

~BETHSAIDA (215)

(Beth-sa'i-da) [from Aramaic, meaning House of the Hunter, or Fisherman]

- The city from which Philip, Andrew, and Peter came
- Now Philip was from **Bethsaida**, from the city of Andrew and Peter. (**John 1:44**)
- Although Simon Peter and Andrew seem to have taken residence in Capernaum by the time of Jesus ministry.
- When he entered into Capernaum, an army officer came to him, entreating him (**Matthew 8:5**)
- And Jesus, on coming into Peter's house, saw his mother-in-law lying down and sick with fever. (**Matthew 8:14**)
- And they went their way into Capernaum. No sooner was it the Sabbath than he entered into the synagogue and began to teach. (**Mark 1:21**)
- And immediately they went out of the synagogue and went into the home of Simon and Andrew with James and John. (**Mark 1:29**)
- It was a city of Galilee.
- These, therefore, approached Philip who was from **Bethsaida** of Galilee, and they began to request him, saying; Sir, we want to see Jesus. (**John 12:21**)
- Following the death of John the Baptizer, Jesus withdrew to **Bethsaida** with his disciples, and at an isolated grassy place in its vicinity, he miraculously provided food for about 5,000 men, besides women and children, who had gathered to hear him.
- And when the apostles returned they recounted to him what things they had done. With that he took them along and withdrew to privacy into a city called **Bethsaida**. (**Luke 9:10**)
- But the crowds, getting to know it, followed him. And he

received them kindly and began to speak to them about the kingdom of God, and he healed those needing a cure. ([Luke 9:11](#))

- Then the day started to decline. The twelve now came up and said to him, Dismiss the crowd, that they may go into the villages and countryside round about and procure lodging and find provisions, because out here we are in a lonely place. ([Luke 9:12](#))
- But he said to them; You give them something to eat. They said; We have nothing more than five loaves and two fishes, unless perhaps we ourselves go and buy foodstuffs for all these people. ([Luke 9:13](#))
- They were, in fact, about five thousand men. But he said to his disciples; Have them recline as at meals, in groups of about fifty each. ([Luke 9:14](#))
- And they did so and had them all recline. ([Luke 9:15](#))
- Then taking the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, blessed them and broke them up and began to give them to the disciples to set before the crowd. ([Luke 9:16](#))
- So they all ate and were satisfied, and the surplus that they had was taken up, twelve baskets of fragments. ([Luke 9:17](#))
- At hearing this Jesus withdrew from there by boat into a lonely place for isolation, but the crowds, getting to hear of it, followed him on foot from the cities. ([Matthew 14:13](#))
- Now when he came forth he saw a great crowd, and he felt pity for them, and he cured their sick ones. ([Matthew 14:14](#))
- But when evening fell his disciples came to him and said; The place is lonely and the hour is already far advanced, send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves things to eat. ([Matthew 14:15](#))
- However, Jesus said to them; They do not have to leave. You give them something to eat. ([Matthew 14:16](#))
- They said to him; We have nothing here but five loaves and two fishes. ([Matthew 14:17](#))

- He said; Bring them here to me. (**Matthew 14:18**)
- Next he commanded the crowds to recline on the grass and took the five loaves and two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, he said a blessing and, after breaking the loaves, he distributed them to the disciples, the disciples in turn to the crowds. (**Matthew 14:19**)
- So all ate and were satisfied, and they took up the surplus of fragments, twelve baskets full. (**Matthew 14:20**)
- Yet those eating were about five thousand men, besides women and young children. (**Matthew 14:21**)
- Jesus said; Have the men recline as at meal. Now there was a lot of grass in the place. Therefore the men reclined, about five thousand in number. (**John 6:10**)
- Outside **Bethsaida**, Jesus later restored sight to a blind man.
- Now they put in at **Bethsaida**. Here people brought him a blind man, and they entreated him to touch him. (**Mark 8:22**)
- Since these powerful works were done in their neighborhood, the people of **Bethsaida** in general, along with the population of Chorazin, came in for merited reproach because of their unrepentant attitude.
- Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, **Bethsaida**! Because if the powerful works that have taken place in you had taken place in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have repented sitting in sackcloth and ashes. (**Luke 10:13**)
- The identification of **the village**.
- Now they put in at **Bethsaida**. Here people brought him a blind man, and they entreated him to touch him. (**Mark 8:22**)
- And he took the blind man by the hand, brought him outside the **village**, and, having spit upon his eyes, he laid his hands upon him and began to ask him; Do you see anything? (**Mark 8:23**)
- Or **city**
- And when the apostles returned they recounted to him what

things they had done. With that he took them along and withdrew to privacy into a **city** called **Bethsaida**. (Luke 9:10)

- Of **Bethsaida** has been a subject of some discussion. The Scriptural references point to a place on the North shores of the Sea of Galilee. The name is connected by Josephus with a populous village lying a short distance to the East of the point where the Jordan River enters the Sea of Galilee.
- This village was rebuilt by Philip the tetrarch and was named Julius in honor of the daughter of Caesar Augustus. [Jewish Antiquities, XVIII, 28 [ii, 1]] The ancient ruins of the site of Julius itself are at et-Tell, about 3 kilometers (2 miles) from the sea, however, remains of a smaller fishing settlement are located at **el-`Araj** right on the shore. Here a natural harbor was used by fishermen up until recent times, so the place geographically fits the meaning of the name **Bethsaida**.
- While accepting this identification as applying to **Bethsaida** in some of the texts, a number of commentators contend for a second **Bethsaida** somewhere to the West of the Jordan. This view is due to the understanding, based on statements by Josephus and others, that the territorial limitation of Galilee did not extend East of the Jordan. Josephus himself speaks of Julius as in **lower Gaulanitis**, the region to the East of the Sea of Galilee. [The Jewish War, II, 168 [ix, 1]] Yet **Bethsaida** is said to be of Galilee.
- These, therefore, approached Philip who was from **Bethsaida** of Galilee, and they began to request him, saying, Sir, we want to see Jesus. (John 12:21)
- However, the region of Galilee does not seem to have always been so precisely defined, Josephus even referring to one Judas of Gaulanitis as a **Galilaean**. [Jewish Antiquities, XVIII, 4 [i, 1], The Jewish War, II, 118 [viii, 1]] It is also quite possible that the city of **Bethsaida** had some of its population extending as far as the West bank of the Jordan, about 1.5 kilometers (1 miles) distant.
- Additionally, since the **King James Version** rendering of;
- And, without delay, he compelled his disciples to board the boat and go on ahead to the opposite shore toward **Bethsaida**, while he himself dismissed the crowd. (Mark 6:45)

- States that Jesus instructed his apostles to go by boat to the other side before unto **Bethsaida**, while the parallel passage at;
- And, boarding a boat, they set out across the sea for Capernaum. Well, by now it had grown dark and Jesus had not yet come to them. (**John 6:17**)
- Gives their destination as Capernaum, some have held that this likewise requires a second **Bethsaida** on the West side of the Jordan near Capernaum. Modern translations of the text at;
- And, without delay, he compelled his disciples to board the boat and go on ahead to the opposite shore toward **Bethsaida**, while he himself dismissed the crowd. (**Mark 6:45**)
- However, allow for the understanding that the apostles began their trip toward Capernaum by first going coastwise toward **Bethsaida**, the point from which they left Jesus evidently being near the site of the miraculous feeding of the 5,000, likely some distance South of **Bethsaida** and on the opposite side of the sea from Capernaum, and thereafter crossing over the northern end of the sea, heading for the ultimate destination, Capernaum. They landed on the shores of the land of Gennesaret, apparently somewhat South of the city of Capernaum.
- And when they got across to land, they came into Gennesaret and anchored ship nearby. (**Mark 6:53**)
- Thus, while various locations have been suggested for a second **Bethsaida**, the Biblical accounts do not require this. It may also be noted that these suggested sites are all near Capernaum and it would be quite unlikely for two cities bearing the name of **Bethsaida** to be situated only a few miles apart.