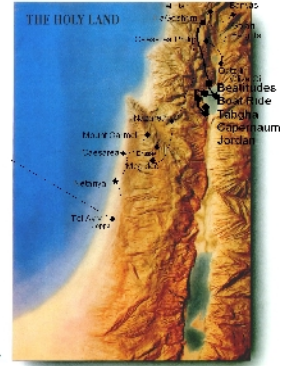




**The Half Shekel Journal** by Ed Rice  
**Vol X Day 5 Sat 31 Jan: Peter n Capernaum**



The restaurant where our lunch was to be served was large eloquent and empty . The olive press in the reception area caught our attention because of our rigorous tour of Golan Olive Oil Inc. The title of our lunch “Peters Fish” caught our attention as well because our guide laughed at the thought of us eating it. And the decor of this restaurant intrigued us because it was just out of Capernaum where Peter caught fish before he walked on water. The arrival of our entries seemed to meet every expectation of our guide. Peter's Fish was all cooked and all there, staring at us through the whole meal and very delicious. Beverly opted for the “Peter's Chicken”. All had a marvelous time.

Peter's 1<sup>st</sup> century house was excavated out from under another building supported on 20<sup>th</sup> century beams. It was located at the outskirts of Capernaum, and positively identified as where Peter once lived. Here the loudest of Jesus' apostles taught some of the earliest converts of Christianity, which would “continue steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers.” Walking into the excavated city of Capernaum gave one the very Roman sense of being there in 30 AD when Jesus had his abode amongst the streets we now stood upon. We examined in detail the synagogue and as our guide clarified and explained the means of telling a 1<sup>st</sup> century synagogue from a 2<sup>nd</sup> century synagogue to one of our number who was disposed to doubt, my mind went off to Jesus' reading and teaching in the synagogue “and they were astonished at his doctrine for his words were with power.” (Luke 4:31) The size of the synagogue in a town can be used to determine a rough estimate of a towns population. We entered the



side court of the synagogue and the guide pointed out the markings etched in the stone floor. Children did their studies in the synagogue and this courtyard served as a playground where they played 'hopscotch' and 'tic-tack-toe' type games. Capernaum was quite a distance from the sea. I had heard talk of the lagoon which had dried up and obviously the sea's level had dropped significantly in the past 2,000 years even as it had in the last 20 years<sup>1</sup>.

I looked out over the ruins of Capernaum, the city where Jesus came to dwell (Matt 4:13), here the centurion of great authority and great faith came to Jesus for his sick of the palsy servant. (Matt 8:5) He came to Peter's house where we had stopped earlier and He had found Peter's wife's mother sick of a fever. (Matt 8:14, Mark 1:29, Luke 4:38.) Here, in the ruins of an unoccupied, dried up, sea forsaken, man forsaken, once bustling

<sup>1</sup> I had often missed the fact that this Sea of Galilee size difference even showed in the plate maps of my Scofield Bible. The maps from the OT period always showed a huge sea, while the NT ones showed a much smaller one.

city I recalled the words of the Christ:



“And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*. Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.” (Matt 11:23-30)

On the bus we traveled south toward the Jordan river outlet, the terrain grew rugged and the hills steep and jagged. As we passed by Genessar you could imagine the old sea level up to the edge of these steep hills and easily picture a herd of swine plunging down the side of any one of these slopes (Matt 8, Mar 5, Luke 5) and drowning in the sea. In the oldest of these accounts Matt 8 mentions a pair of devil possessed men while Mark and Luke's account gives all the emphasis to just one of the two. Also Matthews account gives a various spelling for the country of Gergesenes (Matt 8), of Gadarenes (Mark 5), of Gadarenes (Luke 8). It was not uncommon for a country to have several various labels and it was not uncommon that those with a Hebrew tongue would spell and pronounce names at odds with those with a Greek tongue, ... and it is all too common that modernists Bible translators think nothing of changing God's words in order to synchronize these variations. It is all too common that Christians today are hood winked into accepting and using these modernist deviations from the actual preserved Greek text. Use an accurate, albeit old translation of God's holy Scripture; use a King James Authorized Bible. It translates God's Words, not mans corrections to them.

Some of the Nigerian tours were gathered to leave the Jordan River bank as our bus pulled in. There white robed bare foot 'chieftons' had drawn curious questions from our group as we had encountered them several times at our previous stops. The Nigerian government had sponsored so many free pilgrimages to Mecca for its Muslim population, that somehow they were persuaded to sponsor any Christians or Jews pilgrimages to Israel free of charge. They were here by the bus loads. Several bought jugs of Jordan river water and rushed off to their bus with with their magic holy water, ... I expected that made them more Catholic/Protestant than Baptist but I had not found one that spoke English yet.

