

What is the significance of Capernaum in the Bible?

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Capernaum-in-the-Bible.html>

Capernaum is featured in the New Testament but never mentioned in the Old. Capernaum was a city located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. It is significant in Scripture because Capernaum was the chosen home city of Jesus after He was driven from Nazareth by the religious officials (Luke 4:16, 28-30). Capernaum was also the home of Peter and Andrew and where Jesus called them to follow Him (Matthew 4:18-20). Jesus also found Matthew, a tax collector in Capernaum, and called him to follow (Matthew 9:9).

Jesus referred to Capernaum often and did many of His miracles there (Matthew 8:5; John 6:17-21). He also taught in the synagogue (John 6:59; Mark 1:21). Although Capernaum had been the site of so many proofs of Jesus' identity, the people there refused to believe, and He included it in a denunciation of several cities: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades" (Luke 10:13-15).

It was in Capernaum that Jesus healed the centurion's son (Matthew 8:5-13), the nobleman's son (John 4:46-53), Simon Peter's mother-in-law (Mark 1:30-31), and the paralytic (Matthew 9:1-2). In Capernaum, Jesus cast out an unclean spirit (Mark 1:21-25), raised Jairus's daughter to life, and healed the woman with the bleeding issue (Mark 5:21-42).

The city of Capernaum represents many who have been exposed to the gospel, may enjoy going to church, and consider themselves Christians by association. The familiarity with Jesus and His Word gives them a false sense of assurance that they are right with God when in reality Jesus will one day say to them, “Away from me, you evildoers! I never knew you” (Matthew 7:21-23). The people of Capernaum heard and saw what Jesus did and said, yet they refused to believe (John 1:12; 12:42). We can speculate as to why: would believing would cost them too much? Would it disrupt their comfortable religious life? Would it challenge them to repent of sin and pride, love the unlovely, and give up all to follow (Luke 9:57-62; 4:25-33; John 6:59-66)? Capernaum had a greater opportunity than most cities to hear and believe in Christ, and the residents would be held to a higher standard of judgment (Luke 10:12; Matthew 11:24). Likewise, we will be judged according to the light we've been given (Matthew 5:29; 18:6; Luke 12:42-48). If God did not spare Capernaum due to their lack of faith, He will not spare those today who have heard the message, seen the evidence, and rejected His Son (2 Peter 2:4-10; Hebrews 6:4-6).