

Luke 4:31

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

Analysis

And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. After Nazareth's violent rejection, Jesus relocated His ministry base to Capernaum. The verb *katēlthen* (κατέλθεν, came down) is geographically accurate—Capernaum sits at the Sea of Galilee's shore (about 680 feet below sea level) while Nazareth is in the hill country. The phrase *en tois sabbasin* (ἐν τοῖς σάββασι, on the sabbaths) indicates Jesus' regular sabbath teaching in the synagogue.

Capernaum became Jesus' ministry headquarters (Matthew 4:13 calls it "his own city"). Unlike Nazareth, Capernaum received Jesus' teaching and miracles with faith. This pattern fulfills Jesus' principle that a prophet is without honor in his hometown. The shift from Nazareth to Capernaum also symbolizes the gospel moving from those who reject to those who receive it.

Historical Context

Capernaum was a thriving fishing village on the Sea of Galilee's northwest shore, located on the Via Maris trade route. It had a Roman garrison (Matthew 8:5-13) and a customs station where Matthew collected taxes (Matthew 9:9). Archaeological excavations have uncovered a large synagogue (later than Jesus' time, but likely built on the same foundation) and what is traditionally identified as Peter's house. Jesus performed many miracles in Capernaum, making it central to

His Galilean ministry. Yet despite witnessing His mighty works, the city ultimately rejected Him, earning severe judgment (Matthew 11:23-24).

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does Jesus' relocation from Nazareth to Capernaum teach about God's pattern of taking the gospel from those who reject to those who receive?
2. How does Jesus' regular Sabbath synagogue teaching demonstrate His commitment to engaging people where they gather for Scripture and worship?
3. Why is it significant that Capernaum, which received so much of Jesus' ministry, ultimately faced judgment for unbelief?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	κατέλθεν	εἰς	Καπερναοὺμ	πόλιν	τῆς	Γαλιλαίας	καὶ
And	came down	to	Capernaum	a city	G3588	of Galilee	And
G2532	G2718	G1519	G2584	G4172		G1056	G2532
ἦν	διδάσκων	αὐτοὺς	ἐν	τοῖς	σάββασιν·		
G2258	taught	them	on	G3588	the sabbath days		
	G1321	G846	G1722		G4521		

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 4:13 (Parallel theme): And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

