
The Muse

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A FIRST CENTURY GALILEAN SYNAGOGUE AT MAGDALA?

Synagogues, Jewish congregation meeting sites, are mentioned in the Gospels of the New Testament. There are several places in the Gospels that state that Jesus taught and "proclaimed the good news" in synagogues "throughout all Galilee." However, historians and archaeologists had not found any synagogue sites from the first century. Since Jews could visit the Temple in Jerusalem, they could organize pilgrimages to go there frequently.

Father Juan Solana, a priest with the Legionaries of Christ (a Catholic order found in Mexico), raised about \$20 million dollars by 2009 in order to

build a retreat center on northwest waterfront land on the Sea of Galilee.

He organized the purchase of approximately 20 acres of land in order to begin the building process for the new "Magdala Center" of Galilee.

Of course, any construction on land in Israel requires government permits in order to thoroughly examine the land underneath proposed new buildings.

As the permit process and examination of the properties took place, Archaeologist Avshalom-Gorni discovered portions of walls, benches, mosaics, and other antique items from the 1st century, which led her to identify a synagogue from the home

town of Mary Magdalene. It appeared big enough for approximately 200 people, and of course, delayed building on the sites for years. Details of the find are mentioned in an excellent article by Ariel Sabar entitled "Unearthing the World of Jesus" in the latest issue (January/February) of Smithsonian Magazine. This is one of the many reasons that people should visit Israel today. Sites like this one are open to visitors on a Study Tour!

See below for the details of the next HistoryOnTheMove Study Tour which is scheduled for January of 2017.

HistoryOnTheMove STUDY TOUR

The next HistoryOnTheMove Study Tour to Israel, the Palestinian Authority, and Italy is scheduled for January 5 - 20, 2017. Join this study tour to learn about modern Israel, biblical geography, and the Mediterranean area. To see a detailed itinerary and registration form, please visit www.historyonthemove.com.



CONSTRUCTING A HOME IN JESUS' DAY

In the latest issue (Fall 2015) of *Bible and Spade*, the quarterly publication of the Associates for Biblical Research, there is an excellent article titled "Home Construction in Jesus' World." Professor Brian Peterson of Lee University (Cleveland, TN) summarizes his findings about home construction from various archaeological sites in Israel, particularly Khirbet al-Maqatir. Here are some interesting facts about building a house in Israel during the 1st century:

- Preparations often took as long as a year to collect building materials: stones, wood, branches and Mud/clay.
- The digging of a water cistern for the house had to take place first.
- A stone mason/master carpenter had to be employed.
- A tradesman received his training through his father - thus Jesus was a carpenter like his human father Joseph.
- Houses tended to follow the courtyard model - rooms around a central courtyard. Houses were often approximately four rooms, however they could be larger.
- The lower floors were often used for storage and animals, and the upper floors for living quarters.
- Most houses were constructed with flat roofs.

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