

GOSPEL PEARLS

Zabulun and Naphtali

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Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— 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." From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 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. 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. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. (Matthew 4: 12-17; 23-25)

The Jews considered the territory belonging to the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali a place inhabited by people who were not trustworthy in terms of doctrine. Nevertheless, the prophet Isaiah predicted, eight centuries before the birth of Jesus, that the Light of the Word of God would arise in the land rooted in the darkness of heresy and idolatry. Once again, God confirms that His thoughts and His ways go beyond those of men who never expected anything good to come from a God-forsaken land. Are we, likewise, full of prejudices or are we open to listening to the Word of God?