Wondrous Places in the Region of Galilee

**Church of the Primacy of St. Peter**
In Tabgha, overlooking the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias), is the Church of the Primacy of St. Peter. At this place, warm springs used to flow into the Sea, attracting fish. This made it a popular fishing spot, which is why Peter came here to earn his living.

*(John 21: 1-14)*
Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. 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.

**Mount of the Beatitudes**
On a high hill across the road from Tabgha is the place where tradition says Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, which includes the Eight "Beatitudes" recorded in Matthew 5:3-11

"**Blessed** are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. **Blessed** are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. **Blessed** are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. **Blessed** are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. **Blessed** are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. **Blessed** are the pure in heart, for they will see God. **Blessed** are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. **Blessed** are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me."

**Sea of Galilee**
The Sea of Galilee is fed by the Jordan River, rainfall and springs on the northern side. More properly designated a lake, the Kinneret (the Old Testament and modern name) is 13 miles long and 7 miles wide.

**Golan Heights**
In the back drop of the Sea of Galilee (Sea of Kinneret) is the Golan Heights. "Golan" is the name of a city mentioned in the Bible as a "City of Refuge" (see Golan). It has also come to denote a geographic region stretching from the biblical site westward towards the Sea of Galilee. Gaulanitis or Gaulonitis were also used in this context. The name "Golan" may be derived from the Kurdish word, Gul or plural Gulan, which means flowers.

**Galilee**
is one of the most famous place-names to Christians. Although Jesus was born in Bethlehem, near Jerusalem, he lived most of his life in the region of Galilee, in northern Israel. Most of his ministry and miracles took place in the Galilee.
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Above: The Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes (also known as the Church of the Multiplication) is a church in Tabgha (ancient Heptapegon) on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. The church is modern but stands on the site of 4th and 5th-century churches. It preserves a splendid early Christian mosaic as well as the traditional stone on which the miraculous meal was laid.

Plain of Bethsaida
The northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee is a fertile plain where the feeding of the 5,000 likely took place (Matthew 14:13-21).

Right: Capharnaum appears in the biblical record only in the Gospels, and it is mentioned 16 times in connection with Jesus' Galilean ministry. It is not a place where "tradition" says a significant event related to the life of Jesus occurred. It was his adopted home (Mark 2:1) during his three-year ministry. He lived, slept and ate here. Here, too, he called his first disciples, taught in the town's synagogue and performed many miracles.

Below: This "white synagogue" was not the one Jesus taught in, as related in (Mark 1:21). This was proven by several seasons of excavations in the 1960's. Beneath the synagogue floor, archaeologists found a treasure trove of more than 10,000 Roman coins from the 4th and 5th centuries AD. In the course of further digging, a black basalt wall was discovered running underneath the limestone blocks (below). At first it was assumed that it was a foundation, but at one corner, the basalt wall did not align with the limestone structure above. After more digging below the synagogue's limestone paving, a cobbled floor of black basalt was found, scattered with potsherds dated to the 1st century AD. Taking into account the fact that the Jews of the ancient world customarily built new synagogues on the sites of older ones, it was probably the one built by the Roman centurion (Luke 7:1-5) and the place where Jesus taught (Mark 1:21, John 6:59).
In Mark 1:29 Jesus casts out a demon in the synagogue, then enters the house of Peter and Andrew, with James and John. This indicates that the house was nearby. That brings us to the southern part of the Capharnaum excavations. Some 90 feet from the synagogue and very near the lake, is a bulky octagonal concrete church constructed by the Franciscans in 1990, one guidebook sarcastically refers to the church as "an ugly chapel that resembles a flying saucer hovering above the ruins!" It was built over the remains of a dwelling that, like the other houses in Capharnaum, was once part of an insula, a complex of small, single-story residences grouped around a central courtyard. Sometime towards the end of the 1st century AD the dwelling had become a house-church for early Christians (possibly the earliest church in the Holy Land).

Below: Jordan River (The Baptism of Jesus, Matthew 3:13-17)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” Jesus replied, “Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.” Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lightning on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”

Three principle sources come together to form the Jordan River: the Banias (or Hermon) River in the New Testament city of Caesarea Philippi, the Dan (or Leddan) River located in the northern most city of Palestine, and the Hasbani (or Senir) River in the bottom of a valley at the western base of Mount Hermon, all originating from the snows of Mount Hermon. The main source, contributing the largest flow of water, is the Dan River.