

Jesus' Public Life Begins: Galilee and the Twelve Apostles (3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A)

Isaiah 8:22-9:3—The Light Shines in Galilee

1. Assyrian Exile: begins in the land of “Zebulun” and “Naphtali”
2. Galilee of the Gentiles: though now in “darkness,” will see a “great light”
3. The Messiah will Come to Galilee (cf. Isaiah 9:6-7)

Psalm 27—The Lord is My Light and My Salvation

1. The Lord is my “light” (v. 1)
2. Desire to be in the Lord’s “temple” (v. 4)
3. Desire to be in the Promised Land: “the land of the living” (v. 12)

Matthew 4:12-23—Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee

1. After John’s arrest: Jesus withdraws to Galilee
2. Why Capernaum? Why the north? Why Galilee?
 - a. For safety; Judea is dangerous territory (John’s execution)
 - b. Fulfillment of Prophecy (Isaiah 9)
 - c. More than that: ingathering of ‘lost tribes of Israel’
3. Hope for the 12 Tribes of Israel:

1000 B.C. God Promises King David his “Kingdom” Will Last “Forever”

922 B.C. King Solomon Dies, Kingdom Splits in Two

1. Israel (10 Tribes): Northern Kingdom

2. Judah (2 Tribes): Southern Kingdom

722 B.C. Assyrian Exile: 10 Tribes scattered among Gentiles (2 Kgs 15-17)

587 B.C. Babylonian Exile: 2 Southern Tribes Exiled; Jerusalem Temple Destroyed

538 B.C.. 2 Tribes of Judah: Return from Babylonian Exile begins

30 A.D. 10 Northern Tribes? Remain “Lost” Among the Gentiles

4. Jesus Begins to Preach: the “*Kingdom of Heaven* is at hand”
5. Jesus Begins to Call the *12 Disciples* (12 Tribes)
 - a. Peter, Andrew, James and John
 - b. In the land of “Zebulun and Naphtali,” where the Assyrian Exile Began

The Catechism of the Catholic Church

1. From “the beginning of his public life” Jesus chose the Twelve (CCC 551)
 - a. He gives them “a share in his authority”
 - b. “*Through them* he directs the Church”
2. The Twelve Apostles: “Representing the twelve tribes of Israel, they are the foundation stones of the new Jerusalem” (CCC 765)

Living Tradition

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and *ransom captive Israel*,
That *mourns in lonely exile here*, until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel, shall come to thee O Israel...

Questions for Discussion and Reflection (3rd Sunday Ordinary Time, Year A)

1. Have you ever wondered why Jesus began his ministry in Galilee rather than Judea? Find a map of the holy land that shows where the Twelve Tribes' portions of land were and see if you can see the significance of Jesus choosing the north rather than the south.

2. Reread the entirety of Isaiah 9 and its prophecy of the Messiah. If Jesus deliberately began his ministry in Galilee in order to fulfill the prophecy (as Matthew tells us), what does this show us about who Jesus is claiming to be?

3. What would the significance of Jesus having Twelve Disciples have been in a first-century Jewish perspective? What was the *problem* with him having 12 Disciples?

For Further Study

1. The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand (CCC 541-42).
2. Jesus Instituted the Church (CCC 763-766)
2. Brant Pitre, *The Last Supper and the Lost Tribes of Israel* (CD Bible Study).