

The Gospel According to

SAINT MATTHEW

SAINT MARK

SAINT LUKE

SAINT JOHN

CHAPTER 4. VERSES 13-15

NOTHING RECORDED

CHAPTER 4, VERSE 31

NOTHING RECORDED

4:13 - And leaving Nazareth¹, he came and dwelt² in Capernaum³, which is upon the sea coast⁴, in the borders⁵ of Zabulon⁶ and Nephthalim⁷;

4:14 - That it might be fulfilled⁸ which was spoken by Esaias⁹ the prophet¹⁰, saying,

4:15 - The land of Zabulon⁶, and the land of Nephthalim⁷, by the way of the sea¹¹, beyond Jordan¹², Galilee¹³ of the Gentiles¹⁴;

4:31 - And came down¹⁵ to Capernaum³, a city of Galilee¹⁴, and taught¹⁶ them on the sabbath days¹⁷.

CHRONOLOGY: December 27^{CE} / January 28^{CE}

LOCATION: Leaving Nazareth and Abiding in Capernaum

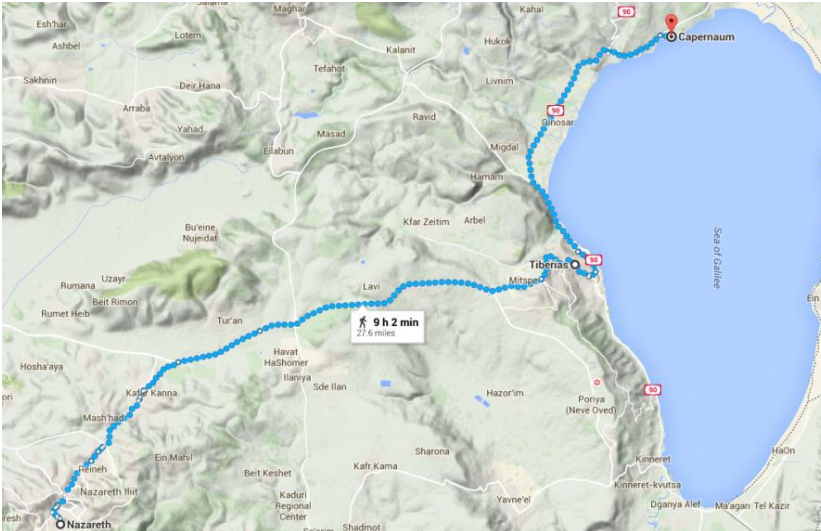
COMMENTARY: The Savior, rejected in His home town of Nazareth, walked over 27 miles to the fishing town of Capernaum. It is speculated that He made this 2 day journey alone. Capernaum is thought to be the residence of Mary, the mother of Jesus, after the marriage at Cana and after Jesus was rejected in Nazareth. It was also the home of Jesus' future Apostles. Peter, James, John and Andrew all lived in or around Capernaum. Perhaps these factors drew Jesus to Capernaum. Jesus' ministry in Capernaum, Nazareth and all of Galilee had long since been prophesied by the prophet Isaiah. He wrote that the Messiah would bring light to those that sat in darkness. Metaphorically, He would bring spiritual enlightenment to those that sat in spiritual apostasy. Isaiah foretold of a time when the Messiah would come to the ancient territories of Naphtali and Zebulun; land given to the Israelite tribes through covenant. These lands became known as Galilee of the Gentiles. With all the influences of the Gentile world, Jesus came there, just like He comes to us. In our sinful and fallen state, Jesus comes to free our souls. He came to people of Galilee, not as a conqueror, but as a teacher. He taught in their synagogues. He taught the pure doctrine of heaven. He corrected the apostate doctrines of the time.

FOOTNOTES:

1 - **leaving Nazareth** – The word "leaving" is translated from the Greek word "καταλείπω" or "kataleipō". The Greek word means to leave behind, to depart from or leave. It can also take a negative connotation as in to forsake, abandon, or to cease caring for something.

Jesus left Nazareth in an astounding fashion. As the congregation of Jews pressed Jesus up the path to the top of Mount Precipice, to throw Him to His death, He disappeared from among their midst. The Jews of Nazareth were the neighbors of Jesus' youth. Some were quite possibly his relatives. His departure must have been joined with feelings of disappointment and rejection on His part.

To further complicate the circumstances associated with Jesus' departure from Nazareth, many believe that He was there alone, or at least without His closest disciples and family members. Skousen wrote, "It will be observed that while Jesus was in Cana and Nazareth, he was alone. However, when he arrived in Capernaum Jesus was ready to launch forth in a massive missionary effort, and he needed his disciples to help him. He started with some of those who had been with him from the beginning." (The Days of the Living Christ, Volume 1, W. Cleon Skousen, page 184).



“And so – rejected at Nazareth – he now turns, as the Messianic prophecies foretold, to Capernaum, that city of sin on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. He leaves the ancient land of Zebulun, where Nazareth is, to live in the land of Naphtali. He has there a nobleman friend whose son he healed; it is the city of Peter’s in-laws, and the future center from which to travel to the cities and villages that must hear his voice and see his face; and the throngs of travelers who pass through it will hear of his words and his miracles and carry back to their home peoples the wondering queries of earnest truth seekers.” (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector’s Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 2).

The exact path Jesus took from Nazareth to Capernaum is not known; however, the Via Maris, a Roman coastal highway, passed just south of Nazareth and led to Capernaum via Tiberias. This would be the logical route, especially when one considers that Mount Precipice lies south of Nazareth. The distance between Nazareth and Capernaum, walking

along the Via Maris would have been slightly longer than 27.6 miles. This was a greater distance than one could walk in one day. Most scholars calculate a days' journey, on foot, at 18 miles. Jesus would have taken at least two days to travel between Nazareth and Capernaum. It might have taken longer, given the fact that Jesus was prone to stop and minister to the people and villages He passed by.

Some speculate that Jesus chose to go to Capernaum because it would be more welcoming to Him. I find such a conclusion difficult to believe. Everything Jesus did was in line with His father's will, not His own comfort. Surely, Jesus went to Capernaum to minister to those who were willing to accept His word. Jesus never strayed from His mission, and He never took the easy path. Capernaum was next stop, most probably because He was to organize the Priesthood Leadership associated with His ministry, and many of them resided at or near Capernaum. Barclay sees this point of the gospel story as a pivotal point in the ministry. He wrote, **"He left Nazareth and he took up residence in the town of Capernaum. There was a kind of symbolic finality in that move. In that moment Jesus left his home never again to return to live in it. It is as if he shut the door that lay behind him before he opened the door that stood in front of him. It was the clean cut between the old and the new. One chapter was ended and another had begun. Into life there come these moments of decision. It is always better to meet them with an even surgical cut than to vacillate undecided between two courses of action."** (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 65).

- 2- **dwelt** – The word "dwelt" is translated from the Greek word "κατοικέω" or "katoikēō". The Greek word means to dwell or settle. It carries the idea of the place where someone calls home.

There is no evidence that Jesus owned His own home. In fact, many refer to the scripture passage that reads, **"And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head"** (Matthew 8:20) as proof that Jesus never had a home of His own. Even so, it would appear the Mary, the mother of Jesus, moved to Capernaum after the marriage in Cana. We suspect that Mary was a widow prior to her move to Capernaum making her oldest son, Jesus, culturally responsible for her care. It would therefore stand to reason that when Jesus "dwelt" in Capernaum, it was in the home of His mother, the closest thing He had to His own home. Elder Talmage wrote, **"Jesus wended His way to Capernaum, which became to Him as nearly a place of abode as any He had in Galilee."** (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 147).

The Savior found some solitude in Capernaum. Though Capernaum was a worldly city, with no lack of sinful living, it was also home to individuals of faith. Edersheim wrote, **"Cast out of His own city, Jesus pursued His solitary way towards Capernaum. There, at least, devoted friends and believing disciples would welcome Him. There, also, a large draught of souls would fill the Gospel-net. Capernaum would be His Galilean home. Here He would, on the Sabbath-days, preach in that Synagogue, of which the good centurion was the builder, and Jairus the chief ruler. These names, and the memories connected with them, are a sufficient comment on the effect of His preaching: that 'His word was with power.' In Capernaum, also, was the now believing and devoted household of the court-officer, whose only son the Word of Christ, spoken at a distance, had restored to life. Here also, or in the immediate neighbourhood, was the home of His earliest and closest disciples, the brothers Simon and Andrew, and of James and John, the sons of Zebedee."** (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 457).

- 3- **Capernaum** – The name "Capernaum" is translated from the Greek word "Καπαρναούμ" or "Kapharnaoum". The Greek name, translated literally, means "village of comfort". **"This famous city of New Testament times was located about 2 ½ miles west of where the Jordan River enters the Sea of Galilee and 10 miles from modern Tiberias. Capernaum was near the Via Maris, the international highway; a milestone from Hadrian's day is on display. It was a customs station and place of residence of the high Roman officer. The commander of some Roman soldiers stationed here built a synagogue for the Jews. When Jesus withdrew from Nazareth he went to Capernaum, and this became the center of his activity for 18-20 months. More of Christ's miracles were performed here than in any other city. Capernaum possibly had a population of 10,000."** (Discovering the World of the Bible, LaMar C. Berrett and D. Kelly Ogden, page 129).

The most probable and accepted archeological site for the location of Jesus' Capernaum is called Tell "Hum". The word "Tell" is an archeological mound. The word Hum is a shortened form of the name "Nahom". Unfortunately, some 400 years after Jesus, the village was abandon and lost to history. Barclay wrote, **"It was to the town of Capernaum that Jesus went. The correct form of the name is Capharnaum. The form Capernaum does not occur at all until the fifth century A.D., but it is so fixed in our minds and memories that it would not be wise to try to change it. There has been much argument about the site of Capernaum. Two places have been suggested. The commonest, and the likeliest identification is that Capernaum is Tell Hum, which is on the west side of the extreme north of the Sea of Galilee; the alternative, and the less likely, identification is that Capernaum is Khan Minyeh, which is about two and a half miles to the south-west of Tell Hum. In any event, there is now nothing but ruins left to show where Capernaum once stood."** (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 68).



Zondervan reinforces Barclay's views saying, **"There are two main claimants, about 2 ½ miles apart, for the honor of being the site: Tell Hum, which is about 2 ½ miles SW of the mouth of the Jordan; and Khan Minyeh, which is SW of Tell Hum. The present trend of opinion is in favor of Tell Hum."** (The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor – Merrill C. Tenney, page 146).

The village of Capernaum was a fishing village on the northern shores of the Sea of Galilee. It was located on the border of the ancient Israelite territories of Naphtali and East Mannaseh. The Gospel record says that it was located on the border of Naphtali and Zebulun. This would be true of Nazareth, not Capernaum. Knowing that Capernaum sat upon the Sea of Galilee, allows us to establish its altitude. The Sea of Galilee sits about 696 feet below sea level. Jesus left Nazareth, sitting at 1,653 feet above sea level, and traveled down to Capernaum. He would have dropped 2,349 feet in elevation to get there. Fitzmyer writes, **"He went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee...Ms. D adds a geographical detail, 'the seaside (town) in the territory of Zebulun and Naphthali,' a scribal harmonization introduced from Matt 4:13. The best mss. of Luke omit it. Luke specifies that tilee sits at about hat Capernaum was a 'town in Galilee' for the benefit of his Gentile Christian readers. Capernaum, which appears in Mark as the center of Jesus' Galilean ministry, would have been about six**

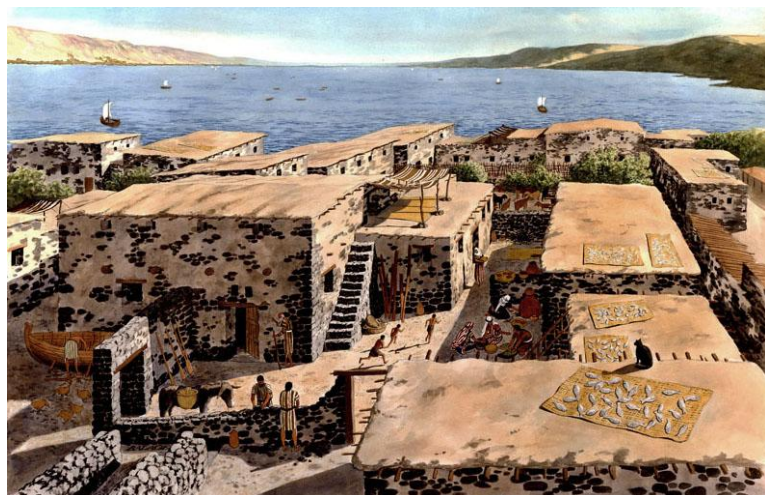
hundred meters lower than Nazareth; hence the distinctive Lucan verb *kathelthen*, 'he went down'." (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, pages 543-544).

Most people think of Capernaum as a righteous city, and associate it with the success stories of the Savior and His apostles. It is true that more miracles were performed by Jesus in Capernaum than any other city, at least according to the gospel record we have at our disposal. Even so, the city did not submit itself to Jesus, as a whole, even though He performed many incredible works among them. **"In spite of Jesus' striking works and teachings, the people did not repent, and Jesus predicted the complete ruin of the place. His prophecy was so completely fulfilled that the town has disappeared and its very site is a matter of debate."** (The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor – Merrill C. Tenney, page 146). Elder Talmage expounded on the fact that Capernaum's failure to act on the knowledge and testimony they were given, resulted in their demise. He wrote, **"The name Capernaum signifies, according to some authorities, 'the Village of Nahum,' according to others, 'the Village of Consolation.' As we follow the history of Jesus we shall discover that many of His mighty works were wrought, and many of His most impressive words were spoken in Capernaum. The infidelity of the inhabitants, after all the discourses and wonderful works which He had done among them, brought out the saying of Jesus, 'And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be cast down to hell.' (Matt. 11:23.) So thoroughly has this prediction been fulfilled that no trace of the city remains, and the very site which it occupied is now a matter of conjecture, there being even no ecclesiastical tradition of the locality. At the present day two spots have claims which are urged, each with such arguments of probability as to make the whole question the most difficult in sacred topography.... We shall probably never be able to know the exact fact. Jesus damned it to oblivion, and there it lies. We shall content ourselves with the New Testament notices as bearing on the work of Jesus."** (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 150).

It is believed that Jesus traveled the 27 plus miles, and some 2,349 feet of elevation, alone. The terrain between Nazareth and Capernaum is debatable. Since the exact location of each city is unsure, the terrain is also unsure. Some locations make for a more challenging journey. Fitzmyer explained, **"Because Luke has transposed that Marcan scene to 5:1-11, he must depict Jesus going alone to Capernaum. H. Conzelmann sought to weaken the implied 'accurate geographical knowledge' by saying kata may well 'be deduced from the incorrect idea that Nazareth stands on a hill' Perhaps; but even Conzelmann would have to admit that in this instance Luke's knowledge of Palestinian terrain is more accurate than usual."** (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 544).

- 4- **upon the sea coast** – The phrase "upon the sea coast" is translated from a single Greek word; "παράθλασσιος" or "parathalassios". The Greek word means besides the sea or by the sea. The Codex Sinaiticus omits the word "coast". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 4, Verse 13, page 18).
- 5- **borders** – The word "borders" is translated from the Greek word "ὄριον" or "horion". The Greek word means boundaries, and refers to a region, district, land or territory.

Most read the passage in the Gospel account and assume that the reference is directed at a village located on the borders of the Israelite territories of Naphtali and Zebulun. Upon further review, and knowing that Capernaum is probably Tell Hum, Capernaum would have been located on the borders of Zebulun and East Manasseh. It is likely that the Biblical translation is in error and that the reference to the borders of Naphtali and Zebulun referred to Nazareth. Capernaum obviously didn't sit in these borders. Even the great James Talmage wrote, **"We learn that it was somewhere on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, (compare Matt 4:13, with John 6:24). It was near or in 'the land of Gennesaret' (compare Matt 14:34, with John 6:17, 21, 24), a plain about three miles long and one mile wide, which we learn from Josephus was one of the most prosperous and crowded districts of Palestine. It was probably on the great road leading from Damascus to the south, 'by the way of the sea,' (Matt. 4:15). There was great wisdom in selecting this as a place to open a great public ministry. It was full of a busy population. The exceeding richness of the wonderful plain of Gennesaret supported the mass of inhabitants it attracted. Josephus (B. J., iii, 10:8) gives a glowing description of this land. '-Deems Light of the Nations, pp. 167, 168."** (Jesus the Christ, James E. Talmage, page 150). BYU professors Ogden and Skinner clarify, **"The land of Zebulun is Nazareth and vicinity."** (The Four Gospels - Verse by verse, D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, page 142).



6 - **Zabulon** – The name "Zabulon" is translated from the Greek word "Ζαβουλών" or "Zaboulōn". The Greek word, translated literally, means "a habitation". The Greek word is a transliteration of the Hebrew word "זְבוּלֹן" or "Zēbulwān". Zebulon is the modern transliteration of the word. The Hebrew word, translated literally, means "exalted". Zebulon was the 10th son of Jacob through his wife Leah. He was Leah's 6th and last son. Zebulon is "one of the 12 tribes of Israel springing from Zebulun. When God asked Moses to number the able-bodied men at Sinai, the tribe of Zebulon had 57,400. The place assigned to this tribe at this point was on the East side of the tabernacle with the standard of Judah. While the exact boundaries of Zebulun's territory are unknown, its portion lay between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean." (The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor – Merrill C. Tenney, page 908). The reference to the territory of the twelve tribes, ties the location to covenant blessings, in spite of the fact that there were many Gentiles residing in the area.

7 - **Nephthalim** – The name "Nephthalim" is translated from the Greek word "Νεφθαλίμ" or "Nephthalim". The Greek word, translated literally, means "wrestling". The name is a transliteration of the Hebrew word "נַפְתָּלִי" or "Naphtaliy". The Hebrew word, translated literally, also means "wrestling". The Latin transliteration of the name is Naphtali. The Codex Sinaiticus translated the word Nephthalim as "Naphtali". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 4, Verse 13 and 15, page 18). Naphtali was the 6th son of Jacob by Bilhah, the handmaid of Rachel. He was Bilhah's 2nd son. "Naphtali appears in the lists of Numbers as a tribe of moderate size. It furnished 53,400 soldiers at Kadesh Barnea and 45,400 at the mustering of the troops across from Jericho. In the wilderness organization, Naphtali was supposed to encamp on the North side of the tabernacle under the standard of Dan, and this group of tribes brought up the rear in marching. Interestingly, they settled together in Canaan. Naphtali's prince Ahira gave the last offering for the dedication of the altar. Naphtali received the next to last lot in the final division of the land, but in many ways its inheritance was the best. The territory of Naphtali, as nearly as we can tell, included the fertile scenic area just West of the Sea of Galilee and the sources of the Jordan. It reached from the lower limits of the Sea of Galilee almost up to a point opposite Mt. Hermon. On the West it reached half-way to the Mediterranean, being bounded by the tribe of Asher." (The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, General Editor – Merrill C. Tenney, page 572).

"The land of Naphtali is the region around the sea of Galilee." (The Four Gospels - Verse by verse, D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, page 142). It contained the village of Capernaum on its Eastern Border with Manasseh, and the village of Nazareth on its Western Boarder with Zebulon.

8 - **it might be fulfilled** – The phrase "it might be fulfilled" is translated from a single Greek word; "πληρώω" or "plēroō". It means to make full, to fill up, to cause to abound, or to supply liberally. In a religious sense, it means to cause God's will to be obeyed as it should be, and consequently cause the promises of God to be fulfilled. The term refers to prophecy. The Doctrine and Covenants teaches, "And these things ye shall not do, except it be required of you by them who desire it, that the scriptures might be fulfilled; for ye shall do according to that which is written." (Doctrine and Covenants 24:14). The question is not whether the prophecy referred to by the Gospel writer shall be fulfilled, that much we are assured, but rather what prophecy was uttered referring to the Messiah and the lands of Naphtali and Zebulon. We find the prophecy in Isaiah. Ogden and Skinner record, "Matthew referred to Isaiah 9:1-2, a messianic prophecy (using future perfect tense verbs as if the prophecy had already been fulfilled): the people who walked in the darkness of apostasy, those who lived in the land of the shadow of death (where the ancient armies of the Near East marched through), have seen the great Light, the Messiah. Jesus is the literal fulfillment of the prophecy." (The Four Gospels - Verse by verse, D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, page 142). It could be speculated that the reference to the borders of Naphtali and Zebulon may be symbolic of all of Galilee. Capernaum did sit in the borders of Galilee.

We need to review the prophecy of Isaiah;

Isaiah 9:1-2 King James Version of the Bible	Isaiah 9:1-2 The Dead Sea Scroll	Isaiah 9:1-2 Septuagint
"Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." (Isaiah 9:1-2).	"For one who was in anguish there will be no gloom. In the former time he treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but in the latter time he will make it glorious, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. On those who lived in the land of deep shadows, light has shined." (The Dead Sea Scrolls, The Great Isaiah Scroll, Column VIII, corresponding to 9:1-2).	"Drink this first. Act quickly, O land of Zabulon, land of Nephthalim, and the rest inhabiting the sea-coast, and the land beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles. O people walking in darkness, behold a great light: ye that dwell in the region and shadow of death, a light shall shine upon you." (Septuagint, Esaias 9:1-2).

It would appear that Isaiah, when referring to the lands of Zebulon and Naphtali, was specifically speaking of Galilee. In fact, Isaiah clarifies this himself calling it "Galilee of the Nations". It is also apparent that Isaiah was referring to the people in Galilee, not any specific city, who were living in spiritual darkness. Those same people would see the light of Israel, the promised Messiah. "The words, 'That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias', do not bear the meaning, that this was their primary and literal purpose. They represent a frequent mode of citation among Jewish writers, indicating a real fulfillment of the spirit, though not always of the letter, of a prophecy." (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 458).

The emphasis of Isaiah's prophecy should not be on Capernaum, or Nazareth, but rather that the Messiah was to come from the region. "On the ground of this prophecy of Isaiah, and not of a 'somewhat mistaken exposition of it,'...the Messianic hopes of the Jewish nation were really directed towards Galilee. It is true that, according to Jerome, in loc., the Nazarenes supposed ch. 9:1b to refer to the light of the gospel spread by the preaching of Paul in terminus gentium et viam universi maris. But 'the sea' (hayyam) cannot possibly be understood as referring to the Mediterranean, as Meier and Hoffmann suppose, for 'the way of the sea' (Derek hayyam) would in that case have been inhabited by the Philistines and Phoenicians; whereas the prophet's intention was evidently to mention such Israelitish provinces as had suffered the greatest affliction and degradation." (Commentary on the Old Testament, Volume 7: Isaiah, C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, page 159).

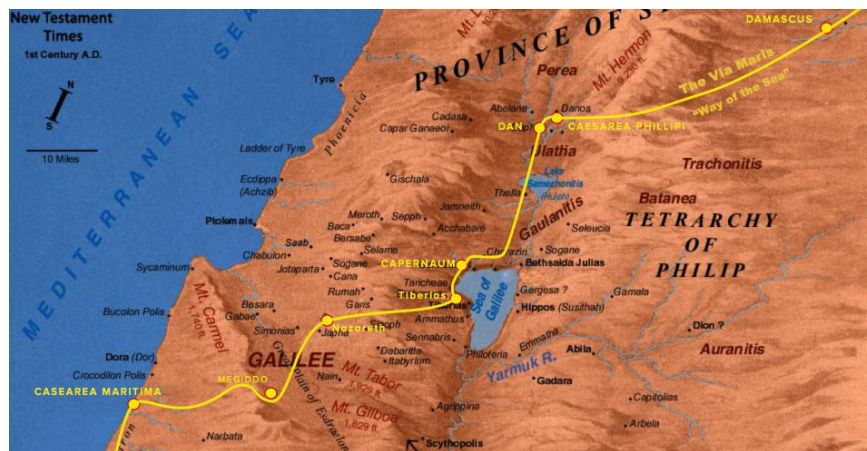
Jesus coming from Nazareth and ministering in Capernaum and the entire region of Galilee give fulfillment to Isaiah's words. "Isaiah's description of 'people that walked in darkness' and 'dwell in the shadow of death' suggests their living in the darkness of sin and apostasy. There is also physical significance to the image. The Galilee is covered with dark volcanic basalt spewed all over the region by several now-extinct volcanoes on the Golan east of the lake, and the black stone casts a dark shadow across the land." (The Four Gospels - Verse by verse, D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, page 142).

9 - **Esaiah** – The name "Esaiah" is translated from the Greek word "Ἠσαΐας" or "Ēsaías". The Greek word, translated literally, means "Jehovah's help". The Greek word was a transliteration of the Hebrew word "יְהוֹשָׁעָה" or "Yēsha'yah". The Hebrew word, translated literally, means "Jehovah has saved". The Latin transliteration of the name is Isaiah. The Codex Sinaiticus translates "Esaiah" as "Isaiah". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 4, Verse 14, page 18).

10 - **prophet** – The word "prophet" is translated from the Greek word "προφήτης" or "prophētēs". In Greek writings, the word "prophet" is used for an interpreter of oracles or of other hidden things. The Jews saw a "prophet" as one who, moved by the Spirit of God and hence his organ or spokesman, solemnly declares to men what he has received by inspiration, especially concerning future events, and in particular such as relate to the cause and kingdom of God and to human salvation.

- 11- **way of the sea** – The term "the way" is translated from the Greek word "ὁδός" or "hodos". It means a travelled way or road. The term "of the sea" is translated from the Greek word "θάλασσα" or "thalassa". The word means the sea and is used very specifically of the Mediterranean Sea or the Red Sea. The Codex Sinaiticus translates "way of the sea" as "toward the sea". (Codex Sinaiticus: The H.T. Anderson New Testament, Translated by Henry Tompkins Anderson, Matthew, Chapter 4, Verse 15, page 18).

The "way of the Sea" is better known as the Via Maris. It is an ancient trade route, improved upon by the Romans, becoming a great Roman Highway. It was the highway connecting the riches of Egypt with the wealth of Damascus and Persia. "The great roads of the world passed through Galilee, as we saw when we were thinking of the town of Nazareth. The Way of the Sea led from Damascus through Galilee right down to Egypt and to Africa. The Road to the East led through Galilee away out to the frontiers. The traffic of the world passed through Galilee. Away in the south Judaea is tucked into a corner, isolated and secluded. As it has been well said, "Judaea is on the way to nowhere: Galilee is on the way to everywhere." Judaea could erect a fence and keep all foreign influence and all new ideas out; Galilee could never do that. Into Galilee the new ideas were bound to come." (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, page 67).



- 12- **beyond Jordan** – The word "beyond" is translated from the Greek word "πέραν" or "peran". The word means beyond or on the other side. The name "Jordan" is translated from the Greek word "Ιορδάνης" or "Iordanēs". The name, literally translated, means "the descender". The Greek word is a transliteration from the Hebrew word "יַרְדֵּן" or "Yarden". Like the Greek word, the Hebrew word, translated literally means "descender". Both words refer to the River Jordan. The term, "beyond Jordan" means past or on the other side of Jordan. Galilee lied on the West side, or beyond, the Jordan River.

- 13- **Galilee of the Gentiles** – The name "Galilee" is translated from the Greek word "Γαλιλαία" or "Galilaea". The word, translated literally, means "Circuit". It is a transliteration of the Hebrew word "גליל" or "Galiyl". The Hebrew word, translated literally, means "circuit" or "district". "The name Galilee comes from the Hebrew word galiyl (Hebrew #1550; compare Hebrew #1551 and Hebrew #1556) which means a circle. The full name of the area was Galilee of the Gentiles. Plummer wishes to take that to mean 'heathenish Galilee.' But the phrase came from the fact that Galilee was literally surrounded by Gentiles. On the west, the Phoenicians were its neighbours. To the north and the east, there were the Syrians. And even to the south, there lay the territory of the Samaritans. Galilee was in fact the one part of Palestine that was inevitably in touch with non-Jewish influences and ideas. Galilee was bound to be open to new ideas in a way that no other part of Palestine was." (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, pages 66-67).

Galilee dates back to at least 1,400BCE, and before it was settled by the Israelites. "When the region of Galilee first appeared in historical records (in the annals of Pharaoh Thutmose III), it was not Jewish but a conglomeration of Amorites and Canaanites. Perhaps this is the rationale behind the expression 'Galilee of the gentiles' or 'Galilee of the nations'." (The Four Gospels - Verse by verse, D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner, page 143).

Galilee's history is full of worldly people, who practiced idol worship and all manner of sinful living. Interestingly, Jesus did not come to earth among a righteous people. Rather, the Messiah came to the sinners. "Let us note where Jesus went. He went into Galilee. When Jesus went into Galilee to begin his mission and his ministry, he knew what he was doing. Galilee was the most northerly district of Palestine. It stretched from the Litany River in the north to the Plain of Esdraelon in the south. On the west it did not reach the sea coast of the Mediterranean, because the coastal strip was in the possession of the Phoenicians. On the north-east it was bounded by Syria, and its eastern limit was the waters of the Sea of Galilee. Galilee was not large; it was only fifty miles from north to south, and twenty-five miles from east to west. But, small as it was, Galilee was densely populated. It was by far the most fertile region of Palestine; its fertility was indeed phenomenal and proverbial. There was a saying



that it was easier to raise a legion of olives in Galilee than it was to bring up one child in Judaea. Josephus, who was at one time governor of the province, says, 'It is throughout rich in soil and pasturage, producing every variety of tree, and inviting by its productiveness even those who have the least inclination for agriculture; it is everywhere tilled; no part is allowed to lie idle, and everywhere it is productive.' The result of this was that for its size Galilee had an enormous population. Josephus tells us that in it there were two hundred and four villages, none with a population of fewer than fifteen thousand people. So, then, Jesus began his mission in that part of Palestine where there were most people to hear him; he began his work in an area teeming with men to whom the gospel proclamation might be made. But not only was Galilee a populous district; its people were people of a certain kind. Of all parts of Palestine Galilee was most open to new ideas. Josephus says of the Galileans, "They were ever fond of innovations, and by nature disposed to changes, and delighted in seditions." They were ever ready to follow a leader and to begin an insurrection. They were notoriously quick in temper and given to quarrelling. Yet withal they were the most chivalrous of men. 'The Galileans,' said Josephus, 'have never been destitute of courage.' 'Cowardice was never a characteristic of the Galileans.' 'They were ever more anxious for honour than for gain.' The inborn characteristics of the Galileans were such as to make them most fertile ground for a new gospel to be preached to them." (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, pages 65-66).

The people of Galilee were in a sinful and apostate condition; however, much of their behaviors had been taught to them from previous generations. According to worldly standards, they were prosperous. Though they were a melting pot of many nations and cultures, the people of southern Galilee, at the time of Jesus, were primarily Jews. In fact, there were often more conservative and old school in their beliefs than the Jews of Judaea. They spoke a more country style dialect of Aramaic. Yet, with the absence of a Temple in their province, and the pomp and circumstance associated with the Temple hierarchy, they retained a greater sense of humility and openness to the spirit of the Lord. Elder McConkie wrote, "Galilee of the Gentiles: So called because of its position as a frontier province, one standing as a buffer state between Samaria, Perea, and Judea and the heathen kingdoms of the north. Many Gentiles inhabited the northern portions of Galilee. This association, coupled with their trade with outside nations, made the Galileans somewhat more independent than their southern neighbors. Even their language had its distinctive dialect so that it could be said of them, 'Thy speech bewrayeth thee'." (The Doctrine New Testament Commentary - The Gospels, Volume 1, Bruce R. McConkie, page 163).

- 14- **Gentiles** – The word "gentiles" is translated from the Greek word "ἔθνος" or "ethnos". The word means a multitude of people, living together or in close proximity. It can be used for a company, troop or swarm. It is also used to refer to the human family, a tribe nation, or class of people. The word seems to mean mortal or worldly people, as opposed to spiritual or godly people.

Barclay gives a concise history of the Gentiles in Galilee. He wrote, "Originally it had been assigned to the tribes of Asher, Naphtali and Zebulun when the Israelites first came into the land (Joshua 9:1-27) but these tribes had never been completely successful in expelling the native Canaanite inhabitants, and from the beginning the population of Galilee was mixed. More than once foreign invasions from the north and east had swept down on it from Syria, and in the eighth century B.C. the Assyrians had engulfed it completely, the greater part of its population had been taken away into exile, and strangers had been settled in the land. Inevitably this brought a very large injection of foreign blood into Galilee. From the eighth until the second century B.C. it had been largely in Gentile hands. When the Jews returned from exile under Nehemiah and Ezra, many of the Galileans came south to live in Jerusalem. In 164 B.C. Simon Maccabaeus chased the Syrians north from Galilee back to their own territory; and on his way back he took with him to Jerusalem the remnants of the Galileans who were left. The most amazing thing of all is that in 104 B.C. Aristobulus reconquered Galilee for the Jewish nation, and proceeded forcibly to circumcise the inhabitants of Galilee, and thus to make them Jews whether they liked it or not. History had compelled Galilee to open its doors to new strains of blood and to new ideas and to new influences. The natural characteristics of the Galileans, and the preparation of history had made Galilee the one place in all Palestine where a new teacher with a new message had any real chance of being heard, and it was there that Jesus began his mission and first announced his message." (The Gospel of Matthew, Volume 1, The Daily Study Bible Series - Revised Edition, William Barclay, pages 67-68).

- 15- **came down** – The word "down" is translated from the Greek word "κατέρχομαι" or "katerchomai". It means to come down, or go down. It literally means to go from a high to a lower locality. The Sea of Galilee sits about 696 feet below sea level. Jesus left Nazareth, sitting at 1,653 feet above sea level, and traveled down to Capernaum on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. He came down 2,349 feet.

- 16- **taught**– The word "taught" is translated from the Greek word "διδάσκω" or "didaskō". It means to teach, more specifically to hold a discourse with others in order to instruct them. "Matthew tells us that 'leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum' to fulfill the Messianic word, which promises that a great light shall shine upon those who dwell in that part of 'Galilee of the Gentiles'. Luke says he went to Capernaum, entered their synagogue, taught them on the Sabbath day – perhaps precisely as he had done in Nazareth – and that 'they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power'. His doctrine was the gospel; he spoke by the power of the Holy Ghost; and it was the light of his everlasting word that was shown forth, in Galilee, in all of Palestine, and in all nations and among all peoples where he or those sent of him should teach and minister." (The Mortal Messiah: Volume 2, Collector's Edition, Bruce R. McConkie, page 2).

Teaching was the mode of Jesus' ministry. He honored His Father's plan, which guaranteed agency to ALL of Father's children. Consequently, none were coerced or forced to follow the will of God. Instead, Jesus taught and allowed the recipients to choose for themselves. He taught the Father's will, and the eternal truths of Heaven. He taught us how we must act and conduct our lives to qualify for eternal life. He taught us how to repent and correct our wrong doings. The prophet Alma taught, "And now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just—yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them—therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God." (Alma 31:5). Jesus, the author of salvation, knew this and therefore taught everywhere He went. He was the master teacher. "For Capernaum was not the only place he taught. Rather was it the centre for itinerancy through all that district, to preach in its Synagogues. Amidst such ministry of quiet 'power', chiefly alone and unattended by His disciples, the summer passed. Truly, it was summer in the ancient land of Zebulun and Naphtali, in the Galilee of the Gentiles, when the glorious Light that had risen chased away the long winter's darkness, and those who had been the first exiles in Assyrian bondage were the first brought back to Israel's true liberty, and by Israel's Messiah-King." (The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Volume 1, Alfred Edersheim, page 458).

- 17- **sabbath days**– The word "sabbath" is translated from the Greek word "σάββατον" or "sabbaton". It means the seventh day of each week which was a sacred festival on which the Israelites were required to abstain from all work. The Greek word is a transliteration of the Hebrew word "שַׁבָּת" or "shabbath". Translated literally, the word means rest, desist, or cease. It too refers to the sacred seventh day of the week, where upon the Jews devoted the day to Jehovah by resting from their labors. "Luke uses the pl. ta sabbata both for the single Sabbath and for more than one. Its use for a single Sabbath is sometimes said to be an Aramaism; but the pl. form, accompanied by the Greek pl. def. art. ta, is too well attested in Hellenistic Greek to be the result solely of such influence." (The Gospel according to Luke I-IX: A New translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Yale Bible, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, page 544).

To the Jews, the Sabbath was a time for scripture study. It was a time to reverence, and worship God. As a matter of religious law, people attended the synagogue where they were taught the law. It logically follows that Jesus would teach the undefiled law to the Jews on the Sabbath.