

# Lessons from the Holy Lands



Bellevue Church of Christ  
Summer 2021

# Helpful Link



<https://www.teamagee.com/class/>

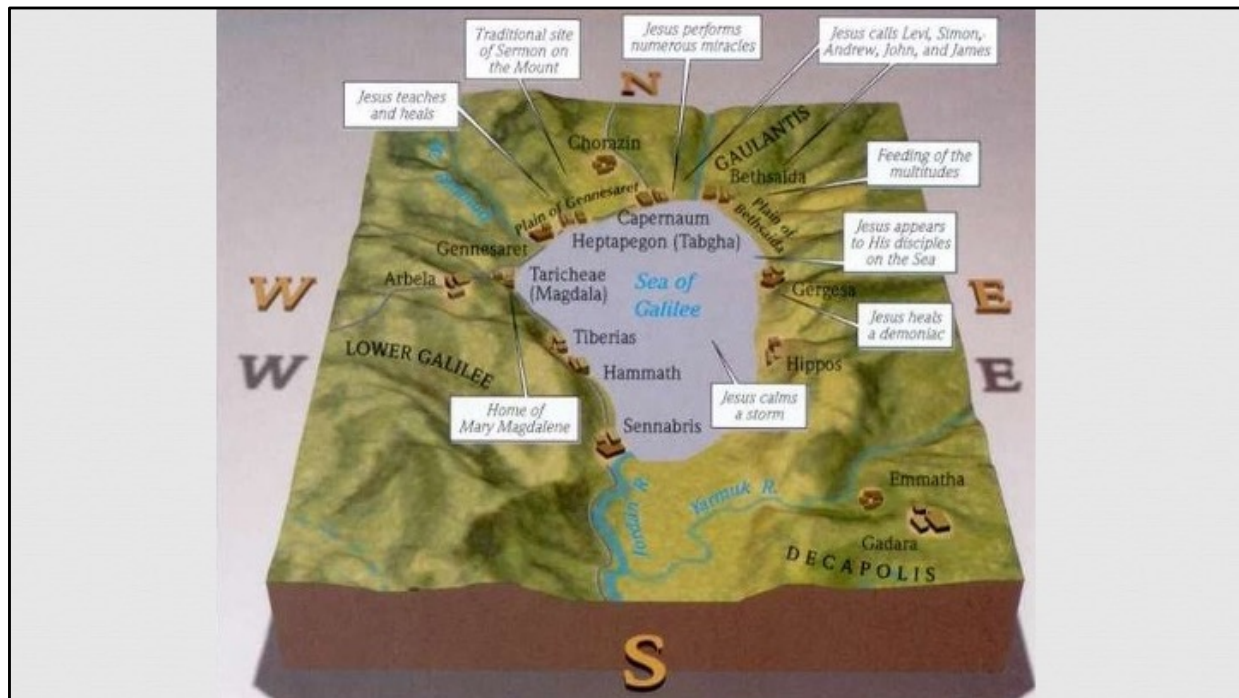
 Copies of the slides with my notes

# Sea of Galilee



Matthew 8:24–26, 14:22–33; Mark 4:35, 6:45–53





# Sea of Galilee

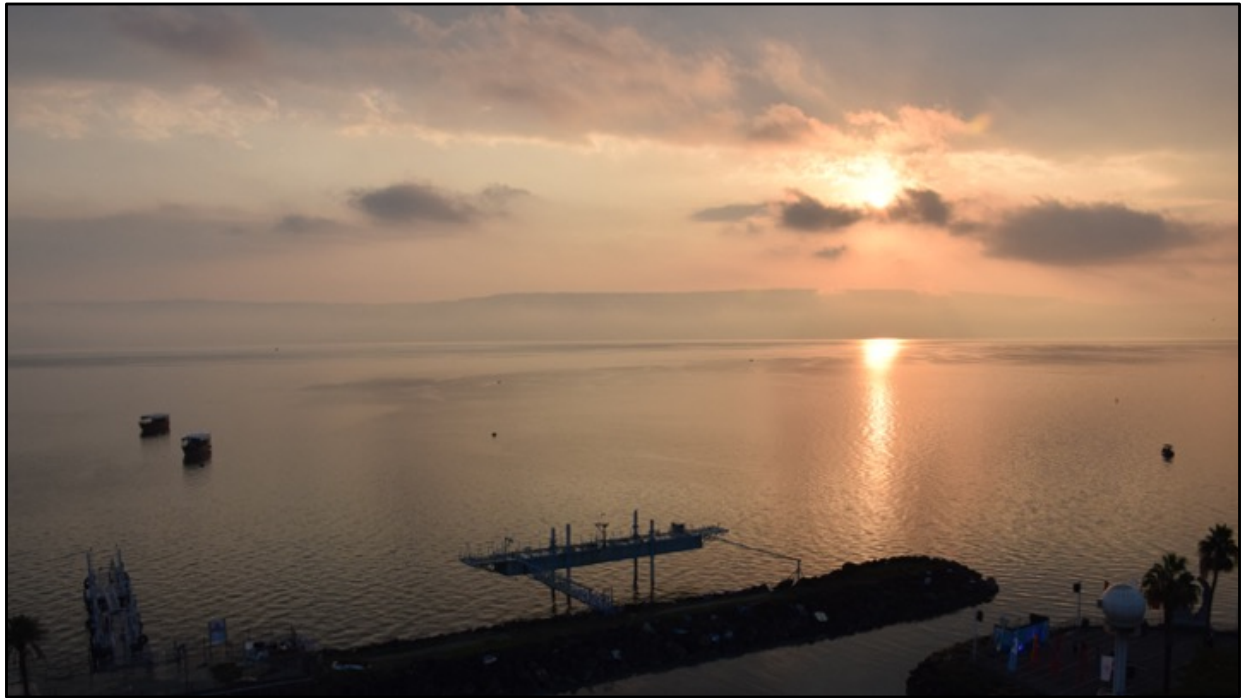


- ❧ The Sea of Galilee has a surface area of 64 square miles.
- ❧ Its maximum depth, measured in the northeast, is 157 feet.
- ❧ The lake is 13 miles from north to south and 7 miles from east to west.
- ❧ Its surface elevation was long given as 686 feet below sea level, but for decades the annual water level generally has been 6.5 to 13 feet below the traditional level.
  - ❧ The Sea of Galilee provides 40% of the fresh water to the surrounding area
- ❧ The Jordan River feeds into the Sea of Galilee from the north and flows out from the south. The sea takes water from the Jordan and then gives it to the Dead Sea.

## Sea of Galilee (Cont.)



- ❧ The Sea of Galilee is known by the following names in scripture:
  - ❧ Sea of Chinnereth (Numbers 34:11; Joshua 12:3; 13:27)
  - ❧ Sea of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1)
  - ❧ Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1; 21:1)
  - ❧ Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:18)
- ❧ The Gospels refer to the Sea of Galilee 53 times (48 times as “sea” or “Sea of Galilee”; five times as “lake”).
- ❧ Two significant events that occurred on the on the Sea of Galilee:
  - ❧ Jesus’ calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee (Matt 8:24–26; Mark 4:35).
  - ❧ Jesus’ walking on the Sea of Galilee (Matt 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–53).



View over the Sea of Galilee from our hotel room in Tiberias





Sea of Galilee from the boat dock on the north shore



View from the boat toward what was likely the land of the Gadarenes during the time of Jesus



View from the boat toward the city of Tiberias



View from the boat to show the mountains surrounding the lake



View from the boat



# Ancient Galilee Boat



- ❧ Ancient boat that was discovered at the Sea of Galilee in 1986.
- ❧ The boat is dated to the first century AD and was discovered during drought time by two men who found ancient nails sticking up through the mud.
- ❧ The extraction was completed by covering the entire boat in polyurethane foam and sailing it on the sea so that it could be extracted by a crane.
- ❧ The preservation process was extensive and took 10 years before it was ready to display.



Ancient Galilee Boat – Dated to the first century AD





Preserved using polyurethane foam as depicted in this model



Ancient boat covered in foam and floating on the Sea of Galilee

# Jordan River



Gen 13:10; Josh 3-4; 2 Kgs 2:6-8, 14, 5:9-14, 6:4-7;  
Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22.



# Jordan River



- ❧ Feb by four tributaries:
  - ❧ Hasbani River, Banias River, Dan River, and the Iyyon Stream
- ❧ The river rises on the slopes of Mount Hermon and flows southward through northern Israel to the Sea of Galilee.
- ❧ Exiting the sea, it continues south before emptying into the Dead Sea.
- ❧ The Jordan River is more than 223 miles in length, but, because its course is meandering, the actual distance between its source and the Dead Sea is less than 124 miles.
- ❧ The diversion of river water by both Israel and Jordan has significantly diminished the Jordan's flow into the Dead Sea and has been a major factor in the considerable drop in the Dead Sea's water level since the 1960s.

## Jordan River (Cont.)



- ✧ The Jordan is mentioned over 180 times in the Old Testament and 15 times in the New Testament. Here are some notable highlights:
  - ✧ First mentioned in Gen 13:10: Lot admires the land “like the garden of Yahweh.”
  - ✧ Joshua leads the children of Israel across the Jordan into the Promised Land and sets up the memorial stones from the Jordan (Josh 3–4).
  - ✧ Elijah crosses the Jordan prior to his ascension (2 Kgs 2:6–8)
  - ✧ The river is prominent in Elisha’s miracles — the parting of the Jordan (2 Kgs 2:14), the healing of Naaman (2 Kgs 5:9–14), and the floating ax head (2 Kgs 6:4–7).
  - ✧ John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River (Matt 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22).



Picture is from the northern part of the river near the Sea of Galilee.





Very popular baptismal site



# Beth-Shean



Judges 1:27; 1 Sam 31:8–13; 10:8–12; 1 Kgs 4:12

# Beth-Shean



- ❧ Beth-Shean is located about five miles northeast of Mt. Gilboa along the Harod Brook, where the Jezreel Valley meets the Jordan Valley.
- ❧ It was first occupied in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC. The original settlement was on top of a large Tel overlooking the surrounding area.
- ❧ During the Hellenistic period, the city spread out around the Tel, eventually encompassing 400 acres. During the Hellenistic Period, the city was included in the Decapolis under the name of Scythopolis ("city of the Scythians").
- ❧ Even though this Beth-Shean is mentioned in the Bible, most of the excavations today are from the Byzantine Period during the 4th and 5th centuries AD.

## Beth-Shean (Cont.)



- ❧ The book of Joshua first mentions Beth-Shean as one of the cities of Manasseh.
- ❧ According to Judges 1:27, the city was still inhabited by Canaanites during the period of the judges.
- ❧ First Samuel records that after the Philistines killed Saul in battle at Mt Gilboa, they hung his body and those of his three sons on the walls of Beth-Shean and placed his armor in the temple of Ashtaroth (1 Sam 31:8-13). According to 1 Chronicles 10:8-12, the Philistines also hung Saul's head in the temple of Dagon.
- ❧ Beth-Shean eventually came under Israelite control, and according to 1 Kgs 4:12, it became one of King Solomon's administrative districts.



View of Beth Shean toward the ancient Tel



Pool outside of the bathhouse





A bath house that includes 3 rooms (1) hot room or sauna (2) cold room (3) cool room for transition from sauna to cold. Note the remains of pillars made of mud bricks that were used to lift up the floor. Slaves would burn wood outside through arches to heat the sauna. This was a very large structure.



A baptismal fount on the back side of the bath house. The bathhouse site also functioned as a Byzantine church.



A road behind the bath house where you could see several layers or strata over the centuries. One of these layers contained intricate mosaics.





Palladius Street that was lined with columns and had an underground drainage “pipe” running under the street.



A beautiful Greek-style theater that is quite large.



Fallen columns from the earthquake in 749 AD that destroyed the city.





This Tel is comprised of 20 strata dating back to 5th millennium BC. It is likely that within one of these strata is the wall where Saul's body was hung. Today, the only significant excavation on top of the Tel is a house of the Egyptian governor from the 12th century.



View of Beth Shean from the top of the Tel



View across the Jordan Valley into the country of Jordan.

# Jericho



Num 22:1, 26:3; Josh 8:2; 10:1, 28, 30; Judg 3:13; 1 Kgs 16:34; 2  
Kgs 2; Matt 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43; 19:1-10



# Jericho



- ✧ Jericho is located approximately 10 miles northwest of the Dead Sea.
- ✧ The area contains a spring, 'Ain es-Sultan, and is considered an oasis in the desert (thus, the designation, "city of the palm trees," Judg 3:13).
- ✧ Herod the Great built winter palaces in the ancient city of Jericho.
- ✧ In Genesis through Joshua, "Jericho" is primarily used as a geographical marker. Phrases such as "opposite Jericho," or "at Jericho" are found throughout the Bible.
- ✧ The book of Numbers uses the phrases frequently to designate the place of the second giving of the Law and the point where the Israelites will eventually cross the Jordan River (Num 22:1; 26:3).



## Jericho (Cont.)



- ✎ Jericho is primarily known for its famous walls which “tumbled down” in Josh 6 at the blast of the horn and the sound of the Israelite battle cry. This was the first city defeated after the children of Israel entered the Promised Land. The campaign against Jericho created a reputation for the Israelites that became the standard by which subsequent campaigns would be described and measured. This memorial of God’s judgment is spoken of in the terms of “just as he had done to Jericho and its king” (Josh 8:2; 10:1, 28, 30).
- ✎ Other occurrences of Jericho may be found in reference to a rebuilding of the site in the 10th century BC by Hiel the Bethelite (1 Kgs 16:34). The Bible also speaks of a prophetic guild located in Jericho (2 Kgs 2).
- ✎ Two gospel stories are set in Jericho or its surroundings: the healing of the blind man and the story of Zacchaeus’ encounter with Jesus (Matt 20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52; Luke 18:35–43; 19:1–10).



Jericho is claimed as the oldest city in the world due to the archeological excavations.



Excavation of a mud brick tower from 1950 to 1650 BC (Right Side) and a stone wall from 1650 to 1550 BC. Both of these would have been from before the time of Joshua. This tower and wall would have been under the walls that were destroyed by God.





The original excavations in Jericho were done by Kathleen Kenyon, and that she had been unable to find the walls from Joshua's time (my belief is that this is because they were destroyed). She did however find a large, round tower and walls that she dated to 9,500 BC. This has led to Jericho being designed as the "Oldest City in the World." The tower is amazingly intact.



Mountain in the distance known as the “Mount of Temptation,” and is the traditional location of the temptation of Jesus (Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-14).



My dad and I riding a camel in Jericho