



2019 EXPERIENCE ISRAEL TOUR

Study Guide for 6a & 6b – Magdala and Tabgha

Historical background: Magdala, a town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, was a major first-century port, a center of trade and commerce, and an exporter of salted fish. Archaeological discoveries have uncovered three interconnected ritual baths that

used groundwater from springs for purification purposes. A Magdala stone was found in the remains of a building, bearing a very clear and distinct seven-branch menorah, a type of lampstand used in the Temple. The Magdala stone found in the remains of one building led to the building's identification as a synagogue and, unlike other first-century synagogues found in Galilee, the Magdala building had ornate mosaics. Meanwhile, less than 3 miles away, the hull of a fishing boat old enough to have been in use during the time of Christ, was found in 1986. (We'll see the "Jesus Boat" at Ginosar following our boat ride on the Sea of Galilee!) These findings provide strong evidence of Jewish presence in the 1st century, a disputed fact by many attempting to wipe out any Jewish history in Israel. Magdala is known traditionally in Christian sources as the birthplace of Mary Magdalene. She is named at least 12 times in the gospels where she is described as one of several women who traveled with Jesus and his disciples and personally supported His work ([Luke 8:1-2](#)). She was one of the women who witnessed Jesus' crucifixion and planned to tend to his body after His death. Mary Magdalene was the first eyewitness of the risen Christ and was commissioned by Jesus to inform the disciples of his resurrection ([Matthew 28:1-8](#)) and ([Mark 16:9-10](#)). It is also certain that during his ministry Jesus taught in Magdala.



Historical background: Tabgha is another small area on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee, only a few miles from Capernaum (to the north) and the Jesus Boat (to the south). ([Click here](#) for perspective.) In ancient times, Tabgha was known as Heptapegon - "Place of the Seven Springs." Seven warm water springs



flow into the Sea of Galilee at this place. Although the Sea of Galilee is fed primarily with snow melt from Mt Hermon, these seven springs produce warm water, which increases the production of algae and attracts more fish in this part of the lake. This rich fishing area, along with other archaeological clues lead us to believe that it was here on these shores that Jesus called His first disciples, taught from Peter's boat and then performed a miracle that resulted in a large catch of fish. After Jesus' resurrection, he appeared to Peter again and performed another fishing miracle. Then He had an intimate conversation with Peter and restored his heart from guilt and shame right here on the shores

of Tabgha!

Bible Application: From the Shores of Tabgha

1. Read [Matthew 4:18-24](#) and [Mark 1:16-20](#). The first disciples Jesus called to follow Him were:

_____, _____,
_____, and _____.

2. Read [Luke 5:1-11](#). Fishing all night, Peter and the other fishermen with him had caught nothing. They brought the boats to the shore of the lake and washed their _____ (v2). Jesus got into _____ boat and asked him to move it a little from the land. Jesus taught the people from the boat and when he was finished teaching he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down

your nets for a catch.” Peter remembered the long night with zero fish caught, but still, he let down the nets. The nets had become so full of fish that they were _____ (v6).

The men filled both boats with fish. According to Luke 5:10 Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching _____,”

3. Read [John 21](#) On the shores of Galilee, after Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, Peter went back to his old job as a fisherman and forgot the commitment he made to follow Jesus. But Jesus appeared to Peter once again to restore him. Another fishing miracle occurred followed by a special _____ on the beach prepared by Jesus (v12).
4. Kym so eloquently wrote these words in her blog post, [Tabgha and Jesus’ Disciples](#), “After preparing breakfast and feeding the disciples, Jesus asked Peter 3 times if he loved Him. Though Peter didn’t understand the agape love Jesus was talking about, he had the opportunity to declare his love 3 times to Jesus...the same number of times he had denied Him that fateful night prior to Jesus’ crucifixion. Jesus totally restored Peter ([John 21:15-17](#)), and we know that Peter went on to become a very bold proclaimer of the Gospel! In fact, it was Peter who first brought the Gospel to the Gentiles!” (Remember Caesarea?)
5. Let’s watch this video live from the shores of Galilee where Peter may have docked his boat and washed the nets bringing these stories to life: [Lessons of Peter on the Shores of Galilee](#). (Listen carefully...this is going to come to life when we are in Israel!)

Thanksgiving and Praise: Embrace these words of encouragement from Kym’s blog post above, “Have you ever “denied the Lord,” or thought that you’ve blown it so badly that you would never be forgiven, much less restored? Well, just as Peter “blew it” and was restored, so the Lord’s grace reaches just as fully to us! Don’t think for a moment that our precious Lord does not have special plans for you! He is able to turn our worst into something powerful! He loves you...and has left this sign on the shores of Tabgha!” Let’s worship in Hebrew to [How Great is our God](#). What a blessing it would be for all of us to sing this while in Israel!



Digging Deeper:

- Watch this short 5.5 minute video about Magdala’s significant archeological finds from the first century: [Jesus’ Footsteps in Magala](#)
- Check out Kymj’s blog on [Magdala: A Jewel on the Sea of Galilee](#)
- [Great pictures and information about Magdala](#)

Keep looking for blessings!