

Jesus Walks – Part 1

One of the things to pay close attention to in your Bible reading is geography. When the Lord came from heaven to this earth, He spent a lot of time in the region of Galilee in Israel. One of the main towns He spent a lot of time in was Capernaum. Usually, when people think of Jesus' hometown, they first think of places like Bethlehem and Nazareth. But a strong case can be made for Capernaum.

Facts about Capernaum

- Jesus made Capernaum the center of His Galilean ministry after Nazareth rejected Him.
- Peter, Andrew, James, John all worked as fishermen in the town. Matthew, the tax collector, had an office there. Peter's mother-in-law lived there.
- A white limestone 4th-century Synagogue was unearthed and built directly on top of the 1st-century synagogue (made from black basalt). Jairus was the ruler of the black basalt synagogue, and a Roman centurion had paid for its construction.
- All of Capernaum in Christ's era was made with black basalt. The streets are quite narrow, and many of the houses excavated share black basalt walls.
- A particular home has been identified as the house of Peter's mother-in-law because it was converted into a church building. Then an additional church building was built on top of it. However, that second church was destroyed. Today an observation post/functioning chapel stands over the proposed location.
- The town sits on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. It lies about two and a half miles from the mouth of the Jordan River.
- The name means "Nahum's town." We have no evidence that the prophet Nahum had any ties to it. The town is not even mentioned in the Old Testament.
- Its location had strategic value for the Romans. Capernaum served as a toll-collecting station to gather tax revenue from caravans passing from Damascus to the Mediterranean coast and Egypt.
- A large army of Roman soldiers occupied it. It was the residence of a centurion and nobleman (Luke 7:2; John 4:46).
- Capernaum was literally "a city set on a hill" (Matthew 5:14).
- It was the center of Jesus' ministry. He took up residence there (Mark 2:1). He preached in the synagogue there (Luke 4:31-32). He performed several miracles there (Mark 1:21-34; 3:1-6; Matthew 9:1-8, 18-22, 23-26; Luke 7:1-10; John 4:46-50).

Lessons from Capernaum

- Jesus is who He claimed to be! The miracles He performed there confirm this (Mark 2:1-12).
- Preaching the truth causes mixed reactions. Some will obey it and become faithful to God (Mark 1:16-20). Some merely believe like demons (James 2:19). Some flat out reject it!
- There are severe consequences for rejecting Jesus (Matthew 11:20-24). Jesus pronounced cursing on the people of Capernaum for rejecting Him!

Conclusion:

Whenever you read the gospels, pay close attention to how significant it was in the ministry of the Lord.

Shawn Jeffries