

# GOING DEEPER

ACTS Israel Tour 2018

## DAY SEVEN: CROWDS, CONFLICTS, AND FEED MY SHEEP

Today we will wrap up our time in Galilee and return to Jerusalem. Before we do, however, we will visit Capernaum, the town Jesus chose as home base for His Galilean ministry. We will visit Tabgha, where the Church of Multiplication memorializes his multiplication of loaves and fish. Our final stop in Galilee will be at Peter's Primacy, the tradition spot where Jesus met with His disciples after the resurrection.

### Key Thought for Day Seven

Sometimes people say that if they saw a miracle they would believe. It is interesting to learn that the people in Jesus's day who saw miracles often did not believe. In the end it is not the miraculous that draws us to Christ but the Holy Spirit who gives birth to faith.

The map for our journey today is in two parts. Part 1 is a closer view of our stops in Galilee.



[Journey Map for Day Seven: Part 1](#)

Part 2 shows our path down to Megiddo and on to Jerusalem.



[Journey Map for Day Seven: Part 2](#)

## The Town of Capernaum

**Dress for a Religious Site.**

Recall now how we visited Kursi on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus

cast out the demons named Legion. In Matthew, the next thing he does is to step into his boat to cross back to the Jewish side of the lake.

*And getting into a boat, he crossed over and came to his own town. (Matthew 9:1)*

His “own town” was the town of Capernaum. In Hebrew Capernaum is “Kefar Nahum,” meaning “Nahum’s Village.” If you are watching you may see a road sign with exactly that on it. The Nahum referred to in the name is not known, except that it is not a reference to the Old Testament prophet Nahum.

Matthew chapter 4 tells us how Jesus came to Capernaum.

Now when he heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali, in order that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah would be fulfilled, who said, “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, on the way of the sea, on the other side of the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—the people who sit in darkness have seen a great light, and the ones who sit in the land and shadow of death, a light has dawned on them.” From that time on, Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near.” (Matthew 4:12-17)

**Why Capernaum?** Let’s take apart the threads in these amazing verses.

- Jesus began his ministry preaching around Jordan, Jericho, and Jerusalem, but when John was arrested he knew it was no longer safe for him to remain in that region. He needed to avoid arrest because that time had not yet come.
- He was rejected at Nazareth. We will visit later today the place where the crowd at Nazareth threaten to throw him from a cliff.
- Capernaum was in a location that fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah about events that would occur in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali. Click [here](#) for a map of that shows how the promised land was allocated to the tribes. Nazareth is in the tribal region of Zebulun. Capernaum in Naphtali.
- Capernaum was a major stop on the trade route Isaiah refers to called the “way of the sea,” another part of the prophecy fulfilled.
- And because Jesus settled in Capernaum, Galilee was among the first place on earth

to see the dawning of the light of the Messiah as the gospel of John says, “In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:4-5).

- Isaiah’s prophecy speaks of “Galilee of the Gentiles,” and although the region was primarily Jewish there was strong gentile presence as well.
- It is at then, with the time fulfilled at last, that Jesus began to preach, “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven is near.”

And there are a couple of more pieces to add.

- Capernaum was directly on the shore of the lake, providing Jesus with easy access to transportation around the different regions of the lake.
- Capernaum was most likely the home village of the Apostle Peter. See Matthew 8:14, “When Jesus arrived at Peter’s house, Peter’s mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever.”

In view of all of these things, Capernaum seems uniquely appropriate as base town for the ministry of Jesus. Today we visit that town which figures so prominently in His Galilean ministry.

**House of the Apostle Peter.** Given that Capernaum was home to Peter you’ll see a statue to him at Capernaum. The Roman Catholic influence is significant at these locations so you will see a lot of emphasis on the words “thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church” (Matthew 16.18).

All believers, however, even if they don’t accept the Roman Catholic interpretation of these words, honor the faith and work of Peter as the unquestioned leader of the early church in Israel.

You will also see at Capernaum an excavated dwelling that is may well be the home of the Apostle Peter. In time, an octagonal church was built around the ancient house. Then, in the late 1980s, a memorial church, with a glass floor, was built directly above the entire site. We will enter the church and look directly down into the house.

What do we know about this house?

- We know the house was in Capernaum, a fishing village. We know that Peter was a fisherman.
- Objects found in the house included fishing hooks and gear.
- We know that people late in the first century thought it was an important holy location.

So, was this the house of Peter? Ultimately, it does not matter. We do not worship houses, churches, or even Apostles. However, we can in all truth treat it as a glimpse into that past, preserved for us today. If reflecting on that reality brings us closer to the Lord, then we have responded well to visiting this site.

**The Capernaum Synagogue.** Near to the house is the synagogue at Capernaum, and it gives us a good sense of what an ancient synagogue looked like and how it functioned. We'll explain more about it when we visit, but for now

*The synagogue at Capernaum*

I'll point out that rows of columns on the left and right which would have supported the roof. The large area in the center was the hall for teaching and worship. The synagogue you'll see is from the 4th century AD, but if you look closely at the outside you can see a black basalt foundation which is most likely the foundation of the synagogue where Jesus taught and healed at Capernaum.

*Black basalt foundation stones at the Capernaum synagogue*



Capernaum

Some of the events in the life of Jesus that are recorded at Capernaum.

- Healed a paralytic lowered through a hole in the roof (Mark 2:1-12)
- In the synagogue, healed a man with a withered hand (Mark 3:1-6)
- Healed the servant of a centurion (Matthew 8:5-13)
- Healed the daughter of Jairus, ruler of the synagogue (Mark 5:41-42)

- Called Levi, the tax collector, to become one of His disciples (Mark 2:14)

In spite of all these mighty works in Capernaum, Jesus warned the city's people about their failure to repent.

*'And you people of Capernaum, will you be honored in heaven? No, you will go down to the place of the dead. For if the miracles I did for you had been done in wicked Sodom, it would still be here today. I tell you, even Sodom will be better off on judgment day than you.'*

## **Tabgha: Multiplication of Bread and Fish**

### **Dress for a Religious Site.**

A couple of kilometres south of Capernaum we will visit a site called in Greek "heptapegon" which means "Seven Springs." Arabs found this hard to pronounce and it gradually became known to the local Arabs as "Tabgha."

Our visit to the Church of Multiplication will be brief, but I hope memorable. The church memorializes the multiplication of loaves and fishes.

*The altar at the Church of Multiplication*

The mosaic tells the story and the rock rising from the floor is said to be the rock on which Jesus laid the loaves and fishes. There are many churches in Israel that are dark and gloomy. I have always appreciated this church for its simple beauty light atmosphere. As we've said about some other things, the site may or may not be authentic, but I have always enjoyed sitting for a moment to thank the Lord for His capacity to multiply blessing into my life. This is how I regard many of these sites. They are a stimulus to thanksgiving and prayer. And who knows? Perhaps it happened here.



[Tabgha](#)

## **The Table of Christ (Peter's Primacy): Feed My Sheep!**

Adjacent to Tabgha is a site called the Table of Christ or sometimes Peter's Primacy. Here we will walk down to the beach, sit by the shore of Galilee, and reflect on how Jesus appeared to His disciples after the resurrection. It was at this site or not far from it, that Jesus one morning cooked breakfast for his friends.

## Dress for a Religious Site.

*The beach at Tabgha (Peter's Primacy)*

The disciples, perhaps discouraged and wondering what to do next, had returned to fishing. After some instruction from Jesus they caught net full of 153 "large" fish which they dragged onto the shore.

*Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. . . . 'Now come and have some breakfast!' . . . . When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread. (John 21:1 and following).*



### The Table of Christ

In this place Peter was restored to ministry after his shameful cowardice of denying Jesus three times on the night of the Lord's arrest. Here on the beach, three times Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me?" Three times Peter answered yes and Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." Perhaps Jesus's exhortation to love is what inspired someone to add these stones to beach.

*Stones on the beach at Tabgha*

As we sit on this beach it is wonderful to reflect on Jesus's superiority over death. The amazement of the disciples is indicated by this small but meaningful hint in the gospel.

*None of the disciples dared ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord.*

What thoughts must have been flying through their minds? What questions? How could this happen? They knew it was the Lord but could hardly believe it and were afraid to ask. And again, as so often before, the question, "Who is this man?"

## **Mt. Tabor**

Eventually the time was fulfilled and the ministry of Jesus in Galilee came to a close. Among the last events in Galilee was His transfiguration, perhaps on Mount Hermon but alternatively on the top of Mount Tabor. Our route on the way to Nazareth will take us past Mount Tabor even if we won't have time to go up it.



Mt Tabor

## **Nazareth Village**

We come now to Nazareth. If there is any town in Israel that was counter to my expectations when I first visited it was Nazareth. I had in mind a small village. Today it is a somewhat dowdy, traffic-clogged modern city sprawling across the hillsides.

*Modern Nazareth*

In Nazareth there is a huge Basilica of the Annunciation, that claims to be constructed on the site of the angel's announcement about Jesus to Mary.

Of more interest for our purpose is Nazareth Village, a non-profit ministry 500 metres from the original centre of Nazareth. At Nazareth Village "Jesus's parables come to vivid life in an archaeologically and historically accurate portrayal of rural life in New Testament times." Staff at the village work in costume at activities from the New Testament era: carpentry, weaving, shepherding, and cooking.



Nazareth Village

You might call them actors, but it would be better to say they are teachers, because at every stop they teach visitors about the times of Jesus with enthusiasm and skill. We will see a carpenter at work using first century tools.

*The carpenter shop at Nazareth Village*

Anna the weaver answers questions about cloth making.

There is a tomb with a circular stone for closure, an olive press and a reconstructed first century synagogue. We learn fascinating details at each place.

*Tomb with a circular entrance stone at Nazareth Village*

For example, the night of his arrest Jesus prayed three times in the Garden of Gethsemane, and “gethsemane” is the ancient word for “oil press.” When we visit the oil press at Nazareth Village we will learn how olive oil was prepared in those days with three pressings. The first pressing produced the lightest and most flavourful “virgin” olive oil used for flavouring. The second pressing produced a heavier oil used in baking or on the griddle. The third pressing was the heaviest squeezing of all that wrung from the olives that last bits of oil possible, seldom used for food but rather for lamps and similar purposes. Jesus, it is thought, prayed three times at the oil press of Gethsemane as the weight of what was to come rested on him more and more heavily.

*Crushing olives before pressing at Nazareth Village*

I am sure you will enjoy and appreciate our visit to Nazareth Village.

## **The Nazareth Precipice**

We stop to visit the Nazareth Precipice, which is very likely the place in Nazareth where an angry mob drove Jesus to the edge of a steep cliff.

*‘Truly I tell you,’ he continued, ‘no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.’ All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way. (Luke 4:24-30)*



## Megiddo

On our way to Jerusalem we will stop at Megiddo, the site of an ancient city with many references in Scripture.

- Joshua's soldiers defeated the King of Megiddo (Joshua 12:21) as the Israelites entered the land.
- Solomon employed forced labor to rebuild the city of Megiddo (I Kings 9:15)
- King Ahaziah, mortally wounded in battle with an arrow by Jehu's soldiers died at Megiddo.
- King Josiah was killed by Pharaoh Neco at Megiddo (2 Kings 23:30).

Megiddo is also named in Revelation where it is connected with "Armageddon" comes from Hebrew "Har" (mountain) and Megiddo, thus the "Mountains of Megiddo."

*For they are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty. ('Behold, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake, keeping his garments on, that he may not go about naked and be seen exposed!') And they assembled them at the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon. (Revelation 16:14-16).*

The Valley of Armageddon, therefore, which many Bible interpreters believe is the site of this world's final battle, is the great Jezreel Valley that we see from the top of Megiddo.

What made this site so significant? Recall for a moment what we've learned about the Way of the Sea, the trade route in Isaiah's prophecy of the coming of Jesus. Megiddo was one of the major fortresses guarding that route.

[Click to View Larger](#)

Megiddo is located on the Mt Carmel ridge which stretches west to the sea. There are three passes through that ridge and Megiddo guards the most important one, the Aruna Pass.

*The Aruna pass through the Carmel mountains near Megiddo*

Even today the main road north toward Galilee runs through the Aruna Pass, and you can see from the picture that the Fortress of Megiddo is nearby.

Megiddo is an outstanding example of the multiple layers typical of a Tel. In the ancient world there were no bulldozers to clear a site for construction. Over hundreds and thousands of years cities would be destroyed again and again from battles. Rebuilding a city involved construction on top of the previous layers, often using materials left over from the previous time.

At Megiddo the layers stretch back thousands of years until we reach the top layer which represents construction from the time of Solomon and Ahab.

*Tel Megiddo cut away model*

Below is a view of Tel Megiddo today.

*Aerial view of Tel Megiddo*



[Tel Megiddo](#)

As you look out from the top of Megiddo over the beautiful Jezreel Valley, is this the site of that great battle of Armageddon?

*View across the Jezreel Valley from Megiddo. Mt. Tabor is in the distant centre.*

**The Importance of a Water System.** At Megiddo we have an excellent illustration of one of the most important steps for defending an ancient city against attack. A city's defenders can hold out for a long time with little food but only a few days without water. Protecting the water supply of an ancient city was a top priority. We will see this at Megiddo and also in Jerusalem where King Hezekiah dug a tunnel to protect Jerusalem's water supply.

The water tunnel at Megiddo was deeply buried and carefully hidden so that attackers could not discover its source. The spring supplying water to Megiddo was outside the city walls. The secret tunnel allowed defenders inside the walls to access its water.

*Diagram of the Megiddo water system*

Today we can walk through the ancient water tunnel.

*Entrance to the Water Tunnel at Megiddo*

## **On to Jerusalem**

We now head back to Jerusalem for the final stages of Jesus ministry. Jerusalem will be our home for the rest of the tour.

### **Passages to Study for Today**

Here are some passages to read as you prepare for Day Seven.

- At Capernaum we are near the “way of the sea” in the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, Galilee of gentiles. Read Isaiah 9:1-7 and reflect how wide and deep is God's plan for redemption. No more gloom. No more darkness, for unto us a child is given.
- Read some of the mighty works Jesus did at Capernaum: healing a paralytic (Mark 2:1-12), a man with a withered hand (Mark 3:1-6), the centurion's servant (Mark 8:5-13), the daughter of Jairus and the woman with a hemorrhage (mark 5:21-43).
- Read about Jesus encounter with his disciples after his resurrection (John 21:1 and following).

- Read about Armageddon (Revelation 16:12-16).

**Day Six**

**Day Eight**