

## Capernaum: City of Our Lord – Part 2

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Last week we began looking at the city of Capernaum.
  - A. This was a small city located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee and was populated during Jesus' day by possibly as many as 15,000, but maybe a bit less.
  - B. I chose this city because it was mentioned 16 times in the gospels and was the city our Lord *decided* to live in.
    - i. This fulfilled divine prophecy (Matt. 4:12-16 – “Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. <sup>13</sup> **And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum**, which is by the sea, in **the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali**, <sup>14</sup> that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: <sup>15</sup> “The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: <sup>16</sup> The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned.”).
    - ii. Jesus's move to Capernaum had the goal of not just fulfilling prophecy but bringing the light of *divine visitation* and *salvation* upon them and taking away the shadow of death!
    - iii. Capernaum was blessed with *Immanuel*, “God with us” (Matt. 1:23), living among them in the flesh, walking their streets, shopping in their marketplaces, teaching in their synagogue, and doing many mighty works before their eyes.
  - C. Its name meant “city of comfort,” which was truly God's intention of Jesus being among them (Isa. 61:1-2 – “The Spirit of the Lord God is on Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to bring **good news to the poor**. He has sent Me to **heal the brokenhearted**, to **proclaim liberty to the captives** and freedom to the prisoners; <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of our God's vengeance; to **comfort all who mourn**”).
2. Today we want to continue our look at Capernaum's visitation by God's Son.
  - A. I want to consider the mighty works, or miracles, Jesus did among them.
  - B. I want to consider how they responded to this visitation
  - C. I want to look at the sobering lessons it provides for us today!

### BODY:

#### **I. Jesus' miracles performed in Capernaum:**

- A. The extent and importance of the miracles done in Capernaum are seen in Jesus's words spoken in Nazareth (Luke 4:22-24 – “So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, “Is this not Joseph's son?” <sup>23</sup> He said to them, “You will surely say this proverb to Me, ‘Physician, heal yourself! **Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.**” <sup>24</sup> Then He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.”).

  1. These people were offended at Jesus' claim to be the Messiah of Isa. 61, the One bringing good news, freeing captives, restoring the sight to the blind, and bringing liberty!
  2. They were offended and disbelieved because Jesus grew up there and they knew His family!
  3. Jesus knew they wanted proof in the form of miracles, **like those done in Capernaum**, which shows those were *significant works* and were being proclaimed throughout the land!

- B. The miracles in Capernaum:
  1. Jesus cast out a demon from a man in their *synagogue* (Mark 1:21-28 – “Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. <sup>22</sup> And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup> Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, <sup>24</sup> saying, “Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” <sup>25</sup> But Jesus rebuked him,

saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!”<sup>26</sup> And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him.<sup>27</sup> Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.”<sup>28</sup> **And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.**”).

- a. The people saw that even the demons knew Jesus and feared His power, proclaiming Him to be the “Holy One of God” that had the power to destroy them!
  - b. Jesus’ *casting out* of this demon by command proved to all that He was as this demon said, the Holy One of God *and* the ruler of the spiritual world.
  - c. In some way or on some level the people *were amazed* by this miracle, causing them to spread Christ’s fame throughout the region around Galilee!
2. They witnessed Jesus healing *many* who were sick and demon-possessed (Mk. 1:32-34 – “At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him **all who were sick** and those who were **demon-possessed**.<sup>33</sup> And the **whole city was gathered together** at the door.<sup>34</sup> Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.”).
- a. The whole city saw Christ’s great power over Satan, human suffering, and sin!
  - b. This time Jesus’ power was shown to be even greater in that He refused to allow the demons to even speak!
3. They watched as Jesus healed the centurion’s servant by just *saying the word* (**Lk. 7:1-10** – “Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered **Capernaum**.<sup>2</sup> And a certain centurion’s servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die.<sup>3</sup> So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant.<sup>4</sup> And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving,<sup>5</sup> “for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue.”<sup>6</sup> Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, “Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof.<sup>7</sup> Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.<sup>8</sup> For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”<sup>9</sup> When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, “I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!”<sup>10</sup> And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick.”).
- a. The Jews in Capernaum knew this centurion and thought much of Him indicating that such a miracle would have been easily proven.
  - b. That Jesus healed from a distance should have had great impact upon them!
4. Jesus healed a paralytic let down through the roof (Mark 2:1-12 – “And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house.<sup>2</sup> Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them.<sup>3</sup> Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men.<sup>4</sup> And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.<sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”<sup>6</sup> And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,<sup>7</sup> “Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”<sup>8</sup> But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus

within themselves, He said to them, “Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? <sup>9</sup> Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’? <sup>10</sup> But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic, <sup>11</sup> “I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” <sup>12</sup> Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”).

- a. They were blessed with the chance to see that Jesus is *God with us*, Immanuel!
  - b. For, when Jesus forgave the paralytic’s *sins*, which *only God can do*, these skeptics were right in assuming He was claiming to be God!
  - c. Jesus proved His claim by *fully healing* this paralytic by simply saying the word, *which is also something only God can do!*
  - d. All the proof they needed was put before them!
5. All of these miracles provided mounting proof that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah (Isa. 35:5-6 – “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup> then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert”).

## II. Capernaum’s response to Jesus:

- A. Despite Capernaum’s favored state, they **did not believe and repent** at their visitation (Matt. 11:20-24 – “Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, **because they did not repent:** <sup>21</sup> “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. <sup>22</sup> But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. <sup>23</sup> And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. <sup>24</sup> But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”).
1. Their visitation produced only a “woe” of *condemnation* and *anguish* from Jesus.
  2. What a sad and *contradictory* ending for such an amazing blessing upon them (Jn. 3:17-18 – “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. <sup>18</sup> “He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”).
- B. Jesus’ condemnation would have stung in a special way, seeing their failure to respond...
1. Put them in the same category as the *heathen king of Babylon* who thought he would “ascend to heaven,” but in His arrogance was “brought down to Sheol” (Isa. 14:13-15).
  2. Meant they would receive a harsher judgment than God would bring upon **Sodom**—that wicked and perverted city in which not a single righteous person could be found!

## III. Lessons from Capernaum:

- A. Lesson 1: Even the very presence of God will not change a hardened heart!
1. Many assume that if they had physical proof of Jesus divinity, a visitation by God, etc., they would believe and obey!
    - a. Jesus’ life, power, and teaching experienced in Capernaum did not save them.
    - b. Their hearts were hardened to the spiritual blessings Jesus sought to provide. They wanted something else, something earthly, something Jesus would not provide.
    - c. Their hardness of heart caused them to reject the Son of God who lived among them!
  2. If you are waiting for more proof or a later time, remember Jesus said, “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (Jn. 20:29) and pronounced great judgment on those who knew to believe and obey...but didn’t!

- B. Lesson 2: Revelation demands responsibility (Lk. 12:48 – “...For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”).
1. Capernaum was **given much** in God’s very presence among them in Jesus Christ.
    - a. Few, if any, others received such attention and blessings from God through Jesus.
    - b. This city that was once *destroyed* by the Assyrians for their lack of faith and obedience to God and that lived in *darkness* and the *shadow of death* had been given a second chance, an opportunity to listen to God Himself teach them of salvation and prove His words by the signs He did.
  2. So, their refusal to repent could only bring God’s most severe wrath and judgment on them.
    - a. They had life among them and did not believe or receive it (John 1:4-5, 10-11 – “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness **did not comprehend it**... <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the **world did not know Him**. <sup>11</sup> He came to His own, **and His own did not receive Him**.”).
    - b. Yet, their hearts and deeds were evil, so they refused to come into the light (John 3:19-20 – “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.”).
    - c. We may think that rejecting obedience to the Gospel now for a better time later is acceptable, a good plan, but it shows our hearts/deeds to be evil, that we don’t want to be exposed in the light!
- C. Lesson 3: God will inflict greater punishment upon those who have neglected greater light!
1. Make no mistake that when Jesus pronounced the “woes” upon Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, claiming Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom would fare better in the Judgment than they...
    - a. Jesus knew Tyre and Sidon were cities full of Gentiles living very wicked lives! Jezebel was from Sidon and their wickedness was rebuked by the prophets. They epitomized evil!
    - b. And, little need be said about the wickedness of Sodom!
  2. For those who have heard the gospel and chosen to ignore it, to reject it, or to not obey it, to them Jesus offers a harsher judgment than will be faced by Tyre, Sidon, and even Sodom!
  3. I do not think anyone truly wants to be in that position in the end!

### CONCLUSION:

1. We, like Capernaum, will give an account for all of God’s blessings and instruction in the gospel we have received in this life.
2. We all must face the fact that this world has been *visited*. And, Jesus’ life and work upon this earth has a purpose that you can’t escape or put off (John 20:30-31 – “Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”).
3. You may not be a sinner like those of Sodom! But, if you have heard the good news of Christ and choose not to respond/obey, Sodom will fare better than will you in the Judgment! For, 2 Thessalonians 1:8 says Jesus is coming “in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who **do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ**.”
4. So, what will *you* do with Jesus?
  - A. Will you come to Him in faith, obeying the gospel in faith by repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in Jesus as the Christ, and in being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins?
  - B. If you are a Christian and haven’t lived faithfully, will you confess and repent of your sin?