

# Jesus' First Stay in Capernaum

## John 2: 12

After the wedding in Cana (see Bq - **Jesus Changes Water into Wine**), Jesus went down roughly eighteen miles to Capernaum. The verb down, is appropriate because Cana was on the uplands whereas Capernaum was on the northwest coast of the Sea of Galilee, on the edge of the plain of Gennesaret.

Judging by the Gospel accounts, Capernaum was a city of considerable importance. From the Synoptics we know that it was Jesus' ministry headquarters in Galilee after leaving Nazareth. Capernaum might even be called His own town (Matthew 9:1). It was probably a large population center, not to mention several of His apostles made their homes there.

It was near this place that Christ called the fishermen (Mattityahu 4:18; Mark 1:16; Luke 5:1). Matthew sat at the tax collector's booth, when the Lord called him into His service, see Cp - **The Calling of Matthew (Levi)**. Many miracles were done in Capernaum, including the healing of the centurion's servant (Matthew 8:8-13; Luke 7:1-10). A detachment of Roman soldiers lived there, and their residence was long and significant enough for the centurion to have provided a synagogue for the local Jewish congregation. Other miracles include the healing of an officials son (John 4:46-54), Peter's mother-in-law (Matthew 8:14-16; Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39), and a paralyzed man (Matthew 9:2-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26). It was also probably in Capernaum that the miracle-working Rabbi raised the daughter of the synagogue leader Jairus (Mattityahu 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56). Here He also drove out an unclean spirit (Mark 1:21-28; Luke 4:31-36);, and used a little child to teach humility (Matthew 18:1-5; Mark 9:33-37; Luke 9:46-50).

But no matter how many miracles were performed before their eyes, the people of Capernaum ultimately rejected Messiah and His message. Jesus answered His own question when He said: **And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you (Mattityahu 11:23-24).** While all unbelievers will end up in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:7-10), there will be degrees of punishment. Those who lived in Capernaum and actually witnessed His miracles, but rejected Him anyway, will have a punishment even worse than the wicked of Sodom. This prophecy seems to have been fulfilled in the most literal sense as evidenced by the fact that neither Sodom nor Capernaum can be found today.<sup>319</sup>

Nevertheless, **He went down to Capernaum with His mother, brothers** (see **Ey - Jesus' Mother and Brothers**) and talmidim, and enjoyed a time of family reunion there. Once again, this would be a natural place for Joseph to be mentioned, but the biblical record is silent, presumably because he had passed away by that time. **His mother** is mentioned here for the last time until we see **her** at the foot of the cross as **her Son** is crucified (**John 19:25-27**). No specific reason is given for going to the city at that time. **There they stayed for a few days**. It seems to have been a period in which **Yeshua** spent time with **His new apostles** before leaving for Jerusalem and the start of **His** public ministry (see **Bs - Jesus' First Cleansing of the Temple**), as we see next.