments that were threatening to tear the tiny congregation to pieces. Paul uses a little irony, a little sarcasm, a little humor to set the agenda for this letter and perhaps to shame the Corinthians for their small multitude of problems.*

But now as we get down to verse 10, Paul stops poking the Corinthians gently in the ribs and instead rolls up his sleeves and gets down to brass tacks. “OK, enough of the sarcasm” Paul as good as writes, “let’s be honest here: I know full well that you are getting divided as a congregation seven ways to Sunday!” Paul knows that rival factions are cropping up and he knows that each group is claiming a different person as their leader and champion.

“We take our cues from Apollos” some were shouting. “Oh yeah,” others shot back, “well no less than the Apostle Paul is our guy!” “Ha!” yet a third faction retorts, “Peter has been around longer than either one and he is the leader of our band!”

Who knows exactly how this state of affairs came about or what motivated the Corinthians to seek varying leaders. For his part, Paul makes it clear that their unity is to be found in the Savior who died for them and that Paul himself, Peter, Apollos, or anyone else you could name come under his Lordship. Unity is found in Christ alone and in the work he accomplished on the cross...”

➤ <https://cep.calvinseminary.edu/sermon-starters/epiphany-3a/?term=1%20corinthians%201> Scott Hoezee

## Greeting Verses 1-3

## Thanksgiving Verses 4-9

## Divisions in the Church

<sup>10</sup> I appeal to you, brothers,<sup>[a]</sup> by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. <sup>11</sup> For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. <sup>12</sup> What I mean is that each one of you says, “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos,” or “I follow Cephas,” or “I follow Christ.” <sup>13</sup> Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? <sup>14</sup> I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, <sup>15</sup> so that no one may say that you were baptized in my name. <sup>16</sup> (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) <sup>17</sup> For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

## Christ the Wisdom and Power of God Continues through verse 31

<sup>18</sup> For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup> *For it is written,*

*“I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,  
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”...*

- a. [1 Corinthians 1:10](#) Or *brothers and sisters*. In New Testament usage, depending on the context, the plural Greek word *adelphoi* (translated "brothers") may refer either to *brothers* or to *brothers and sisters*; also verses [11](#), [26](#)

The passage for today is about division at the church in Corinth. Paul begins the passage by urging unity in the church. Even in translation, 1 Corinthians 1:10 makes the point starkly: Paul appeals to them to be in agreement, for there not to be divisions, and for them to be knit together in the "same mind" and with the "same purpose." The Greek text is even clearer, as the words translated be in agreement" in the NRSV might more literally be translated "say the same thing"--the Greek text has three "sames" in one verse.

Paul follows this injunction to unity by noting the source of his knowledge of divisions at Corinth: he had heard about the quarrels at Corinth from "Chloe's people." While we don't know Chloe from anywhere else in Scripture, it appears that she was a woman of some status who was the head of a household. Some of the people in her household seem to have traveled to Ephesus, where Paul was when he wrote 1 Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:8), and given him the news of quarreling at Corinth.

In Paul's telling, those quarrels seem to have been at least partially about allegiance to various people--Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Christ (1:12). It's probably best not to imagine just four competing groups in Corinth. After all, 1 Corinthians shows that the church in Corinth could find all sorts of reasons to disagree with one another! The point to be made here is that Paul will have no part in dissension related to allegiance to human leaders--and especially to himself--in the church. "Has Christ been divided? Paul wasn't crucified for you, was he? You were not baptized in the name of Paul, were you?" Division in the church, then, isn't merely a matter of people not getting along together. It presents a theological challenge, in that it divides Christ and threatens our ability to bear witness to the significance of Christ's death on our behalf.

His claim to have baptized very few people in Corinth (1:14) poses a potential problem for Paul. At first it looks as if he's saying he baptized only Crispus and Gaius (which is good, because there is little chance that people can claim to have been baptized in Paul's name rather than in Jesus' name). Then, it seems, he remembers having baptized more people--the household of Stephanus (which might have amounted to a large group of people), and perhaps others...but he doesn't remember. While this failure of memory on Paul's part can come across as funny, there is probably more going on here. By handling baptisms he has performed so lightly--he admits to having baptized some people, but truth to tell can't really remember who and how many--Paul rhetorically enacts what he is trying to help the Corinthians to understand. The important things are the gospel of Jesus Christ and the cross (i.e., death) of Jesus Christ. Things like who baptized whom (1:14-16) are beside the point..."

➤ [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=26](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=26)

[Dwight Peterson](#) Professor of New Testament, Eastern University, Saint Davids, PA

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"Paul asks the Corinthians that they all say the same thing; there should be such perfect accord and harmony of sentiment that in their confession of faith before men their agreement may always be voiced. He demands unity for union, not an ignoring of fundamental differences by

equivocal confessions. If a creed is purposely so worded as to include or admit both true and false interpretations, it will not aid the cause of Christian harmony. But Paul wants unity and union on the basis of the truth, lest there be among them clefts, splits, schisms, and thus divisions be found among them in spite of the fact that they are united in an outward organization. Instead of that, they should be well and surely adjusted, held together in a bond of perfect unity, in the same discernment and in the same judgment. They should have the proper view of all conditions and circumstances pertaining to the belief and work of the Church, and they should rest their judgment upon this correct understanding; they should form their opinion from the right disposition, Acts 4, 32. As the Christians are one heart in the faith, so they should be one mouth in confession. But where there are breaches of opinion, due to false thinking and reasoning, there the perfect interrelation and harmony of all the members of the Church is out of the question..."

- <http://www.kretzmannproject.org/> The Popular Commentary of the Bible by Paul E. Kretzmann

### **Matthew 4:12-25; RCL, Matthew 4:12-23**

*(Luke 2:22-32 (33-40); RCL, Matthew 5:1-12 or Luke 22:22-40)*

*"For the third time in Matthew, Jesus finds himself embracing a new hometown. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. In doing so, prophecy was fulfilled (2:5-6).*

*The first move finds the family fleeing Bethlehem and Herod's furor and arriving in Egypt. In doing so, Jesus' life emulates Moses' journeys.*

*The second move allows the family to return to Israel after Herod's demise. However, the reign of his progeny leads the family to resettle in Nazareth. In doing so, prophecy was fulfilled (2:23).*

*A third move brings Jesus to Capernaum. In doing so, prophecy was fulfilled (4:14-16). In other words, never are these moves rooted in human will. Instead, Matthew argues, God has carefully orchestrated these geographical dislocations and thus imbued them with great significance. What is that significance?*

*Perhaps here we get a glimpse of Jesus' peripatetic existence. From his earliest days through his adult life and ministry, Matthew's Jesus is an itinerant preacher, a constant wanderer. Jesus does not opt for the comforts of the familiar but embraces God's call to find those who are in need of a word of God wherever they might live.*

*After all, this is the message of the prophecy. God has promised to reach all the nations. Light has reached those who formerly dwelled in darkness and death. Jesus has come to them and, in a sense, become one of them by becoming their neighbor. Moreover, Jesus' first ministry locale is known as "Galilee of the Gentiles." Thus, from the first and in consonance with prophetic promise, Jesus ministers in an ethnically diverse land..."*

- [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=789](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=789) Eric Barreto Weyerhaeuser Associate Professor of New Testament, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N.J.

## "The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 4th Chapter"

### **The Temptation of Jesus Verses 1-11**

### **Jesus Begins His Ministry**

<sup>12</sup> Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. <sup>13</sup> And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, <sup>14</sup> so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

<sup>15</sup> “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,  
the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—  
<sup>16</sup> the people dwelling in darkness  
have seen a great light,  
and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death,  
on them a light has dawned.”

[Cited from Isa. 9:1, 2](#) - Today’s Old Testament reading

<sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”**<sup>[a]</sup>

### **Jesus Calls the First Disciples**

<sup>18</sup> While walking 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. <sup>19</sup> And he said to them, **“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”**<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>20</sup> Immediately they left their nets and followed him. <sup>21</sup> And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. <sup>22</sup> Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

### **Jesus Ministers to Great Crowds**

<sup>23</sup> And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. <sup>24</sup> So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them. <sup>25</sup> And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

- a. [Matthew 4:17](#) Or *the kingdom of heaven has come near*
- b. [Matthew 4:19](#) The Greek word *anthropoi* refers here to both men and women

**“This is the Gospel of the Lord”**    **“Praise to You, O Christ”**

“Jesus’ ministry begins after his temptation, with the news of John’s arrest.

Although Matt 4:12 says that Jesus “withdrew” into Galilee, Jesus’ move was less a retreat and more a journey into the lion’s den. As Matthew will divulge later, the ruler of Galilee, Herod Antipas, was the one who had John arrested. John’s arrest foreshadows Jesus’ own.

Capernaum, where Jesus made his home, was a town of about 1,000 people. Its inhabitants relied on farming and fishing to survive. Though Jesus has already been named “Son of God,” he lives not among the rich and powerful, but among the common people. Capernaum was located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.

This region had historically belonged to the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, but in the first century it truly was “Galilee of the Gentiles” (4:15, quoting Isaiah 9:1), conquered by Rome and ruled by a Roman puppet whom few Jews regarded as authentically Jewish. Herod Antipas was notorious for his brutality and for his intolerance of any who threatened his claims to power. Into this context of danger and darkness and death comes Jesus, proclaiming deliverance and light and life.

Jesus’ message is identical to John’s: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matthew 4:17; cf. 3:2). Though the content is the same, the context is very different. John was the forerunner, who prepared the way. Jesus is the embodiment of the message. In his preaching and in his ministry, light has dawned and the reign of God has come...”

➤ [http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=1972](http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=1972)

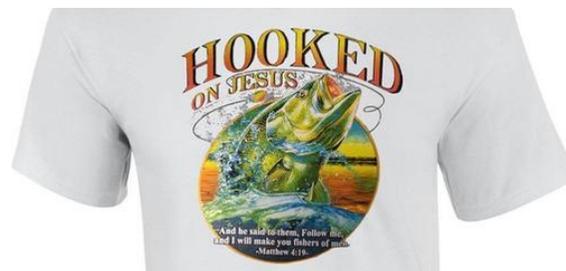
**Judith Jones** Vicar, St. Stephen & St. Luke by the Sea Episcopal Churches, Waldport, Ore.



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## The Matthew Challenge

*Last few days to finish your handwritten copy of Matthew through Chapter 6.*



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