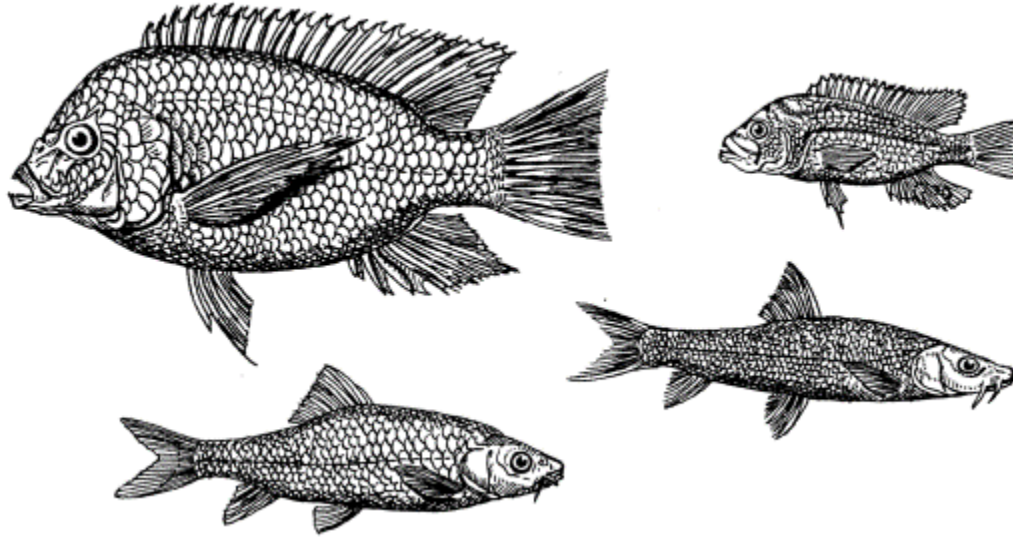


John Lesson 24 Articles



Fishing in the Sea of Galilee played an important role at the time of Jesus. There was a fishery in Magdala, where the fisherman living alongside the seashore pickled the fish. Eighteen types of fish are home in the Sea of Galilee; ten of them are important for commercialization. At the top: The biggest and most important fish is the tilapia, also called “St. Peter’s fish” (*tilapia galilaea*) that can reach a length of 40 cm, and a weight of 1.5 kg. It belongs to the species of cichlid fishes. Bottom right: The long-headed barb (*barbus longiceps*) belongs to the species of carp. It can reach a length of 80 cm, and a weight of 6 to 7 kg. Bottom left: The Kishri (*barbus canis*) also belongs to the species of carps. It has bigger scales than the long-headed barb, and it does not get as large (about 50 cm length and 3 to 4 kg weight). Both fish are fish of prey that eat other fish, mainly small sardines. They were also appreciated as food fish.

A Night of Defeat (21:1–3)

Peter acted without orders in returning to his fishing. He had forsaken all to follow Christ (Luke 5:1–11), and now he was turning back to the old life. Everything about this scene speaks of defeat: (1) it is dark, indicating that they are not walking in the light; (2) they had no direct word from the Lord; (3) their efforts met with failure; (4) they did not recognize Christ when He did appear, showing that their spiritual vision was dim. Peter led the other six men astray when he made his hasty decision. How tragic is a bad influence! We need to keep in mind that God blesses us only when we abide in Christ and obey the Word. “Without Me you can do nothing” (15:5). Too many Christians enter into well-meaning but unscriptural activities, only to waste time, money, and energy for nothing. Let us beware of impatience. It is better to wait on the Lord for directions, and then let Him bless, than to involve ourselves in useless activities.

A Morning of Decision (21:4–17)

When Christ appears on the scene, then the light begins to shine. He instructs them from the shore, and they catch a great host of fish! A few minutes’ labor with Christ in control will accomplish more than a whole night of carnal efforts! It is interesting to compare this miracle with the one at the beginning of Peter’s career in Luke 5. Some see in these scenes a picture of the church today (Luke 5) and of the church at the end of the age when Christ returns (John 21). Today we are casting out the Gospel net, but often the nets break, there is seeming failure, and we do not know how many souls are really won. But when Christ returns the exact number will be known, and none will be lost. Today there are many boats and fishermen at work, but when Christ returns, we will see the one church and all the redeemed in the one Gospel net.