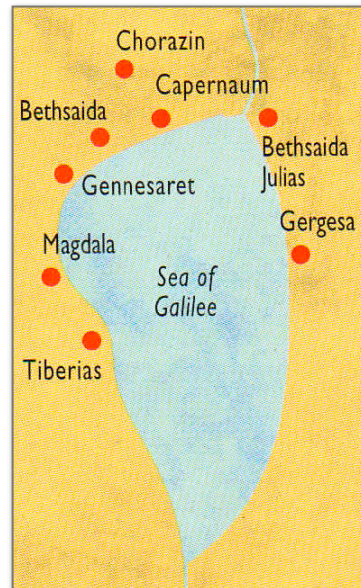


Reflection

- In this session, we examined Jesus' baptism, which led to the 40 days in the wilderness, traditionally west of the Jordan River.
- Think about your baptismal promises: how well do you keep them? Do you recommit your life to God each day? (At the end of these Sessions, we will renew them, re-committing ourselves to God.)
- Think about your spiritual desert experiences: How did you deal with them? Do you give yourself space to spend time alone with God? What are the great temptations for you?
- Jesus called His first disciples to follow Him whilst beside the Galilee lake. He also calls you. You have answered. Otherwise, you would not be here today. However, think about the quality of your response to Him. Consider the new depth in this relationship to which He might call you. It does not mean the heroic, though this may be so for some. For most of us, it is, 'What is the next thing He asks of me?'
- That latter question is something you should pray about. Moreover, remember to listen to what He may be saying. Do not reduce your relationship with God to a monologue, with you doing all the talking. Make it an intense experience of heart-felt speaking and listening between two deeply in love people: God and you.



The Palestine of Jesus: Letting the geography of the land speak to us today Second Presentation



Israel from space

1. This series uses a PowerPoint presentation to explore Jesus' life through the land. The notes below complement the visuals.
2. The traditional site for **Jesus' baptism** is in the Jordan near the Dead Sea. Now, it is a military site, which, until recently, was not accessible. (Read Luke 3.21-22)
3. Today, people can be baptised or renew their baptismal promises at the **Yardenit Baptismal Centre**, where the Jordan emerges from the Sea of Galilee.
4. **Qumran** is near here and overlooks the top of the Dead Sea on the western shore. There was a community of Essenes here, and the Dead Sea Scrolls (now in the Israel Museum, Jerusalem) were found nearby. Some have thought that John the Baptist had connections with the Essenes.
5. Traditionally, the **Temptations of Jesus** occurred in the wilderness to the west of Jericho. (Read Luke 4.1-11)
6. The Wadi Kelt has a footpath that is a shortcut leading from Jerusalem to Jericho in this wilderness area. In Byzantine times, 60,000 monks lived in the valley; now, there are 15 in one monastery.
7. The **Sea of Galilee**: 210m below sea level; 21 km long; 12 km wide; depth, in places, 46m. Its low altitude contributes to its almost tropical weather. The distance from Jerusalem to Tiberius, beside the Sea of Galilee, is 118 km. The Sea of Galilee has 23 kinds of fish; it receives life and gives life elsewhere through the Jordan River. The Dead Sea receives and does not give life. Hence, the Dead Sea.
8. Most of Jesus' activity occurred around the fertile plain on the northwest shore of the Lake. Steep hills slope down to the shore elsewhere around the lake. Josephus, writing in the first century, told of 240 cities and villages in Galilee.
9. **Capernaum**: This was the first town encountered by travellers from Philip's territory across the northern reaches of the Jordan. Capernaum was in Philip's brother's territory, Herod Antipas. Thus, a customs office (Matthew 9.9) and a small garrison commanded by a centurion were there. The inhabitants' poverty can be inferred from the fact that the centurion, a gentile, had to build them a synagogue (Read Luke 7.1-10, particularly v.5).
10. At the time of Jesus, Capernaum probably had a population of 700 (Nazareth had 400-500) and little depth, stretching along the lakefront for 300m.
11. **Simon Peter's house**: Jesus was forced to leave Nazareth (Read Luke 4.16-30) and come to Capernaum (Luke 4.31). No unique advantages induced Jesus to settle here; it offered nothing that could not be found in other lakeside towns. He probably chose it because His first converts, the fishermen Peter and Andrew, lived there (Read Mark 1.16-18). The initial impact was not sustained, provoking a rebuke from Jesus (Read Matthew 11.23-24).
12. Tradition has it that the house of Simon Peter stood here. The drystone basalt walls would have only supported a light roof. You automatically think of the cure of the paralysed man in Mark 2.1-12. But you also think of the healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law and others (Read Luke 4.38-40)
13. One room of this complex was singled out since the mid-1st century AD, and its walls were plastered. At the same time, there was a shift in the use of the room. Before this, it was used for domestic family use, as broken pottery embedded in the floor reveals. After this, only storage jars and lamps were found, and their contents are unknown today. The hint that the room was put to some public use is confirmed by the large number of graffiti scratched on the plaster walls, some mentioning Jesus as Lord and Christ. It seems this became a house church. In the 5th century, all the surrounding rooms were levelled, except this venerated room, in preparation for an octagonal church with a mosaic floor.
14. **Jesus calls the first disciples**: He has already been to Peter's house and is now standing beside the Sea of Galilee preaching to the people. However, the crowd's pressure is becoming too great, so He gets into Simon Peter's boat and pushes out from the shore (Read Luke 5.1-11). His ministry is now well underway. The rest, as they say, is history!