

## DD-13 Jesus Christ: The Wonder Years – Fishing and Sailing on the Sea of Galilee

What stories can you think of that take place on the Sea of Galilee or involve fishing or fish?

Three of them:

- Jesus Calming the Storm after being asleep in the boat (Matthew 8:23–27, Mark 4:35–41, and Luke 8:22–25)
- The miraculous catch of fish after Jesus’s resurrection (John 21:1-14)
- Coin in the fish’s mouth (Matthew 17:24–27)

### Jesus is Calm while Calming a Storm

*Mark 4:35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, ‘Let us go across to the other side.’ 36And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. 37A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, ‘Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?’ 39He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Peace! Be still!’ Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. 40He said to them, ‘Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?’ 41And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, ‘Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?’*

- V. 35 – what is “the other side”
- V. 36 – what kind of boat was this?
- V. 37 – storm
- V. 38 – what kind of fishing boat has a cushion?

## Storms on the Sea of Galilee = Danger

- Though relatively small body of water (no more than 12 miles across)
- Bowl-like effect of the surrounding hillsides
- Much like the crazy winds of a football stadium
- Sea was seen as source of mystery, danger
  - Not swimmers per se
  - Did not have large pieces of foam
  - Fished with least clothing possible so as not to drown
- No communication to shore; no chance of rescue

## What kind of common fishing boat

- could hold up to 13 adults, and
- have enough room for one of them, Jesus, to sleep in the stern
- on a cushion in a storm?

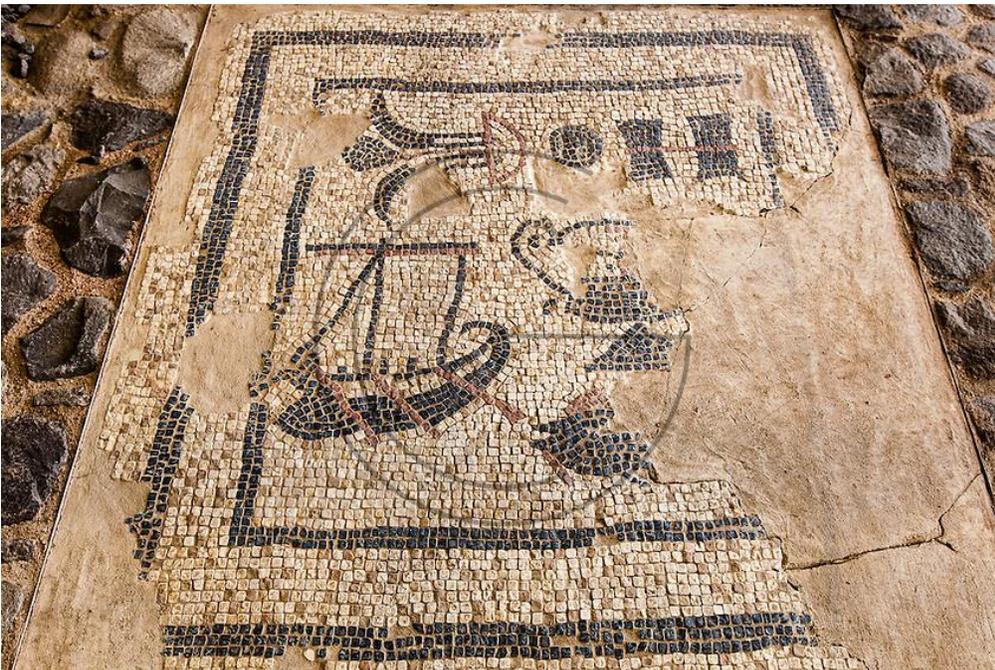
## Pre-1980s Imaginings:



Pieter Stalpaert 1617



Juan de Flores 1490-1500

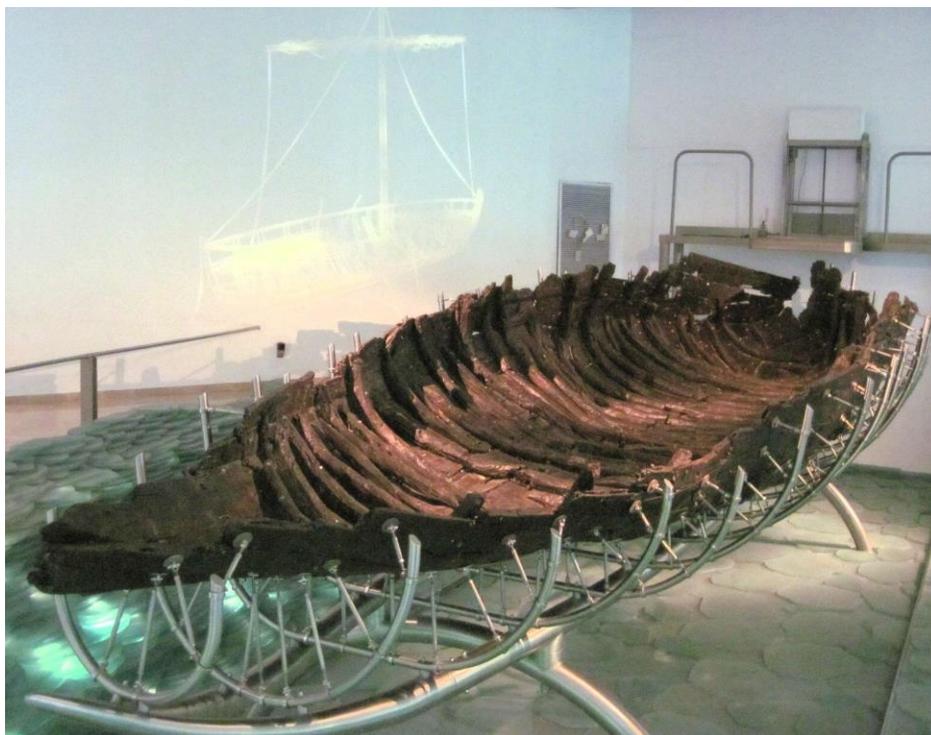


Mosaic floor from 5th Century CE church in Magdala on the Sea of Galilee.  
Uncovered in 1970s.

Watch: [brief video on the discovery of a first century fishing boat.](#)

[Galilee Boat](#) 2:15

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3N-Xcyst9po>



Remains

Wooden model based on the preserved remains (below)



Sea of Galilee Boat details:

Dimensions – 27 feet long, 7.5 feet wide

- How many people can fit?

Single mast

Type of Wood– cedar

Sealed with bitumen (ancient tar-like substance sourced from the Dead Sea)

2 Decks – created storage and platform for standing.

Height was useful for casting net and to spy schools of fish.

“Cushion” – a sack most likely filled with ballast (sand) of some kind.

Anchor – likely a rock with a hole carved into it – drag anchor

Ram in front for intimidation and offense

Multiple positions for oars

- rear oars for close maneuvering and acting like a rudder
- more advanced positions for propulsion

Flattish bottom with no dagger board or keel

– allowed them to go into shallows easily

– gave it more side to side stability

– Easily tipped in a storm however, without dagger board.

Low sides – When fully loaded, gunwale have been close to the water line

Bottom Line: This was a potentially dangerous situation.

## **The Miraculous Catch of Fish: Wrong Fish, Wrong Time, Wrong Place, Wrong Number**

***John 21** Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: **2** Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. **3** “I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.*

***4** Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.*

***5** He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?”*

*“No,” they answered.*

***6** He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.*

***7** Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. **8** The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. **9** When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.*

***10** Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” **11** So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. **12** Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. **13** Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. **14** This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.*

How commercial fishing was conducted:

- Mostly nets



Casting out a casting net, Tiberias, January 2006

Types of Fish:

Small fish – “sardines” – schooling fish – caught close to shore in shallows, many at a time

Kinneret Sardine. “At the height of the fishing season, tens of tons of sardines are caught every night.” In New Testament times these fish were preserved by pickling. Magdala was known as the center of this industry.



Large fish

Tilapia – St. Peter’s Fish – “Musht” caught in deeper waters, a few at a time, during the day (plankton feeders)



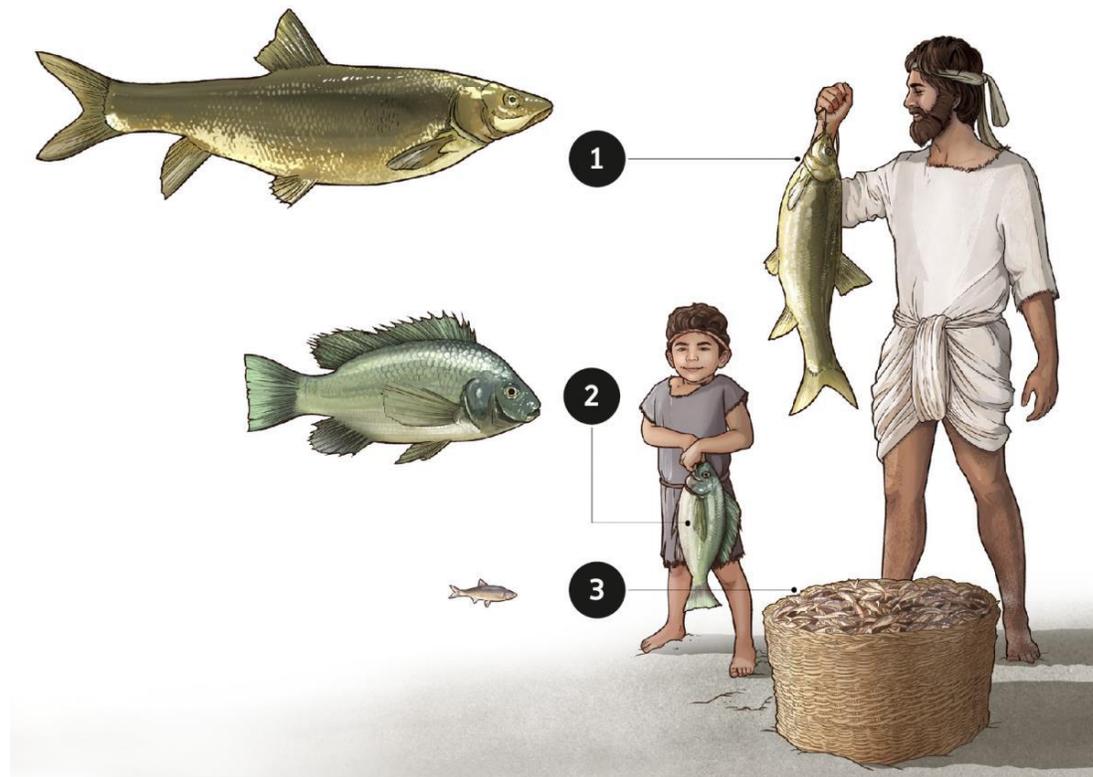
Tiberias - January 2006 -- Tilapia Musht

Barbel/Biny/binny – caught in deep waters, during the day, – a one or two at a time – 14-15 lbs – a kind of Carp – used for Sabbath meals and feasts.



Three things matter in net fishing:

- Right location (esp. depth of water)
  - You can't catch certain fish in shallow vs deep water
- Right Time of day
- Right type of fish



They were fishing at night and close to shore. So what were they fishing for? *Sardines. Small fish.*

The chance of catching a large fish, at night, close to shore, is like the chance of buying a Halloween Costume in January, at Chick Fil a, on a Sunday.

But What happened? 3 miracles

- They caught big fish, close to shore
- They caught big fish, just as night was ending instead of daytime
- They caught big fish, in an unheard of quantity in one net: 153 fish.

Miracle is not the left or right side of the boat.

## Jesus and the Coin in the Fish's Mouth    Matthew 17:24–27

*24 When they reached Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and said, 'Does your teacher not pay the temple tax?' 25 He said, 'Yes, he does.' And when he came home, Jesus spoke of it first, asking, 'What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their children or from others?' 26 When Peter said, 'From others', Jesus said to him, 'Then the children are free. 27 However, so that we do not give offence to them, go to the lake and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin; take that and give it to them for you and me.'*    Notice that Peter is fishing with a hook and line



**Augustus Tetradrachma -- Replica** beside a US quarter – worth four shekels; the cost of the annual temple tax for two people.

We assume that Peter went out and caught a fish with the coin in its mouth.

- He caught a 4 drachma fish – a/k/a a fish worth four dollars.
- He caught a fish with an actual 4 drachma coin in its mouth.
  - Tilapia/St. Peter's Fish – Carries its small young in its mouth until they were large enough to leave. There are reports of the fish picking up small pebbles in its mouth. There was a story written about a tilapia being found with a bottle cap in its mouth.
    - The barbel is a bottom feeding fish that might have been attracted to shiny objects (small fish were shiny).



Snagging tilapia with a treble hook, Tiberius, January 2006